

LESLIE "BOB" GILLETT (HON OF)

He was a much loved schoolmaster at the College for many years and wrote "Framlingham College: The Second Sixty Years (1992)", "Remembered Days: The S.O.F. Centenary Book (2000)" and "The Apprentice (1978)"

See this link for an obituary written by Bob Williams (Hon OF)

<http://www.oldframlinghamian.com/staticpages/index.php?page=20030322020215325>

The following is taken from the Spring 2003 OF Magazine :-

Leslie ("Bob") Gillett (1913-2002)

Thirty-one years as a College master, twenty-four years as College archivist, historian, author and friend, Bob Gillett was part of the very fabric of Framlingham as indeed his humanity has been in the lives of the many hundreds of his pupils. For his tireless post retirement work on behalf of the Society of OFs he became its first honorary member to have been appointed a life Vice President.

Bob's own school days began at the Lower School of John Lyon in Harrow where he won his first XI colours for both football and cricket. In 1936 he went up to King's College, London to read English language and literature, philosophy and Latin. Teaching became an immediate career and his first appointments at two preparatory schools were interrupted in 1940 when he was commissioned in the RAF and served in Intelligence. Rising to the rank of Flight-Lieutenant, Bob had a distinguished career, first in West Africa, where he was mentioned in Despatches, and then serving in an operational flying boat squadron with special responsibilities in the Battle of the Atlantic at the height of the U-boat menace.

The first year after demob Bob taught at Newport Grammar School before moving to Framlingham in 1947, at about the same time as his life-long colleague and co-founder of the Common Room cricket team, Martin Irving.



Perhaps Bob's qualities as man and master are best left to a selection of quotes from the many tributes that have been paid to him.

His commanding Group Captain commended his "reliability, common sense, leadership and coolness", adding that "he was never fussed or flurried by pressure of work or emergency" and that "a well developed sense of humour enabled him to get the best out of his associates".

Pupils will surely concur with a passage from the memorial address of Canon David Pitcher in which he referred in particular to Bob's sense of humour – which you would never be quite sure whether he meant what he said or, rather, the opposite:

"Many students of his will recall this characteristic, especially in the way in which he responded to attempts to mock him and very effectively returned the mockery with interest. There was the occasion when a certain boy was holding a 12 inch ruler over the edge of the desk and seeing how a different note could be played by twanging its end instead of doing the work he had been set. Bob also took his ruler and began to twang it accordingly and then said something like "Yes, I suppose this is music for some people"; there was no more twanging of rulers.

“Ennoblement”

"And then there was what he called "Promotion". If a boy in his class persisted in not paying attention he would promote him and make him sit upright on the desk lid and be embarrassed. And if that did not satisfy, he would ennoble the boy, which meant being sent to stand in the corridor in the strong and urgent expectation that the Headmaster would shortly come down that way. You see, everyone knew he patronized no favourites, was not harsh or bullying in word or attitude, expected courtesy and right behaviour because he was ever courteous as well as firm and disciplined in his own preparation and work. He did not have great difficulty in keeping and sustaining interest.

"He would question what was presented to him and would question thoroughly and deeply until he was satisfied, not in the sense that he was persuaded and agreed but in the sense that he could perceive what was given to him as authentic and well intended before he offered comment".

His overview of the College always included a soft spot for Brandeston where Margery had such strong musical connections and where they both enjoyed a personal friendship with David and Rachel Kittermaster. They both greatly enjoyed being included in the B.H. Jubilee celebrations and Nigel Johnson's Farewell gathering and Bob William's retirement dinner, in fact his last appearance at Brandeston.

And Gwen Randell said; "Bob knew how to invest his talents, knew how to recognise the true treasures of life and make them multiply. He was a great teacher, and not only of the young. He touched our lives, and has left us richer for it, better parents, more constant husbands, wives, sons and daughters, and yes, he left me a stronger Head. We are all his true heirs. Riches indeed. Bob invested his talents wisely and will, I have no doubt, receive one of Heaven's top awards. Bob Gillett – INVESTOR IN PEOPLE"

Finally, on a personal level and as testimony to Bob's unfailing memory, James Ruddock (G46-52), Governor and Editor, recalls:

"Bob first taught English to me in about 1948 but the highlight of our association at

Fram was the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Castle in June 1952. Although I had only a small part this kindled an interest in drama and theatre which was partly handed down from my father. It was noteworthy of Bob's memory that when I knocked on the door of Moreau some 30 years later, having hardly seen him in the intervening years, his opening words of greeting were "A play there is my Lord, some ten words long" – which was my key line in the whole play!"

"OFs will probably not be aware that Bob wrote a fictional novel – *The Apprentice* – but many will have read his masterly works about the College – *Framlingham College: The Second Sixty Years* and *Remembered Days: The Enduring Fellowship of Old Framlinghamians* or seen his Pageant for the College Centenary in 1965. In spite of his great contribution during his time at the College he is not listed in the Index of *A Second Sixty Years* and there is hardly a mention of himself in the text.

"Such a modest and intellectual gentleman and I am proud to have known him for 55 years."

How very appropriate it was that Bob managed to complete his last written work "*The Albert Memorial College*" only a matter of days before his final hospitalisation – and presented so movingly to The Head on 27 September. We are all certainly the beneficiaries of this final, Herculean, effort.

Thus, in the concluding words of Bob Williams, "schoolmaster, author, historian, raconteur, lover of good music; there are an abundance of good memories....He was a fine teacher...and not only of the young. We have lost, at a great age, a true gentleman of Framlingham.