

Fyling Hall Alumni Newsletter

No 10

Welcome to the December 2011 Newsletter.

THE FYLING HALL PARADOX

In October I received the following letter from **Richard Atkinson (1956-62)**. It is a fascinating and vivid account of his time at Fyling Hall but also contains what could be termed 'The Fyling Hall Paradox':

'Reading your latest Newsletter has spurred me to write to you about my days at Fyling Hall in Long Dorm (1956-1962).

Mostly good and happy memories. It was the freedom, the excitement of being able to explore in the evenings and weekends. The trout tickling in Mill Beck, the construction of dens in the trees and underground. The construction of rafts on Ramsdale dam. The film nights in the barn: the only warm place in winter. The treks to Ravenscar swimming pool on the railway line which one year incurred a 44/- fine for railway trespass. Captain Flood was not a happy man !!!!, or Gobbo, as we used to call him. The bill was sent to our parents.

The logging in the winter of 1961, the treks out to the horse trough in the morning to wash and brush up during the freeze. The moorland treks to Hunting Tower, an old army range, looking for live ammunition; spent would do. All of the above were completely unsupervised.

Occasionally we would have a runaway, search parties and police involved. I remember one boy got home to Lancaster, to be brought back a hero, not bad for a 12 year old.

One night of the week was cake night. The bell would be rung to signal cakes were available in the kitchen. It was Lord of the Flies and The Gulag Archipelago rolled into one.

I have fond memories of the staff, if my memory serves, Mrs Fuller, Miss Easton, Mr Pearson, Sugarloaf, can't recall his

name.

Three mile runs every morning before breakfast. Except Sundays when a trek down to Fylingdales parish church was required for morning service. A thorough inspection was had by each pupil before setting off, by Matron and Captain Flood. The rest of the day was free as was Saturday unless we had rugby or cricket against a local school.

Boxing bouts before bed in long dorm, supervised by Captain Flood. Going to sleep with hot ears and ringing head.

God help us if we lost a game of rugby or cricket to a local school. The door would burst open in long dorm and in

would stride Gobbo. He was furious and would berate us for 30mins using every adjective in the book. Ironically he once gave me four strokes with a riding crop for calling someone a bugger. Pretty tame in his vocabulary but he rewarded me with sixpence for not crying, not whilst I was in his study anyway.

Occasional night expeditions to the girls dorm in the main house, not quite sure why, but definitely six of the best with the horse crop if caught.

I often wonder what became of my peers, Leonard Worsthorpe, Julian Lancaster, Duncan Frazier, David Watson, William Pettit, Chris Walley, Dorcas and Deirdre.

I am now living on the Isle of Mull. I have a company called Isle of Mull Wildlife and Birdwatch Safaris. I look back on my days at Fyling Hall with great fondness and would not hesitate to send my children to such a school.

Regards, Richard Atkinson'

There cannot be many places where the statement:

It was Lord of the Flies and The Gulag Archipelago rolled into one.

Could sit side by side with:

I look back on my days at Fyling Hall with great fondness and would not hesitate to send my children to such a school.



Photo Stuart Brown c.1961

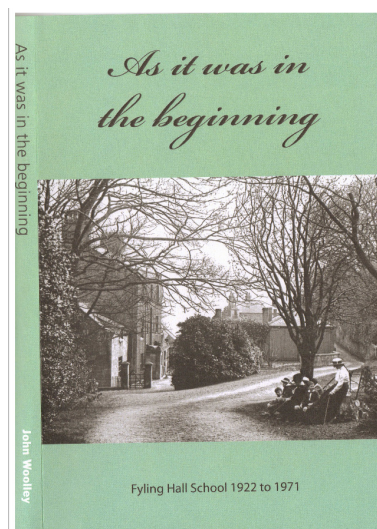
There are several instances of this feeling in **As it was in the Beginning** which has sold well since the summer Newsletter. If you have not yet got around to buying a copy please do contact the office and order one. It is an extraordinary read. Where else might you read: ‘Captain Flood’s last words to me were “If ever you are on the run you can get shelter here” which indicates how he expected my career to go.’ ?

To order this book:

Copies are available from Fyling Hall. Please make cheques payable to Fyling Hall (Yorkshire) Ltd.

Collected from FHS	£5.99
UK p+p (Second Class)	£8.50
Europe p+p (Airmail)	£10.00
Rest of World p+p (Airmail)	£13.00
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Please send orders to Fyling Hall School, Robin Hood’s Bay, WHITBY, North Yorks YO22 4QD.



In a follow up email Richard Atkinson also remembered **Dorcas and Deidre**. ‘Dorcas and Deidre were identical twins about my age and prone to terrible tantrums. They pretended to be horses, all the time, and would refuse to communicate unless treated as horses by pupils and staff alike.’

Michael Halliday (Abbey School 1932-34) (Fyling Hall 1934-38).

Visited Fyling Hall on 20th September from Australia, where he now lives. Abbey School was Mab Bradley’s venture in Whitby that became Fyling Hall once that house was bought by the Bradleys in 1934. [see the opening accounts in *As it was in the Beginning*]. Michael became a sensation when he passed School Certificate (the O levels or GCSEs of its day) at the youngest age anyone had ever done so. He featured on the front page of a national newspaper under the headline ‘Brain of Britain’. The newspaper wanted a ‘schoolboy’ picture and so he was photographed cleaning his rugby boots, a sport he took little interest in.... It is perhaps no surprise that he went on to have a very distinguished academic career. There is a Wikipedia page for those who would like to know more.

One Tuesday in September **Jane Moffat (nee Hall-Parker) (1971-77)** visited the school and met up with myself and Clare White. That Saturday she was meeting up with a group of ex-pupils from the seventies in London. Those gathered included (using the names they were known with at school) **John Peacock, Karen and Grahame Thompson, Barbie Gurr, Beverley Francis, Robin Richardson, Ashley Mann, Adrian Robinson, John Hearn, Chris Woolf and Rachel Calder.**

John Jeakins