

## The Wilhelmshaven Association

### Contacts:

Committee Chair: Barbara Steels  
[chairman@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk](mailto:chairman@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk)

Membership Secretary/Treasurer:  
Carol Goronwy  
[membership@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk](mailto:membership@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk)  
139 Blake Road, West Bridgford,  
Nottingham NG2 5LA • Tel: 01159814246

Newsletter Editor: Paul Levitt  
[newsletter@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk)

Merchandiser : Peter Piller  
[merchandise@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk](mailto:merchandise@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk)

TWA website:  
[www.prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk](http://www.prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk)  
Webmaster: Andy Renou  
[webmaster@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@prs-wilhelmshaven.co.uk)

PRS Blog: Paul Levitt  
<http://princerupertschool.blogspot.co.uk>

Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/21708008728/?fref=ts>

Password for members' website:  
September 2019: **Gu@rD-h0uSe**

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# THE NEW CAVALIER



## PRINCE RUPERT SCHOOL

### WILHELMSHAVEN 1947 - 1972

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*The 2021 Biennial Reunion will be held at The Queen Hotel, Chester on the weekend of the 9th, 10th and 11th of April*



## Editors Letter

Welcome to this Spring issue of New Cavalier in which we hear from two pupils who took up writing as a hobby and ended up being prolific authors – one writing novels and the other songs. They write at length about their lives and their respective roads to success.

On the subject of books, there is excellent news about a title we were hoping would one day grace our bookshelves in English. You've guessed it, 'Wilhelmshaven – Captain Edward Conder RN and the new beginning 1945'. Written by the late Dr Jens Graul, this book can now be enjoyed by a much wider audience thanks to a version translated from German and published by Captain Conder's daughter.

Letters to the editor includes one from a former member of staff, who describes her time at PRS as 'one of the happiest times of my life'. Another teacher didn't even realise how popular she was until she attended the 1997 Wilhelmshaven reunion. And we hear from a former pupil about how he discovered mysterious glassy substances on Fliegerdeich.

There is also news about a history project relating to BFG (British Forces Germany), which started withdrawing personnel from its bases a number of years ago. This year marks the end of BFG after 75 years of Army presence (the last RAF station closed in 2000). To mark the occasion, a three-year project has been funded by a German research organisation and you can read more about it in this issue.

Finally, we trust our big news about the 2021 reunion won't escape your notice.

Your editorial team,

*Paul Levitt & Andy Renou*

## Report from the Chair.

The Reunion Committee has been working very hard viewing potential venues for our 2021 Reunion.

It was fairly easy to get a unanimous agreement from the Committee on the choice of the hotel in Chester. For quite a few years, Chester has always been considered to be a suitable city but the availability of a venue to suit our requirements at the right cost simply has eluded us up until now. So well done and thanks to Richard Loveday, Peter Piller and Terry Abrey for negotiating and making this venue possible on this occasion.

The rest of the Committee has been working on behind the scenes with Carol Goronwy keeping everything together with her excellent administration and communication skills. I am sure that I can pass on sincere thanks from all of you to Carol for her consistent dedication to TWA.

John and I have spent some time this winter on holiday in the Algarve and only had one day of rain in nearly 5 weeks! For those living in the UK, we followed the weather you were experiencing and watched the effects of the various storms and hope that with Spring nearly here the weather will settle down for a good summer. For those abroad we have watched reports of heat and wildfires in Australia and other disturbances in New Zealand. Please let us know your experiences. How many of us can remember the cold winters while we were at PRS in Wilhelmshaven and how

we enjoyed the comfort of lovely warm central heating and a cup of warm cocoa at morning break?

The book written by the late Dr. Jens Graul on Captain Conder, the Naval Officer in Charge of the Naval Party 1735, has been translated by the Captain's daughter, Elizabeth Tarrant, and privately published. Elizabeth has kindly made available a few of these to members who had previously showed an interest in an English copy. It may be possible to acquire a few more copies so please contact me if you are interested. The suggested cost (UK) is £20 including P & P and Elizabeth has donated the books and requested that all profits are to go to the Lifeboat Association. Many thanks to Elizabeth and her family for this opportunity and for all the hard work Elizabeth put into the translation.

On the topic of books, I know of at least 5 TWA members who have written books and can proudly call themselves 'Authors'. These people are aware that I know who they are and I don't want to publish their names without permission. Are there any more Authors amongst our Membership, I am wondering? Please let me know if you have this claim to fame.

Hoping to see many of you at Chester 2021.

*Barbara (Miller) Steels (Hood/Rodney 57-61)*  
*Committee Chair & Archivist*

## Letters to the editor



In your summer edition my interest was sparked by the description of the broken bunker on page 12. During my time at PRS, which was the mid-to-late fifties as a first and second year pupil, I used to goggle at that bleak site and ponder the recent violence involved. Wandering through the wasteland on Fliegerdeich near Drake Boys, looking for frogs, etc., I found it was well scattered with many wads of old fibreglass (not so much health and safety in those days). I imagine there was a high probability of a few unexploded bombs in that area at the time, but what fascinated me were the many strange glassy green stones all over that place. Fast forward to the TWA era and I learned that the third largest explosion of the entire war happened in Wilhelmshaven. This no doubt explains the broken bunker, but I suspect it also

explains the glass-like stones scattered across the Fliegerdeich. A year or so back I started querying the clutter in my house for suitable disposal. A strange green glassy stone gathering dust as ornament on a window ledge reminded me of the Fliegerdeich stones. It would have been normal for me to keep one of those stones indefinitely, so I believe it is from Wilhelmshaven. After giving it a quick scrub I took this photo that may trigger some more knowledgeable explanation from our readers.

*Denis Oglesby (Drake 54-57)*

As usual, I enjoyed reading the latest New Cavalier. It always reminds me of one of the happiest times of my life. There always seems to be a reference to my husband, Kevin, from one or other pupil and I thought you might like to hear about what happened to him after PRS. Kevin's next post was as a housemaster in a boys' comprehensive school in Kirkby (Liverpool) where he dared to produce 'Henry V' and had many adventures with the Liverpool boys. From there he was appointed Principal of Ingestre Hall Residential Arts Centre in Staffordshire where he stayed until his retirement. There he formed a Youth Arts Company and produced many classical plays at his usual high standards. I continued teaching biology, first at Stafford High School and then at The School of St. Mary and St. Anne at Abbots Bromley. But PRS was the most rewarding teaching experience - all the staff in our time were enthusiastic and

had lots to give. The boarding life helped in many ways to educate to whole child, which could be very rewarding. Most of my contemporaries are now gone, but I am sure they would agree with me. After all our work was done we retired to Filey in North Yorkshire where we had twenty happy and healthy years, before finally moving south to be near our daughter. I send my thanks to you and all the committee for what you do and my very best wishes for 2020!

*Pat Callan (Teaching staff, Drake 54-63)*

Ed. – Kevin sent us the following reply to a greetings card we sent to Filey in 2005: “What a great surprise and pleasure it was to receive your letter this morning. There is no doubt the PRS experience lives warmly in our memories. We have found the TWA newsletters a delight, and the book, which John Simes put together, was evidence of the affection felt for the school. So many times we refer to certain incidents that occurred during our time at PRS. It remains a vivid experience! It is most interesting that we share so many memories of our Drake House days and the card you kindly enclosed brought back the main- school site as a Winter Wonderland!! The former pupil who created the images that are so evocative of the PRS environment did a first class job. You may be sure we shall keep the card you sent us and please convey our appreciation to him.”



*Val at school in the mid-50s*

With reference to your previous edition of the magazine, what a coincidence that two others in their 80's were equally adventurous as me. I have a feeling that the PRS spirit is still going strong and making us deny the limitations of our seniority.

*Val (Salmon) Bruce (Rodney 53-58)*

Ed. – Hopefully you are right, Val, in which case we look forward to hearing from readers who have been suitably inspired!

I have come into possession of some PRS memorabilia. I found that there was some provenance for the title of ‘Guinea Pigs’ for the first tranche of PRS pupils. The phrase appears in the first paragraph of BFES Director John Trevelyan’s speech at the official opening of the school, so we didn’t imagine it after all. Miss Drummond (Mrs Slimming) told me

some 40 years later that the staff referred to us as such from the beginning.

*Vic Longyear (Drake 47-50)*

I particularly enjoyed the last edition of The New Cavalier especially John Hollingsworth’s contribution ‘Walk the Walk’ as I am planning to do the Camino de Santiago in September this year. I would love to get in touch with John to get some more information, hints and tips.

*Marianne (Upton) Browning (Howe 65-67)*

My husband’s cousin attended the latest Plön (KAS) Reunion in London and met with someone from Paderborn University who is about to embark on a three-year research project covering “The British in North Rhine-Westphalia/ Germany”. Apparently, it will be funded by the biggest research organisation in Germany and may lead to various publications, including a book, a few conference papers, journal articles and/or public talks. My late father worked for BFES in Germany and my sister and I attended PRS. I visited her last weekend and saw the latest copy of the New Cavalier, which is just the sort of historic material that the researcher is seeking. A few years ago I bought a super book about PRS by John Simes who was in my form at school. Sadly, I seem to have mislaid my copy.

*Josephine (Watson) Ryan (Howe 55-58)*

Ed.- see article relating to this research project in this issue.

A piece in the Daily Telegraph came to light recently that prompted us to write a letter to its editor. A thread about boarding schools started with a statement on Feb.11 that attending such schools led to pupils who were ‘emotionally stunted’. The reply came from a former boarder saying he went to boarding school from the age of 8 to 16 and was glad to have been emotionally stunted by the experience because it made him less of a nuisance and less miserable when bad stuff happens. A response to this came from a former KAS (King Alfred School) boarder (a retired Lt Col) who wrote, “Sir - I cannot relate to the miseries of boarding school described on Feb. 18. I was fortunate enough to board at KAS in Germany from 1949 to 1956. Surrounded by lakes and hills, it had as its headmaster the charismatic Arctic explorer and author, Lt Col Freddie Spencer Chapman DSO. He had a clear vision of the unique opportunities that such a boarding school could bring, i.e., high priority to outdoor activities such as sailing and athletics, with mutual support paramount. The school had helpers rather than prefects and got involved in the local community by taking part in cultural and sporting events. The school maintained a very happy environment that 6,000 or so pupils who attended over the 11 years it was open carried through to later life. Some 150 former pupils from around the world continue to attend the annual

reunion in London and have raised many thousands of pounds for various charities. This is fitting for a school with the motto, 'Let right be done.'

*We felt obliged to send in our own response as follows:*

Sir - Paul French's sentiment about boarding schools (Letters Feb. 21) is echoed by the boarders of Prince Rupert School (PRS) in Wilhelmshaven (1947 - 1972), a co-educational boarding school for British Forces in Germany that was created at a former German Navy barracks after WWII. Opened by Winston Churchill's youngest daughter, The Late Lady Mary Soames, who remained the school's patron up to her death in 2014, it is estimated that the school was the pre-eminent home-away-from-home to some 7,500 forces boys and girls, many of whom went on to lead full and happy lives. From 1972 onwards, the school was transferred to Rinteln and closed only as part of the build-down of British Forces Germany that will be completed this year. Feelings about the school are best summed up by the sentiments of ex-pupil, Air Chief Marshal Sir David Cousins (RAF ret'd.). "I loved my time at the school. I came to PRS from an austere, all-boy Benedictine boarding school strong on physical punishment, and where austerity in food and suppression of stray pubescent thoughts were the norm! I thought, therefore, that I had come to Nirvana when I arrived at PRS in 1959. Sporting standards were superlative and the school

helped me to pass my entrance exams to RAF College Cranwell, which led to a happy and fulfilling career in the RAF. I owe PRS a lot and I expect many will feel the same. I also had such fun there, and I expect that is why The Wilhelmshaven Association (with well over 500 ex-pupils and staff members) is as strong and as vibrant as it is."

I enjoyed the last Newsletter which reminded me of the Jade Festival - and I will be there 3rd to 5th July, staying at The Atlantic Hotel, which looks over the old School entrance, and would be happy to see others.

I attended PRS for the first form only in 1955/56 in Rodney House (my Father was with the Foreign Office in Berlin from 1946, having arrived there in uniform in 1945) and I then went to school in England, in fact to Woolverstone Hall in Suffolk where a certain John Smitherman was Headmaster, and where I stayed until University at Imperial College.

My memories of PRS are not as clear or detailed as those I read about in the Newsletter, perhaps understandably, but are all fond and I recall high standards and cold weather.

Thank you for keeping us all in touch and I look forward to the visit.

*Michael Smith*

A visit to Winterberg



Countless thousands of tourists visit the tiny resort of Winterberg in Germany's Sauerland region every year. Most hope for snow at this time of year, but its climate is so changeable that you never know what to expect from one minute to the next. Many of our ilk have been to Winterberg for a spot of R&R at some stage during our fathers' BFG tours and will recall the vast acres of pine forest and the old wooden ski jump that has long since been replaced by a modern facility. Many of us will have stayed at the Snow Inn, which is no longer a hotel although the building is now the town hall. We recently returned to the town for a few days and didn't see or hear a single Brit during our stay, although there were plenty of Belgian and Dutch registered cars to be seen. Lazily, we drove to the top of the Kahler Asten, the dominant hill in the region, which still has a weather station at the top.

But gone is the radar listening post associated with the Cold-War era when RAF Winterberg was in existence. The views have not changed much, but now there is a hotel and a small café offering visitors refreshments and respite from the wind. There was no snow and it was slightly above freezing when

we arrived, but the wind was whistling and we knew things could change in an instant. We awoke the next morning to several inches of snow and people appeared as if from nowhere with ski-boxes on their car-roofs. There was a bustle about the place as the shutters of local businesses sprang suddenly into life. Make hay while the sun shines is the motto at this time of year in a town that is first and foremost a ski resort. But given that the Germans are, generally speaking, keen walkers and nature lovers, we were amazed to meet not a single soul during our long and enjoyable walk through the pristine forest that could only be described as a 'Winter Wonderland'. We've had several Christmas breaks here and on very few have we not had snow. And Winterberg, fortunately for us, is only a short car drive away.

Ed.

The Wilhelmshaven Association Biennial Reunion 2021  
Friday 9th & Saturday 10th April 2021, will be held at:  
Hallmark Hotel The Queen, City Road, Chester, CH1 3AH

Tickets: £76.00 per person for two days – £50.00 per person for Saturday only  
This does not include accommodation – see below for more information.

Members may bring a guest, however, if their guest is an ex-PRSite, then the guest must also be a fully paid up member of TWA for 2021/22.

The Queen Hotel is the largest in Chester with 221 bedrooms and is the original railway hotel, having been built in the 1850's. It is adjacent to the station and a short 10-minute walk to the main shopping area.

Facilities include: Lounge/bar areas for relaxation, Italian gardens, Free WiFi.

*Provisional Programme:*

**Friday evening** -The reunion weekend will begin with a welcome drink followed by a finger buffet.

**Saturday morning and afternoon** will be a to spend with your friends or explore the surrounding area.

**Saturday evening** is the formal Dinner followed by a Disco Dance. For the **Saturday dinner** you can opt to be seated with your friends or take pot luck. Your booking form will give details of the menu options, **you must make your selection when booking your ticket.**

The new digitised collection of memorabilia will be available to view throughout the weekend.

You will find your booking form enclosed – if you wish to pay by credit/debit card the safest option is to log onto the TWA website and use the PayPal system. You do not need a PayPal account – just your card details - full details on the form.

To enable us to plan the event please return your booking form and deposit ASAP.

Don't forget to complete your choices for the Saturday dinner. FULL payment must be made by 28th February 2021

## Accommodation:

We have initially reserved 60 double/twin rooms in the hotel for TWA members at a preferential rate and more will be made available if required, subject to availability. Rooms not booked by 28th February will be released back to the hotel.

**The B&B rates per room / per night are:**

**£105/£95 per classic room based on double/single occupancy.**

**Upgrade to an executive room for additional £20 per night.**

**Upgrade to a Superior room for an additional £40 per night.**

**Suites are available but you will need to contact the hotel for rates.**

If you choose to extend your stay to include either the Thursday or Sunday night or both, the same room rate applies. Check-in is from 3.00 pm.

Car parking is situated next to the hotel and is a Pay and Display car park and spaces are subject to availability. We have negotiated a daily rate of £7.50 for members attending the reunion.

To book accommodation you may use this link: <https://be.synxis.com/?Hotel=64794&Chain=9035&Locale=en-US&promo=HMC1282020> (**Please note that the link will be live from the 10th April 2020**) or email the hotel [Queen.Reservations@hallmarkhotels.co.uk](mailto:Queen.Reservations@hallmarkhotels.co.uk) or call 01244 305000

*If you email or call please use the block ID code 5701928.*

*If you or your guest are disabled in any way, it is strongly recommended that you advise the hotel of this when making your booking and again on arrival. This is a multi-storey hotel and all bedrooms are accessed by lifts with emergency access via the stairs.*

You must book your own accommodation before 28th February 2021.  
(Preferably earlier to avoid disappointment)

**Getting there:**

**By Car** – Leave the M53 at A56 junction. Straight on at Hoole roundabout. Left at main traffic lights heading for Chester Railway Station. Hotel is directly across from the station

**By Train** – the station is directly opposite the hotel

**By Bus** – the main bus station is in the City Centre and is a 15-min. walk from the hotel.

**By Air** – The nearest airports are Liverpool John Lennon Airport, 23.9 miles or Manchester International Airport, 32.7 miles

**Alternative Accommodation:** There are many options in and around Chester, this link has more information:

<https://www.visitcheshire.com/accommodation/chester-hotels>.



In late 1953, a young RAF man not yet nineteen and the only British Forces person in the whole of Tanganyika, spends thirty minutes wandering around an old fort in Tabora, an ancient Arab slave trading town in the centre of the country. It is an interesting building he assumes to have been built by the slavers. He finds a small well-kept cemetery outside the rear portal. It contains the graves of

about twenty German and around twelve Belgian soldiers. He asks the air traffic controller taking him to the airfield, 'Why are they there?' 'Until the First World War, Tanganyika was a German Colony called Deutsch Ost Afrika (DOE) and they built the fort. The

Belgians came across from the Congo in 1916 and took it and the town from the Germans.' A light switched on in my head. This will be my first book.

Since the age of ten I wanted to be a writer. The wonderful books Headmaster Smitherman made sure were in the PRS library helped me understand general authorship. In 1946, at Munster Lager, I started writing radio scripts in my head for British Forces Broadcasting. I also kept trying to think of a proper story – a book to be properly published – and here, seven years later, the beginnings of a story popped into my head.

I began immediately studying the period in East Africa and Europe. The early explorers, the beginnings of British East Africa, its move to becoming a colony in 1921; the amazing characters who built Kenya into a viable country; the Germans in

DOA and their preparations for war long before we realised they would start one; and Europe and the Weimar Republic after that war.

I studied for thirty years before starting to write. During that time I thought of and developed my characters, working out how to make them real people. They became so real to me they became my friends, except one; a horrible German who wanted Adam Early, my main male character, dead throughout. To make sure I knew my main characters, I wrote a two-page precis on their parents, so I was present, so to speak, at their births. In addition, the deep research brought me an invitation to speak at The Imperial War Museum on the Battle of Tanga, which, on reflection, I removed from the book. Why? Because although it was part of the many years of research and as a chapter took six months to write, I realised on reading the final draft of the book – "White Sunrise" – that it was not really part of the story. Unlinked to anything else, it spoilt the flow and seemed to me to be more of a show-off exercise than part of the tale I wanted to tell.

I removed it completely and included only a few sentences to indicate it ever happened. This taught me to look out for over-egging. However I wrote one really good character relating to the Battle and have him set aside to use in another book. This is how I learnt Viewpoint. No one could ever explain it to me. Not on three high-

quality courses where the tutors (or moderators) mumbled when I asked about it and on several other writing courses I took. Viewpoint I see as the most important technique of telling your story through the eyes of your characters. The interesting point I discovered is that properly used, Viewpoint helps you to write about characters who speak as individual people and sound different to each other, adding to the flow of story.

Peter Mettyear of Drake Boys at the same time as me, commented on this after he had read White Sunrise. I normally keep one strong Viewpoint in any one chapter and if the character leads in several chapters, it allows them to tell the story for me.

I have used the technique ever since. A short story or a novel told through the eyes of your characters moves better. Using natural sounding dialogue allows your reader to hear the story, instead of dragging through wadges of, often, turgid description to describe an incident or place.

For my next book, "Kitchen Gangster", I faced a problem never expected or planned for as I had previously only ever thought of writing fiction. Commissioned to write a non-fiction account of the troubles of a now straight Manchester petty criminal, I needed to relearn how to structure a book in a style I had never prepared myself for. The man had given up petty crime and, almost by accident, become the largest kitchen manufacturer in

Britain. Unfortunately for him, his previous criminality followed him into business as far as the authorities were concerned. They harried for eight years and tried to bankrupt him by all possible means, including constant imprisonment, money confiscation, police raids, untrue press releases and other pressures and attacks.

Here I am, wondering how to write such a book and after several weeks of thought, decided the best bet would be to make it a series of interviews of those involved in these continual attacks. At that point I broke one of my own strict rules. I never appear in any of my own books. All characters are from my imagination. After another month of thought on how to avoid the interviews being a series of unconnected incidents, I placed myself in the book as narrator. In this way I gave Viewpoint and dialogue to the story and managed to make it run in the style of a novel.

My next book became a series of six (so far) novellas. I invented a female assassin named Maddy and caused her to write "The Assassination Diaries". They were very easy to craft as, being her diaries and written by her, only one Viewpoint is required. I wrote six diaries and sent her all around the world to assassinate baddies of various descriptions and awfulness. I have so far written six Maddy novellas. Doing this I had great fun in devising different ways to assassinate her targets. She is a great character and one of my best

friends. When I sometimes became stuck on the storyline, I would whisper, 'Come on Maddy. Tell me what happened next,' and she did. Honestly. In the next hour or so what happened next would drift into my mind and off we were, Maddy and I, rattling through her next adventure at killing speed, so to speak.

I wrote them with the Internet and Kindle in mind and here is something that may at last make me real money. For some time we have been in negotiations with three TV streaming companies to turn each novella into an eight-episode series. Last week they were joined by a fourth – Netflix – because a new agent picked them up and she is taking them to that great streaming organisation in the next week or so. Will The Diaries ever appear on screen? I'll believe it only when I sign the contract and hear the sound of all that money rattling into my bank account. Hope and dreams live high in the film industry and I am not a subscriber. I'll wait until it happens before booking a world cruise for Pam and me.

My latest and most successful books have been three volumes of stories from The Kenya Police, of which I was a proud member. A chance conversation about the old days with one of our Kenya Police widows caused another light to switch on. This is history my head told me. I sent an email to all my ex-colleagues around the world and asked for their stories. I expected around thirty or forty and received

eighty-five. They became the first volume of three entitled "The Kenya Police – A Living History". I expected to sell around £3,000 to £4,000 to my Kenya Police fraternity. I am just approaching £25,000 and have no idea who is buying them. My wholesaler tells me that orders come from all over the world, via buying agents. I take no fee or royalty. All profit goes to our Kenya Police Association charity, The Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children.

As I wrote those last few words, another order came in by email from my wholesaler for volume one. This runs me out of stock and tomorrow morning I will order a fifth reprint.

A fifth reprint? Am I dreaming? I wish I knew who is buying The Histories so I could thank them. Through all this I would say that I have now been writing for sixty years and still consider myself as work in progress. I try to learn and improve in every skill of writing and bless the power that gave me the strength of will to keep going. Don't think I made any money from writing. Most of us do it for love of the craft. Although The Diaries may come home with a few bob. Ins'allah

*John Newton (Drake 47-51)*

Ed. – John is right. You do it because you want to and can. But first you need an idea. Perhaps his story will inspire you? If you are already in print, please let us know.

## Lois on the mend

*Lois Hammond, our former Chairman had a fall recently but is well on the way to recovery and she would like to pass on the following message:*

"Please pass on my thanks to all who contacted me in hospital. I will reply to all in due course.

My especial thanks to Carol Goronwy, who let so many friends know of my predicament ; to Tricia Smith (Perry) and husband Ken, who visited me in Ludlow Hospital with much needed supplies of clothes; and to Paul Hayward, who lives near Ludlow Hospital. He visited me regularly in the Hospital and drove me home to Shrewsbury on 20th February. TWA is definitely an association to be proud of".







In the previous issue of New Cavalier we asked if anyone had done something with their musical talent after school. One boy who did was Terry Friend (Drake 59-61), who combined his song-writing and musical talents to blend country music with blues.

I was born in Kiel in November 1947, where my father's regiment, the 4th Royal Horse Artillery, was stationed after the war ended. We were posted back to the UK in March the next year, but would soon be back in Germany where I spent most of my childhood. My interest in music really started at a British Army primary school in Hohne in the early fifties. I couldn't have been more than seven years old and during music lessons, we would gather around the piano and sing

folk songs. We stayed here for an incredible ten years, which was rather unusual for a military family in the fifties. To me it seemed a perfect and idyllic childhood. The summers were very hot and the winters very cold, and I recall we lived near woodland on the edge of Luneberg Heath where wild heather grew. About six different regiments were stationed at the camp where we were housed in blocks of flats two stories high with an attic and a cellar. We had central heating, double-glazing and all mod cons such as a bathroom. It seemed as though we were living in the lap of luxury compared with our old Victorian quarters back in Aldershot. And we felt safe and could run wild and free in the many small woods and fields around our quarters. Every Christmas was a white one and the snow would lay thick on the ground for weeks at a time.

When my time came to attend PRS, my poor mother had the unenviable task of sewing my name and laundry number to each and every garment from a mountainous pile of prescribed clothing. I caught the school train at Hannover and travelled in the company of Andrew Young, who was a classmate from Hohne Primary School. Heading off into the unknown was fine, but it was a lot easier with the companionship of a friendly face. I expect my mum cried. After all, her first-born child was leaving home. But for me it was a wonderful adventure and there were no parents in sight.



What a lark! However, it all ended in 1961 when I said goodbye to PRS and moved back to the UK for good.

A year later I was listening to the radio one day and heard a song called 'Love Me Do' by The Beatles. I liked it because it was so different to all of the other stuff coming over the airwaves. What appealed to me was the fact that The Beatles wrote their own material, and what great songs they were too. But it was Bob Dylan's song 'Positively Fourth Street' that awoke something inside of me that had been dormant. On hearing it my life changed forever. Now aged 16, I felt lost and as though I didn't belong in the UK. So, I joined the Army, which to my mind seemed the easiest way to travel abroad. There I shared a billet with a like-minded, guitar-playing recruit with whom I kept in touch despite our units being sent their separate ways. Between us we served in Germany, Malta, Libya, Malaya, Singapore and Northern Ireland. It was when I was serving with 3 Commando Brigade that I

began to write poetry and song lyrics, which just poured out of me. But lyrics need melodies, so I contacted my old roommate and our musical partnership was born.

In 1970, after having seen active service in Ulster, I left the Army and together with my friend began to plan our first recording session. This took place a year later and was followed by three years of rejection by just about every record label known to us. As a result, we decided to publish our own albums. By 1974, I was teaching myself to play the guitar and within a few weeks we became the folk band 'Stonefield Tramp'. Our first album was recorded in a matter of only four hours. The album sold so well that we returned to the studio and recorded another. We chose this moment to launch our own label.

With a view to focusing on my song-writing skills, I left the partnership in 1977 and started my own band and record label. After being part of the

music scene in Letchworth for two years, I recruited some of the contacts made as ‘Terry Friend and Friends’ and recorded my debut solo album ‘Come the Day’. Recording my own material was just the confidence boost that I needed, but I was now married with a young daughter, which didn’t enhance my creative output. For about seven years I actually lost the inspiration to write, apart from two biographies – one about my childhood and one about my military career. But in 1996 I got back into the studio with a former band member and spent two years recording my own compositions that had not previously been recorded. The resulting album ‘Whispers in the Wind’ was to be my first CD and my daughter, Sarah, was the backing vocalist on one of the tracks. We also used one of her early oil paintings on the cover. In 2002, I recorded my first ‘country music’ album called ‘Summertime’ and in 2004 things were moving at a cracking pace.”

Terry would go on to write and record material that filled 20 albums, but as with many creative artists, he had to overcome what he described as his version of ‘Churchill’s Black Dog’ along the way. Many of the feelings he experienced would be expressed in his work, such as, ‘The Alamo’ and ‘The Ulster Songbook’. “All told I must have written about a hundred songs, but I doubt if any were on the epic scale of ‘The Alamo’. Should I be so lucky to have any of my songs remembered

after I’m gone, this may well be the one. Whereas the others required no effort at all, I sweated blood over this one and several years would pass before I was satisfied with my lyrics. The melody took decades! It’s not every day that I create an 18-minute long song, but I just found it impossible to tell the story of the Alamo in a 3-minute ‘Pop song’. It was from the images in my head and my heart from seeing the John Wayne film and reading a book by Walter Lord entitled, ‘A Time to Stand’ that inspired me and became the bedrock of my song.”

As its name suggests, ‘The Ulster Songbook’ was largely based on



Terry’s thoughts, feelings and experiences during ‘The Troubles’ in Northern Ireland. Characteristically, his thoughts were for the many other servicemen who shared his experiences. “It was while watching the festival of remembrance at the

Royal Albert Hall, that I heard a couple of First World War Folk songs. This gave me the idea of putting together a compilation album with more up-to-date songs. When I was recording them, the Northern Ireland Veteran’s Association was formed, so I joined and decided to turn my CD into a charitable venture to raise funds for NIVA.”

Terry proudly recalls that when the Imperial War Museum found out about his autobiographical and musical writings, including accounts of military service in Germany and Northern Ireland, they asked his permission for it to be added to their archive as important historical material. But one of his proudest moments came when his daughter, Sarah, passed out of Sandhurst with honours at the Sovereign’s Parade in December 2008. Also the memories of a particular day in April 1968 are indelibly printed on his mind. “Seeing my daughter took me back to when I was standing on a parade ground in Lymington in Devon receiving a coveted green beret for completing my commando course with the Royal Marines!”

The memories go on and the music hasn’t stopped either. Terry’s latest musical endeavour is a joint collaboration between him and one of the original

members of his 1974 band ‘Stonefield Tramp’. A motorbike crash left him wondering if he would ever be able to play the guitar again, so it was just like old times when the two met for the first time in 40 years. “We decided to write songs together and the resulting album features us both singing solo songs. The CD has just been pressed if anyone wants one.”

*Ed.- Further details on Terry’s life and music can be found on his website...*

[www.anothercountrysong.com](http://www.anothercountrysong.com)



## Best weekend ever

We all enjoy meeting old friends at reunions, but we found this reaction by Sue Fox (Blake/Howe 69-72) to our Golden Anniversary Celebration Weekend in August 1997 worth repeating.

I walked through the school gate and into the past. It was like coming home. The faces were changed but recognizable, the characters were exactly the same. The friends were still the best that I ever had. It felt as though it had only been a moment since we last spoke, since we last walked across the playing field, since we last laughed together. We spoke the same language, and when we had to part after such a short time together, we cried the same tears. Sitting among some I hadn't seen for in 25 years and some I had only just met, I felt relaxed and at home. I wasn't mum, or sweetheart, but one of the Fox girls again. I wasn't middle-aged, but one of the babies, or better still, one of those not allowed in the hockey team because they were 'too young'! Now I feel I have a huge hole in my chest where my heart used to be. I would like to thank you for the most unforgettable weekend of my adult life. I was doing okay until the Mayor's speech and then I felt oceans entering the corners of my eyes. By the time Liz Bird stood up to reply and was struggling to contain her own emotions, I was a big sobbing blob somewhere under the table with three layers of mascara traveling down my chin. Worse was to follow. On the Saturday I decided on a town

walk and so didn't venture onto the main-site until the Sunday when I blubbed disgracefully. In the photos I'm the one with the big red hooter and puffy slits for eyes, and hugging a huge box of used Kleenex tissues. Being a kind, caring soul, I felt obliged to kiss everything that moved in order not to hurt the feelings of fellow pupils around me who were hugging and kissing everywhere. Although my lips were all kissed out, I am still a little worried that I may have missed a few people and therefore propose to repeat the whole procedure at the next reunion.

TWA founder, Liz Bird, commented, "Sue's reaction summed up the PRS spirit, which was a credit to the school, its staff and all it stood for. Just seeing everyone enjoying the reunion so much was well worth the huge amount of work involved in organizing the event."

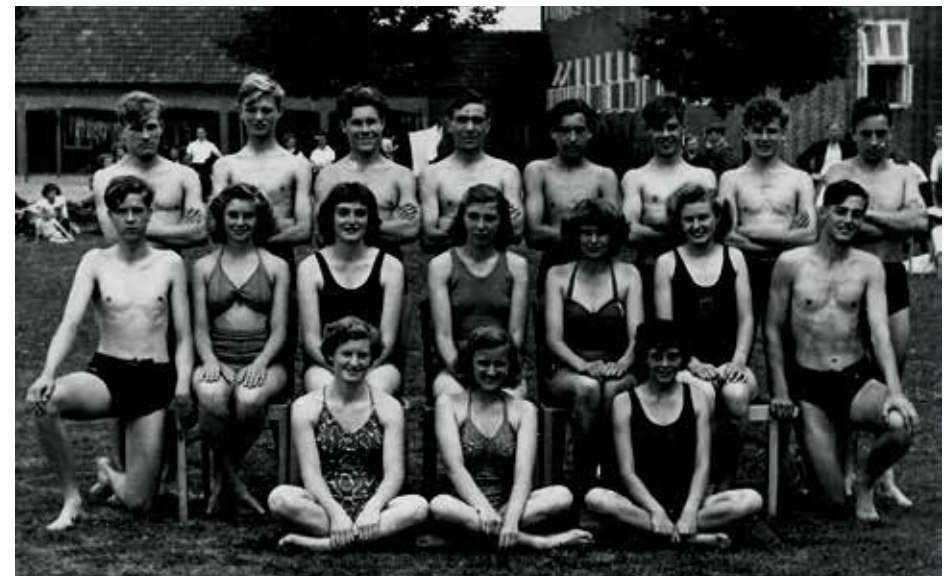


## Where are they now?



*In the previous issue (see '70 years ago' on page 24) we mentioned a football match played on 1st October 1949 between the PRS team and German employees of the school. Vic Longyear has kindly sent us a photo believed to show the very young German*

*team. We would be pleased to hear from anyone who can throw more light on the picture. We sent it to the Wilhelmshavener Zeitung in the hope that one of the players might recognize themselves after 70 years, but we are still awaiting a response.*



*'Who are they? If you recognize anyone, please let us know'*

The Late Jennifer (Peel) Jones, who taught history at PRS during the mid-life of the school, gave her take on the Wilhelmshaven experience in *The Book*. At the Hook of Holland we were put onto a train for the journey to Hamm where we would have our induction course. On the train I first encountered evaporated milk in tea, because German cows were considered to be still prone to TB. So, all the time I was in Germany, right up to 1963, we continued to have it in hot drinks. After five days in Hamm, we embarked on trains for our ultimate destinations, with eight of us going to PRS. Joining us at the last moment was one more woman, a PE teacher who we had envied for her savoir faire. In her orange dress and fake fur coat she was always lost in a crowd of laughing people. We now learnt why she was so at ease - she was returning to her alma mater - she had been one of the first pupils at the school in 1947. School trains held no fear of the unknown for her - unlike the rest of us. She knew what she was doing and where she was going. As it happens, we found ourselves sharing the same flat in Rodney Girls and thus began a friendship that has lasted to this day. Her name: Margaret Urquhart. Apart from my attempts to instill a love of history into my pupils, my other interests were in music and drama, and I loved supporting Bryn Evans and Kevin Callan in the excellent productions they put on. I was allowed

to produce the junior nativity play and to train its choir, and I was in the make-up department for the school plays. My most challenging task was to turn Diana Woodward from an 18-year old into a 50-year old looking like a 30-year old. There was some enormous talent in the pupils and also in the staff, as we showed in Kevin's production of *The Importance of Being Ernest*. We did it twice for the school and then took it to RAF Jever.

As house staff we acquired a great affection for our houses, supporting them in their various activities, although I drew the line at cheering on the touchline of a hockey pitch on cold days. We endured the bonhomie of house parties, but we enjoyed having the monitors in for coffee, biscuits and music. We introduced them to classical music through the Bruch Violin Concerto and we dared to play some of the less shocking songs of Tom Lehrer.

*Thomas Andrew Lehrer (born 1928) the American musician, singer-songwriter, satirist, and mathematician, is best known for the pithy and humorous songs that he recorded in the 1950s and 1960s. His early work typically dealt with non-topical subject matter and was noted for its black humour. In the 1960s, he produced a number of songs that dealt with social and political issues of the day. He retired from public performances in the early 1970s, but the popularity of his songs has endured.*

Our daily routine was somewhat different from the pupils. It began with being woken up with a cup of tea by Magdalena and very often I rolled out of bed just in time to get into the first lesson. This was not because of 'the night after', but because I am a 'night owl' by nature rather than a 'skylark', and the close proximity of the history room to the flat made it too easy to stay in bed. We could have had breakfast in the mess, but those who did not want to eat there were entitled to draw breakfast rations. Margaret Urquhart and I did this and used them for 'intimate suppers' for our friends.

The biggest bind was house duty, mainly because one was deprived of enjoying oneself with three-quarters of the staff who were not on duty at that time. There were four members of staff to each house and when we were on duty it was for 24 hours, from 7 am to 7 am. The morning and afternoon stints were not too arduous - it was the evening that was the bind. After supper, there was just time for a quick trip to the mess for a cup of coffee and a touch of 'humanity'. Once the house was settled and quiet, we would go to bed, but on Fridays and Saturdays we longed for others to come and give news of the happenings of the big world outside. Some times they would bring a bottle and some cards, so we would play bridge or racing demons until the small hours.

One day four naughty girls were bouncing

on their mattresses with such gusto that the duty monitor despaired and reported it to me. Remembering a punishment that had been meted out in the past I ordered 'cold showers' to calm them down, or 'take the chill off'. They returned shortly after and I saw them all happily tucked up in bed. The story must have got around because a few weeks later I was taken off house duty. Apparently a pupil in another house had told her father who happened to be the director of BFES! Several of the staff protested on my behalf and when it was realised that my withdrawal created an additional workload, I was reinstated. Luckily I had the character to withstand 5 Tech's muttering of 'cold showers' when they came in for their history class.

To the teaching staff the great achievement of the school was the stability and encouragement it gave to pupils who had had a great deal of insecurity in their education and consequently in their academic potential. At the end of every term there was the promotions and demotions meeting when the staff would put forward names. It was not hard to promote: to see someone put into a D form on arrival and be put in an A form on leaving, knowing that he/she would then get into a grammar school when returning to the UK, gave us all a great deal of satisfaction. We debated long over the demotions - it was a great sadness to see a youngster slip slowly down the grades.

There were a few people who came

out to PRS and hated it, but most of us loved our time there and look back with affection and nostalgia. After all, most of our lives were radically altered by it. In my last term, when everyone had to get used to calling me Mrs Jones instead of Miss Peel, I bought a cine camera and was able to record the summer activities in the days when we were young and beautiful.

I didn't realise the lasting effect of my teaching until it was brought home to me at the 1997 Wilhelmshaven reunion, when a former sixth-former recalled almost the whole of a class discussion. I enjoyed my time teaching, the pupils were civil and attentive - dared they to be anything other!

*Jennifer (Peel) Jones (Teaching staff 56-59)*

Ed. – A number of scenes from Jennifer's recordings of her last days at PRS feature in the PRS - The Video DVD.

#### BFG almost history



An historian embarking on a three-year research project at Paderborn University is seeking information and memories covering the whole area of BAOR/BFG and is particularly interested in hearing

about the experiences of ex-service personnel and their families. As this will be a joint Anglo-German history, the intention is to try and capture both British and German perspectives. The history of BFG is particularly interesting to researchers as the British Army's presence draws to a close this year (the last RAF station was closed in 2000).

For those who find a blank piece of paper scary, the researcher, Dr Bettina Blum, would be happy to conduct interviews to learn about personal experiences. If you have a story to tell, she will be grateful for any help you can give. To share any memories you have about daily life in Germany, for example, work at the first headquarters in Bad Oeynhausen or at JHQ Rheindahlen, going to school in Germany, Anglo-German events, friendships with Germans, British family life in Germany, living in married quarters, daily military life, visits to West and East Berlin, the military trains, etc., please contact: [bettina-blum@web.de](mailto:bettina-blum@web.de) or write to Dr. Bettina Blum, Universität Paderborn · Historisches Institut - Arbeitsbereich Zeitgeschichte · Warburger Str. 100 · 33098 Paderborn.

Ed.- According to the MOD website, only two British Army units remain based in Germany, namely, Paderborn and Bielefeld (the former home of HQ BFG). Bielefeld is due to close in March this year, i.e. around the time we go to print.

#### Wilhelmshaven 2020



Once again we would remind you that a small group of stalwart Wilhelmshaven fans will be returning to our old stomping ground to enjoy the annual Jade Festival weekend, which is from 2nd to the 5th of July.

You are cordially invited to join us, but we are sorry to say that our traditional abode, The Kaiser Hotel, is now fully booked and you will have to make alternative arrangements for accommodation.



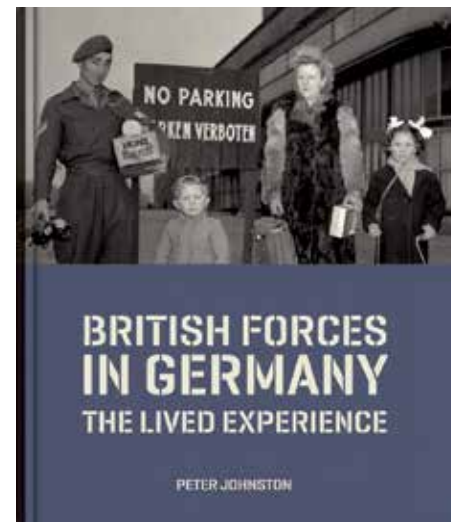
*This photo of the senior girls' 100M race taken in 1949 shows (L to R): Adriane Maher, Elizabeth Allen, Barbara Bates, E Burland, Nora Bryant and Pat Easton. Photo by courtesy of Vic Longyear.*



Finally, 75 years after the end of WW2, the story of what happened in Wilhelmshaven after hostilities ceased has been told in English. And who better to tell it than the city's former Director of Culture, The Late Dr. Jens Graul, who earned his PhD with the dissertation 'Structural Change and Conversion in Wilhelmshaven.' The book was first published in the German language and announced on these pages in Autumn 2014 (see issue 63, p. 19-20). We now have an English version thanks to Edward Conder's daughter, Elizabeth Tarrant, but sadly it wasn't published until after Jens died on 8th July 2018. The limited-edition English version of his book, *Wilhelmshaven – Captain Edward Conder RN and the new beginning 1945* (ISBN 9783941929074), gives a detailed account of how Conder arrived in Wilhelmshaven on 6

May 1945 at the head of Naval party 1735 alongside Polish and British troops to disarm a major part of the German Navy and de-militarise the country's largest naval port. It begins with Conder's birth in 1901 into a middle-class Christian family and describes his desire to go to sea and visit far-away places. Contrary to his parents' wishes, he joined the Royal Navy in 1915 and from 1917-19 was a midshipman (officer cadet) aboard the battlecruiser HMS Renown. After WW1 he remained in the Royal Navy and thanks to his military leadership qualities, he was given his first command (of the destroyer HMS Salmon) in 1932. During WW2 he would rejoin HMS Renown as its first officer and second-in-command. He was aboard the warship on two occasions that Prime Minister Winston Churchill travelled with her to important wartime conferences in Quebec and Alexandria. In March 1945 he became Naval Officer In Charge Wilhelmshaven and the author tells this part of his story in meticulous detail. In a nutshell, Conder used his organizational and diplomatic strengths, as well as his personal charisma and caring attitude to full effect in his new appointment. He knew what he wanted to achieve and how to interpret his orders, while leaving himself and his subordinates room for spontaneous ideas and unconventional solutions. Well prepared and always able to present his position eloquently, he stuck to his

guns once an action or approach had been decided upon. After fulfilling his core mission in Wilhelmshaven (to disarm and demilitarize it), he created fair conditions for the inhabitants and helped them whenever he could. He returned to England in March 1948 and served as Admiralty liaison Officer in Liverpool prior to retiring from active duty aged 50 in April 1951. Eventually the city reinvented itself from scratch so that in the late 1950s there was virtually full employment. Conder's own idea of having a university in the city led to the creation of a science centre and his support for Prince Rupert School left its mark on Anglo-British relations that would continue for decades. The return of the German Navy occurred much sooner than Conder and his generation could have anticipated, but in 1957 he would return to Wilhelmshaven and declare his fondness for the city. In 1970, shortly after retiring (for health reasons) from his civilian job as a company director, he suffered a heart attack and died while on holiday in Italy. His memoirs, which he started writing in 1969, were never finished and one wonders if the author had this in mind when he made the life of Edward Conder central to his book. At the end of his foreword Jens Graul makes a very fitting and touching tribute to Conder by summing up his time in Wilhelmshaven with the words, 'For Edward Conder, to whom Wilhelmshaven owes so much.'



Another book you will want to read is *British Forces in Germany The Lived Experience* (ISBN 9781788160322), which is the authorised history of British Forces in Germany from 1945-2020. Written by military historian Dr Peter Johnston, who is the Head of Collections Research and Academic Access at the National Army Museum in London, the book is a lavishly illustrated military and social history of the forces in Germany, published to coincide with the winding down of the BFG operation. The book is split into decades and covers important military strategy, political events such as the Berlin Airlift and the fall of the Wall, but also the experiences of British soldiers and the increasing integration of British troops and the German population, and their domestic and family lives.

Ed.

## Some party!

The following article appeared in the "ROYAL RUPERT TIMES" dated 5th January 1946.

In response to the general wishes of the ship's company, a party was held for German Children in the theatre on Wednesday 2nd January. The arrangements were in the hands of a small committee, and after consultations with the N.A.A.F.I., it was decided that 250 children could be handled comfortably. Accordingly, 200 tickets were printed, about half of which were taken up by members of the ship's company to invite their friends between the ages of 5 and 12. The remainder were given to the town hall for distribution. So far, everything was going well but unfortunately the press got hold of the story and put it in the local paper. The next development was an appeal for assistance from the Bürgermeister, besieged by some 5000 applicants for the coveted tickets.

Come the day of the party, by 2.0'clock a fair crowd was waiting at the pick-up point at the bridge, when the buses arrived to bring the guests to the base, the lone matelot posted there to ensure that only those with tickets passed over, found himself helpless in the general melee. Brandishing home made tickets, the bigger the better, the children invaded the buses, were perforce transported to the theatre, and there sat down to be entertained.

A gallant attempt was made by the organisers to sort out the sheep from the goats, but due to the language difficulty, it was decided to accept a 'fait accompli' and endeavour to entertain the lot. Various estimates have been given of the numbers, and 650 would seem to be about correct.

The first part of the programme, a Mickey Mouse, presented no difficulty, then came time for tea. It was necessary to have 3 sittings in the canteen, ushering the first batch out of the door, before admitting the next hungry horde. N.A.A.F.I. rose to the occasion and assisted by several voluntary helpers the staff produced sufficient food and drink to satisfy every child. We noticed one infant of tender years who took full advantage of his opportunity and sat through two sittings quite unperturbed by the looks and remarks thrown at him.

After-tea entertainment was provided by a local conjurer, and some degree of order was restored while they all wondered how it was done. Now the party was drawing to a close, and it only remained to return the children to the bridge. All would still have been well, if only the word 'chocolate' was not so similar in both languages. With the prospect of something else in the offing, there was a general stampede towards the unfortunates who were handing out the parting gifts. Fortunately, this was controlled, a queue was formed, and the children filed through the issue room out to the

waiting buses. Here, traffic control was in the firm hands of the Padre, and the bus loads were dispatched in an orderly fashion.

The party over, everybody took a deep breath and then another 'I feel as though I've done a hard day's work' and two persons contemplating matrimony were heard reconsidering their decision. However the general feeling was that it was worth it but maybe it is just as well we don't have to do it again for another year.

*P.S. I found this delightful article most enjoyable. My guess is 'the bridge' mentioned would have been the Deich Brucke and the Theatre would most certainly have been Churchill House which was built for the Royal Navy. The Canteen referred to was the N.A.A.F.I. canteen that in early PRS times was one of the Nissen huts that were used as classrooms. I wonder if the buses were those later used for by the School?*

*Barbara (Miller) Steels (Hood/Rodney 57/61)*



*Taken in 1949 this photo shows Howe versus Rodney Boys - who won the tug-o-war by two pulls to zero. Onlookers present include Headmaster Smitherman, George Wright and Christine Drummond - nearest camera on the left. Photo by courtesy of Vic Longyear.*

## In Memoriam

We were saddened to hear that **Margaret (Hardman) Oliver** (Rodney 53-57) passed away on November 13th, 2019. Unlike her two sisters, Gill and Janice, Margaret wasn't the sporty type, but she did enjoy sailing at PRS and was a Sea Ranger. Some members may remember meeting her at the first reunion in Newbury. Margaret's sister recalls that she was horrified on arrival at PRS to find out that she was the only one wearing thick full-length stockings. These were included on the clothing list and her mother insisted that she wore them even though everyone else was in socks! She was also not a games person; she and a friend used to hide in the room above the dining rooms that was used for Roman Catholic worship. Apparently they were never missed. Once she fell through the ice up to her neck. This was in the days when pupils were driven by buses to skate or slide on the frozen fields when it was too cold to do outdoor games. Despite her predicament, she had to sit on the bus and wait until it was time for the bus to go back to school. At least someone was compassionate enough to lend her a coat! After leaving school she trained to be a teacher and subsequently taught maths and needlework at secondary schools in Biggleswade and Bedford. Later on she married and had a son and daughter before moving to Lancaster in 1976, where she settled and spent the rest of her life. Our thoughts are with Margaret's family.

We are sadly informed that former Head Boy **Peter Plowman** (Howe 54-58) has

passed away. Peter was born in Singapore in October 1939 but in 1942 was evacuated to Australia because of the impending Japanese invasion. In 1954 his family were posted to Munster in Germany, at which point he (and later his sister Merriel and his younger brother John), joined PRS, becoming Head of House in 1956 and Head Boy from '57 to '58.

He was a member of the CCF and a keen sportsman playing in many of the teams. He loved the Gilbert and Sullivan productions produced by Mr Brynmor Evans and took leading roles, his favourite being *The Mikado* in which he played the Lord High Executioner. He did well in his A levels, joined the RAF straight from school in 1959 and in 1960 became an RAF Officer. His first posting was to Malta where in 1964 he met and married his wife, Mary. Various postings followed to Aden, Harrogate, Cardington, Saudi and London. He finally settled with Mary and their two sons, David and Alastair, in St Ives, Cambridgeshire, where he was very active on behalf of the Royal Legion and the RAF Association. He also regularly attended PRS reunions together with Mary and loved to talk about PRS, always saying that this special school had been a vital influence in shaping his life. His health deteriorated rapidly following Mary's death last year and he sadly died on the 9th January. Both are greatly missed by family and friends.

Sadly we must also announce the passing of the following ex-pupils...

**Barbara (Freestone) Rolfe** 53-57

**Collingwood and Frederick Hewitt** 62-64 *Mountbatten/Drake*

## Subs 2020/2021

Please note that subscriptions are due for those who did not opt to set up a standing order. Payments can be made by standing order, Internet Bank Transfer, UK cheque, or to pay by debit/credit card use the PayPal option on TWA site Payments page. See details on the enclosed subscription form (only for those who do not have

standing order already set up). Rates: UK £10, Europe £13, and the rest of the world £15. As most of you know, we have a fund to help out those not in position to pay their subs. If you personally, or if you know anyone who is in this situation, please let Carol know

## New Finds - Rejoined

Karla (Lecky) Daly 62-63 Drake

## PRS 20th anniversary cover



The philatelists among us will be interested to know that another PRS-related commemorative cover has come to light. This latest one was sent in by Steve Lennie (Howe 64-69) and is possibly the first (only?) one issued when the school was in Wilhelmshaven.

The other two commemorative covers we know about were dated 1983 and 1997 to celebrate the schools 35th and 50th anniversaries (see p.16 of issue 61 and p. 22 of issue 67). See <http://www.bfaps.org.uk/our-covers/covers-explained.aspx>