



## Courtenay Lloyd: Celebrating 100 years

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Charles Courtenay Lloyd was born in Tamworth, Staffordshire, on 1 May 1919, the son of Revd. Canon John Lloyd, a vicar and of Dorothy Gertrude Scull, a pianist. In the centenary year of his birth, we are delighted to pay tribute to a teacher who truly has inspired hundreds of boys with his wisdom during his time at BGS.

Lloyd's education was different to that which he gave boys at BGS. He went to school at Clifton College, Bristol, but left prematurely for a job with the Imperial Tobacco Company in Bristol due to the economic conditions of the times. He loved it there, where his main task was to collect the news of the company from different newspapers across the world. Thus, his interest in languages and geography were forged. He also got a carton of cigarettes for free once a week, but was never a smoker. Whilst there, he attended evening classes to learn languages, his great passion, and spent his holidays abroad in places like Brussels and Geneva.

Despite leaving school early, he gained a place at the University of Cambridge to study German and French. At Cambridge, as at school, he was the perfect undergraduate taking his studies seriously. This success was marred by early tragedy, when Lloyd's brother Raymond died of polio at the age of 16. Further disruption was caused by the outbreak of WWII, which forced Lloyd to curtail his studies and join the Royal Navy. He joined as an ordinary seaman and was stationed for most of the war in Scotland. Scotland and the Scottish islands remain one of his great loves. He speaks fondly of the Hebrides, The Outer Hebrides, The Orkneys and The Shetlands. In 1941 after taking part in an officers' course upon HMS Arthur in Hove, he was promoted to Lieutenant. One of his main tasks, as Liaison Officer on board HMS Mansfield, was passing on messages and instructions from the British Admiralty, coding them, un-coding them and passing them on to the Norwegian Navy. He also had to report things back from the ship to the British Admiralty.

Eventful years followed. Lloyd was awarded the Freedom by King Haakon VII of Norway, for outstanding services in connection with the Liberation of Norway. When asked about why he was given the medal, he very modestly replied: "Well the King had lots of medals to give out and I was in Norway so I got one". He continued his heroic exploits by going on to work for the Allied Control Commission in Germany, working as an Intelligence Officer in the British Occupied Zone and was stationed in Schleswig-Holstein, tracking down Nazis on the run. In 18 months, he perfected the Norwegian he had begun learning as Liaison Officer on board HMS Mansfield and fell in love with the country.

Once back at Cambridge, he added Norwegian to his study course. There were only three students studying Norwegian at the time and today it is no longer taught. His passion for languages would never cease. Lloyd speaks fluent Russian, Norwegian, German, French and Spanish. After graduation, spent a year learning Russian and then became a Russian tutor to members of the armed forces under Dame Elizabeth Hill who, as Professor of Russian at Cambridge University, had been tasked with setting up Russian language courses to train future spies.

The courses of the Joint Services School for Linguists (JSSL) are well documented in "Secret Classrooms" by Geoffrey Elliott and Harold Shukman, themselves pupils on the courses. "The purpose of these classes was to produce linguists and interpreters of Russian for military and intelligence purposes." We will never know how many of the 5000 National Servicemen who attended the courses went on to become spies. Some of the pupils became famous or went on to teach Russian like Lloyd – names such as Alan Bennett, Dennis Potter, Michael Frayn, Jack Rosenthal and Sir Peter Hall. Tony Stokes, a pupil of Liza's and an instructor on the courses, became a lecturer of Russian at the University of Oxford, teaching some of the Bradford Grammar School pupils sent there by Lloyd. Whatever their future, they all learned Russian well and in record time and have fond memories of their course.

It was at the JSSL courses that Lloyd met his wife Elena born Her Serene Highness Elena von Lieven (Elena), a Russian Princess who was a penniless refugee when she arrived in England after WW2. Her family had fled the Russian Revolution. In 1920, they married and had two children, George and Masha. Elena had spent part of her childhood in Bulgaria and was sent to study in France when she was six, returning to Bulgaria at the age of 11. Following Russia's invasion of Bulgaria in 1944, Elena fled to Germany with her brothers, and never saw her father again. Her experiences of Communism had a lifelong effect on both Elena and her husband, whose abiding interest in languages helped to nurture a love of foreign cultures and inform a great passion for travel.

When the Salisbury Villas JSSL Russian courses came to an end in 1960, Lloyd had to find another job. The natural course was to look for jobs teaching Russian. He found one at the RAF College in Cranwell, Lincolnshire. The family moved there in 1960 and bought a large bungalow on an acre of land in a small village called Ruskington. To help pay for the house, Elena got into farming with advice from local Lincolnshire farmers and began to breed chickens, ducks, geese and pigs. The Russian courses at Cranwell petered out too as the Cold War receded and there were fewer pupils.

In 1964, Lloyd was hired as a teacher of French, German and Russian by Bradford Grammar School. He and his young family moved to Bradford, where, as a Modern Languages teacher, he made sure that the boys he taught learned far more than linguistics. He took a group of them on an unforgettable trip to Cold War era Russia, offering unrivalled insights into different cultures. Based in Heaton Grove, daughter Masha recalls it was a very unorthodox and international household with her father in charge of all domestic tasks and in which she and her brother were encouraged to take an interest in current affairs - Panorama and the Six O'Clock News were routine viewing. There was also the odd surprise for pupils who made it over the family threshold. One such boy was startled to discover that his newly acquired girlfriend (Masha) was in fact, the daughter of his school master!

Lloyd was a long-serving and loyal member of the BGS staff, a 'special sort of teacher' affectionately known as Clarence to his pupils. Many of them remember him with great fondness and continue to write to him. He remained in Bradford after his retirement in 1984: a halcyon period until the dual loss of his wife and son in 1999 and 2001, both from cancer. These tragedies followed the death of Lloyd's sister Gloria in an air crash, along with her husband and their three small children. Remarkably, and in spite of having "lost nearly everyone dear to him in life," his daughter Masha says that Lloyd "stoically went on, reading the newspaper, ordering books, going for his walks and enjoying his food."

Although not born in Yorkshire, Lloyd came to love "God's own country". He loved exploring places like Bolton Abbey and his beloved Dales. His favourite walk used to be to the top of Ilkley Moor, after which he would enjoy a cup of tea and a huge piece of cake (preferably with lots of whipped cream) at his favourite teashop Bettys.

Lloyd loved sport and was a keen cricketer and hockey player. He would listen to the rugby, cricket and football while hoovering the family's big Yorkshire house. As he and Elena were both teachers, there was no money for luxury things, but they always made sure there was money for travel. Inspired by her sister, Elena bought a house in Spain in Callosa de Ensarria in the province of Alicante – for just over £1,000. It was in an idyllic spot, nestled in the mountains and surrounded by orange groves, without a tourist in sight. Being keen linguists, both Elena and Lloyd learned Spanish well and thanks to them their daughter Masha went on to study Spanish at university and live in Spain.

Lloyd moved to Spain to live with Masha and her family in 2004, but as recently as 1995, his intrepid spirit saw him backpacking through Iceland and Norway! This year, Lloyd will mark a significant milestone: turning 100. The BGS community and the King of Norway send their warmest wishes to a teacher whose reputation is legendary.

Masha has noted that hearing about her father's teaching style was quite revelatory, as he was always so quiet at home! "I would never have known this side of him without the Old Boys. He comes across as 'very eccentric' in their accounts, but was very shy and quiet outside of the classroom."

Masha also recalls how he "taught me to look on the bright side of life and to enjoy the small things in life. I remember going with him to Manchester, that dark industrial town in the north of England, to see a friend of my parents. When I pointed out how ugly a street was, my father said that he always

looked for the beautiful things and not the ugly ones, and that very often there was something beautiful to be found in ugly things.”

Read more about Lloyd described by some of his “old boys”, now in their 50s and 60s who have reached out to Masha over the years via her blog [www.mashalloyd.blogspot.com](http://www.mashalloyd.blogspot.com).

**Written by Masha Lloyd, and Emma Wragg at Bradford Grammar School**