The Rev. Robert Knopwood O.N.[1779-81] and the founding of Hobart Tasmania in 1804

In Fred Thompson’s excellent History of the School [ First Edition 1974, Quatercentenary Edition 1988] Robert Knopwood features prominently as one of James Buck’s [Headmaster 1779-93] most remarkable students. Robert Knopwood first attended Wymondham Grammar School in Norfolk from 1774 to 1778 he was then moved to Bury St. Edmunds Grammar School where he stayed for one year before entering Newport Free Grammar School in 1779. It appears that he was moved to Newport because it was thought that by doing this he would stand a better chance of being accepted by Gonville and Caius College Cambridge [ since its founding in 1588 Newport has always had a very close connection with Gonville and Caius College].

Robert Knopwood did enter Gonville and Caius College in 1781. He was ordained Deacon in 1788 and Priest in 1789. Like his father before him Robert Knopwood was not careful with money being somewhat of a spendthrift and eventually he was forced to earn a living by becoming a private chaplain to various wealthy friends whom he had known at Cambridge. One of these was Earl Spencer who at the time was First Lord of the Admiralty. Through this connection he joined Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins’ expedition to establish a penal settlement on Van Diemen’s Land as Tasmania was called until 1843.

In February 1804 the expedition sailed up the River Derwent in the South East corner of Tasmania and found an ideal location for a settlement on a the west bank of the river on a small plain between the river bank and Mt. Wellington [as it was later called]. On this spot the city of Hobart was founded. It is clear that Robert Knopwood was one of the main driving forces behind the founding of the settlement named for Robert Hobart the Secretary of State for the Colonies at the time.

February 2004 marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the second oldest city [and the most southerly] in Australia. By a most extraordinary coincidence my wife, Jo, and I visited
Hobart in the first week of March this year [2004] as part of our extended tour of Australia and New Zealand. When arrangements for our holiday were made we were unaware of this special anniversary for Hobart in 2004. We flew into Hobart on Monday 1st March 2004. It is a most beautiful city set against the backdrop of Mt. Wellington. There are many references [e.g. street names etc.] to Robert Knopwood in the old part of the city near to the harbour. We visited the cathedral and to our great surprise found in one of the small side chapels a wonderful exhibition dedicated to Robert Knopwood. The exhibition had been especially arranged as part of the 200th anniversary celebrations. One of the exhibits is Robert Knopwood's hand written sermon given on 26 February 1804 within a few days of the landing. This was the first Christian sermon to be delivered in Tasmania. There were several items in the exhibition which had references to Newport Free Grammar School.

Having explained to officials in the cathedral of our connection with Newport we were immediately taken to meet the Dean of Hobart, The Very Reverend Dr. Stuart Blackler. We spent an hour with him. During that time he showed great interest in Newport and wanted to know everything about the School. He informed us that for many of those borne and brought up in Tasmania Robert Knopwood is a household name. He showed us a copy of a biography of Robert Knopwood written by the Rev. Geoffrey Stephens, the Rector of Moonah in Tasmania, and published in 1990 [ISBN 0-646-01098-0]. In the second chapter which deals with Knopwood’s education there are many references to Newport and clearly the Rev. Stephens had consulted the Essex County Archives extensively.

On Sunday 22 February 2004, just eight days before we arrived in Hobart, a special Choral Matins was held in St David’s Cathedral to celebrate the founding of Hobart. At this service the Dean gave the Knopwood Sermon which he based on Robert Knopwood’s original first sermon in Tasmania. I have a copy both the Order of Service and the Dean’s Knopwood sermon. These will be deposited in the School’s archives. I have sent a copy of Fred Thompson’s History of the School to the Dean on behalf of the Old Newportonian Society. He has now received this and in his letter of thanks for the book he informed me that it will placed in the Knopwood display cabinet in the cathedral.

Keith Huddlestone

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. Friday 24 September 2004: Annual Golf Match v Saffron Walden Golf Club; 13.00
Anyone wishing to play in this match should contact Don Hirst, 1 Highfields, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 2AD; Tel. 01799 502244. As reported in the last Newsletter the ON Team lost this match last year, Saffron Walden having put out a very strong team to regain the Fred Thompson Cup which the ONs won in 2002. Don Hirst hopes that as many good players as possible will respond to his request to get together a really strong ON Team this year.

2. Saturday 2 October 2004: 17.00 Annual General Meeting at the School in the Memorial Library.
   The President Designate for 2004-05 is Mr. Peter Carr [1959-64]

3. Saturday 2 October 2004: 19.00 for 19.30 Annual Dinner in the Main Hall at the School
As usual no tickets will be issued. All money will be taken on the door on the night. Therefore it is important that all those who complete the enclosed proforma to say they will attend do actually turn up on the night so that the secretary can give accurate numbers to the caterer. It is also important that no one turns up on the night without first informing the secretary of their intention to do so. If you wish to attend, and the committee hope that as many ONs as possible will do so, please complete the enclosed proforma and return it to the
ON Society Secretary at the school as soon as possible but no later than Friday 24 September 2004.

4. Friday 11 February 2005: 20.00 onwards; Gathering of ONs at the Coach and Horses Newport
2005 marks the 25th anniversary of the starting of this event by Jack Golding in his presidential year and therefore it is hoped as many ONs as possible will try to be in the vicinity of Newport on 11 February so they can find time to drop in to the Coach and Horses. It is always a most enjoyable occasion and often brings together ONs who have not seen each other for many years.

The Football and Hockey matches start at 10.15 and the Cross Country match starts at 11.00. Further details will be given in the December Newsletter. Those ONs who wish to take part please make a note of the date. Saturday 30 April has been chosen because it is after the end of the hockey league season and this is important because many members of the school and ON hockey teams play for league clubs and therefore are not available during the hockey season.

6. Saturday 2 July 2005:
11.00 Mixed Hockey Match v the School
This is now a regular fixture on the School v ON Society sporting calendar. Since it started three years ago it has been a great success. If you wish to take part next year please make a note of the date.
14.00 Annual Cricket Match v the School
This match is now a 40 overs per side game in the afternoon and evening with tea between the innings.
For those who wish to take part please make a note of the date.

Reports and Results

Friday 14 February 2004: Gathering of ONs at the Coach and Horses, Newport
This was a successful event with some 20 ONs turning up at some time during the evening. A number of old school friendships were renewed. Especially pleasing was the fact that a good proportion of those attending were younger members of the Society.

Saturday 24 April 2004:
Annual Football Match against the School
This was a closely fought game which ended in a one all draw. There were opportunities for both sides to win the game but in the end the general consensus was that a draw was a fair result. The following played for the ON team [including substitutes]: R. King [70-77] Capt., A. Sporne [78-83], A. Judd [95-02], P. Simpson [84-92], C. Simpson [84-92], R. Hasleton [79-86], B. Hasleton [72-79], J. Wrentmore [66-73], L. Page [69-76], G. Harding [69-73], M. Stredwick [70-77], M. Ventre [73-80], E. Holland [80-87].

Annual Cross-Country Match against the School
This was close race which the school won by 138 to 168. The school won because the final school runner just managed to beat the last two ON runners to the line. Thus the whole match was decided in the end by the last three runners. The ONs did have the individual winner, Chris Barnes [88-95]. The Old Buggers Cup was won by Howard Steed [72-79]. This cup is awarded to the oldest ON runner in the race who has not won it before. Other members of the ON team were: J. Hearn [96-03], G. Stowell [76-83], R. Newbrook [93-98], I. Hilder [71-76], R. Reynolds [staff], R. McHenery [82-89], M. Peake [Staff], J. Jones [86-93], P. Rogers [72-79]
Annual Hockey Match against the School

This was a very good game which the ONs won by six goals to three. Di Reed [staff] organised the match and in spite of some difficulties [last minute illness and injuries to some ON players] managed to get together an ON team. In spite of fielding only ten players the superiority and experience of the ON side eventually ensured a good win for the ONs. Di Reed is to be thanked for all her hard work in organising this match. The following played for the ON team: A.Rawlinson [89-97], J.Moules [96-01], T.Chapman [97-02], A.Dale [96-01], R.Hollidge[96-03], B.White [94-01], P.Towle [96-03], R.Evans [88-95], D.Tovey[94-03], D.Reed [Staff].

Saturday 3 July 2004

Annual Mixed Hockey Match against the School at 11.00

This was an excellent game to watch with both sides having many chances to score. The ONs eventually won by four goals to two but the result could easily have been the other way round.

Di Reed [staff] must be congratulated for all her efforts in getting the ON team together. Fifteen ONs turned up to play so there were a number of substitutions. The following played for the ONs.

Ben Judd [88-95], Claire Atack [96-03], Alan Rawlinson, [89-97], Annette Fisher [96-01]
Ben White [94-01], James Johnson[92-99], Lindsay Wilson [96-03], Richard Hollidge [94-01]
Jack Moules [96-01], Laura Mitchell [2000-02], Andrew Rix [92-97], David Tovey [97-02],
Adrian Dale [97-02], Sarah Dale[96-01], Vikki Nankivell [93-98].

Annual Cricket Match against the School at 14.00

This year for the first time the annual cricket match was a limited over game. It proved to be a great success. The ONs batted first and made 198 for 9 in their allotted forty overs. Neil Winter scored a magnificent 104 not out. The school side did well to keep the ON total below 200. Alex Layer for the school bowled really well and took 4 wickets for 48 runs. The school side were all out in the 39th over for 160. At one time there was a chance that they could have won the game. Alex Coote for the school had an excellent innings of 70 but once he was out there was no one to keep the momentum going. Peter Carr bowled well for the ONs taking 4 wickets for 58 runs. John Attesley[45-50] and Keith Huddlestone[64-02] umpired. The following played for the ON team:

M.Keefe[84-91] Capt., P.Chaplin[76-83], B.Judd[88-95], A.Judd[95-02], E.Holland[80-87],
P.Carr[57-64], G.Scott[Staff], S.Murphy[Staff], G.Harding[69-74], K.Dalley[53-60],
N.Winter[80-85].

As the Old Newportonians have won three of the five sporting fixtures against the school they retain the Burgess Cup which will be presented to the President, Graham Harding, on Speech Day [Friday 17 Sept.].

O.N.Society 100 Club

This year [2004] 174 tickets have been sold. This is the third highest number of tickets sold since the 100 club was started in 1992 and only six short of the record [180] achieved in 2001. The committee are most grateful to all members of the 100 Club for their continued support. As 174 tickets have been sold it is possible to have three prizes each month this year. Just over £1000 has been has been raised to support the School and help run the Society.

100 Club Winners since the last Newsletter

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<td>2</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>R.Casbolt</td>
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New Members since the last Newsletter

Deaths
The following deaths have been reported to the secretary since the last newsletter:-
Dr.Roy Goulding was a past President of the Society [1958/9] and a former Chairman of the Governing Body.  K. Walker, Staff [1982-04] see the tribute below from former member of staff Reg Nash[69-97]

Kevan Walker:  Staff  1982-2004
Anyone involved with the School in the last twenty or so years will have been shocked to hear of the death of Kev Walker.  After a year long battle he succumbed to cancer on 9 April at the age of only forty four.  The love and respect that Kev inspired in so many was evident from the numbers who packed Newport Church for his funeral; the School was closed for the day.

Kev, as he very quickly became known to everyone, joined Newport in September 1982 from Portsmouth Polytechnic and Lancaster University where he did his PGCE.  His prowess as a teacher of Geography was soon evident and he was a major factor in helping Ian Roper [Head of the Geography and Geology Department] to maintain the standards of a highly successful department.  We were soon to learn, however, that Kev was much more than a superb classroom teacher.  Within a few years he was master in charge of rugby;  the first of several rugby tours which he led, to Holland in 1984, will not easily be forgotten by those who were on it.  As a Leicester boy rugby was one of Kev’s great passions.  Welford Road Leicester and Twickenham were happy hunting grounds for him.

But in addition to this they there were few areas of the School to which Kev did not make a huge contribution.  He was soon appointed as Head of Trappes House , and later became a successful and popular Head of Year;  He was instrumental in setting up the Staff Welfare Committee;  he organised quiz teams for the James Strachan Trophy which Newport won many times;  with his powerful bass voice he was a bulwark of the choir, which he accompanied on innumerable exchange trips to Holland and elsewhere.  The list goes on and on, but it must end with his lasting legacy in the shape of the School musical tradition.  From
“Guys and Dolls” in 1992 to “Grease” in 2003 Kev, together with Nigel Partridge [Head of Music], produced no fewer than twelve musicals, each of them triumphantly disproving any idea that “it can’t possibly be as good as last year”.

Kev’s death leaves a huge gap in the life of the School and in the lives of his many friends, but the sharpest loss is that of his family-his mother, Audrey, and his wife, Rachele, whom he married less than a year before his illness was diagnosed. We can only hope that the thoughts and prayers of his many friends among Newportonians past and present have been and will remain of comfort to them.

News of former Students

Michael Stanley [76-83]
Michael is married with a son, Jason. He is lives in London and is teaching maths in a secondary school.

Richard Davison [57-63]
Richard went out to Australia in 1963. Having worked in the motor repair trade he set up his own business in Sydney where he lived for many years. He sold his business a few years ago and moved to a small farm which he bought near Goulburn [about 130 miles south west of Sydney]. He would be delighted for any of his contemporaries to get in touch with him. His address is: Rose Farm, Taralga Road, Goulburn, New South Wales, Australia 2580; Email: rosefarm@tpg.com.au

Liam Loughlin [93-2000], 2.i in Law at Cambridge

Hannah Drake [94-99], 2.i in Italian and Politics at Birmingham

Richard Smith [93-99], 1st in Civil Engineering at Glamorgan

Katie Watts [94-01], 2.i in Ancient History at Nottingham

Mark Bowers [91-98], MB BS St George’s Hospital Medical School, London

New Buildings at the School
Language Classrooms
As a result of obtaining Language College Status last year funds have been made available from Central Government to build two new class rooms for language teaching. These two class rooms are almost finished. They have been added to the east side of the existing language block. They will be ready for use by the start of the new academic year in September.

Hockey Club-House
When grants were received to construct the all-weather hockey pitch with its flood-lighting [which has proved to be a very great asset to the School] one of the main agreements was that the Saffron Walden Hockey Club would have use of the pitch for their matches and training and also that they would be able to build a club house close to the pitch. The School Trustees leased some ground next to the South side of the pitch on which to build a club house. This club house has now been built and the School will be able to use it. It is situated between the new sports hall and the all-weather hockey pitch. The design is excellent and it fits in well with the pavilion and the sports hall.

Music Suit Extension
In the last newsletter ONs were asked to support the Music Suit Extension appeal. It is pleasing to report that many ONs did contribute to the appeal and that their contribution was a significant percentage of the overall sum raised. The Head of Music, Nigel Partridge has written to all those ONs who made a contribution. The Governors, Trustees and Staff are
most grateful to the O.N. Society for their continued support, the Music Suit Extension appeal being just one example of that continuing support. The extension is now complete and is being used. The extension has been added to the west end of the existing music building and is of the same design.

As can be seen from the above the School is continuing to make excellent progress. Exam results at all levels are very good, a wide range of subjects is taught especially in the Sixth Form and there is a large number of extra-curricular activities which cater for the interests of all pupils. Such is the reputation of the School that there were well over 400 applications for the 162 places available for the Year 7 [first year] intake in September.

Email Addresses and Post Codes
The Society data base now has about 70 email addresses. As there are about 1000 members on the mailing list it is thought that there are more than 70 ONs with email addresses. Clearly it is a great help if newsletters can be sent out by email. Could you please send your email address to the ON Society Secretary at the School if you do not receive the newsletter by email and you do have an email address.

The ON Society Secretary does try to keep the ON data base and postal address list right up to date at all times. To do this it is important that the Secretary is informed immediately of any changes of address [many ONs are very good at doing this but some are not]. It is also important that the Secretary has post codes for all addresses. When you receive this newsletter please check whether the address on the envelope has a post code. If it does not have a post code please inform the Secretary of your post code.