

VENTURA NEVILLE BROMAGE (G47-54)

The following is taken from the Autumn 2001 OF Magazine :-

Neville was in Garrett House and captained the 1st XV Rugby side in 1954 and the season's report said he was a 'tower of strength who inspired a good team to greater efforts and whose able administration off the field was appreciated by the whole school.' Only two games were lost that term. Neville also captained the Hockey 1st XI. He was also Captain of Swimming and later in 1979 when the Pool was refurbished it was named the 'Bromage Pool' by Mrs Carmen Bromage in memory of Brom. Senior. Neville then did National Service in the Royal Artillery and afterwards became a management trainee with Mecca in charge of the City of London establishment. In 1965 he had the Bailey Arms at Stoneyhurst in Lancashire. In 1972 Neville married Felicity Grodzicka. We heard at the Thanksgiving Service what a wonderful step-father Neville had been to Felicity's daughters Elizabeth and Kasia.



Brom was a member of the MCC for many years but in his tradition to help younger people he let his subscription lapse 25 years ago. Many members knew him in the Long Room and he was always warmly acknowledged. Neville loved Lords but despised much of the still lingering pomp. He was captivated by the subtleties of high quality Test cricket but he never comfortably adjusted to the more frenetic pace of the one-day game. 'He and cricket were quintessentially English' as described by Alan Reed at the Thanksgiving Service.

Perhaps Neville's most unfortunate happening was when he played for Harlequins 2nd XV when they were away at Bath and his mother had made a sandwich of tinned salmon and shared it with the cat. Later the cat was found to be ill so Carmen got a message to the coach party whereupon the driver arranged for him to be taken to hospital and have his stomach pumped out. Of course, Neville missed the all important match and the next morning the milkman called at home and asked to see Carmen. He asked her if the cat was all right and she said no he had been ill. He said 'I am awfully sorry, I dropped the milk crate on his head yesterday morning.' (This tale is best heard from the lips of Jim Blythe!)

Not only did Neville put enormous administrative skills into the SOF but he was Secretary of the Aldeburgh Yacht Club for 19 years having only retired at the end of April. He had occupied the position longer than any previous Secretary. Previously he had been landlord of the Plough and Sail at Snape and ran an old people's home called Garrett House. He had the

ability to control difficult children and bloody-minded senior members of the Yacht Club and helped in diffusing awkward situations on many occasions. An ex-Commodore says he will be a hard act to follow.

It is not often we have stories worth mentioning of pre-Fram days but it is worth recording that Neville was spotted by Borrett when about age eight sitting on the steps of Eros in Piccadilly Circus – of course before the ghastly hoardings were erected.

At Framlingham 'Town' there are two tales the Editor's family remember well. Firstly, Neville was always grateful (and said as much to James' friends on numerous occasions) that he took him to Exeat at the Nestlings Farm at Saxtead Green when his parents came there about 1947 and Neville could not get to his parents in London. Travel was much more difficult 50 years ago. Secondly, Mr and Mrs Bromage senior were at the Evening Remembrance Day Service at St. Michael's in 1947 when the Revd. Canon H C O Lanchester died at the Altar as 'Abide With Me' was being sung as the last hymn. Afterwards they went to the Crown and imparted the sad news to Mr and Mrs Ruddock senior.

Neville was always quick to spot OFs wearing the illegal OF tie and suitably and quietly reprimand the wearer. That was the one with the plain crowns which later had to be pierced with an arrow as the motif was the Coat of Arms of a Scottish laird. It was therefore fitting that the Family requested there be no mourning so nearly every OF came in one or other of the official OF ties.

At the Thanksgiving Service the College flag in Framlingham colours flew in a warm breeze on a glorious sunny day. Some 320 mourners had come from all over and their cars filled the Front as a gleaming field of metal. The congregation included fishermen and lifeboatmen from Aldeburgh and this Service and the vast congregation present showed the esteem in which Neville was held by all who came into contact with him.



The Front during Thanksgiving Service for Neville Bromage on 5 July

We reproduce by kind permission of the East Anglian Daily Times the news item of Friday 29 June 2001:

Tributes paid to stalwart of yachting club and college

Tributes have been pouring in to a stalwart of the Aldeburgh Yacht Club and the Old Framlinghamians' Society who died last week, aged 64.

Neville Bromage, also known as 'Brom' was secretary of Framlingham College's Society for former pupils for 25 years.

He was married to Felicity Bromage, the current mayor of Aldeburgh, and lived in the town's Park Road.

He was also secretary of the Aldeburgh Yacht Club for 19 years, and had only just retired in May. He was awarded honorary life membership. He met his future wife, who had two daugh-

ters from a previous marriage, while he was working as landlord of the Plough and Sail at Snape in the early 1970s.

'Getting young people involved'

He became a devoted stepfather to Elizabeth and Kasia, and enjoyed his role as grandparent to their five children. Framlingham College Head Gwen Randall said: "He was an institution. Everybody knew Brom."

She described him as "a wonderful warm-hearted person, who very much called a spade a spade" and had a "fierce love" for the College.

"He was absolutely committed to trying to move the Society away from the image of being an old boys' society, and into a former pupils' association, getting young people involved and in particular getting girls involved – perhaps because he was so proud of his own stepdaughters," she said.

His wife, Felicity, added: "He had a great sense of fun, and a naughty sense of humour."

She added that he was a "proud" stepfather, who had a great rapport with children.

"He loved his school so much. I can't tell you how much Framlingham meant to him, and his friends from there."

Peter Cresdee, a member of the yacht club committee, said: "He got people well organised. He knew everybody. Nobody got anything past him – he ruled with an iron fist," he said.

"He was always his own man, and people respected him. We'll miss him greatly."