

IN MEMORIAM

ARTHUR PHILLIP ROTHBART (STAFF 1969-2004)



Phillip Rothbart who has died aged 72, was still involved with the School, through rowing, until the unfortunate accident that led to his death in June of this year.

We are extremely grateful to Phillip's cousin, Jennifer Lampin, and to his elder brother, Michael, for much of the information provided in this notice; and similarly to George Pfeiffer who joined the staff of Reading School in the same year as Phillip.

(Arthur) Phillip Rothbart was born on 19 January 1946, to Leslie and Esther Rothbart, in Hampstead. He attended Haberdashers' Aske's School and from there he went to Jesus College, Oxford with an Exhibition in Modern Languages. He was to become fluent in French, German, Spanish and Italian and at the time of his death he was studying Portuguese. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he built a fine library of modern language books over his lifetime.

To his MA in Modern Languages he added BSc. (ICT History 2.1) and a diploma in Spanish, and Spanish and Iberian Studies from the Open University and an MA in Contemporary French Literature from Reading University.

Phillip taught Modern Languages at Reading School for 34 years. He organised exchange trips with a School in Pau, South West France, in harmony with his opposite number there, M. Eduard Lucas, and as George Pfeiffer recalled, Phillip quickly also made an extra curricular mark at Reading School, by joining the School Boat Club (which he later led). Phillip's interest in rowing had been fired at Oxford where he had coxed the Jesus College boat.

At School he enjoyed badminton as well and revealed a knowledge of the art of costume and make-up in amateur dramatics when assisting with the School play. Indeed his experience with amateur dramatics was considerable and, as actor, director, back-stage or front of house he was involved for 30 years as a member of the Russell Players (founded in Swallowfield in 1977) and as a co-founder of their Youth Group in 2009.

In retirement he was able to travel more widely, taking frequent walking tours to South and Central America and to South Africa. At home he led a Sunday Rambling Group and, for the University of the Third Age, a "Walk and Talk French" group. He taught at East Berkshire College and was an associate lecturer for the Open University.

Phillip volunteered on a grand scale; he drove a mobile library for Wokingham Council; he was held in high regard by the staff of the Museum of English Rural Life where he worked each Thursday; he helped to organise Reading Regatta each year and was a volunteer in the organisation of rowing at the London Olympics. He looked after the education, sociology and psychology section at the local Oxfam bookshop.

To literature must be added his interests in classical music and art and also in his family with whom he maintained close relations. Phillip was unmarried but very fond of his nephews and nieces.

Phillip broke his leg in a freak accident. After leaving hospital sepsis set in and he was discovered at his Woodley home in late June. The funeral service was performed by Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain at Maidenhead Synagogue, where Phillip worshipped. KCB



A P Rothbart, born January 1946, died June 2018.

Images by Chris Widdows and Tom Shore