

Royal High School Clubs

Details of current Clubs, Club History and the history of Clubs which no longer exist.
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Aims and Objectives

The Royal High School Club (RHS Club) was founded in Edinburgh in 1849, its first President being the Earl of Camperdown. The Clubs objectives and activities, are, as stated in Clause IV of the Club Constitution:

The objects of the Club shall be generally to promote the Interests of the High School (it wasn't yet Royal in 1849), maintain a good understanding, and form a bond of union among the Former Pupils of that Institution.

The Home page of the RHS Club website adds objectives as:

To maintain the history and standards of the principal school of Edinburgh. It has entered its third active century with the same objectives in mind. The move from Calton Hill to Barnton in 1968 and the change to comprehensive education in 1973 have not changed the objectives of the Club, who welcome all former pupils to its membership

The RHS Club provides funds for the Annual Prize Giving, many Prizes and Bursaries, and from time to time for Projects within the School. It hosts an Annual formal dinner, at which the Rector and School Captain speak, and several other pupils, including Nation Captains, attend the event. It also has frequent interaction with the School via presence on School 'Boards', talks to Students, support for prospective careers, and support for the Prize nomination and Prize Giving event. It is also co-editing this History, and providing funds for digitisation of many documents. The Club website is at www.royalhigh.co.uk

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Club President's message, 2019

The RHS Club in the year of 50th anniversary of Barnton has had a very successful year, and I am delighted that the RHS Club and The Royal High School have collaborated effectively together.

Financially, The Club supported the Wider Achievement Ceremony and The Annual Prize Giving, along with the funding, design and populating of The WWII Brass Memorial Tablets. We provided a second edit suite for the school AV dept. We contributed to the selection of School Captain and vice Captains.

I had the pleasure of chairing the Annual Prize Giving when we treated to an inspiring speech by FP, Anne Richards. We attended the unveiling of the statue at Edinburgh Airport to commemorate Britain's finest pilot, Eric (Winkle) Brown and returned earlier this year to celebrate what would have been Eric's 100th Birthday.

FP's took part in the Procession from East Princes Street Gardens to Mound Place and coordinated the filming of the event and associated Sponsored Walk from Regent Road to Barnton.

There was a large FP presence at The 50th Gala Dinner at Dynamic Earth, featuring The Ken Thomson (KT) Singers.

We held a very successful and the largest ever Committee Dinner in The New Club, paying tribute to past President Alan Grossett who died earlier in the year.

In November we attended the Remembrance Service followed by The Memorial Service to unveil the newly commissioned Brass Memorial tablets replacing the wooden versions of 1949. We attended the Annual Dinner of The RHS Club in London. We had a very successful Annual Dinner in Edinburgh with guest speaker, Prof Peter Hayes, Head of Division, Health Sciences, Edinburgh University.

The excellent work on the digital history continues from strength to strength, and I'm pleased that once again all leaving pupils will be given a copy as they leave School after the Prize-Giving.

A new RHS Club Facebook page has set up, hoping to engage to a wider and younger FP membership. During my tenure as president this year I have had the pleasure of working together frequently with the rector as well as attending all meetings of the parent council. Given the current severe budget constraints it is essential that former pupils continue to donate to The Royal High School Club and prize Funds and I am delighted new contributions been received this year.

I look forward to seeing more inclusive proposals benefiting both The RHS Club and Royal High School

Club President's message, 2018

Ian Cowie was elected President of the Club in April 2018, and provided a message for the history.

To be elected President of The RHS Club in any year is indeed an honour, but to have tenure in office on the 50th year of the school at Barnton is indeed a privilege!

I am one of an ageing band of former pupils who jointly attended the primary school at Northfield Broadway, the secondary school at Calton Hill and living at Cammo in 1968, the new build in the west was very much welcomed by me and my family.

I recall joining the RHSFP Club on leaving in 1972, but have only been involved with the committee over the past several years having initially attended a most enjoyable annual dinner.

The Royal High School has changed in some respects greatly; there were no girls when I left and in 1973 when the school became co-educational girls were added to the first form roll. The school also became comprehensive at the same time, ensuring that pupils came only from local schools. From my experience of hearing Rectors' reports and attending awards ceremonies, one thing is for sure, the combined success of the staff and pupils remains nothing short of outstanding.

There is no doubt in my mind that my eventual career choice was very much influenced by my school experience both in and out of the classroom. Archie Davidson, my physics teacher, guided me through the process of soldering circuit boards and supplying me with components to make radios and amplifiers. I left school to study Biological Sciences at Edinburgh University, joined EU Television Society which introduced me to sound mixing and working as a rookie student radio reporter on newly formed Radio Forth. Like Archie Davidson's father, I joined the BBC in Edinburgh and subsequently worked in TV News and Current affairs as a sound recordist, cameraman and producer. It's no surprise that over the years more than a few pupils from the Royal High School have filled posts in newsrooms in The Capital and beyond.

The common spirit we have as former pupils is something more than just to be valued but indeed needs to flourish and I do hope that in this 50th anniversary year, the school instills in you a desire to share and take part in the associated events planned over the coming year.

Looking forward to meeting many of you then!

Ian R. C. Cowie, President RHS Club

A list of Club presidents is maintained in the Chronological Tables article in this history.

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The RHS Club Annual dinner

The annual dinner is held in March each year, and as was mentioned earlier, a strong connection with the school is maintained by the presence of the Rector and School Captain as speakers, a number of other pupils and teachers as guests, and the Fiddle Band which performs prior to the dinner.

Guest speakers enhance the evening by toasting the club and school, and recent individuals in this category are as follows:

2022 – Mike Shepley, RHS Scholar and Compleat Angler
2020-2021 – Cancelled due to Covid
2019 – Professor Peter Hayes, Head of the Division of Health Sciences, Edinburgh University
2018 – Anne Budge, Chair and CEO of Hearts FC
2017 – Ian Blackford MP, Leader of the SNP's at Westminster
2016 – Brigadier Ian Gardiner, Royal Marines
2015 – Dr Judith McClure, former Head Teacher of St Georges School Edinburgh
2014 – Robert Forman WS
2013 – Michael O'Grady QC
2012 – Sheriff Principal Mhairi Stephen
2011 – Matthew MacIver, former RHS Rector
2010 - Dr John Halliday, Headmaster, Dundee High School
2009 – The Honourable Lady Dorrian

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Photos of recent Edinburgh and London Club events



2014 Prize Giving – platform party including FP Speaker Fraser Doherty



2016 Remembrance Service – School Captains, Youngest Pupil, Rectors and FP's



2013 London Club top table – Club President Louise Stevenson, London Club President Valerie Peay and guests



2017 Edinburgh Dinner – School Teachers, Captains and Nation Captains



2019 Edinburgh Club dinner top table, School Captain Meghan Aitken on the right and Club President Ian Cowie on the left



2018 London Club dinner, held at the RAF Club in London. General view of proceedings.

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RHS London Club

The London Club was founded in 1888. It fell into abeyance during the First World War, but restarted in 1920.

The Royal High School of Edinburgh's London Club President, Richard Steedman, and the committee invite former pupils of the school as well as present and former teachers to join the club.

The Royal High School Club in London (RHSCCL) holds two annual events: the pre-Xmas drinks party and the annual dinner which normally takes place in March.

The London Club maintains strong links with the Royal High School at Barnton and the Rector and School Captain normally attend our annual dinner in London. We also have regular contacts with the Royal High School Club in Edinburgh and with several other Edinburgh Schools' Clubs in London. The image on the right is the London Club's President's medal of office - hallmarked 'Birmingham 1912'



The following distinguished guests have spoken at our annual dinner in recent years:

- Neil Zeiger – TV and Film Producer
- Jimmy Adams – Celebrated Test Cricketer
- Nick Barley – Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival
- Dr John Murray – former deputy Rector
- Glenn Chandler – dramatist and creator of Taggart
- George Pascoe Watson – political journalist
- John Kay – economist
- Andrew George – diplomat
- Rosie Kay – choreographer
- Phil Edgar-Jones – Head of Entertainment at BSkyB
- Eric Brown – world record holding test pilot
- Eleanor Morton – comedienne
- Tom Bacciarelli – former head of English at the RHS
- David Robb – star of TV and Film

We have occasionally arranged other events, for example wine and food tastings and a race day.

Today the Club is in regular contact with around 100 former pupils who live mainly in London and the South of England. The Club's annual membership subscription is £15 (payable by standing order) and, among other things, the subscription funds three prizes which are awarded annually at the school's prize-giving ceremony: Dux in Art & Design, Dux in Technological Design and the Prize for an English Poem. It also provides supports for other prizes.

The Club provides a point of contact for RHS FP's living in London and beyond, across diverse ages and backgrounds, and facilitates further contacts with other Scots. The strong history and traditions of the school, alongside the friendships and the values, help to create the common bond shared by RHS FP's in London.

If you require further details about the Royal High School Club in London please contact the Club Secretary, Alex Prentice (alex.prentice1@btinternet.com).

The London Club website is at www.royalhigh.org.uk

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Presidents of the Royal High School Club in London

Those named below have served as President of the Royal High School Club in London since 1960. Current members' names are shown in bold together with their year of leaving the school.

1960 Burleigh Binnie
1961 J A C Manson
1962 J O Johnston
1963 D C Cousland
1964 A L Shearer
1965 T D Dobson MBE
1966 C W Cousland
1967 Sir George Gunn
1968 Wg. Cdr J Moffat
1969 Dr J Park
1970 J Y Orr
1971 G Dick Jamie
1972 Jim C Rowan
1973 Peter J C Matheson
1974 Cliff W Adam
1975 Dan C Logan
1976 R S Anderson
1977 Ken H Lambert
1978 Bert J Davis
1979 Ian G Gilbert (RHS 1943)
1980 Bruce Banister
1981 Sir Gordon Manzie KCB
1982 Sir Stanley Fingland KCMG
1983 Robert D Dewar
1984 Alan J E Rose (RHS 1949)
1985 J B McKellar
1986-87 V S White
1988-89 Sir Gordon Manzie KCB
1990-91 Alastair M Maclean (RHS 1960)
1992-93 Ian Duncan
1994-95 James H Randell
1996-97 Jeffrey T Robertson (RHS 1950)
1998-00 Wg. Cdr. Alan Robertson (RHS 1951)
2001-03 Janette Scantlebury (RHS 1981)
2004-07 Simon Card OBE (RHS 1967)
2008-11 Al Senter (RHS 1971)
2011-14 Valerie Peay (RHS 1985)
2014-17 Fraser Wright (RHS 1985)
2017-23 Paul Fleming (RHS 2003)
2023- Richard Steedman (RHS 1981)

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Histories of the RHS Club

Dr John B Barclay (leaving year 1927), wrote a memoir in 1999 on the 150th Anniversary of the Club. Dr Barclay also wrote the 1974 History of the School

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Former Clubs

The School Histories occasionally refer to overseas and other UK Clubs.

As an example, the 1974 History pp 89-90 mentions 'Former pupils in the clubs in London, India and Malaya subscribed the funds in 1938 to equip the band of the corps with appropriate uniforms. The India trophy of 1928 was given by the R.H.S. (India) Club for the nation which gained highest points for all round efficiency in the Corps.

The India Club also provided a Leopard skin and silver baton to the Pipe Band (1934 History p 98)

The RHS Canada Club was founded in 1913, but the First World War put an end to its activities. The RHS Club at British Columbia, created in 1939 filled some of the earlier Club's function. (1934 History p 97-98)

Glasgow and West of Scotland Club – was still active in 1962, as they endowed the Burgoyne Prize (1962 in honour of J. E. Burgoyne, master and deputy rector, for Dux in German - Open): (1974 History p114)

The Borders Club was active in the 1950's and beyond, as can be seen from the Schola Regia 1954 extract reproduced in the next topic in this article. Dinners were held annually for a number of years.

Extracts from reports of the London Club in Schola Regia editions

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Schola Regia.

The London R.H.S. Club Dinner.

The Annual Dinner of F.P.'s in the London area was held in the Connaught Rooms on 9th March, when R. Ramsay Wright, Esq., LL.D., formerly Vice-President of the University of Toronto, presided over a company of forty-five. Among those present were Mr William Coldstream; Sir Duncan J. Macpherson, C.I.E.; Professor J. P. Hill; Rev. G. L. Brander; Lieut.-Colonel Douglas M'Lagan, D.S.O.; Drs George S. Brock, R. Donaldson, J. Spencer Low, Athelstane Nobbs, and Scott Stevenson; Messrs Alex. Shanks, Findlay Muirhead, Fred Miller, S. G. Yerbury, Charter Hogg, J. M'Lauchlan, P. T. Richardson, J. Johnston Smith, T. Crockett, and F. A. Ross. Apologies for absence were received from Sir Archibald Geikie, O.M.; Sir James Dowie; Sir Stuart Stockman; Sir Philip Hanson; Sir James Purves-Stewart; Professor Somerville; Dr Andrew Elliott; and others. Messages were read from the Rector, and the Secretary of the High School Club (Mr Loudon).

The Chairman proposed the toast of "The School" in an entertaining speech full of reminiscences of the School in 1866-68, which were much appreciated by the company, and which aroused many memories among those present who represented the School in the seventies.

Mr William Coldstream had written some reminiscences of the School in the early fifties, which were read for him by the Rev. G. L. Brander. It is the hope of all who were present that Mr Coldstream's memories may soon be accessible to them in a permanent form.

The health of the Chairman was proposed by Dr Athelstane Nobbs in a delightful fashion.

Among those who contributed to the entertainment of the company were Mr P. T. Richardson, who again gave some delightful renderings of old Scots songs; Mr James M'Lauchlan, whose recitations, serious and humorous, will, we hope, long be a feature of these gatherings; and Mr J. R. Lindsay Daish, whose Scots songs and anecdotes were much appreciated. We should also mention stories told by Dr Scott Stevenson, Mr T. Crockett, Mr Findlay Muirhead, Mr Fred Miller, and Mr Madsen.

A feature of the gathering was the number of younger F.P.'s present, and we trust their numbers will be still greater next year, when, it is hoped, longer notice may be given than some of them had this year. Any F.P. who did not receive notice of this Dinner should send his address to Mr J. Allan, British Museum, W.C.1.

The article above is from the 1923 Easter Schola Regia edition. It must have been a long evening – there were no fewer than eight speakers, singers and other raconteurs.

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F.P. NOTES

THE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL CLUB—BORDERS

THE BORDER CLUB has held three functions since its formation two years ago. Balls took place at Kelso in April 1954, and at Dryburgh Abbey Hotel in April 1955. At a General Meeting in October last the following officials were elected:—President, H. T. Thomas, Kelso; Vice-President, J. Weatherley, Earlston; Hon. Secretary, N. W. Keith, Falcon Hall, Kelso; Hon. Treasurer, J. Fullarton, Kelso. Members of Committee, Drs I. J. McGregor, Kelso, and K. G. B. Reid, St. Boswells, Messrs J. T. Tabel, Yetholm, I. McWhan, Duns, A. C. Dougall and W. Scott, Eyemouth.

It is proposed to hold a Dinner this autumn. Any Schoolman in the Border area who wishes to join the Club is invited to get into touch with the Hon. Secretary. *Schola Regia* looks forward to increased activity as this young and vigorous Branch of the Club becomes more widely known.

The RHS Club in the Scottish Borders

The article above indicates that the Club was fairly well established in the Borders in the mid 1950's. It is believed to have been in existence for around 20 years

ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL (LONDON) CLUB

Founded in 1888, the Royal High School Club in London is the oldest of the daughter F.P. Clubs. The first Annual Dinner was held in the Grand Hotel, Trafalgar Square, in May 1889, and the event was well recorded in the *Scotsman*. The first President of the Club was Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B. The objects of the Club as set out in the 1888 rules were:—

"To form a centre of association for former pupils of the High School resident in London, or in any other part of England."

After meeting for a few years the Club fell into abeyance but was revived just before the First World War by Ernest G. Laing, who acted as Secretary (and who attended this year's Annual Dinner of the London Club). Sir Archibald Geikie was the first President. The war interfered with the Club's activities but the pre-First World War records have been preserved in the School Library until this year.

In the inter-war years the Club was thriving and successful and this was due to the great work of an outstanding Secretary, John Allan of the British Museum Department of Coins and Medals.

The Club again fell into abeyance during the Second World War but was revived after the war. Amongst the post-war Presidents have been Dr R. F. V. Scott, one-time Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; Mr P. G. Brown of the Government Actuaries Department, who still attends the Dinners regularly in his eighties; Sir Thomas Gardiner, Director-General of the Post Office; Thomas Lister, one-time President of the Scottish Institute of Chartered Accountants and, more recently, two of the famous Royal High School family, Charles and David Cousland, and Air-Marshal Sir George Gunn, Director-General of the R.A.F. Medical Services.

The good health of the Club in the post-war years is due in no small measure to the efforts of J. E. Gibson and Ian Gilbert, who were each Secretary for a period of nearly eight years in the 'fifties and 'sixties.

The present President is Wing-Commander J. Moffett, M.B.E. The Club has about 100 members and holds each year a dinner, autumn wine party and summer golf outing. All High Scholars in London and the South of England are welcome to join and the Club hopes that all High Scholars moving to the South of England will get in touch with the present Secretary of the London Club, whose address is:

A. G. Manzie, Esq., B.Sc. (Econ.),
26 Oaklands Park,
Bishop's Stortford,
Herts.
Telephone: Bishop's Stortford 4929.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS! Calling all F.P.'s

September, 1968: R.H.S. Barnton.
Games Hall: 120 ft. x 60 ft.
Swimming Pool: 51 ft. x 30 ft.

"Never have you had it so good." Open from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. five nights in the week. You have first claim on four tennis courts, four badminton courts, squash court, fencing, Judo, golf nets and an indoor cricket wicket.

Here is your chance to form a new club to be affiliated to the R.H.S. Athletic Club and to enjoy your leisure hours.

Have we got the leaders to make a start?

Don't miss this opportunity, otherwise it will be quickly and rightly taken up by the demands of Further Education.

Having been appointed to be in charge of F.E. at Barnton I shall be eagerly awaiting word from all F.P.'s and/or their wives who are interested in using the facilities available to them under F.E., be it in the classrooms or the games complex.

A. T. Ross

Detail from the 1968 Schola Regia, describing some of the Club History. A G Manzie was the Club Secretary.

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