



This address was give by R J (Jim) Blythe (K 48-54) at the Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Kenneth Kester Knight (K 32-38), held at Framlingham College Chapel on Thursday 3rd May 2007.

As I drove up the front today I let my imagination run away with me. Prince Albert's statue was wreathed in mist. Perched on the plinth and balanced on little cloudlets were the good and the great who had passed through the College portals, all were dressed in white senatorial garments. A Forum was in session, of the Society of Old Framlinghamians. Many, many faces I didn't know but then I spotted Alfred Pretty, Founder member and secretary since its inception, talking to another of that era - perhaps his brother Herbert, the first President and no. 35 in the college register in 1865. Ah, here's some familiar faces, The Essex contingent, Mark Liell, Norman Bellamy and Jim Smith, they ran a good ship. There's Old Brom., he taught us all to be irreverent with his famous cry at Meetings after he became Secretary, of GET ON WITH IT. Why there's little Norman Borrett with his brother Charlie and young Brom too. So many other faces, all here to welcome formally a recent arrival to take his place amongst them, Kenneth Kester Knight. There he is with his beaming smile. Ken who slipped away three months ago to join his beloved Pat and Tony.

The word is out that Pat is here too, she's come to listen to Sally. So I haven't got long. Actually I've got longer than you may think. She's round the Back and I know she's off for a smoke, and her motto was why have one fag when two will do. She once accused me of being full of hot air. I have to tell you nothing has changed. Without my imagination and The Athlone Hall and Pryor House the view of the South Front is the one that would have greeted

Ken on his first day in 1932 at the age of eleven. This main body of the Chapel is where he would have worshipped every school day for the next six years, in pews where have sat Princes and Princesses, Dukes and maybe a Duchess, Earls and Countesses, Lords, Baronets, Knights and their Ladies. I assume that after a while Ken would have joined the choir, thus sitting behind me, and certainly there in 1935 when he was appointed Sacristan to the Chaplain when Charles Borrett left the School.

What made Ken, a first generation Framlingham boy, become so dedicated to his school and its former pupils ? I never thought to ask him when he was alive and now I can't stop puzzling about it. Could it have been the leadership of Hervey Whitworth The Headmaster, and his exhortations of The Great Empire ? Perhaps it was the skills he learnt from Bruno Brown, Rupert Kneese, Fuff Winstanley or Charlie Thomas amongst others. I remember now they were at the forum sifting on the Honorary Cross-benches. Maybe the sight of Old Framlinghamians gathering at Whitsun as was the norm inspired him. In 1932 Lt. Col R.E.Flowerdew was the President, one of ten brothers at Fram. over a period of 27 years. Think of the School fees !! No don't. Think what A.J.B. Flowerdew thought about his boys. They entered the finest institution that made callow youths into great men, witness the V.C. at the back of the Chapel to Gordon Flowerdew for his famous charge in WWI, that tragically cost him his life, but saved that of many others. What boy could not be touched by such an exploit. At the Whitsun gathering in 1933 trouble brewed. An Old Boy in the catering trade always dished out sweets to the current pupils and some of the parents had complained to Whitworth. He in turn told Frederick Jackson, President and Governor that it had to stop. When this was publically announced, it so infuriated Matthew Dawson Waugh, President in 1913, that he organised a whip round and jam was bought to supplement the bread and scrape for tea. Maybe I begin to see where Ken.s love for the Old Boys is coming from. (Waugh had also given this Chapel an Altar). In 1935 Col. Percy Clarke was President and a Governor, and at the Whitsun gathering announced that three former pupils had been knighted that year. Frederick Minter, Bertie Walton and Stephen Murphy, and coupled with this Alfred Munnings, a pupil for but two years, had six pictures hung in The Royal Academy and to complete the nap hand Frank Butters had trained the Derby winner. This was more than enough for Clarke to ask Whitworth for a half days holiday. Could any boy but fail to be proud of his school? Emile

Moreau, such a major benefactor for the school and the Society in later years, provided the best wireless installation that could be found. Ken and the others would have heard of the death of King George V on this. I wonder if they knew that the first name on the Bulletin was Sir Frederic Willans, a pupil here from 1894 - 1900?

Ken left in 1938 as a Goldsmith Scholar, a Packard prize for science winner and the French prize, for two consecutive years. He was a member of the first XV and the Hockey XI and was Captain of the Shooting VIII in 1937 and 1938. Corporal Knight was a notable marksman. That year The President was Sir Valentine Crittall M.P. —later Lord Braintree —not our first M.P. but the first to the British Parliament. Did Ken attend I wonder? The toast to the Society was given by Lord Eustace Percy and the response was by Munnings. Munnings was a free spirit and not a little rascally and incarceration at a boarding institution had not suited. However forgiveness was in the air, for he had not paid to join the Society, but sheepishly asked if he could do so now. Much merriment ensued and he finally got his Knighthood in 1944.

Alas the storm clouds of war were brewing. Alfred Pretty, pupil, Master, Founder and Secretary for nigh on half a century pledged to respond by return to any letter received from any theatre of war, such was the camaraderie of the Society to which Ken now belonged. Many lives were lost, friends of Ken. This strengthened the resolve of those who returned that those who didn't would be remembered, thus the War Memorial Fund was launched and in due course, combined with the good offices of the Governors, Brandeston Hall was opened.

In 1951 Mark Liell was President and he incorporated a Commemoration Service with the Whitsun gathering which lasted until the Whitsun holiday became the late May Bank holiday. At the first service Canon Howard Dobson preached 'may this commemoration of all the good things the school has given you and done in you and for you, strengthen you in your service of God'. Ken would have been there and his repayment to the School and the Society had begun. How he repaid, Council member since 1951, one time Auditor, asst. Secretary, Finance Comm. Member, President in 1968 and very long time Trustee. In the capacity of Trustee he saw the Society through the most difficult times of the Seventies, raging inflation, oil crises and more but

never once did he deviate from his policy of not selling the family silver - eating with your fingers is a messy business, he said. As a current Trustee I can assure you that his policy is still maintained. His legacy. Ken was appointed a Governor in the seventies, a culmination for every former pupil, his circle was completed. I learnt much from Ken, not least that one wore the narrow stripes in the City and the broad in the country. He also had difficulty in remembering names of spouses of colleagues and to this end he kept a little black book. I was detailed to get the info. And he filled it in. He could often be seen in a corner consulting it. It was such a good idea that I copied it, being years ahead of my time in memory loss. Alas frequently I either couldn't find it or forgot to bring it. When, a decade and a half after Ken, I became President in 1983/4, Mark Liell fathered me into the post with the words 'listen to all that is said - and then go with Ken.' Later, Pat Howard Dobson and Ken approached me on behalf of the Governing Body to complete my circle, but still flushed with Presidential adrenalin I ventured that I was first and foremost an O.F. and this might create difficulties. I should hope you are, said Pat - not the answer I might have thought - but this was followed by Ken saying 'what's good for the School is good for The Society and what's good for the Society is good for the School - the situation will never arise.' What a wise old bird he was. GET ON WITH IT Oh Dear, Brom is on the warpath, Pat must be on the way back. I had so much more to tell you about Ken, I wrote it down in a little black book somewhere. Today we thank God for the life of Ken, an exemplary scholar and sportsman, a caring, diligent and devoted Governor, a magnificent and dedicated ambassador for the Society, and a sorely missed friend.