

Bun, Cuppa and Chat

Veterans' Group

NEWSLETTER



August 2024

Norman and I have really enjoyed dipping into the Olympics, discovering different sports and delighting in the number of GB medals in a wide range of disciplines. There is something quite humbling in watching young (and some not so young) men and women from different nations enjoying competing, being so resilient and determined in the cauldron of intense competition, showing joy in winning, and gracious acceptance in defeat. Two British cyclists particularly caught my eye in this first ten days of competition - Tom Pidcock who won gold in the mountain biking (think F1 on bikes on a track strewn with boulders and roots) after recovering from a puncture to chase down the leader, and Beth Shriever in the BMX cycling (think downhill skiing on bikes with all the competitors setting off together from traps at the top) who dominated the heats and semi-final, only to be squeezed out at the start of the final and finished in 8th place.



For those of you who have no interest in sport, I attach a photo of one of the rose fields in our village. Makes a change from wheat, beet, and maize! Whartons Roses, who supply garden centres across the country, are based locally and there are often several rose fields in or near the village to brighten up my day in the summer. Even better, I won a rose at our village fete raffle, together with a joint of beef from local farmer Dickon's pedigree Red Devon herd, which is currently grazing in the field beyond my window! I do love rural life.

Bun, Cuppa and Chat News

The next Bun, Cuppa and Chat get-togethers will be on Thursday 26 September and Thursday 31 October, 2.30-4pm at the Mariners Galley Café as usual.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Bert Herrington a few days ago. Bert was a very well-known member of the Harleston community, including serving as chairman of the governors at Harleston Primary School and an active member of the Royal British Legion locally. Our sympathy goes to Alison, Bert's daughter and his other family and friends.

Remembrance and Poppy Appeal

As Poppy Appeal Organiser for both the Dickleburgh and Long Stratton areas, I will be organising collections in shops, pubs, businesses and schools from 17th October, as well as the manned supermarket collection in Long Stratton Co-op (subject to confirmation from the Store Manager) for three days in the period from 24 October to 9 November. I can also provide wreaths for organisations such as churches, parish councils etc at a cost of £25 each.

If you have any suggestions for collection points, or require any wreaths, please let me know, as I am in the process of putting in my 2024 orders. And if you can help with collecting at the Co-op, either returners or new collectors, I would love to hear from you.

We would like to invite Bun, Cuppa and Chat members to Rushall for the Remembrance



Service at St Mary's Church on Sunday 10 November 2024 at 3pm, with refreshments provided **before** the service from about 2pm at the Mariners Galley Café. We appreciate that some will be attending their own morning Remembrance Services, but we would love to see any of you who can make it. We will lay a wreath on behalf of the Bun, Cuppa and Chat group at this service. It would be helpful if you would let me know if you will be coming, particularly if you want to join us for refreshments at the Café, so we can liaise with Glenn and Amy over catering.

Olympians at War



Thirty-one British rowers competed in the 1908 Olympics held in London, of whom nine were killed in the 1914-1918 war, nearly 30 per cent of the team. Rowers were traditionally educated at public schools and drawn from Oxbridge crews, many of whom rowed in the annual Boat Race, so the high percentage of deaths in the First World War is not surprising given that the rowers were part of the officer class. In the 1914-18 war, the average lifespan of a junior officer on the Western Front was estimated as six weeks. Great Britain entered eight teams in the four 1908 rowing events, winning four golds, three silvers and a bronze.

Duncan Mackinnon (left) and **John Somers-Smith** (below) were both part of the Magdalen Four, an Oxford University crew which was selected to represent Great Britain at the Games in the coxless fours, winning gold., Mackinnon enlisted early in the war and was serving as a lieutenant with the Scots Guards at the time of his death in 1917 at Passchendaele. John

Somers-Smith served with the 5th London Regiment and was awarded an MC at the 2nd Battle of Ypres. He was killed

on 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Three members of the gold medal winning Eights crew were also killed in the War. **Frederick Kelly**, **Ronald Sanderson** and **Gilchrist Maclagan**. Kelly was commissioned into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (Royal Naval Division) on the outbreak of war. He was wounded twice at Gallipoli, and awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. He was a close friend of Rupert Brooke and wrote *Elegy for String Orchestra: "In Memoriam Rupert Brooke"* (1915). Kelly was killed in November 1916 in the last days of the Battle of the Somme. Sanderson was educated at Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge. He



was commissioned into the Royal Horse Artillery in 1900 and served in the 2nd Boer

War. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Legion d'honneur in the 1st World War and was killed in action near Ypres in April 1918, aged 41. Maclagan was educated at Eton and Magdalen, Oxford and coxed the the gold medal winning Eights crew at the 1908 Olympics. Maclagan served as a lieutenant in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and was killed in action at Pilckem Ridge on 25 April 1915. **George Eric Fairbairn** (left) rowed for

Cambridge in the 1908 Boat Race and won the silver medal at the Olympics in the coxless pair. He served as a second lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry and died of wounds at Bailleul on 20 June 1915, just a month after arriving in France. Members of the Cambridge boat race team were selected as the second British crew to compete in the Eights at the Olympics, winning a bronze medal. Three members of this crew were killed in the War: **Oswald Carver**, **Edward Williams** & **Henry Goldsmith**. Carver served with the Royal Engineers and died of wounds at Gallipoli in June 1915. Williams served as a lieutenant with the Grenadier Guards and was killed in action near Bethune in August 1915. Goldsmith served as a lieutenant with the Devonshire Regiment and was killed at Fromelles in May 1915.



Many other pre-war UK Olympians served in the armed forces during in the First and Second World Wars. **Kenneth Powell** was an all-round sportsman, excelling in gymnastics, rugby, athletics and tennis. He competed at Wimbledon between 1905 and 1913 and represented Great Britain in the 110 metre hurdles and the tennis tournament at the 1908 Olympics, and again in the hurdles in 1912, where he was placed fifth. Powell enlisted in the Honourable Artillery Company as a private at the outbreak of the First World War and, apparently without any previous experience or training, was posted to the Western Front within a week. He died of wounds on 18 February 1915 in the Ypres Salient. **Reginald Pridmore** (left) was another multi-talented sportsman; educated at Bedford Grammar School, he excelled in hockey, cricket and rugby. Pridmore was a county cricketer and an international hockey player and was selected for the GB hockey team at the 1908 Olympics. He was their top scorer including four goals scored in the final against Ireland which GB won 8-1 to take gold. Pridmore served in the Royal Field Artillery in the First World War, winning the MC for his actions during the Battle of the Somme. He held the rank of major when he was killed at the Battle of Piave River in Italy on 13 March 1918.

My thanks to Wikipedia and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission for permission to include information from their websites. See <https://www.cwgc.org/stories/home/> for more information and to add your own stories.

Modern Military Olympians

The tradition of military personnel competing in the Olympics continues to this day, with three from the British services appearing in Paris in recent weeks – rower and REME soldier, **Corporal Stephen Cox** came 5th for Zimbabwe in the men's single sculls, Army reservist, **Second Lieutenant Kerenza Bryson** competed in the Modern Pentathlon event, and **Air Specialist 1 Liam Sanford** of the Royal Air Force competed in his second Olympics with the GB hockey team. Major Heather Stanning, of the Royal Regiment of Artillery who won back-to-back gold medals in the coxless pairs at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics with Heather Glover said: "For any forces Olympian going to an [Olympic] Games, it is that pride of representing your country. They already have that ... [by] wearing their military uniform, but to be there in your Team GB kit representing not just your sport, but the country, the broader Team GB, it's a really special feeling."



Liam Sanford



Stuart Robinson

The Paralympic Games began as a small gathering of British World War II veterans at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital, who engaged in sport as part of their rehabilitation so it is not surprising that many service veterans of all nations now compete as elite sportsmen and women in the modern Paralympics. Army veteran Gregg Stevenson has been selected for the GB rowing team in Paris and former RAF Regiment gunner, **Stuart Robinson**, is in Team GB's Wheelchair Rugby Paralympics team once again.

In 2013, Stuart lost both legs as a result of an IED explosion while on his fourth deployment to Afghanistan, as well as suffering multiple other injuries including a fractured sternum and pelvis and severe injuries to his arm. He was put in an induced coma for six weeks, with his survival in doubt, but by 2014 he was competing at the Invictus Games. This will be his third Paralympics, with the GB wheelchair rugby team defending its 2020 Tokyo Olympic title. I remember watching the Tokyo final, brilliant!

Other military Olympians and Paralympians have made their mark too, not just at the Games. Lieutenant **Peter Reed** of the Royal Navy is one of GB's most successful rowers. Between 2005 and 2016, while a serving officer, he won five World Championships and three successive Olympic golds across two rowing disciplines, Men's Four, and Men's Eight, and three silver World Championship medals in Men's Pairs as well as European silver and bronze medals. Reed retired from rowing in 2018, but in September 2019, then a Lieutenant Commander, he suffered a spinal stroke, which paralysed him from the waist down, leaving him in a wheelchair at the age of 38. Reed said, "All the other news is great. "My arms are still strong and my brain is still as average as it ever was."



London 2012

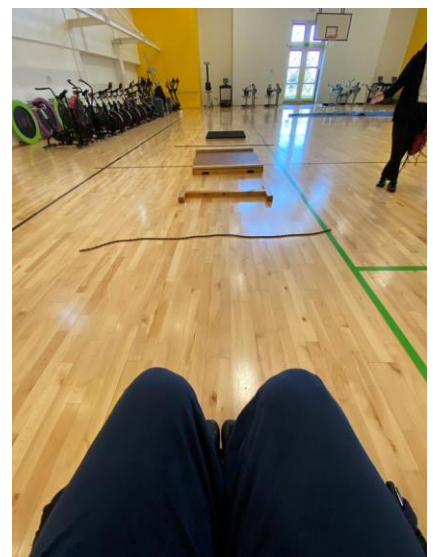
He has shown resilience and determination in his adversity and rehabilitation – his Twitter posts show him swimming, doing press ups, and other physical challenges, aiming to reverse some, at least, of the damage to his spine caused by the stroke. In Feb



2020, he posted this on Twitter/X with the photograph (right): 'Six months ago I was sprinting Royal Marines assault courses. 6ft walls & 30 ft ropes with weighted gear were keeping me fit. This was today's course & it wasn't any easier! Even for the green beret or Olympic gold, my motivation has never been greater. #Onwards.'

After briefly considering a new career as a Paralympian, Reed is now a campaigner and advocate for disability access and a public speaker on resilience. In 2022, Reed retired from the Navy

and was made an Honorary Captain with the role of 'advisor, advocate and critical friend.' Reed married Jeannie in 2021 and their son Freddie was born in December 2023.



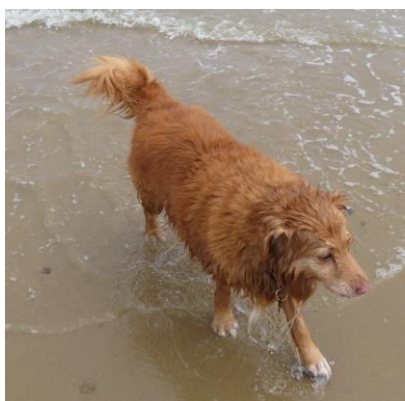
Norman's Chuckle Corner

- ✚ A police car pulled up next to an old lady who was obviously drunk and found walking a problem. They decided to be kind and to take her home. One of the officers sat in the back of the car with her and as they drove around the streets, asked her where she lived, but all they got out of her as she squeezed the officer's arm was, "You're passionate". They drove around the town again and asked her again, and once more as she squeezed the policeman's arm, and said "You're passionate". By this time the policemen were getting a bit worried about her. They stopped the car and the officer said "Do you understand? We have been driving you around for nearly two hours and you still have not told us where you live." "I do understand", said the old lady, 'I keep telling you you're passing it'.
- ✚ Two men talking in a pub, one said to the other "Whatever happened to Pete who used to work here?" "Oh, he got this hare-brained idea to build a new kind of car," the friend said. "That's interesting, how was he going to do that?" "He took an engine from a BMW. and the brakes from a Porsche, seats from a Mercedes, tyres from a Ferrari and the chassis from a Jaguar." "Gosh" said the friend "what did he end up with?" "Ten years in prison!"

Homage to Tommy Cooper

- ✚ I told my Doctor 'there's something wrong with my foot, what should I do?' He replied, "Limp".
- ✚ I said "Doctor, I am losing all sense of direction, what should I do?" He said "Get lost"
- ✚ An eighty-year-old man went to his doctor to get a full MOT medical. A few days later the doctor saw the old gent walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm. The doctor saw his patient again two days later and said, "I saw you walking down the high street with a lovely young lady, and you were doing great. The old chap replied, "I was just doing what you suggested Doc, to get a hot Mamma and be cheerful" The Doctor said, "I didn't say that, I said, You've got a heart murmur; be careful."

Musings from the Mutt and the Moggie



I had a wonderful time this month, taking the Master and Missus on several day trips, which included the seaside and pubs! Water, sand, balls, stray chips – what more could I want? It was a bit windy on Southwold Pier – no

comments about ginger corgis, please. I'm a Toller!



I didn't mind being left Home Alone while they all went out each day as I could hone my hunting and 'looking gorgeous' skills. You may think I am just looking cute here, but all the mice which I'm watching are just out of shot!!



Sahara and Sugie

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