

Fyling Hall Alumni Newsletter

No 4

Welcome to the December 2008 Alumni Newsletter.

Welcome to the latest newsletter. The plea for information about **Captain Flood** in the last newsletter produced some interesting reminiscences and speculations about the man but not, perhaps, the breakthrough we had been (unrealistically ?) hoping for. **Richard Atkinson (1955-61)** recalled: 'I remember him telling us boys in Long Dorm lurid stories of his escapades in Spain [during the Civil War, when he fought for Franco] between boxing bouts before bedtime. One about when he and his men had to evacuate a village. The women refused and lay in the road. He ordered his men to urinate on them. Can't remember the outcome but he seemed very proud of that story.'

Richard now lives on the Isle of Mull and organises Birdwatching and Wildlife safaris. His website is:

www.mullwildlife.co.uk should any ex-Fyling Hall pupils find themselves in Mull and want to join one of his safaris. **Mike Bradshaw (1946-49)** wrote: 'One thing I can thank the inimitable Captain for is that he instilled in me a love of classical music and poetry.'

Robert Hilton (1946-48) wrote: 'I knew no ill of Captain Flood.' **Peter Martin (1964-68)**, whose photograph of Captain Flood began this investigation, wrote a series of reminiscences too long to quote here, as did **Mike Coates (1955-62)**.

Fascinating stuff: 'Gobbo', as Captain Flood was known to the pupils, certainly has a legendary status.

In September a group of ex-students organised themselves a small informal reunion via Facebook contacts. This was arranged at quite short notice over the summer holidays. Although centred largely around Whitby, people came out to school on the Saturday morning and had a look around and met the new Head, Ken James.



At September's Informal Reunion Laurie Lee (1994-2001)

Whilst she was visiting **Joanne Balmforth (1993-99)** told me of her brother Christopher's Military Cross and I have written about that separately.

Also in September two ex-students, **Simon Hood (1978-83)** and **Caroline Wardle (1979-84)** were married from school. A ceremony in St. Stephen's was followed by a reception at school. Our best wishes to them both.

During the summer and through into the term we have had the usual occasional visitors. Amongst them was **Richard Lilley** who was at school here with his sister, Judith. He called in and later wrote to me: 'You may recall that my sister, Judith, and I attended Fyling Hall from 1972 to 1976. I returned to the school for the first time in August with my wife and daughter. It was wonderful to show them round the school with Mrs White. Although the school has changed considerably since 1976 I am pleased to say that Mrs White hasn't changed at all! It was fantastic to swap stories and memories, At one point I rang Judith to check a former pupil's name, she and Mrs White chatted as if it was merely the start of a new term!' (This may be the place, because she will never read this far, to reveal very quietly that Clare White was eighty during the term. She absolutely forbade any celebration of this event, threatening to leave the country if she caught a whiff of a plan. She is, as Richard Lilley said, really just the same as she has always been. A remarkable person.)

Rebecca Lawrence (1980-86) called in fairly recently and wrote a charming brief reminiscence that included: 'I thoroughly enjoyed my time here.... My favourite teacher was Mr Terry.... This school taught me to be independent and stand on my own two feet. Best years of my life.'

During the summer **Chris Blythe** wrote to very sadly report the death of his younger brother, **Andrew Blythe (1966-74)**, at the age of 50. Our condolences go to all Andrew's family especially his wife Ruth, daughter Gemma (23) and son Simon (21).

John Jeakins

Christopher Balmforth MC (1995-96)



On March 18th 2005 Corporal Christopher Balmforth, aged 24, was awarded the Military Cross for his part in an ambush in Iraq. A rocket propelled grenade lodged in his armoured Land Rover but did not go off. The driver of the vehicle was then hit by small arms fire which left him incapacitated. Christopher said: 'I was second in command of the team and I knew I had to do something. I got out of the vehicle and returned fire on the enemy position.' Then with enemy fire still coming at them, he led a small team to overrun the position, killing three of the five enemies and serious wounding a fourth. In line with his military training he gave first aid the wounded while the other troops cleared the situation. An extract from the citation read: 'He was instrumental in protecting his comrades' life and regaining the initiative in very dangerous circumstances against overwhelming odds.'

We add our rather belated congratulations to him for this award.

2009 Alumni Reunion to raise money for 'Help for Heroes'



Jonathon Hardy (1992-2000), usually known as Jof to his contemporaries, has undertaken to personally organise this event. He writes:

'In 2009 there will be an old boy's house rugby match, dinner and charity auction all to raise money for Help for Heroes. The event will be held on 26th September 2009. There is a page on Facebook (Fyling Hall Help for Heroes) for further information. If you are interested in playing, attending, helping out or even donating something for the auction please contact Lt Jonathon Hardy RN 07966299503 or by email: Culdrose-atco12@mod.uk.'

Coast to Coast Bike Ride



In the June Newsletter we appealed for support for the Coast to Coast ride on behalf of the British Heart Foundation undertaken by Steven Allen and Jamie Noon. This ride raised £14,172. They would like to thank all those who sponsored them. Jamie's blog concluded:

"It was a beautiful Yorkshire evening and all the pain and sweat of the previous days seemed to evaporate unlike the smell from our wretched bodies. There was still time for fish and chips, a couple of draught beers and a final application of Sudocrem before finally retiring for a dream filled night's sleep."

We would like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!