



**First thoughts:**

It is lovely to see that in our part of the world the snowdrops are in bloom and the daffodils are pushing their way through the earth – we hope that the signs of spring are becoming noticeable in your part of the world.

Two reminders for you this month: if you have NOT yet paid the annual subscription of £15 it is now due. We will be sending reminders out during February and into March.

Secondly, if you wish to attend the **Curry Lunch in Winchester** on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April please complete and send your booking form to Jane Tull as soon as you can. The earlier Jane receives your booking form the easier it is for her to plan ahead. If you have mislaid the Booking Form, then you can download it from the website, or contact us and we will send you a copy. Thank you.



**The Spring Edition of the Journal No.55**

The spring edition of the Journal should be with you soon containing many articles that may interest you. Included is the latest report from **Bettina Blum**, who begins her letter with the following greetings:



“Dear friends and supporters of the "British Forces in Germany" project, Although the New Year is already a little advanced, I hope that you will still accept my best wishes for the year 2024. I hope that the year will bring more peace on earth. As I deal with wars and occupations in my work and with the question of how it was possible to overcome enmity, I am always struck by how much the issues of the past still concern us today. I hope that a better understanding of the past will help us to better shape the future.”

From March, I will be working at the LWL Institute for Regional History in Münster. The institute has the task of writing the history of Gütersloh from 1945 to the present day. Because the occupation and the stationing of Army and Air Force units are an important part of the city's history, I have been asked to research this topic and write the chapter. I'm really looking forward to the project, because it's exciting to focus on a single town for once and to get to know the different points of view there. If you would like to share your memories of Gütersloh, I would be delighted to hear from you!” **Bettina Blum**

There is a recent photograph of Bettina in this Bulletin, as she attended the last formal lunch of the Wyvern Society – it is always good to put a face to a name and vice versa!



## Reunion of the Wyvern Club - King Alfred School (KAS), Plön:

Paul French has sent us the report from the reunion of the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion luncheon, which is printed below, but first, this lovely photograph of his class in 1947 when he and his brother were pupils at Belle Vue!



“This photo shows my class at Belle Vue BFES Primary School in 1947. The class room had a wonderful view of Kiel harbour from which we could watch the flying boats/aircraft. My twin brother, Peter and I are in the 2nd and 3rd places in the second row. Our family came to BAOR Germany in October 1946. My older brother Ron joined King Alfred School in Plön in 1948 and Peter and I joined KAS in 1949.”



Peter and Paul in 1982 on a 3 DIV exercise (Ex Claymore) when both were of COs of their respective Regiments.



Paul French, with his brother Ronald, who was on the first school train in 1948.

### **From Paul French MBE, Chairman, Wyvern Club (King Alfred School, Plön) of the 76th King Alfred School, Plön Anniversary Luncheon held on 13th Jan 2024 in London:**

‘On the 13th Jan 2024, the Wyvern Club made up of former pupils and teachers of King Alfred School (1948 - 1959) Plön, celebrated the 76th Anniversary Reunion at a formal luncheon in the Radisson Blu, Bloomsbury Street Hotel. This was the 70th year that the Wyvern Club have celebrated with the same Bloomsbury Group of Hotels. The Reunion was well attended with some 90 members being present, made up of mainly former pupils, one former teacher, plus children, and

grandchildren of former pupils. Some members had travelled to the occasion from USA, Norway and France. The reception proved highly successful and included a military trumpeter to provide the celebration fanfare prior to formal speeches. The event included moving montage photographs of the many activities and events of the school's short history which were shown during the initial reception as well as during the meal. The highly successful film, 'The King Alfred School Story', produced by former pupil, Peter Dent, was shown later during the afternoon. (You can view this film if you wish on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsmFbM9DA3M&ab\\_channel=PeterD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsmFbM9DA3M&ab_channel=PeterD))



### Founder members of the Wyvern Club

From L- R: Ann Scallard, Elise Payne, Barry Stanley, Ron French, Shirley Hemming, Richard Ascough, Clyde Aylin;

The school Wyvern Club which was formed in 1954 enjoyed much success with annual Reunions taking place in London plus additional major Reunion gatherings taking place in Plön during 1988, 1998, 2008, 2018 for the 40th, 50th, 60th & 70th KAS Anniversaries, respectively. The former KAS school estate is now the home of the Plön Marineunteroffizierschule (Navel, Junior Officer School). All these reunions in Plön were well attended by both staff and former pupils with numbers of some sixty to eighty members taking part on each occasion.

Stadt Plön and Marineunteroffizierschule invariably invited members to impressive, formal, friendly receptions in their respective establishments. Excellent relations have been maintained with the Bürgermeister, Stadt Plön and Commandant of MUS over the years. In 2013 and 2017 Wyvern Club, Dragon Boat teams trained on the Thames, made up largely of grandchildren, then competed in the Plön Dragon Boat Festivals. These were

highly successful and provided a glimpse for children and grandchildren of former KAS pupils, of the wonderful setting and opportunities that parents and grandparents had enjoyed, benefitted from and experienced during their time in Plön between 1948 and 1959. Although the Reunion of the 13th Jan 2024 is to be the last formal luncheon event, informal gatherings will go on, so that the Wyvern Club members may continue to regularly meet.

At the time of our luncheon, a niece of one of the school members, Liz Watson who was a former primary school pupil at AFCENT, has just finished "The World's Toughest Row - Atlantic 2023" across the Atlantic as one of the "Ace of Blades" – a four women rowing team. They completed the challenge by rowing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean in a 25ft boat in 47 days, 7 hours and 27 minutes, setting off from La Gomera, in the Canary Islands on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, with the team finishing in English Harbour, Antigua on Monday



29<sup>th</sup> January 2024. During our lunch to celebrate our 76 years of the Wyvern Club we mused and lingered on memories of past achievements, but it was wonderful to consider that our families, and others, continue to enjoy challenges and success now. Long may the spirit of adventure continue!"

**Photographs from the Wyvern Club Reunion, January, 2024**



Enjoying the lunch and watching memories!



The school train.....

The trumpeter hails the event! The screen shows a map of the Plön area, where the school site was chosen by John Trevelyan, the first Director of BFES.

If you are interested in viewing the film made about the school, it is available here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsmFbM9DA3M&ab\\_channel=PeterDent](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsmFbM9DA3M&ab_channel=PeterDent)

Jenny Billington (seated), well into her 90s and last surviving member of staff.



Dr Bettina Blum of Paderborn University, who has attended several of the reunions.

and Richard Ascough, who was on the first school train.

Photographs-  
thanks to

Peter Dent





## In Remembrance:

Jo Vestey sent us the names of close friends from SCEA/BFES teaching days who have sadly passed away over the last year: **Margaret Sowerby** was an Art teacher at St John’s Singapore and Rheindahlen died in April 2023; **Doreen Brown** taught in Hong Kong also died in April 2023; and Jo’s close friend **Margaret Wishart**, who taught in both Malta and Hong Kong and died in January of this year. Jo points out that like many unmarried ladies her single friends did not have children to report their loss so news of their passing took time to reach friends. We extend our thanks to Jo for sharing names and thus giving us time to pause and consider all who worked for the betterment of children’s service education over the years and who may have passed unknown to many of their friends.

Jo also would like to remember **Marjorie Marshall** who died late last year in Portugal after a period of ill health – Marj taught in Germany and Hong Kong, where she met and married Roger Marshall when they taught with Jo at St Andrew’s School, HK; **Kay Birtwhistle** who also taught at St Andrew’s in Hong Kong and after returning to UK in 1974 went to live in Stockholm after marrying a Swede and there taught in a British school. She sadly died of asbestosis. Lastly, Jo reports that **Nigel Grandfield’s** sister wrote to tell her that he’d died as a result of Parkinson’s disease. Jo comments that this was an awful trial for an athletic man who played wicket for the Hong Kong national team. Nigel had worked in Cyprus, Gun Club Primary and St Andrew’s school, Hong Kong. Jo have a special connection to Nigel as he ‘gave her away’ when she married in Hong Kong as she had no family members present.

Also, we would like to remember **Trevor Ricketts**, who taught at Tal Handaq in Malta and was a stalwart of SCADS and produced many of the wonderful musicals performed by teachers and families. Trev died suddenly following a stroke in February this year.



## And so, goodbye until next month:

We have previously asked for short articles for our Bulletin, and would like to thank all the members who have sent in their contributions. However, we could always do with more! So, here is a short list of suggested subjects that you might feel able to contribute – it doesn’t have to be long, just a paragraph or two and a picture always looks good:

- Life as a pupil in school
- A photograph of a special day/ ordinary day/ with friends
- Your hobby
- A Limerick or poem or short story
- An event in my life that I remember well...
- Getting together with old colleagues/friends

*(this list sounds almost like the Monday morning ‘composition’ that we had to write at school long ago – not meant to be such a hard task – just a hint at what you might write on these wet mornings!)*

Best wishes

Hugh and Christine Ritchie (Membership Secretaries)