

OVERSEAS BAG – 2024

“HERE & THERE” (Overseas Bag)

Overseas Bag Editor: Chris Essex (K69-75), 3 Kingston Avenue, Saltford, Bristol, BS31 3LF; Tel: +44 (0)1225 873878; E-mail: overseasbag@oldframlinghamian.com

As I have said for last few years, this is now the 20th year I have been editor of the Overseas Bag and I have immensely enjoyed the role and have visited a number of you overseas during that time, especially to mark 150th anniversary. I would be delighted if one or more of you would be happy to take this over for the future. As you can see my appeal over the last couple of years has not produce a torrent of applications but I hope this year you will give it serious thought. It is very rewarding and as a member of the website team I would be happy to support in any way I can eg local reunion lists etc. Please drop me an email if you would be interested. In the meantime, happy reading!

Once again, this edition of the 2024 Overseas Bag contains a good crop of articles from OFs living overseas from the UK. As usual, you will notice that half of this correspondence has come from just one country – Australia. It would be great to also hear from more OFs in other countries, so get writing please.

It is great to see some time and effort being put into organising future gatherings in various countries around the world over the next 6 months and I'm very happy to help anyone prepared to have a go in their area.

AUSTRALIA

Phil Bower (G65-74) was on the move at the end of 2023 to a new house on the west coast in Gingin, which is closer to Perth where his band is but he was sad to be leaving his "forever" home upon which he had lavished a lot of love care & money. He said "*Gingin is classed as regional so it doesn't have fixed internet - only what they call "fixed wireless" - essentially, the net is beamed down and everyone has to have a receiver on the roof pointing towards the main tower. It's absurd in this day and age and the MAX DL speed is a pathetic 75M/sec - but in reality I'll only have about 2/3 of that.*"

We arranged for Phil to receive a hard copy of the OF Newspaper and he said that he was thinking about doing a piloting course - they're the people who escort the oversize truck movements. H was attracted by the fact that he can take his dog with him while travelling.

He provided an update in March 2024 "*Been doing a lot of painting etc - there are a couple of photo's on my facebook. But, being in a small village, everything takes a loooooooong time to do! Been waiting for a sparky to finish the electrics for 3 months..... till that's done, there's no point in finishing the decorating, so there's no point in putting down the new floorboards which have to go underneath the wood burner but the old busted wood burner has to go first.....I'm fed up with living like a bleeding student!! Everything still in boxes etc etc. I now have aircon which is totally solar powered, so switch on & leave without any cost, I also have 6.5kw on the roof with a 6.5 battery back up, all designed to reduce bills - although the lot cost me about \$18k!!*"

Summer was a hot one this year, winter remains to be seen - although only 3.5hrs south of Gero, it's a huge difference meteorologically speaking. The "garden" is a war zone - I have to find some way to get hold of some turf for at least a small area cos the hounds are missing that & I'm pissed off with constantly having to clean up when they bring most if back in!

Music - I had a 3pce original band but the guitarist left for his own personal reasons plus I'm working with some guys on a covers project - the singer is from Nottingham! Small world. The originals thing did a facebook broadcast a few months back - it's still up I believe, so I can send you a link if you're interested? It's just over an hour long but for reasons I don't understand, we're all playing left handed (the camera appears to have reversed the imagery!). The audio isn't brilliant but for an ipad mic in a loud environment it's not bad. More later as they say!"

I asked Phil for his help naming the people in the following rugby photo, that featured Phil, my good self and former Overseas Bag editor Richard Rowe.



I believe the photo is of School 3rd XV 1974 and includes the following :

Back Row – Richard Sheldrick?, Jeremy Cumming, ?, Chris Essex, ?, Andy Slade, Mike Blake, ?
Front Row – ?, Phil Bower, Martin Hall, Richard Rowe, Alan Southcott??. Graham Hatch, Niall Foster

Although Phil couldn't help with names, he thinks he was scrum half or something.

In August 2024 Phil posted on Facebook *"if you think you're too old to rock n roll..... you probably are" (I don't so I'm not!) don't anyone, ever, tell me my rig is too big or too loud....."*



Geoff Brown (G61-66) was in touch from Chifley, New South Wales to set up his standing order to receive the OF Newspaper. He was going through treatment for cancer at the time and his wife was as well. We wish them both well.

Nick Carlton (G63-70) was also in touch in October 2023 to set up a standing order for the OF Newspaper. He had the following news *"Great to hear from you. The West of England supper looked really enjoyable and of course I remember Marsh and Hendry .. it would have been good to catch up. Yes, I had a very successful trip to Japan with my son James and posted some of our adventures on Facebook. It really was good to be travelling again and the trip was a great tonic!*

Hopefully I will make a trip to the UK next year .. possibly in the spring. I think the OF dinners are usually fairly early in the year but if there is anything later on it would be good to participate! There is an annual P&O Princess Cruises reunion in May in Southampton which I will try to make."

He was back in touch at Christmas 2023 saying *"Hope that you have been having a lovely Christmas .. we have had an enjoyable one here. My news though is not quite so good .. two or three weeks ago following*

a routine blood test my GP was concerned that my liver results were all over the place so sent me for a CT scan. I'm going to have an op on 8th Jan for further investigation before most probably starting immunotherapy. All a bit of a surprise as I have been feeling ok. When I took my son for a trip to Japan in October we were very active .. some days walking 18 Kms but I have been feeling tired with the odd twinge which I just put down to age. Will keep you posted but in the meantime wishing you both a happy and healthy 2024."

Robert Craig (K55-59) responded to my email news and said *"Although I'm feeling my age a bit I continue to volunteer at the UQ Marks Hirschfeld Museum of Medical History at Herston in Brisbane. We are always interested in anyone who has an interest in medical history particularly with the development of medicine in Queensland.*

Keep up your good work if you are able. I am always interested to maintain contact. My brother Frank Garret Craig remains well living in Lee on Solent. He was one of the first entry to Brandeston on transferring from the College, when my grandfather Sir Frank Garret.Garrett joined Princess Alice at the opening."

Mike Garnett (R53-55) was sad to hear in October 2023 that **Richard Rowe (S65-74)** was postponing his trip to Australia. He responded to Richard saying *"Hello Richard – good to hear from you and sorry that you have had to postpone your visit. 'Downsizing' is something we all have to do at some stage in our lives, and it can be very stressful. Meanwhile we in Australia are recovering from the divisive Voice Referendum which was trumped due to the voice of reason expressed by the silent majority. Good on them. I hope England do well against South Africa in the rugby championship – they have all been tight matches but I still think the All Blacks will prevail in the long run."*

In December 2023 he sent this lovely picture taken at Hanging Rock a couple of weeks earlier, with his daughter-in-law Jamie and his youngest grandchild Sonny *"and yes, that is MY walking-stick!!"*

He went on to say that he was interested to read the various stories in the recent Digest and recalled that Colin Tremlett was Head Boy when he was at Fram.

He wanted to know which one of the two in the picture was Colin. It was Norman Mayhew on the left and Colin on the right. He recalled Norman Mayhew was a very good hockey player. Both must be in their late-80's because they were a couple of years ahead





In May 2024 Mike came across the following photo of himself taken about 1955 – ie seventy years ago. He said *“It got me thinking about the history of the uniform that I am wearing, and the following may be of interest. Framlingham College was affiliated with the Suffolk Regiment that had been formed as far back as 1685, and in recognition of this the Fram CCF wore their cap badge (as you see in the photo). Just four years after this photo, the Suffolk Regiment disbanded – being affiliated with other regiments to form the East Anglia Regiment which is what it is today.*



I wonder what uniform the present CCF wears and whether they re-affiliated with the East Anglia Regiment.”

I obviously wore the same CCF uniform but can't remember the cap badge, but knew a man at the College who will know the answer to his question. I forwarded **Martin Myers-Allen (Hon OF)**.

Martin came back with the following response *“The cap badge was adopted by the Suffolk Regiment in 1901 and went on through WWI. The motto translates to, 'by the sign of the Rock'...referring to Calpe, or Gibraltar.”* He also provide a link to more info on the internet.

There then followed some interesting banter with Chris Shaw who suggested that the “charge at Beersheba” had something to do with ‘beers and Sheila’. Mike added *“At the time of the Charge, Beersheba was just a dirty township with valuable storage tanks of water, inhabited by a few scruffy Turks and their German officers. Some years ago on a visit to Israel, I went on the long drive south to Beersheba to hunt down some graves of Australian Light Horsemen whose families here wanted to know if they had been commemorated with a grave. I was able to locate three of the four missing graves and photographed them.”*

John Gates (S44-48) was in touch near Christmas 2023 with the following message *“Very hot this year, you no doubt enjoying cooler weather, it would be lovely to be back in England, but age has it's limitations as you are aware, we being 92/93. Ruth's Dr made her undergo a full driving test of 2 hours, written, oral and physical, just to cover himself when OK-ING her Driving License renewal, massive cost*

of AS710, but very glad to say she passed with flying colors.

I am still managing to go to my gym 4 times a week, and Ruth her Yoga classes twice weekly, so keeping "Body and Soul " in good trim. I now have to use a " Walker " at all times to get about- it's just tough luck!!. I corresponded with " Neville Marsh " today."

July 2024 John advised a new address which I updated. He added *"Still alive but life is getting harder, still managing to go to my gym 3 times a week had a lump cut off right lower thigh, so no gym until 22/07, makes getting back into routine very hard after nearly 14 days. Hearing is very bad now, eyesight not good, walking with Walker both inside and out of the unit at all times, however still playing Bridge."*

Peter Hollins (K70-76) came over to the UK in September 2024 and so we took the opportunity to meet up near me – see photo. You'd think I was the Aussie in my shorts, but a rare burst of summer greeted us that day. Peter had also met up **Terry Pringle (R66-75)** while over in the UK.

Colin Lipman (R53-61) as our organizer in Sydney has been a star originally offering to organize a Sydney gathering for the visit of **Richard Rowe (S65-74)** that has been postponed for the moment. He then offered to organize one to mark the arrival the of **Brian Pretty (S52-56)** and his wife to live near Sydney. This will be done as soon as Brian is feeling better.

I then heard that **Kwai Hong Ip (G80-88)** was visiting in August 2025 and was keen to meet OFs in Melbourne in Sydney so we hope that one will come off as well.

Simon Narroway (G72-75) was happy to receive his OF Newspaper in digital form and offered a generous donation to cover the next 10 years or so. His only other news was "Summer here. 37 degrees (about 100F) forecast in Sydney over the weekend. Fortunately, I am escaping to Sapporo (Japan) tomorrow to see their annual ice sculptures festival. Trust all is well. The news I read about the UK is concerning. Australia ticks along under the radar as always. "



Neville Marsh (S53-61) is one of the OF Vice Presidents and therefore gets an invite to quarterly Council meetings which are now all online. He made sent the following to our Hon Sec *"I have asked for a later time to be considered perhaps once a year so Chris and I could join the meeting. 8.00 pm in UK would be 5.00 am here, which I would be happy to get up for!"*

He started work on organising an OF reunion in Brisbane to mark the visit of **Richard Rowe (S65-74)** and his wife Denise. Sadly in February 2024 the visit was postponed but he stands ready to organise.

The Olympics in August 2024 and Australia’s strong showing in these games promoted comments from **Chris Shaw (K50-56)** which resulted in the following comment and analysis by Neville.

“Chris S, you know I love a challenge and your thrown gauntlet has been picked up! Australian Olympic tragics are keen to explain that on a per capita basis, the nation comes out on top of the medal table. Thus, as things stand overnight, Australian have 2.2 million inhabitants per gold medal whereas China comes in at a paltry 87.5 million folk to each of their gold medals. England comes in at 5.9 mipgm (million inhabitants per gold medal). A more interesting statistic, rarely used, is the percentage of gold medals per total medal count. This gives an indication as to how good a country is at winning rather than just taking part. Here is the complete list (I have chosen 10 gold medals as the cut-off: if you don’t, you will get quite aberrant results such as St Lucia with a population of 180,000 and one gold medal; we can’t allow that to muddy the waters).

Country	MIPGM	% of gold
Australia	2.2	46%
France	5.3	27%
England	5.9	30%
USA	24.2	22%
China	87.5	43%

Turning to the OF News, I was interested to see the planned Centenary Rugby match. The first match was indeed played on 11 October 1924. Unfortunately, FC lost 22-8 despite fielding three masters and the College doctor! William Tregenza was B.A. from Jesus College, Oxford, who “divides his time between Modern Languages and the games of the School.” The report of the game in the Framlinghamian makes interesting reading. Please note the last sentence – we don’t want this to happen again, do we? (my emboldening):

1sT XV.

v. Ipswich. Lost 22-8. Played at home on Saturday, October 11th.

*The school were beaten by Ipswich in their first match by four tries and two goals (22 pts.) to a try and a goal (8 pts.). Considering the comparatively short time they had had for practice the team put up a very good fight. The forwards though overpowered often in the scrums by a heavier pack were excellent in the loose. Mr. Tregenza scored after a brilliant run by Soar, and Howard added another. The first was converted. **The worst feature displayed was a tendency to lose heart towards the end of the game.***

Team: G. L. Joyce; Mr. W. Tregenza, C. W. Soar (captain), Mr. H. H. Jones and R. V. Howard; G. T. Leaberry, B. R. Blofield ; D. H. Belcher, S. S. Boreham, Mr. B. Butler, Dr. Hare, W. Collins, F. Seale, T. S. Stephenson and V. G. Bromage.

OFs of a certain age will remember that the College used to have a museum with thousand of exhibits. Neville started asking questions about the museum and access to old documents which raised our interest in what he was up to. Here is his report as at September 2024 :

*Neville Marsh (S53-61) writes that he has been busying himself looking into the records of the old College Museum. It still rankles with him that the museum and its contents were broken up and sold off by Headmaster Laurie Rimmer in 1973/4. The total number of exhibits numbered between 20,000 and 30,000, donated over a period of 100 years by boys at the College, Old Boys, teachers, and many other benefactors. Despite Mike Robinson's best endeavours as Superintendent Master, the museum became unused and unloved by the early 1970s. As a result, Laurie Rimmer decided to sell off the contents to make space for other things. Most of the collection was auctioned by Arnott & Calver in Woodbridge, although some attempt was made to return items to the original donors. Fifty years on, the location is known only for four items: a stuffed snowy owl in a domed glass case, retrieved by **Tony Martin (G47-55)** the day that the museum was broken up, two "type" fossils (the first specimens of a species to be discovered) retained by Ipswich Museum (identified by Neville in the 1950s) and an airmail letter sent by the **Hon William Robertson Warren (1892-99)**, Premier of Newfoundland, on the first non-stop transatlantic flight piloted by Cockcroft and Brown in June 1919 (recently returned to the College). Neville hopes to produce an inventory of donations, taken from entries in *The Framlinghamian* magazines and tease out some of the more interesting donors and donations. Who would have thought that the great-great nephew of Marie Antoinette's dancing teacher would come to Fram as a dancing and violin teacher and donate to the museum! The eclectic mix of donations is almost too amazing to comprehend: a violin block reputedly belonging to Stradivarius, the spider crab donated by the Medical Officer of Health for Wickham Market, two clips of poisoned Mauser bullets from the Boer War, a brick from the Black Hole of Calcutta, a crocodile's egg from the Upper Congo and a Sati immolation memorial stone from Gujerat in India, used to commemorate the immolation of a wife atop her husband's funeral pyre: the list is as endless as it is fascinating! **Neville would like to hear from anyone who donated to the museum, knows the whereabouts of dispersed items, or has stories or photos to share.***



Brian Pretty (S52-56) who I had met a couple of times at West of England Suppers I had organised got in touch in January 2024 with the surprise news that he and his wife had emigrated to live near Sydney. Here is his message *“First of all, I do hope this mail finds you well and all prepared for the coming new year. Also forgive me for the long silence but many things have happened to us since we last met and I am way behind in my updates. I still do work in Uganda but mostly from home now as travel is difficult. Difficult because, in a moment of madness, we sold up all our possessions and home and two years ago moved to Sydney Australia in order to spend out twilight years with our family, all of whom are citizens of Australia. A huge decision at my age (I will be 85 in February) but so far we are delighted to be here.*

Sadly I forgot to advise those at Fram who need to know and cannot find the email address to advise of our current whereabouts. Could you possibly let me know the correct email and person in charge of OF details.”

In an email to Chris Brian said *“So kind of you to greet us and a bit annoying to know you live in Cairns. The reason behind that being we spent a week in Cairns a short while ago and it would have been great to meet up and pretend to be Australian!!! To be honest we are not City dwellers but all our family live here so we had little choice. We absolutely loved Cairns and intend coming back again as soon as time allows.(subject to hurricanes of course).*

Having spent a large part of the past thirty years working in remote areas of sub-Sahara Africa I found the conditions around Cairns very similar and we envy you.

As you so rightly say, getting to know Australians is a whole new ball game but we have become part of a local Church which helps to understand the local thinking. My greatest problem so far is trying to understand the local language which here in Queenscliffe is like trying to follow the Scottish lingo. They seem to speak very fast which does not help but so far we have no regrets of coming here at all.

I think that come autumn time when the ranks of the teenage population have thinned, we may well come and relax out your way and if so, we must meet up. I was 52 to 56 at Fram so we must have crossed paths at some point. Although I lived in Sussex, Alfred Pretty, my uncle was head teacher of Fram decades ago and subsequently my brother and I became cannon fodder to the family history. We were also part of the Pretty family connected to Ipswich.

I had to go back to Fram a few years ago to give a talk on my work in Africa and hardly recognised the place. Bit like a 5 star hotel with amenities beyond belief. The kids of today really have got it good.”

Unfortunately the reunion/welcome in Sydney has not yet been possible due to Brian being in hospital but we hope it happens later this year.

Hugh Richardson (S43-48) was in touch in August 2024 saying that he wanted to get in touch with his old friend **Ian Channell (42-45)** aka The Wizard of New Zealand. Hugh had recently had a fall and therefore had had to postpone a planned trip to the College.

Andy Ridley (M84-89) was pleased to hear at Christmas that Chris & Rebecca Shaw had not been affected by the recent heavy rains from Cyclone Jasper.

Chris Shaw (K50-56) is as usual our greatest correspondent and my thanks to him for that and all he does to keep in touch with OFs in Australia.

He was sad to hear that the visit of **Richard and Denise Rowe** had been postponed. He said “*I echo Mike [Garnett] about the downsizing stress but maybe you will have more time to make decisions rather than being rushed as Rebecca and I were. Whenever you choose to arrive on our shores you will find a great welcome, as other SOF travellers have already discovered. Here in Cairns we have a long hot summer*

approaching, but the proximity of the Coral Sea will stop the vegetation bursting into flame - we hope! Others may not be so lucky. We collectively wish you a good sale, a comfortable move, and a visit to Oz when you can make it. A small codicil that some of us are not getting younger, so don't leave it that long!”



Chris sent a number of photos including this one with his son Shean - a 91cm Nannygai, a type of snapper and very good eating, with butter and lemon juice, and a sprinkle of parsley.



And this one taken recently, mirroring his parents in the background taken on their 70th wedding anniversary in 2008, when his Dad was 101 and his Mum 99.

“Our ages are modest by their standards, me being 84 and Rebecca will remain a mystery to everyone else!”

In November 2023 he had news that he had published the paperback version of ‘Echoes’, and had also organised a free download of a little book entitled, ‘The Making of Echoes of Gallipoli’. It’s just a chatty little conversation to anyone who cares to read it, and exposes them to all my other work as well on www.chrisshawauthor.com/shop

December 2023 saw areas of Queensland being deluged with rain and being covered on the BBC. Chris said “*I should also point out the rainfall figures for Black Mountain near Cooktown, 2189mm over 5 days. That’s 86 inches, or 7 feet 2 inches in the old money. That’s a lot of rain in anyone’s language. If my memory serves, East Anglian annual rainfall is around 30 inches.*”

Chris had also picked up on the death of **John Rankin (K47-56)** and said “*Sad about John Rankin, who was House Captain and a great table-tennis player. I have put his name in one of my novels, and he wrote he was pleased about that, and that he had his dream career as*

a GP and a hospital doctor in Dovercourt, so he would have had a good life. I met him in 2008 at the college when Rebecca and I visited. It was sadly not a happy event for me, but that’s history. “

A couple of days later he reported “Yes, Rebecca and I, and my son Shean and his family are high and dry. However, my daughter, Tanith in Mount Molloy has had over two metres of rain in around 3 days. They evacuated the farm using a boat and a tractor (and leave that as a simple image!), and they have lost a lot of their animals. We shall get the whole story over a period of time, I expect. They do not have mobile phone coverage where they are, so it was several days and someone else’s satellite phone before she got through to me. They were returning yesterday from staying with friends, but until they can get back to me, I won’t know what is going on. Cairns is isolated as the Port Douglas road is washed out and there’s an enormous boulder blocking the coast road. The highway south is blocked by flooded roads and bridges, and the three Range roads from the coast to the Atherton Tablelands are similarly flooded, washed out, or have fallen trees that will need some attention over time.

We have been very fortunate in our village. We have had water and electricity throughout this period, even though we are not far above sea level. The rainfall was able to get away quickly except when there was a King Tide of about 3+ metres. Cairns is fortunate in that there is only a relatively short flood plain, the hills of the Great Dividing Range being close to the sea here, and clears away quite quickly, whereas Townsville has several kilometres of flood plain and takes forever to drain.

A large number of Emergency Services personal are coming from all over Oz - well, they will when we can use the airport, which also went under. There will be a plethora of wonderful stories coming out of this event when the water goes down and we are left with crocs and snakes! On the road to Cooktown from Port Douglas, which was called the CREB Track, (Cairns Regional Electricity Board), where they pioneered putting in the electricity supply to Cooktown in the 1950's, there was an iconic pub called The Lion's Den. It's finally gone. There were 16 people on the roof (high?) at the time, but whether it blew away or had its foundations undermined by floodwater, remains unclear. However, when 4WD driving that challenging track, it was a fine thing to drop into The Lions Den to 'knock the froth of one or two' before continuing one's journey.

The sequel of this will be when the supermarket shelves that are now empty, are re-stocked, everyone has water and electricity, and the roads are open, but methinks that may be several weeks. First, get the people off their roofs and out of trees, and away from the crocs, the snakes, and the spiders, which also suffer lack of normal environment."

In January 2024 he was in touch with "newcomers" **Brian and Sheila Petty** and he looked forward to visit from them.

In March 2024 he contacted **Bob Munro (R54-60)** "Good morning Bob! I'm connecting with you because we have had reports of heat, wind, bushfires, and extreme danger around Mildura and Ballarat. That was a few days ago, and I've been busy doing 'stuff' I guess, but I've finally got round to you, to make sure you are safe, and your home is intact. Please let us know.

We have had our trials and tribulations too but with water vs your fire, and our floods vs your wind. My daughter had half a metre of floodwater through her house and it's on nearly half a metre stumps! Throwing out furniture that is half water is not a problem, but having family photos and such stuff ruined beyond repair is emotionally damaging to mothers, and wives, who are the home-makers. Her latest ploy is to put the farmhouse on new stumps, which will put it out of reach for next time. and we all know how that works, there never is a next time. The weather pattern changes and the rain goes elsewhere! That's life.

Rebecca and I are faring well. She has her cross-stitch projects, just finishing off King Henry VIII's children, King Edward VI, Queen Mary I, and Queen Elizabeth the First. I'm learning about marketing books, and on the results to date, I have a long way to go! I have an hour's Zoom meeting with the Gallipoli Association of UK in April, with about 60 participants at 5.30am our time, and am running the Anzac Day Dawn Service the following day, also at 5.30am! Being an owl, not a lark, that will take some getting over, but what was all that discipline about at Fram if not to do such stuff with a smile and no conception of discomfort?"

As reported on the OF website, Chris gave a talk via Zoom to the Gallipoli Association of UK. There were about 60 Gallipoli experts tuned in and Chris has to give the talk at 5.30am local time in Cairns. See this story on the website <https://www.oldframlinghamian.com/news/general/of-gives-talk-to-gallipoli-association-on-his-book/>

In May 2024 he reported that he had overcome a life-long phobia about public speaking. He did about 12 talks in just a few months on every facets of his book 'Echoes'. He went on to say "*There are two other books in the background that are waiting to be published: one is 'The Enforcer', a sequel to the 'The Imposter' and a fictional account of an invasion of UK in WW2, starting with the North Norfolk coast, and using the same characters as are in 'The Imposter'. Then, because Rebecca and I have watched more police dramas, both American and British, than is good for any one person, I wondered whether I could write such a story. What turned out, from my Muse, was a pre-Covid conundrum of a serial killer in Cairns, with twists and turns, and a chase, not through the streets of London or Birmingham or Norwich, but a 4000km chase through Queensland and into the Northern Territory. Grisly ending!*

PS:

*There was an old traveller called Shaw,
With a thirst for adventure, and more.
His foundation at Fram
Took this naïve little lamb
To Cairns tropical shore, for sure."*

In August 2024 Chris commented on the passing of **John Thurlow (K48-55)** "*I was sorry to hear of the passing of John Thurlow as he was a contemporary of mine in Kerrison. I have watched the 'mortality creep' over the years, and have seen the age group of 'shuffling off this mortal coil' schlepping ever closer. I trust Norman Porter and Paul Williman are still upright and smiling, as am I. Many have gone way before their time. I would love to join in one or other of the OF Dinners but the chance of overseas travel has now passed, and we are willing prisoners in this penal colony that is really paradise, and which has finally evolved beyond sport and meat pies for its identity. Cheers from Chris and Rebecca, and from all our Olympic heroes who punch well above our weight on the world stage. If it came down to an intellectual challenge I would immediately push **Emeritus Professor Neville Marsh** to the front of the queue, thus keeping it in the SOF family."*

In response to an invite from **Richard Sayer (S56-61)** to an OF at the Plough & Sail, Chris gave this eloquent response "*Greetings Richard and Georgina, and trust you are both well. It seems an age since your Brisbane visit with the violin connection. Your offer of an SOF gathering is seductive but sadly, beyond reach. I am fairly well acquainted with World Affairs, and have wondered about Stephen's wife, Aileen, I believe. Has she moved from Oman? Everyone misses Stephen.*

I thought the 'Plough and Sail' was near the top of my incongruous list of pub names, but the country around Snape is much like the River Deben and Sutton Hoo where ploughs and sails could well be on any given horizon. (There is the smell of the banks of the River Orwell at Felixstowe in my head.) Much of my childhood was spent exploring the mud and sea lavender, the Redshanks and Greenshanks, and mournful cries of the Curlews. A magical, lonely place of tough sedges bowing in the wind, and then they turned

this Paul Gallico landscape and waterscape into the fourth biggest container port in Europe. This I have swapped, for the last fifty years, living with sunshine and blue skies, inhabited by happy people, but not safe from 'bities and beasties' that are coming to the attention of those in safe but temperate environments. There is less of a chance of severe diseases than I experienced in the third world islands of the Caribbean many years ago. Ah me, going down the corridors of time on a Sunday morning is a fine pursuit. Rebecca and I wish you both well, with apologies not to be able to cross the world to, what would be very strange to me too, a mosque in Snape."

At the end of this Overseas Bag you can see a final summary for year from Chris.

CANADA

Howard Thistlewood (K66-73) was over from Canada and meeting up with OFs on 23 October in Essex. He reports "This time, I had lunch with James Mehta, Terence Hurlock, David A Kent, and Willis Chapman. We spent much time trying to coordinate our meet. **Terry Hurlock (R66-73)** sent the photo below showing a reunion that took place at the Crown in Lexden.

Left to right **Howard, James Mehta (S67-75), David Kent (G66-73), Terry Hurlock (R66-73) and Willis Chapman (G68-73).**



Howard added “Regarding the OFs, Terry, Dave and I started at Brandeston together in the 60s, and I knew James from Fram rifle shooting and that he lives in the area. We had a very nice lunch together, and I enjoyed staying with Willis Chapman and his wife on his farm for several days. Willis and I were great friends at Fram, and he says that we propped up the bar at the Prefects Club a little too much in our final years. We visited Willis and family earlier on a UK tour with two of my sons in 2003 when I also tried to show them Fram College but was unable to do so for “security reasons” according to staff. A bit of a change from when I went there.”

David McMillan (K54-58) wished a Merry Christmas from Montreal!

Jack Wass (Z94-98) got in touch in September 2024 and was glad to hear his old friend Kim is flying the flag in Germany. He went on to say “My art gallery, OIL + WATER is going from strength to strength, and I am currently working on a painting series called Firewalls, which depicts people in office attire with pixelated faces in very animated poses. This is partly an homage to Robert Longo’s series from the 80s called Men In The Cities. I’m also building a startup art dealership which is primarily directed at the vibrant film industry here in Vancouver. “

You can read a story on the website about his business etc

<https://www.oldframlinghamian.com/news/members-news/creative-of-prospering-in-vancouver/>



CHINA/HONG KONG

Chris Hall (G62-69) sent a long Christmas 2023 message *"In 2023 life returned to normal after COVID and the 2019 protests in Hong Kong. This means that I have less to write about, a sigh of relief from some of my busy friends who do not face a 10 page Christmas letter with equanimity. The sigh of relief may be premature since having nothing new to say has not prevented the production of thousands of books.*

2023 started badly for me. My sciatica came back so it was agony to stand up, walk or kneel down. A doctor friend recommended Panadol, but my helper Lody was unable to buy any, since stocks had run out. Hong Kong was then experiencing over 25,000 reported COVID cases a day and probably many more. I heard that Singapore had also run out of Panadol because mainland Chinese tourists were visiting Singapore pharmacists and buying all the Panadol in stock in case they catch COVID. My Singapore friend told me that she was eventually able to find one forlorn packet that had fallen behind another item in the shop. This was needed for her 99 year old mother who needed a blood thinner which was not aspirin.

People were very kind and I was inundated with offers of help and cures, especially from people who had experienced the agony of sciatica themselves. One friend encouraged me to try his inversion machine. You are strapped to the machine which turns you up-side-down, which reverses the usual pressure on the disc and hopefully enables the pinched nerve to shake itself loose and eliminate the pain. When I entered his flat I made quite an entrance as my sciatica was hurting badly. I rudely pushed past him and, without waiting for an invitation to sit down, charged straight for the sofa and put my legs up to relieve the pain. My friend was most sympathetic to my rudeness. Besides the disconcerting experience of being up-side-down on a machine, there was a fascinating display of Chinese and Tibetan antiques. Ever the collector, I could not resist and bought two of them: a life sized model of a Tibetan boot with a colourful mascara mask on it and a leather purse with metallic embroidery over 1,500 years old.

Besides the pain, the most galling of my experiences was being wished "Happy New Year" by doormen and receptionists as I limped through reception lobbies feeling anything but happy. I showed great fortitude in restraining myself from saying exactly what I thought about 2023 and the pain it brought me.

There were two things that brightened my new year:

- 1. An email from a client "You have been such a blessing to us that I want to wish you all blessings possible this coming year!. It's nice to be appreciated.*
- 2. A box of Sees' chocolates (my favourite), the highlight of my new years' celebration at home as I had to cancel my normal New Year's Eve party.*

This year my office had an extra two days holiday to celebrate the Chinese New Year. This started on Sunday 2 January, but the auspicious time to reopen an office for the Year of the Rabbit was not until 10:38am on 30 January. Consequently in addition to the 3 public holidays, our office enjoyed an extra 2 days of holiday. I turned up at the office around 10:32am on 03 January Monday to see a large crowd of people waiting outside the front door of our office until the magical moment of 10:38am, when the door was opened.

In 2021 we moved into a nice new office at 299, Queen's Road Central. As is traditional in China the fung shui man came round to ensure that the furniture was aligned in the right direction so as to maximise good fortune. I wanted some tall cabinets to store my files; but was told that this would disrupt the fung shui. I stored my files on the floor instead. Eventually I was able to arrange a compromise and acquire a desk height cabinet I was then able to get some of the files off the floor and relieve my back. In the past I have always worked for companies with a considerable expatriate influence. I am now for the first time working in a Chinese owned office and experiencing different customs.

In 2021 I reported that I had become a movie mogul. This year I have become a film star. A new Hong Kong TV station had an English Language channel. The Hong Kong Government wanted to increase the local content so they produced a documentary about old expatriates and why they stay in Hong Kong. I was selected for one of the 6 episodes which can be seen on the link <https://vimeo.com/813047106/27c91744cd>

Many of you can skip the link as I have already sent it to you. (I'm not backward in self-promotion). The documentary nearly didn't happen. The first day of filming had to be cancelled as one of the team got COVID. We next planned to film in my office but the camera man had an accident and couldn't work, Eventually the fates looked kindly on us and a full day's filming took place in my office and home. A final date was fixed to film in my church; but when I woke on the Sunday morning I discovered I had COVID, so that filming had to be cancelled. The camera man was already on his way to the church so it was a wasted journey. We then arranged to film in the church in January, but sciatica intervened. By this time there had been so many delays that it was decided to go ahead. It was still painful for me to stand on my right leg, so if you look carefully at the scenes in the church, you can see that I am hobbling or trying to keep my right foot off the ground. The documentary was well received and resulted in the South China Morning Post, Hong Kongs' English language newspaper, writing an article about me. A lady came to interview me and was still in my flat 4 hours later as she could not get me to stop talking about myself. The arts magazine, Orientations, has also written an article about me. If anyone wants copies of these, let me know and I will send you a link, though probably a lengthy Christmas letter and one TV programme is more than enough about Chris for most people.

One happy result of the TV programme was that it was put on the alumni website of my old school. In 1970 my school sent 3 boys to Cambridge. I had kept in touch with one, Peter Randal, but had lost contact with the other, Tony Megs. I had always wondered what had happened to Tony. Thanks to the TV programme I found out. Tony saw it on the alumni website and wrote in to say that he had enjoyed it. I was therefore able to make contact and arrange a dinner on my summer trip to London. I discovered that he had had a successful career with BP (British Petroleum) and was subsequently asked to be chairman of Crossrail (the new railway line across London) to help sort out its problems. TV has been accused of making couch potatoes of us, but sometimes it can help bring people together.

Now that COVID is over I can travel to China; but I need a visa. I normally ask my secretary to arrange it; but she was away on holiday. I therefore decided to apply on my own to prove that I did not need my secretary to do everything for me. I therefore went to the China Travel Service office. There were hundreds of people there and all the signs and instructions were in Chinese. The only sign in English stated "Information", but there was a queue of over 60 people waiting at that counter. I gave up and decided that I needed my secretary after all. The following week I went back with my secretary, who was able to establish that it was the wrong location. We were directed to another China Travel Service, a few

minutes' walk away. This was much better. There were only 2 people in the queue and the signs were in English. We presented my application form to be told it was out of date. We were instructed to complete the form online and then return and have it checked. Once my secretary downloaded the form, I realised why it had to be checked. It was over 10 pages long and asked detailed and searching questions such as "Are you a journalist?" "Have you ever worked for an NGO?"

The form not only asked for details of every prior employment but the computer required you to put in the precise date that you started the employment. Trying to remember the exact day when I started a job 20 or 30 years ago was beyond me so I had to guess.

One of the tricky questions was "Have you ever lost your passport?". I lost my passport in Shanghai so I thought I better report it on the form. With a great deal of effort I remembered that my passport had gone missing in autumn 2004; but the form required the precise date of the loss. Again I guessed. However, when I presented the form to the China Travel Service for checking, they asked for a copy of the police report. It will not surprise you that I no longer had it. Fortunately the counter clerk was most helpful and solved the problem by suggesting that I simply answer "no" to the question about the loss of a passport. Chinese bureaucracy is such that it is almost impossible to comply with all its requirements. This normally does not matter; but the advantage for the authorities is that if they ever decide to investigate you, they can nearly always find something that you have done wrong.

During the year a collection of Chinese textiles came up for auction in of all places Texas. I was excited because the collection contained some good items; but I was horrified to discovered that the auction was online and, worse, my secretary was away in Japan on holiday during the week of the auction. I have never mastered the ability to bid online, as I have always relied on my secretary to make online bids for me in the past. Fortunately I was not busy at work so one afternoon I got my secretary to train me how to make bids online and to my amazement I actually succeeded in making a few bids. The problem with online auctions is that you think you have made the highest bid and then in the last few seconds before the auction closes, someone makes a higher bid. You then have 3-5 minutes to make a higher bid if you so wish. I was concerned that my newly acquired skills would not be sufficient to meet this frenetic last minute activity. I therefore called on younger, more expert hands to help me; but how to persuade them to join me, as the auction took place late on Thursday evening and early Friday morning. The idea of a champagne auction party was suggested and I jumped at the idea. I therefore invited several young friends for a champagne party and dinner, provided they brought their laptops and helped me with the bidding. This can continue for half an hour or longer after the bidding has officially closed as people continue to make counter bids. Consequently if you are interested in another lot that comes shortly after the first one, you may have to watch the progress of the bidding of 2-3 lots at the same time which is why more than one laptop is useful. Otherwise a third party may win the bidding on one lot while one is focused on the ongoing bidding of another lot. My guests enjoyed the excitement of the bidding without the downside of a successful bid, the struggle to find enough money to pay the bill presented by the auction house on the following day. I succeeded in getting the 2 most important lots I wanted, and consequently ended the evening a much poorer man. It will not surprise you to read that at the end of the year I was still heavily in debt because of my addiction to collecting Chinese textiles. However, as I say life is not worth living if you can't go shopping.

I continue to have regular dinner parties. One of the most amusing reasons for declining my invitation to dinner was from a friend who had been invited to attend the Kings' coronation in the British Consulate.

The dress code was formal; but the only way my friend could fit into his dinner jacket was to embark on a strict diet for the next 2 weeks. Dinner in my flat would have eliminated any chance of getting into his dress trousers.

At another dinner a lady friend gave me a back handed compliment "Chris you haven't changed", she said "but then when you were 30, you looked 80". Now that I am an old man it is my prerogative to complain about modern ways. I notice that an increasing number of people are answering my WhatsApp messages with a pictorial icon, which I ask my secretary to translate. The earliest form of writing was pictograms. It seems that the 21st century is regressing to the use of modern pictograms.

I am not the only old man to be surprised by modern customs. Another contemporary told me that a London law firm adds a seasonal picture to their emails. Last Easter the screensaver showed a picture of three fluffy yellow chicks in a nest in calm gentle surroundings. One of the associates objected to the picture on the basis that: (1) She felt that the chicks were vulnerable, and (2) It was harming her mental health.

I am surprised that a lady of such exquisite sensitivity has chosen the law for her career. Perhaps she feels that being a solicitor enables her to work at home without venturing out into a hostile world. I understand that it is often difficult to find staff in the office on a Friday. I heard that one partner in a London law firm telephoned an associate during office hours on a Friday to receive a strong ticking off. How dare he interrupt her at home on a Friday when she was about to take her dog for a walk.

No one ever taught me how to use a traditional telephone. It was easy. I have now had my mobile phone for 3 years and still have difficulty using it. People talk about love/ hate relationships. This does not apply to me. My relationship with my phone is nearly all hate. It continuously interrupts me with pings to notify me of messages which I don't want to read. However, on the rare occasions that I do want to receive a call or WhatsApp message, it either does not ring (digital contraptions are so sensitive that they are continually doing things I do not want them to do, such as switching to mute) or makes the message completely disappear. When I turn on my phone in the morning (I turn it off overnight to get some relief from its continuous interruptions), it tells me that there is a WhatsApp message. However, I cannot access the message immediately because a passcode is required. (When the Hong Kong Government introduced a COVID app that had to be used to enter restaurants and other places, the app insisted that I install a numeric passcode). By the time I have entered the passcode, the message disappears never to be found again. I have therefore given up using a mobile phone as a means of communication and restrict its use to free international calls.

If you want to read more criticism of modern ways I attach an excerpt from "Expat", an autobiography I read this year by Wendy McTavish who had experience teaching in Australia and Hong Kong. After reading the article you will understand how immigrants have helped improve London's schools from the worst performing in England to the best in spite of the parents' poverty and not speaking English at home.



In spite of my complaints, I realise I have much to be grateful for. I was reminded of the reality of war when I received from an Israeli lawyer an email written in haste while he was on active military service (he is no youngster).

You have probably had enough of my verbiage so I will end with some photos. One of my friends, K C Ho, liked my pink suit but decided to go better and had an even brighter pink suit made for himself. He then found that there was no opportunity to wear his splendid new outfit, so I arranged a dinner for him, his wife and daughter where we all wore pink and celebrated with a bottle of pink champagne.

As the Chinese say I wish you a prosperous New Year and may you achieve a Chinese life style.

Robert Holland (R57-65) in October 2023 sent a very early Christmas message, but for good reason. It read as follows “*Final Greetings from Penang, (October 2023)*

Felicitations of the Season to all, and I apologise if this is the earliest Christmas letter that you have received, making the year seem even shorter than normal. It has been a fantastic year after the confines of Covid, and like the rest of the world we have revenge travelled this year, with two cruises and trips to Hong Kong and the UK, with another trip to Hong Kong booked for November and December.

After over a quarter of a century of happily living the Life of the Lotus Eaters in Penang, we have decided to leave and like the flotsam and jetsam of Empire, drift once more onto the hotel fringed beaches of Hong Kong, and so with effect from the 1st March 2024 our address will be in Lantau, Hong Kong SAR.

Following our UK Cruise we drove down from Leith to Heathrow taking two weeks and managing to visit the National Arboretum and several old friends from Hong Kong, all of whom were well settled and greatly enjoying life in the UK. We were also blessed with perfect weather for the entire trip which made visiting friends and old haunts that much more enjoyable.

Framlingham Market Square as I remembered from 1966, when the snow fell and fell, producing a perfect, almost Victorian Christmas scene, and this summer’s view from Castle Meadows across the Meres to my old school, Framlingham College on the hill beyond.



Sadly, it is unlikely that I will ever see the delightful market town of Framlingham again, although it greatly influenced the early years of my life and holds so much of my affection. “

He gave me a further catch up in March 2024 “*Leaving Penang friends and memories after 27 years was sad, but everything went smoothly. However when we arrived in HK on the 14th our tenant came over and said he needed to leave today (22nd) a month early, so we have been running around sorting out utilities and arranging for the contractor to start stripping the flat for new flooring, new wiring new plumbing and new electrics starting on the 25th, as we leave for 21 days around Taiwan, China, Korea and Japan next Thursday, originally planning to return in time to take over the flat after the cruise! Hong Kong is fine and still quite cool around 21 degrees which is very pleasant. “*

Jenkin Leung (K79-84) on one of his regular trips to the UK had a brilliant catch up in January with **John Watterson (Hon OF)**, **Tim Mosse (K78-82)**, **Robert Bellfield (K81-83)** (both have not met up since 82/83!) and **Charlie Wright (K80-85)** at the Crown in Woodbridge.



“**Athena**” **Choi Hoi Shuen (V02-03)** got in touch at the start of January 2024 to update her email which we did and she then registered on the new website. In addition she wanted to reconnect with a **Chris Hall (G62-69)** who she had a chance meeting with during a 2015 reunion [we put them in touch]. She said “*There is a HK maritime related exhibition I’m involved in as a donor and I would like to conduct an interview to obtain some oral history and initiative from Chris who has spent a significant amount of life time in HK.*”

I put her in touch with Chris and with **John Ting (G02-09)** for when he organises another OF gathering in HK and asked for an update on the exhibition.

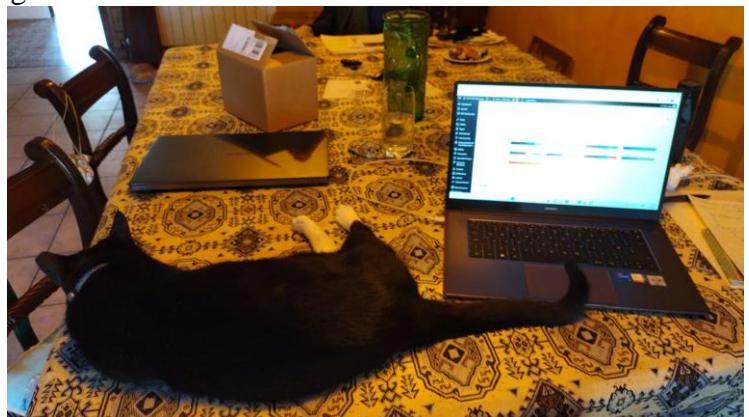
COSTA RICA

David Allars (K47-54) was going through a difficult time after having spinal surgery earlier this year for a compressed nerve, that had left him basically confined to a wheelchair, but he said therapy was helping.

FRANCE

Richard Crofts-Bolster (R76-80) it turns out lives fairly near to Patrick Rogers (R56-60) who was making enquiries about OFs living near him in the south of France. The 2 are now in touch with each other and I hope are able to meet up in the coming month.

Robert Craig (R63-70) is now retired in France and was involved with the SOF website around 2000. He offered to provide some help on the new website towards the back end of 2023 he was most helpful in updating some of the records for us. At time his progress was hampered by his cat!



Guy Bullen (S64-73) was happy to receive a digital copy of the OF Newspaper. He subscribed to the new website.

Gerald Hendrie (K49-52) was keen to ensure that he received a paper copy of the OF Newspaper and this was organised. He added “*I have much appreciated the actual, physical, Framlinghamian – indeed the 2019 edition remains permanently on view in this house because of the excellent photo of the College - just as I remember it when in 2006, almost by chance, I found myself in Framlingham and was able to stop at the gates and look up the familiar drive. It was in April and holiday time for the College. The weather was perfect.*”

I was in Kerrison from 1949-52 and perhaps interestingly John Legrove, also Kerrison, (I don’t know the years) contacted me about a musical work of mine he had heard on the radio (St John’s Cambridge, Advent Carol Service, first carol, There is no Rose) and he told me that at the recent Manchester Cathedral carol service a carol arrangement of his (I Saw Three Ships) was performed along with my

There is no Rose. He wondered whether there had ever been a previous musical occasion when two works by two Kerrison men had been heard in the same event! I think he was going to contact the College about this.

I do not know whether the College might be interested, but a recent disc Gerald Hendrie: Organ Music Volume 1, performed by Tom Winpenny on the organ of St Albans Cathedral (Tocatta Classics) has been followed by a second volume currently 'in press' and which should be out shortly. If you think the College would like these for the library (there's lots of other stuff which you could see on Wikipedia!)"

Gerald is in the Distinguished Section of the OF website so I asked him to review and update his biography, which he was kind enough to do in February. You can read it here <https://www.oldframlinghamian.com/distinguished-ofs/professor-gerald-mills-hendrie/>

Thomas Otho-Briggs (R56-60) responded to our appeal for donations for the OF Newspaper.

Elizabeth Reece (V88-93) got in touch in December 2023 *"Hello! Are there any group members in France? I moved my life and work here this year! Doing an insane renovation, full immersion with my GCSE French! Wishing you all well for 2024 wherever you are!"*

In April 2024 she posted *"I just finished my first novel and Dr Baird is proof reading it for me! He taught me from 89-93. Amazing to think how we could support each other! I went to Fram the month after my 13th birthday! It was a completely surreal experience coming from an International school in Iraq. I was prepared to HATE it but within hours I was in love with the weirdness of it all. The building, the ridiculous efforts to keep us uniform, the trees, the view, the masters robes.... I wrote every day down in my diary for 5 years."*

Patrick Rogers (R56-60) had an interesting an unexpected reason for getting in touch with the Overseas Bag. Whilst he has a London address recorded he spend a lot of his time in the south of France. He was keen to receive the OF Newspaper in paper form and went on to explain why :

*"If the OF mag. is only digital, actually reading it is easily missed. But the paper version fares much better, being well read and not only by me. My wife, Poppit, picks it up too and sometimes spots something of interest, as she did some time around the end of the 1960s, when she spotted a contribution from **Harold Robey (1913-16)**.*

Robey turned out to be an old friend of her guardian in Singapore where she grew up, one Lucia Bach (IPA pronunciation berf, not like the composer). When Miss Bach heard I was at Fram she remarked, oh, so was Harold Robey. My wife, as a girl, was struck by his terribly disfigured face. Apart from his injuries before the war he had apparently suffered badly under the Japanese during his incarceration, presumably in Changi jail,. He was evidently exceptionally tough and stubborn, to Fram's credit.

*As he mentioned in his 1969 contribution, Robey took two Chinese boys under his wing. The younger, Francis, later joined the Singapore police force and responded very quickly when Poppit was assaulted. He had also bought one of Miss Bach's bull terriers. Of the older "brother" (Peter?) she knows almost nothing. **If by chance anyone knows of either of them, we'd love to know too.**"*

I told him that I had looked at the 1960s magazines and there are a lot of references to Harold Robey who seems to have been known as George. These are downloadable from the website when signed in and then searchable. They include reference to him being related to 2nd Duke of Norfolk who appears to have been the founder of Framlingham Castle nearly 1000 years ago! If you need help let me know. Robey died in Wimbledon on 7 July 1968.

He said in France they are in Arles staying with a friend as they recently sold their house and have yet to find a suitable replacement. He said he would be happy to hear of any OFs nearby and hence I put him in touch with **Richard Crofts-Bolster (R76-80)** I mentioned earlier. I pointed out to him that now he was registered on the website he could search via <https://www.oldframlinghamian.com/connectfram/the-directory/> and then Advanced Search to find all OFs in France. For those who are interested, here is a list in Post Code order of all 36 at the moment with an address in France.

<u>Town</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Postcode</u>
Carcassone		11000
		11350
Marseille		13009
Mandeville en Bressin		14710
JUIGNAC		16190
Moutardon	Nanteuil-en-Vallee	16700
Triel	Seine	18510
Les Champs Géraux		22630
Lieu Dit Le Bourg	Saussignac	24240
Dordogne		24440
Condorcet	Nyons	26110
Soudorgues		30460
Caillavet		32190
Espiet		33420
Vienne	Isere	38200
Sarbazan		40120
Pontivy	Bretagne	56300
Meniac 56490		56490
Croisilles		62128
Haute Pyrennees		65250
Lyon		69003
Gigny-sur-Saone		71240
Aix les Bains		73100
MESSERY	Haute Savoie Region	74140
Paris		75006
Paris		75016
Meaux		77100

Saint Germain en Laye	78100
St Germaine en Laye	78100
Montigny Le Bretonneux	78180
Triel Seine	78510
Maisons Lafitte	78600
Villennes sur Seine	78670
St Nom la Breteche	78860
St Amans du Pech	82150
Vincennes	94300

Michael Rumsby (Z81-86) responded to the requests around the OF Newspaper. He said “I don’t actually live in the UK and have not done so for about 25 years so please feel free to send the magazine electronically by all means.” I responded saying that I was fascinated by the fact that he said he hadn’t lived in the UK for 25 years as we have an address in Leiston recorded as his current address.

He responded saying “*Yes you have my mum’s address so I do occasionally get a copy of the magazine but I’m not in the UK so much these days. Spent 20 years in Bruxelles and Paris and now changed the course of life as a professional artist based in a rambling stone place in SW France. Come up to London a few times a year as represented by a big gallery there (Clarendon Fine Art).*”

I must be more involved in OF stuff - I know some of the team reached out about the art stuff at some point and I was in the middle of a show prep so was manic. Apologies - you all do such a brilliant job of driving this thing and maintaining the OF community. I’ll make a note to do better LOL.”

I put Michael in touch with **Peter Howard-Dobson (R65-69)** so that he could join the Society of the Arts and become more involved with the Society. Michael responded enthusiastically “*Let me make time to get involved and try to help you promote this somehow. As someone that was encouraged to pursue my creative instincts at the College, I’m afraid I fell in to the trap of parental and societal pressure to get a ‘proper job’ and did subsequent enjoy a fruitful career but it’s only now that I am painting full time that I’m truly happy. I have a keen interest in encouraging young people to be who they are and be proud of their creativity. I’d be happy to join up and draft something for you.*”

GERMANY

Kim Dickel (M97-98) began planning another OF Germany reunion back in January 2024 and delivered a wonderful event in Heidelberg on 7 September 2024. Here is Kim’s report :



Six years have passed since German OFs gathered in Germany to celebrate the unbreakable bond brought to us via the life altering time we spent at Framlingham College. This year we finally met again on September 7th in Heidelberg, a backdrop that was carefully chosen as the city celebrated another German-British union. While the Heidelberg castle bathed in a mysterious red glow, fireworks over the Neckar reminisced the arrival of Elizabeth Stuart who received this opulent welcome from her then betrothed elector Friedrich V. in 1613. Over 400 years later German OFs watched proudly knowing that they, too, played a small part in the beautiful tradition of Anglo-German friendships.

With very little interest in German OF reunions in the last years, I was overjoyed to welcome well known and new faces. We started the day with an exclusive and private company tour at tech incubator Ameria at Heidelberg's newly developed innovation park. We then moved to the more picturesque part of town and met at the Kulturbrauerei where we enjoyed hearty comfort food and a cordial catch up after all these years. At nightfall we watched the castle illuminations near the river before promenading over to Heidelberg's beautiful old town. Some OFs had excellent local expertise and our celebration lasted well into the early morning hours. Drinking, dancing, laughter and lively conversations made it a night to remember.

On all our behalf I would like to extend my gratitude towards the College and the Society with a special thanks to my co-host Johannes Tröger, past President Chris Essex and current President Nicholas Whitehead, who ensured that financial and hands on help was extended whenever needed. Lastly, I would like to applaud the enthusiasm of our attendees! The high-spirited, humorous and friendly personalities of our Framlingham College alumni always ensure that our reunions are heart-warming occasions. Our unique community founded by the common experience that is Framlingham College remains a source of comfort, inspiration and friendship. I look forward to our next reunion like I look forward to Christmas. See you all there!



List of attendees on Saturday 7th of September 2024 in alphabetical order

Kim	Dickel	M 97-98
Anna Sophia	Heine	P 20-22
Nicholas	Kuhn	K 09-10
Jasper	Lüer	S 06-08
Dominik	Scheffer	K 12-14
Christian	Scherpel	R 09-10
Jac	Schröder	R 17-18
Yannic	Schröder	G 22-23
Johannes	Tröger	R 96-98

Kwai Hong Ip (G80-88) is currently based in Germany for work and as a result of him being awarded an OBE for “services to International Criminal Law.” I was keen to add him to the Distinguished Section of the OF website. I was grateful to Kip for his help with this which can now be seen here <https://www.oldframlinghamian.com/distinguished-ofs/kwai-hong-ip/>

In March he was in touch again about a trip to Australia in 2025 to watch the Lions series and wondered if there was an opportunity for an OF gathering there on one of the test days. The first test was in Adelaide where we don’t appear to have any OFs but I have contacted **Mike Garnett (R53-55)** in Melbourne and **Colin Lipman (R53-61)** in Sydney who are up for it nearer the time. The dates are in Melbourne 20-24 July and Sydney 25 July to 2 August. He is not going north of Sydney so no opportunity to meet up with OFs in Brisbane or Cairns.

INDIA

Richard Gould (K66-71) came over to the UK in November 2023 and visited the College. There he attended an OF Lodge event. The report reads as follows “*WM Richard Gould , Charity Steward Charlie Binder, and Headmaster of Brandeston Hall Jonathan Egan accepting a £5000 donation to the Framlingham College bursary from the OF Lodge, a great Installation meeting at the College, in the Chapel laid out as our temple with the figure of Christ behind our banner which was donated many years ago to the College by the Lodge when the extension to the Chapel was done. Thank you to all our guests, we hope you had a very enjoyable visit.*”



JAPAN

Jonathan Amos (S67-71) spotted that a fairly close contemporary of his had been awarded a prestigious design award in 2024 (**Jonathan Cooper (G84-89)**) and we posted this as a news item on the website.



Jonathan also gave a fuller update on recent news “***Maurice Hall (R59-69)** and I have been exchanging emails from time to time. I didn’t know him well at school but we both worked at Scrutton Goodchild and Sanderson, accountants in Ipswich, immediately after leaving Framlingham in the 1970s so we have two separate experiences to reminisce about. He has retired now and is enjoying his new house in Woodbridge.*

***Richard Williams (S66-71)** emailed me out of the blue last month after finding an old email of mine, which was a very pleasant surprise. We had a lovely chat together on Zoom. He still keeps in touch with Julian Taylor and David Barker and hopes to renew contact with others. After a career in banking, including a couple of years in Tokyo in the nineties, he is now working from home in Sussex as a self-employed business consultant, much like me.*

My 20 year old daughter has just arrived in England

for the first time as a foreign student at Oxford Brooks University for eight months. On arrival, she stayed with my sister, Rebecca, who contacted the College to ask for a tour, premised on Sakura being the daughter of an OF. To my amazement, the tour was very generously granted and Sakura was fascinated and very grateful to get a glimpse of her dad's old school days, sending me several photographs. The granddaughter of my French teacher, Mr Irving, showed them around which was a nice touch for me.

I still enjoy working as a Xero accounting software consultant and the challenge of running my own business as much as ever and like to think I have a pretty good work-life balance. Making music is my main interest these days. My main instrument has always been acoustic guitar, playing solo, but I'm fascinated by recording music and my sitting room is becoming more and more like a home studio with various instruments and a recently acquired Tascam Model 12 audio recorder and mixer, which I can't wait to learn how to use. My wife is equally keen and is now learning to play guitar so we're looking forward to making plenty of music, now that our parenting days are coming to an end.

Life in Matsuyama is very quiet and peaceful. We live on the edge of the city, overlooking a small, forested mountain and pond which is surprisingly good for bird watching; so far I've seen 48 different species. The city is flat and the traffic very bicycle friendly so I usually cycle around on my new Trek FX3, which I love with its straight handlebar and 1x10 gears. Otherwise, public transport is excellent with the national railway, four local railway lines, trams, buses and ferries serving all points of the city. There are numerous islands just off the coast, I can get to the nearest one in 30 minutes, which has a swimming beach, locally grown fresh orange juice and a brewery. The main problem this summer has been the heat, up to 35 degrees without much rain, which has kept me inside much of the time with an air conditioner and looking forward to cooler weather."

NETHERLANDS

Peter Barker (K65-68) is one of only 4 OFs based in the Netherlands. He contacted us about some school photos he had sent in a few years and the descriptions he had give us. *"I have to own up that I had something quite wrong with the description of one of the photos. Because we (in the photo) were wearing hockey shirts, I assumed that we were part of a hockey team. Now, I have just learnt that the team was the Kerrison Interset (Interhouse run around the Mere) team from 1968."*

We corrected the gallery and I noticed that his list of names left off his little brother Dave from the end of the front row! "Sorry, I left out my brother. I do have form in that sort of thing. At our evening wedding party, 40 odd years ago, I booked the restaurant for one too few. My wife was convinced that I had left her out! Well, we are still together so she must have forgiven me. In December, we had a Barker get-together with all of my parents' descendents in Pinner, where we came from, 25 of us.

NEW ZEALAND

Richard Bearne (K59-62) writes in April 2024 “I went and looked at the college from the front on my tour of the UK. Off back to New Zealand after five weeks of east and west of England, Wales, Scotland and Orkney! Great memories but happy with my choice of where I now live.”



David Newson (S54-63) hoped that I would find a good replacement as Editor. They had had their usual family invasion from NZ and overseas with almost 30 people on Christmas Day! David was still recovering from major surgery to his aorta in May. He said “*I can manage a fairly normal existence – however I need a walking stick for walking long distances. I can still play my trumpet – no more high notes though! Travel is still possible – we are hoping to get to Perth WA this year and perhaps a trip to the UK next year. My 80th Birthday is in October of this year which will be an excuse for another family gathering!*”

Dave Simms (R64-71) emailed on Christmas Day 2023 “*Thanks for your note below. I feel I should know you? I was Rendlesham (64-71) and I have just updated my profile on the new SOF Website. Your Kname rings a bell after all these years!*”

I replied that we would have overlapped at Fram as I was there 69-75 but in Kerrison. I said that we had been to north island NZ passed quite nearby to where he is now living, when we travelled from Napier to Wellington in a blizzard!! It was the first time some people in Wellington could remember seeing snow!!

Dave enquired about other OFs living in NZ. As a registered member on the website I was happy to share a list of 12 with him. I hope he may organise a NZ gathering at some point, especially as most live on the north island.

SOUTH AFRICA

Mike Bullock (R55-59) sent his usual Christmas message 2023 and this is an edited version “*Our great grandson Jed was born in April. Yes, the exciting news is that Jedidiah James Tinley was born in Bristol to Hannah and James our eldest grandson on 28th April 2023. They are all well and are now living in Middelburg, Mpumalanga where James works in Allan's business. We meet up with them*



fairly frequently and we receive lots of photographs as he develops. As I write this we have heard that he has just started crawling, and you know what that means.

We had Christmas last year with Allan and Catharine and some of the family in St Lucia and this year we will be there again.

We both have been as healthy as one can expect for an octogenarian and one close to that milestone. Mike's heart and cancer checks have been very encouraging. In January we travelled around the Natal Midlands for a few days, staying at the "Granny Mouse" hotel. We've had a couple of trips to Whiskey Creek and to Dullstroom for a few days with friends, oth-erwise it has been very much "stay at home" for us where we have enjoyed our garden and home, and various community activities.

Mike still does DIY around the house and garden and has been playing bowls twice a week although in the recent very hot weather and "heavy" greens he is considering the future for bowls. He enjoys his trout fishing in Whiskey Creek and Dullstroom


His wife Wray has kept well and active and continues to enjoy her gardening, sewing and other activities. In summer we sit out on the patio for breakfast. Most evenings we sit in the garden listening to music enjoying the peace and tranquility that we are fortunate to have. She also maintains her involvement in the church. In January she graduates from a septuagenarian to the dizzy heights of an octogenarian."

As a Vice President of the SOF, Mike wanted to know in May 2024 if he could appoint a proxy for a Council meeting to discuss/approve the new relationship agreement with the College. Mike indicated that he was in favour of approving the agreement. I asked about his health having not been well at the end of 2023. He said "My general health is good for my age, it's just the arthritis in my shoulder that is causing a problem, not too bad right now but the surgeon and specialist say that it is best to have the operation now because as I get older the risks are higher and if I don't have the replacement I could lose use of my shoulder in my dotage. I was very interested in the article about Group Captain Percy Pickard as I was reading a book entitled "Mosquito" about the legendry wooden wonder aeroplane and it had a lot about "Pick" and operation Jericho."

He followed up a bit later by saying "The operation has gone very well and I have been convalescing at home since a day after the operation. Now I have 6 weeks in harness with physio and exercises, and maybe a year or so to wait for full use as my right shoulder too that long to fully recover."

SPAIN

Ian Foster (K46-53) sadly died in Majorca in November 2023. A memorial service was held in London in February 2024 attended by a number of OFs – see article on the website.



The Family of Ian Foster
invites you to

A Celebration of his Life

Bring stories and memories
of Ian.

9th February 2024 1pm - 4pm
The Farmers Club
3 Whitehall Court,
London, SW1A 2EL

Dress code:
Gentlemen: Formal jackets and ties
Ladies: Dress conventionally.
Trousers are permitted but not
casual slacks, jeans or trainer
shoes.

USA

Rachel Bohanan (V97-04) had tried to organise an OF reunion in Houston Texas. Despite there being 11 in Texas including Rachel and her brother, she had been unsuccessful.

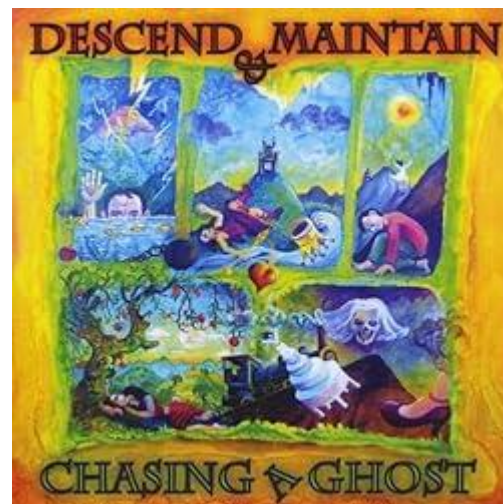
Dave Connett (K71-73) was a contemporary of mine at Fram and when he made a donation towards the OF Newspaper I took the opportunity to get in touch with him. I mentioned that a few weeks earlier in October 2023 I organised a great reunion in the West of England and present were fellow contemporaries **Charlie Blackmore (K65-75), Kevin Horrocks (M66-75) and Simon Chaplin-Rogers (S68-73)**.

He responded *“Holy cow! What a reunion. Really sorry to have missed it. Charlie being my bunkmate at Fram and Kevin (Herbert) was my tentmate on our school summer excursion to France. Looks like it was a damn good event. I keep thinking about visiting the UK to touch base with old friends...maybe next year. I've sold my ownership in the brewery and have relocated to the Pacific Northwest - Vancouver, Washington. The weather here reminds me a lot of East Anglia.*

How are things with you? Really glad you're maintaining the Framlingham connection. I must say, from perusing the website Framlingham College looks as though it may as well be on the moon as unrecognizable as it appears to me nowadays. My last visit to the school was in 1986. Which was especially memorable as I stopped by Norman Borrett's house and had tea with him and his wife.

Unfathomable to realize we last assembled on those schoolgrounds over a half century ago.”

I replied saying that it would be great if he were to make a trip over and that I would happily offer to organise a bit of a get together of characters he/we would have known. I asked if he was still a musician. He replied *“I've kept my hand in the music biz all this time. No real success, but still receive ridiculously small royalty checks every quarter. But I've really enjoyed it and it's what I'm still doing now. I'll reach out if and when I decide to fly over. I recorded a couple of records over the years and at his suggestion I sent the lyrics for Chasing A Ghost over to **Pete Rodulfo (R70-75)** who painted the album cover. I have the original hanging in my home studio right now. “*



Anthony Cowan (R55-64) was keen to respond to our request for donations towards the cost of the OF Newspaper but a combination of bank account issues as travelling abroad meant it took some months to finally sort.

In October 2023 he reported that his daughter was now a Deputy - Counsel General at a huge US Consulate overseas and their son was a Manager at Boeing. They have two lovely grandchildren, aged 6 and 2.

In January 2024 they were back from travelling “*Back in Seattle on Monday night and back at our place in the foothills of Mount Rainier, having picked up our Weimaraner [dog], mid-afternoon, on the Tuesday. Visited three countries - Turkey, Italy and England in three weeks - Whew! While away I had lunch with **Edward Turner (K55-61)** and others at the Railway Arms at North Elmham. He used to farm at Campsea Ash.*” As a result of this conversation I was able to get Edward’s email address and update his records. Edward is now living at Aldringham, near Leiston, Suffolk and specializes in Redpoll cattle.

Miguel Heinonen (K01-03) offered in September 2024 for any alumni in Miami to feel free to connect with him and he would be more than happy to take them out for lunch. I put Miguel in touch with **Richard Rowe (S65-74)** and **John Nielson (R68-72)**. Richard responded positively to meeting up with Miguel when next in Miami.

He added that he had just moved to Miami, Florida. He is currently the founder of Heinonen Ventures, and the co-founder of Whitefriar and Listelligent. He is currently also studying for his Doctorate in Business Administration at Florida International University.



Ted McKean (G65-66) got in touch for the first time in September 2024 and had the following news “*I have fond memories of the year that I spent at Framlingham, 1965-66 when I was a visiting American sponsored by the English Speaking Union. I still keep in touch with a handful of old classmates and expect to make at least one more trip to Framlingham in the near future. Since 1974, I have lived in Gilford, New Hampshire where I practiced law for many years. I married Louise in 1970 and we have three children. All of us are very much alive and quite well.*”

My two contacts to this day, both multiple visitors to home for me in Gilford, are: **Clive Hedley (G58-67)** and **Tony Burlingham (G58-66)**. Clive, former head boy, is a retired journalist and professor. Tony is a retired anesthesiologist, now living in Australia. Both lived along with me in Garrett. Both have been widowed and are now very nicely remarried. I value to the greatest extent their friendships; both were most generous during my year long stay here.

Life at Framlingham in '65-'66 was quite a wake-up call. I boarded five days at my school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and my home was just a few miles away, so I was always close by. But friends came easily at Fram, and the year went by quickly. From there, I went on to the University of Virginia and then law school. I was an officer in the US Navy after



Virginia and before law school. (Service then was mandatory.)

I do plan to get back to Suffolk at least once more, and, fortunately, my wife is eager to join me. I owe my friends and teachers at Framlingham a lot!"

Bryan Pearson (S45-47) was 92 in November 2023 and I wished him a happy birthday and a great 12 day cruise from Papeete back to Honolulu on the Norwegian Spirit.

He responded saying that he had been in touch with **Nick Carlton (G63-70)** in Western Australia and **John Gates (S44-48)** in Queensland, Australia. He also had sad news that he had lost his kid brother Ian who was 85 but had had heart trouble for many years.

He added *"In the newspaper version of the OF Mag, I noticed a clip about **Mike Evans (S45-48)** which reminded me of the last time I saw him, in 1950 I believe. He was working in the tennis shop at Lillywhites and I was rehearsing for Charleys Aunt at the Saville."*

In December 2023 he said *"Just back from our short cruise on the NCL Spirit, a very comfortable ship and excellent dining in the two huge, yet somehow quite intimate Main Dining Rooms."*

Richard Rowe (S65-74) back in October 2023 had the unfortunate news that he and Denise were going to have to postpone their trip to Australia. *"We are very sorry about this as we were looking forward to meeting you all; especially after all the great planning that you have done so far. The reason is a little self-inflicted. We have been planning to down-size our home as part of our retirement plans - and that was all intended to happen towards the end of 2024. However recent events have triggered the whole process a lot sooner than expected; with the result that we really cannot afford to be a long way from home for the whole month of February 2024, at the peak of potential sales / move out activity. I am really sorry about this and hope that we might be able to establish dates for a future visit to Australia, and maybe meet up on a more informal basis."*

In January 2024 Richard raised the subject again of videos that had been filmed at Brandeston by former teacher Mansell Beard. Richard recalled *"These are all low quality 8mm film that is recorded with no sound. Sound is added after during the cut and edit phase. We used to sit in his room adding sound effects. So the timing is often well off such as calling out someone's name. For the sword fights, we borrowed cutlery from the dining room to clash together. They are still fun spotting people to add names eg the Palmolive advert at the beginning had **Charlie Blackmore (K65-75)** as the mother and **Kevin Horrocks (M66-75)** as the baby. **Tim Mitchell (R67-77)**, **Tim Rosen (S66-75)** and many others have appearances. I know I am in there somewhere as are my brothers. "*

Richard agreed to send them over so we could try and extract the videos.

In September Richard responded to the idea of meeting up with **Miguel Heinonen (K01-03)** in Miami when next convenient. At the same time he updated on housing moves *"Our Cape Cod house is gorgeous. We have 5 beds and intend to make it our Summer base eg May - Sept . I generally live over in Fort Myers but am currently up on Cape Cod. It will be good to meet up sometime to catch up on SOF. My youngest son is at Notre Dame doing a 4-year Mech Eng degree with a minor in Art; and now*

extended for an extra year this year to do an MBA. He has done well with internships so far, but might want to chat with you about your entrepreneur experience.”

Jane Taylor nee Clarke (P86-94) responded to my early September 2024 email out to all overseas OFs for news *“Very happy to open this email as I have been meaning to get in touch - I am based in Boston, US and as an OF P90-94 (I think!!) I thought I could give a little update on what I am up to over here! Do I write something and send it directly to you? I will also ensure I am enrolled in the new website as I so enjoy keeping up-to-date on everyone's news.”*

Jane was back in touch with the following update *“After leaving the College and attending Manchester University I lived in London for a few years, got married and had 2 amazing children Izzy and Freddie. We then moved to Amsterdam when they were 4 and 2 for Neal's job with Reebok. After 4 truly wonderful years in the Dutch capital we were on the move again this time a bit further from Suffolk to Boston, Massachusetts. We have now been in Boston for 12 years and feel very settled although when asked, home is always going to be Framlingham and of course I tell everyone who will listen here that its where Ed Sheeran is from!*

I have been working at a leading games and puzzle company called Buffalo Games as their VP of Licensing for 10 years, here I seek out and negotiate partnerships with the likes of Disney, Pokemon, Harry Potter, and all the US Sports franchises such as the NFL and MLB - we then manufacture and distribute board games and puzzles to all the major retailers across North America - as you might recall it wasn't so easy to buy a puzzle during Covid so its been an interesting and busy few years! I love it!



My work enables me to travel around the US and I counted this year that I have actually been to Las Vegas 20 times for tradeshows! Neal continues to work in the sports industry and its hard to believe that Izzy and Freddie have spent almost their entire school life in the American system. Izzy is at Northeastern University as a 2nd year nursing student and Freddie in his final year of school, he will be attending Connecticut College next Fall (Autumn!!) where he was recruited for soccer (Football!).

We have 2 furry friends Cookie and Luna who thankfully stop the house feeling too empty and we love spending time on Cape Cod but keep our eyes out these days for the sharks! I still love returning to Suffolk to catch up with family and friends and thoroughly enjoyed a tour of the college in the summer kindly led by Kate Jackson - so fun to see Duncan, Katy, Imo, Nikki and Antonia - its like we never left - some of my best memories are of my school days. If anyone is visiting the East Coast, please do reach out. I would love to hear from you.”

AND FINALLY

A Small Essay from **Chris Shaw (K50-56)** titled “The Uttermost Ends Of The Earth”¹

It's Spring outside, and the russet leaves are falling from some of the trees. In three or four days, after the old leaves have formed heaps of potential compost, new buds will have put a Lincoln Green whisper back, to be fully resplendent again within about 10 days, So, no Winter then!

I'm keeping a weather-eye out for the arrival of the Torres Strait pigeons, a migratory bird that graces us with their presence during the summer months and, on arrival, give us the first sign that Summer is on the way. They are big birds, and as Sir Terry Pratchett wrote, ‘You could get a good meal off a thing like that’.

As one, who can be described as ‘having gone native’, I hate the winters and look forward to, once again, having a comforting sheen of perspiration accompanying my activities and looking less like a ‘Gypsy’ in my attempt to keep warm. ‘er indoors, my Rebecca, is the complete opposite, being a ‘city-girl’, with ‘shopping’ as the ultimate pleasure centre, and architecture as her woodland. She also grew up in Sydney, so enjoys the cold. Well, I say cold, but in truth it's all relative. Walking down Hamilton Road, the main drag in Felixstowe, in my lightweight tropical gear, in November, with the east wind tearing in from the Russian Steppes, has little comparison in Oz, maybe except in Tasmania, which pokes out into the ‘Roaring Forties’.

We've just had the Olympics, where once again Australians have punched way above their weight in their medal tally, and Professor Neville Marsh, SOF of Queensland has been lured into another of his inimitable statistical analyses that proves the point. Those incredibly brave para-Olympians have just had their closing ceremony while we slept, which pertains to most of the rest of the world, too. Time zones filter out much of the news to us except the important bits. The rest comes to me from the likes of YouTube and tells us that the world is going to hell in a handbasket.

I have completed a three-year project of a leather-covered book on Gallipoli that explores the reactions of parents left behind when their children get killed, wounded or broken, The theme is current with Israel/Hamas and Ukraine/Russia creating yet more deep angst for parents. (See: www.chrisshawauthor.com) Getting 500 leather covers from Jaipur in Northern India to Cairns, airfreighted during the Covid outbreak and lockdowns, was a tad tricky, but it got done, and fulfilled my dream of its presentation.

Rebecca has also finished her project, a twelve-year labour of love of cross-stitching Henry VIII, his six wives and his children, plus scenes including them. Twelve pieces, more than a million stitches and beautifully framed, they will be recorded in a little booklet that I'm putting together, entitled, ‘The Rebecca Cassandra Shaw Tudor Cross-stitch Collection’. I will send a copy to ‘Fram’, if we get hard copies, and not just e-books.

I have literally just spotted the first Torres Strait pigeon for the season so I know that warmth is on the way, bringing the blossoms of our flowering trees to help us celebrate Christmas; the Royal Poincianas, the lavender Jacarandas, and the rich yellow, hanging bracts of Cassia fistulas. Of course, in Oz it also means the potential for Cyclones, and bush fires that can burn hundreds of square kilometres in areas inaccessible to ‘firies’.

We shall be in touch with Col Lipman in Sydney about arranging for a celebration and welcome to Brian and Sheila Pretty, who have arrived in Oz. Mike Garnett and I communicate, as do Neville and Alison Marsh, so all is peachy in Oz regarding Old Framlinghamians.

The 'footy' season is drawing to a closing climax of 'finals', and cricket is about to start up again. My son will be taking me out to the reef, we locals say in understatement, as the rest of the world knows it as, 'The Great Barrier Reef, the only living thing that can be seen from space!'

My daughter, Tanith, and her family live west of Port Douglas on a small farm. They got caught out by Cyclone Jasper, and while their farmhouse is on 1 metre stumps to prevent flooding, they still had half a metre of floodwater through the house, which ruined just about everything. The ones that hurt are the irreplaceable items: the photos and the books, the letters and keepsakes from bygone eras. They are lifting the house another metre to stop this happening again. Rebecca and I live about 2 metres above sea level in Cairns while Tanith is 400 metres above. That's Oz!

Let me leave you with a little story, and a true one. Shean, my boy who has just passed his fiftieth birthday, (and where the hell did all that go?), took me out to the reef for fishing about five years ago. We took off at around 2pm and he drove his boat on a flat Coral Sea around 30 miles north and we started fishing on reefs that may never have seen a baited hook. Around dusk, the sun went down in a blaze of colour, augmented by a sugar cane fire with smoke and particulate matter creating purples, oranges, golds and silvers in a true peacock display of glory. This was closely followed by the full moon rising from the eastern horizon, and it was a 'blood moon' not unlike a blood orange but magnified to almost science fiction proportions. As we started our return journey, the planets aligned above us in a 'bower', and it was like passing through a celestial gate. 'Once in a lifetime'. 'Extraordinary!' 'So privileged'.

Thanks Chris E., for your 20 years of anchoring warmth and facilitation. Our overseas OF family has been in very competent and caring hands. Thank you.

1. *'From the uttermost ends of the earth', a book on New Zealander's experiences in WWI, by Brigadier John H Gray, CBE, OBE, ED.*

Since our Kiwi cousins are just across the 'ditch' from us, I thought I may borrow it for some punch to the title.