



## A tribute to Ian Beer, CBE on his 90th Birthday

Today we would like you to join us in marking the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of former Headmaster, Ian Beer.

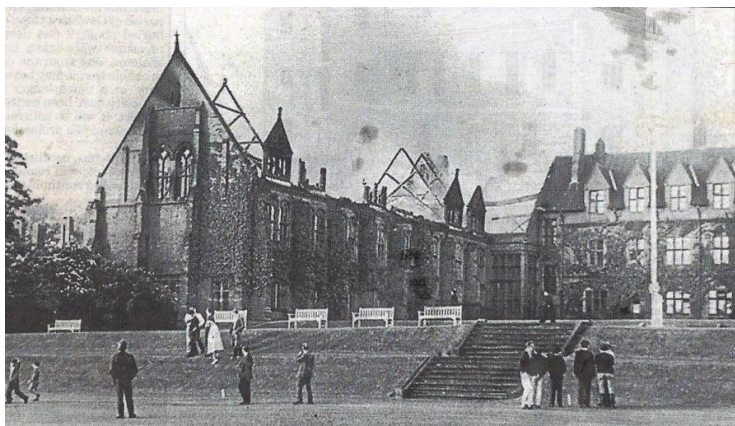


Cambridge educated, Ian joined Ellesmere as a very young Headmaster in 1961, aged only 29 years. He and his new wife, Angela, made the move up to Shropshire from Marlborough College where Ian had served for five and a half years and was a Housemaster.

Reform-minded Ian quickly set about making vast changes at the College starting with the reduction of corporal punishment, a form of discipline that had been used by Masters and Prefects alike for many years. Against the odds he successfully educated an entire community on alternative ways of disciplining pupils which proved much more effective than a cane.

Ian made changes within the Common Room at a time when there was no retirement age. Many of the older Masters were replaced with younger teachers, helping the College in the transition from an old-style public school to a modern independent school. For the first time, the happiness of the pupils was put at the forefront of their education which provided a much more positive environment for them to learn in. Something that remains in the College's ethos to this day.

The 'Great Fire' of 1966 took place during Ian's Headship, an evening that he would never forget. Following a visit to London, he and Angela returned to Ellesmere in the early evening to be greeted by a huge pall of black smoke. Sadly, the Chapel, Dining Hall, House playrooms, domestic quarters and kitchens had burnt down and smoke was still pouring out of the College's beautiful red brick buildings. Fortunately, nobody was hurt and, once the fire was under control, Ian set about managing the situation so that pupils could remain



in school. After making some calls to some senior military contacts, Ian held a 2am meeting with his team of soldiers; field kitchens were set up on the golf course and breakfast was served at 7.15am, meals were served three times a day from here until a temporary dining room was set up in the gymnasium. There was no disruption to the boys' school routine and not a lesson was missed.



Before leaving the College for a Headship at Lancing College, Ian saw the opening of the newly built chapel in May 1969.

Ian was the Head of Lancing College from 1969 to 1981 when he left to be the Headmaster of Harrow. He remained at Harrow until his retirement in 1991.

Ian has continued a close bond with each of the schools throughout his retirement. In 1992, he was appointed a CBE in recognition of his services to education.

In addition to an impressive teaching career, Ian was also a talented Rugby player, representing the Cambridge Blues from 1952-1954 and being capped for England twice in 1954. Following his retirement, he was President of the RFU in 1993-1994.

To mark Ian's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, former Director of External Relations, Nick Pettingale, created the Ian Beer Rugby Scholarship at Ellesmere College with support from College staff and Old Ellesmerians. The award supported two aspiring rugby players, Colin Dickson (Meynell '13) and Mathew Kinney (Meynell '15), through Sixth Form enabling them to continue their studies whilst receiving excellent Rugby coaching.

**We would like to take this opportunity to wish Ian a very happy and healthy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and thank him for his continued support of Ellesmere College.**



If you have any messages or anecdotes that you would like passing on to Ian, please send them by email to: [olivia.beckett@ellesmere.com](mailto:olivia.beckett@ellesmere.com)