

OBITUARIES IN THE FARNHAMIAN 2002

Whilst the 2001 magazine was at the printers we were advised of the sad passing of **NORMAN PATRICK (1921-1931)** who had been a great supporter of the Old Boys Association for many years. Norman regularly attended the Annual Dinners until in recent years his poor health made this impossible. In the 1999 'Farnhamian' magazine his profile showed what a remarkable life he had led. The following appeared in the 'Farnham Herald' on 27th April 2001.

NORMAN PATRICK, all-round sportsman, dies at 87.

Norman Patrick, a member of the Patrick family that has been in business in Farnham for more than 150 years, has died at the age of 87. Norman died in Frimley Park Hospital on April 20th, after suffering from pneumonia. He was born in East Street in 1914, and attended the Farnham Grammar School for ten years. Here he shone as a sportsman, playing in the first XI in both cricket and football, was a front-runner in the school cross-country team and was a keen boxer.

On leaving school in 1931, Norman started work at the family business, H.C. Patrick & Sons Funeral Directors in East Street, but still kept up with his sporting interests, specifically lawn tennis, winning the Farnham championships on seven occasions. In 1937, he married his mixed doubles tennis partner, local girl Joan Horne. Later that year, Norman joined the Guildford Territorials in the 318 Battery Anti-Aircraft Division. He was called up at the beginning of the Second World War, joining the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers as a Second Lieutenant.

Norman continued his sporting pursuits throughout the war, particularly in many physical training courses, one of which saw him face Jack Petersen in a boxing match. Petersen was British and Empire Heavyweight Champion. Norman also played tennis at Wimbledon, and once had the honour of playing on the Centre Court. It was at this time that Norman became great friends with one of Arsenal's great captains, Joe Mercer. This brought about a life-long love affair with the Highbury club, an obsession that is continued by his sons.

Norman was transferred to the Isle of Wight to help combat the V1 and V2 firebombs. When the war ended he returned to Farnham where he resumed with the family business. By this time, wife Joan had presented him with two sons Martin and Robin, and a daughter, 'Perly'. He was a founder member of the Farnham Round Table, and continued to play tennis on a local basis. A keen horse rider throughout his life, Norman became a member of the local pony club, taking over as Area Controller after some years. Norman leaves behind Joan, and his three children, as well as nine grand-children.

Early in June 2001 we heard the sad news of the death of former Headmaster **PAUL FRENCH (1971-1990)**, who had suffered poor health in recent years. Paul was born in Haslemere and went to school in Shottermill and Godalming before entering the R.A.F. for his National service. He studied Mathematics and Natural Science at Cambridge, finishing with a B.A. Degree, and then began his teaching career at Maidstone Grammar School. He then moved on to Hemel Hempstead and eventually to the position of Headmaster at Farnham Grammar School in 1971.

Within two years the Grammar School closed and Paul faced the task of re-opening as a Sixth Form College and changing from a 'boys only' stronghold to a college for both sexes. Everything was pioneering, and as Farnham moulded into the desired pattern other Surrey grammar schools followed their lead. The site itself also had many changes and the new library and music block were introduced for example. With the new college established, Paul retired early in 1990, although he still taught part time at Godalming and Alton Colleges. He became very involved in the Farnham U3A (University of the Third Age) and saw it grow to well over 600 members.

Paul leaves his wife Dorothy and four children, all of whom attended the Farnham College. He lived only a few yards from the entrance to the Farnham College and will be remembered for his great contribution to both the Grammar School and the College.

At the end of May 2001 news arrived from Australia that **DAVID ROGERS** had died at the age of 81. David regularly remained in contact with the Association and during his retirement produced three books covering different stages of his life. His parents owned the well-known Rogers Cake Shop in the Borough for many years and his first book gives us an insight into life in Farnham just after the First World War. David spent 12 years in the R.A.F. and then worked for various companies, before ending up in Australia and settling there for the remainder of his life. He was a great jazz fan and played with some good class bands during the 1950's.

We will miss his letters and his humour and it is sad to see such great characters pass on. The Rogers family will always be a part of the history of Farnham.

As we start this 2002 magazine we have been inundated with news of Old Boys dying and on 1st June 2001 one of our greatest supporters in **GORDON W.S.MORRIS (1928-1930)** died near his home in Wokingham. For a man who only spent two years at the Grammar School, Gordon remained close to the Association all of his life and served the Old Boys well over the years. He was always at the Annual Dinner and in the recent magazines his name can be seen asking for new members to join the Farnhamian's Masonic Lodge.

He had been asked to write his profile for the previous magazine, but ill-health prevented him doing this and the details of his life are therefore a little scarce. Tracing his earlier days through old magazines we can see that as a member of Morley House he was an outstanding sportsman and played at the back in one of the School's finest soccer teams (Norman Patrick played in goal). After leaving the school he played for the Old Boys and for most of the 1950's he was the Hon. Treasurer for the soccer club. He trained as a surveyor and worked for Bagshot and Aldershot Borough Councils. During the Second World War he was moved to the north of the country and worked as a surveyor for the Ministry of Supply. During this time he was an enthusiastic cyclist and rode for Camberley Wheelers initially and continued this sport whilst in the north. In 1945 he re-joined the Borough Surveyor's Office in Aldershot.

From Aldershot Gordon moved to Bagshot and then to Wokingham Borough Council. In the 1950's he became self-employed and remained working well past retirement age.

Gordon belonged to the Old Farnhamian's Masonic Lodge in Castle Street and in 1959 was installed as the Master of the Lodge. He was most concerned to see the lack of Old Boys joining the Lodge and in recent years new members were taken in who had no association with the School.

Gordon leaves his son David, who we understand will be taking up residence in the house at Sindlesham in the near future.

We have received words of tribute from Harold North (1924-32) regarding a friend and classmate **RAY GATES (1924-30)**, who recently passed away. He writes; ' Ray and I first met at the Wrecclesham C of E junior school in 1923 and it says much for that small school that four boys were coached and passed the then studentship entry to FGS. There was Ray, Jim Brooker and myself and a boy called George who could not take his place at the Grammar school as his mother was a war-widow and could not afford the expense of uniform, books, sports gear etc. The three of us started the September term in 1924 in the early days of 'Moggy' Morgan's reign. Many times Ray and I have laughed over the idiosyncrasies of the various staff and the different ways they had of taming, let alone instructing, a crowd of healthily disruptive boys. We had then little knowledge or sympathy for the fact that most of them were war veterans with their own health and domestic problems.

After school years I lost touch with Jim Brooker, apart from the fact that he joined the Portsmouth Police and distinguished himself in the annual Portsmouth-Ryde swimming event. Ray joined Prudential Assurance with who he stayed all his working life, first at Guildford, then Brighton and latterly London. We always kept in touch, even to the extent of making up a foursome with our respective fiancées for Youth Hostel holidays. War service naturally disorganised our contacts, but not entirely, as by then our wives kept close contact throughout. Ray and I managed a clandestine and totally unauthorised meeting for a few hours in Palestine whilst he was stationed in the Gulf with the Surreys, and I in Egypt with the RAF. In hindsight a somewhat reckless adventure, but we got away with it!

The years following the war saw us both struggling to make a living and rear families, but when we could afford our first small car we again met at half-way points for summer outings with the children. In later years our early Youth Hostel ventures blossomed into joint motor tours all over Europe from Norway to Portugal and Italy. (The acid test of real depth of friendship is for four people to spend a fortnight or more in a car together!). Ray and I with our wives were lucky each to attend the other's Golden Wedding celebrations.... just! Still later I was privileged to attend Ray's Diamond Wedding, honoured as the only non-family guest.

I think this potted history of a very close and rewarding friendship of 78 years with a classmate will explain why I shall miss Ray nearly as much as will his delightful wife and five sons.'

It was reported in the Daily Telegraph dated 29th August 2001 that well-known actor **JACK GWILLIM** had died at the age of 91. The following is a shortened version of the obituary of this remarkable man.

' Jack Gwillim was a character actor who appeared in the West End and on Broadway in a career which spanned half a century on stage and screen. Tall and slim, and with

a powerful voice, Gwillim excelled at portraying figures of authority. On screen, he played various types of potentate – majestic, military, civic and clerical – with roles ranging from Poseidon in *Clash of the Titans* (1981) to George VI in *Sink the Bismark!* (1960). He was also a respected exponent of the classics on stage, especially during the last decade of the Old Vic Company. The son of a regimental sergeant major, Jack Gwillim was born at Canterbury on December 15th 1909. Educated at Farnham Grammar School, he joined the Royal Navy at 17 and was posted to the training ship *Iron Duke*. As an all-round track and field athlete, Gwillim played rugby for the Navy and, while stationed in the Mediterranean, became undefeated heavyweight boxing champion of both the Army and Navy.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Gwillim was a serving officer in Hong Kong and China. In 1946 he was invalided out of the Navy as a commander, having been the youngest of the rank at the time of his promotion. After testing for a wireless announcer's job, a BBC producer who recalled his amateur acting in the Navy suggested he become a professional actor. Gwillim took his advice and spent two years at the Central School of Speech and Drama. This was followed by three seasons, from 1950, with Anthony Quayle's Stratford Memorial Theatre Company. Apart from minor roles, Gwillim played MacDuff to Ralph Richardson's Macbeth as directed by Gielgud. He then toured Australia, before returning to the West End in Peter Brook's production of Fry's *The Dark Is Light Enough* (Aldwych, 1954).

In 1955 he joined the Old Vic Company and played in a host of well known classical plays with actors of the stature of Richard Burton, Paul Rogers, John Neville and Coral Browne. From 1964 he appeared in both the West End and Broadway in a variety of roles and his career included more than 50 film and television credits. His final performance on television was at the age of 90.

Jack Gwillim married firstly, in 1943, Peggy Bollard. She died in 1958. They had a son and a daughter. He married secondly, in 1969, Olivia Selby, who survives him. They had a son.

On 6th February 2001 we heard of the death of **GEOFF CRAWTE**, after a short illness, aged 56. Geoff was born in Farnham and lived his childhood at the family home in Alfred Road, very close to the school. He went to West Street Boys' School for his primary education and then to Farnham Grammar School from 1955 until 1961. Geoff was in the school choir, sang in the choir of St Thomas on the Bourne and was an excellent swimmer, winning the Senior Swimming Cup.

From school, he joined the National Westminster Bank and two years later moved to the Electricity Board, where he worked for the rest of his career, rising to be a Quality Analyst in Portsmouth. When he was taken ill in 1994, he was told that his condition

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(Geoff Crawte continued)

was serious and required an operation. He underwent major surgery and a long period of recuperation. Following this experience, Geoff retired to Honiton in Devon and resolved he would try to help others facing similar challenges, particularly young people. He devoted much of his time during the following 6 years to this task and was a great source of strength and reassurance to many people facing major surgery.

Geoff's work has recently been recognised by the East Devon Special Needs Action Group, where Geoff worked with many youngsters. The Geoff Crawte Friendship Award has been established to recognise the contribution of those who carry out similar work helping others. Geoff married Carol in 1965 and they had two sons and a daughter.

Another younger man was **DR. ROGER DOWNHAM (1955-62)** who died in 2001 from complications that developed following a road accident. Roger was born and raised in Farnham and lived his childhood in Roman Way. He had his primary education at East Street School and went to FGS in 1955. Roger was a relaxed, jovial and extremely bright pupil with a keen sense of humour and good all-round ability. He played in goal for the school football team, kept wicket in the cricket and won the swimming cup three times.

His career was marked by professional success. He left school to study Civil Engineering at Leeds University and gained his BSc in 1966. At the end of the course, his professor, who was to move to Aston University, invited Roger to continue his studies at Aston. It was here that he obtained his PhD. After his studies, Roger joined IDC Construction, rising to Managing Director and a director of the main board. He had responsibility for many major projects, including the construction in 1980 of the prestigious Cambridge University Press 'Edinburgh Building'. He met the Duke of Edinburgh during the opening of the premises.

After a spell of three years working for IDC in Belgium and two years with Sainsburys as Construction Manager, Roger worked for the Midland Bank in a similar role. During this period he was the Treasurer of the British Council of Offices and an external examiner for Coventry and Oxford Brookes Universities. He retired in 1998, continuing to live at his home in Stratford-upon-Avon, and fulfilled a life-long ambition of buying a large motorcycle. Tragically, this was the indirect cause of his premature death on 8th September. Roger leaves his partner, Sue Main, and 14 year-old son Alexander.

When working with **DOUGLAS LEUCHARS (1962-68)** in 2000 on his interesting profile he was showing early signs of cancer and was often not too well. However he retained a good sense of humour and joked about certain aspects of his condition. It is with regret that we announce that in January he died of the disease. Douglas had a very interesting career and worked abroad for many years. Within the past year he moved to Northumberland, where he died at the age of 73 years. Yet another former teacher who will be sadly missed.

In December last year we lost one of our best known members in **FRANK PULLINGER**, who was a lifelong resident of Farnham and the former owner of Pullingers Stationers in West Street. Frank spent the early part of his life in Beavers Road and attended the Grammar School before leaving to work in the family shop from the age of 16 until 65. The shop was originally founded by his grandfather George in the late 19th century. There are stories of a herd of sheep being driven through the town to the butchers and then breaking loose to invade the shop and Lady Anderson sending her chauffeur into the shop whilst she waited outside in the car as he brought various items out for her to inspect.

Frank was away from the business during the Second World War for six years as a result of answering an advert for men between 25 and 50 to form an anti-aircraft battery locally. With other Old Boys **RAY KIRK AND MAURICE ELPHICK** he formed the 137 Royal Battalion defending the south coast. From here he went to Egypt and Palestine and took part in the victory parade in Jerusalem. From the end of the war until recently Frank remained in touch with his former comrades through the annual re-union dinner held at Farnham Maltings. Returning to civilian life he now managed the shop with the help of his mother and sister. He was a founder member of the Farnham Ramblers and through his love of walking met his wife Mary on a rambling holiday in Somerset in 1955. They had a son Philip and a daughter Anne.

Frank Pullinger died peacefully at home aged 87 and his name and his memory will live on as an important part of the town and the Grammar School.

We have also heard that **KEN BAIGENT** died some months ago. Ken entered the School on 1923 and was a member of Harding house. He regularly attended the Annual Dinner and he last attended in 1998 when he was the oldest Old Boy there.

Another Old Boy who joined the School in the late 1920's was **COLIN L. LARMER** who entered in 1928 and became one of the School's greatest sportsmen. He boxed for his house, Morley, and won his weight in 1934. He played cricket and soccer for the School and was an outstanding athlete. In the 1932 House Cricket Competition his bowling figures were 5 for 7 against School, 4 for 11 against Massingberd and 5 for 8 against Harding. In 1933 in the School Sports he won the 100 yds, 220 yds, 440 yds, 880 yds, the Hurdles, High Jump and Throwing the Cricket Ball.

In the 2001 magazine we wrote of **H. F. (Bert) STUART**, who entered the School in 1924. Bert was a regular at the Annual Dinner and drove down from the North-East towing his caravan, attended the dinner and then slept in the caravan, which was parked in the School car park or nearby, and on Sunday made the return journey. His family advised us that after the 2001 dinner Bert died whilst making that journey home. He was the first to stand for the Roll Call last year and will be sadly missed.