

# Remembrance

Remembrance has played a big part in School life since the First World War. The various Memorials are essentially remembrances of the Two World Wars, the Great War of 1914-1918, and the Second World War of 1939 to 1945. Remembrance has however continued long after cessation of hostilities, with an Annual Remembrance service, regular visits by pupils to Battlefields and visits to the School by War veterans and other survivors.

**Topics include the following:**

[The Great War Memorials \(Porch, Tablets and Jocks Lodge field\)](#)

[The 1914-1918 Roll of Honour \(digitised volume\)](#)

[The dedication of the Jock's Lodge Athletic field, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1921](#)

[The dedication of the Memorial Porch, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1923](#)

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[The Second World War memorial Tablets](#)

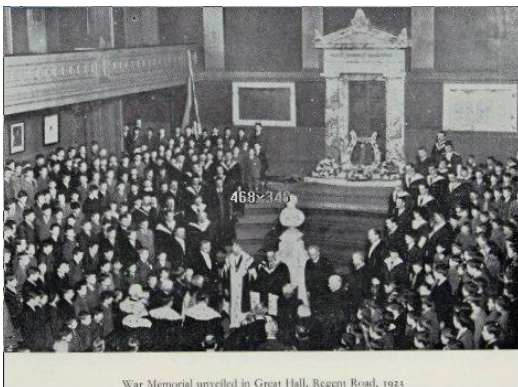
[The School Organ](#)

[Other recollections](#)

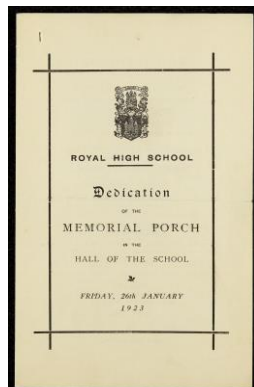
## The Great War Memorials

### Memorial Porch

The memorial porch of Skye and Iona marbles was originally erected in 1925. Brass tablets containing the names of 182 former pupils who died in the 1914-18 War were erected at the same time. The marble was the gift of Dr James Watt: the architect was James Gray. The inscription ΘΥΔΕ ΣΘ ΤΕΘΝΑΣΙ ΘΑΝΟΝΤΕΣ is by the Greek poet Simonides and may be translated into modern idiom as 'Their Name Liveth for Evermore'



The unveiling of the Memorial Porch and Brass Rolls of Honour, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1923



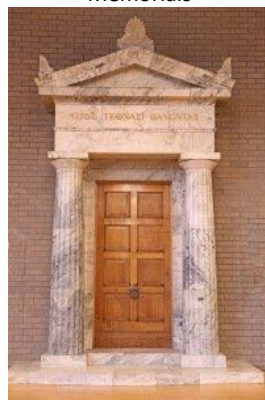
The Programme detailing the Service associated with the unveiling of the Memorials



The Queen, Duke of Edinburgh and Rector Dr D S M Imrie outside the memorial Door, Regent Road, during the Royal Visit, 4<sup>th</sup> July 1958



The Memorial Porch at the Remembrance Service,



The memorial porch, now



Leaving Students, Parents and other guests outside

## The First World War Memorial brass tablets

The two brass tablets shown below contain the names of the 182 Former Pupils who died in in the 1914-1918 War



The tablets have been erected on either side of the Memorial Porch.

## Memorial athletics field at Jocks Lodge

When the subject of a war memorial to the former pupils who fell in the First World War was being considered it was felt that it should not be merely decorative but that it should take a form which would benefit the boys of the School. So grew up the idea of a memorial field at Jock's Lodge in addition to the marble porch in the hall. Dr James Watt negotiated with the Duke of Abercorn for the property in 1919 and the price was paid by instalments until 1930. The Education Authority presented the pavilion opened by Prince Henry (3<sup>rd</sup> son of George V, and later Duke of Gloucester) in 1925. Later the field was properly fenced and commemorative trees were planted on the perimeter. The stand was erected by donations.

The last rugby match (against Stewarts as was the first) was played on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1987, ending a sixty seven year connection with the Jock's Lodge site. The proceeds from the sale of the ground were used to purchase the playing fields at Barnton, and construct the pavilion there.



Opening of the New Field, Jock's Lodge, 2nd October 1920 versus Stewarts FP. (Ball kicked off by Mark Morrison)



Opening of the Jock's Lodge Pavilion in 1925 by Prince Henry (3<sup>rd</sup> son of George V)



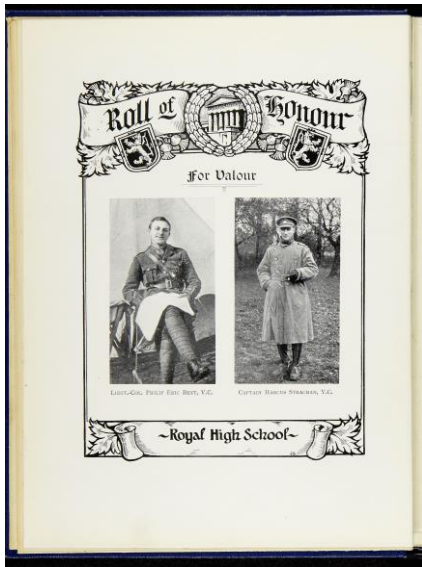
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## The 1914-1918 Roll of Honour (digitised volume)

This 100 page book has been digitised. It lists all those Former Pupils who went to the War, along with photographs of the one hundred and seventy four who died. Those wishing to acquire a copy should contact the History Editors.





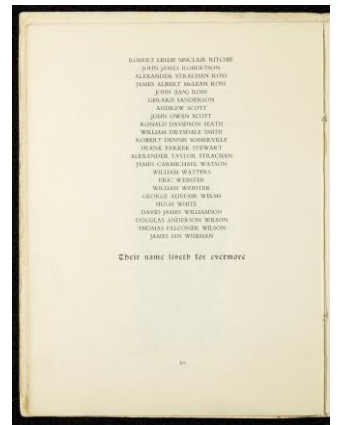
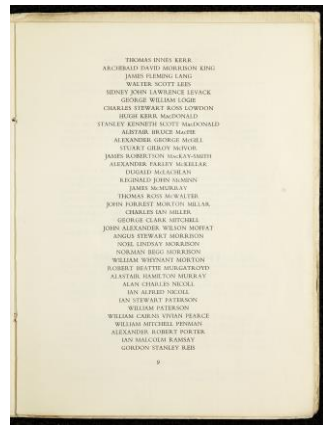
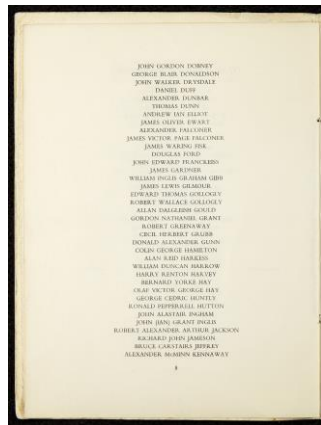
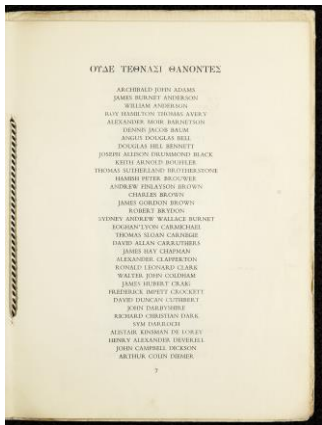
Philip Bent VC and Marcus Strachan VC depicted in the 1914-1918 Roll of Honour

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## The Second World War memorials

### The Roll of Honour

The following pages are reproduced from the booklet prepared for the unveiling of the Memorial Windows, erected in memory of those who served and died in the Second World War. The complete list, shown below, has been extracted from the brochure prepared for the unveiling on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1949.



## Memorial Windows

The memorial stained glass windows were the work of William Wilson and the panels by William G. Dey, both former pupils. They were dedicated in 1949 to the dead of the 1939-45 World War. The symbolism represents Scotland and her great men throughout the centuries and their connections with the School, the builders of the nation, its thinkers and its heroes. We owe the windows and the panels bearing the names of the fallen to the work of the Ladies' Committee of that time who under the energetic convenorship of the Rector's wife raised the funds to meet the entire cost.



Artist William Wilson at work on the Windows



The Memorial Windows



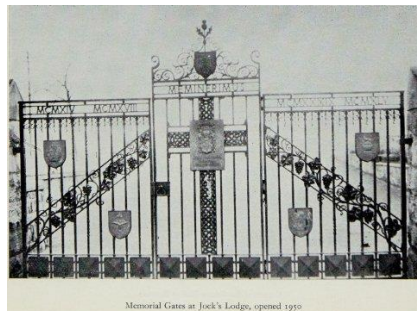
The memorial Windows installed in the Great Hall at Barnton

## Memorial Gates

The gateway was designed by William G. Dey, a former pupil, and the construction was carried out by another former pupil, R. S. Watson. Mr Hadden produced the memorial gates. The gates bear copper shields emblematic of the services. The vine motif is the Christian symbol of life. The whole design is headed by the single word *Meminerimus* which is taken from the School song. The gates were removed when the Jock's Lodge site was sold, and in due course they were re-erected in the playground at Barnton. In 2015, for the first time the gates were opened on the day of the Prize Giving and Leaving Students were invited to pass through them on the way to the reception in the pavilion.



Match V Stewarts on 30th September 1950 to celebrate the opening of the memorial gates



The Memorial gates installed at the Jocks Lodge athletic field



The Memorial gates installed in the playground at Barnton

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## The School's Remembrance Services

*Kate Fraser, formerly Curricular Leader of History, and Depute Rector since April 2017, has for several years worked with pupils to create an exhibit which is shown during the Annual Remembrance Ceremony in the School Hall. Kate produced this article for the inaugural RHS digital history describing some of the Former Pupils who have been remembered in recent ceremonies.*

Remembering the sacrifices made by the former pupils of the Royal High School during the conflicts of the twentieth century is still a pivotal part of school life today. Every year, during the week leading up to Remembrance Sunday, the whole school stops to remember. The school community stops to remember the 1026 former pupils who served with the army during the First World War, 300 of whom were wounded, and 182 were killed. The school community stops to remember the 1243 former pupils fought during World War Two of whom 131 were killed.

The week of Remembrance culminates in the formal Memorial Service which all pupils in S5 and S6 attend. This process of Remembrance remains largely unchanged over the years. Former pupils and important members of the school community are invited. The Rector gives an address. The youngest pupil in the school turns a page of the Book of Remembrance. The School Captain, accompanied by the Vice Captains, lay wreaths at the Memorial Door for those who fell in the First World War and at the Stained Glass Windows for those who fell in the Second. Two minutes of silence and reflection are held and the Last Post movingly played. Indeed, the service is largely unchanged from that described in Schola Regia, in November 1920, 'On November 11<sup>th</sup>, Armistice Day, the School assembled in Hall for the purpose of holding a short service in memory of the fallen. The Rector read out the names of Former Pupils who were killed during the Great War; and after the two minutes silence had been reverently observed, the Reverend Mr Strang gave a short address. He explained for what high principles these men had died, and encouraged the school to preserve by word and deed the noble tradition of sacrifice and service and the important role the school played in the war'.

Every year the Assemblies try and put a face to the names of those who died in the conflicts. The two Victoria Cross winners from the World War One, Philip Bent and Marcus Strachan, are remembered. The History Department of the school recently managed to track down the Grandson of Marcus Strachan, who wrote a very moving letter to the school, highlighting the exceedingly fond memories his grandfather had of his old school.

Over the past three years, as we move through the centenary of the First World War, there has been particular emphasis on this conflict. In 2014 we remembered the first FP to be killed, 3 days into the war, John Maxwell who had joined the Navy two years before the outbreak of war, He was a signal boy on HMS Amphion, and he went down with his ship when it was blown up by a mine off the English coast on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 1914. The second FP killed in action was Captain Ernest Mure Glanvill, of the Royal Army Medical corps, who was killed in action on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

We have remembered those former pupils who were not killed in direct action on the battlefields. One FP, Captain Mitchell was killed in the Quintinshill rail disaster on the 22 May 1915 near Gretna Green.

We have remembered George Watson. He was the second son of a former rector of the Royal High School, Dr. Watson. He left our school in 1915. Here is some of information shared about him from the School magazine. 'Although he was much too young for the army, he was so anxious to serve that nothing could prevent him. In the beginning of July 1916 he went out to France and volunteered for work with a tunneling company of the Royal Engineers, and it was while he was working with them that he was shot dead by a sniper on the 10th September'.

We have remembered George MacRae, who was a great athlete and played in the first 15. A former school captain, Sydney Riddell also fell. He was very good at maths and played cricket and football as did George Matheson, a former editor of the school magazine. All three pupils have formed part of the Remembrance Assembly over the past few years.

As we approach 2018 we will be remembering the last Royal High School pupil to die in action during the First World War, Private Oliver. He died in September 1918, only two months before the war ended. When he was at school he was keen on all sport and played football and cricket. He won two silver cups at the school games and was described as always being 'a thoroughly clean sportsman'.

Schola Regia has formed the basis of the research for the Assemblies, packed as it is with letters from the trenches, and sadly, memorial notices. It tells of boys in the school putting together parcels and packages to send off to the FPs on the Front Lines, including updates of the progress of the school's rugby teams – sharing the delight when they beat the likes of Watsons and Heriots.



Every year the History department is involved with a trip to the Battlefields of Flanders, which culminates in a very moving and poignant ceremony at Tyne Cot. Current members of the school community gather in front of the memorial to Philip Bent, to pay their respects to a former pupil who lost his life during the First World War inspiring and leading those around him, receiving the highest award for Bravery. Our current school community is ensuring that the Greek inscription above the Memorial Door, 'They died but did not die' holds true. They are not forgotten.

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## School Visits to Battlefields

Many School trips have been taken to the WWI battlefields. This topic will be populated in a future edition.



*2017 Battlefields trip - Tyne Cot, Belgium*

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## Three Schoolmates

The 1936 Annual Report (shown below) has, like all those until the late 1990's when the role became too large, a list of all pupils at the School. The one shown is remarkable in that three War Heroes are on the same page, two of them in the same fifth form class, and one a year ahead as Captain of School.

FORM VA.		FORM VIA	
815	Adam, Clifford Wallace James Anderson, Robert Sanders Baum, Dennis Jacob Beaton, James Brown, Eric Melrose Currie, Ian Stanley		Barnetson, William Ewart, Roy Gibson Ford, Douglas
820	Donald, John Robert Fingland, Stanley James Gunn Gordon, Douglas Frederick Perry Jeffrey, Bruce Carstairs Judge, Thomas Douglas	865	Grant, Ian William Ballantyne King, Archibald David Morrison Kydd, Robert MacDonald, Stanley Kenneth Scott
825	Lambert, Kenneth Henderson Lomax, Eric Sutherland M'Beath, James Ian Miller, David Fleming Smith Nelson, Charles Cannon	870	M'Gill, James Smith, Thomas Douglas Steljes, John Ferguson Wallace, Peter Rennie Graham Wiseman, Denis Buchanan Yuille, David Tulloch
830	Nicoll, Ian Alfred Patterson, George Gordon Pearce, William Cairns Vivian		

*Annual Report 1936. In form VA are pupils number 818 (Eric Melrose Brown) and 826 (Eric Sutherland Lomax), while in form VIA is pupil number 863 (Douglas Ford).*

These three pupils made their mark on Humanity in different ways. The first two served in Europe and Singapore respectively, and lived into their mid 90's, while the latter was executed by the Japanese in Hong Kong at the age of 25 on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1943.



Douglas Ford as a Lieutenant in the Royal Scots in 1939



Eric Lomax as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Royal Signals attached to the 5th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery



Eric Brown as an RNVR Pilot, probably in 1939

The stories of **Douglas Ford** and **Eric Brown** are told on the RHS Club website (and in this History in the 'Famous People' pages).

See [http://www.royalhigh.co.uk/a\\_tale\\_of\\_valour.htm](http://www.royalhigh.co.uk/a_tale_of_valour.htm) and [http://www.royalhigh.co.uk/famous\\_people.htm](http://www.royalhigh.co.uk/famous_people.htm)

The story of **Eric Lomax** came into public notice when a film one of the books he had written about his wartime experiences was made into a film. 'Railway Man' recounted his life from his capture in Singapore to his reconciliation with one of his Japanese torturers while in captivity in Thailand.



The following account has been compiled from the account in Wikipedia

In 1939, aged 19, Lomax joined the Royal Corps of Signals before World War II broke out. Following time in the 152nd Officer Cadet Training Unit, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant on 28 December 1940. He was given the service number 165340. He was a Royal Signals officer attached to the 5th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery. As a lieutenant, he was captured by the Japanese following the surrender of Singapore in February 1942. He, along with the other Far East Prisoners Of War (FEPOW), undertook a forced march to Changi Prison. He was then taken to Kanchanaburi, Thailand and forced to build the Burma Railway. In 1943 he and five other prisoners were tortured by the Kempeitai and convicted of 'anti-Japanese activities' after a clandestine radio (which he had constructed) was found in the camp. He was transferred to Outram Road Prison in Singapore for the remainder of the war.

On 12 September 1946, it was gazetted that he had been mentioned in despatches "in recognition of gallant and distinguished services while (a Prisoner) of War". He was awarded the Efficiency Medal (Militia) in 1949 and was granted the honorary rank of captain. He retired from the Army in 1949.

Lomax was the first patient of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture. His later life included reconciliation with one of his former torturers, interpreter Takashi Nagase of Kurashiki, Japan. Takashi had written a book on his own experiences during and after the war entitled *Crosses and Tigers*, and financed a Buddhist temple at the bridge to atone for his actions during the war.

The following Obituary in the Telegraph of 26<sup>th</sup> May 2017 is a flowing account of his life

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/military-obituaries/army-obituaries/9596599/Eric-Lomax.html>

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## The Second World War Memorial Tablets

Memorial tablets for those Former Pupils who died in World War 2 were unveiled on November 9th 2019.

The unveiling of the Second World War Memorial windows on 5th July 1949 was accompanied by the installation of wooden memorial tablets, which sadly deteriorated in the intervening years, sparking the idea of recreating replacements in the same form as the World War one versions. The tablets were researched, designed and commissioned by a Former Pupil, with funding provided by the Royal High School Club.

One of the photos below shows Katy Gray and Ken Falconer, niece and nephew of Alexander Falconer. He was a Major in the Border Regiment (India) and was killed on active service in Burma in February 1945. In one of the photos below, Ken Falconer is pointing to his Uncle's entry on the new memorial. Both Katy and Ken are former teachers at the Royal High.



The platform party



School pupils and guests



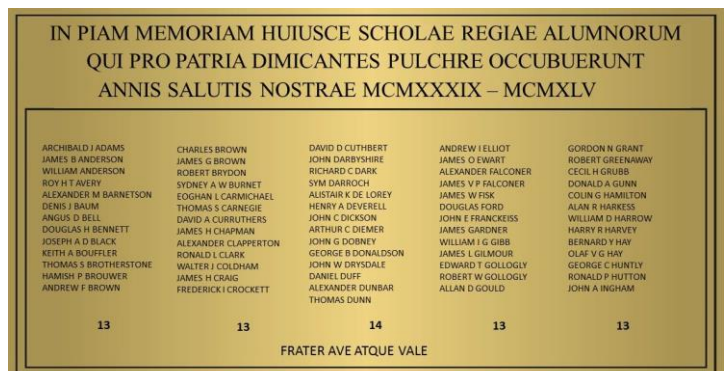
Katy Gray and Ken Falconer, daughter and son of Alexander Falconer



Sir Walter Scott gets in on the act



The engravers at work on the tablets



The two tablets shown above are displayed on either side of the Memorial Porch

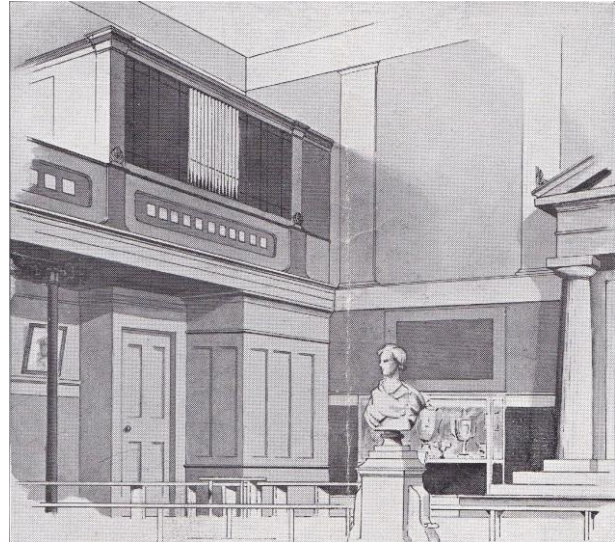


## The School Organ

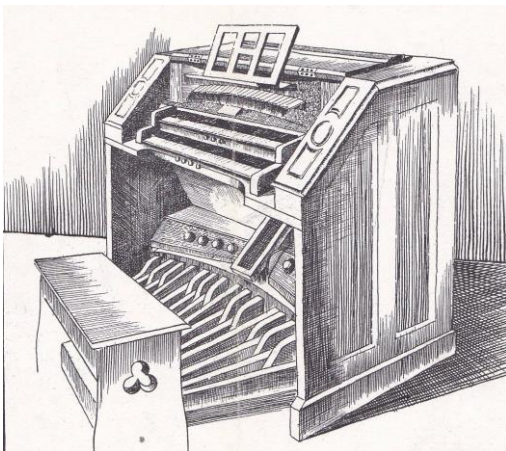
The School Organ was also part of the WW2 memorial, and a short history has been written. It was originally installed in a church in St Leonard's Street, and purchased as part of the WW2 memorial, installed in Regent Road in 1948. It was moved from Regent Road to Barnton in 1967, the year prior to the school relocation, and despite being played occasionally, was not utilised on many occasions. A project was instituted in 2022 to undertake a minor refurbishment, and to record a short organ concert by two former pupils. The concert [can be heard here](#), and a few historic and current photos are shown below.



St. Paul's Free Church in St. Leonard's Street, Newington – organ in use between 1898 and 1942



The east organ loft in the hall at Regent Road, installed with the west loft and the console in 1948



The organ console



Bill Bowie and his boys rehearse circa 1963



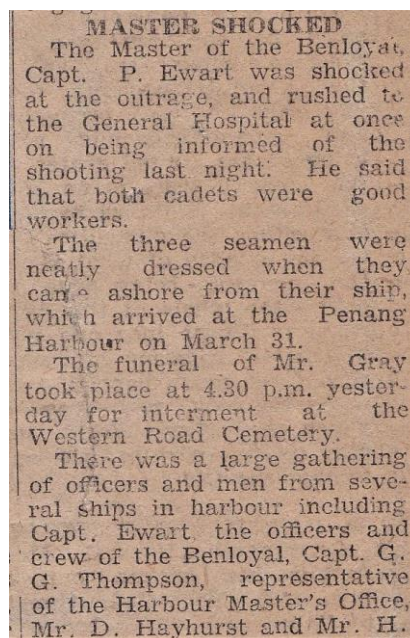
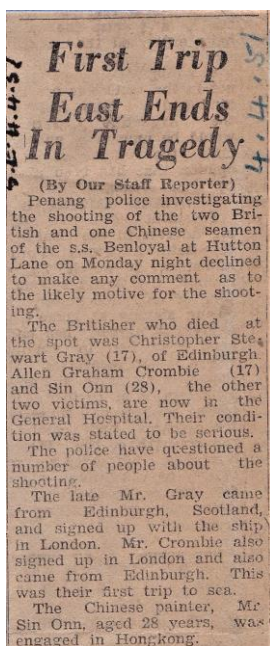
Who said organs didn't have many pipes?



RHS Organ team (engineers and performers), 28th October 2022

## Other recollections

- One thousand and twenty-six former pupils served with His Majesty's Forces during the 1914 war, approximately twenty per cent of all the school's scholars eligible to participate. Over three hundred were wounded, one hundred and eighty-two paid the supreme sacrifice, seventy-nine were mentioned in dispatches, twenty-seven gained foreign decorations and one hundred and nine were awarded British and Commonwealth decorations, decorations that included the Victoria Crosses that were won by Lt Colonel Phillip E. Bent and Captain Marcus Strachan.
- On page 71 of John Murray's 1997 History, one RHS Correspondent, on the death of a fellow former pupil, wrote "being slightly wounded on the same occasion, I was near him in the dressing-station. We were chatting away together and he seemed quite cheerful. I for one never thought he had been mortally wounded".
- The account of Philip Bent, reads: Twice previously mentioned in dispatches, and the holder of the DSO, he was in command of a section of the Leicestershire Regiment in October 1917 when he rallied an exhausted division with the cry 'Come on Tigers', the nickname of the Regiment. He captured Polygon Wood in Belgium, but in the moment of victory he himself was killed. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.
- Already the recipient of a Military Cross for bravery, Captain Marcus Strachan took command of his company when his commanding officer was killed in a charge on a troublesome German battery at the battle of Cambrai. After killing seven German gunners by himself, and silencing the battery, Strachan cleverly fought his way back through the German lines bringing with him not only his own wounded men but fifteen Germans whom he had casually made prisoner en route.
- The School Duxes in 1906 and 1907 were both killed in the Great War. David Watson died on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015, and Colin Cumming died on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015. John Handyside, Dux in 1899 died on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1916. Other Duxes up to 1918 also enlisted, but survived, although some were injured.
- Returning Second World War prisoners were entertained in the School Library in 1945 or 1946 (W C A Ross History p 38).
- Christopher Gray left School aged 16 in 1951, and became a deck cadet on the Ben Line ship SS Benloyal. He was on shore leave when he was killed in Penang, Malaya by terrorists on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1951. At the Prize-Givings of 1953 to 1956, there was a 'Christopher Gray Swimming Trophy' presented at the annual prize-giving by Mrs R S Gray, whose name matches the one in a newspaper cutting about the incident supplied by Gordon Milne, a Former Pupil. The Christopher Gray Trophy is still presented to this day (2022)



*The newspaper cutting announcing the death of Christopher Gray in 1951. His Mother initiated and presented the first Christopher Gray swimming trophy at the 1953 Prize Giving*