

**THE
MUSCLES
OF FRIENDSHIP**

Valedictory Speech by

Jocelin Winthrop Young
*Founding Director of
Round Square*

On the occasion of his retirement
October 1992
At Bishop's College School,
Lennoxville, Quebec.

This valedictory address ought to thank and pay tribute to all those who have helped Round Square during the past 26 years. Were I to attempt to name all the scores who have done so, or to give brief accounts of each of the 25 conferences and the many projects – then we should be here for a good 3 - 4 hours. Instead I can only give you an impression, and that a subjective one, of our history.

In 1953 two events occurred which seemed to me of great significance: Kurt Hahn retired as headmaster of Gordonstoun, after a serious illness at the age of 67; and from August 12th to 14th 1953 a devastating earthquake struck the Ionian Islands off the west coast of Greece. There were thousands of casualties. King Paul of the Hellenes immediately visited the islands with Queen Frederika and her brother Prince George of Hanover, then headmaster of Salem. Prince George resolved to initiate a building project involving students from different countries to help reconstruction on the island of Cephalonia. This we discussed on his return to Athens, where I was head of Anavryta School. Contacts were made with the member schools of the Conference of Internationally-Minded Schools, an organization to which both Salem and Anavryta belonged.

In the event a team of 120 students, from 8 countries, left by air from Munich on the 20th July 1954 and were joined in Patras by a group of boys from Anavryta. From there the group went to Argostoli on the island of Cephalonia. Under the inspiring leadership and example of Prince George a home for old people was built, and the experience has remained a highlight in the lives of all those involved. The Gordonstoun party was led by Roy McComish then a housemaster at Gordonstoun.

The success of the Argostoli project coupled with Hahn's retiring, led me to believe that co-operation between our schools was imperative if the principles and practice of the founder were to survive. His dominating personality had carried the movement so far, but even he was not immortal. We had organised some activities between Gordonstoun, Salem and Anavryta – including a simultaneous athletics competition – as early as 1952.

On the 21st April 1955, the heads of Salem, Prince George of Hanover and of Gordonstoun Robert Chew, met with me in Athens to establish a structure for co-operation. The venue was the Canadian Embassy and I had asked the Canadian Ambassador Terry MacDermott, former headmaster of Upper Canada College, to chair the meeting; an auspicious start, but it got nowhere.

All three schools were much too tied up in their own problems – we had the Cyprus crisis – and I had not thought out how to maintain co-operation during the gaps between projects. Another opportunity did not occur until eleven years later, after my return to Salem.

During this interval there was time to analyze what had gone wrong and to think out a workable scheme. Nevertheless the failure of the first foundation left scars, that are easily traced in the plans for the second attempt.

I considered that getting headmasters together once a year would enable discussion and planning to take place. But the Conference of Internationally-Minded schools had taught me how dull and esoteric such meetings could be. Therefore, why not have a kind of grid conference? The horizontals being the different nationalities and cultures and the verticals the four main groups concerned: the heads, the governors or trustees, the staff and the students? It ought to work but the first failure had made me cautious and, in the event, the suggestion was for bi-annual conferences and then only for heads. But it seemed to me that, "once aboard the Luggar" both problems might solve themselves. If it caught on; then annual conferences would be seen to be necessary. If we got the governors to come as guests, they might stay; and if the conferences were always held in schools, then the presence of staff and students should follow in due course.

The principal objective would remain projects of all possible types from further Argostolis to classroom co-operation. Hahn's colours were to be nailed to the mast. The necessary criteria for membership would be taken from his principles. The organization would be run by letting each school take over an area of administration, or the running of specific programmes. This should keep the expenses to a minimum.

In 1964 I returned to Salem and informed the Board of Governors that in addition to the work agreed to in my contract, I intended to build up a documentation of all Hahn's activities; this has now become the Kurt Hahn archives. And that I intended to try and found an association of the schools started by Hahn himself, his colleagues or his pupils.

While we are only concerned with the association, the archives are complementary and you could hardly have the one without the other; if Hahn's ideas were to survive, then it could not only be by legend and hearsay; but by collecting all the documents relative to himself, and his work. The Governing Body agreed to my proposals and I would like to record my gratitude both to the Board and the Direction of Salem for allowing me to travel and build up the conference in addition to my responsibilities in the school.

On the 5th June 1966, Hahn's 80th birthday was celebrated at Salem and Prince Max of Baden sent a special invitation to the Headmasters of Gordonstoun, Louisenlund, Anavryta, Battisborough, the Athenian School, Box Hill and the Atlantic college to discuss, I quote: "The setting up of a Hahn schools conference". The chair was taken by King Constantine and, in a meeting lasting not more than 20 minutes, agreement was reached on naming the conference "The Hahn Schools" and Mr. Brereton invited the heads to hold the first conference in Gordonstoun in 1967.

In his address on that day Hahn referred to this meeting and said: "I have been made happy by Jocelin Young's plan to have regular meetings between the allied schools. That is the best way to avoid two very different dangers; resignation and complacency". Hahn was to attend the first two meetings in 1967 in Gordonstoun and at Box Hill in 1968. At the first he fought for three days to have his name removed from the association, as he felt it might later inhibit suitable schools from joining. Eventually the meeting accepted my alternative of "Round Square". At Box Hill in 1968 we discussed "co-education" as the first of the sequence of conference themes. Hahn remained silent until the final plenary when the chairman persuaded him to say a few words. Hahn began: "Co-education breaks out after supper!"

But to return to the Salem meeting; this was followed by our first disappointment when the Atlantic College refused to join; I still hope that the future may bring the two groups closer together.

Was it all Hahn? Well – no. There were two themes I wished to develop that were not his. Hahn believed that if students of different nations co-operate in acts of service for those in need or distress, this will be especially effective in removing national prejudice. Of course I believed in this too, but I also wanted students to learn to understand their differences and gain enrichment from their varied cultures and mentality. Bishop's found the correct formula 25 years later naming their conference: "Celebrating differences".

Secondly – no doubt over simplifying, - I believed in discussion and Hahn believed in persuasion. Dr. Meissner – the man who knew him best – writes to him: "You are always trying hard to convince and, you do all the talking. Whoever does this will, often, not know what the other man is thinking". Confrontation and arguments seemed to me essential in an international association; it is not appreciating the counter arguments, that court danger.

We are all prejudiced by our environment whether we like it or not. At the age of six, I remember happily reciting, from Robert Louis Stevenson:

Little Indian Sioux or Crow
Little frosty Eskimo
Little Turk or Japanee
Oh, don't you wish that you were me?

Over the years there have been a number of incidents which have been brought to me at conferences, in which national pride has been, unwittingly, offended. This shows that Round Square is doing its job. In one case I was the offender.

Let me say a few words about the pioneers of Round Square; they were a remarkable group and each played a significant part in creating the association.

Without Robert Chew's backing there would have been no beginning. From before the first meeting in Athens, his quiet support gave me the confidence to go ahead with the foundations in both 1955 and 1966. His early death was a great loss to the conference.

Henry Brereton had supported the idea in its embryonic stages. We had discussed the details when he visited Salem in 1965. Most important of all, he undertook to draft the paper of principles, which was

approved in Box Hill in 1968 and has served us well for so many years. He, it was, who persuaded the members to accept the name "Round Square" when I proposed it in 1967.

John Corlette of Aiglon was our most powerful personality and he was the only one to own his own school. He was urging expansion and development long before I felt we were ready for it. He insisted that there must be an association journal but it was not until 1982 that the enthusiasm and driving energy of Margaret Sittler got "Echo" going. John was an original and this showed itself in his creation Aiglon and its most characteristic custom: the morning Meditation. He collected art and had a weakness for Jaguars (petrol driven). He was a master of publicity and used this much to the benefit of his school. During the first American conference at Athenian in 1972, Aiglon gave a reception in San Francisco and a very fine film of the school was shown with a commentary by the best of the B.B.C. announcers. It began with the camera swinging through the arc of mountains between Aiguille Verte and the Dent du Midi. Then it swept down into the Rhone valley and one saw the distant road zigzagging up towards Villars. A small object driving up the road grew into a familiar streamline shape and the voice of the B.B.C. chimed in: "John Corlette had a dream". There was a chortle of joy from the assembled Heads, which John took in good part.

In 1963 I had borrowed an old car and driven myself to and fro across the United States. One important reason for this, was to visit Dyke Brown in Oakland. A former pupil of Hahn's in Germany, he was about to start a school at the foot of Mount Diablo. I considered it vital to get him to join in order that our association should be seen, from the first, to be larger than European. Dyke is a creative educator and a man whose wisdom has been invaluable to us over the years. He came to the first conference in Gordonstoun in 1967 and gave a fascinating account of the problems in American schools at that time. After it was over Robert Chew who knew me through and through, came over and said: "Don't imagine that it will be possible to hold a conference in San Francisco, there won't be the money". This was a very characteristic challenge.

A year later Chew retired and was succeeded by John Kempe to whom we owe the creation of R.S.I.S. John, a member of the Alpine Club, enjoyed travel and adventure and joined me in the search for schools in Australia and Africa. In India with Shomie Das and Gulab Ramchandani and another fellow mountaineer Joe Nold, he initiated our projects. Pip Sharpe succeeded him, and it must remain for them and others to record the many varied and highly successful activities of R.S.I.S. in four continents.

Also with us here today is David Byatt, then Head of Battsborough in Devon and now, still active as the Warden of Gordonstoun. This school was a model of what a Hahn school should be, but unfortunately too small to survive financially. No other school I have known was so dominated by a sense of service. On my first visit to Battsborough, David and I were sitting, in the evening, in his office looking out over the cliffs towards the Eddystone light, when he picked up the phone and reported, in a quiet matter-of-fact voice, a ship on fire giving distance and bearing. I thought this too good to be true but in fact it turned out to be a French fishing vessel in distress.

Finally Roy McComish, without him Round Square would not have survived. To explain why, I must go back to a serious miscalculation in my original plan for the conference: the administration and organisation were to be undertaken by different schools and thus infrastructure would fall away. But it just didn't work out that way. Heads were too busy – and rightly so – dealing with their own schools. I was handicapped as I was unable to find a secretary who could write English and take dictation in that language. Therefore I had to do all my own correspondence, and this continued for 20 years until I finally became emancipated with a P.C. Throughout these years Box Hill was the centre of the association and Roy's team of David Larg as treasurer, and Kay Holland as secretary to R.S.I.S. provided the administration. The McComish's small drawing room became our headquarters and with Barbara McComish providing a bottomless tin of digestive biscuits and necessary relaxation by playing Bach to us on the piano, we got ahead. Roy is a Scot, an artist, a former Seaforth Highlander and a romantic who retired conveniently close to an English Golf course and with a view over fields to the ruins of Fotheringhay Castle where Mary Queen of Scots was executed.

He pioneered all our main undertakings in India, Africa and the Middle East. He is an optimist and I a pessimist, if I may steal someone else's definition: "One who has a pessimism of the intellect but always tries to hold on to an optimism of the will". Roy designed our logo and his sketches of Hahn are unique. The most loyal of Hahn's supporters, for years he used to propose at the conferences that the name revert to the original "Kurt Hahn" conference. However, he would not like me to treat him too seriously, so let us go back to that Box Hill co-education conference. At the final plenary Roy summed up in the presence of

the delegates and Upper School and I quote: “ In Box Hill we have a good co-educational tradition and you will never see boys and girls walking in the school grounds hand in hand”. There was a joyous roar of laughter from all in Upper School; quite undismayed he added: “Well, not when I’m there!”

The first constitution of the conference was based on the personal membership of each headmistress or headmaster and this ensured the interest of each new head joining Round Square. Each member had a vote in the A.G.M. and Honorary Members were co-opted to inspire and run the association. The governors had insisted on their right to attend meetings after the first conference, and their contribution grew over the years, partly I think, because they felt they benefited so much from the opportunities of contacts offered by the presence of the four tribes at conferences.

By 1977 I had understood that the ideal of distributing the conference administration and organisation among the schools, would not work. A final appeal along those lines at the Salem conference that year failed of its purpose and from then on criticism of the directorate grew. In 1980 at the Box Hill conference R.S.I.S. was founded and King Constantine attended for the first time since 1971 and I quote his words: “There were only eight of us sitting round the table at that first meeting in Salem. And I asked each headmaster in turn if he wished to join. Each immediately replied affirmatively. ‘Get on with it then’ I said. Now look at the R.S.C. as it is represented here tonight – and what a successful enterprise it is”. By then we had doubled the original number of schools to twelve.

In 1981 at the Athenian school, criticism was voiced by the governors. I quote: “The governors were concerned about the apparent lack of forethought, by the members, to the business items on the agenda”.

In 1984 in Lakefield King Constantine was asked to become Patron of the conference. He accepted. “Provided he could speak his mind”. He has kept his promise. From this time on a standing committee, consisting of all heads and governors who wished to attend meetings in London, helped to plan and run the association. However, the committee only had an advisory role and the final decision still rested with the director.

1985 brought the next step at Gordonstoun: Lord Leven, chairman of the governors, proposed that each school should appoint a governor to share the responsibility with the head. On the 11th October 1986 in Salem, the following resolution was approved by the A.G.M.: “That membership of the Round Square conference be by schools; that schools be formally represented at the A.G.M. by their heads and a nominated governor. Each school would then have one vote”.

On the 9th October 1988 Democracy finally prevailed, and at an extraordinary meeting of the members at St.Anne’s, a governing body, later named the Council, was appointed to: quote: “Take any executive decisions necessary to implement agreed Conference policy”. This structure has proved of great benefit to the association, particularly as it has included elected members from the principal regions. While the transfer of power was not always painless, in general, the new structure has worked admirably. This, I believe was, in part, due to the chairman of the Council and the director having co-operated together, in one way or another, for the past 44 years.

The conference grew slowly in the first fifteen years, then in March 1983 I heard from Dyke Brown and Terry Guest that a presentation about Round Square at the annual meeting of the North American Independent Schools in Anaheim, California, had resulted in many schools showing interest. They were therefore inviting all these schools to be represented at a meeting in Colorado from 24th to 25th September that year. We met at the Okanela Lodge near Glenwood Springs. 12 schools were represented there; three of these were already members of R.S.C. With great enthusiasm the new schools wished to join the conference, as a group, and they clearly wanted an immediate answer. This, I was not authorised to give, so I suggested that they start a project in North America and set up a temporary association, while I reported back to the R.S.C. They agreed and I suggested the name of Okanela in the hope that nobody would want to keep that for long! The first two projects were with the Naskapi Indians in Schefferville, Quebec and with the Flathead Indians in North West Montana. Further meetings were held in New York 1984, Arizona 1985, Boston 1987 and Washington 1990. These were the most complex negotiations and I greatly added to the difficulties by insisting that there should be no members of Round Square who would wish to limit their active participation to their own continent.

The final success of the negotiations was largely due to the wisdom of three North Americans: Peter Tacy as President of Okanela, Terry Guest as the senior Canadian member and Dyke Brown as the senior

American member. Okanela having served its purpose and carried out most successful projects, was dissolved finally in 1990.

The highlight of Okanela was undoubtedly the conference here at Bishop's from January 24th to 27th 1986. The subject was "Winter in the Northland" and in addition to an admirable programme David Cruickshank arranged for suitable weather with sunshine and snow blizzards. The Kurt Hahn lecture was given by John Bayly a lawyer from Yellowknife, he quoted a popular modern song by Vigneault which, I think, gives a marvellous picture of Canada:

Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver
Mon jardin, ce n'est pas un jardin, c'est la plaine
Mon chemin, ce n'est pas un chemin, c'est la neige.
Mon pays, ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver.

What a fortunate country to contain two such great cultures!

It is a happy chance that enables a Canadian to take over as director in Canada. When I first visited Terry Guest in Lakefield, the wiles of the weather allowed me to obtain an insight into his gifts; we were all having supper in the dining hall on my first evening, when I saw a magnificent sunset framed through the great west windows. The sky was yellow melting into gold and dark red, the woods, across the lake, provided a jagged black edge to the base. I saw Terry get up from his table and go to the door and switch off all the lights: "Just look at that sunset" he called out; and we all sat silent for a few moments. I thought of Kurt Hahn and his ability to communicate a sense of wonder. Indeed, as those who knew him will remember, his favourite adjective was "wonderful". Here, I thought, was another with a touch of like metal.

The rate of expansion in the other continents varied. The ripples caused by a Round Square can only be calculated by applying quantum mechanics. In India the progression was steady after the Doon school and Lawrence Sanawar joined in 1981. All four Indian schools have organised most successful projects and most of us are still under the spell of last year's conference at the Doon school.

In Australia John Day brought in the Southport school in 1975. John Kempe and I, despite a number of visits over the years, were unable to add further schools until Peter Harris joined with Billanook in 1991 and now there are other schools interested. I am greatly looking forward to the first conference on that fascinating continent and there is already discussion about a first project.

In Africa there is also growing interest after that remarkable school Starehe joined. Previously Roy McComish and I had spent a week working in the school and that was a most interesting and impressive experience: this was 'Education for Responsibility' at its highest level.

Each school that has joined has contributed to the sum of similarities and differences. Each conference has contributed its own individual character. Each project has given more students the chance to experience the fulfilment that I first recognised at Argostoli.

It has been a long haul and I should have liked to have closed with a quotation from Wordsworth:

"Enough if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour".

But I seem to hear Hahn's deep voice prompting me: "Have YOU joined the secret and powerful union of the peace-of-mind preservers?" It is a timely warning. Not so long ago a distinguished member of the conference wrote: "To someone outside the organisation Round Square must look, at best, conservative, amateurish, self congratulatory and self-centred." Let us look at our failures or – to be more tactful – at mine.

There is the failure to penetrate into the classroom. The possibilities of co-operation in many subjects, have never been realised. With modern media and a questing mind, many teachers could contact and develop programmes with schools in other countries or continents. Very little use has been made of the possibility of staff swapping homes for holidays. This ought to be of benefit, both to the staff families and to their

schools. As a result, when visiting member schools, I sometimes find the common room friendly but disinterested.

There is the failure to encourage foreign languages. In the beginning I had fondly imagined that conferences would include committees and small groups working in French, German and Spanish or Italian. In fact we have merely followed the unfortunate trend of the last quarter century and have accepted English as *the* Lingua Franca. It is my impression that in the conference as a whole, less students are now taught foreign languages. We, the English speaking peoples, should never forget that languages are a vital means of acquiring culture. In my lifetime we have also, to a large extent, lost the direct contact to Latin and Greek and we are, no doubt, the poorer for it. There has been a running controversy over the years as to whether the encouragement of foreign languages should be included in the Round Square criteria. I have always supported this.

The white handkerchief waved at the beginning of each conference to remind us that there are always delegates present to whom English is a foreign tongue, failed of its purpose and could well have been interpreted as a sign of surrender. But – even if we fail to make the effort – we should express our appreciation to all those whose native language is not English and who have come to conference after conference and had to listen to a stream of different English accents, only rarely reduced in speed for their benefit. Their patience and tolerance have been exemplary. O Si sic omnes!

There is the failure to realise in full the pediment of Roy's Temple of Hahn. When he first drew it I suggested Politics as the legend. Kurt Hahn was, throughout his life, engaged in politics in one form or another and he took this from Plato. However, the wording was altered to: "Political and racial tolerance." I still believe that the job of the conference is to encourage the discussion of political affairs and to expose the differences of opinion and not plaster over them. All of us who were there will remember the most moving session at the Abbotsholme conference after the fall of the Berlin wall, when each German delegate told us what the reunion of his country meant to him. The same interest applied to the witness of the dramatic changes in Russia during the visit of Madam Alla Khvostova to Aiglon. But there are other events which must divide rather than unite the members; these we have, too often, failed to tackle. Where was the great debate on: European union or not? On the issues of the disputes in Gatt? On the Falklands war? On the Gulf war? On the many crises between Arab and Israeli over the years. These and many other issues which you may think of, should, in my opinion, be part of the a la carte menu offered by Round Square. We are a very varied group of people and we should use the variety more.

Finally, there is my own particular failure to live up to the original concept: the failure to arrange co-operation with the other Hahn foundations: The Outward Bound, the United World Colleges and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It has not been for lack of trying, but that is no excuse.

I have talked for long enough and it is time for me to stop and go. Every limit is a beginning as well as an ending. The future looks promising and exciting. It begins in the New World, and Round Square – the ultimate oxymoron – having completed its first stage, is now going into orbit. Let us wish it well and all who travel with it. For myself I shall conclude with a very short poem by Emily Dickinson:

In this short life
That only last an hour
How much – how little – is
Within our power.

TOAST TO WINTHROP YOUNG

Bishop's College,
Lennnoxville Quebec,
1992

by

Roy McComish

Earlier this year when Jocelin Winthrop Young asked me to say a few words after the Banquet on the final night here at Bishop's magnificent Round Square Conference, he was unusually coy. It took more than one telephone call for me to drag out of him that he really wanted me to say something rather nice about him tonight, the night of his retirement as Founder director of The Round Square Conference but he added: "For God's sake keep it brief and keep it lighthearted!" I accepted the invitation but I felt I had to warn Jocelin that whilst keeping my remarks brief was easy, making them lighthearted was easy, but finding something nice to say, might prove more difficult.

Of course, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is absolutely essential to tell all there is to know about Jocelin Young to an audience consisting predominantly of young people who will be responsible for taking the Round Square Conference into the 21st Century. They must know all about the Founder before his guiding hand deserts the tiller. It is a great honour for me to do this. Well, somebody had to do it.

But really, you know, Jocelin Young I'm afraid is ancient history. However, like the Romans he is important ancient history, so let us start at Chapter 1.

I have known Jocelin for over 40 years. Sounds absurd, but it's true. My first encounter in 1949 was hardly auspicious. It was my first term on the staff of Gordonstoun. He had just returned in a blaze of glory to his Old School for the first time since setting up Anavryta School in Athens at the direction of King Paul of Greece and at the recommendations of Kurt Hahn. I was the lowest form of animal life in any Public School namely the NEW ART MASTER - he was as you might say, to coin a phrase, - the blue-eyed boy of the period (the Duke of Edinburgh and he took it in turns I think) - returning as the successful young headmaster of 30 years of age.

The occasion was a small sherry party one Saturday morning after classes in Hahn's drawing room - not the Founder's Room in Gordonstoun, but the rather more beautiful room next door to it across the hall. I was sipping sherry with some other newcomers on the staff, all of us summoned to meet the illustrious Winthrop Young, when I suddenly heard THE VOICE approaching from through the open drawing room door, asking in cadences so familiar today as they were very surprising at the time, "McComish did you say? McComish? Now that's a funny name! Sehr komisch what?" and into the room he came, followed by Kurt Hahn who, when my time came to be introduced, with a wry smile murmured, "Mr. Young, meet Mr. McCo-o-mish".

The Headmaster of Anavryta returned two years or so later, crowned with further successes. There was to be a Staff Match against the boys' First Eleven Hockey Team. I was asked to play for the Staff because they were absolutely stuck for players and Bobby Chew, Norman Pares and Max Coles were desperate to field a Staff side. Fortunately Jocelin arrived in the nick of time, a sort of Batman, and without hesitation agreed to play for the Staff. I am sure you all know what it is like to see hockey played properly and with real skill - especially you people here in Canada. A top player has the speed and grace of an ice-skater, making telling, wristy flicks the hockey-stick sending the ball like a bullet and dangerously hard. Jocelin,

raised in Gordonstoun's hey-day with contemporaries such as the Crole brothers who became Scottish internationalists, was every bit as good as they.

From my point of view however, he was a terrible show-off. He was elegant and dashing. I was ungainly and gauche. It seemed to me that Winthrop Young was all over the pitch, outrunning the opposition, hitting the ball all the time. I was running all over the pitch too but somehow never quite getting in touch with the ball to hit it, until my chance came. To my great surprise, the ball came to rest right at my feet and, adopting an orthodox golf stance – my big moment – I took a great swipe.... and missed. The crowd roared. The Staff won 2 nil that day. J.W.Y. scored both goals...of course.

Athlete, mountaineer, all rounder, distinguished War record in M.T.B's. Headmaster twice over, an O.B.E. thrown in. The list of honours still sticks in my gullet. Renaissance man, musician, art connoisseur, historian and archivist. Multi-linguist – a fluent speaker of Greek, German, Swedish, French and Italian. Is just the English that's a bit funny. You can see now,, I think, why I am beginning to enjoy speaking about J.W.Y. tonight.

However, I began to get to know Jocelin very much better in the middle fifties when 100 boys, from many European schools, went out to Greece to help in the earthquake zone in the Ionian Islands. We all worked very hard in the Greek August sun, backbreaking work building a house for elderly people – but Jocelin was nowhere in sight. I assumed he was sipping Pimm's No.1 back in Athens. The Headmaster of Salem at the time, Prince George of Hanover, was in charge of the expedition (he worked harder than anyone) and when he left us at the successful end of the assignment and handed over to me, only then did I begin to discover what Jocelin had been up to. The logistics – the supplies for the whole operation had been in his hands throughout that torrid eight weeks. We were extremely well fed with fresh fruit and meat every day, medical supplies – more necessary than expected – were always immediately forthcoming, and we were constantly supplied with essential building tools and materials for the work. I was beginning to see J.W.Y. in a different light.

And after that, our friendship could only improve and when I left Gordonstoun and started up Box Hill in 1959, Jocelin surprised me with his interest in the project. He actually became one of my Founder Governors. After a few years he sent his son Mark to us. Time passed, the School grew and then in 1966 Jocelin invited me to join a group of headmasters of schools associated with the philosophy of Kurt Hahn. The Heads of the first six schools to constitute the RSC met in Salem on Hahn's 80th birthday and, under the chairmanship of our first Patron, King Constantine, who had flown over specially from Athens to attend the celebrations, the very first meeting of RSC took place. Who set up that meeting I wonder? J.W.Y. of course. Nobody else. Described in such a simple straightforward way, however, the success of the concept seems inevitable, almost predictable. You know the rest. Jocelin told you in great detail the build-up to the foundation of the Round Square. Too easy...a piece of cake. But it was not at all like that. The birth of RSC was an extremely difficult one and the clue to its birth-pangs can be seen in that very first meeting which I have just described from which Kurt Hahn was actually ABSENT. I shall say a little more on this point in a moment because it is historically very important.

Speaking personally, I can only say that the Round Square helped my then, very young, extremely tender School, Box Hill, to survive. Also my experience of Round Square during those first ten or a dozen years were really the best. I am well aware that RSC has advanced from strength to strength in more recent years, and you are all here to prove it, and to be congratulated for all its subsequent successes. For me I shall always remember the "primitive years" when it seemed that the three of us, Jocelin in Germany, John Kempe in Scotland and I in Surrey ran the RSC simply on a shoe-string, by ringing each other up and taking decisions. Most undemocratic I'm sure. There were no rules, no guidelines, until we made them and then they were introduced only when we felt a bit of organisation would be helpful. We did not always agree and, through the years there have been major issues of contention and argument. But the metal of RSC today was forged on that early anvil, and the blacksmith was Jocelin Winthrop Young.

Later on John Kempe and I would accompany Jocelin on educational escapades to Bahrein and Jordan visiting schools which either sought or were considering membership. It was encouraging to note the ever-spreading interest in Hahn's ideas across new frontiers. The most memorable trip of all was when we went to see Starehe School in Kenya in '85. John had made the original reconnaissance in the previous year and returned in great excitement with glowing reports and actually proposed and sponsored Starehe for membership. Our visit was a remarkable experience and I would suggest that every member of RSC should

try to see this truly outstanding school: one which Hahn would have rejoiced to see himself. Jocelin and I were very proud of the fact that Starehe accepted our invitation to join RSC.

Enough reminiscence and I must close soon. But there is one fact about the foundation of RSC which you, who will be carrying the flag forward from tonight, should know. Not many people know that that inaugural meeting in Salem in 1966 which saw the birth of RSC, did not receive Kurt Hahn's unequivocal blessing, and, while he was not openly opposed to the concept, he was by no means entirely enthusiastic. This was a great pity and was an enormous setback for Jocelin and the RSC. However, nothing daunted, J.W.Y persevered, and it is perfectly true to say that the RSC would never have existed had it not been for J.W.Y. And here we all are tonight as on so many other happy occasions through the years thanks to one Jocelin Winthrop Young.

But please don't get me wrong – don't misunderstand me. Kurt Hahn was arguably the most significant educational innovator in this Century and we were privileged to play a part in his massive contribution to international education yet, whilst he could if he had wished put Round Square on the map at once, the simple fact is that he had no real interest in Jocelin's plans for the embryonic RSC. Many another Gordonstoun school boy, under Hahn would have given up the struggle there and then, because Hahn could be very dictatorial, and like so many great men, frequently petty-minded and throughout Jocelin's life – from his formative years as a schoolboy at Salem then Gordonstoun, to the time of Hahn's death in Salem in 1974 Jocelin was in a real sense under his tutelage. But here is the beautiful and remarkable twist to the story! The style of education – which everyone here has experienced – developed in him the strength of purpose and obstinate sense of direction of his own old Headmaster. You see Jocelin has every bit as much stubborn, singleness of purpose as Hahn himself, and frequent disagreements with his old friend and mentor throughout his life never prevented Jocelin from carrying out his own ideas and objectives. Hahn would frequently throw tantrums at people with whom he disagreed and this could be a very disturbing experience – but when he threw tantrums at Jocelin they missed him by yards.

Paradoxically, Salem and Gordonstoun had produced in Jocelin Young, someone who would carry forward the flag of international education in a way which Hahn no longer had the interest nor the energy to do himself.

By losing Winthrop Young from the helm of RSC tonight, I hope most sincerely that you will not allow him to slip overboard, or even just go ashore. Keep him in the crew please. His breadth of understanding of Hahn's philosophy is unmatched anywhere today. He is Hahn's sternest critic and his most active and successful proponent rolled into one, moreover he is an English Gentleman in the very best sense of the word – and I speak as a Scot.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I did promise Jocelin to be lighthearted and I will close simply by saying that JOCELIN DID IT HIS WAY.

Regrets, he's had a few,
But then again, too few to mention.
He did what he had to do
And saw it through without exemption.
He planned his Round Square course
To every continent and island
And more, much more than this
He did it his way.

In a moment I shall ask you to stand and drink a toast to Jocelin, and I shall ask you to couple it in your thoughts with all our best wishes for the future of The Round Square Conference and to its new Director, Terry Guest.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The Toast is simply : “TO JOCELIN”

Roy McComish
4th October, 1992

The Hahn Schools Conference

20th July 1954

Araxos aerodrome, Patros, Greece.

The three Dakotas of the Hellenic air force were late and our small group was waiting in the dark. It was very warm and the cicadas had stopped singing for the night. The silence was almost total, except for a few remarks of the reception officials. Then the distant drone of the approaching planes raised hectic activity to light the flare path and a hundred tired students and Prince George descended from the planes and were driven in lorries to Patras where they embarked in the naval sloop "Machetis" (Warrior) and were brought to Argostoli, the port on the island of Cephalonia.

The great earthquake of 1953 had devastated the island and it was still a site of ruin and rubble. It had been the idea of Prince George of Hanover, the brother of the Queen of Greece, and headmaster of Salem, to organise a group of boys to help rebuild an old folks home in the port of Argostoli. Volunteers were collected from the group of schools belonging to the "Conference of Internationally-minded schools" founded in Geneva in 1950 and later dissolved in 1970. Characteristically, for that time, the only two heads engaged in the operation were, Prince George with the planes, and myself the head of Anavryta, waiting below. However, the Gordonstoun group was led by housemaster Roy McComish who took charge of the party when it sailed round the Aegean, in the sloop, after the project was over.

The great success of the enterprise was due primarily to the inspired leadership and example of Prince George and for all engaged in the enterprise it has remained a unique and fascinating experience. Although my responsibility was largely in Athens, dealing with the supplies and the authorities involved, I visited the site several times and was so impressed that I decided to try and create a permanent organisation to deal with such emergencies.

In June 1954 I visited Gordonstoun and was present when Kurt Hahn resigned as headmaster after a prolonged and serious illness. The success of the Argostoli project coupled with Hahn's retiring, led me to believe that co-operation between our schools was imperative if the principles and practice of the founder were to survive. His dominating personality had carried the movement so far, but even he was not immortal.

In 1955 the heads of Salem, Gordonstoun and Anavryta met in Athens to attempt to start such co-operation. The plan was doomed to failure from the start as we were too far apart to enable consultation. The failure was mine and some years were to pass before I had worked out a valid and detailed plan.

In 1959 I returned to London and got a job in the Foreign Office and in 1960 Roy McComish founded Box Hill School and my elder son became a pupil. The benefactor who provided the finance turned out to be a Scientologist, which meant nothing to me, but curiosity caused me to read one of Ron Hubbard's books and I forced Roy to do likewise; somehow we got rid of this menace. However not long after the benefactor withdrew his financial support and demanded £5000 for the goodwill. Such was the confidence of the parents in Roy that we elected a governing body and raised the necessary money. This crisis brought me into close contact with Roy, both as a parent and as a governor. He became my best friend and Box Hill became the administrative centre for R.S. for many years and Kay Holland has continued the tradition up to the time of writing.

In 1962 I learned that my appointment to the Salem directorate would start in either '63 or '64. This meant that the plan I had devised could go ahead with Salem as my base. To enable projects to be prepared and co-operation to be constant, there had to be an annual conference, but the Conference of Internationally-minded Schools had taught me how dull and esoteric such meetings could be. Therefore why not have a kind of grid conference: the horizontals being the different nationalities and cultures and the verticals the four main groups concerned: the heads, the governors or trustees, the staff and the students. It ought to work but the first failure had made me cautious and, in the event, the suggestion was for bi-annual conferences and then only for heads. But it seemed to me that "once aboard the Luggar" both problems might solve themselves. If it caught on, then annual conferences would be seen to be necessary. If we got the governors to come as guests, they might stay; and if the conferences were always held in schools, then the participation of staff and students should follow in due course.

The principal objective would remain projects of all possible types from emergencies as in Argostoli, to classroom co-operation. Hahn's colours were to be nailed to the mast. However, it would not be all Hahn: There were two themes I wished to develop that were not his: (see page 3 of the "Muscles").

"There were two themes I wished to develop that were not Hahn's. He believed that if students of different nations co-operate in acts of service for those in need or distress, this will be especially effective in removing national prejudice. Of course I believed this too, but I also wanted them to understand their basic differences and gain enrichment from their varied cultures and mentality. Bishop's College found the correct formula 25 years later naming their conference "Celebrating differences".

Secondly, no doubt over-simplifying, I believed in the importance of discussion and Hahn believed in persuasion. Dr. Meissner – the man who knew him best – writes to him: "You are always trying hard to convince and you do all the talking. Whoever does this will, often, not know what the other man is thinking".

This was the reason for my insisting on a conference, as well as the projects. Confrontation and arguments seemed to me essential in an international association, as it is not appreciating the counter arguments, that courts danger.

We were going to have to find an expert on running international conferences and somehow we should have to find the cash to pay him or her. Then an internal Foreign Office circular appeared on my desk advertising a vacancy on the academic staff of the International Conference centre run by the F.O. at Steyning in Sussex. I applied for the job and joined Wilton Park on the 1st October 1962 and remained there until I took up my appointment in Salem on January 1st 1964. The success of the R.S. conferences has been startling. Of all the parts of R.S. they are the only section which has not been altered over the years. We owe a considerable debt to the F.O. and I suggest that the Secretary of State be invited to the 50th Conference!

1962 and 1963 were years of intense activity; Roy and I listed all the schools which we considered had adopted Hahn's ideas, or had included them at their foundation, these were: in Scotland, Rannoch and Dunrobin, in England, Abbotsholme, Battsborough and Milton Abbey, in Germany Louisenlund, In Switzerland Aiglon, in Africa Achimota, in India The Doon School and I had also heard from Hahn of the forthcoming foundation of the Athenian School in California. Gordonstoun, Salem, Anavryta and Box Hill were, of course, taken for granted.

My travels were limited by a lack of funds and we had to rule out Africa and India for this reason. Two schools, after my visit, turned down the offer of joining, Abbotsholme and Aiglon. In the first case the head of Abbotsholme, Robin Hodgkin, a climbing companion of mine, rightly maintained that Reddie, the founder of the school, had inspired Hahn and that the school had its own tradition. I had known John Corlette for many years and admired the originality of Aiglon. He was not convinced by my proposal and turned me down. However, he changed his mind and came to the 1967 meeting in Gordonstoun. I assume he had consulted Henry Brereton, whom he knew well from his time on the staff in Gordonstoun and was converted, as Henry was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea. At Milton Abbey there was little interest and I became convinced that the search should be more for an interested and active head than for evidence of Hahn practices in the school. There was never any doubt about Battsborough or Rannoch or Louisenlund. Dunrobin had manifold teething problems and I added to them when I was asked to report to the Countess of Sutherland on the suitability of the castle and had to point out that the accommodation of the boys above the cornice would make their escape almost impossible in case of fire. However, the school closed before we could realise the election.

Athenian presented a formidable problem but I was convinced that we must have, at least, one school outside Europe. Hahn spoke highly of Dyke Brown who had been a pupil of his in Birklehof and I believed in former Naval officers in principle. Once again the goddess Tyche turned up trumps on Foreign Office territory in the guise of Mrs. Lemon Clark of Fayetteville Arkansas, national president of the League of Women Voters. Learning, at Wilton Park, that I had not visited the U.S., she offered to arrange a Texan travel grant for 1000 dollars and to present me with her third car – an old Borg-Ward – which she said should reach the west coast but probably give up on the return journey. (She was right, it collapsed in the Nevada desert.) In return she asked me to lecture to groups of the L.W.V. in Alabama in the deep south. This I did for a week and learned much. I drove alone across the States and back in the summer of 1963. On arrival at Albuquerque I joined route 66 and headed for Oakland where Dyke was living. He was very busy, hoping to open Athenian in 1964. With Kate's help we got in 2 hours discussion and I was immensely impressed by their plans and my scheme seemed insignificant when I followed on.

On my return to the U.K. I found that Roy joined me in regarding the accession of Dyke to be the most important candidate of all and we were most disappointed when he had to delay the opening until 1965 and thus call off his attendance in Salem in 1966. However, there was discussion after the Salem meeting which showed that a few of the chosen heads doubted the validity of such an ambitious step and Robert Chew, head of Gordonstoun, warned me that a compromise might be approved that Dyke be elected Hon.Member instead. At the meeting in Gordonstoun in 1967 I placed on the agenda, as final subject, a report by Dyke Brown on the problems of education in California. He spoke for 20 minutes and it was quiet and brilliant and after that there was no further doubt about his being elected.

When I drafted the proposal of the Salem meeting for his signature in 1966, Prince Max added the Atlantic College: this was proposed by a member of the board there who had been one of the first boys in Salem, Julio del Val Caturia, and I had taken no action as they had turned me down as Director of Activities in 1960. The Chairman of the board, Air Marshal Sir Lawrence Darvall, had informed me that I possessed neither the qualifications required nor, he felt, the personality to operate in an international community. After that I felt any approach from me would be fruitless. The College renewed the contact a few years later and Roy was sent to visit St.Donats, but they did not apply.

The Minutes of the 20 minute session in the small room at the S.W.corner of the Imperial Hall in Salem, chaired by King Constantine, give an accurate account of this significant beginning. Hahn's 80th birthday was a great occasion, but for me the most important moment was a year later, when we elected Dyke Brown and the Band Wagon gave its first jerk forward.

J.W.Y. 28/3/1999