

# Creative

## Book reviews



Our best-known private pupil is brought to life in the critically acclaimed biography *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* by Rosemary Hill (Allen Lane, £30). **Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin** studied at CH in the 1820s before his brief, intense, spectacular career (he died insane at forty) as a pioneering neo-Gothic architect, designer and controversialist. This is the first full modern life of him, drawing on thousands of unpublished letters and drawings. Also worth noting is Christabel Powell's monograph *Augustus Welby Pugin, Designer of the British Houses of Parliament: The Victorian Quest for a Liturgical Architecture* (Edwin Mellen Press, £79.95) in which she explores the tensions between Pugin, himself an ardent Roman Catholic convert, and a particular group of other converts led by John Henry Newman.



An OB test pilot and wartime air ace is the subject of *RAF Top Gun* by Nick Thomas (Pen & Sword Aviation, £19.99). **Teddy Donaldson (Ma A 25-29)** was one of four Old Blue brothers, three of whom won the DSO as aviators during World War II. In the pre-war air force he quickly became both a stunt pilot and a crack-shot, winning the RAF's Gunnery Trophy One and leading the RAF's aerobatic display team. When war was declared he was commanding No 151(F) Squadron flying Hurricanes and in their first engagement destroyed six enemy aircraft, shooting down many more in the months that followed. His DSO was awarded for his leadership of the squadron during the Battle of Britain and his personal tally of eleven, plus ten probable destructions. Later he switched over to jet aircraft, commanded a Meteor squadron and went on to command the Air Speed Flight, established in 1946 to break the world record – which he eventually did himself, not only setting a new record but breaking the 1000 kph barrier. Retiring as an Air Commodore, he found a new role as the *Daily Telegraph's* air correspondent.

The latest novel by **Rupert Thomson (Pe B 66-73)** is the chilling but thoughtful *Death of a Murderer* (Bloomsbury hbk £12.99, pbk £7.99), in which a police constable guarding the corpse of an unnamed killer (essentially Moors murderer Myra Hindley) muses on his life while questions about the nature of evil hang in the air. The *Independent on Sunday* thought it Thomson's masterpiece.

*Crisis? What Crisis?* (Aurum, £20) by **Alwyn W Turner (La B 73-79)** is a political and cultural history of the Seventies, hailed by Roger Lewis in the *Mail on Sunday* as 'a masterful work of social history and cultural commentary, told with much wit. It almost makes you feel as if you were there – which I was.' A 'vivid, brilliantly researched chronicle' agreed Francis Wheen in the *New Statesman*.

The most prolific inventor of armaments during the Second World War period was **Sir Barnes Wallis (Wd 7 & Pe A 1900-04, Treasurer 57-70)**, whose Tallboy and Grand Slam earthquake bombs were eclipsed in destructive power only by the atom bomb dropped on Japan in 1945. How his bombs were developed and helped win the war for the Allies is chronicled in *Barnes Wallis' Bombs: Tallboy, Dambuster and Grand Slam* by Stephen Flower (Tempus hbk £25). His full career is outlined in Peter Pugh's *Barnes Wallis – Dambuster* (Icon Books, £14.99).

For many years the discursive poet **Mark Akenside (Assistant Physician at CH Newgate Street 1759-70)**, once a household name, was out of fashion – but his work is now back in print, and the growing critical literature shows that a revaluation is in progress. In *The Literary Career of Mark Akenside: Including an Edition of His Non-medical Prose* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, £35.95), Robin C Dix brings the expertise gained as Akenside's editor to support his critical assessment of the poet's works.

**John Arnold (Ba A 43-52)** Dean Emeritus of Durham Cathedral has written *Life Conquers Death Meditations on the Garden, the Cross, and*

*the Tree of Life*, a paperback published by Zondervan Publishing House ISBN-10: 0310279763. It is the Archbishop of Canterbury's Official Lent Book for 2008 The Archbishop writes in his Foreword: 'This book is a powerful statement of basic Christian hope; I asked John to write it after hearing him deliver two retreats in which I felt that I had been introduced afresh, with authority and profundity, to what was most central in our faith. I hope many others will find here just that sense of hearing great and supposedly familiar truths as if for the first time.'

*Growing up in A War* by **Bryan Magee (Ba A 42-48)** was made available in paperback from 6th March 2008 (Publishers: Pimlico, London Price £9.99). Reviewed in the September 2007 Old Blue.

**Alice Willitts (Peasnell) (LHB 83-90)** has jointly authored with Deborah Carter *Food Allergy and Your Child* published by Class Health (ISBN 978-1-85959-186-4) and costs £17.99. Described as being written by two mothers with first hand experience it is a practical guide to bring up children with food allergies.

Not the first Old Blue author in this field, **Linda Gamlin (3s 62-69)** is joint author of *The Allergy Bible* (Quadrille Publishing, new edn 2001).

**David Miller (La B 48-55)** has a new book out, *Mercy Ships: The Untold Story of Prisoner-of-War Exchanges in World War II* by David Miller. Published by Continuum London. ISBN 978-1-85285-572-7 £20. *Lady de Lancey at Waterloo* by David Miller. Published by The History Press Ltd, ISBN: 978-1862274211 £14.99, has been reissued in paperback (4 April 2008).

**David Bennett (Th A 54-62)** has recently (May 2008) had published *A Magnificent Disaster, The Failure of the Market Garden, The Arnhem Operation, September 1944*, (Casemate Publishing, UK £19.99) concerning the truth behind the failure of Operation Market Garden.

**York Membery (La B 73-80)** advises that he has a story in *BBC History Magazine* (Oct) on Lady Bountiful and the boys she put through CH.

**Chris Simms (Pe A 81-88)**, the only one of the Simms brothers blessed with pace and a regular in the 1st XV a few years back, has been short listed under 'new and emerging' authors for 'Europe's Most Prestigious' crime writing award, for his book *Shifting Skin*.



*The Gods that Failed: How Blind Faith in Markets Has Cost Us Our Future* (Bodley Head, £12.99) is the third book to be co-written by **Dan Atkinson**

**(La A/Ma A 72-79)** and Larry Elliott. The gods in question are the 'new elite of super-rich free-market operatives and their colleagues in national and international institutions' who, say the authors, are 'unconcerned with – in fact, hostile to – job security, social tranquillity and the traditional middle class aspiration for both the good life and the quiet life.' Samuel Brittan called the book 'engagingly written' in the Financial Times; Jeff Randall in the Daily Telegraph found it well written and witty.

## Music reviews

**Tim Benjamin (PeA/MdB 87-92)** publishes a regular newsletter and is founder member of the Radius ensemble. They performed on May 25th at the South Bank Centre. He reports that the only definite date in the diary for Radius is 18th June next year at Wigmore Hall. He has been commissioned to write the music for the Greek Play, which takes place every three years in Oxford. Basically it is a classical Greek play, in ancient Greek. On from 15th to 18th October at the Oxford Playhouse.

**Rebecca Gibson (Col A 87-94)** has been touring the UK as a woodwind player in various shows for the last eight years. She finally has her own West End gig and is appearing at the Palladium in *The Sound of Music*.



**Lewis Atkinson (La A 79-86)**, brother of **Dan (La A 72-79)** has recently released an album of music. His promotional blurb includes the following;

Broadcaster (aka Lewis Atkinson) is a creative musician. He has been making music in a home studio since he was thirteen when he cobbled two tape decks together. He subsequently played guitar in many unsigned bands through school, college and after. He took a degree in Music and Performing Arts at Bishop Otter College, Chichester, but eventually got fed up of being a musician on unemployment benefit and reluctantly relegated music to an obsessive hobby. He has been using spoken word in his compositions since the early nineties, experimenting with samples taken from film, television, long and short wave radio. When a friend gave him a CD set of the ground breaking radio series *The Radio Ballads* from the 1960's, he realised that he had found some extremely rich source material. He took a number of tracks to producer/musician Calum MacColl who agreed to produce and engineer with him. The resulting CD became the unique-sounding '*Primary Transmission*' (Red Grape, 2008).

The album was released on the 23rd of June and has already caused quite a stir. It's been record of the week on Colin Murray's Radio One show while being played on various other shows on Radio One, Two and BBC 6 Music.

If you would like to listen to some of tracks or for more information visit [www.myspace.com/broadcasteruk](http://www.myspace.com/broadcasteruk) or his record company's website [www.redgraperecords.co.uk/artists/broadcaster.html](http://www.redgraperecords.co.uk/artists/broadcaster.html)



Right: **Lewis Atkinson's** recently released CD '*Primary Transmission*'.