

# Farewell to Ian Notermans

## A tribute by Steve McCubbin

Following the funeral service for Ian Notermans (Carr 1968-73), his friend and contemporary, Steve McCubbin, gave a speech at a pub gathering for family and friends. He recalled a popular, humorous and good-hearted mate



▲ At the Carr Reunion in 2011, Ian cracks up as Chris Hamp recounts an amusing tale from their schooldays. They are standing in what was the House library

I'd like to take you back to the late 60s and early 70s, when free love, long hair, student protests and letting it all hang out ruled for young people... except, perhaps, at a venerable public school like Epsom College.

An all-male institution – not exactly ideal for hormone-raging adolescents; long dormitories and hard mattresses; an era when the thwack of a cane could still be meted out by the Headmaster, Housemaster and prefects; strange punishments for relatively minor misdemeanours, such as 'ins and outs', where you had to get changed into your CCF (Combined Cadet Force) kit, then out of that into your PE kit, then out of that into your daily uniform, and then the routine started all over again – all at the double, of



▲ Ian and Jeni Notermans at the 2011 Carr Reunion. (Middle, top) Ian looking smart, with those well-polished boots, in the Carr drill squad. (Bottom) Ian in a House photo

course; fagging – where junior boys did chores for prefects, like making coffee and toast or polishing their shoes, for a few hard-earned shillings; the ptoyce – a small cubicle in a room of many small cubicles, which, as a junior, was your little hideaway for doing prep and listening to music; then you graduated to a pretty cramped study, usually shared by three senior boys; but we did have hi-tech – good old-fashioned record turntables and cassette players, and headphones bought from Army Surplus Stores.

Into this strange, but often strangely happy, land wandered young Ian Notermans back in 1968. Tall, with a wiry mop of perfectly brushed black hair – and, from the very start of his five-year stint, a fantastic ability to play it both ways; he ►



▲ **Ian and Jeni with Marie at her graduation ceremony at Exeter University**

observed the rules, sure, but with that inimitable laugh and twinkle in his eye, he mocked them as well. As some of us can testify when he concocted the most incredible ‘hooch’ – a mixture of countless strong spirits, shaken up in a plastic bottle so it could be smuggled along to a CCF camping weekend. We remember that mega-hangover well, but it was worth it.

Ian made many friends quickly – he was so affable and good-hearted, with a lovely sense of humour and, very importantly at a school like Epsom, a sense of the ridiculous. He had his distinctly quirky traits. Great buddy Roger Bingham says: “Before he went to bed, Ian loved to sit in his study and have a pint...of cornflakes. It would be in a traditional dimpled, one-pint beer mug, and he’d put plenty of sugar and milk in it, and devour it.”

“Then there were Ian’s jackboots – boots with a long zip up the side,” recalls Roger. “As a prefect, Ian would come to bed in the dormitory later than the rest of us. You were trying to get to sleep and Ian would delight in the noise of undoing the zip on those boots.” Another good mate, Chris Hamp, remembers the boots had metal ‘Blakeys’



▲ **Carr House Reunion in 2011. Ian with (l-r) Chris Martin, Steve McCubbin, Nigel Brunton-Reed and Nick Brunton-Reed**

on the heels, so “when he clicked them on hard ground at night, they caused sparks”.

Another friend, Nigel Brunton-Reed, who had the honour of being Ian’s fag, said: “Ian was renowned for his boots. They were calf-length black boots which I, as his fag, had to keep immaculately polished. He had the nickname ‘Heels’.”

Those boots were made for walking. But Ian was just as deft in boots made for running. He was a terrific sportsman – a gifted athlete and rugby player. I can distinctly remember him zooming round the school athletics track in 800m races.

Ian was also incredibly neat. Beyond neat, really. Ian and I and, our friend, Pankaj Patel, shared a study, and Ian’s tidiness was exemplary, putting Pankaj and me to shame. I can clearly remember that ultra-organised desk, with perfectly arranged pens and books, and his white, drip-dry shirts hanging by the study window.

Ian changed his shirts regularly, sometimes twice a day, I think – unlike ►

most of us, who waited till a 'clean laundry' run! I think shirts would have to last you three days or so, but maybe my memory is foggy there! Ian also cut a dash on the CCF parade ground, immaculately turned out in his RAF uniform – boots so well shined you could use the toecaps as a mirror.

You could certainly count on Ian with a map. He and Roger Bingham won the School Orienteering Cup three years in a row. "I remember getting lost many times, but Ian always put us back in the right direction," says Roger. There's a photo of the winning pair with their cup, each pointing in a different direction.

One abiding memory of Ian is the way his face completely creased up when he laughed, and there were a lot of moments like that in our time at Epsom. Ian and I hooked up with each other again at the Carr House reunion in 2011. And that creased-up face and distinctive laugh were on show again when we all went on a tour of our old House. We were standing in what was the old library. I think Ian cracked up after hearing Chris Hamp remember a House Prayers where one boy was doing a Bible reading and mispronounced 'ass', saying: "The men went out of the village to find an arse tethered to a tree!"

It was a moment to cherish. We were transported back in an instant to our carefree teenage days.

Ian was also a very persuasive young man. Another good friend of his, Steven Kay, recalls: "Ian organised the school dance in our last year. He toured the



**Memorably amusing: Ian and his unmistakable smile**

local girls schools, St. Philomena's, Carshalton; Notre Dame, Cobham; Rosebery High; Sutton School for Girls, and no doubt many more, to present good reasons why they should come to the darkened hall and strobe lights of what is still called Big School, as opposed to the many reasons no doubt going through their minds as to why they should not.

"Ian took his ambassadorial role seriously and toured the schools to persuade them of the benefits of a night with the likes of us! It was a hard sell, but his natural charm prevailed and busloads arrived for fun and frolics!"

Ian's mum, Ruby, figured quite large in our Epsom lives, too. She was a real matriarch, so kind-hearted to all us friends of Ian's. Roger Bingham told me: "His lovely mum baked Ian delicious sponge cakes and Ian would sit in his ptoyce and cut it into slices. Before he knew it, five or six boys would be gathered round the ptoyce, hoping for a crumb or two.

"Only twice, I think, did I get a slice – and even then it was the thinnest of slices only a sharp knife can produce!"

So Ian, your Epsom friends here today, and those sending their good thoughts from far away, salute you. As a great friend, a popular man, a memorably amusing and easy to amuse character – above all, someone whom it was a real pleasure and honour to know. We will miss you very much but we will be cheered by countless happy memories of you. Thank you so much for that.