A M D G

BEAUMONT UNION REVIEW
WINTER 2025

In 1876, Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India and Custer made his ‘last Stand’ at the Little Bighorn, it was also the year that the Beaumont Union was founded. The idea was mooted after the Shrovetide play put on by some old boys, by Charles Roskell (the first pupil) chatting with the Rector Fr Welsby in the Second Guest room. Why the Second rather than the First is open to speculation, but the result was that in April a letter went out to all and sundry by a

committee formed under Roskell, now a solicitor, with William Munster (MP for Mallow), Robert Berkeley (Master of the Berkeley Hounds and High Sherriff of Worcestershire), Frederick Barff (Barrister) and Bernard Parker (Solicitor and son of the Premier of New South Wales). A fairly eclectic bunch with lawyers predominating as they always have in the B U. They had about 60 positive replies and on 1st November the Society was launched with two other committee members Charles Clifford (Country gentleman and Squire) and Charles Pedley (father won the 1847 Derby). The first Dinner was held at the Criterion the following year with the Hon Charles Russell in the Chair. He in fact deputised at the last moment for Joseph Monteith (Land owner in Lanarkshire) and as a boy " his reckless behaviour riding across Runnymede had caused an old gentleman to fall from his horse into a ditch". He sounded an admirable though probably unwise choice. Now 150 years on I very much hope that I can rely on as many as possible to join us in May at Beaumont to celebrate what may be a last "Hurrah" and what we believe has been a force for good and friendship over the years.

EDITOR Further note:

This was supposed to be the Christmas Edition but it was held up, partially because I have been busy on other writing (see further below), and have spent a lot of time abroad in the last few months and then we were into the Christmas / New Year break for the 'Website Manager'.
I trust you will take this as 'reasons' rather than 'excuses'.

A belated Happy Christmas and New Year to one and all.

NEWS

THE B U 150th ANNIVERSARY PARTY

The Party will take place at Beaumont on **Friday 22nd May**. The full programme will be confirmed in due course but will include:
Mass celebrated by Bishop Jim Curry. (hopefully in the Chapel)
Champagne Reception on the Captain's Lawns.
Luncheon.

Members with their Wives, Girlfriends, "Partners" are invited.
Cost will be kept to under £100 per head.

Details to follow but in the meantime PLEASE put the date in the Diary. This will probably be our last major gathering.

STATE OF THE UNION.

We have 292 members of whom some 50 regularly attend events. Others through distance, infirmity and age remain with us in spirit and keep in touch.

There are a good many though that during my time 'at the helm' (ten years +) I have never heard from but I trust still enjoy getting these missives.

THE LUNCH

Forty members were at The Caledonian for our annual lunch: the following attended.

Romain de Cock (Chairman),John Flood, Michael Wortley, Chris Newling- Ward, Michael Newton, Peter Savundra, Patrick Solomon. Jeremy Gompertz, John Wolff, Nickolas Warren, Gerard de Lisle, Ant Stevens, Philip Critchley, Tim FitzGerald O'Connor, Robert Wilkinson. Ed Monaghan, Michael Morris, Oliver Hawkins Bishop Jim Curry, Amanda Bedford, Tony Outred, Derek Hollamby , Jonathan Coleman, Nigel Courtney, Stephen Crompton, Patrick Burgess, Richard Sheehan, Bertie de Lisle, Rupert Lescher, Chris Tailby, Julian Langham, Christopher McHugh, Richard McHugh (Guest),Jonathan Johnson, Anthony Northey Michael Burgess, Edwin de Lisle, Varyl Chamberlain, Paul Dutton.

We all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and Romain gave an excellent and often hilarious speech.
The Lunch has not "died a death yet!"

Rogues Gallery:-

The Chairman

Squire Gerard de Lisle

Jeremy Gompertz

Ant Stevens

John Wolff

Philip Critcheley

Edwin de Lisle

Michael Burgess

Patrick Solomon

Chris Newling-Ward

Michael Newton

Michael Morris Ed Monaghan Jonathan Coleman

Mandy Bedford Tony Outred Oliver Hawkins

Anthony Northey Jonathan Johnson Chris McHugh

John Flood Peter Savundra Michael Wortley

Richard Sheehan Julian Langham Varyl Chamberlain

Stephen Crompton Chris Tailby Nigel Courtney

Bertie de Lisle Patrick Burgess

Derek Hollamby Bishop Jim

Tim FitzGerald O’Connor (it was an excellent Lunch)

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

Some 30 OBs attended the Mass together with wives and friends. We were fortunate to have Fr. Simon Hall celebrate for us. (a onetime pupil of Simon Potter at Wimbledon College). Since the sale of St Johns last year there is no longer a Jesuit we can call upon for the day. It is a problem we will have to face for future years, especially with the shortage of priests.
Some of us were able to enjoy coffee, croissants, cakes and biscuits beforehand at St Johns where Philip Barr, his Staff and the boys made us all most welcome. Following the Mass, we had an excellent buffet lunch provided by De Vere in the old Lower line Refectory: as usual they looked after us exceedingly well. Let us hope that our tradition of Remembrance will continue for future years.

11th November
I took the Wreath from the previous year out to the Normandy Memorial at Ver- sur - Mer and laid it there on your behalf.

THE DERMOT GOGARTY MASS.
22 November at St Johns

John Flood writes:

The Dermot Gogarty Memorial Mass, the day after his 20th anniversary, was mainly attended by the family and a few friends. I told Kathy we were privileged to be invited there and represent both his Memorial Trust trustees and the Beaumont Union

His brother (2 years older) spoke very well, including of the importance Dermot had expressed for the family sticking together, and paid tribute to his and Kathy's children, spouses and the grandchildren. He also revealed what Dermot would probably have looked like at the age of 68 as the two brothers had been so alike in their forties. A best friend of Dermot from their South Africa days spoke first and was full of praise for him. Kathy also spoke briefly to thank everyone for being there. All

their 5 children and 9 grandchildren were there, I would envisage the eldest grandchild being 9 or 10.

Fr Dermot Power, former chaplain to both SJB and St Mary's Ascot, celebrated the Mass, mostly from a seated position, in a warm and very meaningful manner, including his own tribute to Dermot as the introduction, from which it was apparent how special he felt it was to be celebrating Mass again in the SJB Chapel. In an effort to make the Mass more meaningful for the grandchildren he inserted a shortened version of the hymn 'Sing Hosanna', instead of the Sanctus, and later included a verse of 'He holds the whole world in His hands', as well as including the Taize Hymn 'Jesus remember me when I come into Your Kingdom' at Communion, having practised all of these with the children before the Mass started.

It was poignant to see the current headmaster, Philip Barr, sitting in the seat where Dermot used to sit, and later in the Mass assisting Fr Dermot as his server and Eucharistic Minister. It was especially delightful to see Dermot & Kathy's son and 4 daughters, twenty years on from when they were schoolchildren, with so many in the next generation, three of whom read the bidding prayers.

A truly extra special and very personal Mass to witness, celebrated by Fr Dermot in an exceptionally inclusive way, so well suited to the congregation of a remarkable family man and headmaster, whose earthly life ended so abruptly and tragically early but, as his best friend Matthew said, "Lives on”.

OBITUARIES

I must inform you of the following deaths: may they rest in peace.

William Henry (52). A great supporter of the BU, a regular to Lourdes with the BOFS and especially remembered for his lunches given at Tandridge Golf Club for his contemporaries, players and no-players alike.

Sir Roger Clifford Bt (54). The last of the Cliffords and was at Beaumont with his younger twin brother Charles. He succeeded his Uncle – Fr Lewis Clifford SJ (OB) and Rector in 1982 and lived in New Zealand. He was a ‘cattle dealer’ and racehorse owner. He was married with two daughters resulting in the Baronetcy being now defunct.

Roger Darby (62). He came to the school from Penryhn and joined the 'A' stream and was one of those that provided the backbone to the school. He played 3rd XV and 2nd XV, rowed 3rdVIII and 2nd VIII, rose to high rank in the Corps and was a member of virtually every society on offer. He appeared in every play going – usually the parson or a person of gravitas and was a natural pairing with Michael "Binge' Tussaud in the Panto. Much to our disgust he was promoted to Monitor and left our dissident dining table half way through our final year. Roger didn't go to University : the days when Oxbridge or TCD and possibly Imperial were the only ones acceptable to the Js and started life in the Bank of England and gained a commission in the H A C. Roger put on a few pounds over the years and was content to be described as portly and I was not surprised that he had become a resident of Tunbridge Wells: it seemed appropriate to his character! A faithful supporter of the BU, he will be much missed at our gatherings.

NEW BOOK pending

I am currently finishing a new book with the 'Beaumont' connections to the world of racing: there were a good number including winners of all the Classics including the Derby and winners of the Grand National and other important 'jump' races.

"Threads of Racing Silk" covers owners, breeders, jockeys and the all - important horses up to the present day to include Coolmore the greatest 'powerhouse' in the sport. It should be published in the spring in time for the B U Party in May.

Lester Piggott , one of the greatest jockeys of all time in the colours of both **Freddie** and then **John Wolff**. He looks disgruntled and well he might be having just been ‘dropped’ in the paddock at Sandown. When Lester was at the centre of the largest tax evasion scandal of all time his defence barrister was an OB.

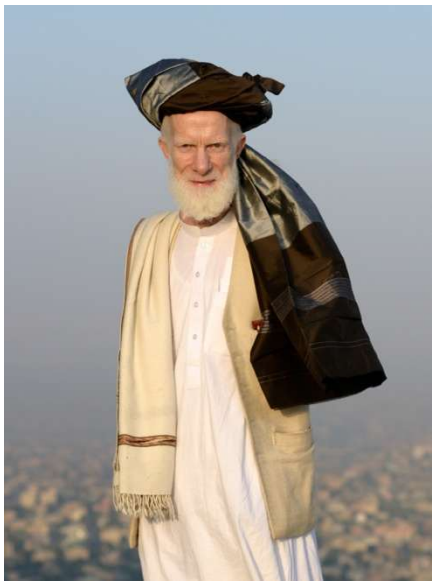
There are plenty more revelations between the covers.

ARTICLES

Beaumont’s own IMAM

Last September **John Butt (66)** contacted me and in the course of an Email conversation I soon realised that he was not the ‘usual’ OB and has so far lived a fascinating life. To begin with he followed his father and two Uncles and his brother Richard to Beaumont. (Richard now lives in The States but is not in contact with the BU). John’s family were from Trinidad where his father Eric and his brother were all lawyers and Malcolm was the British Consul. John was one of those that had to go to Stonyhurst for ‘A’ levels; he didn’t enjoy his time there and on leaving “went walkabout”.

Initially John offered me an article on the BBC World Service where he had worked for a time and initially he sent me the piece you will find below. However, being the ‘digger and delver’ that I am, I found out more about our own Imam.



Credit: Leslie Knott of Tiger Nest Films.

AMDG

بسمه تعالى

From Beaumont to the BBC: my time in “uninstitutional institutions”

By John Butt (66)

The late Queen Elizabeth’s visit to Beaumont, for the school’s centenary in 1961, took place before my time at Beaumont. My elder brother Richard was there. I have it on his authority, and I believe it is documented elsewhere, that the monarch summed up her impressions of Beaumont with the memorable phrase, “…. the most uninstitutional institution I have ever visited.”

It must have been partly because the Beaumont spirit had rubbed off on me that, in 1990, I joined what at the time was—to my mind—another “uninstitutional institution”—the BBC. If the Corporation had not been uninstitutional and uncorporational, one would find it difficult to imagine how they might have employed me. First of all, between my leaving school in 1968, and returning to England at the end of the 1980s, I had a series of escapades and adventures, mainly in Afghanistan. At the same time, I set about receiving a second education, in Islamic madrasas or seminaries, in the process learning several languages of Afghanistan,

Pakistan and India. You could say that it was an Arabic/Persian version of the Latin/Greek classical education that the Jesuits were so adept at imparting. I graduated in 1983 from the “Oxbridge” of Islamic Studies in South Asia, Darul Uloom Deoband in north India, the only person of European origin ever to have done so. My Islamic education was the basis for me taking up a career in journalism. I had become leader-page editor for a Pakistani newspaper based in Peshawar when I decided to return to England in 1989, hopefully to advance my journalistic career there.

Of course, with a C.V like that, no one was faintly interested in what I had to offer. Except, that is, for the BBC. I applied for a job working on a South Asia daily current affairs programme. “You are lacking in the necessary broadcasting skills,” the BBC Eastern Service wrote back to me, “but do get in touch and we will see how we can utilise your considerable experience of South Asia.” Soon I was recruited for the BBC Pashto service, broadcasting to Afghanistan. The BBC, for their part, did not waste time in sending me back to Afghanistan.

The BBC had come up with an idea that only an uninstitutional institution like the BBC could come up with: a radio soap opera, modelled on the BBC Radio 4 radio drama series The Archers which, like The Archers, would help with what everyone hoped at the time would be post-war reconstruction in Afghanistan. The idea seemed eccentric to everyone outside the BBC. “The BBC is starting an Archers for Afghanistan,” the Times diary at the time mentioned, in bemused and quizzical tone, as if to say, “What on earth is the BBC up to?” What was even more outlandish on the part of the BBC was that they thought I—without an iota of drama experience but knowing Afghanistan pretty well—would be a good person to head what came to be known as BBC AED—the Afghanistan Education Drama.

Inside the BBC, people thought differently. “He has the best job in Bush House,” Bush House being where BBC World Service was based at the time, the head of training said of me, when I joined a Training of Trainers course for people about to undertake new assignments. “You have it worked out, don’t you?” my fellow trainees said, when I gave them a summary of how I would go about my task as Editor of the Archers for Afghanistan.

Well, as it happened it did go pretty well. Our Archers for Afghanistan achieved 70 per cent steady listenership among Afghans based in Afghanistan, and those who were refugees in neighbouring Pakistan. We found numerous instances of the hold our Afghan Archers had on the imagination of listeners. One such example occurred when one of our characters had to be killed off, since the actor playing the part was emigrating to Australia. The character was so popular that prayer meetings were held in Afghanistan and neighbouring Pakistan for this totally fictional character.

It was not only the populace who were hooked. The Taliban, who were ruling Afghanistan at the time, exhonerated our audience research team from their ban on women’s employment. We once ran a storyline, emphasising the need for women to be working in health centres. The storyline created such alarm among the Taliban that, when they found out that our audience research team—headed by a woman—

was passing by a provincial hospital, the Taliban authorities accosted them and said, “How come you are running storylines suggesting that we don’t allow women to work in health centres? Please come inside and see how many women are working here.” The storyline had not even mentioned Taliban, but they had taken it personally. That was the kind of impression the Afghan Archers exerted on all categories of Afghan society.

Which is where we return to our late monarch, and her penchant for the uninstitutional and unconventional. In my capacity as head of a pretty large BBC office based in Peshawar, I was invited to a reception for the Queen and Prince Philip, when they visited Pakistan in 1997. The reception took place on the lawns of the residence of the British High Commissioner in Islamabad. Everyone was organised in U-shape lines, so that the royal couple could easily pass by and greet everyone. I was dressed pretty smartly in a suit, but I did give myself away a bit with my Uzbek duppa or cap and longish beard. Her Majesty was intrigued enough to stop in front of me: “Where do you LIVE?” she asked. “I live in Peshawar, ma’am,” I replied, feeling immediately at ease. “What do you DO there?” Her questions were penetrating, cutting to the core. I fumbled for a phrase or two, looking for words that would capture a monarch’s imagination: “It’s like an Archers for Afghanistan, if you can imagine that ma’am,” was what came bursting out. “No, I can’t imagine that. TELL me about it.” She was clearly enthused and as I explained to her that we were constructing drama storylines that would help Afghans improve their lives, she kept nodding as if to say, “Yes, I understand, I get it.” Her parting words were, “I think that’s FANTASTIC,” leaving me pretty chuffed and others in attendance maybe a bit jealous. But all the credit went to the work I was lucky enough to be doing, and the Queen’s ability to see its value, in an instant.

In 2013, BBC World Service—along with several parts of the BBC—moved from Bush House to New Broadcasting House. There is a clip available on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=se_5HC8SUBU showing Her Majesty’s official opening of the new building. BBC World was on air at the time of her visit. Standing behind the glass panel that separates the newsreaders from the rest of the newsroom, she was shown on live television, followed by a horde of BBC journalists, while the presenters turned round and respectfully paid obeisance to the monarch. It was described as “one of the most bizarre pieces of live television you will ever see.” It was an extraordinary piece of television engineered entirely by the Queen. One of the presenters at the time was Julian Warwicker of BBC World Service. “Everyone had been asked to stay in their places,” he said of the “gaggle of people” who accompanied the Queen, “but as you know, in this building, if you are asked to do something, we tend to do exactly the opposite.”

He was talking, of course, about the BBC, but he could just as easily have been talking about Beaumont.

Ed: I commented to John about his using AMDG at the top of the article and we both agreed that although a Jesuit motto, it was also most applicable to the Islamic faith as well.

THE HIPPIE WHO BECAME AN IMAM

By Nadene Ghouri

Forty years after following the hippie trail to South Asia, John Butt is still living in the region, and still spreading a message of peace and love - though now as an Islamic scholar.

As our car turned around the bumpy Indian road, a gleaming white marble minaret came into view. My fellow passenger, John Mohammed Butt, could barely contain his excitement.

"Can you see it?" he asks. "It's like the Oxford University of Islamic learning. For me these minarets and domes are just like the spires and towers of Oxford.

"It's been almost 30 years since I was last here and I am still getting the same thrill. This is my alma mater."

The alma mater in question is Darul-Uloom Deoband, South Asia's largest madrassa, or Islamic school.

Driving through the madrassa gates, we entered a world rarely seen by Western eyes.

Deoband was built in 1866 by Indian Muslims opposed to the then British rule.

Little has changed since - winding streets and tiny courtyards lined with stalls selling fragrant chai, bubbling pots of rice and paintings of Mecca.

Everywhere are the Talibs, religious students, young men with dark-eyed fervent expressions carrying books or quietly reciting the Koran.

And in another scene reminiscent of Oxford, students riding bicycles.

John Butt is the only Westerner to have graduated from Darul-Uloom Deoband

A chai seller recognises John and runs towards him. "John Sahib, John Sahib."

The two had not seen each other in decades, yet the man remembers him instantly.

"John Sahib was the only student I ever saw who used to go jogging.

"There was only one John Mohammed - unique," he laughs.

That is perhaps not so surprising, when you learn that John Butt remains the first and only Western man ever to have graduated from Deoband.

He showed me his old dormitory room, a windowless cell where he spent eight years in a life of virtual seclusion, living under a regime of prayer and Koranic study.

But that is just one facet of this man's extraordinary life.

Aside from his time at Deoband, he has spent most of the past 40 years living among the fierce Pashtun tribes, who inhabit the lawless hinterland between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

He went there in 1969, he says, as a dope-smoking young hippie and never came home.

He laughs. "When people call me an ageing ex-hippie, I always reply that I am ageing maybe, but I'm certainly not ex. I'm still a hippie."

John Butt cuts an imposing figure.

At 6ft 5ins tall, he sports a long white beard and alabaster skin that is almost translucent.

Dressed in flowing white ethnic robes, he reminds me of a Benedictine hermit monk or a Victorian explorer, swashbuckling straight out of the pages of an historical novel.

He tells me he adores the Queen, Stilton is his favourite cheese and that football is his passion.
Yet among the border tribes, he is regarded as a native Pashtun and revered as an Islamic scholar. Home for him, until recently, was a tiny village in Pakistan's Swat valley.
Swat was once a popular tourist destination but is now the scene of regular battles between the Pakistani military and the Taliban.
But back in 1969, the young John was hooked from the moment he saw Swat, describing to me snow-capped mountains, rivers like flowing jewels, forests and alpine pastures.
It was, he says, "like Tolkien's Middle-earth, magical and other worldly" inhabited by tribal people who were "very pleasant, big-hearted, tolerant, easy-going and welcoming".
When his fellow hippies grew up and went home to become accountants and lawyers, John stayed on - becoming fluent in the Pashto language and studying Islam.
But John's world changed in the late 1980s, with the arrival of jihadists, who came to the border areas from all over the world to fight the war against the Russians in Afghanistan.
"I saw the rural, religious Pashtun way of life I had come to love so much being diluted, contaminated and poisoned, in particular by Arabs from the Middle East," he says.
"The way they practise Islam is very different to the tribal areas, but they used money and influence to impose their own set of values."
So he decided to fight for his adopted culture.
Peaceful Islam
In the early 1990s, he joined the BBC World Service Pashto service and helped to set up New Home New Life, a now iconic Afghan radio soap opera, known as The Archers of Afghanistan.
Six years ago, he set up a radio station which broadcasts across the Afghan-Pakistan border and which tries to promote tribal traditions along with peace and reconciliation.

> “I've hired some of the best Islamic scholars in the region - pious, good and brave men”

More recently, John has switched his attentions back to Afghanistan and is spearheading the formation of a new Islamic university in the predominantly Pashtun city of Jalalabad.
"It makes perfect sense. There is currently nowhere in Afghanistan where a young man can do higher Islamic studies. They go to Pakistan, where as we know some of them have become radicalised," he says, emphasising that his university will give a platform to moderates.
But this promotion of peaceful Islam has set him on a collision course with militants. His beloved Pakistan has now become too unsafe for him.

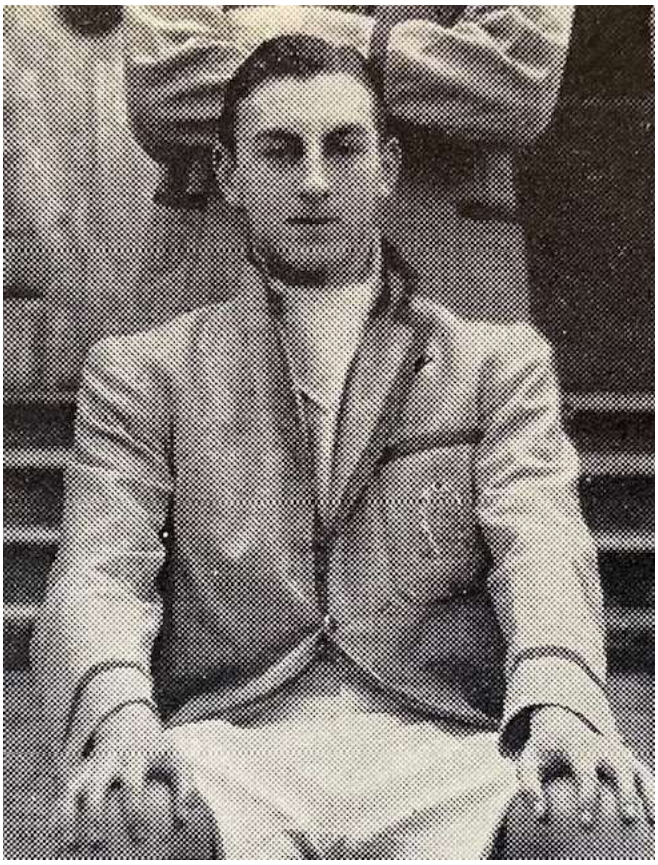
"Swat is a militarised zone and people I see as foreigners there now treat me like I'm the foreigner, even though I lived there for 40 years.
"It's hard to work out who is who any more - who is Taliban, who is criminal. The waters are very muddy."
Last year, waters of another kind finally put paid to his idyll, when his house was washed away in the floods which devastated the area and killed thousands.
"It was a relief in some ways. When I lost the house, I knew I'd never go back there."
Afghanistan has also become increasingly perilous after Taliban death threats.
The Taliban have delivered so-called night letters - notes hand-delivered in secret and at night for maximum impact - warning students not to study at the university and denouncing John as a Christian missionary or an "orientalist".
Death threats have also been made to his teachers and staff.
"I've hired some of the best Islamic scholars in the region - pious, good and brave men," he says. "They know this is for the benefit of Afghanistan and they insist they will stay working with me despite the dangers."
As I said goodbye, he was planning to travel to Jalalabad on the local bus. We talked about the possibility of him being attacked and he admitted he could easily be killed. But when I asked if he was scared, he brushed me off with a shrug. "You only die once. I could get hit by a bus tomorrow."

CHAMBERLAIN MEMOIRE

Guy (61) writes;

Before my father died in 1999 I asked him to write about his early life. He wrote it in three parts “His early Life and School at Beaumont “, he was Beaumont Captain, i think in 1936. “Preparation for War” and Finally “The War; Dunkirk”. Then he died before recounting the remainder of the war!!

You review a lot of people and their war years and I wonder if you would like to see these pages, surely you would have to edit them. The remarkable thing is my father never had a diary or a computer yet almost 60 years later he can recall the dates, times places with extreme accuracy. There is a 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment web site and others have recorded identical events, exactly in keeping with my father's memory. I find this extraordinary, those times must have been extraordinary to have such detail imprinted on one's memory for 60 years.
My grandmother was a fervent Catholic, my grandfather, just a Christian, however he respected his marriage vows and sent my father to Beaumont.
My father's name is Maxwell Anthony Chamberlain but he was always known as Tony.
My mother is Frankie as in the attachment.



Maxwell as Captain of Boxing 1936

"My Life" - M.A. Chamberlain

My elder son Guy has persuaded me to jot down a few reminiscences, so starting with our family.

Volume 1 – My early life and school years.

Unfortunately, I have no knowledge of my grandfather, Benjamin, on my father's side, from records he was born in 1851 and died in 1922 aged 71 years. He married Annie Georgina who was born 1861 and died in 1940 aged 79 years. My grandfather was a fairly wealthy man having an income of £3,000 per annum, until in 1902 a relation lost him his fortune and they had to move from a comfortable house in Dorking to a small house in Tulse Hill. He was, I understand, involved in the Brewing business and transportation. The financial loss meant that my father had to leave Eastbourne College and go to Hurstpierpoint College. I do not recall having ever met my grandfather however as I was 5 years old at the time of his death I must have done so. My grandmother I met regularly as I used to accompany my father who visited his mother every Tuesday without fail; she was a kind lady but rather regal and severe.

On the other hand my mother's father I knew well from the age of 3 years; his wife, my grandmother, died before I was born. Grandfather Searle was financially independent and lived at 'Blackmoor' at Kidmore a few miles from Reading. The property included a large farm run by Sid Cox and his wife, great friends of mine. Grandfather's two sons Percy and Gerald never attended school but were educated by tutors. He eventually lost his money which was all invested in Railways and came to live with us at 'Pendennis' in Sutton. He died around 1927 having been 3 years with us and was senile and slightly dotty. He used to steal candles and light them in his room!!! – Very dangerous. A very kind and generous man, he would take me with him around the farm and we always visited 'Prince' and 'Fleur' two enormous carthorses and when in a good mood used to tip me a guinea – a lot of money in those days.

I cannot recall any stories as my contact with both my grandparents was formal and not loving.

Sid Cox I remember far better; a real farmer figure, red of face, chewed straw and wore trousers with string around the knees and with a thick leather belt at the waist. He took me rabbiting with the ferrets, shooting, hay-making and advised me how to look after and tend some of the many animals and pets on the farm. His wife a large jolly woman, always at work in the large red-bricked cottage kitchen, fed me incessantly as she was convinced I never got a square meal at the big house.

I now come to my father, another Benjamin Thomas born 1886 – died of Angina and Diabetics in 1966 aged 80 years. I know nothing about his school days other than that he was at Eastbourne College and Hurstpierpoint. A brilliant scholar and excellent sportsman excelling at gymnastics, hockey and fives and also holding the long-jump record at Eastbourne College for many years. On leaving school he took the Chartered Surveyor's Institute examination and passed out first. He was elected a Fellow of the Chartered Surveyor's Institution.

He joined the Civil Service and entered the Valuation Department of the Inland Revenue working at Somerset House and later at Bush House in the Strand. In 1937 he was awarded the Coronation Medal; he headed his Department and on Retirement became a consultant for Savills' a leading London Estate Agent.

He was an excellent Tennis player and first-class hockey player. He belonged to the Tulse Hill Hockey Club about the best in the South of England and earned his first Southern Counties Cap at the Midlands v South of England on 28th February 1914. Subsequently he earned his Cap for England and played for his country a number of times. (Cuttings from various newspapers are in an envelope in the file named 'family honours and awards' in the left hand bottom draw of my desk.) When he became too old for first class hockey he became a referee and used to oversee many of the County and England hockey matches.

My father was a Captain in the Royal Artillery – Howitzer regiment and finished as a Captain. He was in action in France but as he never spoke of the war I have nothing to recount. Before joining he was with the Artist Rifles (subsequently 21 SAS).

He commuted to London from either Sutton or Cheam and took with him a flat 50 tin of Players which he finished each day. He completed The Times crossword daily during the journey to London.

Despite smoking he was pretty fit but in an accident he twisted his knee and had to have an operation to remove the cartilage. The surgery left adhesions and slowed him down but he still played excellent Tennis but could only referee at Hockey. He was excellent at Bridge and played for the South of England in many competitions. He was a member of a club in London where he played once or twice a week and the stakes were 2/6p a hundred – a considerable sum in those days.

I adored my father – he spent a great deal of his time with me – we went to Olympia Circus, the Royal Tournament, Aldershot Tattoo and the Derby annually. He also followed greyhound racing, motorcycle dirt track racing and of course I spent hours watching hockey matches. They always had a party after the match and once being bored I made the mistake of saying "Daddy, that's your eighth whiskey". It put me off hockey though!!!

I must now come to my mother; a lovely lady almost permanently ill with a nurse in attendance. We now know that her whole body was affected by a blockage in her oesophagus which affected both her breathing and her digestive system; this results in food being blocked and a sick stomach occurring which involved endless major operations without curing the main problem. Today none of this would happen.

My childhood when on holiday from school was basically to keep quiet, look after myself and not to disturb mother. This does not really explain matters, however with my father being out most of the time and nurses and our servant Lloyd (my old nurse) to be avoided I lived very much on my own. By day I had friends around but come the evening I had to resort to my room and books. You do not want to be an only child.

I am far from proud over my behaviour towards my mother who was always most loving; sadly I did not return that love and by and large ignored her. Despite her illness she exerted a very strong influence over my father and me, all of it to our good. She died in 1952 aged 67 years in hospital after a major operation. As usual I have failed to do my mother justice. Perhaps I should mention that she was a devout Roman Catholic but this did not in any way affect her relationship with my father who was not of any particular calling. He adored my mother and did everything he could to make her happy but not surprisingly; he spent much time away from home.

I have left much out which I will have to rectify later but I suppose I must consider what I have to say about myself.

My first recollections are of ‘Blackmoor’ my grandfather’s house and farm. When I was around 5 years I had, apparently, locked knees and fallen over whilst running. Medical advice was that I should wear leg irons and I was measured and fitted for these ghastly contraptions. My father with his knowledge of hockey injuries was far from happy and against medical advice took me to Blake a leading osteopath in London. I remember Blake sat me on his desk with my legs hanging down and said don’t move and don’t scream. He then manipulated my leg and knee joints and after a series of clicking sounds he said to my father. “He is OK – send him to a farm where he can run around for 3 months and he will be fine.” A great relief to me as irons on my legs would have been terrible.

At ‘Blackmoor’ I ran around with Sid Cox the farmer, was spoilt by his wife and had a wonderful 3 months.

The next thing I can clearly remember is going to St Anthony’s Eastbourne at 7½ years old. Probably because I was an only child and at home, mother being largely inoperative, I enjoyed school although we were fed badly and really suffered. Luckily my parents supplied me with a good tuck box but as the term progressed we were forced to resort to Moleys (that is bread spread with mustard, pepper and salt). Everything went well both academically and on the sports field until I caught double Pneumonia and Pleurisy. The situation became desperate and I was given the ‘Last Rites’ – Extreme Unction.

My mother decided the school was no place for me and removed me wrapped in blankets with a temperature of 105° in our Austin 7 which she drove back to our house

in Sutton at great speed where Dr Brown, our family doctor, was on hand. This was one time mother was not in bed and she certainly saved my life. However, the result of the Pneumonia and convalescence meant that I lost about two terms schooling. This was serious as although I passed the Common Entrance for Downside, the headmaster told my parents that I was not really up to the standard required by Downside and should go to Beaumont.

I left St Anthony's as Captain of the School, Captain of Boxing and Cricket and was Head Scout. The latter reminds me how different our attitude is to competition today. Our main sporting opponent in Eastbourne was 'Temple Grove' a school adjacent to our sports grounds. One year a joint Scout outing was arranged which took place on the South Downs. Both sides were issued with 3 white tapes attached to our scout belts and the object was to obtain as many as possible from the opponents and return to base. Little did the respective masters expect the battle that ensued; children were clutched together rolling down the hill and fighting tooth and nail – scout staffs were freely used and much blood was spilt. We won!!! – A memorable afternoon and great fun but we got severely punished.

Why, I do not know but it was a must for the more adventurous to leave ones dormitory at the dead of night and roam the school grounds and indeed the roof where I came upon the Maguire brothers cutting lead off the roof to make a cosh!! However the ultimate dare was to run to Beachy Head and collect something from the kiosk there and return unseen either by the school authorities or the Police. It was about a four mile run there and the problem was to get through the outskirts of Eastbourne without being spotted by the Police or any other busybody. My run went well enough although it was spooky on the Downs. I collected an ice cream sign from the kiosk and started the return journey wishing to God that I had never undertaken the run particularly as the moon became covered by clouds and there was a slight drizzle. I was dead scared and further aggravated by falling over a sheep half way home!! I made it with my trophy but what a stupid thing to do.

I look back with pleasure at my time at St Anthony's; we had some odd masters, Tip Toe Tibbet who bounced around the class room. Monsieur Talibart who always forgot to do up his flies and used to retire behind the blackboard to adjust himself but everyone could see him in any case. Harding used to bring his blood stained uniform to the class room when lecturing on the war. He had a dreadful temper and any boy who really irritated him he used to pick up and through out of the window. Robinson who smoked a frightful pipe would get fed up teaching a class and take everyone to the music room and play hot rhythm. Lastly there was Mrs Patton the Head Mistress, her husband, a lovely man was ineffectual like her son Anthony and daughter 'Ladybird'. However her husband was an inveterate gambler on horses which was largely the reason St Anthony's was so expensive.

The running of the school was left to Mrs Patton a real dragon and she did not like me; her favourite punishment was to seize ones hand and rap the knuckles hard with a heavy ruler……. it hurt.

Summer holidays were mostly spent in the Isle of White or Cornwall; mostly Cornwall, based at Padstow where my Uncle Percy had a house. Lovely coves which were generally deserted and father spent hours with me fishing for moleys in the pools drawing lobster out of their holes with a long stick having a hook of steel at the end. We went spinning for mackerel in a fishing boat and shot cormorants from the boat. Knocked me down every time I fired the 12 bore but one got a shilling a head for cormorants.

This brings me to my school days at Beaumont. My first day was not a success; I was knocked down the stairs leading to the main gallery by some senior boys because I had my hands in my pocket. I then had to attend a choir audition and Clayton the Music Master did not believe I was tone deaf and unable to sing to the notes but thought I was taking the Mickey out of him and ordered me to beaten; 3 ferulas I think. I don't know why I have recorded this but it has always niggled me. However I much enjoyed Beaumont and ended up Captain of the School, Captain of Boxing, Captain of Cricket being both a wicket keeper and batsman and playing twice at Lords against the Oratory – didn't do well. I was Captain of shooting and Under Officer in the OTC.

My academic progress was somewhat marred again by catching double pneumonia and pleurisy due to meandering back from a Rugger Match on Runnymede in the pouring rain and catching a chill. Once again I was at death's door and received yet again Extreme Unction; a Sacrament which I believe has now been done away with. A pity as I am sure it was this Sacrament and the prayers of the Beaumont boys that saved me as the school doctor was quite useless. My recovery was slow and I had a long convalescence which left me a couple of terms behind and which the Jesuits failed to re-arrange or encourage me to make up.

A few memories come to mind; my father who I suspect considered he had produced a moron was convinced that I could at least be trained in some game at which I could play for England. He deemed it was to be cricket and had me coached by some of the English team and spent hours hurling cricket balls at me and as I was made to stand with my back to a wall I became pretty efficient. However while I realised I was quite good at the game I knew I was not up to county standard let alone anything better. I became pretty depressed over the whole affair as above all I wanted to please my father and match him in playing for my country. Walking around the grounds at Beaumont with a Jesuit called Fr Tempest I broached the subject and he wisely said to me "you are good at most games and rather than be supreme at one you will have much more fun being good at a variety of sports". This was very comforting.

Remaining with cricket I recall that when wicket-keeping in a match a ball caught me in the mouth and knocked my two front teeth back into my mouth. Once again I recalled my father's words from his experience on the hockey field "if you get your teeth knocked out insist on seeing a dentist immediately and ten to one he will force them back and your teeth will be saved". I persuaded the master to take me to the school dentist and sure enough with the help of a gold band which I had to wear for several months the teeth survived and lasted for some 40 more years.

The most disastrous episode of my time at Beaumont came about due to my enthusiasm for .22 shooting for which I won 5 silver spoons to be seen in our silver cabinet. As captain of shooting I had access to the range at any time. We were allowed out of school onto Runnymede and the river front and used to explore the area past the 'Bells of Ouzeley' and even got a local publican to open up a back room where we could foregather and have a drink. Near this Pub was a large empty house which I thought it worthwhile to inspect. Having climbed the wall and obtained entry to the house I found a large hall which had three enormous chandeliers hanging from the tall vaulted ceiling. These had three layers of light bulbs and it occurred to me that they would provide excellent target practice.

Accordingly the following Sunday I removed one of the .303 Lee Enfield Rifles with a .22 barrel plus ammunition and repaired to the empty house where I proceeded to shoot out a number of the lights from an adjacent balcony. As this was great fun I enlisted a couple of friends to join me the following Sunday. Unfortunately the Police were lying in ambush; we split and bolted for any possible exit but I was hampered by the rifle and was cornered. The other two got clear away, one diving through the French windows.

From the Police Station I was eventually delivered back to the school. My father was summoned and agreed to pay compensation for the damage – he was not pleased. I awaited my fate with some trepidation as I felt sure that I would be expelled. A couple of days later the whole school was assembled and the whole sorry business was disclosed in detail with much emphasis on stealing a gun and ammunition, vandalism, letting down the school etc etc. Finally I was given the choice of a birching or being expelled. I chose birching, a punishment which had never been used for untold years. The normal punishment was by ferula on the hand. Painful but bearable.

The birch was a two handed slightly whippy rod with a heart shaped gutt at one end with suction holes and ridges. This was delivered over my bare bottom and while I remember little about the beating as I passed out and regained consciousness in the sick room where I remained for some three days being patched up.

On surfacing I found that the boys were pleased that I had not given away the two other boys concerned and the Jesuits, who I am sure knew who they were, treated the whole

matter as closed. They must have done as I became Captain of the School a year or so later.

I was sad to leave Beaumont and all my friends, unfortunately none of whom lived anywhere near me. Although it has its advantages it is far from easy being an only child.

Volume 2 – Army life and preparation for the War.

While I had hopes to go into the Army my father was far from enthusiastic and had arranged for me to be articled as a potential Chartered Surveyor with Raymond Beaumont of 35 East Street Brighton. I reluctantly went along with his wishes and joined the firm having digs in a student's boarding house. I passed the Preliminary examination and was well into the Intermediate exam when I decided to quit. This was due to my social life and girl friends being centred around our home in Sutton and the work and digs were both boring an uncomfortable. My transport at this time was an AJ5 Motor Cycle which meant that my weekend trips were often both cold and wet whereas in Sutton I could borrow my father's car!!

The transport situation improved as my father gave me a second hand Wolseley Daytona – an open 4-seater with a 6 cylinder engine. I got 90mph out of her – Frankie managed 95mph. A great car but expensive to run – to overcome this I sold her and with the money bought a brand new Standard 8 open 2-seater for stg120 – super little car and economical but not the same class as the Wolseley.

I have failed to mention that during the Christmas holidays I twice went to Switzerland with my friend Poels and his family, once to Lenc and once to Arosa – great fun but no ski lifts, we used to climb for 4 hours with skins on our skis – very exhausting for a 20 minute run down. I also went twice to Lourdes as a stretcher-bearer via a train filled with the sick and disabled. A very interesting time and despite the commercialism one could cut the faith in the atmosphere with a knife. A hundred thousand Christians marching with lighted candles up the steps past 3 churches to the summit was an unforgettable sight.

Back to quitting being a Chartered Surveyor. My father was furious but resigned and he and a number of friends arranged for me to be interviewed for a variety of jobs. This resulted in my making a major mistake. I had two interviews in one day, one with Shell at which I was offered and accepted a job with PLUs and unlimited prospects with good money and a life time career. That same afternoon I went for an interview with Thomas Cook. As the interview progressed it was clear that if accepted I would get a better salary and special management training in a section they had recently set up. This

included trips abroad, attachment to the Indian Section, cruises, courier experience and free travel abroad.

Stupidly I cancelled the opportunity with Shell, which created much furore and took the job with Thomas Cook.

I went on a training course, visited both Holland and Belgium and arranged for the various comforts, some unusual, of several Princes and their entourage from the Indian section. Later I also went as Assistant Cruise Manager twice on the Orion and once on the Oriana. These cruises were great fun, two weeks in a first class cabin and I had to wear evening dress every night. The Manager and I ran a small office on board and were responsible for all the travel arrangements on each visit to the various ports of call; that is transport, dinners, night clubs, casinos, excursions etc. Most comfortable and interesting were these cruises, First Class only and we as Cruise Officers were treated as such and also had an allotted table with passengers in the dining room and a luxurious cabin.

There were two winter cruises; one covered the Norwegian Fjords and called at Oslo, Bergen, Molse and Trondheim and then onto the Northern Lights. The other was a Scandinavian tour calling at Danzig, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki, Goteborg and Oslo.

Early in 1939 I was proposed by my cousin Jack Jones and seconded by Eric Biseley for the Honourable Artillery Company and was accepted by the Court of Assistants. This is the oldest Regiment in the British Army raised in 1537 by Henry VIII and was one of four territorial officer producing units, they were the best club in London and very difficult to get into. The HQ is at Armoury House, Finsbury Square in the City. The other three Regiments were The 'Artists Rifles' in which my father was a member, The 'Westminster Dragoons' and The 'Inns of Court' a Cavalry Regiment.

The HAC had two artillery regiments and an infantry battalion, I joined the latter. Discipline was very strict and the highest standard of dress and maintenance of weapons and equipment was insisted upon. However once above the ground floor of Armoury House there were no ranks and Christian names were used.

I much enjoyed the training and social activities and the summer camp at Warminster with the other three officer producing units. Custom allowed us a wine tent in the field, so we had on our tent lines an enormous marquee in which wine etc was served by stewards and waitresses, much to the envy of the other units. War was clearly nigh so the training both physical and military was hard and we both played and trained with zest. As a matter of interest there must have been over 2000 cars in the car park…. Rich.

Prior to all this I had the good fortune to meet Frankie. I was invited to a party at Col. Burton's house in Woolwich. He was killed on a hospital ship bombed by Japs leaving Singapore as Chief Medical Officer. Peter Burton his son a great friend of mine from Beaumont was the instigator of the invitation and in those days you did not take a girl friend but were introduced to one of the opposite sex who was nominated your partner. I got Frankie - a stunning girl – I was well pleased and very lucky. We had great fun and that was the start of my courtship.

It was, I think, on the 3rd September that war was declared and I reported to the HAC where the regiments were mobilising. I recall an air raid warning sounding – a false alarm I think. However, orders were given to dig-in and we proceeded to ruin the immaculate cricket, rugby and hockey fields belonging to Armoury House by digging a First World War trench system.

In a couple of days we formed up and marched through London with bayonets fixed, drums playing and colours flying as was our right. Few people took any notice!!!

We entrained and landed up at Bulford where we started 162 OCTU (Officer Corps Training Unit). As officer cadets we had to undergo further training before we were commissioned. At this stage we lost about 80 cadets who either had their own planes or a pilot's license and rightly they went to the RAF.

We marched, dug, shot and familiarised ourselves with a variety of infantry weapons; grenades, light machine guns and mortars. We drove a variety of army vehicles and motor cycles. I had a break here as a number of new motor cycles had to be collected. Volunteers were asked for and while all could drive cars only six of us could handle motor cycles with any degree of expertise. For a couple of days we were driven out to a collecting point and took over brand new Nortons. We had great races back to camp.

I was, with many others, commissioned on 15th December 1939. This ceremony was somewhat marred by the new Commandant failing to understand the somewhat lively exuberance that was customary amongst members of the HAC when celebrating. Admittedly we had overdone it the previous night and few could have slept. The Commandants house had been singled out for some spectacular decoration.

The upshot was a full scale parade, a vitriolic lecture and all cadets commissioned were ordered to dress in fatigues and report to the drill square. There we were given full packs loaded with rocks and told to double round the square for 20 minutes – anyone falling out would loose their commission. Round and round we went with Warrant Officers stationed at every corner. Fit as we were we all had major hangovers and the rocks bounced and cut into our backs. However, with mutual help we all made it; two hours later we left camp in our cars with all horns blazing and with the cheers of the remaining members of the HAC. The Commandant was not pleased.

After a couple of weeks leave at home and visits to London where I got myself kitted out with uniforms; Mess kit, Blues etc by Conway Williams our regimental tailor and endless parties with Frankie, I left in my little open Standard 8 to join my regimental depot at Sobraon Barracks, Lincoln.

I reported to the depot on 29th December 1939 late afternoon in a snow storm and on arrival at the "keep" my car broke down at the Guard Room where I had reported. I found out the location of the Officer's Mess and told the Guard Commander to have the Guard push my car to the Officer's Mess. A bad move….. as the following day I was up before the Commanding Officer and told in no uncertain term that I had broken practically every rule in Military Regulations and would if it were not for the war and being just commissioned been court martialled.

Life at the depot was comfortable with much social life. A number of our subalterns were awaiting postings to one of our battalions – there was one in India and one in France. Training continued daily but we badly wanted a platoon of our own to command. I had done well with both the HAC and at 162 OCTU and wondered why I had not been commissioned into the Buffs or Queens, both Regiments I had asked to join. I had hardly been north of the Thames and had to look at a map to find Lincoln!! Notwithstanding other officers at the Depot were also mystified over their own posting. It appeared that the eight warrant officer platoon commanders in each battalion were to be withdrawn as with their many years experience they were not expendable whereas 2nd Lieutenants were. Hence the random postings.

One light relief was that Bertie Burridge, a brother officer from the HAC, and myself were detailed to take a mixed draft from a number of infantry regiments to Rouen base depot from whence they would be despatched to their various regiments. All went well until we arrived at Le Havre where I was told there would be a five hour delay before we could entrain for Rouen. Bertie and I decided it was unreasonable to keep the two hundred men sitting around the platform, so having seen to a guard being posted on the kit and arms gave permission for the remainder to visit Le Havre town and report back in four hours. How stupid can one be…… As the first drunks appeared about four hours later, the message got through!! We got hold of some Military Policemen with jeeps, got the train delayed and scoured the bars and brothels of Le Havre. When we left we were still missing six men who were subsequently found and sent on. The C.O. of the base depot was not amused and told us to report to our battalion in France and not return to the UK. Luckily I had a letter from the C.O. of my depot saying that on delivery of the draft we were to report back to our own depot in Lincoln. We spent an uncomfortable night in a bell tent with ice on the ground and only one blanket but as we had managed to spend that night out on the town we felt little pain. Then back to Sobraon Barracks until 6th April 1940 when eight of us were posted to the 2nd Royal Lincolns and were stationed at Ronchin a few miles south east of Lille.

The village was small and poor with few facilities. The officer's mess was located in the Mayors office and was just adequate. I was billeted in a local house – tiny room with no bath and an outside loo. My platoon in 'C' Company under Major Charles Boxer a splendid man was entirely made up of long term experienced regular soldiers. I am pretty sure they looked upon me as an absolute twerp. My platoon sergeant tactfully suggested he handle the platoon until I was well settled in. This I wisely accepted and during exercises and our continual digging of the extension of the Maginot Line in the way of massive tank traps – I had no problems. They came to accept me and I knew I would be able to lead when the war started.

Life in the Mess was boring; subalterns were not allowed to leave the table while any field officer was still seated. As the Company Commander sat drinking port for hours on end this rule was particularly galling. However Mess nights only occurred three nights a week and on other nights we could visit Lille which was full of life and catered for the British Army which was in the vicinity.

Our battle plans involved a swift move to Louvain once the Germans attacked the Maginot Line. Unfortunately the Belgians would not let the British or their allies carry out a reconnaissance in uniform which meant that Company and Battalion Commanders had to sirreptitiously visit their planned battle positions in civilian clothes and in civilian cars. All very tiresome and stupid but it was done.

We had everything prepared for the advance and knew exactly who went were and what was loaded in every vehicle including troop carrying vehicles which were permanently on stand by. When finally on the 10th May at the Officers Parade – Eric Hefford the Adjutant received a signal and on reading it said "Gentlemen the war has started – Activate Plan 'D'".

Volume 3 – The War (Dunkirk)

I rushed off to my platoon and found that my batman Sutton had all my fighting kit packed and loaded and the rest had been left with the Rear HQ. The platoons were ready and my platoon sergeant reported to me "Sir, you will now lead the platoon and I will cover the rear." I said "fine sergeant but why are you at the rear?" "To shoot any bugger who runs" he said!!

Our move to Louvain (Leuven) was straight forward and without incident. We settled into our predetermined positions – dug in and awaited the Germans. My platoon was the left flank unit of 'C' Company and the battalion. I was told to liaise with the Belgians on my left; this I did to find a highly excitable major in full dress uniform and sword shouting at, even to my limited experience, a thoroughly ill-disciplined and disorganised

unit. I reported to my Company Commander, Charles Boxer and he told me to keep a close eye on this left flank. My corporal commanding my left flank section reported at 0400hrs that there was a lot of movement in the Belgium lines. I went over a little later to find that the whole Belgium unit had left and our whole flank was wide open. My Company commander moved us further left but we could not cover the gap and it later became clear that the whole Belgium army had capitulated without a shot being fired.

We came under mortar fire on 11th May and direct contact was made later in the day. We were well dug in with good fields of fire and were looking forward to an enemy attack. In the meantime 'the powers that be' decided that our forces were being spied on by Belgian defectors and that Louvain (Leuven) must be patrolled by units to flush out any spies or wireless transmitters – five transmitters were found but unmanned. The only patrol I went on was a disaster; I took an NCO and three men and covered a number of specific buildings without any sign of occupation, Louvain had been evacuated.

On my way back to my platoon I realised I had left my gas mask in one of the buildings so I told my small party to return to base while I went back alone to the building. Just as I reached the house I thought I saw a flicker of a torch light upstairs – what to do? I had to have my gas mask so I decided to go ahead. Drawing my revolver I went into the house and moved slowly upstairs where my gas mask had been left. Leaping into the room there was nothing – however on picking up my gas mask I felt something was wrong and decided to leave by the back stairs. I was quite definitely frightened and had my revolver ready. Reaching the back door with relief – I opened it and the moon shone sufficiently to show the way – when out of the semi darkness came an Alsatian which was clearly trained to attack, I fired all six shots into the beast and ran for it. Hence my dislike of this breed.

The next day my platoon came under mortar fire and the enemy probed the strengths of our positions. They attacked the following morning and were repulsed although we suffered a couple of casualties. My platoon sergeant presented me with a P & P Luger probably taken from a warrant officer we had killed in the action. Kept it all the war until 1960 when it was stolen from my car in Turkey. A pity, it was 12mm and the only hand gun I was ever accurate with and served me well in Palestine.

For no apparent reason we were told to withdraw. This happened time and time again with no explanation and to us – no reason. We never lost contact with the enemy and never lost a battle. We often counter attacked to regain a position and to consolidate, we suffered casualties but were never beaten. We retired along roads filled with refugees - vehicles - carts - prams - women - children fleeing from the relentless bombing and strafing by German Stuka fighters which came screaming down (and I mean screaming, they had sirens activated by wind speed when they dived), machine gunning and bombing the mass of civilians and army indiscriminately . We eventually

learnt to stand and shoot with rifles and Bren guns as they straightened out at 300-400 feet and where vulnerable.

As the retreat continued our losses mounted, Tony Newbury our C.O. was killed and Geoffrey Lawe the 2 i/c took over Eric Hefford our adjutant was hit and Tony Noble took over. Charles Boxer my Company Commander was hit in the backside during an attack but insisted on the splinters being extracted before we continued the battle and won. However I had lost, either killed or wounded over half my platoon and it was decided to reduce 'C' Company to two platoons instead of the normal three. Darby Hart took over the rest of my platoon and I was made Intelligence Officer.

This meant that I joined battalion HQ and had a small intelligence section with a sergeant and five men plus two motor cycles. The latter were bliss; I and my sergeant were mobile and could recce both forward of our own battalion and as time went by the routes through which we were ordered to withdraw. I had a good liaison with Peter Rowell who commanded the carrier (light tracked vehicles) platoon and we blew up a couple of bridges. On one occasion we waited until the leading German motor cyclist with a side car was crossing and then blew it. Very satisfactory – we left in a hurry and as I leapt on my motor cycle I hoped to God it would start!

Alistair Fennel, one of our officers at brigade HQ used to arrive day after day and tell us that we had to retreat – no explanation – it was difficult because our men were seasoned soldiers and had proven to be better fighters than the Germans. Yet back and back we went through an endless mass of refugees and harassed by Stuka fighters. All bad for morale yet the battalion was in good fettle. Confidence, God knows why, was high and we felt capable of competing with anything that the Germans could throw at us. By this time Gerald Tatchell had been killed and Tony Cartland (Barbara Cartland's brother), Bertie Burridge my friend and ex HAC officer was killed and also Burrell. Goulson had been hit and Gough too and our overall strength only amounted to around four hundred.

While all this was going on, I had little time to think of Frankie being either too exhausted or immersed in the many problems involving my intelligence section; furthermore as I was attached to the battalion HQ I was aware of all the command decisions and orders. Notwithstanding I had Frankie on my mind as she had volunteered before the war as an ambulance driver with the London County Council. Rumour had it that London was under threat and had been bombed and I rightly assumed that as she lived with her parents in Beckenham she would be on duty covering London. This was in fact so and driving a heavy vehicle in a blitz or just covering accidents or fires was no place for a young girl. However there was nothing I could do.

On leaving Louvain (Leuven) the battalion had passed through Brussels over the River Dendre and the River Dyle to a defensive position on the River Escaut. Rations were

non-existent and the battalion lived off the land and foraged for eggs, pigs, chickens, sheep and cows. Then on the move again through to Tourcoing and Zuydschoote where the battalion came under heavy attack on 29th May; it is said that the 8th and 9th Brigades (we were in the 9th with the 1st Kings Own Scottish Borderers and 2nd Royal Ulster Rifles) held up the German Army Corps for a day thus helping the evacuation from Dunkirk of some many thousands of the B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force).

On this day I was ordered to recce routes to Dunkirk for although 3 Division were told to cover the withdrawal and fight to the last man the C.O. thought it worthwhile to check out the route and have the intelligence section study the ground from a defensive point of view.

I remember sitting on a wall viewing Dunkirk mole and the beaches with my section. It was a shambles – Dunkirk was on fire with shells landing on the mole and the vicinity every few minutes. The sky was full of stukas which together with the German artillery were bombing, machine gunning and shelling the beaches. Queues of soldiers were forming up behind make-shift moles of 3 tonners driven into the sea with wooden slats over the roofs for boarding purposes. Whalers and small craft came in and waited chest deep for men to clamber aboard; there were many casualties and I thought the whole affair very dangerous indeed.

We returned to the battalion to find the remnants en route to Furnes near Veurne, East of Dunkirk. Here we were told that we would cover the withdrawal to the very end. We re-organised into two companies and an HQ company having about 45 men including my intelligence section which by sheer luck was still complete. Small attacks by Germans occurred but nothing serious. Waves of bombers went over to lay waste the Dunkirk beaches and we were shelled throughout the night.

Early 31st May we were told to withdraw to La Panne. That evening the remnants of the battalion left for the beaches; on arrival it was dark except for the many fires and sporadic shelling. The battalion was directed to the Bray-Dunes and formed up with 50 men to a guide provided by my intelligence section and marched some four miles to a jetty made up of sunken lorries and duck boards on top. The tide was out and no one could get to the boats so we marched another nine miles to Dunkirk. Finally the shelling, the casualties and the exhaustion caused the C.O., Geoffrey Lawe to call the officers together – all eight of us - we were to split up with some 25 men each with orders to do our best to get back to the UK.

As Dunkirk had proper berthing facilities albeit under fire I led my party to Dunkirk. We boarded a Destroyer which unfortunately was both bombed and shelled as it left the mole. I and many others bailed out.

Gathering men from various regiments including Worthington, the Commanding Officer's batman I moved down the beach towards the Bray-Dunes; the tide was coming in and whalers and small craft were coming within wading distance so we scrambled aboard where we could. I found myself on an old wood burning small steamer commanded by a naval Lieutenant who obviously hadn't slept for days and could hardly move from the bridge. He called out to me (mistakenly I had assumed that as I was in the hands of the Navy all was well and we had no further problems) to have all the weapons loaded (brens and rifles) and all able bodied soldiers to man the decks as we would likely be attacked en route. The remainder to care for the many wounded.

How right he was, we were attacked seriously three times but with some 20 bren guns firing we discouraged the enemy – saw no RAF.

We arrived at Dover late on 1st/2nd June and embarked in the nearest train and woke up in Camberley. I contacted the parents and then Frankie to whom I suggested that as life as a subaltern was precarious, what about getting married. She agreed. I then slept for 24 hours.

We got married at St Edmunds in Beckenham on 11th June 1940 in a great rush; unfortunately Frankie was denied a full scale white wedding. The 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment was to reform at Castle Cary in Somerset and after a 48 hour honeymoon that is where we went.
The End.

GISS - GOSS

GISS – GOSS is THE REVIEW gossip column with tittle-tattle gleaned from various sources.

From Country Life:-

This Magazine has produced a couple of articles relevant to Beaumont. The first concerns The Tempest family: The connection her goes back to Sir Charles Tempest:-

Born on 5 January 1834, he was the son of Henry Tempest of Heaton and his wife Jemima, second daughter of Sir Thomas Joseph Trafford, 1st Baronet of Trafford Park, Manchester. He married, firstly, on 21 May 1862 Cecilia Elizabeth Tichborne, daughter of John H. Washington Hibbert of Bilton Grange. In 1866 he was created 1st Baronet Tempest of Heaton. His first wife met her end by a terrible accident when her dress caught fire and she burnt to death. 'Sir Charles, who was severely injured in endeavouring to extinguish the flames, experienced a great shock by his wife's lamentable death, and from that period until his second marriage he lived the life of a recluse'. Despite this he sent his son and heir Henry to Beaumont which he left in 1875. The year before Sir Charles met and fell in love with Harriet Manson Gordon, a seventeen-year-old girl of good family, and the two were married on 1 June 1874 at the Bavarian Chapel on Warwick Street. In 1877, however, his young wife eloped to Paris with an acquaintance of her husband's, Henry Vane Forester Holdich Hungerford. For three weeks the two lovers lived together under the name Hungerford at the Hotel Wagram in Paris, before embarking from Le Havre for the United States; however, Lady Tempest soon returned alone. Sir Charles Henry

Tempest divorced her in 1878. He died on 1 August 1894, aged 60. Sadly, Henry predeceased him in 1891 and the Baronetcy became extinct. The family fortune went with Sir Charles' daughter Edith to save Carlton Towers for the Fitzalan Howard Family. Roger below is descended through Sir Charles's younger brother.

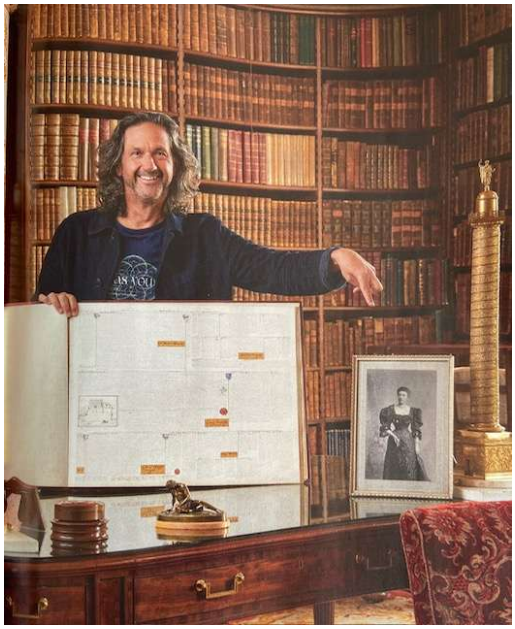
Past participants

ROGER TEMPEST holds open a densely written genealogy that traces the history of his family, owners of Broughton since the Middle Ages, back through 32 generations to 1097. 'The continuity is astonishing and improbable,' he muses. 'How have we survived?' This remarkable volume was compiled in 1889 by his great-grandmother Eleanor Blanche Tempest, whose silver-framed photograph stands on the desk. The text is written in a small, but immaculate hand on vellum with names picked out and is variously illustrated with hand-drawn illustrations, including coats of arms, seals and facsimiles of signatures. Another copy of the manuscript was presented to the British Library, where it remains.

'This document is a window into the past,' he continues. 'It reveals what my ancestors lived through and how adaptable and forward thinking they were. It's a reminder, too, I suppose, that actions are the measures of every individual. I like to think that there is a lot of courage, duty and integrity to be found here, as well as good custodianship of the land and its community.' *JG*

www.broughtonsanctuary.co.uk

Photographs by Jesse Wild



The next articles concerns the re-building of the House of Commons after it was partially destroyed in WW2 and the artchitects appointed were Sir Giles and his brother Adrian Gilbert Scott.

Fig 4: The Aye (pictured) and No Lobbies flank the sides of the main chamber [illegible]

Astonishingly, those features were directly derived from the chapel of St Stephen, begun in 1292 (COUNTRY LIFE, *April 1, 2015*). Following the Reformation, this superficially adapted interior had become the first permanent home of the House of Commons. It's from the facing ranks of choir stalls in this building that the modern arrangement of benches in the House of Commons derives, likewise the Member's Lobby from its antechapel and the position of the Speaker's Chair from the high altar and Gospel lectern.

In April 1944, the Committee selected the architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott from a short-list drawn up by the Royal Institute of British Architects. He was helped in this work by his brother Adrian. It was an obvious appointment. Scott had first sprung to fame in 1903 at the age of 22 as the winner of the competition to design Liverpool's Anglican cathedral (COUNTRY LIFE, *December 12/19, 2018*). He had since established himself as a leading architect of his generation, with an enormous diversity of projects to his name, from the K2 telephone box of 1925 to Battersea Power Station of 1929–35, and from the University Library at Cambridge of 1931–34 to replacing Waterloo Bridge in London in 1937–42.

Scott was well versed in English and European Gothic. He agreed that the new work at Westminster had to sit stylistically with the old, but was critical of the Victorian detailing, which he described as 'lifeless and uninteresting'. In its place, he aimed to create something 'fresher, lighter and more alive'. Whereas Barry and Pugin had adopted an eclectic style that freely combined details of many phases of English Gothic, Scott adopted a restrained Perpendicular Style modelled on Tudor buildings. He also almost completely stripped out the heraldry from the design, which was the leitmotif of the Victorian decoration throughout the Palace.

By October, Scott had drawn up his designs, presenting them with the help of an exacting model at a scale of 1:48 by Thorp Model-makers at the considerable cost of £509 14s 2d. Building work, however, waited until the end of the war. As reconstructed (***Fig 3***), the chamber sits within the earlier walls and has a pitched roof of the same volume as its predecessor. The Victorian roof had incorporated painted panels, but Scott's roof is plain and densely timbered. It again accommodates a skylight, but one illuminated by electricity rather than the sun (there are offices above). This detail was a concession to the demand that the rebuilt interior, like the Victorian chamber, initially had no suspended lights.

The internal furnishings were largely made using kiln-dried oak from Shropshire. This created a light finish in contrast to the stain and gilt of the earlier interior. Scott used a similar finish in many other comparable projects, including the slightly later restoration of the London Guildhall. At the Commons, he fought an unsuccessful rear-guard action to prevent what he regarded as the oversimplification of the panelling as a cost-saving measure. All the carving of the oak was undertaken by Green and Vardy of Islington over a period of three years.

Internal galleries for visitors had been part of the Commons since the 1690s. These were expanded at the ends of the room and the distinct spaces for men and women integrated to create a single Strangers' Gallery. At the same time, the columns that had previously

supported them were removed, opening out the floor of the chamber. This was initially planned by Scott with more upright benches furnished with a new machine-woven wool tapestry called Replin. MPs, who had enjoyed slumping on Barry's leather-covered originals, however, demanded that the old benches be exactly re-created with upholstery in the Tudor livery of green. In concession to the poor acoustics, a miniature speaker was fixed in the back of the benches every two seats.

Great care was lavished on the Speaker's Chair (*Fig 7*), which was independently commissioned from H. H. Martyn & Co of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire. It is carved from Australian Black Bean Wood, one of many gifts of furniture and materials made by Dominion and Commonwealth territories of what was already a rapidly shrinking Empire to the rebuilding—including inkstands, ashtrays and replacement despatch boxes. The chair's canopy was made by Watts & Co, with embroidery by the Misses Scrivener that made use of 5,000 yards of gold thread.

> 'MPs, who had enjoyed slumping on Barry's leather-covered benches, demanded they be re-created'

Although Scott was focused on the form and decoration of the chamber, he also faced the structural challenge of inserting it within the existing layout of the Victorian building. As conceived by Barry, the two houses of Parliament were aligned in the plan, with the Speaker's Chair of the Commons and Sovereign's throne in Lords just intervisible down a long enfilade (*Fig 5*) that crossed the towering volume of Central Lobby (*Fig 4*). Scott's re-creation not only preserved this alignment, but its aesthetic coherence as well.

The gutted Members' Lobby (*Fig 2*) was repaired after Barry's design, but—as was suggested in the 1943 debate—the scarred doorway to the chamber was preserved as a reminder of the wartime damage (*Fig 1*). It is flanked by sculptures of Churchill and Lloyd George, Britain's two 20th-century wartime leaders. All the Gothic detailing was skilfully recut using stone quarried from Clipsham, Rutland, but with updated black-letter inscriptions. To either side of the Chamber itself, Scott also created Aye and No lobbies, the tellers' desks rolling out on rails to facilitate counts (*Fig 6*).

More practical concerns included the need to create an efficient air-conditioning system.

Fig 7. **The Speaker's Chair, with its richly embroidered canopy and carving of the royal arms. All the furniture of the original chamber was destroyed in the Blitz in 1941**

The heating system of the old house had been a favourite subject of complaint for MPs and the task of creating a more effective replacement fell to Dr Oscar Faber. This operated with the help of a periscope that allowed the operating engineer to increase or divert the flow of air according to the level of attendance and in response to divisions. Another concern was the provision of modern communications, including scores of telephone cabinets. Offices and services were squeezed into every available space above, below and to the sides of the new structure.

The new chamber was officially opened by George VI on October 26, 1950, nearly 10 years after it had been destroyed. Many critics were regretful that Scott had been compelled to work in a Gothic style. Indeed, the fact that the Festival of Britain opened the following year in the summer of 1951 underlines exactly how counter-cultural this was. The *Times* correspondent observed that if art was meant to please and amaze, the new chamber would 'be pleasing to many but will astonish no one'. Regardless of such judgements, however, Scott's neo-Gothic interior arguably articulates in architecture the creative tension between tradition and modernity that—for better or worse—remains central to our politics.

THE CUTLERS
A son and his father that trod very different paths.

Horace G. 'Hank' Cutler, Ph.D., a celebrated natural products chemist whose career spanned more than half a century, died June 1, 2011 in Watkinsville, GA at age 78, after suffering from cancer. He was born in London, England, on November 21, 1932, to **Sir Horace Walter Cutler, O.B.E., K.C**. and Betty Martin Cutler. He grew up in London during WW II and had many memories of the blitz. **Dr. Cutler attended Beaumont College Jesuit boarding school in Old Windsor,** Trinity College, Dublin, Columbia University, New York and the University of Maryland, College Park. At the age of 20 he immigrated to Quebec City, Canada, and then moved to New York City. In 1954 he accepted a Union Carbide Fellowship with Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research in New York. It was during a Good Friday Mass that he met Joanne Steinmetz, who also worked at Boyce Thompson. They were married in 1955. During his Fellowship he realized his passion for natural products research while working with Lawrence "Larry" King on plant growth regulators.

This passion drove him to embark on a **57 year career in natural products research.** While working with Dr. King, he was involved with the development of the insecticidal agents possessing carbamates, which eventually lead to the discovery of carbaryl (Sevin(r)) by Union Carbide. In 1959 he accepted a position as a Plant Physiologist with Tate and Lyle, Ltd., Central Agricultural Research Station, Carapichaima, Trinidad, West Indies. While in Trinidad he was able to work with a team of researchers that investigated a wide-swath of plants for bioactive compounds. Among other developments, this work eventually led to the development by Tate and Lyle of the sweetener sucralose that and is currently sold in the US under the trade name Splenda(r). In 1963 he enrolled in the University of Maryland to earn a Master's of Science (1963-66) and Doctor of Philosophy (1966-67) degrees in natural products chemistry. Upon graduating from the University of Maryland he was appointed **Plant Physiologist with the United States Department of Agriculture -** Agriculture Research Service in Tifton, GA, to develop a modest natural products program within the USDA. It was during that time that he became interested in evaluating the secondary metabolites of plants, fungi, and aquatic organisms for their biological effects. In 1981 the USDA interests in the natural products program had grown to the point where they asked him to relocate his research group to the Richard B. Russell Centre in Athens, GA. This afforded him the opportunity to become more engaged with his adjunct professorship at the University of Georgia and support graduate students of various departmental programs within the university system. In the late 1980s he served on a USDA-ARS Special Committee to secure federal funding to build the Phase I of the National Centre for Natural Products Research in Oxford, MS. His research group relocated to this site in 1995 when construction of the Centre was completed. It was at that time that Hank retired from the USDA as a GS-15 Research Leader and volunteered his time at Mercer University College of

Pharmacy and Health Sciences as a Senior Research Professor. This faculty appointment gave him the opportunity to educate pharmacy students and to direct graduate students working on PhD degrees in pharmacy research. He also held an adjunct professorship at the University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy. During his 57 year career with the USDA and Mercer University, Dr. Cutler was **recognized nationally and internationally for research on the isolation of biologically active natural products from fungi and plants. He published over 200 peer-reviewed papers, 33 book chapters, 13 books, over 150 national and international scientific presentations, and more than 50 US and international patents.**

He served as Fellow of the American Chemical Society, was awarded the Silver Medal for Research from the Japanese Society for the Chemical Regulation of Plants, the Plaque of Appreciation for Contributions to Science by the Korean Agricultural Chemical Society, and the Abbott Pharmaceutical Award. He served as President of the Plant Growth Regulator Society of America (PGRSA) and as its Chief Executive Officer. He was a member of the honor societies Sigma Xi, Rho Chi, Phi Lambda Sigma, and Phi Sigma as well as a member of the New York Academy of Sciences, the Georgia Academy of Sciences, and the American Chemical Society. In 1989 he was selected by the **American Chemical Society as the state of Georgia Chemist of the Year.** The USDA-ARS recognized him in 1990 by awarding him the Outstanding Award for Performance. He was a member of the University of Georgia Catholic Center where he was a professed Secular Franciscan. For more than 40 years, he was a lector at various Catholic Churches and served as a Eucharistic Minister for much of this time. He is buried at the Honey Creek Woodlands of the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, GA. He is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, Joanne Cutler, seven children (spouses), Frank Cutler, Paul (Debra) Cutler, Chris (Karen) Cutler, Kevin Cutler, Stephen (Jill) Cutler, Elizabeth "Liz" (David) Grow, and Holly (Keith) Kendrick. He also leaves behind 12 grandchildren.

The Father – Sir Horace Cutler

Horace Cutler was the most formidable figure in the politics of London since Herbert Morrison, the pre-war leader of the old London County Council. But whereas Morrison went on to perform on the national stage - becoming Home Secretary and Foreign Secretary, as well as Deputy Leader of the Labour Party - Cutler's achievements were confined entirely to local affairs.

He did, however, make two stabs at a parliamentary career. In 1960 he had high hopes of securing the Conservative nomination for Harrow West, Harrow being his native turf; but he lost out to Jack Page. In the 1970 General Election he fought the Labour seat of Willesden East: he lost, and thereafter forswore national politics, devoting his abundant energy and acute mind instead to the affairs of London under the aegis of the local government behemoth which was the Greater London Council, of which he was Leader from 1977 to 1981.

Horace Cutler was one of the seven children of an intermittently successful builder, who had begun his adult life as a carpenter. He was sent to Harrow Grammar School, where his somewhat flamboyant style of behaviour did not endear him to his teachers. But there was no doubt about the quickness of his intelligence, and he might well have gone to university, had not the untimely death of his father compelled him to plunge himself into the family business, as a young tiro.

He showed an immediate aptitude for two areas vital for that business. First, he had an eye for derelict property with a development potential. Second, he had great natural gifts as a business administrator. Both served the company well and, although it suffered vicissitudes, as most companies of its kind did, particularly in the straitened times after the Second World War, Cutler's story was one of success until, in 1985, an Inland Revenue Bill for what would today seem a trivial sum of just over pounds 100,000 forced the company into bankruptcy. Cutler remained bitter about what he saw as an unnecessarily draconian bureaucratic attitude to a basically sound business.

And, indeed, his later successes in businesses as varied as coin-operated launderettes and store management in Milton Keynes suggested that his judgement was better than that of the taxmen. But, in the meantime, long before any of the really dramatic events of his business and political careers, Cutler had served in the RNVR on one of the most dangerous of wartime tasks - minesweeping. When peacetime came his energies had to be, initially, devoted to the family business. But, in 1952, the direction of his life changed.

In that year he was elected a member of the Harrow borough council. He had been vestigially involved in Conservative politics since 1932 (when he had joined the Junior Imperial League, from social rather than political motives), but he had come to see how important local government was to people in his line of work, and how vital, therefore, it was for people like himself to become involved in local electoral politics.

His central interests were in housing and planning and, in addition to his responsibilities at Harrow, he became a member of the Middlesex County Council; he was also Mayor of Harrow in 1959.

In 1965 the Greater London Council was established, and the political glory days of Horace Cutler began. He quickly became Deputy Leader of the Opposition and then, in 1974, Leader. It became clear, almost immediately, that he would become a scourge of bureaucracy, though his ideas were not to come into full effect until the Conservatives gained control of the GLC in 1977.

The GLC at that time had strategic control of the affairs of 22 boroughs, and a bigger budget than that of many nation states. In the early days (though he was to become disillusioned later) Cutler relished the task of running this sprawling empire: his enemies (and there were many, in both parties) thought he relished his job too much, and questions were from time to time raised about deals between his property companies and the council. Inquiries showed, however, that he had never behaved improperly.

He slashed the bureaucracy at County Hall, and virtually abolished the direct work scheme, by which the council employed directly labour for maintenance and development, rather than allowing private firms to tender for contracts. He sought privatisation before Margaret Thatcher had ever used the word. If John Biffen is right (and I think he is) that the sale of the council houses has been one of the most important aspects of privatisation, then Horace Cutler was its first prophet.

But he did have his failures, and his attempt to bring private investment into London Transport was, perhaps, the most dramatic. He also had problems with his party in Parliament: he never trusted the corporatist ideas of Edward Heath, and Heath did not trust him. However, when Margaret Thatcher was elected Leader of the party in 1979, Cutler found a soulmate. Their instincts about policy were much the same and, in particular, Cutler had become disillusioned about the possibility of efficiently running the GLC as a single unit: he was therefore receptive to her desire to abolish it, something which came to pass in 1986.

he word "flamboyant" remains the right word to describe Cutler's later career. From his sharply cut suits through his colourful bow ties, to his elegant beard, he was always a figure who maintained his own distinction. He loved and courted publicity, and rarely declined an opportunity to appear on a public platform, or on radio or television. But behind the dramatic image, and his various publicity stunts, Cutler was a dedicated, efficient, and very hard-working man.

Horace Walter Cutler, businessman and local politician: born London 28 July 1912; OBE 1963; Member for Harrow West, Greater London Council 1964-86, Leader of Opposition 1974-77, 1981-82, Leader 1977-81; Kt 1979; married (one son; marriage

dissolved), second 1957 Christiane Muthesius (one son, three daughters); died Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire 2 March 1997.

MARGERY KEMPE

I recently listened to a History podcast on Margery Kempe, an English mystic at about the same time as Juliane of Norwich. We would have known virtually nothing about her until a manuscript of her ‘book” was discovered in the home of an OB. But first of all, her life in brief:-

The daughter of a mayor of Lynn, she married John Kempe in 1393 and bore 14 children before beginning a series of pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Rome, Germany, and Spain in 1414. Her descriptions of her travels and her religious ecstasies, which often included “boystous” crying spells, are narrated in an unaffected prose style that uses such contemporary expressions as “thou wost no more what thou blaberest than Balamis asse.” Apparently illiterate, she dictated her Book of Margery to two clerks from about 1432 to about 1436. It was first published (modernized) in 1936 and in Middle English in 1940.

The manuscript was found in an attic by chance at Southgate House in Derbyshire the home of **Lt- Colonel William Erdswick Butler Bowden (95)** . (I understand that certain aspects could be described as pornographic)
It was William who donated the Cope that bears his family name to the V & A Museum.
There were six B Bs at Beaumont starting with John (69). The family is related through marriage to other Catholic and OB families including the de Traffords, the Petres and the Walmsleys.

A LOST Contact.

My Cousin **Anthony Outred** sent me Christmas greetings which included:
“Thank you once again for keeping the BU flame alive. It really is appreciated by so many of us and is still an important part of our lives. **I will do my best to persuade the likes of Roger ‘Mole’ Stowell and Roger Johansen to attend the 150th anniversary** which you are so generously giving so much of your time to organising. Whilst on the subject of Johansen, he tells me that he was left to confront the Rector with the notorious meat pie.
Annie and I hope that you are having a wonderful Christmas and wish you a healthy and rewarding 2026 with many winners.

I replied:
Thank you both for your 'greetings' which are reciprocated. Didn't know **Stowell** was still with us - I don't think he has been on the B U lists in years. Not certain whether **Roger J** has moved back to this country: his brother died this time last year. Great if you could 'chivvy' them up.

Antony again:
Roger Stowell is very much alive and kicking, retired film maker and photographer turned artist living in the Sud Vendee.
He was the class wit and very popular but I gather from another old friend that after I left in 1960, Roger was given a hard time and may have become disillusioned by Beaumont. He came across our Instagrams and got in touch due to our shared interest in the Arts.

I attended **Peter Johansen’s** funeral in the Cathedral. It was an impressive affair with many of his colleagues from Swire’s present and some seriously moving eulogies. He was one of Beaumont’s high achievers.

Roger Stowell (60)

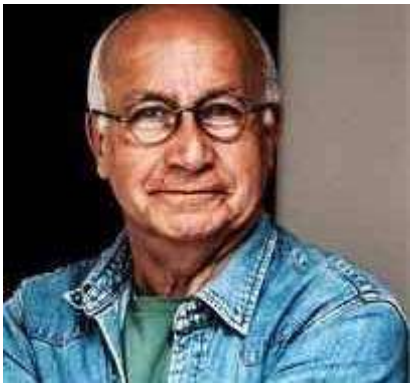
Ed: Like a dog with a bone, I looked up what Roger had been doing inn the last 60 odd years.

After Beaumont he eventually went to the University of Portsmouth to study Fine Art and Film Making for three years.

Roger then worked as a professional advertising and editorial photographer since 1968. After leaving Portsmouth Art School in the UK with a diploma in Fine Art he began assisting the photographer Clive Arrowsmith, before being sacked for being a hopeless assistant. He went on to photograph fashion and portraits for magazines including the legendary *Nova,* and interiors for Sir Terence Conran's retail store Habitat, before beginning to work as a food, wine and lifestyle based photographer in 1985. During his long career he has worked editorially for most of the main magazines in London including *Elle, Marie-Claire, The Sunday Times, The Times, The Observer, Telegraph Supplement, Red, Olive, BBC Good Food, Tatler*, *Homes & Gardens, Food & Travel, Sainsbury's* and *Taste*

Between 1990 and 2000 Roger was directing TV commercials for the UK and Europe. Specialising in food products, he worked with Nestle, Masterfood, Kellogs, Dolmio, Danone, Maggi, Weight Watchers, Little Chef, Lindt, HP Sauce amongst others. Below are a couple of several accolades for his work:

"Roger comes from The Old School of directing and I learned a monumental amount from him and the other directors involved with the studio. Whereas other directors would perhaps panic or have meltdowns during stressful shoots. Roger would take it all in his stride and lead us all, crew and client alike out of the problem with an assured calmness. Working alongside Roger was always a pleasure and I have fond memories of all the shoots we did together. Age should never be the issue. Experience and creativity is invaluable and Roger has both in spades."
Another:
"Don't miss an opportunity to work with him, it's a unique experience. People tend to forget there's more to life than just the results, the journey is just as important. "



"Roger Stowell, that's me, has been a professional advertising and editorial photographer since 1968. I attended art school and studied fine art, though I have no idea why I chose to study fine art. I just thought that's what you did at art school. I

would still be struggling to finish my first painting had I not been offered the chance to assist one of London's leading fashion photographers. My tutor's advice had been " ….why play houses when you can do the real thing.." so I did the real thing. In 1985, whilst engaged in shooting some accessories for Elle magazine, the art director, Clive Crook, asked if I would like to shoot a food feature for the magazine. From that day on I specialised in food photography. I have shot for most of the major magazines including *Elle, Marie Claire, House and Garden, Red, Olive, BBC Good Food, The Sunday Times, The Observer and Telegraph Colour Supplement* and others in France and America. Advertising clients include Heinz, Kellogs, MasterFoods, Danone, British Meat, Dolmio, Lindt, Findus and so the list goes on. From 1992 I directed TV commercials with Julian Seddon Films.

"In 2001 Jenny, my wife, and I moved to live in France permanently. We live in deep country in the heart of the Southern Vendée. In 2005 I met and fell in love with digital photography. I was never enthusiastic about dark rooms, so the ability to work on pictures without stumbling around a chemical filled, dimly lit cave was an epiphany. I now work on my pictures and run occasional Food Photography Workshops, here in France and in London."

Lt- Colonel GERALD BYRNE

A typical soldier OB of the Sudan, Boer and Great War period. Son of a General who had married into the sporting and very wealthy land owning Larios family of Southern Spain (with five OBs.)

Messrs Holt & Co
present their Compliments and beg
to notify that they have this day
placed the sum of £12 2 6
to the credit of
Lieutenant A Byrne
per advice of
Paymaster, Worthington Lines,
Aldershot, in payment
of travelling claim

3 Whitehall Place,
London, 24th March 1917

Picture courtesy of the London Medal Company

OBE, 1st type, Military, HM 1919;
Queen's Sudan (LT. G.B. BYRNE, 2/R.BDE:);
QSA (3) Defence of Ladysmith, Laing's Nek, Belfast; (CAPT: G.B. BYRNE. RIFLE BDE.);
KSA (2) (CAPT. G.B. BYRNE. RIF. BDE.);
British War Medal and Victory Medal with MID (LT.COL. G.B. BYRNE.);
Khedive's Sudan Medal 1896-1908, 1 Clasp: Khartoum, regimentally engraved naming; (LT. G.B. BYRNE. 2/R. BDE.)

Gerald Bertram Byrne was born on 10th November 1873 in Aldershot, Hampshire, the son of Major General Thomas Edmond Byrne, and his wife Eliza Petronila Larios-Y-Tashara, his younger brother Alfonso Byrne being born in April 1875. After being educated privately (Beaumont 1885 – 1888), he was commissioned into the British Army for service initially with the Militia as a 2nd Lieutenant with the 3rd Militia Battalion, Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment on 1st March 1893, and having been promoted to Lieutenant on 27th February 1895, was then commissioned into the Regular Army as a 2nd Lieutenant with the Rifle Brigade on 17th July 1895, and promoted to Lieutenant on 23rd October 1897.

Byrne saw service with the 2nd Battalion during the reconquest of the Sudan in 1898, and was present in action at the Battle of Omdurman and the entry into Khartoum on 3rd September 1898. In the aftermath of the operations in the Sudan, Byrne then moved with the 2nd Battalion to Crete to assist in the suppression of the Cretan Revolt, but with the outbreak of the Boer War was then went to South Africa, and took part in the operations in the Natal including the action at Lombard's Kop before taking part in the defence of Ladysmith, during which he was present in the sortie of 10th December 1899 and the action of 6th January 1900. After the lifting of the siege of Ladysmith in February 1900, Byrne went on to participate in the operations in Natal from March to June 1900, including the action at Laing's Nek on 6th to 9th June 1900, the operations in the Transvaal east of Pretoria from July to 29th November 1900, including the actions at Belfast on 26th and 27th August, and Lydenberg on 5th to 8th September. He was ultimately present on operations in the Transvaal from 30th November 1900 through to the 31st May 1902 and with cessation of hostilities.
During the conflict, Byrne had been promoted to Captain on 18th March 1901, and his younger brother had died at Bloemfontein on 10th June 1900. Byrne saw service in Egypt from 26th September 1902 through to 21st November 1905, and then in India from 22nd November 1905 through to 31st March 1906, after which he was stationed in Winchester, Hampshire. Byrne remained a Captain through to his retirement on 23rd September 1911, and then assumed the rank of Captain with the Special Reserve of Officers seeing service with the 5th Battalion, Rifle Brigade from

20th May 1912.
In the meantime he had married Aileen Myrtle Whitaker on 10th December 1906 at Palermo, Sicily, with whom he had issue of two sons, one in 1907 and another in 1915, by which time he was living with his family at St George Hannover Square, Belgravia, London.

With the outbreak of the Great War he once again took up an active commission, and as a Major, saw service out on the Western Front from 16th March 1918 as the Commandant of the General Infantry Base Depot at Le Havre. It was this valuable service in connection with military operations in France that Byrne was appointed an Officer of the Military Division of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in the London Gazette for 5th June 1919, and additionally awarded a Mention in Despatches in the London Gazette for 9th July 1919. Having been ultimately promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on 13th April 1920, he reverted to the Reserve of Officers, and was removed from that list on attaining the age limit on 10th November 1928. His campaign medals were sent to him in January 1922 when he was shown as living at King's Worthy in Hampshire. Byrne who went on to live at Geln House, Sarisbury Green, died on 3rd December 1940 when over in the United States of America at Bethesda, Maryland.

Ed: his brother **Alfonso (90)** is listed on our Boer War Memorial

De Lisle continuing Beaumont Connections

Gerard de Lisle's grandson Fr Christian is currently Rector of St Ignatius at Sunbury on Thames: a parish with Beaumont connections:-

Fr Christian de Lisle Rector of St Ignatius of Loyola Sunbury-on-Thames

Church of St Ignatius

The Jesuit Connection

The first known Jesuit connection with Sunbury came around this time through Beaumont College in Windsor. The college housed Jesuit novices until 1861 when they moved to Manresa House in Roehampton. The Society of Jesus, also known as the Jesuits, founded by St Ignatius of Loyola in 1540, had been entrusted by the bishops to provide spiritual leadership to many of the burgeoning Catholic parishes in England.

The Jesuit novices from Beaumont prepared the local Catholic children for Confirmation. It is known that around 1854, fifty to sixty of these children walked to Weybridge (some bare-footed for lack of shoes) to receive the Sacrament. The priest gave them a meal before their walk home. The Jesuits preached to the Catholic community of Sunbury and one of these, Father Foley, even preached in their native Gaelic tongue.

Trip Advisor

Lovely church in Sunbury on Thames with a beautiful painted ceiling behind the altar. Very friendly and welcoming church **with a very friendly priest.**

Challoner Club is revived as social club for young Catholics

Tabitha Smith

15 July 2025, The Tablet

Pont Street in Knightsbride, London where the former Challoner Club was based. Mauro Gea via Alamy

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The private members' club for young Catholics has relaunched in London

The Challoner Club has been revived as a unisex private members' social club for Roman Catholics "living, studying or working in London".

Originally founded in 1949 as a gentleman's club under the chairmanship of Michael Derrick, assistant editor of *The Tablet*, the original Challoner Club disbanded in 1997.

Its revival by Calder Claydon, reading theology at St Mary's Twickenham and Francisc-Eduard Vladovici-Poplauschi, who is reading history at Cambridge, seeks to "preserve the heritage of the club as reverently as possible", including offering honorary membership to any members who belonged to the club's former iteration.

Claydon, chairman of the club, told *The Tablet* that there is "a genuine need for such a group".

"I think we provide a needed space for Roman Catholics, especially younger Catholics, where they can have the same fellowship and fraternity one might find in a political dining club, but also meet those who share the same religious beliefs and thus the same outlook on life."

The former Challoner Club was based at 59 Pont Street and hosted the library of the Irish Genealogical Society. While the revived club does not have a permanent location, Mr Claydon said that they "intend to host not only dinners, receptions and galas, but also events where people can network and discover friendships and connections with those in their academic or political fields".

A public inaugural Mass will be celebrated on 8 August by the club's chaplain, **Fr Christian de Lisle,** at the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory in Westminster, followed by a drinks reception at the Travellers' Club.

“For a club like this, that is based around faith, it was important to admit both men and women,” Mr Claydon added, noting that the club has admitted married and soon-to-be married couples.

“At this moment in time, we are in a unique crisis where more and more so, Catholics need to work together towards common goals and to promote Catholic social teaching. We also want to create spaces to promote women’s fellowship because those spaces are important.”

60 Years ago from ‘The REVIEW’

Ex Cathedra

October13th was traditional Blandyke including various visits to worthy places of interest. In the evening there was a dinner followed by a fim show.

The Martin Wind Quartet visited in November to give a recital.many of whom are members of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Tony Scott has been elected as Hon Sec of the Council of Youth Rowing.

The last ever Pantomime ‘Ali Baba ‘ was produced by David Allen.

Fr Edwin Sass (OB) has been awarded the ‘Scout Medal of Merit’.

Captain Kelly has been appointed Sergeant-Major of The Queen’s Bodyguard, the Yeoman of the Guard.

Rhetoric Guests included Air-Commodore Dickens, The Dean of Windsor and Dermot de Trafford Esq.(later 6th Baronet)

Four Oxford Awards have been made:
Richard Cree Exhibition in Natural Sciences at Worcester.
David Danson Minor scholarship in Natural Sciences at Trinity.
Simon Li The Stearns Exhibition in English at Lincoln.
Raymond Parish Scholarship in Modern Languages at Lincoln.

CHOIR,
Only 7 recruits to the trebles at the start of the school year – the trend in early adolescence. A new Mass has been written to take the lack of ‘seraphic’ voices into account. The Carol service also had to take this into account.

The CORPS
Now reduced in numbers but the Drill Competition went ahead judged by Drill Staff from the Grenadier Guards : No 1 Platoon were the winners.
Newling Ward and Shand went (or sent) on a Drill course at Chelsea Barracks.
Two new officers have been appointed: Lt Bannister from Oxford UOTC.
And Lt Potts from the same OTC for the Corps of Signals.

Apart from the Infantry the Corps now includes the Corps of Signals and a Corps of Engineers'

The Corps of Drums will parade and play for the last time this year.

HIGHER LINE Debating.

Debates included "Snobbery is the bane of England"
"The House deplores present tendencies in modern culture"
" Immigration of Foreigners into this Country ought to be controlled"
" Comedy is truer to life than tragedy"
" The House regrets the passing of the Years"
Finely" : The House supportys economic sanctions against Rhodesia**"**

The QUODLIBETARIANS

Twenty-five members – the largest in years. Presentations included:
" The Changing World " – Mr J Sullivan SJ
"Evolution"- G Greenfield
" Changing face of Conservatism" – Mr P Hughes SJ
" Sartrian Existentialism" – T Martin,
" Libya" -Mr Douglas Collard
" Why Spain has failed" - C Scheybeler
" Economic Underdevelopment" – Mr Robert Mabro.

VRIL has had to be abandoned owing to an 'economic crisis' in The Society.

MUSIC

Apart from the concert given by the visiting Wind Quartet , the Society enjoyed a visit to the Festival Hall to hear pieces by Mozart, Schoenberg, and Beethoven.

The 231st CHORUS

A new venture for those interested in 'The Arts'. Particularly poetry, plays and folk music.

SCIENTIFIC
Mr Merrell has retired being replaced as President by David Allen- he gave a 'Lecture' on Explosives (illustrated) to a large audience of subdued pyromaniacs.

HIGHER LINE PLAY

THE Masters : Ronald Millar.

For one of the final plays put on by the school, they chose a difficult one to interpret. A cast of twenty trying to portray middle-class academics with donnish prose was no

easy task. There were some good performances and suspense maintained and the actors congratulated.
The ‘Green Room’ staff excelled themselves with some inventive sets.

GAMES

1st XV

Disastrous statistically speaking. Of the 13 played only 3 were won and 1 drawn. The later was against Merchant Taylors and a good effort, The wins were Stonyhurst Wanderers, Guys Hospital and a very novice Eton side. Losing to Wellington understandable but the side should have won against the likes of Reading, Douai and The Oratory. Beaumont Rugby rather went out on a sad note.

3rd XV

If the 1st XV were a disappointment , the ‘Turd’ in the words of the already departed Mr O’Malley excelled themselves. They won 6 of their 19 matches, drew I and lost 3. Points for 101 and against 41.
Eight members were awarded their ‘Flash’. (This seems to be a new award)

Ed I have no idea what the ‘Flash’ was and looked like ; I would be grateful for information.

B U

Mons. Alfred Gilbey has retired as Chaplain at Cambridge his successor is Fr Richard Incledon (46). Fr Richard had previously been assisting Fr Michael Hollings (39) at Oxford. We continue to provide both University Chaplains.

Major General Basil Eugster (late Irish Guards) has been appointed a CB on taking over as GOC London District.

Tom Callow (47) writes from his home in Milan to say that his wife has died of cancer but that he has re-married : he asks for prayers for the soul of the former and blessings for the latter.

Tim FitzGerald O'Connor has been assisting Terence Hackett (49) on his farm near Chard – bringing in the harvest.

Ed Monaghan has been involved with The Yale University Dramatic Society - their latest production 'The Death of Dr Faust' has proved a rousing critical success.

John Cargin, Patrick Covernton and Philip Stevens have all passed out of RMA Sandhurst.

Captain Anthony and the Hon Mrs Motion have adopted a daughter Georgina.

Kitchener Fund awards have been made to : Brian Bell at Worcester.
Andrew Geddes at St Catherine's
James Halliday at TCD.

Hatches, Matches, dispatches.

Robert Wallin - a son

Engaged: Mark Addison, Anthony de Trafford, Nicholas Farrant, David McIlvenna, Michael Morris, Paul Podesta.

Married: Basil Bicknell, Tom Callow, Richard Morris

Died ; Eric Tarlton, Captain Harry McGrath late Queens Bays, Jose Martinez de Las Rivas. Captain Reginald Mascall DSC late RN
Alex Wimsatt from cancer while at Yale .

Philip Stevens Final Chapter of his Memoire

Chapter 18. Battles and battlefields

There is an old saying that there are two kinds of historians. The first are generalists: they know less and less about more and more until they know absolutely nothing about everything. The second are specialists: they know more and more about less

and less, until they know absolutely everything about nothing. For many years I tried to be a generalist, but my interest changed. I became a specialist, resolved to concentrate on the Great War. In time that became specialist about the Western front, then about the Battle of the Somme, then the first day of that battle. Once I had absorbed all that I could about that day, I began to work outwards again, until eventually I felt that for an amateur I was actually fairly comfortable with the idea of exchanging thoughts with others.

By the time our children were about eight to twelve years old, we were able to arrange annual holidays in France. I have heard them say that whilst they remember little about those holidays, they do remember stopping at battlefield sites on the way home. If you are a small child, descending to the bottom of Lochnagar Crater at La Boiselle, on the Somme battlefield, must be memorable.

Lochnagar Crater at La Boiselle. Can still be visited, but no longer entered.

In 1985, two friends suggested that we should go together on a battlefield tour, to Belgium, to see what was left of the Great War sites before they all disappeared under the pressure of modern life. Anthony, a friend with some military service in his background, had the one reliable guide book of the time, Before Endeavours Fade, written by Rose Coombes, and was to be our tour leader.

Our arrival in Ypres was not auspicious. Working in banking I was appointed banker to the group, but had forgotten that we were to stay our first nights in Belgium. Not only did we have no appropriate Belgian francs to pay the hotel bill, we had no

language either, because Ypres remained defiantly wedded to Flemish Dutch and resented the presumption that speaking French was an acceptable substitute. English was spoken, reluctantly and not well. After all, this was long before the surge of interest that was to turn Ypres into the focus of the Western Front touring industry.

There was also another unplanned problem. Pope John Paul the Second had visited Ypres on this day and the official parties were departing as we arrived. Saying that the impact of that visit had overwhelmed local resources understates the obvious. We had not bothered to book rooms, assuming that arriving in the early part of the season would give us choices. In Three Men in a Boat, Jerome K Jerome records the three travellers who looked for last-minute rooms in Marlow during Regatta weekend. They were offered the option of sharing an ironing board and a billiard table. We were slightly more luxuriously accommodated: some research and driving around led us to the village of Langemarck, about eight miles away. The local pub had two tiny rooms unoccupied, probably a box-room and a broom cupboard. Those became our base for the stay.

That first evening, we went back to Ypres to attend the nightly Last Post Ceremony. Every night of the year at 8.00 p.m., buglers of the Ypres town fire service march into the road to sound Last Post under the Menin Gate, the memorial that records the names of over 54,000 British and Empire and Dominions soldiers who died at Ypres during the first part of the Great War but who have no known grave. That has happened every night since 11 November 1929. During World War 2, the ceremony was discontinued in Ypres, under German occupation, but continued without missing a single night, at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey. On 6 September 1944, Polish forces of the Allies fought their way into Ypres and that night, at exactly 8.00 p.m., against a background of the noise of battle just outside the town, a solitary Polish infantry bugler stepped into the road under the arch and sounded Last Post. On Friday 17 July 2020, the ceremony will have taken place for the 31,835th consecutive night.

On this night in May 1985, the ceremony was a very impressive formal occasion. The British Legion had many parties, with their parade colours, from all over the UK. Belgian veterans, military bands and dignitaries were there in numbers.

One night later, we returned: this ceremony draws one back, time and again. This time, the ceremony was very small. Instead of the entire corps of buglers of the fire brigade, just four of them, two in uniform, two in whatever they happened to be wearing at the time. The three of us visitors and the president of the Last Post Association were almost the only other people there.

Next morning took us to sites that have been on the itinerary of every battlefield trip that I have ever led or guided. The first was Langemarck Deutsche Soldatenriedhof, the first, and for many the only, German war cemetery that British visitors see. In an area scarcely larger than an over-sized football field, 44,000 German soldiers are buried. Of them, 3,000 were student volunteers from university cadet corps, killed in the First Battle of Ypres in November 1914. The Kindermort, The Massacre of the Innocents, featured large in the contemporary understanding of 1985.

British war cemeteries are meant to have the feel of a British garden about them, German ones are designed to be sombre.

At this time, it was perfectly easy to walk across a ploughed field and pick up the detritus of war in a matter of a few paces. Rifle bullets, the round balls of shrapnel shells, the splinters of casing of high explosive shells, bits of weapons, barbed wire, all were there for the collecting. Anthony and I had been soldiers and were wary of anything that looked capable of making a loud noise, but Gerard, the third member of the party, was more comfortable with handling what he found. He was perhaps unaware that Belgium farm tractors were always fitted with large plates of blast-proof steel under the driver's cab, despite which one or two farmers were killed every year by shell blast during the ploughing season. We had to exercise a veto when Gerard wanted to bring home a particularly attractive souvenir of our visit. Negotiations took place with a considerable distance between the military and non-military participants.

Not wanted on voyage

That afternoon, we visited Tyne Cot Cemetery, the largest cemetery cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. . On a wall at the back is an ‘overspill from the Menin Gate memorial: the names of a further 35,000 men killed at Ypres but having no known grave. Over 12,000 individual, identical gravestones are poignant themselves, but the awful nature of war in the Ypres Salient came home to us as we realised that two thirds of those graves contain the remains of a soldier who could not be identified. As we walked around, I saw a gravestone with the inscription “A second lieutenant of the Great War. King’s Shropshire Light Infantry.” Stepping backwards to photograph the headstone, I saw that this stone was adjacent to another, bearing exactly the same inscription.

It would be an understatement to say that I was greatly moved by this moment.

Several years later, in my early days at UBS, I told Robert, husband of a client, about my experience, and he was immediately keen to make such a trip himself. He decided that we would put together a trip for some of his friends, so we set off for a short reconnaissance trip. On our reconnaissance trip there was some small crisis about map-reading that had caused him to question my entire military career. I pointed out that as similar doubts involving maps had arisen when the career was in progress, I was neither hurt nor surprised by his comments. For the trip itself we would retain the

services of a professional guide, to reduce the risk of getting lost. We almost didn't get to complete the arrangements, when, a fortnight before we were due to travel, the Twin Towers attack threatened to scupper all such travel. Some juggling of dates enabled us to make the trip, a little later than expected.

Fortunately, the party included a mutual friend of Robert and myself, which made easier the fact that I was otherwise among a group of people who were all complete strangers to me. Our guide did not impress anyone, and merited comment in my diary after one day with him: "... a pillock, a TA soldier who wants to be a professional, a corporal who thinks he should be a major, ... irritating as well." However, he did have the ability to explain why we were wherever we were, bringing places and events alive.

We stayed at an hotel outside Ypres, the Kemmelberg Hotel. It was, and still is, a charming and welcoming establishment. If there was one disadvantage, the rooms were small, and the walls between them were thin. There was a television in each room. One evening, one of the party wanted to retire early to his room, to watch an important European football match. At breakfast the next morning, he wanted to complain to the management. He complained that as he was watching the match, the TV kept switching to a channel that seemed to specialise in films in which actors and actresses were engaged in very 'adult' activities. Some minutes later, another member of the party came into the breakfast room. He also wanted to complain; his enjoyment of what he called an adventure film had constantly been interrupted by the TV switching to some football match in which he had not the slightest interest. The walls were indeed so thin that one TV remote could operate two TVs.

At lunch at this hotel on our final day, we were mutinous. Our guide had a programme to fulfil, but it had begun to do what it does in that part of Belgium in late September; it rained harder and harder. Lunch lasted nearly four hours, and our eventual visit to the last place on the programme was short and wet.

Of course, we had an end of trip meal that night. The combination of Belgian cooking, with lots of cream and wine involved in that, warding off pneumonia with whisky, and cigars, sent everyone to bed very tired. When Robert got home the next afternoon, his family were unimpressed, and the first of the Bottlefield Tours had a name.

Robert felt that as a private banker, I needed a London club. I was open to persuasion, subject to the firm personal view that any club had to offer overnight accommodation and welcome members of all sexes. I had seen too many clubs whose members were either middle-aged men or old women, and I thought that a club that welcomed female members as well would a big improvement. Somehow, Robert persuaded me join the only London club, Buck's, that seemed remotely attractive, even persuading me that an all-male club, without overnight

accommodation facilities, met my minimum levels of expectation. The disadvantages were outweighed by three positive features. One was that the drink Buck's Fizz was invented by a barman of the club. The second involved the long 'club' table in the dining room, where members coming into lunch alone would eat together, and were expected to join in with whatever conversations happened to be in progress. The table was called Cads', on the grounds that the sort of people who used it were probably friendless and therefore were cads. The third was that the club actually did have one female member, officially a Cad, the Queen Mother. If Cads' was good enough for her, it was good enough for me. I regretted

that I could not enjoy the fun of Buck's with friends and colleagues who had failed to be born male.

On the first Bottlefield Tour, a participant was the presiding light of another club. Aspinall's was one of the early licensed gaming clubs, and attracted a high-rolling gambling membership, the sort of people who holiday in Monte Carlo and other centres where they can find discreet opportunities to indulge their expensive pastime. An invitation to join this louche and expensive establishment came as a total surprise: Nobody could possibly imagine that I lived that sort of life. A different explanation emerged, I would be welcomed, not as a gambler, but to enjoy the dining-room at lunch-times. The club was always open, and fully staffed, and the staff wanted more to do than stand around hoping that someone would come for a meal before heading to the tables for the afternoon. I never once wagered so much as a farthing at the club, nor paid a membership subscription, but was a lunch-time member in a louche refuge from UBS in Curzon Street. Amanda and I could entertain clients, colleagues and friends in style. Some clients enjoyed the place, it represented a semi- disreputable life, one that was utterly at odds with what they knew about my attitudes to what I did for them as clients. Since retirement, I have never opened a bottle of Pomerol, an appellation that I discovered there, without a nod to memory of those lunches.

Both Buck's and Aspinall's had another advantage; unless I invited them, I was never likely to bump into colleagues whilst having lunch in either place. One or two colleagues did hint that they would like to be put up for membership off Buck's. I never got around to doing anything about such hints.

A second Bottlefield tour took us to the Somme area a couple of years later, and we employed the same guide for the trip. Most of the faces were familiar from the original trip, with a leavening of new ones. On the way home, we all agreed that our next venture had to be to Verdun. One new 'face' had a rival proposal: we should not just think about the Great War but expand our plans to encompass sites relevant to World War 2. The suggestion was ill-received; this group was planning to visit the Western Front and we had not completed that project. Our new face expressed regret at this, mentioning that he had been about to offer the use of a private jet, a

large Gulfstream V, to help broaden our horizons. Suddenly, we were all agreed that we needed to be less rigid in outlook, and the new plan was that we would go to visit the sites of the Normandy D-Day landings for our next annual trip. Over the next three year, we did visit Normandy, then Brussels to visit the site of Waterloo and more of the Ypres Salient, and then Berlin, for the sites of the Nazi regime and Battle of Berlin in 1945.

One moment of one trip stood out. In Berlin, our guide was a local resident, a retired British Army officer. Miraculously, the very room in which Hitler first addressed his generals, on the day after taking power, has survived the Allied bombing of 1945. Our guide arranged a visit. We stood around the table that fills much of the room. Our guide stood at the end of the room, between two windows that looked out over a courtyard. Hitler had stood on exactly that spot, on 31 January 1933. Our guide began to explain the circumstances of the meeting, as Hitler explained his plans for the re-armament of Germany and the restoration of German glory. As our guide spoke, he became animated; voice rising and falling, gestures ever more theatrical, eyes staring. The explanation became a passionate call to arms for the good of the

German Volk. It was a mesmerising performance, and it ended as suddenly as it had begun gradually. Our guide reverted to the retired British officer. “And that, gentlemen, is what it was like.”

In planning this trip, Robert and I had determined that we had to visit the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen. The group was not keen, so we compromised; we would go there for an hour or so before going to see the ridges east of Berlin where the Russians had finally broken the last resistance to entering the city. We set off early one morning. Nigel, our guide, wanted us to see Plötzensee, the site of the Nazi prison, interrogation centre and execution site for political prisoners. We were not surprised that after his rendition of Hitler’s speech that day before, Nigel was able to convey the absolute horror of standing in the very room where political prisoners had suffered excruciating torment on their way to slow deaths, filmed all the while so that Hitler could be assured of their deaths.

Although Sachsenhausen was never a large camp, it was officially listed as the No. 1 establishment of the system, where particular detainees, such as commandos captured during the Dieppe Raid were taken. It was also, in effect, an academy and training establishment. Here came for training all who were to become commandants of other camps. Here were the medical headquarters of the medical research bureaux that oversaw all camps’ experimentation on the healthy and handicapped alike. Here were devised and tested the methods of mass execution that were to be used throughout the camps system. The prototype gas chambers, ovens and medical research facilities remain as the Russians found them in 1945.

I have never in my life been in two such horrible places as Plötzensee and Sachsenhausen. Our party, having reluctantly given up an hour for the trip, decided to abandon the day's other activities. One said that if we had to see these things, we had to pay them proper respect: after all, he intended never again in his life to visit such a place of suffering. We finally left, lunch forgotten, in the late afternoon. I learn that, since our visit, the site has been much restored, with a visitor centre and museum. I prefer to recall it as it was on Spring day in 2008, a nearly deserted place of remembrance of terrible things, not a visitor attraction.

For the journey home, we flew from Nazi-developed Tempelhof Airport. The airport had been the Berlin end of the Berlin Airlift after the Second World War, and had served the City throughout the Cold War. It had become redundant after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The last commercial flight to use the airport took off on 10 October 2008. We flew out on 11 October, the last passenger aircraft ever to use the historic airport. Our guide, Nigel, and the Gulfstream pilots had achieved a fitting finale to a profoundly moving trip.

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The Bottlefield group did get to Verdun, and to Italy, to see the site of the battle for Monte Cassino. For these trips, we retained professional guides, but as we were discussing the proposal at last to get to Verdun, one member said that he was keen to go there but that he did not see why we needed an outsider to guide us, and he was happy, if all were happy, that I should guide this visit. That decided, my immediate need was actually to go the Verdun and see for myself what I had taken on.

The Battle of Verdun in 1916 must be seen as one of the most significant in European history, alongside Blenheim, Trafalgar or Waterloo. The battlefield has not

been recovered for farming, the fate of much of Belgium's or France's other battlefields. It remains largely un-restored or conserved, although there has been much work in the years since I first went there. Even the nine villages on the battlefield have never been re-built or re-occupied. There are major national and international memorials, forts, trenches, bunkers, encampments. In Spring-time it is almost deserted. It is a relatively remote place, and good hotels seemed to be non-existent. On my first visit, we had struggled even to find somewhere for lunch. Passing a sign suggesting a restaurant, we drove up the drive, and despite the fact that the kitchen was closed, it being after 2.00 p.m. the staff found the makings of a little picnic lunch. I like to think that I have repaid that kindness many times over, having taken perhaps ten battlefield touring parties to stay there for four nights each time. The Chateau des Monthairons certainly adds to the appeal of going on a 400-mile drive from London to Verdun.

Ch. Des Monthairons, return to calm after a day at the front.

-o0o-

Our son Freddie was a pupil at Wellington College. We had chosen his prep school with care, by the simple method of looking at a map to find out which was closest to Hartley Wintney. From there, following on to Wellington, adjacent to the prep school, had been equally an easy decision. Wellington entered a period of under-achievement before the GCSE year, things were not going well, and we were thinking to move his education elsewhere for his sixth form years. We delayed our decision because we heard that the governors had decided that a new Master of Wellington was needed, to arrest the slide. Accepting an invitation to an evening meeting, to hear the new Master explain his vision, we were part of a group of perhaps 150 of Freddie's year group's parents. The new Master was introduced, and Anthony Seldon had entered my life. His vision was clear, uncompromising and demanding. Wellington's period of eclipse was over, the school was going to be

good immediately and best very soon, and he would make that happen. On the way home, we decided that Freddie should stay for the ride.

After taking over, Anthony announced that he would be leading a part of parents on a trip to Belgium and France during the coming Spring term. Shortly afterwards, watching Freddie play cricket for his school, I met Anthony for the first time. We chatted and I mentioned that I had signed up for his battlefield tour, and was looking forward to exchanging thoughts and knowledge with the party. He was not impressed. This was clearly going to be his party, definitely led by himself.

In due course, at 6.00 a.m. one dark morning, Nicky dropped me off at the Master's Lodge, where I joined about 40 other parents, all curious about what we were undertaking with the Master. I was keen to see what he really knew about something that I had studied for many years. We soon found out what the trip would involve. A brief introduction on the coach, appointment of a head boy and head girl, and off we went. Audio tapes of voices talking about experiences of the Great War lasted for 45 minutes. The head boy and head girl were told to hand round pencils and papers, and an oral test of 20 questions was announced. It was fascinating. People began very uninterested, but school-days competitiveness crept in. Wives hid their answers from husbands, husbands hid theirs from wives. The winner was awarded a large box of Quality Street, and expected to share it round, of course. Not only was any ice broken, everyone now knew that inattention would be shown up on this trip.

The exact moment when the trip changed for me came early on. Anthony was standing at one of the first stops in Belgium, at the German military cemetery at Langemarck. He was explaining the outlines of the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915. I was at the back of the class. A pair of young parents felt a little out of their depth, and I was quietly explaining a more local and basic element of the story to them. The same couple sought me out at the next stop, and by the end of the day I was joined by a few more at each stand. Anthony generously invited me to say a few words to the entire group, and the format of ten battlefield tours together was taking shape. Anthony led the group, led discussions about the overall picture and was able to inspire with his introduction of the literature and poetry of the war. I added bits and pieces of more specific information about people and events relevant to the sites where we stopped.

Each year we developed the Trenches Trips, as they were called. A few places that we had always visited were replaced by others, trips evolved to suit the parents, and Anthony and I enjoyed working together. We slowed the pace, so that parents could enjoy social time together, we ensured time on every trip to include a local Saturday market, and we tried very hard to make each evening meal into an event.

Anthony always sat at the front of the coach, and I sat across the aisle, where I could reach the coach's sound system and television controls to show film or explain

matters as we passed places of interest. I realised, as we drove from place to place, that Anthony was actually busy using every spare moment in the coach to carry on running Wellington as though he was in his office on campus. On one trip he was very pre- occupied, and after breakfast on the second day he told me that he had to go back to Wellington, but would be back for dinner that night. It would be wrong indeed to say that all went on with his absence unnoticed, but the day did pass off successfully.

On the very first Trenches Trip a parent received a text message on his phone. It was from his father, a South African, who thought that he should pass on some family history that might interest the group. Grandson told us the story of his grandfather's part in the Great War:

A boy of fourteen was growing up on the family farm outside Pretoria. His father had fought the British during the Boer War, but had accepted the new situation after that war's end. The boy had grown up with family stories of the war. With a new war now declared, son had wanted to do his bit. It was not possible to join the British Army in Pretoria, there was no British recruiting centre, and he would be recognised. Leaving home without telling anyone, he walked and hitch-hiked the 40 miles to the nearest place where he thought he might find British soldiers, in Johannesburg. He was a big lad and his declared age of 18 was accepted. Early in 1915 he was in England, and by mid-1916 was with the South African forces in France in time for the Battle of the Somme.

Back home, his mother had not given up looking for him, and in 1917 she had tracked him down, despite his using a false name. After a year of active service, her son was taken away from active service and sent to England, still too young to be allowed legally to enlist. When the war ended he was nearly 18, at last legally permitted to enlist but not to serve in France.

Another South African mother, on a different year's trip, took us on a detour to see her grandfather's grave. The date was 18 May, the exact day that would have been his 100th birthday. She thought she was the first member of his family ever to see his grave. She had brought with her a birthday card that her grandfather had sent to his son, her father, from the Western Front, during a lull in preparations for the Battle of the Somme.

Anthony wanted the Trippers, as we were called, to try to interpret what they were experiencing. He urged them to write poetry, to sketch or draw. The results could be very moving.

Mothers who had never written line of poetry in

their lives contributed:

Our minds were blown apart Not by shells and mortar
But by our realisation of
The loss of boys to slaughter.

Our eyes were sore and teary Not from smoke and gases
But from the sight of all the fields Where men had mortal clashes.

Our hearts were torn in two Not from our own grieving
It was our understanding of The places we were leaving.

Our arms were stretched out wide Not in supplication
But simply in our horror of
What nation does to nation.

I cannot stress how much it meant To learn of all that sorrow
Without that understanding
How can we build tomorrow?

“I’ve brought him home safely.” the sergeant bellowed “He’s all in one piece!” he beamed.
“He’s had a great war,
He’s done himself proud.

He can get on with his life, as he dreamed.”

But I looked at my glorious, wonderful boy And knew that he hadn’t returned:
His mind was elsewhere,
His face showed no joy

He was not the same son for whom we had yearned.

He would sit all day in tortured thought And would scream all night out loud His friends were all dead
Their lives were cut short

Bombarded to death. How could he be proud?

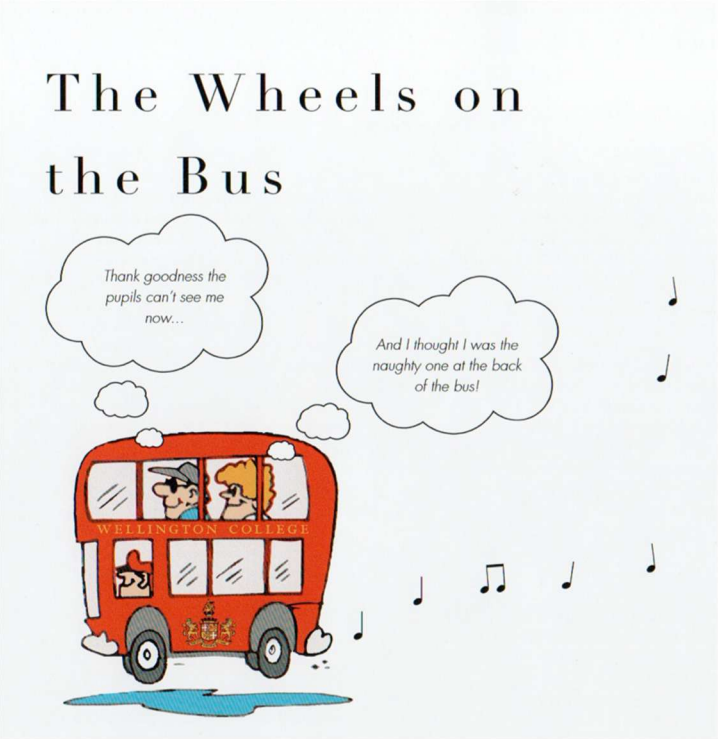
We tried to reach out to our beautiful lad But all of our efforts in vain
He had survived
And the guilt drove him mad

So he took his own life and thus eased the pain.

Some painted, many saying that they had not done anything like that since leaving primary school:

A young mother, an aspiring singer, sang the Londonderry Air at an impromptu lunchtime concert at the Kemmelberg Hotel near Ypres. Waiters, manager, kitchen staff and the hotel's Sunday lunch guests all stopped to listen. As we were leaving, the manager told me that in 20 years or more as manager of the hotel, overseeing countless wedding celebrations, birthday parties and the like, he had never heard a performance that had made such impact on all who were present. He himself felt privileged to have been in the room. Not one person was aware that the Londonderry Air, written in 1913, had been the unofficial anthem of the 16th (Ulster) Division, cut to pieces on the Somme in1916, and then again in 1918 in the fields outside the hotel's windows.

After that intensely emotional moment, there was trouble at the back of the bus. I am told that on school trips there is always trouble at the back of the bus. The head boy and head girl were deemed to have been inadequate, and whilst the head boy escaped lightly, the head girl was demoted. However, Anthony Seldon picked her successor in haste, and the new head girl was soon sacked in her turn. To restore morale, Anthony led the entire party in an uplifting song.



In later years, the Trenches Trips produced a series of books, with photographs, poetry and paintings, personal memories and family stories of the Great War. Being Wellington College parents, the books tended to be of the highest professional standards of production. Those four books have their own place in my shelves of books about the Great War. Even the cartoons in these books, see above, had professional style about them.

I also led trips for Old Wellingtonians, which involved two or even three generations of travellers. On one such trip we knew that we were almost the first people since 1918 to see the underground tunnels and bunkers of the Glory Hole at La Boiselle on the Somme battlefield. A few weeks before we arrived, an English group of experts had begun a programme to conserve the system and we made a contribution to their costs in return for a trip into the tunnels. We were not to know that not only were we the first, but in fact almost the last as well. The owner of the land valued his privacy more than he wanted his land to become a war memorial and visitor centre. He took away access to the site soon after our visit, and the research group had to leave their work hardly begun. Anyone of the 35 or so on that trip can truly claim that they had an experience that was almost literally unique.

Other trips came out of those ones, and several times I took private parties, assembled by veterans of the official Wellington ones. Almost always, they wanted two things from their trip: a pace at which they could be slow, consider and absorb, and somewhere where I would take them if their proposed trip was to be their last. Everything led to Verdun, and several more trips to this place of which I never tire.

A last thought about the formal battlefield tours part of my life: I never, once, right up until now, have led a party that did not include at least one person whose father was not actively involved in the Great War. There are still people alive, younger than I, whose fathers fought during that war.

-o0o-

One day in 2007, out of the blue, I received a letter from the officers' association of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. It was my first contact with the regiment for 38 years. Members of the association had spent many years raising funds to erect a small memorial to commemorate the part that the regiment's 1st Battalion had played in the Anzio landings, south of Rome in January 1944. Would I like to join the regiment in a visit to that town, for the unveiling of the memorial and the civic receptions and other events planned for the occasion? I would indeed; the Bottlefield trip to Monte Cassino was fresh in mind, and to see the next part of the story of the fight for Italy's liberation was perfectly timed.

The trip was deeply moving. During the Anzio campaign, 85% of the battalion's number had suffered casualties, and a memorial to them was overdue.

As the officers' guests, we had two of the very few men left alive who had landed at Anzio with the battalion. One had been a member of a machine gun crew, but at heart was a country boy from a Shropshire farm, feeling out of place in this company. As I was out of place as well, I took it upon myself to look after this old boy.

One of our official civic engagements was held in a British war cemetery, and we had time before the wreath laying to walk around. The old boy and I walked slowly around, and three times he stopped by a grave, stood to attention and shakily raised his hand in salute. I said nothing, asked no question, but as we walked to the wreath-laying ceremony he told me that he had completed some unfinished business, saying goodbye to the three other members of his machine gun crew.

Later that day, we were guests at a reception in a farmyard. A small group of KSLI soldiers had been positioned here on the perimeter of the small Anzio beachhead area. The old boy was able to tell the group what had happened here, when his group been at 'that window, that one right there', firing the machine gun at advancing German troops of the German 14th Army under von Mackensen. The farmer listened intently as our interpreter translated, called his young son, perhaps ten years old and spoke passionately to him. Our interpreter hardly needed to translate, the meaning was clear: 'This man was fighting the Second World War in your bedroom, shake hands with him, and never forget this day for as long as you live."

The Anzio trip led to others. The antecedents of the regiment were in the Light Division formed to fight in Portugal and Spain during the Peninsular War against Napoleon's armies. With Anzio so successful, two trips followed in those earlier footsteps. Finally, the KSLI took me back to Ypres and the Western Front, but we didn't go to Tyne Cot cemetery, because the regiment was not involved in that final part of the Third Battle of Ypres, called Passchendaele.

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Apart from the formal battlefield tours, I have been fortunate in recent years. Travelling around France each summer, I have been allowed one or two days to visit some more or less local site associated with the Great War. Such trips have taken unexpected turns. One year, we drove towards Bordeaux, but a combination of a fuel tanker drivers' strike and poor weather caused a diversion. We ended up 1,400 kilometres away, in Slovenia, at a town called Kobarid on the Soca river. It used to be Caporetto on the Isonzo river, the site of the Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo during the Great War. Nicky allowed me many more than the annual two days for that exploration. In Alsace, we ended up on a ridge, the Hartmannswillerkopf. It is almost vertical on each side, with a narrow plateau, perhaps 20 metres wide, running along the top. French and Germans had occupied this extremely narrow strip, simultaneously, for almost four years, trenches so close together that both sides had erected high wire netting, still there, to prevent the opposition from throwing hand grenades into each other's trenches. We have ridden on Decauville railways, relics of the Battle of the Somme. East of Verdun, I have been chased out of a restaurant

with a carving knife. We had a booking for lunch, but the disturbed son of the patrons had taken a dislike to our party.

In 2018, Nicky and I met the US 5th Marines on their own battlefield tour, marking the exact centenary of their great battle at Belleau Wood in France. The day before, they had paraded for the President of France nearby. On the day we met them they were actually in Belleau Wood itself, closer to the history that had brought them over from America for the commemoration.

I went to Gallipoli on my own. It is not easy to get there, involving arriving in Istanbul in late afternoon, with an overnight stay there before a six-hour bus ride to the area of the campaign, two days there and then the return journey, broken with a couple of days in Istanbul. Gallipoli itself is a place apart, unlike any other battle field or campaign area that I have seen. It is also welcoming and has one of the best visitor experiences that I have seen. Standing on the mock-up deck of a warship in the half-light of dawn, the floor heaving and rolling, deafened by the sound of the guns firing, blinded by the flashes of the guns, all it needs is someone to throw buckets of water to complete the experience of naval bombardment during the battle.

I had engaged a driver / guide for my two days in Gallipoli, and on the first day left the itinerary largely to his experience. That was sensible, because we drove to all the places that form the key notes of the story of ANZAC and the British landings. For the second day, I wanted to go further north, to the site of the later landings, at Suvla Bay. If the story of the first half of the land campaign of Gallipoli is of failure, the Suvla Bay part of the story has to be of abject defeat. I asked my guide how often he came here. It took a moment for him to work out an answer: in his ten years as a guide, our visit together was typical for an average year, the only one. I took many photos there, including one of two brothers' graves, side by side, killed together on the same day, that of the Suvla Bay landings. Some years later I gave a talk about Gallipoli and used the photo of the brothers' graves to illustrate a point about how many pairs of brothers were killed during the campaign, 196 pairs and two sets of three. The three brothers of one of those sets of three all died on the same afternoon. Almost none of those 398 have known graves. After the talk, a couple in the audience came to tell me that they lived in the very house in which the two Hook brothers had lived all their lives until 1914 and enlistment. Not surprisingly, they wanted a copy of my photo.

I was not impressed by Istanbul. The experience of being one of a party of 20 tourists, that party being one of many dozens of similar size, all trying to enter the Blue Mosque or the Hagia Sophia simultaneously, was tourism at its very worst. Without telling the tour leader, I dropped out of my group and went to watch the shipping in the Bosporus. Perhaps they are still wondering where I am.

Hagia Sophia, a crowded experience.

The Hook brothers' graves, 7 August 1915, the day of the Suvla Bay landings

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The more I was involved in leading or guiding groups to see the Western front, the more one question was regularly asked: "You've told us what happened in this field/ wood/crossroads, but what made armies be here in the first place?" People often asked me to recommend a book that would help complete beginners understand the story as a whole, so that they could put into context why they were standing in that wood or field. I could certainly recommend many studious books written by or about great and not-so-great generals, about battles that were great victories or disastrous bungles, depending on the author's preference, but even the one-volume histories, and everyone has written one of them, all presume prior knowledge. After some thought, I decided that the only answer was to write the book for beginners myself.

In the autumn of 2009, I set out to write my first book. Actually, writing a book is easy, especially if you haven't a clue about how to do it. You just sit down and start telling the story. After a while you realise that you're writing long, rambling and drivelling sentences. You then find an editing program on your computer, which tells you what rubbish you're writing, and asks what reading age you want your book to reach. Then miraculously the program suggests how to turn the drivel into readable English. A set of simple rules now dictates every word. All that the author needs to do for himself is pretend to know the subject. If, like me, you have no imagination to write a novel, your book has to be about things that happened. To write a book about

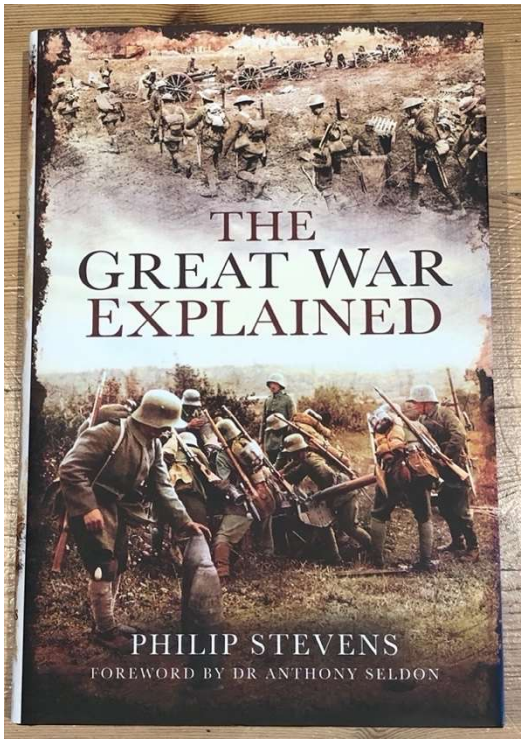
the Great War is highly risky in this respect, because so many people know so much more than the author does.

For my last six months in the City, I spent my evenings and weekends writing. When I retired from the City, Nicky allowed me a week's holiday. "From next Monday, you are to write, five days a week from 9 until 12 and from 2 until 5." I followed this regime, and I kept in mind the young parents on the Trenches Trips, for whom I was writing. My rules included using no long words, assuming no knowledge of the subject, no familiarity with words like division or battalion, no idea of how a machine-gun works, and no idea of tactics or strategy. My clever computer told me when my sentences got too complicated for anyone over the age of 18. Easy reading permits makes for easy absorption of information.

Late on one Sunday evening, a year after starting, I finished the book. I looked at my bookshelves and decided on a publisher. I had no expectation of selling many copies of the book, perhaps a few hundred. Having chosen a publisher, I sent off an e-mail and went to bed. By midday on the Monday I had an e-mail and phone call from the publisher. On the basis of having seen chapter 1, they would offer to publish.

Things began to move. I had to find a second pair of eyes, to be editor. Typically, I found an editor who wanted to get into editing and needed a first project. That was trying, a novice author and novice editor trying to put a book together. The publisher has a huge library of hitherto unseen pictures, and gave me liberal access. Gradually, it was taking shape. The publisher decided to change the first plan, for a small run in paperback. Instead, there was to be an initial run of 2,000 hardback copies. Anthony Seldon wrote the preface, and then offered to host the launch party in the Waterloo room at Wellington College, where hang the memorial rolls of the 707 Old Wellingtonians who died in the Great War.

People wrote appreciative reviews in the specialist magazines, and suddenly The Great War Explained was a success in the small world of single-volume histories of the Great War. The hardback edition and reprints sold out very quickly, and runs of the soft-cover editions ran to several thousand sales. A third version, a true paperback, had an initial order of 3,000 copies from Waterstones. Obviously, I was going to be rich on the royalties. The publisher soon put me straight: "Philip, you are not an author, you're a bloke who wrote a book. If you get a second book published, you're an author. After a third, you're an established author. Established authors make some money." I really didn't care; to make any money had never crossed my mind. The idea was to tell the story in a way that opened the door to understanding the Great War. Over the next few years more 12,000 people would pay their money to open this door. That was satisfaction enough, and what money I did make paid for tax- deductible research trips to Gallipoli and other places.



Publishing the book gave rise to another but unexpected aspect of Great War communication. On 1 January 2015, my New Year's resolution was to write a diary on Facebook. Every day from then until the centenary of the Great War Armistice, I would tell some short story of an event that happened on that date exactly one hundred years previously. I spent a couple of hundred pounds on a marketing campaign and began to write. Ten months later, on 12 October 2015, 16,000 people read the Facebook entry that told of the execution of Edith Cavell. People began to send me stories of their own family members who had fought and died during the Great War, and I was able to include many of those individual tales. By the end of the project, a few more than 10,000 people were opening that Facebook page every day.

Organisations of all kinds began to ask me to gives talks or lectures. Some had specific subjects in mind, others just wanted me to choose a topic that would appeal to their members. I found myself travelling to all sorts of places. Speaking at village hall groups, school history societies, military museums, branches of the Western Front Association, anywhere where the organisers would make a contribution to one of the military charities that interest me. The smallest audience was just six people, the members of a branch of the Western Front Association that was struggling to retain local interest. The largest was a well-known public school, where pupils had been encouraged to invite their parents to attend. The school theatre holds 600 people, and it was standing room only. Sometimes the audience included many knowledgeable students of the war, sometimes I was speaking to people who had not one inkling of the subject. That latter level of knowledge was universal when my favourite talk, Women in the Great War, was chosen. I would begin by asking

everyone to raise a hand if they could name a single female who was famous because of the Great War. Many hands would go up, only to go down again if I asked them to lower their hand if they had thought of Edith Cavell. It is a sad fact that almost nobody, and I include

some ‘name’ historians whom I have met, has any idea that over 100,000 British women died in munitions factories during the war years, or that over 110,000 British civilians, living in this country, died directly as a result of starvation during the period.

I was approached to be a guest lecturer on cruise ships in the Mediterranean. Campaigns like Gallipoli and on the Dalmatian coast were to be the topics. A chance conversation with somebody experienced in these things gave me pause for thought. He pointed out that you are stuck on a ship with your audience. Passengers assume that you are there to be treated as a paid-for part of the entertainment at all times, whether in the restaurant or bar, trying to read quietly or talk to others. In the end, your paid-for holiday becomes a time of almost involuntary solitary confinement in your cabin. The thought of cruising on a ship fills me with horror anyway, so the invitation to speak on such voyages was easily declined. Covid-19 ended all that anyway.

To end this chapter about battles and battlefields, I quote proudly from a letter that I received from a friend who is now Professor Sir Anthony Seldon, a distinguished figure in Academe, a respected historian, author of many books and a supporter of my amateur interest in history. He wrote after one of the Trenches Trips:

“Philip – you are simply brilliant. I have never been on any trip, ever, anywhere in the world, with a better, more passionate or magnetic speaker.”

Anthony Seldon, simultaneously running a Trenches Trip in France and Wellington College by mobile phone

Reading those last words again, can somebody explain why those responsible for my education thought I should study Physics, Chemistry and Biology for my A-level

subjects? Thank goodness they did: otherwise, I might have studied English, History and French, passed my A-levels, never have gone to Sandhurst and never have met the military history department there. If those had never happened, I would never have gone to that bottle party in Clapham, would never have had the Great War in my life. The rest, as they say, is history.

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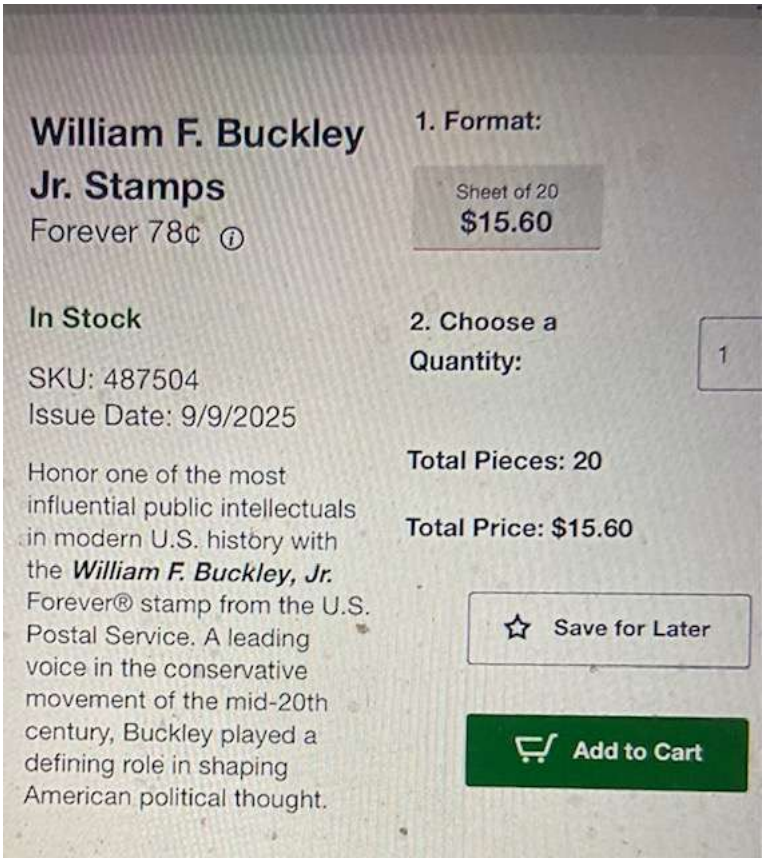
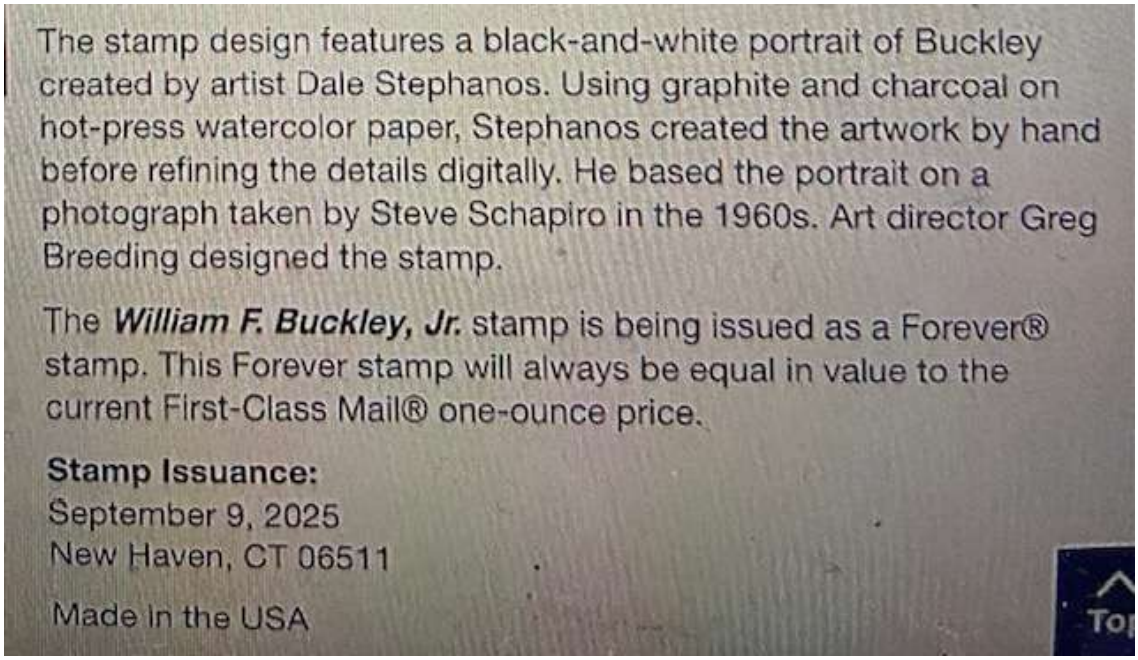
So, after 18 chapters, almost 18 weeks of lockdown, I reach the present day. I have forgotten to write about work for the Leonard Cheshire charities, fishing and probably many other things. Times with some people should have been mentioned, but weren't. The exercise has brought people from distant days back into my life, it has kept me out of the locked-down pub, and it has justified, to me at least, the point of writing those diaries every day for half a century or more. I have carried within my writing the immortal words of Winston Churchill: "History will be kind to me; I intend to write it." Perhaps a philosophical epilogue, Chapter 19, would round off the tale of a life, always lived fully but not always wisely. In two weeks, I shall attain the milestone of having survived for three-quarters of a century. An epilogue can wait until I reach that age, when looking back really can be prefaced by the dreadful words: "When I was your age..."

CORRESPONDENCE

From John Marshall

A postage Stamp of OB **William Buckley**





John was over from the ‘States’ visiting Ireland and the seat of an ancestor and OB **Henry Montague Lyons (97)** of Croom House, Limerick.

Croom House was the home of the Lyons family in the 18th and 19th centuries. The house of James D. Lyons was valued at £48 in the early 1850s and he had a flour mill valued at £75 closeby. He held the property from John Croker. Described in 1943 by the Irish Tourist Association surveyor as a beautiful mansion on the left bank of the Maigue river, it was then in use as a military post. The Lyons family built the main house, the mills on the river where the mill wheel still turns, the courtyard with staff quarters, substantial stabling and individual staff houses. They also funded and built the Catholic Church and School at that same time. Descendants of the Lyons Family ran their businesses in Croom until November 1947. In August 1934 Henry Anthony Montagu Lyons a young and only son of James Lyons (OB 94) inherited Croom House and its demesne lands. He was killed in the Second World War and his widow sold the remaining lands and house in 1947 and moved to the UK never to return.
The Property is now a successful stud. (One of the ‘inmates’ above)

Hugh Wooldridge sent me this photo of ‘scouting at St John’s (Hugh in white jersey)

From Brother Michael Milward S J

I am a Jesuit in Japan who was a boy at Beaumont from 1958 to 1963. Your photograph of Queen Victoria's visit is fascinating. One question arises from the U.S. flag on the left side of the picture. Have you any idea why it was there.

Ed

Thank you for your (long distance) enquiry. Needless to say, that in the records there is nothing to give an indication as to why it should be in such a prominent position. We know that there was much bunting including flags from other nations - Don Carlos of Spain was present as his young son had just arrived at the school. Beaumont from its inception was to attract those from the Diplomatic Corps and those seeking an English Catholic education and the first American boy is listed in 1863. In 1892 when The Queen visited there were at least a couple of Americans there at the time: overall some 70 from the States spent time at Old Windsor.
Sorry not to have given a more precise answer. It may just have been, because the visit was 'Last minute Dot com' that they put up whatever they could find .

From Adrian Naughten

The years gather all too quickly and aches and pains are part of our daily lives! I fear my damn knee(6 operations following Sepsis after initial Knee Replacement) continues to restrict me hugely and now unable to drive. But life goes on and I get around on 2 crutches. Also keep in touch with people who count including my great chum David Roe.

Just to show that I do read your regular BU News etc I was drawn to the recent piece about Brother Michael Strode in which the name Fr Perry Gildea makes an appearance. I wondered whether he might be a descendant of James Gildea who started SSAFA in 1885? He came from Co.Mayo and as I have been Chairman for SSAFA Northern Ireland I have on many occasions had to oversee Gildea Awards!! Just a thought!

Once again I am unable to attend the BU Lunch….October is a bad month for me as I have to attend Regimental Events over here and also come to London in mid/ late November for our Annual Regimental Lunch at Army & Navy. I fear all these committments just ' add up' and travelling ,even the short distance to London, is quite an effort.mplease convey my Warmest Greetings to any contemporary who might vaguely remember me! I wish you well for a successful lunch. Incidentally I am in touch with Don Houlihan who lives in Oporto, Portugal and whom I hope to see when we are in Portugal for Christmas(my Sister-in- law lives near Spanish Border to East of Faro).

From Paul Dutton

Have I confessed before to the Regatta contretemps with the great Jumbo?
Three of us were standing on the towpath. I can't remember who the other two were, perhaps Craig Waller and Marshall. We were oblivious when we heard this roar. "Get out of the way you bloody fools!"

Well of course we froze and Jumbo veered to the right towards the river and dived over the handlebars and into the water. We vanished and were amused to see Osbert Lancaster's cartoon on the front page of the Express the next day in the library.
See you at the lunch. Hope it's a good turnout.
Paul
PS on the subject of buildings near Halkin Street, the Kents lived in Belgrave Square as did Chips Channon and there are many references in his diary. I love reading such diaries even though there is a lot of dross. Two Tallulah Bankhead utterings from the diaries:
"Darling I'm ambisextrous. "
"Darling I'm just showing him I really am a blonde."

From John Flood

There are surprising details in the Beaumont Review of1965 relating to the 2nd VIII. I was Captain of that boat and I have a photo in my downstairs loo of Oxford City Regatta of my oar hitting a swan which stopped the boat in its tracks when we were down a little on Teddy's - our reaction was so strong that we went on to overtake and beat them, contrary to what is written. I also recollect taking over the scull that Terry O'Brien had used and later realising that he had had the oars the wrong way around which thwarted my endeavour to win the sculling cup at Egham Regatta, as my brother David had done 14 years beforehand. How Terry won the pot is therefore a mystery!

From Marcus Wigan

Hi Robert I hand t realised quote how e pensive uk had got! But as I so t be in uk then it's just and observation. You might have misread my new three year appointment as a **Visiting full Professor at Imperial for the next three years** (quite a compliment at 83!) would be served in Uk: however it's being done remotely which is now quite straightforward!
I hope the dinner goes well

From Konrad Wallerstein

thank you very much for the email invitation. Unfortunately, this year I shall not be in England at the time of the lunch. I plan to make it next year.

My standing invitation to any BU member who makes it to Bangkok, or elsewhere in Thailand, still stands. So far no takers.

From Guy Chamberlain

I spent my Sandhurst years (61-3) with Mrs Baker (Lorrie's sister -Lorrie I think was at Arnhem, anyway he was married at 19 years old to Lady Delamere, Lord Delamere of Kenya's daughter.), she bread Salukis and I had one of hers at Tidworth (late 60s) which has celebrity status as being the best coursing Saluki ever. He won the Clive Cup 3 or 4 times, trained on Salisbury Plain by me!!

The Clive Cup is a trophy for the AKC LURE Coursing trial at the National Specialty, awarded to the Best of Breed winner and originally donated by Windrush Salukis in 1997, with a replacement trophy presented starting in 2018 by DoubleTime Salukis. It is a prestigious award in the Saluki community for the top Saluki in that specific lure coursing event.

From Nigel Courtney

Many thanks for your gripping "Dunkirk 85 years on". It reminded me of what my uncle Geoffrey Best told me about his experience of Dunkirk as a Major in the Tank Corps.

He said he was told that he and his men would not be evacuated - their job was to stop the Germans from reaching the port at all costs. He set up a roadblock on the main highway but the Panzers simply roared past his comparatively lightly-armed tanks. Now behind enemy lines his told his men they had to choose: surrender or try to escape. They opted to escape ... by walking through occupied France to Bordeaux. They walked at night and sheltered by day in barns selected by the French Resistance. Unfortunately one of Geoffrey's men could not resist looting watches from shops en route.

It took three weeks to reach Bordeaux where contact was made with London and a trawler was dispatched to collect them. When it arrived offshore they were taken out in rowing boats and scrambled up nets thrown over the side. As the looter reached the deck the Skipper said 'no room for luggage' and tossed the sack of watches into the sea.

Within days of arriving back in England Geoffrey was sent to India where his task was to go to Burma and collect elephants. As many as 2,000 were being used to drag logs from the forests to the sawmills. A teak plantation manager known as 'Elephant Bill' (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Howard_Williams) had sounded the alarm that Japanese forces could capture and use the elephants to build bridges and advance towards India more quickly.

Geoffrey and his men spent months in the jungle – sometimes behind enemy lines - driving elephants back to India. The ordeal left the men emaciated. Geofrey told me

that on return to India they were flown up to an American army base in Poona [I had had no idea that Americans were in India] and fed them a steak lunch – which killed half of them that night. Geoffrey was so angry he punched a senior officer and was promptly demoted to Private. He eventually regained his majority and after the Armistice he joined REME and served until the 1960s in Arborfield, Bielefeld and Gibraltar (where, inter alia, he was in charge of the 9" guns that secured the Straits).

Ed: Nigel also sent me a copy of the 1961 3rd VIII which includes the Late Roger Darby.

Back row: Roger Darby, Christian Forbes
Seated: Nigel Courtney, Peter Clover, Christopher McHugh, Douglas Bellamy, Michael Morris.
Lying: Richard Wilkinson, Robert Wilkinson.

From Paul Burden

Can you help me with a little bit of local history research about the town of Marlow where I live. The de facto Lords of the Manor here were a family called Clayton who held the manor house in the adjacent village of Medmenham. They were resident there for a couple of hundred years from the 18th to the mid-twentieth century. There is I believe a Beaumont connection. One of the last representatives of the family hereabouts was Roddy Clayton who was at school with us. I believe that rather tragically he died in a road accident in his twenties. Can you confirm that? It's a quite small ;piece of a larger jigsaw.

ED:
Yes, I can help. Roddy was the grandson of Sir Harold Clayton 10th Bt .His father Fitzroy was married twice and Roddy was the son by his second marriage to

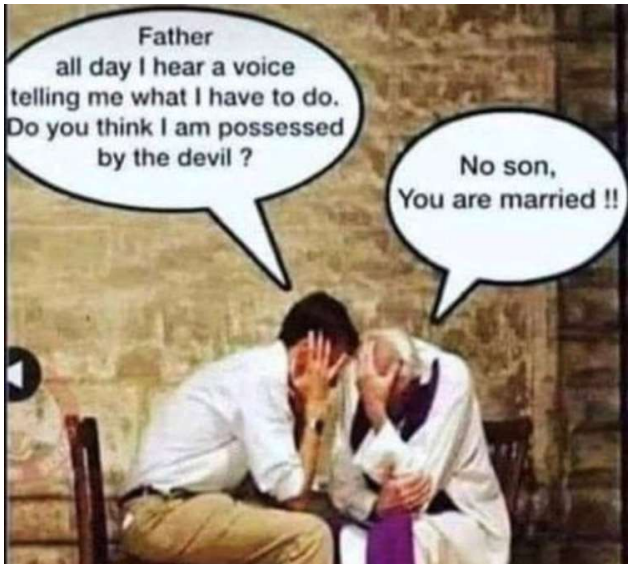
a Ryan and was brought up a Catholic. He had much older half-brother and half-sister. For a time he shared Binge Tussaud's house in Montpelier Walk not far from Harrods. In 1968 he married Diana Walker another Catholic whose brother (Ampleforth) I knew well when I lived in France. Roddy had a couple of children before he was tragically knocked off his scooter in London and killed. His son went to Downside and the daughter to Shaftsbury. Diana married again but that sadly ended in divorce. Any money in the family was hoped to have come through Lady Clayton's jewellery but it was later discovered that she sold the originals and what was bequeathed were paste!

Paul again:
Thanks so much Robert. Interested to learn that the info I had about Roddy was correct. His father had a house in the centre of town. He operated it as a club known as Fitzroys, his middle name. Not sure if it was still going when we arrived here in 1973. Would Roddy have been in line for the title or would that have gone to an older brother I wonder. His Ryan mother was the sister of another OB, a contemporary of my Dad's who was the father of our contemporary, **James Ryan.**

Ed again:

Paul - Fitzroy had an elder brother who inherited the title and it has passed down his male line.

Final Thought from this REVIEW:



L.D.S.