



## **The Richard Hancorn Award**

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## **The Award and its Aims**

The Richard Hancorn Award was established in 1996 to provide support for pupils at Clifton of high all round calibre who are contributing both in their academic studies and in the many extra-curricular activities available to them, thus taking advantage of the rich and varied education that the school offers for the benefit both of themselves and the school. The Award also aims to assist parents financially, recognising that such pupils may incur additional expense for their parents while enhancing the reputation of the school through their activities. It therefore supports gifted individuals who not only aspire to a university place but who are also contributing to the wider life of the school.

## **A success story**

Since its inception the Award has succeeded in its aims by supporting pupils with a very wide variety of skills and interests. These have ranged from high sporting achievement, including the captains of rugby XV, cricket XI and netball team, and participation in virtually all other areas of school sport. They have covered every aspect of school life including outstanding actors and singers, debaters, philosophers and leaders of various school societies, active members of the CCF and organisers of chapel weeks. Their success has been reflected in recipients of the Award attaining very senior positions in the school, where they have contributed by taking responsibility for many aspects of the internal running of the school.

Commenting on the progress of one recipient, a master said simply “she does everything”. This neatly summarises the sort of contribution the recipients have made to the school in their time at Clifton.

To date all recipients of the Award have succeeded in going on to University where they have continued to contribute by bringing their skills and achievements to bear.

## **Eligibility for the Award**

The Award is open to all pupils in the senior school, be they boys or girls, boarders or day pupils. More than one may be open at any one time.

In practice, the Award has been generally been given to pupils entering the VIth form who already have a track record of achievement and who may need financial support to complete their promising career at Clifton. In this way the Award has enabled pupils to fulfil their time at Clifton and to obtain maximum benefit from their education.

## **Uniqueness of the Award**

In addition to filling a gap in providing a bursary for pupils at Clifton who contribute broadly across the full range of life of the school, the Award provides a fitting memorial to Richard, a committed Old Cliftonian, as well as putting his funds and those who have supported the Trust, to good use.

# Richard Hancorn

*DH – May 1960 to December 1964*

## *Foreword*

**By Bill Buck**

**Headmaster, Pembroke House, Gilgil, Kenya**

Richard was one of my best friends at our day prep school in Southampton. For years we played sport together, and competed with and against each other throughout our youth. He was my captain of cricket, I his vice-captain: he opened the batting, I the bowling. We both reached our school 1<sup>st</sup> XIs early and followed each other's progress through the pages of *Wisden* – one school above the other. We played squash, golf, tennis (where he beat me in our prep school final with gentlemanly ease); we even sailed together on a Crusader camp. And yet, he had brains too! He won a scholarship to Brasenose College, Oxford to read Modern Languages, whilst I went off to St Luke's, Exeter to become a teacher.

We kept in contact and often played cricket against each other in Southampton during the holidays. If you bowled him a good ball it was always acknowledged with a nod and a mouthed "well bowled". Then came the tug of the cap which led to the mental routine before he settled again, invariably meaning that the sharp brain and quick reflexes resulted in the next ball finding the middle of a cultured bat and, most likely, producing neatly placed runs.

The modesty of the man, and that acknowledgement and appreciation of other people's gifts, seemed to draw him towards the desire to give back to others those techniques that his abilities had turned into skills. So it was no surprise to me that, even after illness tragically struck him, he retained an extraordinary gift for teaching.

As a teacher myself I had always admired those colleagues who could achieve excellence from their pupils and yet had an equally supportive desire to see those same children excel in other fields too. As a Headmaster I admire schools that encourage a roundness in the education of the young.

It is typical of the Hancorn family that this Trust should be set up to foster that ethic and I am sure that Richard would be pleased to realise that his Trust fund will now allow other pupils of all round ability to enjoy a Clifton education.

**W.D.Buck**  
**28/10/96**

## ***“A Scholar’s wisdom comes from ample leisure”***

Richard left Clifton in December 1964 with a scholarship to Oxford, shortly before his eighteenth birthday. He was head of Dakyns’.



Small and bespectacled, he had the bearing of a scholar and, perhaps, a musician, but his activities in the four and a half years he spent at the school covered a great deal more than that. They were happy and eventful years. He achieved success in many fields and his unassuming nature together with a notorious absent-mindedness belied a fiercely competitive spirit.

Later he had a successful career, first as a teacher of modern languages and then as a solicitor, before falling seriously ill in his late thirties. He died in December 1994, aged 47.

As an Old Cliftonian he actively supported the school, whom he continued to represent before his illness, both in the Cricketer Cup and in numerous rackets competitions. Where anything to do with Clifton was going on he was bound to be there.

## ***Early Days***

Within two weeks of arriving at Dakyns’ in the summer of 1960, Richard had already done a number of things that typified the range of activities and interests he pursued during his time at Clifton.

To begin with, as the youngest and certainly the smallest boy in the school, he had put his name down for the house unison choir – as a bass! This was quickly amended by a senior member of the house to “treble”, only to be changed back by Richard because his voice had indeed broken at a very young age. Thus started a long association with singing at Clifton, where Richard was a lifelong member of the school choir.

The second experience was more unexpected and certainly unplanned, as Richard was told by the head of house to attend High School dancing as a late replacement. This was an order that had to be obeyed, even though it was intended solely for sixth-formers, so Richard duly went along. Fortunately he had been taught ballroom dancing so he knew what to do, but it must have been quite a shock for the girls at the High School to find themselves dancing with a boy who barely came up to their shoulders!

More predictably, Richard's sporting talent was quickly recognised but, even so, he must have surprised to find himself playing in a house match for the first XI on Bigside against Watson's at the tender age of 13. Injury had left the house short of a player and, as he was a brilliant fielder, he was brought in. Needless to say, Dakyns' won the match very easily!

Not everything went to plan, however, and when the school announced a whole day's holiday to celebrate Princess Margaret's wedding, he went off with a friend to Weston-Super-Mare (which unbeknown to them was strictly out of bounds) and spent his entire term's pocket money!

### ***Richard and 'The Moonlight'***

The old upright piano started to rock to and fro as Dick tentatively played the first chord of the Moonlight Sonata. No one had noticed that the piano had been moved to the edge of Yak's carpet, half on and half off. The Dakyns' House soiree would have ended abruptly there if the piano had had its way, or the barely concealed mirth of the pater had influenced the pianist. Totally undaunted, Dick smiled and with his amazing coordination followed the moving keys to the end of the movement. Few of those present were aware that Dick's beautiful rendering had defied all the odds.

Over twenty years later his friends witnessed the same selfless determination after Dick had his first major operation at Southampton and silently wondered if he would make it to Christmas. Not only did he walk out of the hospital in time for Christmas, he managed to live fruitful life for a further ten years. Despite countless hardships you never heard him complain and he always wanted to know how you were. Towards the end he settled for being an armchair sportsman though he kept his brain active by teaching a friend Spanish and, of course, playing a little Beethoven on the piano.

**Peter Hankins (DH, 1959-1964)**

### ***How he lost his appendix – and went missing!***

For Richard, Saturdays meant one thing – sport. But even he excelled himself one winter's day in 1961. He played a game of junior rugby, as usual, and this was quickly followed by a game of football when he discovered that there was a player short on an adjoining pitch. Returning to school from Beggars Bush in time for tea, he then played his usual hour's rackets and, after supper, he enjoyed an evening's basketball.

Something had to give and in the middle of the following night he woke up with acute appendicitis and was rushed to Southmead Hospital. The offending appendix was removed and, as was the custom then, he remained in hospital for several days in order to recuperate. However, when it came to the ward round he was nowhere to be found. Unaccustomed to such inactivity, he had gone in search of a book to read but when he reached the library he found it in such a mess that he decided to reorganise it instead!

## ***Representing Clifton***

My most vivid memory of Richard is the day when, as a colt, he played for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI for the first time against the visiting South African Schools XI. I was watching from the parapet and felt pleased that he was playing, and wishing that one day I would join him on the Close. In the years to come I did, and when batting with him it was easy to admire his concentration, his dedication and his ability to score runs off the best bowling.

**Michael Ridley, Principal of the Royal Belfast Academic Institution**

## ***A Cricketing Legend***

Richard had been an outstanding cricketer from a young age but, even so, it was a major surprise when he was called up as a colt in 1962 to open the batting for the first XI. Still one of the smallest boys in the school, and with a pair of boots borrowed from a boy in the Pre, he played in the Centenary match against Rugby, carrying his bat throughout the first innings and setting up an historic Clifton victory. It was fairly typical that he managed to mislay the boots overnight, resulting in ten large boys desperately searching the pavilion for them! Fortunately they were found in time for him to continue his innings.



He went on to win the Bishop Bat (which he also won in 1964) for the most runs scored for the school in the three two-day matches against Rugby, Cheltenham and Tonbridge.

In 1963 he opened the batting with the captain that year, Chris Maughan, who recalls: “we had a great opening partnership season although for a smallish fellow he had quite a deep voice and with my not too brilliant hearing our running between the wickets was not ideal! Richard’s main quality as a batsman was his reliability – Clifton’s answer to Geoff Boycott!”.

### ***The Rackets Cup***

Richard excelled at all racket sports, so it was natural that he should take up rackets while at Clifton. He soon got into the colt's pair and, at the age of 15, he surprised everybody by winning the school's open rackets competition, beating the captain of rackets in the semi-final and going on to win a cup which a kind Old Cliftonian had donated. He remained unbeaten by any of his contemporaries at Clifton and he also won a famous match at Queens in an era when such happenings were all too rare. He was drawn against the second seed, from Eton, in the first round and played an astonishing match, winning 15-0, 15-7.

### ***The Public Schools six-a-sides***

Soccer was a fledgling sport at Clifton, where Richard was the first Cliftonian to be awarded his colours, and he led a successful Clifton Casuals six in the tournament at Brentwood in 1963. On ice-bound pitches, Clifton had three or four tall, strong defenders and while they dealt effectively with the opposition – mostly by knocking them over – Richard, with his low centre of gravity, skated through to score the goals. All went well until they came up against Bradfield in the semi-finals, but by then Clifton's name was securely written on the soccer-playing map.

### ***The Housemaster's View***

In his time in Dakyns' Richard put up a record of achievement of which any pupil or parent could be proud. House annals show his remarkable progress up the ladders of school cricket and rackets, both of them games calling for great skill, concentration and self-control. In 1962 he won a place in the school cricket XI and two years later he was appointed captain of rackets. Below his quiet exterior there was a strong competitive streak and this was evident when he played a major part in Dakyns' achievements in becoming Cock House in music, cricket and rackets during his time there.

He became Head of House in September 1964 and his career at Clifton culminated in the award of a Heath Harrison scholarship in Modern Languages at Brasenose. For all this, Richard was a quiet, self-contained member of Dakyns' who set his contemporaries a very fine example in his contribution to school and house life.

**DGC, Housemaster of Dakyns', 1961-1975**



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