



The Old Priorian Association

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2011

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From The President, OPA

Dear Members,

As I write my welcome message, I call to mind one of the key objectives of the Association: to be a "centre of union" for St Benedict's alumni and the wider community of staff and friends. Thanks to your help and support over the past twelve months, the Association has helped to coordinate and organise many reunions and get-togethers – both formal and informal; from the Leavers' Party (to welcome our newest members) to the Christmas Reunion (for many of those in their second year out of School).

From informal gatherings at home and overseas (as far as New Zealand in fact) to our formal President's Dinner, your support has made these events truly memorable and we are glad to report on all of them.

And a special mention to the Old Priorians Rugby Football Club (OPRFC) and The Old Priorians Cricket Club, which have been an inspiration in terms of the sheer numbers of players that regularly get together for training sessions and play on match days; on behalf of Council, I wish both clubs all the very best in their respective endeavours next season. You can read more about their latest success stories overleaf.

Finally, an important, often overlooked role for the Association is to maintain worthy scholarships and bursaries; it gives me great pleasure to report that Sinead Leahy (OP 2008) was awarded our "Travelling Scholarship" last summer; you can read all about Sinead's "Kilimanjaro Expedition" in her own words within these pages.

I hope you enjoy our 2011 Spring/Summer Newsletter; as ever, I encourage you to send in your news, stories and photographs for our next edition later in the year. Meanwhile I hope you have a great summer. Happy reading!

Paul Fagan (OP 1991)
President, The Old Priorian Association

OPA President's Dinner

The annual OPA President's Dinner was held on 31st March this year. The setting was the usual location of Over-Seas House in Piccadilly, where the traditional wood panelled walls of the Hall of India perfectly compliment the formal evening wear of the diners. There were 117 at the Dinner and a pleasing mixture of ages. 30 Old Priorians took advantage of the subsidised tickets available to those who had left school in the last four years and the other diners represented leavers from each decade stretching back to the 1940s. The Guest of Honour was Basil Nickerson, who served the school from 1956 to 1994, becoming Senior Classics Master in 1961 and Second Master in 1969. His speech was a fascinating tour of a St Benedict's School that looked

very different in years gone by, but is still recognizable to the present day through the Benedictine ethos carried by its pupils and staff. Basil's speech, the company, the food, drink and general atmosphere all contributed to a very enjoyable evening.

This extract is from Basil Nickerson's excellent speech, which will be published in its entirety on the OPA website in due course:

A minimis incipit: changes have come bit by bit, but faster and faster: and they still go on - rightly Fr. Abbot. St Benedict's is alive, but the most thrilling thing Headmaster is to see that it is still boys and girls, young men and young ladies that matter. I could go on and on but thank you for hearing me out. Thank you ex President, Robin Berger for the great



Dom Thomas, Eloise Blondiau, Paul Fagan and Alexander Somerville

honour you did me on my Retirement of presenting me with the Priorian Medal, so far the only non-pupil of the School to receive such an honour, so much treasured. I ask you to rise and drink to the continued life and prosperity of St Benedict's School.

Catherine de Cintra (Bursar)



a puero incipit...



Patrick Tobin, Richard Baker and John Bogie



Clare and Basil Nickerson

The Old Priorian Newsletter always welcomes contributions from Old Boys and Girls about their experiences at the School, life after school and details of reunions. Please contact the Editor, Mary Keal c/o The Old Priorian Association, St Benedict's School, 54 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London W5 2ES

Old Priorian Association Annual General Meeting and Memorial Mass

On Saturday 13th November 2010, twenty members gathered in the Benet Club beside the Abbey for the Association's Annual General Meeting; a further ten members sent apologies for absence. Reports of the various sections of the Association were received and accepted by vote.

Officers and Council Members of the Association for 2010-2011 were proposed and voted upon. For the coming year our officers are Paul Fagan (1991), President, Lewis Hill (1975), Secretary and Michael Ainslie (1980) Treasurer. In addition there are seven members of the Council – Frank Casali (1984), Edward Conway (2005), Rosalind Fagan (2004), Mary Keal (1983), David Murphy (1954), Peter Watson (1952) and Emma Whitehouse (1998). Completing the Council are eight ex officio members (some are OPs in their own right, shown by their dates below), who are not voted into office, but sit on Council because of the position they hold within St Benedict's, or because they are appointed at the request of the OPA by other bodies associated with the School. They are: Dom Thomas Stapleford, OSB (Chaplain to the OPA), Christopher Cleugh (Senior School Headmaster), Robert Simmons (1987, Junior School Headmaster), Catherine de Cintra (Bursar, St Benedict's Trust at Ealing), Brian Taylor (1960, appointed by the

Abbot), Debbie Bell (1984, appointed by the SPF), Margaret Moore (Administrator OPA, appointed by the OPA) and Richard Baker (1959, Assistant Administrator OPA, appointed by the OPA). It is in the hands of these eighteen people that the affairs of your Association are managed.

For discussion and vote at the AGM major changes to the rules of the Association governing the way that the OPA communicates with its members had been circulated to all members. These changes were voted through as proposed *nem con*. Members have full details of the changes in the formal notice that they received concerning the AGM; basically we shall be making much greater use of email communication with members and we would strongly encourage all members to let us have their email addresses and of course to keep us informed of any changes. Email communication of formal Association business will result in great savings on paper, postage and "manpower in packing" as well as speedier receipt.

Following the formal business of the AGM, the Annual Memorial Mass for Old Priorians who gave their lives in war and for all former pupils, staff, parents and friends who have died was held. This year we specially remembered André Abramian, a pupil at the School

for the last ten years who died on 29th October 2010, aged 14. To his family we extend our deepest sympathy. Mass this year was celebrated in the Sacred Heart Chapel in the School Cloisters; the chief celebrant was our Chaplain, Dom Thomas Stapleford and he was joined in con-celebration by an OP Fr Ted Wildsmith (1954). At Mass we were joined by seventeen other guests of the Association; these included seven CCF Cadets under the command of the School SSI, Captain Alastair Grant; they provided a most fitting setting in our remembrance of the War Dead and the Laying of the Wreath – we thank them for their participation in our Memorial. Our thanks also go to Oran Doyle (2010) who provided the music; Oran is currently on a Gap Year teaching in the Music Department at the School.

After Mass all adjourned back to the Benet Club for drinks and lunch which on this annual occasion are always given by the Association to its members and guests. Our thanks to Giovanni Persano, Manager of the Benet Bar who always makes us so very welcome on the number of OP occasions when we make use of his facilities and also to Concetta Vager who once again provided such a welcome and excellent lunch.

Richard Baker (1959)
Assistant Administrator, OPA

Cricket Day – 4th July

It was with a heavy heart that on the 18th June I applied for a bar licence which would enable me to sell alcohol at the annual OPA v School XI cricket match. The weather had indeed been very pleasant up to this point but I just knew that the moment I started making preparations for the bbq and bar, the heavens would open and rain would ensue until the end of the 4th July!

A couple of weeks later my licence was duly received and still no rain had fallen. I did my mammoth Costco shop on the 2nd July and was surprised by clear blue skies and the need for the car's air conditioning to be on – where was the rain??? I had a lovely evening sitting outside in my garden on the Saturday – still no rain!!! Sunday morning – clear blue skies – dare I believe what I was seeing???

It is with a smile on my face that I can report that we had a most successful and well attended Cricket Day. My thanks must go to Mr Simmons (Junior School Headmaster) and the teachers who ran a very enjoyable quick cricket tournament for the Juniors. Many parents came down with their offspring and thoroughly enjoyed an afternoon of fun cricket – some brought picnics but many were lured by the smell of the sausages and burgers wafting across the playing fields.

Throughout the day the OPA cricket team did their best against the School XI – members ranging from last year's leavers to 'not-so-young' old boys! I would like to let you know the score but what with selling burgers, coffees and beers and the lovely Shulldham tree in my way, I have absolutely no idea what it was!

A few years ago I advised the OPA Council to drop the word 'fun' from our Cricket Day – I had spent too many cold, windy, drizzly days hoping that the lone spectator would buy a coffee from me. I am so pleased to say that this year I had fun and I do think quite a lot of other people did too.

Well done and thank you to all who took part in the day – whether spectator or player – I totally appreciated you being there!

P.S. The techie assistant who helps in the preparation of this newsletter tells me that the score was: Old Priorians XI 168, St Benedict's 1st XI 169-7; The School winning by 3 wickets.

Mary Keal (OP 1983)

Kilimanjaro Expedition

As a keen fresher and still in the wake of my post 'gap yah' travelling blues, I already had my eyes fixed on my next challenge. Within the first few weeks of being at Durham I had heard many a rumour about this 'Kilimanjaro Expedition' that the university charity committee ('DUCK') ran. I went along to the talk, and eagerly applied. And so, after being successfully accepted onto the trip, by the end of my first term I had already planned five weeks of my summer holiday. However, as if reaching the summit wasn't a big enough challenge, the principal aim of the expedition was to raise a lot of money for charity. In accepting a place on the expedition each of us agreed to guarantee to raise £1500 for the charity 'Save the Children' in addition to the £1800 it would cost in expenses to get to Tanzania. Therefore, over the Christmas holidays I made ambitious plans as to how I was going to reach these goals. After setting up a Facebook group encouraging my friends to donate online, Edd Conway contacted me mentioning that the OPA offered a travel grant that contributes to funding trips and expeditions made by Old Priorians that are intended to enrich the individual's personal or academic development. It is not very well known but without the OPA's extremely generous grant I would have struggled to raise the necessary funds that would enable me to reach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro all in aid of Save the Children. I successfully managed to raise a combined total (including fundraising and expenses) of

£3300 prior to departure and so with one feat under my belt I eagerly awaited the 3rd July when I would head South East of Heathrow for Africa.

After an exhausting and nauseating struggle of four ascending days, I successfully reached the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro during the early hours of the 10th July 2010. Such an achievement was only possible due to the OPA's kind generosity.

The rest of the expedition was just as incredible, where exploring and experiencing local Tanzanian culture was truly an eye opening experience. After the climb we were involved with some projects run by a local charity in Arusha. We met and worked with many people who were suffering directly and indirectly from HIV or AIDS and the renovation work we completed here for a local village has already brought about positive and sustainable change to these people's lives. It has enabled them to distribute grants from NGOs to those suffering from HIV or AIDS in the more rural regions, these grants will support and kick start local businesses to provide these people with a livelihood. Without the brand new offices that we built, such opportunities in life would not have been possible for these local villagers.



Sinead makes new friends

Tanzania is amongst one of the four most naturally diverse countries in the world. Therefore discovering its stunning, vast landscapes was endlessly breathtaking, and something I will never forget. The varied landscapes of mountains, savannah, rainforest and beaches, to name a few, never ceased to amaze me. By embarking on this expedition, as a group we collectively raised a staggering total of £40,000 for Save the Children. Save the Children rely heavily on Durham University's fundraising every year and their fantastic work can be seen in LEDCs but also right here in the UK. So on Save the Children's behalf, I would like to thank the OPA. Additionally I would definitely encourage other OPs who may be considering similar expeditions to apply for this travel grant, as it made covering the expenses a lot more manageable and stress free, allowing me to truly enjoy the experience. Finally I would like to thank the OPA again for enabling me to embark on such a trip.

Sinead Leahy (2008)

Editor's Comment: If you are planning to embark on a similar endeavour the OPA awards a Travelling Scholarship annually. This award is open not only to gap-year students, but to any OP of any vintage. Please contact the Association Office for further details.



At the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro

Farewell Martin Knights

In July 2010 around 35 Old Priorians gathered at the Slug and Lettuce in Richmond to wish farewell to the school's Director of Sport and former 1st XV coach Martin Knights. Leavers from 1999 through to 2010 came together over a few drinks and reminisced over various First XV memories born in school, on the pitch and abroad on tours. It was a pleasure to organise such an evening for Martin after the input he had on the school and all his rugby players as individuals too. His 13 years at

St Benedict's built Bennies from being a respected rugby school to the major player that it is today – a slow process with a lot of hard work. Everyone was delighted to see Martin again and wish him the best for his future endeavours as a House Master at Prior Park in Bath. All who were present would also like to publicly thank the OPA for their support and subsidy of the event.

Edd Conway (2005)



Matthew Doyle (2004) and Joe Simpson (2006)

OP Rugby – The season so far ...

The Old Priorians hoped to continue building on their 2008 reformation and worked well with new coach Pete Fisher (Exeter Chiefs and England Students) over the summer of 2010, enjoying the warm weather and hard grounds to get in shape for the new season in Herts/Middlesex 1. The first stop was the mini-tour to Wales on Saturday 21st August. The sun we had been enjoying in training seemed a distant memory during the downpour we faced whilst playing Pontypool United RFC. We have yet to play in conditions quite like these even during the grey afternoons of November and December! We gave a decent account of ourselves but struggled in the awful conditions and succumbed to a defeat despite superb performances by the Dolan brothers Mike (2008) and Liam (2009). We more than made up for this in the club bar after the game though and enjoyed close to five hours socialising with our Welsh



Adam McCulloch and Nick Farren in Cardiff



Rob Grant in action against HAC

counterparts experiencing various games and sing-alongs. Ben Horan (2005) and John Gleeson (2007) both made memorable appearances during these few hours but, as always, what goes on tour stays on tour! We all soon headed back to the hotel to freshen up before gathering again and heading en masse to experience the delights of Cardiff and a superb night out.

The whole of pre-season had been spent gearing up for the season opener against rivals HAC at home. We quickly found ourselves up against it, trailing by 14 points within 20 minutes. We slowly scrapped our way back into the game thanks to the boot of Aristide Goualin (2008), a brilliant performance by Gavin O'Connell and an Alex Wightman (2005) try, giving us a 19-14 lead with two minutes remaining. Unfortunately HAC managed to score in the corner



Jack Dever breaks at Cronk Cunis

and their kicker scored an outstanding conversion to win them the game 21-19. This was a bitter blow, especially as an injury during the game was to deprive us of the heavily influential Andrew Wilkie (2008) until after Christmas. The following week there seemed to be a bit of a hangover from the HAC match as we struggled to a 26-25 win away at Kilburn Cosmos, achieved thanks to tries by Matt Davis (2007), Edd Conway (2005) and two from Ross McIntosh (2010). The following two games saw us without many players due to injury and work commitments which certainly wasn't ideal against two of the stronger teams in the league. We lost 40-21 to London Welsh and then 36-12 to Old Hamptonians, two comprehensive defeats that we would avenge in January. With Schalk Blom returning from injury and other players stepping up, the club managed to follow these defeats with two victories - 24-17 against Old Actonians which was most memorable for Rob Grant's (2007) two drop goals, and 35-22 against Harlequin Amateurs.

These wins were only a brief ray of light ahead of three hugely disappointing league defeats against Hackney (20-14), Old Grammarians (27-21) and Verulamians (45-17). Whilst we had genuine excuses caused by a crippling injury list the three losses were demoralising due to our poor performances causing us to lose games that we really should have won. Soon came the end of November and with it a great deal of snow which saw consistent postponements right up to Christmas.

This period gave us some time to rest, heal various injuries and welcome back some students ahead of crunch games at the start of January. First up was a big game away at London Welsh who sat second in the table and had beaten HAC prior to Christmas. Finally we were able to welcome back Andrew Wilkie and Gavin O'Connell who put in impressive shifts again as we defended for our lives and ground out a 9-8 win due to three Edd Conway penalties earned by an outstanding effort by the forwards and unforgiving defence throughout. On the 15th January we managed to build upon this result with a 19-6 win against Old Hamptonians. We then welcomed back a further three players, all of whom had not played since April 2010 due to serious injury. Dave Haston (2006) reminded us why he was Players' Player of the Year last season, Seb Oddi showed good glimpses of the form that led him to 27 tries last season and Matthew Doyle (2004) brought his excellent understanding of the line out to secure crucial ball at key times late in the game. After good team play Jack Dever (2008) produced a stunning left handed pass to put Haston over for our first try. The second was a mirror image of the first, Jack this time putting his brother, Mike (1999) in at the corner. Leading 12-6 we found ourselves under a huge amount of pressure on our line. Thankfully Rasheed Alawiye (1993) continued his fine form by intercepting on our line and carrying up the line for 30m before off-loading to Matt Davis who showed great awareness and pace to sprint the remainder of the pitch and score a try that would prove to

make the big difference in taking us to a 19-6 win. At the time of writing we hope to continue this resurgence in our form and do our best until the end of the season. The promotion we had wanted this year will have to wait, but next year we will strive for it again.

Old Priorians retain the Cronk Cunis National Under 21 Trophy

St Benedict's Ealing successfully defended the Cup competition at the 14th annual Cronk Cunis Under 21 Festival at the Richmond Athletic Ground on Monday 30th August 2010. The cup final, in which St Benedict's defeated 2007 Cup winners Tonbridge 19-7, was the culmination of nine hours of continuous rugby played on seven pitches, mostly in welcome sunshine. A total of 71 matches were played involving some 40 teams, all of them former pupils of some of the country's leading rugby playing schools. Some 750 players took part in festival's five competitions – Cup, Plate, Bowl, Vase and Shield – making this established Under 21 event the biggest festival of one-day 15-a-side adult rugby in the country. Whilst the emphasis is on participation and enjoyment, the standard of rugby also seems to go up every year. Teams came from as far afield as Hull (Hymers College), Altrincham (St Ambrose) and Penrhos (Rydal), confirming the national status of this event.

St Benedict's had looked likely winners from early in the day but were pushed extremely hard in their semi-final against Brighton, winning 11-6 in a closely fought match. The second semi-final was even closer, with Tonbridge scoring in the dying minutes to overcome Dulwich College 12-11. The Cup was presented to St Benedict's captain Rowan Halsall by RFU President Richard Appleby who continued the record of recent RFU presidents in attending this prestigious national event.

(Article courtesy of official report on the tournament)

Old Priorian winning squad: M Dolan, Joshi, A Wilkie, Goualin, McCulloch, Wellings, Jenkins, Porter, Gerald, Collis, L Dolan, McIntosh, Booth, Clarke, Simpson, Rowell, Halsall (captain), Stephenson, Layton, J Dever, D Wilkie, M Dever.

Edd Conway (2005)

Old Priorian Cricket Club – 2010 Season

O PCC had a mixed but very enjoyable 2010 season. While we may not have been too successful on the pitch we had some enjoyable games, and got a very good mix of years involved, enjoying the sport, weather and company. Over the season we had three recent leavers playing, and other players went back as far as 1959. We generally fielded a fairly young team, and saw some development among the younger players. Overall approximately 40 Old Priorians represented the club.

4th July	School	Home	Lost
18th July	Salix	Away	Won
25th July	GWR	Home	Lost
1st August	Brentham	Away	Lost
8th August	Turnham Green	Home	Won
15th August	Old Actonians	Away	Cancelled
22nd August	Weekenders	Home	Lost
12th September	Hampton Wick Royal	Away	Abandoned

Salix provided a good start to the season with a game over at the Imperial College grounds in Harlington, but they succumbed to a strong OP team with a pair of Jewers and two Wasses. Making

the most of the good weather OPs were able to put Salix under pressure with four of the last three years' opening bowlers, and followed up with an aggressive batting attack and despite a temperamental pitch Matt Codrington was able to score a fluent 100.

The GWR game showed the inconsistency in batting which would dog OPs for the entire season, with several of our batsmen ruing their lack of net practice, and one even claiming that their recently corrected eyesight was too sharp for batting! Unfortunately this was followed by the Brentham game, which as usual seemed to be jinxed – after struggling to get a team out we lost by a fairly substantial margin and despite an impressive 115 from Raj Chauhan and a solid 62 from Rob Grant our bowling never looked consistent enough to challenge a solid club side.

With the square being re-laid OPs relocated to the bottom square for most of the season, but still managed some good cricket, the bowlers perhaps encouraged by the threat of disappearing into the river. The Turnham Green game proved interesting, with a brief panic before hand when their fixtures secretary confused the venue of the fixture and had to hastily arrange taxis to Perivale. However, OPs were able to compose

themselves and put in a good collective effort with a team that had not played together before, again with several of the younger players putting in strong performances for a well deserved win.

The final game of the season was a new fixture against the Weekenders, in which OPs showed glimpses of their form from previous weeks, and also some of their inconsistencies.

As usual we received excellent support from John and Paul at Perivale, making full use of the facilities and pitches. We also look forward to enjoying the improved facilities at Perivale which offer some exciting possibilities, with a newly re-laid wicket and all-weather net facilities.

Next season we hope to further expand our set-up, and continue to build our fixtures card. The club is always on the lookout for new players, whether having played for the OPs before or not, so anyone interested in playing social cricket in the West London area, or arranging a fixture with their current team, is encouraged to get in touch with the club at:

oldprioriancc@googlemail.com

We are waiting to hear from you!

Ben Horan (2005)

“Wednesday Sport”

O n Wednesday evening between 8 and 9pm a mixture of young and old OPs meet in the school gym to play a game that has been played for countless years. The game is a mixture of

basketball and rugby as well as some light circuit training thrown in for good measure. The aim of it all is simple: get the ball in the net! It's a great way of keeping fit with a competitive edge and

there is always time for a beer afterwards. Do come down and join us on a Wednesday evening.

Michael George (2003)

Interested in organising a reunion...?

Reunions are now more popular than ever and remain a great way to meet up with old friends and rekindle school memories. There is useful advice online about how to make sure that your

reunion is a success:
http://theopa.org/annual_events/reunions
If you are interested in organising such a reunion then do please contact the OPA Office:

opa@stbenedicts.org.uk
with full details of your proposed plan as early as possible as there may be a special subsidy available for your gathering to help with the costs.

School News and Headmasters' Newsletters

A number of the published documents of the School (eg Newsletters, The Priorian etc) are now available on the School Website via an eBook system; unlike some of the ebook systems available, the one used does not involve downloading any software to your computer so many of you may find this a much simpler

method of viewing these documents.
Latest School News:
<http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk/index.php?cat=3>
The Headmasters' Latest Newsletters:
http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk/index.php?page_id=6

The Priorian No 138, 2010:
http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk/index.php?page_id=26
Some archived copies of the Priorian can also be viewed here.

Upper 6th Leavers' Prom 2010

Arriving at Twickenham Rugby Stadium on the 3rd July, we were greeted with a champagne reception before we began an evening to celebrate our time at Benedict's. Whilst many would agree that leaving Bennies is not an occasion to be celebrated, the reassuring words of Father Thomas at the Leavers' Mass, "that you never really leave", were a great comfort and something we have all realised to be true over the last year, particularly through being embraced into the world of the Old Priorians!

After a quick catch-up with friends and teachers we had not seen since study leave began, we were ushered towards the highly entertaining photographer who was encouraging us to "look fierce" or stand back to back! He took hundreds of photos, a really great way to remember the evening before we all head our separate ways. After we were all re-creating our own "Blue Steel" Zoolander poses, we were led into the Nightingale Suite where the Prom Committee had spent much time and effort preparing the room with balloons flowers and candles in order to create a memorable evening for all.



Katie Ravenscroft and students

After dinner the speeches began. A few important thank-yous were in order on behalf of the year group to Mr Cleugh, Father Thomas, our form tutors and our very own Mitchell Brothers, Mr Brown and Mr Foley (who are probably sick of

the joke at this stage!). Emma Murphy-O'Connor started off the speeches by thanking our year group for two great years, thanking the teachers for being a great help and wishing us well for the future. Oran Doyle then said his own thank-yous, particularly to the Prom Committee who had spent months organising the wonderful evening. Mr Brown then gave a highly entertaining speech, reminiscing about teaching several of the boys in PP1. Then the dancing began in earnest!

The DJ was pestered into playing cheesy numbers to get all the staff dancing as well as the pupils. Miss Shaw, Mrs Wall, Mr and Mrs Brown, Mr Foley and the twenty other teachers who joined us were up and dancing along with the year until two in the morning when the night was appropriately rounded off with "The Fields of Athenry" and "Galway Girl".

After a much deserved evening of fun concluding a year of hard work, we all returned home with a night of memories and the feeling that we really have experienced something special by choosing to come to St Benedict's. Not only had we spent various numbers of years learning in a wonderful environment, we have also made lifelong friends with not only our peers but also our teachers. And on behalf of the year group, I'm sure we're now all eager to join in "Old Priorian Antics"!

Emma Murphy-O'Connor (2010)



Emma Beaumont, Saffron Beaton, Alex Glover and Sam Coates

Age shall not weary them, but they do get a little older!



Most of the 21 present



... and some were present over 50 years ago



Tony Brunning and Basil Nickerson

Sixteen old faces and five new faces went to make up the gathering which it seems has now become a regular feature of the Old Priorian scene. This lunch party of twenty one was the largest yet organised so effectively by Ian Blackaller, to whom we all extend our thanks; and it took place on Tuesday 16th November 2010 in our usual venue in London. Perhaps old and new faces alike showed the odd sign of age for it must be admitted that all present were now, to use a term from their youthful days, OAPs (Old Age Pensioners). However age did not detract from the general eagerness to reminisce, to catch up on current news of families and friends and to enjoy a splendid lunch which as usual lasted well into the late afternoon. Unlike our last meeting we had no battles with weather or transport on what was a gentle autumn day. A photo of the Remove in 1956-57 was produced which certainly brought back memories for many of friends from years long ago; I wonder if the Lower Sixth of 2010-2011 will be having such a reunion in 2064!

The following were present – for the first time: Jim Anscomb (1958), John McGrath (1958), Simon Donan (1959), Chris Mulvey (1959) and Basil Nickerson (Staff 1956 – 1994). The “I’ve been here before” group: Ian Blackaller (1954), Peter Bingham-Daly (1955), Tony Sparks (1955), Peter Delaloye (1956), Kevin Hannigan (1957), Brian Lee (1957), David Randell (1957), Michael Rapazzini (1957), Anthony Baker (1958), Tony Brunning (1958), John Maguire (1958), Anthony Phillips (1958), Richard Baker (1959), Brian Clancey (1959), John Lindley (1959) and Brian Taylor (1960).

It was a delight to have one of our “old teachers” with us; Basil had come up to London with his wife Clare for the OPA AGM held three days earlier and had stayed on to celebrate his 79th birthday on the day of our lunch – what better way to start his celebration than coming to lunch with us before his theatre outing in the evening! He was certainly the centre of much reminiscing not only from those he actually taught or coached at games, but from all.



Michael Rapazzini and Peter Delaloye

Nineteen of us gathered again in February 2011 for another delightful lunch. This time twelve “old hands and seven “first timers” were present; for the record the new faces were:

Michael Nutt (1954),
 Tony Japes (1957),
 Dennis O’Keeffe (1957),
 Tony Trigg (1959),
 Peter Burke (1960),
 Gordon Wilson (1960),
 and Brendan Caulfield (1963).

Here’s to our November 2011 gathering!

Richard Baker (1959)

St Benedict’s Leavers 2009 Christmas Reunion

On the evening of 21st December 2010, the cohort of 2009 leavers was fortunate enough to have a reunion that was subsidised by the OPA. We rented out a function room at the Drayton Court pub in West Ealing, which had, very conveniently, been elegantly refurbished recently. Getting to this venue, however, proved rather difficult, even for an Ealinger like me, as the roads were smothered in snow. Notwithstanding, our reunion still had a strong turnout of fifty, which was over half of the total number of 2009 leavers.

As more Bennies boys and girls arrived, I had an increasing feeling of déjà vu. Personally, I had seen most people since our departure from St Benedict’s, but not altogether. It was just like being back in the Sixth Form common room (though without the dodgy pool table) and this somewhat took me aback. New haircuts, a typical lack of shaving and the general ‘university look’ were obvious from the outset, though the same old jokes, laughter and Bennies banter was still prevalent; that was, in my opinion, the best aspect of the whole night.

By virtue of the generous subsidy, the first forty-two entrants were given a coupon for a free drink and this was certainly well received. With everybody out of the Drayton by 11.30pm, decisions needed to be made about the subsequent events. Some went home due to the weather conditions and “whatnot” but the rest of us ventured to



Fortified for the snow!

Ealing Broadway in search of a bar, whereupon a snowball fight ensued, evoking memories of the mass scolding we used to receive for this back at St Benedict’s; it was certainly pleasing to be free from that now, though the buzz of having to run away from Mr Halsall and other such legendary figures was certainly missed!

In short, it was a marvellous night and everybody was really glad that it happened. Consequently, I think it has

inspired us to meet as a large group like that more often. I think it is amazing that we are still able to meet and have such a good time together; not only does it reflect on the closeness of our year but also on what St Benedict’s was able to produce and inspire in us. Huge thanks must go to the OPA for encouraging us to organise this reunion and for subsidising it so generously. I cannot wait for our next reunion.

Anthony Searle (2009)

OPs gather in New Zealand

Take nine former St Benedict's pupils from three continents plus three days of balmy New Zealand weather and add red and white wine, beer and good food and you have the perfect ingredients for the first official overseas OP reunion. And that is what took place in Pauanui on the Coromandel Peninsula south-east of Auckland over a nostalgic long weekend in February 2011 when former pupils gathered at the holiday home of former St Benedict's rugby and maths/science master New Zealander Neil Moss.

Neil graced the hallowed classrooms at the top of Eaton Rise and playing fields at Perivale from 1958 until 1961 and gained the affection of his pupils for his friendly open approach to school endeavours both mental and physical.

The Pauanui gathering brought together former students from Canada, Australia, England and New Zealand. Collectively they covered a period from the 1940s to the 1980s. The combined mileage of the dedicated OP revellers was more than 100,000 miles (for most of the rest of the world 160,000 kilometres!!!) which only goes to show what lengths some people will go for a drink!

Those who gathered in New Zealand, with their approximate dates at St Benedict's and their current country of residence were:

Michael Pohlmann (1953-1959 Canada); Simon Donan (1949-1959 UK); Tony Duboudin (1953-1959 Australia); John Bastable (1948-1958 Australia); David Milburn (1953-1959 Australia); Chris Hendry (1954-1965 Australia); Mike Reece (1951-1961 Australia); Kevin Brennan (1941-1948 New Zealand) and Helen Galatis (1981-1983 Canada).

The reunion started with an opening lunch in Pauanui when friendships old and new were renewed. It was then off to Neil Moss' holiday house. Neil and his wife Jacqui had secured the use of three other holiday homes nearby to accommodate the nine OPs with their wives and partners as well as finding room for several in his own house.

The first evening was an outdoor barbecue at Neil's house which went late into the night with old memories and stories told and retold. As one OP remarked: "It only seems like yesterday that were all at school playing on the Black Pitch or freezing in the old gym while Pat Simister warmed his back in front of the pot bellied stove in the corner."

The next day it was breakfast on the decking in the front of Neil's house and then a visit to the surf beach for a swim. After lunch OPs explored the area before gathering at the Pauanui golf and sports club for dinner.

Here each OP gave an account of their days since leaving St Benedict's followed by toasts to absent friends, the school and the OP Association and a vote of thanks to Neil and Jacqui Moss for their hospitality.

On day three the group drove to Hot Water beach where at low tide thermal hot water bubbles to the surface. Armed with spades provided by Neil the OPs dug themselves holes in the sand that immediately filled with hot (yes too hot in some cases) water which mixed with sea water provided a warm sea and sand bath. The sight of several mature aged, over-weight OPs wallowing in the water was not an altogether attractive sight!

On the way back from the delights of Hot Water beach the group visited a winery (again organised by Neil and Jacqui) for platters of nibbles and sipping some of New Zealand's fine wines.

The day was rounded off by a salad dinner at Neil and Jacqui's house for a final nostalgic gathering before the group broke up the following morning.



Back: S. Donan, M. Pohlmann
Middle: J. Bastable, C. Hendry, H. Galatis, N. Moss, T. Duboudin
Front: M. Reece, D. Milburn, K. Brennan

The three days were a pronounced success thanks largely to Neil and Jacqui Moss. Plans are already under way for another similar gathering perhaps this time in Australia probably in Melbourne or Adelaide.

Perhaps the most important thing about the gathering was the ease with which the group got on and how the years seemed to melt away as we reminisced about school days in Ealing. It says much for the school that everyone had fond memories of their days at St Benedict's tinged perhaps with the odd less enjoyable moments – like being sent up for talking in assembly, wearing one's cap at a jaunty angle or similar serious crimes which warranted a flogging. Happy Days!

Tony Duboudin (1959)



Only the Old Boys!

Dates for your Diaries

Diarise Now! – Full details will be published in our monthly email news and on our website when available:

OPA Golf: Thursday 9th June 2011 at Royal Mid Surrey Golf Club. Contact the OPA for application form

OP Cricket Day: Sunday 3rd July 2011 at Perivale

OP Rugby Sevens: Sunday 18th September 2011 at Perivale

OPA AGM, Memorial Mass and Lunch: Saturday 12th November 2011

OPA Fencing: Last October the event had to be cancelled because of lack of "participants". We do hope very much to keep this activity going, especially now

that fencing is so strong a sport in the School. Please do let us know if you are interested in this Annual event which usually takes place in October.

Births, Marriages and Deaths June 2010 – April 2011

Births

18 Aug 10: To Patrick (2000) and Karen Fagan, a son James, Patrick

11 Dec 10: To Paul (1984) and Eva Sturt a son, Jonathan Maximilian; a brother for Amelia (8) and Susannah (6)

27 Jan 11: To Oliver (1992) and Kate Bradley a son, Rory Alexander Neligan; a brother for Michael (2)

Deaths

30 Jul 96: Edward Stewart Dawson (1932), Aged 81

16 Jun 10: George Castel (1958), Aged 68

15 Jul 10: Tim Summerfield (Staff 1991-2004), Aged 47; Husband of Siobhán (OP 1993, née Higgins)

20 Sep 10: Michael Paul Davis (1981), Aged 46

31 Oct 10: David Lynch (1983), Aged 45

9 Dec 10: Nicholas Ingram (1976), Aged 52; Father of Hugo (2007), Brother of Dominic (1970) and Simon (1972)

28 Dec 10: Alan Niekirk (1947), Aged 81; Brother of Paul (1951). Alan was the first Lay President of the Association, 1962-1964

14 Feb 11: John Byrne (Staff 1965-1990), Aged 80; Father of Jonathan (1977) and Victoria (1987)

14 Feb 11: Patrick Keating (1960), Aged 69

16 Mar 11: David Inwood (1953), Aged 74; Father of Matthew and Jonathan (OPs) and Husband of Ann (Junior School Staff 76-83)

21 Apr 11: Reginald Fuller (1921), Aged 102; Canon of Westminster Cathedral

Who has been in touch with us recently...?

Since our last published newsletter the following OPs have been in contact with the Association, mainly via the "Where Are You Now?" and "Find a Classmate" sections of our website:

1955 Jack Willhoft – UK

1958 Jim Carty – Spain

1958 John Clarke – Queensland, Australia

1959 Brian Dickson – Florida, USA

1959 David Everett – Kent

1960 John Barry – Worcs

1960 David Gaskell – Hants

1961 Robin Duke – NSW Australia

1961 Jonathan McNamee – New Jersey, USA

1961 Martin McNamee – Berks

1963 Benedict Heal – Bucks

1964 Peter Brandl – Hants

1964 Gilbert Munnich – United Arab Emirates

1966 Wojciech Liszka – Surrey

1969 Christopher Blauth – London

1969 Jim Russell – France/Malta

1971 Jorge Chubretovich – Chile

1973 Simon Barry – Cape Town, South Africa

1978 Thomas O'Shea – Hants

1979 John Conway – France

1982 Dominic Howard – London

1983 Francesco Cipollone – France

1983 Peter Gibbs – UK

1984 Peter McCafferty – London

1986 Matthew Botsford – Wilts

1986 Mark Cummins – Devon

1988 Colin Corbett – West Sussex

1989 James Hamblin – Victoria, Australia

1990 Richard Fagan – Spain

1990 Anne Majcherczyk – Middx

2004 Andrew Swampillai – Middx

2004 Sinan Khadhour – Cambs

2008 Guy Nevard – London

Don't Forget

Tell us where you are now by filling in a *Where are you now?* form online at: www.theopa.org/wayn/index.html

Or find old friends by submitting a *Find a Classmate* form online at:

www.theopa.org/find_a_classmate/index.html

Email Addresses

Do please remember to keep us informed of any email changes and encourage OPs who may not be on our emailing list to let us have their

addresses. Please **DO NOT** send us listings from your own address books – Data Protection prevents us from using them; addition of an email address to our

database requires an email from the person concerned!

Contact with other OPs

The OPA Office is happy to act as a “Forwarding Agency” for email contact – If you wish to contact an OP whose email address you do not have then email us and we will forward your email address to the person concerned

(provided we have an email address for them!) saying that you wish to contact them by email; he or she is then free to contact you if they wish.

Please note that we will not forward email messages – we will not act as a third party email source!

WAYN – Where are you now?

It would help us to maintain our database records accurately and it would also help the Careers Department of the School, if you would take a few minutes to visit the Website and complete the WAYN Form which can be

accessed from the Button Link on the Portal Page. This applies especially to those of you who have left School in the last few years and are now on the first rungs of the ladder in that great big working-world or still in further

education; having said that, don't let us put the rather “Older OPs” off supplying their information – the occupation “Retired” can be just as useful, providing of course we know what field it is that you have worked in!



The Old Priorian Association Founded 1927

Officers:

President

Paul Fagan (1991)

Secretary

Lewis Hill (1975)

Treasurer

Michael Ainslie (1980)

The Association was formed on 1 July 1927, the name reflecting its beginnings within “Ealing Priory School”, as St Benedict's, Ealing was known at the time of the Association's inauguration. It was established to form a centre of union for former pupils of the School and to hold meetings to renew old associations

which connect the Members with the School and Ealing Abbey. It was also to forward and promote in every practical way the interests of the School and conduct its business according to The Rules of The Association which form the structure within which the Association operates.

The Association is governed and run by The OPA Council, a body consisting of:

Three elected Officers – the President, Secretary and Treasurer. There are not less than four elected Members of Council together with a number of ex-officio Members of Council who are not elected, but appointed by various bodies

of St Benedict's at Ealing.

Full details about the Association and its activities can be found on the OPA Website at: www.theopa.org

The Association has office facilities within the School and may be contacted by:

Email: opa@stbenedicts.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8862 2249

Post:

The Administrator, The Old Priorian Association, 54 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London W5 2ES