

# Old Raineians' Association NEWSLETTER

web : [www.ldraineians.com](http://www.ldraineians.com)  
email : [admin@ldraineians.com](mailto:admin@ldraineians.com)



Summer 2015



Photograph courtesy of Tony Beard. Taken in November 1958 immediately prior to withdrawal of the trolleybus service.

### **Winter reunion and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for 1965 Intake.**

A number of members who started the school in 1965 have asked if we could arrange a combined reunion for their year intake. So, if you started Raines in 1965 this is a special invite to you to join us.

We can now confirm the details for the ORA Winter Reunion as follows:

Friday November 6<sup>th</sup> 2015

The Counting House

50 Cornhill

London

EC3V 3PD

Order your tickets now at the Old Raineians' Association website or use the following link:

<http://www.oldraineians.com/old%20raineians%20association%20reunion%20online.php>

### **Summer reunion and AGM**

The recent reunion was held in The Civil Service Club and followed the ORA AGM.

It was an excellent evening with a very good buffet. Gwynneth Jackson made the journey from York and proudly displayed her Highly Commended National Parks Certificate for Volunteer of the Year. This was for the Yorkshire Dales. She had a particularly good time meeting several old raineians whom she hadn't seen since they left the school in the Seventies - Kay Smith, Tony Simpson, Mike Stotter among others. Christine and Ken Crump also joined us and like with Gwynneth, so many members are pleased to see them and share memories.

A good turn out from the Seventies all round, with new faces and regulars. The photos are on the website and clearly, a good time was had by all.

Thanks go to The Committee for organising this function and of course, to the members who attended.

### **Alec Lancelot Aldridge.**

Alec Aldridge was a teacher at Raines' from 1921 until his retirement in 1961. He was the subject of a previous article by Tony Fuller in the spring 2000

Newsletter. An excellent piece well researched. Tony and I joined the school at the same time in 1958 so both have vivid memories of Alec.

Recently the ORA was contacted by Prys Owen who's first wife Mary 'nee' Aldridge was Alec's niece.

Prys has kindly sent various photographs and emails regarding Alec's life, teaching career and as a First World War pilot.



Alec Aldridge Piloting an SE5 in the Royal Flying Corps during WW1

Alec flew a variety of aircraft after rapid promotion to First Lieutenant in November 1917. Unfortunately he crashed his aircraft on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1918 and was impaled on the control column, resulting in serious injuries which confined him to hospital for the remainder of the war. He eventually relinquished his commission in January 1919. Sadly his injuries which resulted in having a metal plate inserted in his chest, contributed to his premature passing in 1962.



Sopwith Pup



SE5



Avro BE2C



BE2D



Second Lieutenant Aldridge  
1917



BE12



Sopwith Camel



Avro 504K

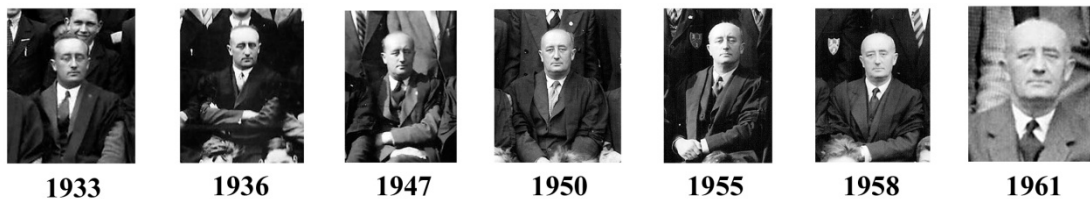
**A Selection of the aircraft that he flew**



Appearing war weary



Alec (far right) at the Wedding of Prys Owen  
to his niece Miss Constance Mary Aldridge



from the available 'Panora' school photographs taken during Alec's 40 years teaching

Alec would quite often beat his chest and comment upon his metal implant but apart from that, mentioned little about his war record. This we had to prise from other teachers who were equally interested in his illustrious service. World War 2 was seldom mentioned apart from the fact that he served in France with the resistance, using his knowledge of a particular local French dialect. Martyn Armitage recalls him telling his class of an instance where he lay motionless in a gutter with a sten gun as some German soldiers passed by above.

As Tony Fuller wrote in his original article, Alec really was our 'Boys Own Hero', a real life Biggles . I for one never really appreciated his amazing service back in the day or I would certainly have asked a lot more questions.

**Andrew Holland** writes

Regret I shall not be able to attend this year's reunion as I am caring for my wife who had a severe fall in February, and is still suffers bouts of giddiness.

However on a happier note I have come across a photo I took on the 1965 Sixth Form trip to Scotland, showing a number of Upper and Lower Sixth geographers and geologists. It was taken on the second day, at the start of walk in the Knapdale Forest. The Crinan Canal can just be seen in the background.

I have annotated the picture as far as I can although the quality is not good (Kodak 120 HP3 roll film in a box camera!!)

I have also attached a hilarious account of the trip from 'The Rainien' magazine submitted by Wayne Mockett. I hope you can use them in the next newsletter.

Best regards to all and hope to see you at the Winter Reunion.



Mr Nicholas  
6th Form Geography Field Trip to Scotland 1965

## SIXTH FORM GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIP TO SCOTLAND

On Thursday, 25th March, a coach set off from school heading into the rain-soaked night. On board were thirty-two souls and two drivers, but the drivers have little to do with the following narrative and so we will bid them adieu. Of the thirty-two scholarly figures three were discernible as Mr. Spooner, Mrs. Quick and Mr. Nicholas. The trip to Scotland was made mainly in the darkness and so not much can be said about it. It is said that people slept in the gangway of the coach and evidence of this was seen in the footprint on the face of an eminent member of the Upper Sixth.

Scotland was reached just after dawn but it was a surprise to find it was, after all, bigger than Canvey Island. We motored on over snow-covered terrain until we reached the coast and came upon the beautiful Gair Loch. The coastal scenery was breathtaking for all those with the energy left to open their eyes and look.

The hostel was reached after a stop at Inverary. This was a fairly modern building (built in 1848) with the awesome name of Minard Castle. It was, however, more like a country hotel than a Scottish castle. We were the only party mad enough to stay there at that time of the year, and we found out why on the first day's outing when we tramped across sodden Scottish moors, fell in assorted bogs and rivers and got thoroughly drenched in the continuous Scottish rain. The second day, however, was sunny and warm and we were fortunate to have this weather for the rest of our stay there.

On the second day we visited Knapdale Forest, a Forestry Commission forest, which consisted of trees, trees, trees and trees, and deserted villages and wild animals. While we walked through the forest we came upon a deer, who had got caught up in some wire while trying to escape from us. But we freed it and it ran away quite happily. At lunch-time we visited Achnamara, a small Forestry Commission village, where we experienced at first hand the rousing, skirling, putrid sounds of the 'pipes.

"Tomorrow we will go to Oban, which is a large town, and you can do what you want all day," they said. "Ho, ho!" we said, licking our lips and chafing at the bit. When

we arrived in Oban on the coach we counted no fewer than five public houses along the main-street, but when we descended from the coach we were most chagrined to find that this was the only place in Scotland to have a public holiday on this very day and that every — thing was closed. We spent a joyous day throwing stones into the sea and climbing a dirty great auditorium, erected by some twit who couldn't find anywhere else to put it except at the top of a dirty great hill.

We would have made the best of Oban if we had known what was to follow the next day. "We are going to climb Ben Cruachan," they said. "Ugh!" we said, but climb it we did, via another mountain-top, which we were disappointed to find was not our eventual goal. Ben Cruachan is 3,689 feet high and covered in about nine feet of snow from the 2,500 ft. line. All but three of the party reached the summit, fortified by the promise of a pint for those successful. Coming down was worse than going up, but funny with it, as backsides were utilised as escalators down the precipitous sides. Reaching the bottom we discovered that all the pubs were closed and so we had to wait two days for our drink.

The fifth day was composed of a very arduous coach-ride to Glen Coe and an Aluminium factory at Kinlochleven. Glen Coe was disappointing, as despite all reports it is not covered with blood. However there is a very pretty stream which cascades down the side of a mountain and into which at least three of the party nearly precipitated themselves. Outside the main gates of the British Aluminium factory we found at last that damned elusive pub, where we satisfied our thwarted desires of the last few days. Inside the factory were lots of aluminium, furnaces, dust, heat and broad Scottish accents. It was quite interesting if you could hear a word of what the guide said over the clanking of machinery and the broad Scottish accents. We were given a fine tea and piles of literature about, of all things, aluminium.

On the last day of our tour Mr. Spooner said we would have a "walk-down" of only fourteen miles. Hurrah for Mr. Spooner! The geographers walked up Glen Shira in search of Rob Roy's cottage, which was just a pile of bricks, adding weight to the theory

that the poor bloke did die of exposure. The geologists went with Mr. Nicholas to the head of Loch Fyne to make a geological map of the coastline. They were carried by the coach about two miles further than the area to be mapped because Mr. Nicholas "thought they would like the walk." The maps were duly made and the two parties assembled in Inverary, where Mr. Spooner stood the whole party to drinks for reaching the top of Ben Cruachan.

The next day we fell out of bed at 5.30 a.m. and had breakfast, I'm told, and got on the coach, they tell me, and drove away, I believe, in the darkness, it must have been, before the dawn.

Most of us woke up just as we were leaving Scotland and there followed a rapid return down the M6, where the coach passed everything in front and at times travelled at 85 m.p.h. We arrived back in London at 8.0 p.m., with fine tans and many happy memories. Everybody enjoyed themselves thoroughly and most even learnt something.

W. Mockett (6U).  
(Geographical details by D. H. Keen).

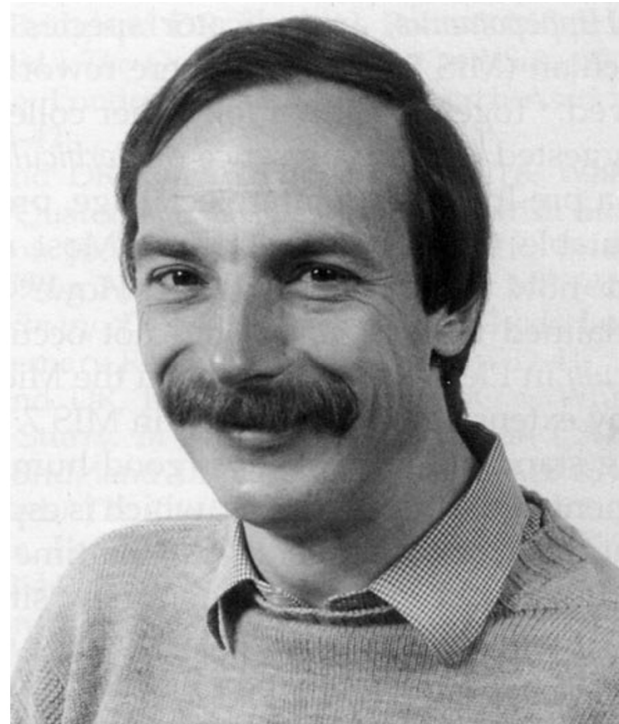
**David H Keen** (as mentioned in Wayne's article above)

David, known as Ted at school also joined in September 1958. He was always friendly with an almost overwhelming enthusiasm for most subjects while also finding time to help others not so academic. He always seemed to have a pocket full of fossils resulting from trips to the Jurassic coast. Obviously this became his

passion, resulting in an illustrious career described here from his obituary in the Guardian



From 1961 school panorama



Professor David Keen, was a leading figure in environmental research into the Earth's recent past, a field of increasing importance. His knowledge was broadly based: while his special expertise was biological, using fossil molluscs as evidence for the nature of past environments, he held posts in university departments of geology, geography and archaeology.

Our understanding of the Quaternary era - the 2m years to the present, encompassing ice ages and intervening warm periods - evolved considerably during Keen's career. He was one of several who, from the late 1970s, promoted a more complex account of the period, with five glacial-to-warm cycles in the last 500,000 years. In the resulting controversy, he always favoured innovative interpretations, based on the evidence from the mollusc species that he painstakingly washed from sediments.

Happily, he lived to see these interpretations vindicated. This work took him to North America and China: in the latter, his interest lay in the snails contained in the huge thicknesses of wind-blown dust (loess) accumulated during the ice ages - the Yellow river derives its name from the yellow sediment eroded from this material.

From 1975 to 2002, Keen rose from lecturer to professor at what became Coventry University; the Quaternary research and teaching centre in its geography department had started while it was still Lanchester Polytechnic. When the centre was disbanded, Keen turned to consultancy, including the coordination of the National Ice Age Network, which monitors key geological and archaeological sites revealed by the extraction of aggregates, generally ice-age river gravels quarried to go into concrete. In 2003 he joined the archaeology department of Birmingham University.

Born in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, he was brought up in Catford, south-east London, and went to Raines' Foundation grammar school in Stepney. After gaining joint honours in geography and geology at Bedford College, London (1969), he stayed on as a postgraduate, moving to Queen Mary College, London, as a research fellow in 1972 and gaining his PhD on the Pleistocene (ice age) history of the English Channel in 1975. He kept up the resulting links across the Channel, leading excursions of British learned societies to France and the Channel Islands, and of French societies in the other direction. Field visits brought familiarity with all types of natural history and a particular love of birds.

Keen was secretary (1986-90) and president (2002-05) of the Quaternary Research Association, European editor for Quaternary Science Reviews from 2002 onwards, and editor (1991-2002) of the Proceedings of the Geologists' Association, from whom in 2003 he received the Foulerton award. He also served on committees that oversee the funding of radiocarbon dating by the Natural Environmental Research Council.

His legacy includes more than 100 publications, more than 60 of them journal articles, with more to appear posthumously, and he wrote or edited half a dozen books. As a consultant to English Nature, he co-authored the Geological Conservation Review volume on the Quaternary SSSIs (sites of special scientific interest) in East Anglia and the Midlands, to be published next year. His large collection of molluscan specimens is destined for the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff.

David sadly passed away in 2006 aged 59

### **Brian Chaperlin .....writes**

A while ago someone (I can't remember who, but it was likely an 'older' member) asked in a newsletter if perhaps Lindsey Hilsum is related to the Hilsums who attended Raine's in the 1930s/40s.

Lindsey Hilsum is Channel 4 News International Editor and regularly appears on Channel 4 news. She is also the author of Sandstorm; Libya in the Time of Revolution, an account of [the fall of Colonel Gaddafi](#).

She reported the "Arab Spring" from [Egypt](#) and [Bahrain](#) and in 1999 she reported from Belgrade when NATO bombed Serbia. During [the 2003 US invasion](#) she reported from Baghdad and covered the Fallujah assault in November 2004. Her reports from Africa, the Middle East and Russia have [earned her several awards](#).

From 2006-8 she was the Channel 4 News China Correspondent, based in Beijing. In 1994, she was the only English-speaking journalist in [Rwanda](#) when the genocide started. She has been with Channel 4 News since 1996.

I decided to try and find out if she is related to Cyril, Charles and Sidney; After much research I eventually contacted her and received the following message.

Yes my father Cyril, now aged 90 and my uncles Charlie and Sid are all still alive.

**Brian Chaperlin** writes

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

There I was sitting in the vast sports hall at Northumbria University in Newcastle upon Tyne, waiting for my youngest son to go through the very last graduation ceremony of the year.

I was switching my attention between what was happening on the platform and reading the graduation lists in the booklet that the guests had been given. There was a large screen to one side of the platform, onto which were projected images of the graduates as they approached and shook hands with the Chancellor. Their names were read out and also projected onto the screen.

I wasn't really paying a lot of attention when I heard a name mentioned that resonated with me. It was an unusual name and one that I had last heard probably 45 years ago, when I was a pupil at Raine's and I was instantly transported back to Arbour Square, Stepney, E.1 and the 1960s.

I wondered, could the graduate whose name had just been called be related to the pupil who had attended Raines' at the same time as me? Not impossible, but most would say unlikely. I believe that coincidences are more than just that and this

belief is based on a number of such experiences. I felt that something was about to happen that would once again reinforce my belief.

The logical part of my mind then came into play. Suppose that another Old Raineian was present, how would I find them, as there would be hundreds of people milling about at the reception. I knew just what to do; send out a 'thought'. And so I asked that if this person was present I should meet them.

The ceremony ended and everyone made their way to the Students' Union. As I collected my complimentary drink, I turned around and there was the person who I had been thinking of, John Horsey (1963 – 1970). We hadn't set eyes on one another for a very long time and whilst the years have taken their toll, we did recognise one another. A short exchange of information followed, covering the past 45 years in a few minutes, introductions of various family members and a promise to keep in touch, which I will do, encouraging his renewed interest in the Association and putting him in touch with old friends.

John is married and lives in Sheffield. He has two children and two step children. He studied engineering at Bradford University and currently works in Poole, Dorset during the week, returning home at weekends.

## Old Flo



Starting at Raines' in 1958 and walking from Stepney Green Station included a walk through a couple of bomb sites plus the construction of the Stifford Estate which consisted of 3 tower blocks edged by maisonettes.

Upon completion in 1962 the London County Council purchased 'Draped seated woman' from Henry Moore for the princely sum of £7000 and installed it on a plinth in the centre of the park area. The intention was to add some culture to what was a deprived area after WW2. It certainly made a statement and quickly became known as 'Old Flo'. Owing to concerns over vandalism she now resides in Yorkshire Sculpture Park on long term loan. Former Tower Hamlets Mayor Lutfur Rahman tried, unsuccessfully, to sell her and now the Museum of London has pledged to do everything possible to bring the sculpture back to Tower Hamlets.

### **Newsletter Contents**

If you sent in an article and it doesn't appear in this newsletter it will be included in the next newsletter towards the end of September.