

OVERSEAS BAG – 2023

“HERE & THERE” (Overseas Bag)

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Once again, this edition of the 2023 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.

As I have said for last few years, this is now the 19th 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!

AUSTRALIA

Michael Anderson (S80-87) is an example of what a small world we live in. As you will read below, **John Gates (S44-48)** was out on his scooter at the start of the year, when he got talking to a chap at the Maroochy Shore Surf Club and it turned out he was an OF! Read more below and I hope Michael gets in touch with an update.

Iain Birrell (G69-80) registered promptly on the new website but spotted that his 2 brothers were not correctly shown as **Timothy Birrell (G68-73)** and **Mark Birrell (G73-78)**. Now corrected. I recalled meeting Iain at the Hunter Valley for the 150th celebrations. He thought the new website is looking good.

Paul Bonner (G61-64) sent this message in March 2023 to mark the launch of the new website “*Many congratulations on the new website. It looks fantastic and very easy to use. I loved the newspaper version of the magazine and look forward to receiving details of the payment system for overseas OF's. Thanks for all your efforts.*” Paul was living on the Sunshine Coast so was up for visiting Brisbane for a lunch in February 2024 when **Richard Rowe (S65-74)** was visiting Australia.

Phil Bower (G65-74) in October 2022 was “*still looking for a couple of muso's to create my next 3pce, still writing songs, still have my dog. It's looking like at least one knee replacement in the next 12 months, possibly some shoulder surgery too (steroids don't seem to clearing up the issue)...the consequences of doing the only job I ever really enjoyed, being a stagehand/roadie. Summer is on the way but it's shaping up to be a hot & wet one which could be interesting.*”

I often wonder what happened to Jon Beverley, Festus Foster, Pete Long, they were the good guys.....

Not a great deal going on here really – life has become a series of austerity measures but as I said back in 98, at least if I end up broke, I can be warm & broke instead of cold & damp & broke! Of course, I hadn't counted on that actually happening!"

In March 2023 he gave a further update when we launched the new website *"Still trying to find the right person to complete the band line up, still playing but it's a long haul to Perth & back every week for rehearsals/auditioning people..... Winter coming – we had some rain overnight, the first in about 6 months.....and it's getting close to having to wear long pants instead of shorts..... (life can be hell sometimes....) I expect I'll have to start wearing shoes soon as well. **James Barry (G70-75)** is in the area on some tropical island that he seems to have been spending a great deal of time on this past month.*

Still writing songs of course and am working on some ideas for a vid for my latest offering which is the cheerful subject of declining mental health leading to suicide! Always the fun stuff from me!!"

Geoff Brown (G61-66) was in touch in September 2022 to let us know that he and his wife had emigrated to Australia in 2021, just south of Sydney. He wondered if there were any OFs locally he might know or meet up with, including any OF functions in Sydney. He was immediately put in touch with local Sydney organiser **Colin Lipman (R53-61)**, plus **Chris Shaw (K50-56)** and **Mike Garnett (R53-55)**.



Chris Shaw was in touch first with a warm welcome *"Greetings and Salutations, Geoff, and a huge welcome to Australia! By now you will probably have realised that you are climbing a learning tree, and I would encourage you to embrace it. I've now been here for nigh on 50 years and would not change a thing. Events tend to be more extreme than most places, but the beauty is very rich. You'll be a POM for the rest of your life here, maybe, but that's OK. It's said with a pat on the back.*

OK! Reality. There are around 30-40 OFs in Oz and a sprinkling in NZ (Kiwi-land!) There's not as much communication between us as perhaps there should be, but you will also learn about the 'Tyranny of Distance'. In NSW, Colin Lipman in Sydney has been kind enough to organise the odd dinner for an OF or two passing through, and they are rather fine affairs with dinner at Darling Harbour or Watsons Bay. Mike Garnett, who lives outside Melbourne, is the closest OF to me. Between us, we put together the 150th anniversary OF Dinner in the Hunter Valley. He is, and was, a top 'Royal Tennis' player and a top bloke! Rebecca and I live in Cairns, and if you check out 'the map' you will start to understand my 'Tyranny of Distance' quote.

Geoff, I'm on the end of a phone, and you will now have my email address, so, feel free to contact me if you have a query about some aspect of life in Oz, or ask an Australian, although I'm one of those too. We work hard and play hard, although at 83 my 'playing' days are mostly behind me.

Enjoy your journey, keep in touch, and don't get drowned by the wet season rain, eaten by crocs or sharks, or stung by jellyfish. Other than that, you'll be fine!"

Geoff responded by saying *"Many thanks for your very welcoming emails. I don't mind being called a POM by the Aussies as long as it is not followed up with bxxxard! The 150th dinner in the Hunter sounds wonderful. We have been coming here probably about a dozen times from the UK, twice a year to visit our son Alexander, who lives in Maroubra, NSW. He was moved here by his company, Morgan Stanley from Hong Kong, where he picked up a permanent Cantonese souvenir - his wife! When visiting our son, we always headed up to the Hunter for a day or two wine tasting. Barbara and I celebrated our golden wedding anniversary in May up in the Hunter, our daughter Charlotte flew in from Abu Dhabi and our son also came up with us. We have a bottle of tawny port from my favourite Hunter winery (Ivanhoe) etched in gold for us, as you can see from the photo.*

*In our preparations for coming to Australia, we sold our UK home in Coggeshall, Essex, of 28 years at the end of April last year. We were eventually granted a visa in October last year (2021), after waiting 15 months since applying. Between April and October, we rented properties on short term lets, mainly in Felixstowe. While we were waiting for our visa, we also saw **Clive Hedley (G61-66)** and his wife for a short stay at the Crown in Fram. Clive was a contemporary of mine, as I was also in Garrett 61-66. Colin Lipman may recall Clive's older brother, **Mark**, who was also in Garrett and who was Head Boy at the Centenary Celebrations which were in 1963 I seem to remember. Clive has put me in touch with another Garrett contemporary of ours, **Tony Burlingham (G58-66)**, who I believe lives on the coast in Southern Queensland, or maybe northern New South Wales [we have no contact details for him].*

It was Covid that eventually persuaded us to live in Australia. Both our son and daughter said that if we became ill with it, they couldn't come to the UK and look after us. We don't have any other near relations in the UK, so we decided to move here, so we could see our Australian grandchildren grow up and be near Alexander and his wife. There was no chance of moving to be near our daughter because her family are like gypsies and have lived in Abu Dhabi, Jakarta, Bali, Singapore and now back to Abu Dhabi, and all that since becoming expatriate in 2008! Our son has said he will always work in Sydney and if his company wants to move him elsewhere, he will resign. That persuaded us to up sticks and come here and we have bought a house in Chifley, NSW, about 10 minutes' drive from where our son is in Maroubra.

Chris (Shaw) your tyranny of distance comment rang a bell in the dim and distant parts of my Fading Memory Lane, and I remember it was in a DVD we purchased before leaving the UK, which was about the Indian Pacific rail journey presented by Michael Portillo (former UK MP). We bought that DVD and also one about the Ghan, as we intend to do both journeys in the fullness of time. We have some experience of long train journeys, having previously done the Orient Express from London to Venice, as well as the Eastern and Orient Express from Singapore through to Bangkok and then on to Chiang Mai. Portillo used the same description about distance in Australia in the DVD. We have been to Cairns in the past, when we also drove to the Daintree and stayed in a wooden cabin built, with others, up in the trees. We also went offshore in a glass bottomed boat and saw a little of the Great Barrier Reef which was fascinating. I do remember a long time ago skiing in Europe in the 70's with a Kiwi. He commented that he never realised quite how large Australia was until he had been flying over it for something like 7 hours and hadn't reached the west side!

You might like to know that one of my interests is tracing the family tree. I have traced my male line back 11 generations to the early 1600s and they were all born in Glemsford, Suffolk (near Long Melford and Bury St Edmunds). My father was the first in my line to move away from Glemsford since 1600, and it is because of his wanting me to gain an appreciation of Suffolk, that I went to Fram, a decision I never regretted.

I am sorry to have rambled on with such a lengthy email but hopefully Chris (Essex) has enough here for the overseas bag,"

Colin Lipman (R53-61) was next in touch with a warm welcome *"I have not been here as long as Chris and Rebecca, but I am closing in – now coming up to 36 years. Thank you for your story and I hope we will catch up soon. I left Fram in 1961 when you arrived – Now we can catch up in Australia! I look forward to getting together."* Colin also gave a sad update on the condition of his son that you can read below.

Then **Mike Garnett (G53-55)** was in touch to also welcome Geoff *"How interesting to hear all about your past adventures Geoffrey – you have far more connections with Australia than I do! And also, how sad to hear about your son, Colin - he was clearly a brilliant sportsman and achieved so much, and I do hope his condition improves over time. I have always maintained that headwear in contact sports should be mandatory.*

*Besides myself the only other OF I knew who played real tennis was **Stephen Sayer (S58-63)** and we became good friends even though we had not known each other at Fram - he being some years younger than me. We played against or with each other at tournaments in London, Hobart, and at a small township called Aiken in South Carolina! I stayed with them when they lived at Oman and our last encounter was here at Melbourne for which I attach a picture. Great to hear that you have joined the small coterie of OF's down-under Geoffrey – hopefully we can all catch up one day next year (Chris - maybe a nice restaurant on the Esplanade at Cairns would be great??)*

Geoff responded to all the warm messages *"Many thanks for your email and also the photo of yourself and Stephen Sayer. Am I correct in assuming he was on the right in the photo with yourself? I seem to remember that I overlapped with Sayer at Fram, maybe by two or three years. I also think he was in Rendlesham and was very talented at a number of sports.*

I didn't know he was also in Oman. I spent my whole career with Shell and Barbara and I had five wonderful years from 88-93 in Muscat, Oman. I am still in touch with a few Omanis from my time out there. The Shell company there was Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), being a joint venture between Shell and the Omani Government. We employed about 5,000 staff, of whom roughly 1,000 were expatriate senior staff professionals and were mainly from the UK or Holland. One of the best perks of being with PDO was membership of the Ras al Hamra club for their senior staff. Not only was it on the beach, but it also had its own sailing clubhouse,



golf clubhouse, restaurant, patio bar overlooking the swimming pool, and its own standard drinking bar. In all, there were five bars, something of a luxury in "dry" Oman, plus a "bulk" store (equivalent of an off licence) where you could buy alcohol to take directly home. You also didn't need cash at the club or in the bulk store, as one just signed a chit and it was aggregated and deducted from your next month's pay.

I really do look forward to meeting you all at some time or another, hopefully at a function."

Nick Carlton (G63-70) helped me in October 2022 contact Bryan Pearson who I'd not hear back from for a little while. He hoped to get back to Suffolk in 2023.

He was back in touch in March 2023 *"Hi Chris, thanks for your message and hope you had an enjoyable time on Saturday with the AGM and dinner. I'm looking forward to looking more at the new website and of course will provide any feedback. All good here .. moving house next month .. downsizing as the maintenance here on the beach was far too much at my age .. not going far but a nice location. It is good to have a clear-out so I am looking forward to an uncluttered life. Once we are settled I hope to travel again .. it has been nearly 3 years since I went anywhere .. a far cry from life before Covid. Will let you know if I am headed to the UK. It has been a good summer .. managed a bit of swimming but otherwise pottering around the home."*

Mike Garnett (R53-55) was in touch initially prior to Christmas 2022 hoping that I might be persuaded to stay on as Overseas Bag Editor for a few more years! His news was *"I have just returned from a few days at Australia's most isolated place, King Island in the Bass Strait, mid-way between Victoria and Tasmania. Very historic, scores of ship wrecks dating back to the 1850's, and stunning coastal views – they make great cheeses and have a couple of spectacular golf courses – see photo.*

I joined a local ukulele group earlier this year and thoroughly enjoy the music and company, we meet every week ("Show Me the Way to Go Home" !!)."



In January 2023 Mike sent this photo for the Gallery saying *"It is of some interest because we see the cricketer David Larter seated front row, 2nd. from right. I recall a few of the other names, eg: a senior prefect extreme left, Mayhew. Back row on my left is Burwood. 2nd from left is probably Metcalf. Seated from left Aeron (??), Fordyce, John Saul centre with football, then Cairns, Larter, Aldiss (?). Not bad for my memory – it must be 65-70 years ago! I wonder how many are still in the land of the living?"*

[So I took up the challenge of trying to find names for all those included. After some more work the final list at the moment is :-

Back row - from left Norman Mayhew (R48-56) in white, ???, David Metcalf (R50-55), ???, Mike Garnett (R53-55), Richard Burwood(R53-57), ???, ???, ???.

Seated - from left Julian Aaron(R53-57), Malcolm Fordyce(R52-56), Chris Brain(R46-56), John Saul(R49-56) (centre with ball), Chris Cairns(R50-57), David Larter(R51-57), Denis Aldiss(R52-57)

If anyone can name any more then please let me or Mike know.]

In late April 2023 Mike's new OF Newspaper finally arrived on his doormat and he said *"this welcome newspaper arrived a couple of days ago. My thanks to you and the others involved which must have taken up considerable time. I think, whether we like it not, that future communications will need to be on-line not least due to cost of postage. Nice to see the many pics taken at the RAF Club"*

In July 2023 word was out that **Richard Rowe (S65-74)** and his wife Denise were going to be visiting Australia in February 2024. Richard was a former editor of the Overseas Bag. Mike quickly volunteered to organise a gathering in Melbourne and sent out an invite to local OFs, which included the following details *"I have been in touch with Richard who has provided a provisional itinerary but their time in Melbourne is brief - basically they are free for dinner on the evening of Saturday 3 February, following which they depart for Sydney. Please consider whether you can join us at Young & Jacksons, Chloe's Restaurant (upstairs) at 6.30pm. Saturday 3 February 2024.*



This is a few months away so anything can happen between now and then, however perhaps you can let me know if you are interested in receiving further updates regarding this plan."



In August 2023 Mike was back from Raratonga, the largest of the many Cook islands. He reported *"Great snorkelling with the most colourful fish in the world – and turtles. The Cook Islanders are gentle giants and formed the maori race that went to New Zealand about the 1400's which I did not know. Christianity came from the 1820's, led by Londoner John Williams who made one fatal error. He strayed outside his comfort zone, so they clubbed him and ate him for breakfast! Sorry that England did not*

win the football final, but it was a great match”

John Gates (S44-48) in an email to **Bryan Pearson (S45-47)** in November 2022 said *“Well I am still standing upright, although have had several ailments since we were last in contact. I have now turned 91 and had to give up driving, Ruth now 92 and still driving and OK for at least another year. I have a 4 wheel scooter and just had it serviced having travelled over 600kms in the first 11 months. It is really great and gives me independence, and I can get into all the major stores, post office etc. Still playing bridge, but having a bad run currently, when my regular partner returns from his overseas trip we will do better again.*

Have taken all our tribe to two high priced resorts which has been lovely to all be together. Now don't really want to go very far, and no flying nor cruising, so really cutting back, as my health problems are too dramatic, and I get very uptight. Youngest granddaughter just announce her engagement to a very nice lad, we like him and he has a good job with Treasury. Eldest granddaughter Ellen normally lives in Canada, but currently over here, has an English, Canadian & Australian passport, and very bright.

Apart from the above we are both well for our ages, as I go to a gym 4 x weekly and Ruth does Yoga 2 x weekly, so keeping in trim. Luckily we are too old to be involved as I think WW3 will come within a few years, hope I am wrong but don't think so!!”

John was back in touch with me to wish us and our family a very happy Christmas and a healthy and safe New year in 2023. That afternoon he had been out on his scooter *“and as usual I got talking to a chap reading a book at the Maroochydore Surf Club and facing the sea, we got talking and it turned out that he went to a boarding school at a place called Framlingham, which of course was Fram College, and he was in Stradbroke House, just the same as myself, except he left in 1987, and I left in 1948.*

*His name was **Michael Anderson (S80-87)** and he has not kept in contact with any Old Framlinghamians, but he is an engineer and very nice. What a small world to run into some one just by stopping and chatting whilst out on my scooter.”*

In March 2023 John received his OF Newspaper and thought it was much better than the old one. He said *“We are quite well, but I have deteriorated and walking is a real effort now, but just have to keep doing what I can, as Lauren our youngest granddaughter is getting married on 11 Nov 2023 and I want to be able to at least get there for the ceremony even if don't stay for reception*

Having Michael Anderson and his wife over for afternoon tea this coming Sunday 26/03, I told you I met him whilst out on my scooter towards the end of last year. Had another scare about 10 days ago, the driver of "Beyond Transfers " who takes me to the gym, went down with Covid , but I have not had it thankfully, I even packed my bag, as I



knew if I got it, it would mean another Hospital trip.”

On 27 March he added “*Michael came over to see us yesterday, unfortunately his wife Evgeniya (Geniya) was sick and could not come, but we will catch up before too long. He stayed with us for about 2 hours, and we had afternoon tea etc and a long talk. Michael is a Water Engineer and I am going to send him the SOF website details.*”

Rob Goodale (K58-66) registered on the new website and I spotted that we didn’t have an up to date postal address for him. He also said he had some photos of school activities from his schooldays and some team (sport) photos from his father’s time at Fram. I explained the “Share your Photographs” facility on the new website. At the time of writing this Rob was travelling but has now provided a postal address in Mermaid Waters, Queensland.

Peter Hollins (K70-76) updated on what I expected to be retired life “*I am not enjoying retired life as I am back in the workforce and struggling to fit in the golf! Saying that, at the start of Covid, my brother in law who is a recruitment consultant had a number of clients who were worried about their cashflows and financial situation. I took a 3 month contract with one client, then another with a different client and then 6 months with the Uniting Church in Western Australia. Almost 3 years later I am still there as CFO! (The Uniting Church here is a combination of the Methodist & Presbyterian Churches). I watched the Coronation with interest. My Anglican Priest spent 3 years at Westminster Abbey and it was interesting to take in his observations – e.g. why the yellow & blue floor covering. I await with interest the start of the Ashes!*”

Colin Lipman (R53-61) in Sydney warmly welcomed **Geoff Brown (G61-66)** to Australia, but gave the following sad update on his son Michael “*I thought I should mention that my son Michael who is now 42 and lives on the Central Coast, also played rugby – Australian under 19 and 20, Bristol, and captained Bath, 10 caps for England, and then finished his career with the Melbourne Rebels a few years ago.*

Michael had over 30 concussions during his professional career and now suffering onset Dementia. Michael married Frankie 6 years ago, they have 2 children. Since retiring from the game they have written a book called “Concussion” which has just been launched in Australia. A story which needs to be told and hopefully the authorities will act on the problems created by contact sports.

Michael and Frankie are currently travelling to the UK – hopefully to find a publisher, interviews with the press etc – Allan and Unwin, Australian Publisher felt there would not be any interest in the UK – Wrong!”

On Friday 9th December 2022 Colin organised a splendid event



at The RAC of Australia in Sydney. This event was postponed due to Covid, however 13 people attended and from all reports received, all enjoyed themselves!



The Dinner was arranged to welcome Barbara and **Geoff Brown (G61-66)** who had just emigrated to Australia and requested to meet other OF's who were living in Sydney. We are extremely grateful to Colin Lipman (R53-61) for once again agreeing to organise and for the following write up *"As a surprise Eunice and Andy Mayhew had just arrived for a holiday in Sydney and were able to attend. John Clarke (G57-60) came down from Orange which is West of The Blue Mountains – about 200kms from Sydney (see picture). It was good to see Bunny Allport and her daughter Lara who were representing Michael Allport (R54-62) who died in October 2021. It was a great evening with entertaining stories. All welcomed another function in 2023. Also there was David Summers (G48-56). Pictured is yours truly with the Queen!"*

In June 2023 when Colin heard that Richard and Denis Rowe were coming over to Australia in February 2024, he immediately said he would put his thinking cap on to arrange a suitable venue.

Neville Marsh (S53-61) added his warm welcome to **Michael Anderson (S80-87)** and said "As Chris [Shaw] has said, we are a small group in Queensland, all in our 80s and early 90s. In the past we have had enough numbers to meet on a regular basis, but we have been depleted with the loss of two nonagenarians, Peter Bailey and Peter Simpson. That leaves Chris in FNQ, John nearer to you in Maroochydore and myself in the western suburbs of Brisbane. We come up to the Sunshine Coast once or twice a year, so with notice, we might be able to meet for a modest repast/coffee/glass of McLaren Vale shiraz, whatever takes your fancy. "

In May 2023 Neville congratulated us on the new website – a great improvement. He said *"It was easy to navigate around although it took me a few moments to find the OF Directory, which I use a lot. Could this be a new tab alongside Connect@Fram. The new OF newsletter is also a great improvement. Holding it in one's hands like a newspaper is infinitely preferable to thumbing through a book! Alison and I are well, thanks. There is plenty of coverage of the lead up to the Coronation on TV. I am not sure if street parties are being planned and there is mention of Australians being asked to swear allegiance to the King. As most of us have already done this when we became Aussies, I do not think there will be many takers!"*

The news of **Richard Rowe's (S65-74)** visit in February 2024 got Neville into planning mode. We have 17 OFs in Queensland, 5 live in or near Brisbane city, 5 live on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts, three live at the Top End and four have not provided a location. He sent out the following invite :

Good afternoon Old Framlinghamian,

Please forgive the impersonal approach of a group email which I am sure will come as a complete surprise.

First, I hope you are well and keeping active. With everything that life has thrown at us from covid onwards, it seems to take an extra effort to enjoy life to the full.

My reason for contacting you is to tell Queensland OFs that Richard Rowe (S65-74) will be coming out to Australia next February with his partner Denise and visiting capitals of the eastern States. Richard ran the OF Magazine Overseas Bag for several years to which many of you will have contributed. Chris Essex back in Blighty has very kindly provided emails for all known Queensland OFs, so we can gauge the interest in a lunch-time event.

*We have proposed to hold a lunch on **Thursday 29 February, 2024** in or near central Brisbane, at a time and place to be agreed. As Richard and Denise fly out later that day, I would suggest a fairly early start, say around 12 noon.*

*I do hope that those of you within striking distance of Brisbane can join us (my apologies to those from the far flung north and west of Queensland). There are a couple of OFs for whom we do not have contact details: **David Pacello (R77-85) and Peter McAuley (R70-74)**. If anyone knows their whereabouts, please let me know.*

I will get back to you in the New Year with firm details but for the moment, this is a good reason to get that 2024 diary into action!

Finally in late August 2023 Neville was extremely helpful and patient in testing how overseas OF might subscribe to the OF Newspaper going forward. Success was achieved at last and we now have a basis to proceed with a mailing to all overseas OFs.

Bob Munro (R56-60) provided the following extensive update at Christmas 2022 for which I'm most grateful "*Thank you for your good wishes for Christmas and the New Year, much appreciated. Maria and I wish you the Best for all your family, including your new Granddaughter! Congratulations! Congratulations too on your Platinum Jubilee Award - must make you very proud indeed. Well done.*"

*The Overseas Bag is always of interest, but this edition I read with sadness that **Mike Allport** had passed away earlier in the year. Whilst we were not close friends we were both in Rendlesham House at the same time. I do remember, however, what was probably his first day at Fram. when someone at the dining table asked him his name; "Allport" was the reply. Then some wag (no idea who) asked "Import or Export?" Why on earth should I remember that after 66 years? Go figure!*

I'm sorry for you that you have been unable to pass on the editorial baton; having been involved with several different Clubs over the years myself as Secretary, Quartermaster and various other positions, I know how hard it is to pass that baton on! You have done too good a job, that's the problem!

I have kept up with Chris.Shaw by email, and of course he has kept me appraised of his excellent literary endeavours. I am lucky enough to have been sent the manuscript (.pdf) of his latest endeavour, 'The Enforcer' which I am in the process of reading. Jolly good it is too, most enjoyable. And the leather bound "Echoes of Gallipoli" would appear to be a fabulous record of a subject rarely mentioned - not sure I can afford a copy of that one, however!

Here in Mildura we have had a wet and cold (for us) Winter, followed by a cold and VERY wet Spring, then followed in turn by a very cold and also wet (!) beginning of Summer. Thankfully we are now enjoying some higher temperatures and clear blue, cloudless skies. I just love it!! However, the downside of all the rain that we have had (and many other parts of Oz.) is that there has been, and still is, extensive flooding. The mighty River Murray has broken it's banks and Mildura is experiencing the second worst flood on record - the worst was in 1956. Sadly, some homes have been lost, many homes have had to be evacuated, major road closures all around, and lots of acres of vines are completely underwater, so they won't recover. And some of those vines have been producing grapes since the end of WW2.

A couple of our Golf courses are underwater, and it is thought that they will not be playable again until the end of 2023. But already, new turf for the greens is being grown for when the water finally subsides. Devastating for a lot of people. Not me, though, as I don't play Golf.

That's about it for the time being. My wife, Maria, has been living with Multiple Myeloma (a form of blood cancer) now for just on twelve months, and a difficult twelve months it has been; visits to Doctors, Specialists, Oncologists, Hospitals, Pathologists, Pharmacies etc. etc. However, the saving grace has been the Internet - many of the Specialist 'visits' have been by video conferencing. Thus saving us having to drive to Melbourne from Mildura (600kms each way) at least once a month, or catching a flight (costs can be claimed on 'Medicare'). There are good days and not so good days. C'est la vie. Anyway, take care, stay safe, have fun."

Unfortunately a few months later Bob let me know the sad news that his wife Maria had died. I reminded him of the lovely photo taken of him and Maria at the 150th Anniversary gathering in the Hunter Valley. Bob commented "Love the photograph you sent; I look as though I have had more than one too many! But Maria was her usual happy self - she loved meeting people and sharing new experiences and just having fun, whereas I am basically just a miserable old sod!!"



Hugh Richardson (S43-48) was in touch in January 2023 "Thank you very much for the letters and works for we OFs over the years. Having reached 90 I can appreciate the physical effort involved in your travels and correspondence over the years. I hope that you have escaped the covid menace. I got it in November 2022 just as I became a great grandfather and had to cancel my big birthday party. I hope that we shall see you in Sydney again."

Chris Shaw (K50-56) is without doubt our greatest correspondent from Australia or in fact anywhere in the world and I'm hugely indebted to him other than the annual challenge it sets to get it all edited for the Overseas Bag.

Back in January 2023 we discussed the sad new that we had just heard that **Roy Farman (K47-55)** had died on 22 November 2022. I found the following notice had been published :

FARMAN, Roy Samuel:

On 22nd November 2022, peacefully with family at home in Masterton, aged 86 years. Dearly loved husband of Sandy, much loved father and father-in-law of Tim and Jacki, Sarah and Richard Shirtcliffe, Guy and Suzanne, and cherished Grandad of Ethan, Sasha, and Noah; Monty, Griffin, and Coco; Thomas, George, Hunter, and Katie. Friends and Family are invited to attend a celebration of Roy's life in the Village Chapel, 4-6 High Street, Kuripuni, Masterton on Saturday 26th November at 11.00am.

Chris recalled that he and Rebecca had stayed with them. “Roy went through in Kerrison with me but I didn’t recognise him at our meeting, nor him me. His lack of horn-rimmed glasses and my beard seemed to have effectively disguised us, plus the odd 60 year aging process. Also, I’m not known for my ‘gravitas’, a character-trait much admired in some quarters, mostly by women I gather. Now I’m far too old to worry about such things. Thanks for keeping me informed.”

At the end of January 2023 I commented to Chris that I’d just seen the midday news here in the UK and it had coverage of the devastating floods in north island NZ with I think stated 261mm of rain in 24 hours. I suggested that in Cairns he might describe that as a mildly wet day!!!! Chris’s response was a classic reminder of the rich life he has led and is worth repeating here.

“When I got here in 1973, there was an incomprehensible system of rain measurement that involved “points”. It was in parts of an inch, but no one seemed able to define it, and it seemed limited to the farming community anyway. The “inches-per-hour” was something I could recognise and work with. An inch an hour was rain. Two inches per hour was “good rain”. Three inches per hour was “really good rain”. Four inches per hour was “Tropical”. Then came the daily total, which of course is a product of “inches per hour” times “hours of rain”. It’s a good thing that I’m a pharmacist who has been used to converting units of five different systems of measurements in my head because the inches and millimetres became interchangeable there for a while. 100mm/24 hours was good rain. 200mm, water over the road. 300mm is over a foot of rain and is likely to cause some problems, mostly determined by the geographical features of the region.

In our Test Cricket team we have a bright young man from South Africa called “Marnus Labuchagne” and I hope I got the spelling right. He has composed a verbal description of the various rain rates. Last night he was miked up in a BBL match and they were experiencing “Mizzle”, a mixture of mist and drizzle, etc., etc. The match was finally washed out but I missed his description of that which may have been “Matchless rain”.

Referring back to the Caribbean islands I used to visit, there were Guyanese, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbadian dollars, all different relative to the British pound. There were Jamaican and Bermudan pounds, also different, also Bahamian Dollars with their beautifully colourful notes that included a \$3.00 bill, that were continually being printed as the American tourists all took at least one home as a souvenir. Clever! Then there were \$US and GBP. I learned to shuffle between those in the early days, then I just paid what was asked if I wanted something. Then I got to Oz and was broke again! “

The following month Chris was in touch with **David Newson (S54-63)** on the connected subject of Cyclone Gabrielle. Chris said *“This is by way of an apology for, a) creating a Tropical Cyclone off Cairns, and, b) for allowing it to get out of control and letting it wander into your backyard! TC Gabrielle formed off our shore and, had the steering winds been a tad different, it may well have landed in our lap as a Cat 3 or 4, which is not nice and not at all domestically harmonious. Instead, she charged southwards and discombobulated the Newson family in Taranaki. I can only hope that any disruption was minimal, and there was no property or personal damage. We’ll try very hard to not do that again.”*

In March 2023 Chris posted to me in the UK a tube containing his 1955 entire school photo. I found a friend locally to scan all 6 feet or more of it and paste together into a single image that is now in the Gallery on the website for all to enjoy. I gave the original to the College for safe keeping. It was interesting to see that I could name a number of the teachers as they were still there in 1969 when I arrived, but all were now sadly dead. Chris told me that *“the photo had sat in Felixstowe until about 2012 when my mother died. I am absolute top left, next to Douglas Revel, who was my partner in the shooting Cadet Pair at Bisley, then David Thomas (K) in next bed, Penny?, Brian Ellis?, Steadman, Price. One wet weekend, instead of twiddling my thumbs, maybe I will get this photo out and see if how many names I can get. There’s still some there from memory.”*

Chris had been good enough to give some feedback on the paper designs for the new website a couple of years ago so we contacted him for his feedback on the actual new website in March 2023 *“I am probably not the person to ask about this as the pace of ‘progress’ has outpace my brain’s capacity to plastically adapt. However, once I have spent some time with it and learned to navigate it properly, it and I will benefit greatly. The amount of information is staggering, with all those old photos of past teams. The quality of the photos, fonts, and presentation is spectacular. I suspect the work of Chris K., with whom I have had dealings. He’s highly skilled and a bit of a perfectionist at this stuff and has ‘knocked my socks off’ with the seductively clean appearance. Potential parents will not fail to be impressed. I would give it 9/10, the missing unit for a ‘possible’ being my chasing around the ‘Login’ feature, which, as any five year old would tell his Grandad, ‘Read the screen, Grandad!’ So, well done to all concerned. “*

Following hot on the heels of the launch of the website was the production of our first OF Newspaper which in some cases took a few weeks to arrive overseas. Chris reported *“The newspaper has dropped on ‘my front door mat’ and I have to say I’m mightily impressed, to the point that I’d like to enroll again! What a huge change in attitude, facilities and their associated infrastructure, and the focus on the pupil. It’s only been 70 very odd years since I was there, but I can feel a sense of openness, cooperation rather than ‘them and us’ teacher/student attitude, and ‘being the best you, you can be.’ Another little phrase that impinged upon my mind was the perpetuation of ‘The Enquiring Mind’. Too often one sees people throughout the world who have ‘given up’ and retreated into a ‘pie and beer’ philosophy, rather than sitting outside in the shade and doing a comparison of two leaves and the wonders contained therein. Well done to Chris K., Chris E., and the team, for a brilliant outcome. “*

Later in March Chris made contact with **Michael Anderson (S80-87)** to welcome him to Queensland but they have not met up yet.

At the end of March **Michael Thomson (K52-59)** sent me a picture of a shooting team at Fram probably taken in 1956. After many emails it appeared that one of those in the picture was Chris Shaw, so I asked for his help.

The final result was the following names

L to R standing: John Saul (R49-56), NK, Michael Thomson (K52-59), Brian Champness (G55-59), Jake Backus (R53-56).

Seated: Robert Clayton (G50-57), Anthony Church (R52-56), John Haddon-Silver (S48-56), Chris Shaw (K50-56), Chris Martin (K48-56).



Chris Martin had died last year and **Anthony Church** died in 2018. We have lost touch with **Jake Backus** but the rest of your group are alive and well and in touch.

Chris went on to say *“I taught my son to shoot and he took to it well. Now, he goes pig-hunting occasionally, to help rid us of wild pigs that do a lot of damage to crops. With such a big country, eradication is a bit of a problem. Check out the ‘Dingo Fence’, 5,814 km from South Queensland to the Great Australian Bight and built 1880-1885. We have many of these wild and free animals, including camels, which are so disease-free that we export them to Saudi Arabia. They are a tad redundant as we now have Toyota Land Cruisers. That’s your bit of trivia for the morning. “*

In April 2023 he reported that for the last six months he had been very busy with overcoming his fear of public speaking, something he had avoided all his life. With his wonderful book “Echoes” on the scene, it was necessary to tell people about it, and it’s much more efficient to tell more than one person at a time.

June 2023 brought news of **Richard Rowe (R65-74)** visit to Australia in February 2024 and he sent the following message to Richard *“Richard and Denise, a future “Welcome to Australia - again” is in order as very happy news. Rebecca and I were trying to remember the year of your last visit, but gave up for a superfluity of memories, and an inability to quantify past times as a result of a heart attack. However, I remember the evening with crystal clarity. With the character of Australians plus the overseas OF esprit-de-coeur because of the dedication of Chris Essex, you may well be inundated with dinners and wine toasts, silly speeches and hugs of welcome - so prepare. It will be great to meet Denise this time.*

So on behalf of all OFs living in Oz and NZ, we will say ‘Welcome’ to you both. Look forward to it. I am copying in a couple of stalwarts in the OF arena of entertainment, in the hope they can be persuaded to help organise dinners or lunches for you both.”

He wrote the following to **Mike Garnett (R53-55), Colin Lipman(R53-61) and Neville Marsh (R53-61)** *“Greetings Gentlemen, you will see by the emails I sent to you out of the blue, that Richard Rowe will be visiting Australia with his wife Denise. For those who don’t know Richard, he is a ‘round-the-world’*

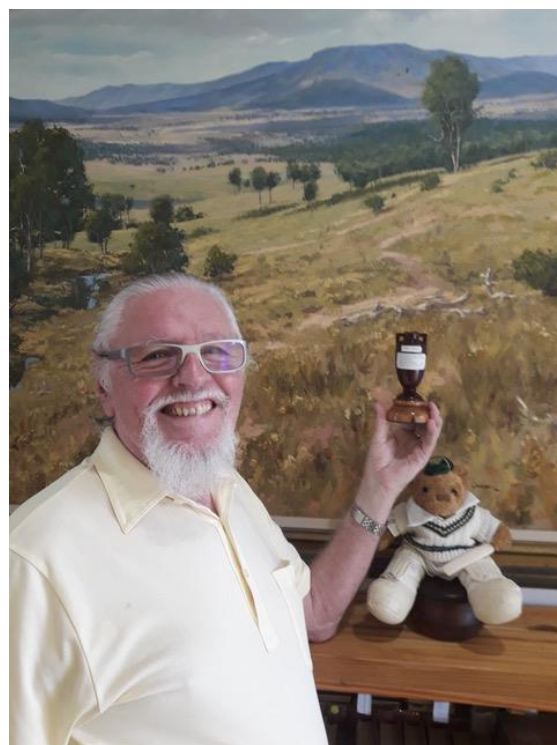
yachtsman, and an ex-SOF Overseas Bag Editor. Enough said? He's also one of the Good Guys! I was wondering that since Richard and Denise will be in your areas on the dates he has outlined, whether you would bring to bear your expertise in dinner organisation to set up an event close to you. Mike, it may mean trogging into Melbourne, but you have no scarcity of great restaurants to choose from, at least you had before Covid + Andrews. Colin, you have done a mighty job in Sydney, and I'm sorry I wasn't able to come to your last one. Your experience in past times should make this a doddle for you. Neville, we don't get many OFs coming to Brisbane but would you organise something, please, when the dates have been confirmed? I say 'Thank You' in anticipation, Gentlemen. Richard has visited Sydney before and Phil Bower organised a dinner at Darling Harbour. There was some sort of weird dress code, which I failed miserably, I recall. There's at least six months to think about it."

He went on to say that he and his Rebecca would come to Brisbane "Neville, when you have a venue, we will book a hotel nearby, and join in with the excuse for SOF festivities renowned throughout the known world, and as whispered in dark corridors, also in the unknown world! The dress code I will leave to you, Neville, but Brisbane in the middle of the cyclone season is a factor that you will undoubtedly take into consideration."

Of course August 2023 saw mention of the Ashes "I don't feel like parading the Ashes replica this time, although it was an even and really exciting series. We sort of won it by default - your rain! - and retain the trophy, but by not enough to crow. However, next time.....? Enjoy summer and don't get too wet."

I can't resist including again Chris's wonderful replica that he made some years ago to taunt us Poms!!

At the end of August 2023 Chris was just come back from a Book Fair in Yungaburra on the Atherton Tablelands promoting his unique leather bound book "Echoes of Gallipoli: For those left behind". He said "Expenses outweighed sales, and its winter. Some good conversations though. A couple of 'Ten-pound Poms', several ex-servicemen, and other authors from far and wide. Got offered three talking gigs about my book. Home now, to my 'home-body' Rebecca's delight and the cat's relief to be out of boarding at the RSPCA. Catch up on sleep, warm up from the Tablelands, and dry out from the rain. Tomorrow is another day."



Aubrey Whitear (G58-65) sent an interesting Christmas message/update "Happy Days are here again, the skies above are clear again. At least they are so long as you ignore Mr. Putin's shenanigans in the Ukraine, the state of the economy and the morality of our politicians. I'm pleased to tell you that despite Di and I being a year older than we were last year and increasingly frequenting doctors waiting rooms, we are still vertical unlike poor old Betty Windsor who served us for so long and so well. I wonder what the corgis will be doing this Christmas? Fretting about being replaced by King Charles spaniels, no doubt. So whilst we may live in the shadow of nuclear Armageddon, I like to think everything will work

out fine and the good news remains - you are unlikely to be mauled to death by a Golden Retriever or Santa's reindeer for that matter. Happy Christmas to you!

After a hiatus of nearly three years Di and I have once again been able to take to the air and our travels have taken us far and wide. First, for two weeks in May we were in Port Douglas. A week with Tristan, Sophie, Fleur(8) and Pat(6) enjoying the warmth, the barrier reef, the swimming pool and ice cream. Then a week on our own witnessing what a metre (yes, a metre) of rain in three days not only looks like but also sounds like. A fire hose on our tin roof couldn't have been noisier. It was not good for the golf course.

Soon thereafter, when Covid was still on our minds, Di and I drove for a couple of hours north of Melbourne to Bendigo to see the Elvis Presley exhibition. Unfortunately, Elvis was unable to be there but he was evoked by several extravagantly dressed impersonators so we could get a general idea of his work. It's a tribute to the power of advertising that even in such a remote location the exhibition was mobbed. Once arrived, we jostled shoulder to shoulder with the mob (no anti-social distancing required or possible) to see such fascinating artifacts as Priscilla Presley's golf buggy key (there, I bet you didn't even know she played) as well as many items of even lesser interest and which fortunately I can no longer recall. If there was anything worth seeing, it must have been obscured from my vision by the mob. The best things however are unexpected. The disappointment of the day was relieved at lunchtime by stumbling over a little café serving the best seafood spaghetti aglio e olio this side of Napoli. We also discovered a local artist who has now produced three very nice paintings for our living room wall. So the day was not entirely wasted.

Next came our Great Trip, a two-month extravaganza largely made up of an amalgam of various holidays we had booked and thanks to Covid, deferred over the past two years. In mid-July, Di and I flew to Perth in Western Australia from where we set off in horizontal driving rain (first stop Geraldton with its impressive HMAS Sydney memorial) to spend nearly three weeks driving up the West Australian coast as far as Exmouth – a distance of about 1,500 kilometres. Within an hour, we had a cracked windscreen. Among the highlights was the Kalbarri National Park with its skywalk stretching out over the Murchison Gorge. To prevent us falling to our deaths they had thoughtfully put out numerous signs saying “Cliff Risk Area” at the edge of obvious drop-offs into the void. The Swiss being more practical in such matters would have fixed a chain. The lowlight was Carnarvon where our accommodation could only be described as tatterdemalion although amazingly from casual observation it may have been the best in town. In its defence, Carnarvon did have a Space Museum and decent pub for dinner. In contrast, our glam tent complete with en-suite at Sal Salis on the edge of Ningaloo Reef was more luxurious than any tent has a right to be even if one night a bush rat did chew his way into my backpack at the foot of our bed. The food was great and the booze was free! Di even swam up close and personal with humpback whales and lived to tell the tale. Don't miss it if you are ever up that way.

Back in Perth, we flew to the north of England to see Roland, Joanna, Faith(10) and Sam(6) for the first time in three years and stayed for a couple of weeks in their splendid new house complete with guest bedroom for Nanna & Pops. Well, it's new to them, it's actually about 150 years old. There we were introduced to the delights of Vegan chicken. I'd like to say “tastes like chicken” but I'm more inclined to the view that if it catches on, there will be an acute shortage of white pencil erasers. Another slightly worrying occasion was when we were passed at high speed on the motorway by a white van signed “Zombie Apocalypse Response Vehicle” – it's a strange world we live in. For almost two weeks there

wasn't a cloud in the sky and the weather was hot and sunny enough to make us think we were in the Mediterranean, then when the weather remembered it was Lancashire, we all (including Joanna's parents) Easyjetted to Mallorca in the Mediterranean which I had last visited with my parents in about 1963. The beach in Magaluf which I remembered as a wild place with only one hotel on its entire length had been changed into Blackpool or Surfers Paradise on steroids. We saw large girls in dangerously small bathing costumes drinking Jaegerbombs for lunch. They didn't appear to subscribe to my grandmother's cockney maxim "if it ain't for sale, don't put it in the window". But then again, this was Magaluf, so perhaps they did. Fortunately, Joanna had found accommodation for us in a lovely villa with a big pool up in the hills. Not only was it peaceful but it was also right next door to a wee winery where we were warmly welcomed. It would have been perfect if the garden had not been infested by wasps.

From Mallorca, Di and I planned to fly to Bordeaux to start a week's walking holiday in the Dordogne. Well in advance, I had booked a direct flight on Vueling, a cheap Spanish Airline. I didn't know it at the time but this was to prove an error of gigantic proportions. Firstly, our direct flight was cancelled and replaced by two connecting flights, then shortly before departure the new flights were also cancelled. A moment of panic ensued before we had to settle on a not cheap flight to Paris and an expensive ride on the TGV to Bordeaux. How to waste a day of holiday. Our walk in the Dordogne was mostly a delight despite it being about 35 Celsius most days. One day we canoed almost ten kilometres on the river carried along by the current and only retarded by an occasionally mutinous crew. At nights we stayed variously in small hotels, a grand chateau and a farm. Fortunately, all had bars and nearly all had swimming pools in which to cool off. Dinner was mostly outdoors under the stars although one night was interrupted by an enormous thunder storm that sent us scuttling for cover drinks in hand.

Our Dordogne walk ended in Les Ezyes where tired, hot and sweaty we checked in to Le Centenaire hotel. There was the usual welcoming drink – a green concoction that surely must have been better for me than it tasted – after which we were invited to sit down whilst they brought the soap trolley. Think cheese trolley but it's soap! Then in the middle of the hotel lounge, we were required to sniff various blocks of soap to see which one took our fancy after which the check-in chick carved off fragments to be placed in our room. White powder, soap or otherwise, did not feature. This laborious procedure we were told was designed to save sea creatures from extinction. It took so long that I was thinking of checking out before I could check in but as the check-in chick was already doubling as the soap-dispensing chick, this did not appear possible. It was fortunate that this was so because when it came to dinner the hotel chef showed he really knew what he was doing and had no compunction when it came to dispatching sea creatures. Our meal was accompanied by ten Englishmen at a nearby table who appeared to be on a conference singing God Save the King in acknowledgement of their new monarch. To their eternal shame, they did not stand up. Incidentally, in case you have missed it, Les Ezyes claims to be the "world capital of prehistory". Cro-Magnon man (or a least his statue) looms over the village. Here you can see ancient rock art and a lot of other old stuff. We went on a tour of some caves guided by an English woman who could have taught at Ronald Searle's St Trinians (Google it if you are not familiar) and who spoke French with a Surrey accent. She made us stand at the back of the group because we were Australian. I thought only the real French were sensitive about submarines.

The final leg of our holiday was spent catching up with friends and relations in the southern UK. We avoided the queue to see Betty lying in state and instead on a sunny day walked along Regent's Canal, had coffee and bought trinkets in Camden market before continuing to Regent's Park for lunch. We stayed at the St Pancras hotel because I have long admired its architecture. Useful tip - it looks a lot better from

the outside although they do a good breakfast inside. Our room overlooked the platforms so we had a grand view of all the comings and goings. We could also hear the station announcements and could tell where the train on platform five was going at any time of day or night. Next time we will try somewhere else.

We arrived home just in time to see Betty's funeral on the TV. It was enough to bring a tear to a glass eye although I found I could only watch people walking slowly along the road for so long and after an hour or so succumbed to jetlag and went to bed. Luckily, I was wide awake a couple of weeks later when we celebrated Di's seventieth birthday with a splendid lunch by the seaside. I had never seriously contemplated being married to a seventy-year-old but as I am now closer to eighty I can't complain. Indeed, it has been my great good fortune in life to have met her.

On that happy note, Di and I would like to wish you a very merry Christmas with your family and in particular a happy and healthy New Year. We are looking forward to travelling and seeing some of you next year.

Di & Aubrey

Ps I almost forgot to mention that recently I attended my grandchildren's primary school's production of Cinderella. This was an excellent night, the show being best described as Cinderella meets School of Rock with a bit of Snoop Dog on the side. We had songs by such rock luminaries as ABBA, The Monkeys and Queen and the joint was jumping. I hardly need to tell you that both Fleur and Pat were outstanding but the very best part was that the school had not gone woke. Cinderella was still played by a girl and Prince Charming by a boy. There is hope, ladies and gentlemen. There is hope!

CANADA

Howard Thistlewood (K66-73) has lived in British Columbia for many years and when I heard of the horrendous forest fires in August 2023, I got in touch with him. This was his response "Yes, we have been confined inside by dense smoke since Thursday of last week, was well as a travel ban to keep roads clear for emergency vehicles. 00s of fires are near us, with major fires to the N and S of us; and with tens of 000s evacuated and the usual very large number of summer tourists sent home.

Our region is like southern Europe with a Mediterranean climate in summer (colder winters), grapes, peaches, and so on grown here, but clean mountain lakes for swimming and water sports instead of the sea. Consequently, our region suffers the same types of summer fires as other med. regions do.

We have been protecting our 1 acre property by slowly changing the landscape over 20+ years, as a result of living in southern France and seeing practices there. However, we do live in the "interface" zone as there is only wild land behind us all the way to Vancouver. So, we have preplanned our evacuation kits and boxes, have an emergency plan, and so on, every summer.

Yesterday and today in fact, the smoke cleared each morning and so I had my (usually three X a week) swim in the lake at 8am (normally noon with buddies), and today went on a 6km hike with my daily hiking

group. We should get through this in a week or two. Meanwhile, I complete a home renovation in preparation for visitors next year, and plan an England trip for October."

Caroline Mallett (Hon OF) recently sent out an appeal to those who took part in the 2015 Art Exhibition, for an update on their careers in art and design. The 2015 Exhibition was put on to mark 150th anniversary of the College. **Jack Wass (Z94-98)** was back in touch to say that he had opened his own art gallery & studio called Oil + Water, in downtown Vancouver, Canada. He shows his greyscale oil paintings, digital collage prints, and the conceptual art he's been doing over the past couple of years. See news article on the SOF website showing his oil paintings, digital collage pieces under the moniker Jack The Cribber and the examples of his conceptual art. He can be found on Instagram at [@jack_wass_art](#) [@jack_the_cribber](#) [@oil_and_water](#)



CHINA/HONG KONG

Gareth Morris (K90-98) has a postal address in Cornwall so I sent him an invite to a West of England OF gathering I was organising. He replied saying that he wouldn't be able to attend as he was in China for a period. He was interested in meeting up with OFs in the area so I put him in touch with **Chris Hall (G62-66)** and **John Ting (G02-09)**. Chris responded saying that he would be happy to meet up next time in HK. Gareth said he would let Chris know, but was mainly based in Jiangsu, Shanghai or Zhejiang.



Chris Hall (G62-69) was initially in touch back in April 2023 about a Hong Kong TV station, ViuTV, which had done a series about old expatriates and why they continue to live in Hong Kong. They had done a 25 minute programme about Chris as part of this series. The series is called Expatations. The link to the programme is: <https://vimeo.com/813047106/27c91744cd>. I published this as a news story on the website which got some interest from contemporary **Tony Meggs (K63-70)**. Chris got in touch with him. As you've read above he was also in touch with Gareth Morris.

In July 2023 Chris was visiting London and arranged to meet up with Tony Meggs and **Peter Randall (R65-69)**. Here is Chris's report, which is on the website "*In 1969/70 Fram sent*

*3 boys to Cambridge: **Tony Meggs (K63-70)** to study natural sciences specializing in physics, **Peter Randall (R65-69)** to study natural sciences and mathematics and **Chris Hall (G62-69)** to study history.*

In 2023 the 3 had a reunion dinner in London, the first time that Chris and Tony had seen each other for 54 years. Chris and Tony made contact with each other through the OF website. Chris Essex had posted a Hong Kong TV programme about Chris Hall on the OF website, which Tony saw and wrote to say that he had enjoyed watching, because he had always wondered what Chris had done after going to Cambridge. Chris had also long wanted to know what happened to Tony Meggs. They were able to satisfy each other's curiosity.

Tony had a successful career at BP (British Petroleum) rising to be Head of Technology. After leaving BP Tony was Chief Executive of the Government's Infrastructure and Projects Authority for 3 years and was made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the 2019 birthday honours list. He was then asked to become chairman of Crossrail to help sort out the problems in that company. He is presently chairman of Sellafield, a government corporation specializing in the disposal of nuclear waste. [Click here](#) for his entry in Distinguished OF section.

Chris Hall qualified as a chartered accountant and subsequently became the senior tax partner in Grant Thornton Hong Kong. Chris currently has his own international tax consultancy business which helps to fund his passion, collecting antique Chinese textiles. [Click here](#) for his entry in Distinguished OF section.

Peter Randall qualified as an actuary and subsequently became a partner of Bacon & Woodrow, one of the largest firms of actuaries in Britain.

The evening started with Tony hosting drinks at the Athenaeum Club and ended with port in the East India Club, where Chris was staying. (The public schools club merged with the East India Club so Fram's crest can be seen in the entrance hall of the East India Club, see picture). Peter was not able to indulge liberally in drinks as he had driven all the way to London from Warwickshire and had a long way to go home at the end of the evening."

Jenkin Leung (K79-84) was delighted to pass on the news that a few OFs in Hong Kong had an impromptu get together in February 2023 - left to right – **Robert Wong (S81-84)**, **Xavier Lam (G78-80)**, **Stephen Ngai (G75-79)** and **Jenkin Leung (K79-84)**



COSTA RICA

David Allars (K47-54) was delighted to receive from **James Ruddock-Broyd (G46-52)** funeral material and commentary of his

best school pal **Bill (WJC) Wade (K48-53)**. David found it bitter-sweet reading but was most pleased to see it. James hoped to pass this to David by hand some 3 years ago when he might have come to England but post lockdown this seems unlikely so James decided to risk the posts which eventually worked after a 6-week air mile journey.

FRANCE

Robert Craig (R63-70) and I were in touch back in May 2023, when he recalled with a smile a photo we had had taken in Dubai, that I published in the Overseas Bag and known as the "sock photo"! Anyone interested in more details can email me or look up 2015 edition.

Since then Robert had retired to France and we discussed how he had been involved with the SOF website around 2000, with Richrd Rowe. He said that he might be happy to help again in the future, but unfortunately one of his hips needs replacements, but this may allow him some time to help afterwards.

Brian Rosen (S40-46) in October 2022 had been discussing with **Bob Williams (Hon OF)** his participation in the funeral of King George the 6th and the Coronation parade of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Brian sent the following which I included as a news story on the website *"When the king, George VI, died 70 years ago it was quite unexpected and we had just 9 days to prepare to play our part in the State Funeral on 15 February, 1952. I was one of the 10,000 troops lining the route from Westminster Hall (where some 305,000 had paid their respects at the Lying in State) to Paddington station, from where the late king's coffin continued its onward journey, in a train hauled by the aptly named ' Windsor Castle', to Windsor, for the Funeral Service in St. George's Chapel. It was a pretty long, hard day for us and everybody was still shocked and, of course, very saddened, at the king's sudden passing.*

This was in some contrast to a similar privilege, 16 months later when I had another very long day, starting out from Olympia where we had to muster very early in the morning, marching in the Coronation Parade; a much more joyous occasion. As representatives of the 21 SAS (Artists) TA Marching Contingent, we led the Territorial Army in the Procession. With the weather forecast for 2 June, 1953, for somewhat mixed weather, I well remember, having marched up Park Lane and set to make an eastward turn into Oxford St, the heavens opened and we received a hefty soaking, with the blanco on our belts running down all over our military uniforms. A fair old mess to sort out at the end of the day!"

In November 2022 Brian provided the following detailed update on his life in France and his family, some of whom were contemporaries of mine. *"Here in France we have had a beautiful summer and this seems to have extended to the end of October. Even now in early November the trees are reluctant to show their autumn colours.*

Although there seem to be plenty of Covid cases around, these generally seem to be much less severe and there are no restrictions on movement or gatherings. Many people still wear a mask on public transport and that must be beneficial. Vaccination is easily obtainable, at home from a nurse from chemists. Life in general is very much returned to normal and the restaurants are full particularly at weekends and concerts and other events are well attended.

As far as I am concerned, with the RBL and RAFA, the traditional commemorations have been resumed with many events between now and the end of the year. I have given up my duties as a standard bearer but remain on various committees.

*Two of my three sons are now retired. **Philip (S63-72)** has been settled in the middle of Montreal for many years now. He seems to spend much of his time utilising the skills he learnt from a certain Tom Fleming more than 50 years ago, as he carries out improvements and renovations at his house and the apartments of his son and his daughter.*

***Simon (S64-74)** lives near Cambridge and has recently retired from Jaguar Land Rover and is now able to spend more time repairing and restoring some of his old classic cars. He continues each year and to attend advanced snowboard training in the Alps. As usual he will drop in for a few days to visit us here, complete a few technical jobs around the house, much appreciated.*

***Timothy, (S66-76)** has recently moved from Chester to the Maidstone area to be near his three grandchildren. He still has plenty of work as a computer specialist after a thin time at the height of the pandemic.*

***Daughter Sarah (BH78-93)** lives and works from home in Lyon. She has been an epidemiologist for about 15 years and is now an associate director of a large American company.*

It is now not very easy for me to travel and thus it is unlikely that I will be able to attend any events at the College. Anyway I send my very best wishes to all."

GERMANY

Kim Dickel (M97-98) reacted to my appeal to help photograph the grave of an OF in a cemetery in Germany - **Stephen Field (1895-98)**. He is buried in Berlin. He had been treating fellow soldiers.

I asked if she had considered trying to organise another OF reunion in Germany and mentioned that it had been great to meet up with **Jens Kippenberger (G91-91)** at the annual dinner at the College earlier this year. She will try and organise another reunion in Germany in first half of 2024.

I noticed that from her updated profile on the new website that she was currently studying for a psychology degree. Kim gave the following update *"I started two years ago to study psychology and have finished all exams about 6 months ago. I only need to write the Bachelor thesis now and am currently in preparation for this (literature research etc.). I am also in the process to find a new job, ideally one where I can combine my finance and newly acquired HR knowledge. It is not easy to find something nice, but I hope an opportunity will present itself in the near future. I will then also most likely proceed with a master in Psychology, but I have to see how I can combine this with my new position timewise.*

It was quite challenging to sit down and learn things (by heart), a very different experience than 20 years ago :-), but given that I have another 25ish years of work ahead I thought it might be a good investment.
“

In July 2023 **Peter Howard-Dobson (R65-69)** reached out to Kim to introduce to her **Maja Theisen (V20-23)**, who is our first German Moreau Scholar.

NEW ZEALAND

Roy Farman (K47-55) had sadly died at the end of November 2022 and I let all OFs in NZ know. I was sorry that snow prevented us meeting up with them when we visited NZ in 2011.

David Newson (S54-63) reacted to the news of Roy's death *"Thank you very much for sending the sad news of Roy Farman's death – I was unaware of this. If anything comes up in the NZVA Journal about Roy I will pass it on to you. I met up with both Roy Farman and David Juby years ago but have had no contact recently – both were very supportive towards a junior colleague who happened to go to the same school."*

We had a busy time over Christmas and New year – thirty people on Christmas day – 14 grandchildren and 16 adults including ourselves. Seven out of our eight children were there with their wives and partners – our second son James and his family could not make it due to a family bereavement. We had a great time – very hectic but fun. Our fourth son Richard and his family have just left us today to fly from Auckland back to Hamburg in Germany. Now we are back to normal I will be able to catch up on my Christmas mail!

We have had a couple of extreme weather events since the New Year with flooding and storm damage on the East Coast of the North Island – fortunately Taranaki has not been affected so badly. We are definitely moving into a warm wet cycle for the next few hundred years!"

About a month later in February 2023 **Chris Shaw (K50-56)** contacted David to check they were OK after a visit from Cyclone Gabrielle. *"We survived the cyclone without too much drama – there was quite a bit of tree damage due to the wind – I have spent most of the last week clearing all the ground debris. We will need some outside help for the upper tree damage – that can wait! The power was off for a few hours – Taranaki got off very lightly compared with the East Coast. The flooding on the East coast has been disastrous – most infrastructure on the flat areas has been destroyed with water up to the roof in many areas. Our main growing areas for fresh fruit and vegetables have been affected – we will probably have some shortages of fresh produce for a while. The water levels rose very quickly – within minutes – hence the loss of lives (eleven so far). It will take weeks or months before some areas get back to any normality – the government seems to be making all the right decisions so far."*

Colin Tremlett (R47-55) got in touch in May 2023 with **Kate Jackson** to say that he was going to be visiting the UK from his home in New Zealand. He had been unable to attend previous Brandeston reunions so would very much like a tour of both Brandeston and the College. Colin had been at Brandeston on the day it opened.

He has remained best friends with **Norman Mayhew (R48-56)** for nearly 70 years and would be accompanied by him and Colin's granddaughter Samantha (Sam).

He was interested to see if any of the four copper beech trees planted together on The Back to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 have survived. He believes the one he planted was nearest to the main building. We published a news article on this a couple of months ago – [click here](#).

The visit took place on 21 August 2023 and as well as Kate, Colin, Sam and Norman, they were also joined by **Tony Martin (G47-55)** and Norman's wife Margaret. Inbetween tours of Brandeston and the College they had lunch at the Crown.



SOUTH AFRICA

Mike Bullock (R55-59) was in touch with his usual newsy Christmas message in December 2022. He said the following “*Here is the latest edition of Bullock Moos for you. May the spirit of Christmas be with you and the family over the holiday period and into the new year.*”

*Mike and Wray become great grandparents. So let's start with the proud parents to be. Yes, the exciting news is that **Hannah and James** are expecting a son in April next year. **James** has completed his Geo Science degree and both he and Hannah taught in Bristol while **James** awaited his British citizenship. They are planning to return to SA as soon as possible after the baby is born.*

Try as we may to avoid Covid we succumbed early in the year but as we had been vaccinated the symptoms were mild and we had no complications. Wray had experienced a mineral deficiency which is now under control. Mike had a tumour removed from his eyelid and beestings at the same time as Covid. Otherwise our health matters go along with those of a septuagenarian and an octogenarian .

Mike still does DIY around the house and garden and plays bowls twice a week. He has also been off shore and trout fishing a couple of times this year. Wray continues to enjoy her gardening and we sit out on the patio



most evenings enjoying it and listening to music. She also maintains her involvement in the church.

All the best for Christmas. We fly to St Lucia, KZN North coast for a family Christmas, the other family being in Knysna."

SPAIN

Ian Foster (K46-53) wanted help get set up on the new website, which he duly did. I pointed out to him that as a distinguished OF for his literary prowess he can see his entry under authors. If you enter "Foster" in the main search facility at the top of the home page, that comes up with 19 finds mainly relating to his cricketing prowess while at the college.

I ask him if he had made any more adverts for the Spanish lottery. He said he hadn't but his photo is still used on Lottery sellers boards.

USA

Jules Arthur (K75-84) responded to an email I circulated to all OFs who live in California, from **Alex Miller (S89-91)**. Alex was currently living in San Francisco at the time of the OF London Supper in July 2023 and wondered whether any other OFs were in the area. Jules responded saying that they lived close to La Jolla in Mission Hills and looked forward to connecting up with Alex next time he was in the area. Alex had happened to be in La Jolla just the previous weekend! Jules's uncle is **Nick Arthur (K57-64)** who also happens to have lived in La Jolla for 40+ years!

We were in touch again in August 2023 following the bad flooding in the area. Jules reported *"the storms were bad particularly in the desert where we own a home but we stayed water tight."* Know that Jules enjoys his Grand Prix I asked which he was seeing next *"Vegas this year and then Silverstone next year"*.

Des Bishop (R72-77) registered on the new website, but I spotted that he didn't have a current postal address so wanted to check he was still living in the US. He replied *"I am still here. I have actually updated my profile, address and phone number. It's early here but I knew I had to get this done. I will also go in, review and take the new site for a spin. I am in Montgomery County MD, specifically Damascus/Gaithersburg. I never expected to buy here, but the area is a farming zone and of course resembles the English Countryside"*

He subsequently came back and said *"It's really great. Just saw a picture 1973 Rugby XV 1st team. Very proud, that was only my 2nd year there!! Looking forward to getting back on track. Thanks for keeping this legacy going for so long."*

I pointed out that I thought the nearest OF to him was **Michael Blake (K72-76)** in Washington and coincidentally I think Michael also features in the 1973 Rugby photo. I think Michael is 2nd left in the back row.

Rachel Bohanan(V97-04) provided an update on living in the US *“Unfortunately I do not keep in touch with any OFs. I travelled to Houston many years ago for holiday and I enjoyed it so much that I decided to stay. I currently reside in the city of Houston as I enjoy the city life. I have a 10 year old daughter and I currently work at the Jewish community center. I would love to get in touch with any OFs that reside in Houston if you are aware of any. “*

I responded saying that we have a couple of other OFs in Houston and 10 others in Texas. One of those is a Gone Away address for what I assumed was her brother **Michael (K97-00)**. We didn't have an email address to contact him either. I asked if she would be up for trying to organise a reunion in Houston and asked if she remembered **Camila Glenesk (P01-03)** who lives in Plano near Dallas.

I was delighted when she replied saying *“Michael is my brother and his email is xxxxx. I do know Camila Glenesk, we were actually in the same year but I haven't spoken to her since she left Fram. I would love to try and organize a reunion in Houston!”*

Watch this space hopefully!

Niall Foster (G73-75) responded in October 2022 to a request from **Phil Bower (G65-74)** to reconnect and after saying that I was travelling in the US later that month he said *“If on your US trip, you are anywhere near Dayton Ohio (we live 16 miles north of Dayton), please let us know so we can reconnect in person.”*. We were sadly only travelling down the eastern side of US this time.

Alex Miller (R06-18) was in touch for the first time in June 2023, and you will have read earlier, I circulate his message to OFs in California with a number of responses. This all stemmed from an invite we sent out about the London Supper as we thought he still lived there! He said *“I reconnected with an old girlfriend during lockdown and we are now married hence my move here! It's a magical city but it sadly has a huge problem with homelessness and crime. I am going to continue my career in property (which I did for 25 years in London) so that's the plan! Do get in touch if you find yourself here and we can meet up. I will let you know if I connect with any O.F's here and send some pictures - funnily enough my wife's mother lives in La Jolla and we are going there to see her towards the end of this month!”*

In response to an email from **Laurence Pretty (S49-54)** in California he said *“I would be delighted to take you for lunch should I find myself in your neck of the woods and would be keen to organize something in the not too distant future hopefully. I have extremely fond memories of Framlingham and have strong family connections in Suffolk (although my father has lived in south west France for the last 20 years). I wish you a happy 4th July weekend.”*

Bryan Pearson (S45-47) in an email to **Nick Carlton (G63-70)** in Australia in October 2022 said *“It was great hearing from you on the phone last night, it has been a very long time since I heard your voice and, at first, I didn't recognise you ! We certainly had some great times together on your various ships and Celestine speaks very fondly of you and our adventures, both at sea and on land (Butt & Oyster). I forgot to ask you how Raquel is doing and Celestine scolded me for that !*

At almost 91, I seem to be holding up pretty well, complete with Pace Maker installed, which is a really amazing little device. A couple of years ago I had a problem with defibrillation of the heart, which in one instance caused me to suddenly black out and fall, therefore the Pacemaker which holds the heart beats to a steady rhythm and speed.

Since our last three cruises were cancelled, I doubt that there will be any more and , in fact, I spent the money that I had put aside for a cruise, on a lovely women's Rolex for Celestine, a watch that she had always wanted but we couldn't afford. We hope that you will soon be able to travel again, perhaps stopping by Hawai'i, on the way."

I contacted Bryan in November 2022 to make sure that he had heard the sad news that the actor Leslie Phillips had died aged 98. I immediately thought of Bryan and his early acting career when he first met up with him and then kept in touch with him ever since. Bryan responded *"It is really weird that I was on IMdb, the actor's page, looking up Leslie, on the very day he died ! I had been wanting to reach him as he and I are the only living members of the Charley's Aunt cast from 1950, or were. Leslie played the Aunt and I was Charley, the actual lead, at the Saville Theatre."*

Here's a wonderful picture of them.

Bryan then asked whether he had ever told me the story about how he was reunited with his 1954 Bentley a couple of years ago? I said and asked for more details.

"In 1957 or 58, I saw an ad in Variety for a Bentley for sale, turned out to be a gorgeous Continental with a Mulliner body that had been modified by Henri Chapron, a famous coach builder in Paris. I called the seller, Kurt Kreuger the Swiss German actor, went



to see it and fell in love.

To cut to the chase.....I bought the car and drove it happily in Hollywood where the studio gates swung open automatically when I drove up, until 1968 when I was on the verge of divorce from my wife of 12 years and I was afraid that she would grab the car, so I quickly sold it to a producer at Paramount for cash and a Chrysler station wagon !

Anyway, after nine years in Tahiti, followed by many here in Hawa'i, I was feeling nostalgic and started searching the records of the Rolls Royce Owners Club in the extremely unlikely chance that I could find the car by looking for the chassis number and guess what, it was



listed and I was able to contact the owner, a collector of luxury cars ! He owns an engineering firm in St Louis and has a HUGE collection of Rolls, Bentleys, Daimlers etc.and even has a complete Spitfire engine which he takes to car shows and fires up for the spectators. He explained that he had bought my car, which had somehow been back to England in the meantime, then returned to the US in very bad physical shape, completely demolished the Chapron body and returned it to the original condition.

I was invited to visit him any time, which I subsequently did twice, as my daughter was living near there at the Scott Air Force base. It was a bitter sweet reunion as, not only was the body completely changed, but he had it painted in British Racing Green.

It was quite an emotional experience, to sit in the driver's seat again after all this time. Here's a picture of it, in front of my home in Sherman Oaks.

Just before Christmas 2022, Bryan was in touch with **John Gates (S44-48)** which you will have read earlier. He said *"Quiet time for us, as half the family is away on the Mainland in California and Missouri, but we'll still have a few at the dinner table, enjoying the Christmas pudding and mince pies that I had sent from England (God bless Amazon!)."*

In March 2023 he was in touch with news that his cruising days were not over *"Fingers crossed, I have made a reservation for a 12 nighter from Papeete back to Honolulu from November 14th to 26th on the Norwegian Spirit. We have sailed on NCL once before and, while it is not Princess I must say that the food was a cut above. We'll miss the champagne waterfall and the Elite parties, also there are no formal nights. Now that the Covid restrictions have been lifted, I'm just hoping that my present excellent health continues, so glad to be free of the awful (and useless) face mask regulations !"*

In July 2023 he had the sad news that he had lost his kid brother Ian, at the age of 85. He had had heart trouble for many years. He also said *"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 Theatre."*

Laurence Pretty (S49-54) was good enough to respond to the news that **Alex Miller (S89-91)** was in California and sent the following message *"Welcome to California! I attended Framlingham in the 1950's. About twenty years ago there was an effort to arrange a get-together of OF's living in Southern California which I was unable to attend because of another engagement. I think I have met two OF's for lunch during the 50 years I have been living in the LA area who were visiting here. They were put in touch with me by the OF Society in England. I do not know how many OF's live in Northern or Southern California.*

I am also a graduate of Imperial College London and was involved, in the 1980's, in founding a Southern California Imperial College Alumni Association. It got to about 30 members and lasted about five years. It fell apart because of the geographic dispersion of its members within Southern California and the difficulty of finding venues for occasional meetings that were geographically attractive to enough of its widely dispersed members to patronize events.

I am a retired lawyer, age 87, who lives in a retirement community in Altadena in LA County. If you are ever in our area I would be happy to meet with you socially for lunch or dinner. "

Richard Rowe (S65-74) back in May 2023 went on a family holiday to Egypt and volunteered to take photos of OF graves in the country that we had so far failed to visit. He took photos of the graves of Frank Balls at Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery and Frank Harris at Alexandria (Chatby) Military & War Memorial Cemetery. He said *"I am on vacation with my family. We did two days scuba in Hurghada. And now joined a 10-day G Adventure tour of Egypt. Yesterday was Sphinx and Pyramids; today in Alexandria. Tomorrow back to Cairo and then on to Abu Simbal, Luxor, etc. We fly home on June 1."*

In an email to **Chris Shaw (K50-56)** he added *"Fortunately the two cemeteries for Hadra and Chatby were only a couple of miles from our hotel, and Alexandria has Uber, so easy to get around. It is very moving visiting these cemeteries, especially when you see most of the ages are between 18-23; all the same ages as my own kids. I just wish I had had more time to visit the most accessible cemetery, in the old part of Cairo for OF Hugh Sheringham. I must have passed within a couple of miles of the Cairo cemetery several times. I have a couple of Egyptian contacts in Cairo, so I will endeavour to get them to send the photos; but not quite the same as visiting yourself. The fourth OF grave in Egypt for Humphrey Springfield is in the Kantara cemetery, so a little more remote and just on the east side of the Suez Canal - so technically in the military control zone for the Sinai Peninsula."*

My other news is that my wife, Denise, and I, are visiting Australia in February 2024. We are basically going on a cruise out of Sydney around New Zealand. Our flights are a little odd as we managed it all on using up points. We will probably do a few days in and around Melbourne; and then fly up to Sydney for a few days there. After the cruise we will drive north to Brisbane and have 7-days to do it in, following a rough itinerary from a friend in Coff Harbour - some inland to parks and waterfalls, some on the coast, up to Steve Irwin's Zoo. We thought about Uluru and Perth and north of Brisbane; but it started to make our schedule rather hectic."

In July 2023 he had visited Cape Cod, USA with the family. He updated on his planned visit to Australia/NZ, with Melbourne being visited first on 3 February, followed by Sydney a few days later, then a cruise round NZ before returning to Sydney and then travelling up to Brisbane. OF reunions are being planned in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane as you will have read earlier.

Richard had a bit of fun with ChatGPT and asked it to compose a limerick about **Chris Shaw (K50-56)**

There once was an Aussie, Chris Shaw,
With a spirit that left you in awe.
From Down Under he hailed,
With a spirit that sailed,
His laughter and smile, no flaw!

In August 2023 Richard reflected on previous visits to Australia *"I am trying to remember when and where the previous Reunion was in Sydney I attended. I was in Sydney on one of the Round the World yacht race boats in 1997; and again for a crewmate's wedding in 2003 when I stayed part of the time with Phil Bower (G65-74). On one visit, Simon Narroway (G72-75) arranged a visit to a local rugby game - I remember David Campese was playing. "*