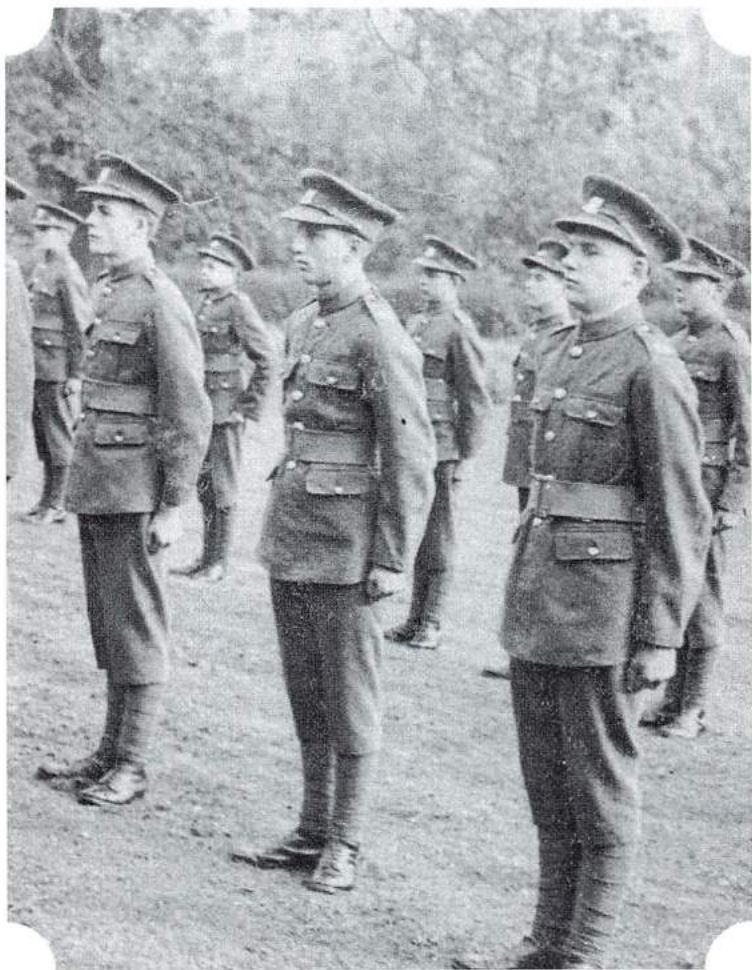


Their swords are in your keeping
The Wartime Generation of Framlinghamians



Published by the
Society of Old Framlinghamians
marking the 60th anniversary of
the end of the Second World War

Foreword

Over 500 pupils spent at least some of their schooldays at Framlingham College during the Second World War. They included, in the early years, some who had fled from other countries or whose families had been torn apart by the conflict.

Life at the school had to be adapted to very changed circumstances which included a memorable evacuation to Repton and the loss in the armed forces of eighty-four old boys, many of whom were still at school when war broke out.

This account of those six years was sparked by a request to contribute, while memories of those times are still held in mind, to a book, *Schools at War*, to be published by The Association of Representatives of Old Pupils' Societies (AROPS).

We asked John Waddell, who was at Framlingham for the whole of the war, to compile our contribution and he in turn appealed through our web site for the recollections of his contemporaries. The result produced more information than AROPS called for but sufficient, it seemed to me, to warrant publication by the Society of this pamphlet recording those extraordinary times three score years ago.

To those memories of schooldays, we have added tributes to just three of many OFs who served with distinction in foreign fields. We include too, a postscript reminiscence of OFs visiting the D-Day beaches 60 years after. We offer this as our tribute to that splendid generation of OFs.

Norman Porter,
President, Society of Old Framlinghamians

FRAMLINGHAM COLLEGE IN WARTIME

Framlingham College is fortunate in being situated in the heart of the country, far from any large town or industrial district. The danger from air attack is therefore at a minimum. However, as an additional safeguard the Governors had, before the outbreak of war, provided four concrete Air Raid Shelters in the grounds, capable of accommodating the whole School. The boys are regularly drilled in getting to their shelters, and in the use of their gas masks.

CURRICULUM. It has not been found necessary to make any important modification to the Time-Table.

OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES. As a War measure, to assist the domestic staff, the senior boys have been called upon to undertake the making of their own beds and the cleaning of their own boots. In addition, they are being asked to sacrifice some of the time devoted to games, and occupy themselves in work on the land: one of the School playing fields has been ploughed up and used for growing vegetables. The boys are responding very well to the calls made upon them, and show clearly that it is their desire to help in these difficult times.

CATERING. Catering is more difficult, but so far, in spite of a scarcity of some commodities, it has not been necessary to alter the standard of feeding.

*The notification which
parents received soon after
the outbreak of war*

The Wartime Generation

The Second World War as recalled by the pupils of Framlingham College at that time.

Framlingham College is, as the crow flies, a dozen miles from the Suffolk coast which was assumed, in the early days of World War II, to be one of the sites where a German landing was likely to take place. It was also on the route to London by German aircraft from the more northerly bases in the Low Countries.

Neither fact was conducive to parental confidence although for the pupils, in recollection at least, such awareness of danger did not weigh heavily.

They had returned in that September of 1939 to a school darkened by blackout curtains and lit by what seemed to be 25 watt bulbs. Rather exotically the dormitory lavatory windows had been painted orange and blue light bulbs installed which might not have fooled the Germans but certainly confused us. (The physics master offered an explanation for this which was greeted with considerable scepticism).

Through the Phoney War period, we also had the occasional air raid drill sitting in dug-outs which were mud-floored and dark, while clasping our gas masks in their cardboard boxes .

Even such air raid shelters were rather more useful than the advice apparently tendered by A.R.P. officials in 1938 who suggested that, in the event of an air raid, the school should 'scatter the boys in the surrounding countryside rather than provide splinter-proof shelters for them' In fact the shelters such as they were, remained virtually unoccupied. Their inadequacy must have become apparent to the school.

Firewatchers were told to awaken each dormitory if they received a telephoned Red Alert. These Firewatchers were much envied for both their freedom to roam the school unwatched and for the extra rations provided to sustain them in their vigil.

"When the threat of invasion was at its height, I remember a school group under Major Collins helping to build a concrete pill box in Badingham Road. The last time I looked it was still there, standing guard like the Martello Towers".

The Rev. John Bennett ('34 - '42)

Thus summoned, as only happened very occasionally, everyone was required to sit or lie down on the flagstones paving the main corridor of the school and presumably not give too much thought to the amount of solidly built Victorian structure which could come crashing down on their prone bodies if Hitler had had it in for them.

In truth the threat from the air never really materialised. There was the dramatic interruption to breakfast (porridge and bread, with jam if you had any left) when a plane roared low overhead, machine guns at full blast. First assumptions that the school was being strafed were eventually displaced by the fact that it was one of our fighters shooting down an escaped barrage balloon. Of course there had been several instances of old boys buzzing the very place where, not that many months before, they had been pupils rather than pilots, but they had all resisted any more aggressive intention than the desire to show off.

"Soldiers stationed nearby used to come up to the school to have baths, and rugby matches were played against Army teams. This was in contrast to the present ban on matches between schoolboys and mature men - although oddly enough we ran rings round them".

Andrew Currie ('38-'43)

One stick of bombs from a fleeing German bomber did land about 800 yards away across College Road, having been observed actually falling from the low-flying aircraft. (Those of us who were sitting on Prince Albert's statue plinth in front of the school immediately identified it as a JU 88 for we were all aircraft spotters at that age and in that time). A teacher at

the town's elementary school was killed but there were no casualties among College personnel.

However one Framlinghamian had a lucky escape. Peter Simpson ('32 - '40), was walking in the town which, as a prefect, he could do, and saw the bombs leave the aircraft. He turned and ran back about 20 yards to get behind a house and lay prone with his hands over his head. In a few seconds the bombs exploded and he felt bits of debris falling on his back but was unhurt. He was in the middle of the stick with at least two bombs on either side.

Much later in the war a flying bomb (a 'doodlebug') landed and exploded in the wood near the school swimming pool . Examinations were taking place at the time and when the aircraft's engine suddenly stopped overhead, pupils were told to dive under the nearest desk. Much chaos, accompanied by spilt inkwells, ensued. From the Higher School Certificate grades achieved, the invigilator may have been carried away in his reporting of the drama of the occasion with commensurate latitude being shown by the examiners.

" A group of burly sixth-formers dug a zig-zag 1914/18 war trench under the officious eye of Major Collins and Sgt. Major Vale by the pine trees next to 'The Canon'. Quite what use it was escaped everyone."

Andrew Currie ('38 -'43)

The majority of such flying bombs, however, passed overhead on their way to London and at times one could almost imagine a schedule and feel slightly contemptuous if one was running a bit late for, by this time, the East Anglian air was hugely populated by the Flying Fortresses, Thunderbolts and Mustangs of the American 8th Air Force whose airfields surrounded the school.

The Flying Fortress bombers excited our particular attention because they seemed to make their final turn for the Parham airfield before landing using Framlingham Castle, across the mere and water meadows, as their marker. Often damage to the aircraft was easily visible and so too were the flares they released at just this point indicating that there were wounded aboard.

However it was the threat of invasion which had, at least for one,

summer, a more dramatic effect on wartime school life than all this aerial activity.

Parental concerns had already reduced the number of boarders in the school and, by the February of 1940, there were only 142, with further removals taking place even during term. In June, with Dunkirk and the fall of France, the governors developed an evacuation plan. The summer term was shortened, ending on June 25th, and pupils were instructed to find their own way to Repton School in Derbyshire on August 6th. Fewer than 100 pupils reassembled in the picturesque small town where two houses had been allocated to the evacuees. Brook House accomo-

' The day boys carried on classes practically as usual during the evacuation to Repton. The only difference was not so much noise and not so much sport. There was gardening which was a bit of a bore, but most of the boys were from the surrounding villages and it wasn't too hard on them. The classes were, as usual, morning and evening and then it was a matter of cycling home at night with a small lamp on the front and no rear lights but a white patch on the rear mudguard.'

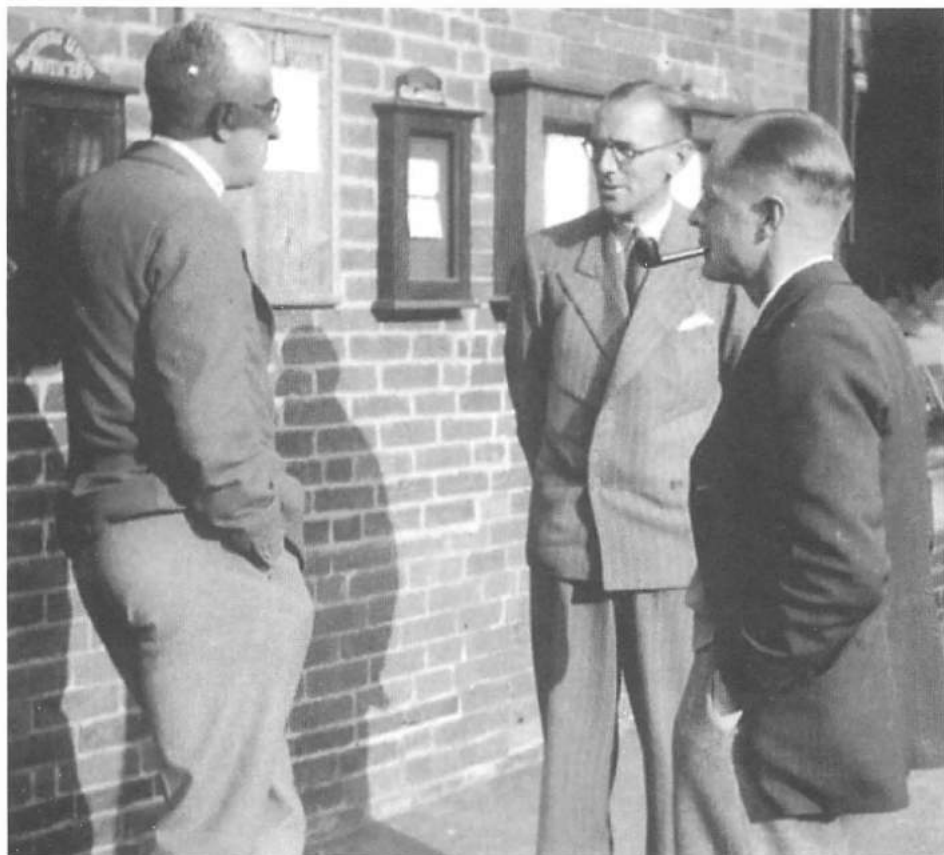
Ivor Webb ('37 -'42)

dated the Junior School while the older boys were in Hall House (dominated, one pupil recalls, by a huge picture of Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher, an Old Reptonian).

The day boys, always a minority at the school, remained in Suffolk with a rather ad hoc syllabus. The one day boy who made the trip continued to live outside the school's influence, staying with a family living in Repton, where the husband was an Old Framlinghamian.

Repton's facilities included its beautiful library which was held in some awe by the more studious, as was "the creepy Saxon crypt of the church next door", to quote one of the Framlingham visitors.

There was a noticeable shortage of masters. The younger had by now been called up and not readily replaced by those who had thought their teaching days were over. Those staff who had made the trip to Derbyshire took subjects with which they had not been previously associated and it was not unknown for senior boys to have to fill in for masters on occasions.



Guy Simpson ('39 - '40) took this rare picture from the Repton sojourn of an impromptu staff conference. The Rev. Rupert Kneese (left), who was very much in charge of matters during the evacuation, talking to W. E. Winstanley (centre) and Quentin Cuckow who was at the time the Junior School housemaster.

For the pupils the move seemed marvellously liberating. At Framlingham boarders had been forbidden to enter the town. At Repton they had no alternative. The two houses they occupied were at opposite extremes from the centrally placed classrooms, church and playing fields, to which they had to make their way daily. Shops could be entered. The baker on the hill was still selling doughnuts: unheard-of luxury. And the Repton tuck shop ("Grubba" apparently in their lingo) served a series of differently flavoured milk-



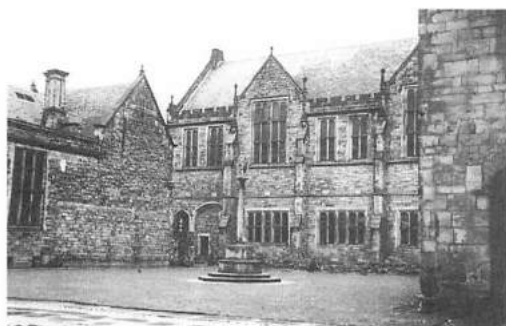
shakes which still, when Old Framlinghamians who were there reminisce, surface within minutes among their memories. It hardly seemed like wartime at all except for one thing...

Repton is only a few miles outside Derby, and Derby featured, among its other delights, the Rolls Royce factory which was making Merlin engines for the RAF. It was consequently bombed often and heavily. We who had, at that time, still to encounter much in the way of serious bombing

We were sent down to the cellars during an air raid alert at Repton. I, being a prefect, allowed myself to sit on the stairs. The young nurse who shared my name sat with me one night and got the sack the next morning for neglecting her duty, to flirt with a boy. I don't think we flirted so as you would notice"

Paul Griffin ('35 - '40)

-the incidents recounted earlier were all subsequent to the Repton evacuation - could sit at our dormitory windows (heavily taped up to dis-



Repton School, seen on the left from the air, dates back to 1557 and its buildings, scattered through the small town, have a timeless air.

courage flying glass) and watch the firework display. Of course the newly-found mobility meant that, during free time, expeditions could be mounted to the surrounding countryside where shrapnel, cartridge cases, incendiary bomb fins (and in one documented case at least, an unexploded incendiary bomb in its entirety) could be retrieved and stored in tuck boxes or lockers.

An RAF bomber which crash-landed just outside Repton shed enough perspex from its broken cockpit cover for most people to have a portion and when it was, rightly or wrongly, subsequently claimed that the pilot had been Guy Gibson who later achieved Dambusters fame, it inflated the value of each chunk on the souvenir market.

There was also a whiff of celebrity attached to our new school surroundings. Until the week or so before our arrival, a film crew had been

using the school to shoot the film 'Goodbye Mr Chips', with Robert Donat in the lead. Boys who had returned for a few days as extras had each, we learned with some envy, been paid a golden sovereign; virtually the equivalent, even at its face value, of a term's pocket money!

It was, in all, a delightful interlude during which the sun, in memory at least, shone permanently. Lessons somehow seemed to speed by quicker than at Framlingham and prep was undoubtedly more civilised because, instead of just Upper Sixth form members having studies, as at Framlingham, at Repton there were studies for everyone, shared by four or five boys. Inevitably some of the previous occupants had left some possessions to await the new term and the sight of a Framlingham boy wearing a Repton boater may have been regrettable, if understandable in the heat of August, but was not unusual.

For the older boys there was most memorably an educational (for so it was defined) visit to a Burton brewery where a certain amount of educational sampling is remembered to have taken place.

There was swimming in the River Trent but cricket loomed largest in our lives. A local RAF XI playing against the school included W. J. (Bill) Edrich, the subsequent star of many a Test Match, among its members although the result, probably mercifully, has now been forgotten. More easily recalled by many people was the constant presence in daylight hours of Tiger Moths and Miles Magisters wheeling and circling above us from the R.A.F. station at nearby Burnaston with their trainee pilots who would become the successors to The Few of the forthcoming Battle of Britain.

There is agreement, among all those who made that journey to Repton, that everyone there seemed remarkably kind and in all we were treated as welcome guests rather than refugees from a threatened part of Britain. That the respect was mutual is born out in the history of Repton School (*Repton 1557-1957*, edited by Bernard Thomas) which reports that there was an earlier evacuation when, for a year, the boys of King Edward's School, Birmingham were moved to Repton. "Later", Thomas records. "we had a briefer but very pleasant visit from Framlingham College".

.....It was certainly brief. On September 10th, five weeks after arrival, we were back on the train to our various homes. Only years later, at least for many of us, did a fuller picture emerge of what had happened

Prior to the evacuation, the school had been notified that the military might requisition the College buildings 'for a short period'. There was also, of course, the commercial reality of declining pupil numbers and therewas the looming invasion threat,

The Governors reached their accomodation with Repton as described by Leslie Gillett in the College history as follows: 'Each house with



Framlingham's two wartime headmasters in the second world-wide conflict. W.H.A. Whitworth M.C. , M.A.(left) presided over the school from 1929 to 1940. Mr R.W. .Kirkman M.A. took over as Headmaster in 1940 and remained at Framlingham until 1955

Framlingham boys in it would have a bachelor master from Framlingham as House Tutor. The charge to be made by Repton was 30/- (£1.50 'new money') a week per boy. This was for board and lodging, use of classrooms, laundry, swimming bath, certain playing fields and hard tennis courts, the School Chapel and Sanatorium. Framlingham was to provide sanatorium staff and a Lady Housekeeper and linen maid for each house. If the stay should extend to the Christmas term - an arrangement quite acceptable to Repton - the plan was to distribute the visitors among the school houses, the two schools being, in effect,

amalgamated.' But two weeks after this decision was made, the Governors endorsed the recommendation of their Executive Committee and directed that the school should return to Framlingham in September. Leslie Gillett observes that Sir Robert Eaton White, the Chairman of the Governors who sanctioned the school's removal to Repton, had died on the day before the move took place but offers no specific explanation for the change of plan.

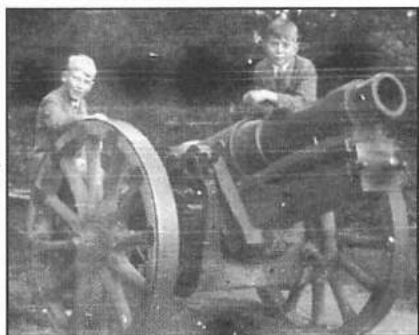
The events at Dunkirk require one other mention in the school's wartime story. Hervey Whitworth had been Framlingham's Headmaster from 1929. He was widely respected with a fine war record and a limp to prove it. He was also a keen sailor and during the momentous days of Dunkirk a parent asked him if he would come and navigate a small boat from the river Deben to pick up soldiers waiting on the French beaches.

"While brother Mick (Michael Simpson '32 - '40) and I were at home for the summer holiday at Easton we joined the Local Defence Volunteers. We were each issued with an American rifle and attended regular instruction. Subsequently we were able to keep our bicycles and rifles at the school so that we could report for duty if the call came."

Peter Simpson ('32 - '40)

The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Governors approved his action but Whitworth sailed only as far as Harwich when the message came through, standing down the would-be rescuers. More was, at the time,

"There was no damage to the fabric of the college during the war but 'The Canon', which stood adjacent to the south wall of the chapel, was a casualty. It had been presented to the College. Quite who gave it has been as lost, as the weapon itself which was taken away to be melted down and recycled, although there is some dispute among OFs about quite when."



John Waddell ('39 - '46)

"When we were in the 5th form we managed to escape 'legally' during geography lessons using borrowed bikes . We were producing a 6 inch to-the-mile map of the area - ostensibly to show what crops were growing etc. Sometimes we would find a crashed 'plane in one of our fields - an interesting diversion from sugar beet.

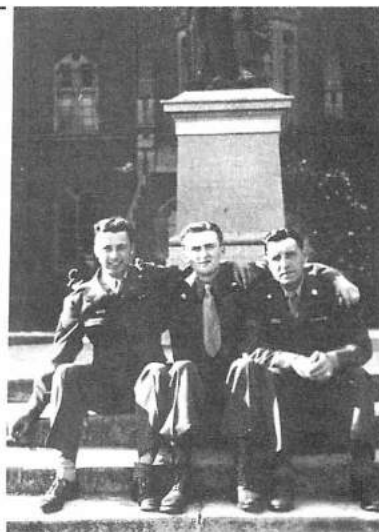
Also there was a chance that an escape rubber dinghy would have an emergency ration pack

which might yield Horlicks or Ovaltine tablets; even more valuable than the 0.5 ammunition mainly used for home-made fireworks.

Incredibly there was virtually no security at Parham airfield and we could cycle right up to the Flying Fortresses and talk to the guards.

We often had informal visits to the school from US personnel and I can remember a few joining us for an impromptu cricket match and having some success, despite or perhaps because of their baseball actions, with the bat. I still have this picture (above) of three of them on The Front'

Brian Rosen ('40-'46)



read into this action, taken together with the fact that, shortly after the return from Repton, the Governors accepted Whitworth's resignation, than appears to have been the case. He was succeeded by Reginald Kirkman.

Whitworth's only comment on the speculation connecting the two events was made 15 years later when, in a letter to the *Old Framlinghamian* magazine, he wrote: 'The fact that my Headmastership came to an end in December 1940 had no more to do with the operations off Dunkirk than with the battle of Trafalgar'.

This , with some additional observation, is the type of wartime routine reported by Bob Gillett in *The Second Sixty Years*.

The day began for boarders at 7.15 a.m. with the ringing of the rousing bell by David Foreman, the college servant whose loyalty and length of service had already made him the subject of affectionate anecdote and legend. It was a hand-bell that Foreman rang, the sounding of bells in public being prohibited unless to announce an invasion.

The Linen-room, benignly governed by Miss Barnes and Miss Meakings, whose love for the College and everybody in it did not diminish their firm management, was open by 7.30 a.m. for the drawing of clean clothes although clean white detachable collar would



have been laid out on individual's beds every other day with shirts, socks and underwear on a more leisurely schedule.

Once a week each House enjoyed a bath-morning though this entailed much scrambling in order to be in time for Assembly at 7.55 a.m. Silence was observed in the Assembly Hall, in the procession to the Dining Hall after names had been checked against the School Roll by the Duty Master and until he had said grace from the top table.

Food was, of course, rationed, sugar being kept in screw-top jars



Slowly a sort of modified normality returned to the school. The 1942 Sports Day saw Alfred Pretty, founder of the S.O.F. , present the prizes (left). Field Marshall Lord Ironside reviewed the J.T.C. (above) on Speech Day where he was guest of honour and the Easton Harriers met on the front outside what was then Headmaster Kirkman's house.



bearing the owner's name; butter was strictly apportioned and the ownership of a jar of jam almost a status symbol.

Beds were made after breakfast; Chapel service, lasting some ten minutes, began at 8.45 a.m.; morning school began a quarter of an hour later.

Lunch was preceded by roll-call and presided over by the Headmaster and his two full prefects. Members of staff sat at the head of the boys' tables, waited on by the doyen of College stewards, the imperturbable

"I loved the food and have struggled ever since to find such good plain English cooking."

*The Rev. Max Halahan ('42 -'46)
with no obvious indication of tongue in cheek!*

"We had tripe for lunch one day and hardly anyone ate it. It wasn't served again."

John Ineson ('43 -'50)

"Burleigh ('42-'47) and I used to take long afternoon walks and we discovered a pub that would provide tea with JAM and CAKES!"

The Rev Max Halahan ('42 -'46)

Artie Hall. After the meal Headmaster and staff left the Duty Prefect to give out notices, to praise or chastise the School for achievement or shortcoming.

Then, on the Thursday of each week, pocket-money might be drawn from the House Bank run by each housemaster. The total capital for each pupil was (old money) £1 although, of course, it bought a great deal. Other than in exceptional circumstances, the equivalent of 10 new pence was the going withdrawal for the week - enough to buy 4 bars of chocolate, if rationing allowed, at the sporadically opened tuck shop run by geography master Brown in the wooden hut then on the Tech. Centre site.

Games took place in the afternoon, with evening school from 4.30 p.m. until 6 p.m. A cup of tea was to be had before this session, High Tea following before 2 hours of Prep. began at 7 p.m. The final Lights-out for the School - the Junior School did no prep and were abed by 7.30 pm -

"One young Pilot Officer, A.L. Searby, came to visit his old house - Rendlesham - and before the end of term he was declared missing in morning chapel. His squadron was flying the ill-fated Manchester. I remember him telling us that the Manchester was a white elephant."

Sqd. Ldr. Michael Dobson ('34 - '42)

- was generally at 10 p.m., preceded by a bell for silent individual prayer when all would kneel by their beds for a minute or two. After lights-out the black-out curtains and screens were drawn back and, whatever the weather, windows were opened wide.

Defaulters were sometimes directed to help in the newly created kitchen gardens rather than run round in unproductive circles under the eye of the gym instructor (who was always called Sergeant-Major because that title seemed to go with the job, although he had actually

"The JTC visited army camps and I remember the time on a range when we were allowed to fire an old water-cooled Vickers machine gun. It was like being Gary Cooper in some old film"

Andrew Currie ('38 - '43)

been a Major in World War I). Each summer holiday the school chaplain, the Rev Kneese, ran a quasi-voluntary camp for the more senior boys to help get in the harvest.

The O.T.C., more democratically renamed the Junior Training Corps, eventually obtained uniforms which enabled them to discard the tunics, peaked caps and puttees which had, until then, given their parades a turn-of-the-century appearance and an Air Training Corps squadron offered alternative training which seemed to consist mainly of being taught the morse code by the local postmaster.

Although most nights passed without incident, members of the Stradbroke dormitory, the largest and the only one accommodating the entire house, recall observing with some morbid fascination the red glow in the sky which apparently betokened the bombing of Norwich.

In the freezing Spring Term of '41, with no hockey possible

for many weeks, ice hockey took its place under local rules on the frozen mere and even reached the formality of a match against the town. The local hunt, the Easton Harriers, held a meet or two at the school and, in our caps and sweaters, we were allowed to follow on foot.

Slowly on the sports field old rivalries revived with the matches against assorted service sides giving way to contests against nearby schools, Ipswich, Woodbridge, Culford, Norwich and Greshams, as transport became more readily available.

Greshams was a very popular away match for the excellence of their cricket teas!

Towards the end of the War Michael Rosen ('40 - '46) kept a Singer Le Mans 4-seater sports car in a private garage in Framlingham. In it, he, Gerald Mitchell ('42 - '46) and I used to go for jaunts on a Sunday afternoon. As we were all prefects we were allowed into town, and, since the possibility of any boy owning a car, particularly during a war, had occurred to nobody, we consoled ourselves with the argument that it was not specifically prohibited.

One Sunday we had all been to tea with my parents and, on our rather belated way home, we got a puncture on the A12 by Glemham Hall. Chapel roll call was looming and Rosen admitted that he didn't have a jack to use to change the wheel. Disgrace and dishonour faced us when along came four German Prisoners of War out for a stroll (Towards the end of the war many worked on local farms and such freedom of movement was not unusual).

Very quickly they solved our problem. Picking up a substantial branch from an oak tree they stuck it under the car and levered it up manually while we bolted on the spare. and we made chapel with seconds to go.

John Waddell ('39 - '46)

On one trip to play against Norwich School the coach driver, on hearing gunfire from a now forgotten source, stopped his vehicle

and everyone hurled themselves into a ditch. Then, after a few minutes, they proceeded on their way.

One cross-country run at a late stage in the war is particularly remembered because it took participants on a route which, with only a slight deviation, led them to a crashed American aircraft from which the crew had apparently bailed out. It was still unguarded and rather more than modest souvenirs were claimed by the runners.

We kept abreast of the current hits through the set-room radio and the gramophone with an electric pick-up plugged into it. Some of the more well-heeled boys were in the habit of sending off for records.

There was another source of entertainment at school - the one-valve radio set. I forget who was our guiding light, but we would send away for the components and assemble them in home-made wooden boxes about a foot square. I did have a general idea about the function of the various parts, but I can now only recall the heady thrill of achievement when, having connected everything together successfully, I heard Alvar Liddell reading the news on the Home Service.

To operate this device outdoors you needed to sling an aerial wire over the branch of a tree, push a skewer with an earthing wire into the ground and stick on your headphones. Indoors you would drape the wire over a wardrobe or picture rail, attach the earth to the nearest water pipe and you were in business.

Barry Bonner ('43 - '45)
writing in the magazine.

These included a live ammunition belt and part of a bombsight mechanism which, as it turned out afterwards, was still considered rather secret ... so secret, in fact, that the following day, police arrived at the school. All tuck boxes and lockers were searched and one participant, who had to give up his ammunition, recalls tea chests full of materials, the bomb sight and his cartridge belt among them, being taken away. As the tide of battle turned, the build-up for D-Day saw extensive troop movements as the Suffolk coastal area became a staging post for the soldiers

who were eventually to embark for the Normandy landings. There was an air of expectancy and, on the morning after news of the landings had emerged, boys whose descent to breakfast had traditionally been at the last moment, dressed speedily to get down to their set room even before the meal for a glimpse of the house newspaper.

"Steve Lee and I started out on a walk to Dennington across the fields whwn a very low flying German bomber (a Heinkel, I think) dropped some bombs on the town and then flew right over the College in our direction. We were in an open field and as it passed over us, we clearly saw the rear gunner swivel his guns towards us and open fire. Never in the history of the College have two boys sprinted so fast towards a high hedge into which we plunged head first to the accompaniment of bullets crackling through the twigs."
Anthony Brook ('39 - '43)

The way the eventual news of Victory in Europe was received was recalled by the late Tim Woodgate ('43 - '48) in a letter to *The Old Framlinghamian*. On the evening of Monday May 7th 1945 it was whispered during prep that victory was to be celebrated on the following day and the school was to have two days' holiday. The announcement had been on the wireless at 7.40 p.m.

One boy opened the window in the upper floor of the New Buildings classrooms and shinned down the drainpipe in celebration. The master on duty, the Rev. Kneese, tried to insist that prep should continue but eventually admitted defeat.

A queue formed to use the one public telephone to contact parents for collection next morning amid great excitement and general rejoicing.

For those whose homes were too far away for such celebration, a trip into Framlingham had to suffice to mark the occasion; an illegal trip but one to which, for once, the authorities turned a blind eye.

Woodgate recalled that there was a funfair visiting Framlingham at the time and it was the focus of attention for many of the stay-behind pupils.

The war in the East, of course, was not quite over but it seemed to us far, far away.

VE Day put most of our worries behind us, although for those in the armed forces, of course, it was a rather different story.

However, losses of old boys, whose sacrifice might be announced in chapel or on the notice board - adjacent to the one with information

“Waiting for my father (a former head boy) who was on leave from Egypt and coming to Speech Day, I did not know whether he would be in uniform or civilian clothes. I was about eight and a half and had not seen him for 4 years so I was afraid that I would not recognise him. But of course I did....”

Chris Seddon ('43-'50)

about the day's cricket, rugby or hockey teams - occurred with fearful regularity.

Framlingham's sons paid a heavy price, as the picture on the back cover of this publication of the memorial in the chapel to those lost in the war indicates, but their sacrifice was recognised in a magnificent post script to the war years.

It was to mark the lives of all those who gave them in two world wars, that in 1947 the Society of Old Framlinghamians purchased Brandeston Hall set in 26 acres to be used as the College's preparatory school. It was opened, in the presence of the friends and relatives of the fallen, in the summer of 1949.

Framlingham College was founded as Suffolk's tribute to the memory of Prince Albert and it was fittingly his granddaughter, H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone, who unveiled a tablet which evocatively enjoined its readers to remember the fallen. 'Their swords', it reminds each succeeding generation of young Framlinghamians, 'are in your keeping'.

Away from Framlingham

in Foreign Fields....

In all, the two world wars accounted for the deaths of two hundred and thirty four Old Boys and masters, eighty four of them in World War II. In World War I Old Framlinghamians won three Victoria Crosses. Awards in the second war did not reach those heights but were many; registered and recognised at the school with pride as the news of them filtered through rather more slowly than that of the fatalities.

Both modesty and death in battle mean that the many, many acts of bravery will never be known to us. Certainly news of some such, even when acknowledged by the awarding of a medal, did not necessarily reach the school until well after the war.

Even sixty years on, interesting anecdotes continue to emerge. In a copy of *The Old Framlinghamian* magazine only last year many learned for the first time of the camaraderie which existed between ex-pupils who re-discovered the bonds of friendship in very different circumstances.

There was Peter Bailey ('35 - '38) an R.A.F. pilot who flew the Dakota aircraft which towed the Airborne Division glider piloted by Brian Hebblethwaite ('34 - '39) . After triumphantly surviving the defence of Pegasus Bridge, their partnership was maintained at the Arnhem operation when Hebblethwaite was killed. Or there was the D-Day landing on Sword Beach when Ken Mayhew ('29 - '34) was driven ashore in a bren gun carrier by another O.F. Cliff Kindred ('28 - '32) .

Any detailed recounting of the wartime valour of Old Framlinghamians would inevitably prove to be less than complete.

Here, standing in, as it were, for all of them are three war experiences, one from each service, chosen because, thanks to the media recognition they were accorded, they are better known than would have been the case if the stories had been masked by the modesty of the subjects.



Major George Whittaker M.C. M.B.E

THE NAME WHITTAKER has a resonance for many O.Fs. Glyn Whittaker ('35 - '42) was Head Prefect after the return from Repton. As a Lieutenant in the Royal Marines Commando he died of wounds in Normandy. Richard Whittaker ('31 - '37) , whose medals are now owned by the College, won the D.F.C before his death in action . The picture above is of the third of the school's trio of Whittakers, George Whittaker ('28 - '32)

He, too, was Head Prefect. Born in Argentina, he worked in Kenya before returning to Britain, crossing the Sahara Desert in an ancient lorry with three companions and a school atlas. His plan was to become a tea planter but in India he also became much involved in military activities including the Baluch Regiment in which he served in North Africa. Commanding a company in the Battle of the Cauldron in 1942, his company were attacked by some 60 of Rommel's tanks against which the British anti-tank guns were having little success.

Whittaker decided to knock out at least one tank and leaving his trench with a "sticky bomb" made for the nearest tank with his sergeant. The sergeant was killed by fire from the tank and when Whittaker hurled his bomb, it failed to explode.

He was captured and sent to a prisoner of war camp in the German-occupied part of Italy from which, with a companion, he escaped.

The following two months brought out all the qualities,

subsequently described in *The Daily Telegraph* as those of a widely respected, shrewd and natural leader. For two months Whittaker and his companion endured huge hardships, dodging the Germans as they trekked towards what they hoped was Allied-held territory.

They had little food and lived in constant danger of discovery. The physical strain was characterised by the fact that, after their boots disintegrated, they wrapped their feet in rags and dragged themselves onward through the snow which obstructed them for much of their journey.

When they finally reached the American forces, at first they were thought to be deserters, but eventually were taken to hospital and finally back to England. Whittaker spent the rest of the war, once he had recovered, as an instructor in jungle warfare in India where, after the war, he returned to the tea business.

The M.C. which he was awarded for his bravery in the Battle of the Cauldron was followed by peacetime recognition when he was appointed M.B.E. for services to the British Community in Calcutta.



**Lt. Fergus Dempster R.N.V.R.,
D.S.C., O.B.E. and Spymaster**

FERGUS DEMPSTER ('29 - '34) is included here, representing all those who served in the Royal Navy, although his naval career was hardly conventional. Popular, ebullient and good at games he was

invited to sail with Headmaster Whitworth ; was with him, indeed, when the Whitworth yacht was run down and sunk by a French trawler off Ramsgate. That peacetime incident was somehow indicative of his wartime exploits.

Only just before he died, aged 81, did Fergie admit to the fact that, for much of his life, he had been a senior officer in the Secret Intelligence Service (S.I.S.) and that career grew out of his wartime exploits in a clandestine operation known by the deliberately anodine name, The African Coastal Flotilla.

No hint of the flotilla's operations appeared in news bulletins or official reports. Its task was to secretly land or pick up people and material from under the very eyes of the enemy's coastal defences.

When Fergie joined the force it was operating from Corsica using fast small boats to take passengers, known as "Joeys" to rendez-vous along the coasts of Italy and France.

As well as landing them (by rowing them ashore) and retrieving Joeys who were agents, saboteurs, propaganda specialists and escape organisers, the flotilla ferried stores, arms, ammunition, food and money for the Resistance.

It also picked up fugitives who were trying to evade the Gestapo, escaped PoWs, crashed Allied air crew, politicians, and Resistance workers. The boats had their own captains and crew, but the Flotilla officers, who called themselves "Shoeflies", were responsible for the conduct of the mission, ensuring that the Joeys were delivered to the right pinpoints.

It was dangerous work. Some pinpoints were compromised and ambushed. There was always the risk of running into enemy destroyers, E-boats, flagships and coastal convoys. Any boat still at sea after day-break was attacked by the Luftwaffe. The allegiance of some MAS boat crew could not be relied on. There was at least one mutiny, resulting in the death of the Shoeflies officer.

Operating only in the 10-day dark period of the moon each month, the Shoeflies carried out more than 100 missions between January 1944 and the Allied invasion of the south of France in August. For his part in all this Dempster was awarded the DSC.

Subsequently he joined a Special Counter-Intelligence unit to detect German

“stay behind” agents in the Antwerp region, under the cover of the Port Security Control. Years later, the Belgians made him a Knight of the Order of the Crown.

His wartime career found a mirror in peacetime when he rose rapidly through the ranks of the S.I.S. He became second in command of Security Intelligence, Far East, involved in the post-war struggles in Malaysia and Vietnam. For four years he was Head of Station in London before moving to set up their version of the S.I.S. in Australia. When the O.B.E. was added to his decorations, it was reckoned by those who knew him to be short of what he deserved.



Group Capt. Percy Pickard D.S.O., and two bars, D.F.C., Czech Grand Cross

IT WAS THE WAR in the air, perhaps because of its relative proximity, which most engaged the attention of Framlingham’s pupils during those six years of conflict in World War Two and in it an old boy, Percy Pickard (‘26 - ’32) became one of its most iconic figures.

Group Captain Percy Pickard, D.S.O. with two bars and D.F.C. and Czech Grand Cross would also, if the French had had their way, have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

His school career was not remarkable, although he had an obvious affection for the place. After his hero's death, Headmaster Whitworth told a national newspaper: "He was a nice lad but a great problem. He was always bottom of his form".

His early activities after he left offered some indication that adventure was in his blood. He and a friend hitch-hiked their way from London to Nairobi and then drove back in a truck they had bought for £50. By the time the war started he had already established his career in the R.A.F.

Much of his early wartime activity was confidential. As the commanding officer of 161 Squadron, with its secret aerodrome in Kent disguised as a farm, his special task was to drop off, or sometimes pick up spies and resistance fighters in enemy territory using the slow but agile Westland Lysander.

He also flew many leaflet and bombing raids and was once rescued from the North Sea after being shot down and spending 13 hours in a rubber dinghy.

In contrast to his early secret work, Pickard was cast as the pilot in a wartime film documentary drama *F for Freddie* which was hugely popular and made him an instant celebrity.

Surviving, unlike many of his peers, one hundred missions meant that he had the opportunity to remain on the ground thereafter but he refused the offer.

Shortly before his death, he had returned to his old school and talked modestly to a star-struck audience. Indeed he invited a couple of senior boys to be his guests at his bomber station in Yorkshire where they flew on a couple of routine air tests and saw the squadron off on a bombing mission to Kiel.

His final mission was planned by him with typical bravura. He led a bombing attack on the French jail at Amiens where 12 members of the French Resistance were due to be executed. It required time-delayed bombs to be dropped against the outer walls of the jail from a height of 60 feet.

As a result 258 prisoners escaped, including 79 members of the Resistance. But Pickard's Mosquito aircraft was one of the two aircraft lost.

The French, who reached his crashed aircraft first, removed all marks of rank and identity from his body so that the Germans did not know the quality of the man they had shot down.

Pickard was buried in a cemetery at Amiens and the French erected a memorial stone as soon as it was safe to do so, which listed Pickard's decorations and added for good measure the V.C. because the French thought he deserved it.

Official and ministerial directives to remove it were ignored. Only when Pickard's wife, Dorothy, asked them to do so was it erased.

Even then the French had the last word, making a film *Derrière ces Murs* as a tribute to him.



The painting above of the Amiens raid was commissioned by another Old Framlinghamian H. Patrick Taylor ('43-'46) and is by artist Graham Coton

Foreign fields revisited

D-Day 1944 - 60 years on

Four OFs have recorded their experiences with other OFs during or soon after the greatest military achievement in all time.

The following write -

Peter Bailey (K34-38) of Noosaville, Queensland: "I was an RAF Pilot on No. 233 Squadron and towed gliders on all three operations mentioned in the 'Glider Pilot' article on page 32 of The Old Framlinghamian of Spring 2004. All RAF and Glider Pilots carried out extensive training early in 1944 prior to the advent of D-Day. I was flying Dakotas from RAF Blakehill Farm (Transport Command) in Wiltshire and was fortunate enough to team up with **Brian Hebblethwaite (R34 - 39)** who was a Glider Pilot. I towed Brian in the second glider to be dropped on Pegasus Bridge on the night of 5/6 June. The six gliders of 6th Airborne Division made history that night by hold-



Peter Bailey beside Brian Hebblethwaite's grave at Oosterbeek

the bridge against heavy odds until relieved by the main force. Brian and his co-pilot Banks returned to our unit unscathed about two weeks later amid much celebration! The next airborne operation, ‘Market Garden,’ at Arnhem was to follow on 17 September and it was my privilege again to tow Brian with Banks piloting their Horsa Glider with 1st Airborne Division. The operation suffered huge losses and sadly both Brian and Banks were killed by mortar fire on 19 September fighting in the ground battle. Brian was a very special friend and so modest - what a waste of life, aged 21 years. I have visited Brian’s grave on one of my visits to Oosterbeek Cemetery.”



“I remember **David Brook (S36-40)** quite well at school and had no idea he was a glider pilot in WWII but thanks to the good offices of the OF magazine, I have become a member of the Glider Pilots Regimental Association and on the mailing list of “The Eagle.” David, its Editor, responds saying that he sat next to Brian in Chapel and says the GPRRA records show that he landed approx. 3 miles to the East of Pegasus Bridge on LZ K close to the village of Barent. He and his first pilot S/Sgt. Banks were in ‘F’ Squadron. David was at Blakehill Farm too and

wondered if Peter towed him to Colchester from where they flew on ‘Varsity’ in March 1945, but it turned out that Peter’s last airborne operation was Arnhem in September 1944.

David writes: “I have been trying for 20 years to find some reference to Brian’s service without any luck in spite of receiving so much material as Editor. Now, within three weeks, I not only heard from Peter but, quite coincidentally, I heard from another glider pilot, Michael Watts “that Brian and Banks landed their Horsa immediately behind his glider on D-Day! Watts was also close to Brian at Arnhem and saw him being killed. Apparently a flight of FW190s saw Brian and others run to take cover under trees which the planes attacked with machine gun fire, killing Brian. I now have reports of what happened to him from two first-hand sources.”

Philip Simper (R25-30): “My letter might revive a few memories for Pete Bailey. At the end of the Japanese War we were both stationed at RAF Camden, NSW. He was a pilot and I was an Operations Officer. We did not know we were both OFs until, a few years after being demobbed, we found ourselves among the spectators at a school rugby match on Dixons with Lord Louis M. as a guest.”

Ken Mayhew (R29-34): “On D-Day I was driven ashore on to Sword Beach in my Bren Gun Carrier by an OF. As i/c the Carrier Platoon leading up to and including the landing in Normandy, my driver was Cliff Kindred (28-32) so I was in very good hands. He was a great chap who came through alright and afterwards worked for a Suffolk engineering firm. We kept in touch until he died some years ago and I kept in contact with his wife and daughter who now live in Halesworth.

“During a period stationed in Beaconsfield, I met Winston Churchill when I spent two weekends at Chequers re-inforcing the garrison there when he was in residence. The Guards Officer there and myself were invited to the after-dinner Film Show attended by WSC in his siren suit with Lord Louis M. as a guest.

Short Reflections on the 60th Anniversary 2004

Bill Collard (S55-58) and James Ruddock (G46-52) went on a Royal British legion pilgrimage to Normandy from 4th to 8th June 2004. At the opening of the English Memorial Garden at Caen by Prince Charles on 5th June, Bill very astutely spotted an OF face several rows away in the 5000 crowd. After much craning of necks, it was ascertained it was the face of Ken Mayhew who was naturally weeded out when the formalities were over and photographs taken with Ken wearing his Normandy Campaign and other medals.

Ken was with the Suffolk Regiment party from Bury St Edmunds. On the 6th, Ken's party avoided the expected crowds at Bayeux and Arromanches and instead went to Caen, Sword Beach and Coleville, a very peaceful contrast from the main areas. Ken writes later: “We were present at Bayeux for the 50th anniversary and General Sir Patrick Howard Dobson (R33-40) was escorting the Queen on her walkabout

and spotted me in the crowd, whereupon he gave a big shout and introduced me to the Queen. It was so spontaneous and typical of Pat. I have been 'detailed' to write the report of our trip for the Regimental Gazette."

Brain Rosen (S40-46) was entrusted with the standard of the Parachutists SAS at a ceremony on the 5th at Plumelec as he was about the only one in the Rhone-Alps section with enough strength to carry it.

John Waddell would like to thank the following contemporaries at Framlingham whose contributions have all helped to reinforce and colour his recollections:

**The Rev. John Bennett, Barry Bonner, David Brook
Tony Brook , Ian Channell, Andrew Currie,
Christopher Garrard. Anthony Chapman, Sq. Ldr.
Mike Dobson, Paul Griffin, The Rev. Max Halahan,
John Ineson, Alfred Molson, Bryan Pearson, Anthony
Rosen, Brian Rosen, Chris Seddon,
Guy Simpson , Peter Simpson,
Colin Stokes, Ivor Webb, Stewart Willett.**

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TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN
OLD BOYS AND MASTER OF THIS
IN THE CAUSE

EVERLASTING MEMORY OF THE
COLLEGE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES
OF LIBERTY.



STUDIO SAPIENTIA CRESCIT

- ROYAL NAVY -

- ROYAL MARINES -

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