



THE OLD PRIORIAN ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018



President's Welcome

Welcome to this most recent Old Priorian Association newsletter with lots of interesting articles to browse - let me whet your appetite notably with news of the *Annual Richard Baker Science Lecture*, this year exploring the reasons for declining attendance at classical music concerts and the underlying psychology thereof. The long-awaited War Memorial was finally unveiled in a very moving, well-attended ceremony in the School.

May I also mention the valiant

Dorabros article about their endeavours in raising money for the Teenage Cancer Trust inspired by personal motivation. More news follows of gatherings held under OP auspices - this year's Oxbridge Dinner at St James's and the latest *Shampers* lunch in central London.

I would also like to highlight the excellent work provided by the Development Office and the new Connect platform for Old Priorians (*Vide Infra*) and of course lots of news from all over the world to complete this round up of the

latest from Ealing.

Finally, may I offer our thanks to the new editor of the Newsletter, Olivia Davies (OP 2015) who has produced such a fine result with her first edition. Thanks also to all those who have contributed articles.

May I wish you and your families a good Lent and an even better Easter.

**Lewis Hill (OP 1975),
President OPA**

From The Headmaster

Dear Old Priorians

Life at St Benedict's is extremely busy. Many of our pupils manage to fit in an extraordinary range of activities, not to mention the day-to-day business of receiving an excellent academic education. At the end of the last academic year we celebrated our best ever GCSE results, with 66% of pupils awarded grades 9 to 7 (the equivalent of A* or A), and the best A level results in 5 years, with 74% achieving A* to B. Six pupils have received offers from Oxford or Cambridge this year, and the majority of the rest are destined for top Russell group universities.

There have been trips to New York and Washington DC for Politics pupils; to Rome and the Bay of Naples for Classicists; to Vietnam for Economists and Berlin for the Historians. The Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme is thriving, as is the CCF. Our cadets helped to lead our Remembrance

Service and WWI centenary commemoration in exemplary fashion.

We have enjoyed strong seasons in rugby, fencing and hockey, with the 1st XV winning the Middlesex Plate this year, our fencing squad winning the London Quadrangular at St Paul's, and the hockey U12s winning the Middlesex Tournament. On the Arts front, we have had a dazzling production of *Les Misérables*, superb concerts each term and a continuing partnership with the world-renowned choir VOCES8.

In preparing for life beyond St Benedict's, pupils have benefited enormously from the expertise and experience of many Old Priorians, who give careers talks or take part in events such as the Careers Fair. I am very grateful to all the Old Priorians who have helped in this way.

Andrew Johnson

The Old Priorian Association Annual Dinner 2019

This year the Old Priorian Association Annual Dinner 2019 will be held at School on Friday 26th April 2019 at 7.00pm.

Before the dinner, there will be the opportunity to join a School Tour, which includes the new Sixth Form and Art/ADT Centre and the newly refurbished Cloisters and Orchard Hall.

Ticket price: £40 (for Leavers of OP 2015 - OP 2018, there is a special subsidised price of £20).

Ticket includes a glass of Prosecco on arrival, 3-course meal (vegetarian and vegan option available if pre-booked), coffee, wine and a digestif. There will be a cash bar open until 10:45pm.

Dress for the evening is Black Tie or Lounge Suit.

**To book your ticket (and tour), please contact the OPA at
opa@stbenedicts.org.uk**

We very much look forward to welcoming you at the Dinner!



1974 - As we were then
by Paul Shreder (R.I.P. Staff 66-92)

Front page photographs:

Upper - In Memoriam

Lower - LtoR: Gordon Wilson, Joe Kearns, Richard Kornicki, Dominic Cuss, Abbot Francis, Joe Berger, Andrew Johnson, Bishop Paul, Richard Baker, Ecobians: Brian Martin and Ian Malcolm

'We will remember them'

by Shaun Hullis, Chairman, War Memorial Committee

The 'Last Post' never fails to bring tears to my eyes, and listening to pupil Ben King play it from the balcony above the Cloisters on November 11th 2018 - a date resonant with history and replete with loss - marked for me the end of a project which will, I hope, remind generations of Old Priorians and St Benedict's pupils, parents, and staff of the selfless commitment and sacrifice of their predecessors. In September 2014, I asked permission to raise funds to replace our war memorial with something more fitting, accurate, and prominent. Four years later there it was, the culmination of fundraising work by the War Memorial Committee (Mrs Caroline Crean, Mr Dominic Cuss (OP 1980), Mrs Tara George, Mrs Catherine Lawson, and Dom Thomas Stapleford OSB), hard labour by the Estates Department, and the generosity of countless Old Priorians, pupils and their families. Thank you all.

The hardest work of all had been performed by Mr Luke Chapman, in whose Norfolk workshop the new memorial took shape. His brief had been to preserve as much as possible of the layout of the old, but with carved instead of painted detail and lettering, full names as far as possible (a couple still elude us), and several corrections and additions. This he achieved with, I think that you will agree, huge success - despite his saying that it is one of the hardest projects (and pieces of oak!) which he has tackled. He was unfortunately unable to attend the unveiling, but when we wrote to thank him, he replied: *'It was lovely to read your note - those things make carrying on carving worth doing. I've had my doubts on my future in carving this past few years; it's been a tough*

run, but that means the world to me right now'. It was a deep honour to carry this project out'. Luke now has a new mini-chainsaw as a token of the Committee's appreciation.

The ceremony lasted twenty minutes. A hush fell over the hall a few minutes before as a CCF Guard of Honour paraded in front of the veiled memorial, with reversed arms as at a military funeral. It was their fourth remembrance event in three days. Many other cadets were among the guests, including a number from our partner school, Cardinal Wiseman.

We were honoured that the Representative Deputy Lieutenant for the London Borough of Ealing, Mr Richard Kornicki CBE (father of Edmund, OP 1994, and Dunstan, OP 1995) had agreed to unveil the memorial on a very busy Remembrance Day, and he spoke briefly but movingly on the reasons for remembrance. The Right Reverend Paul Mason, the Catholic Bishop of the Forces, then blessed the memorial with Fr Alexander and Fr Thomas, reminding us all of the message atop it:

**OF YOUR CHARITY, PRAY FOR
THE SOULS OF THE PUPILS &
STAFF OF THE SCHOOL WHO
GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR
COUNTRY**

Captain Gordon Wilson, RN (OP 1960) read the Lesson. Wreaths were laid by Mr Kornicki, Mr Richard Baker (OP 1959), Mr Joe Berger (OP 1976, Chairman of the Board of Governors), Mr Dominic Cuss (OP 1980), and two representatives of the Ecobians (old boys of Ealing College),

including their Chairman, Mr Ian Malcolm.

It was not only our own memorial which we unveiled that evening. We have agreed to preserve the Second World War Memorial of the now-demolished Ealing College, a stone which was in danger of being lost or destroyed. We are honoured to have been entrusted with this important part of local history and collective memory. Ecobian Mr Brian Martin, who made the original request, wrote: *'I wanted to send you my personal thanks as well as those of the Ecobians as a whole for all your efforts in creating a permanent home for our Memorial Stone. It was an honour to attend the ceremony. The layout of the wall, with the Conabor Sword, is especially pleasing. Above all, congratulations on the St Benedict's memorial; it is a magnificent piece'.*

Mr Joe Kearns (OP 1950) and Abbot Francis Rossiter (OP 1947) led us in a communal act of remembrance before the 'Last Post' and two-minute silence. Time always telescopes during the silence, and for a space our dead re-joined our community, there but not there. As the 'Reveille' sounded, we returned to the present, and to a wonderful tea provided by the Orchard Hall caterers.

Perhaps the most moving of the messages which the Committee received afterwards came from an Old Priorian: *'I offer my thanks not only personally, but also on behalf of The Old Priorian Association - of its current members, but also perhaps on this occasion of a group of Old Priorians, one of whom I knew personally, who cannot now speak for themselves, but whose names we will remember for ever'.*

Organising a Reunion

Reunions are now more popular than ever and remain a great way to get together with old friends and rekindle school memories.

If you are curious about what your fellow alumni are doing, then we are here to help in many ways - do please contact us.

Much useful information about reunions, including guidelines for applying for a possible subsidy, is available on our website.

The Annual Richard Baker Science Lecture 2018

by Olivia Davies (OP 2015)

We were delighted to welcome Professor John Sloboda OBE FBA (OP 1968) as our Guest Speaker for the Annual Richard Baker Science Lecture Series. Students, parents, Old Priorians and friends were welcomed to St Benedict's by Rob Simmons (OP 1987), Junior School Headmaster for what has now become a very popular and much anticipated lecture in the OPA and School calendar.

The evening was opened by Upper 6th student, Max Lubowiecki, who delivered his Extended Project Qualification Research Presentation, in which he explored 'To what extent are mathematical concepts discovered rather than invented?' He presented with confidence and clarity, clearly showing passion for his subject. Max will be leaving us this summer to read Mathematics at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

To introduce Professor Sloboda's lecture, the 'Psychology of Concert Attendance', was a wonderful performance of Gregory Porter's 'Real Good Hands' by Upper 6th students; Jack Leonard (vocals), Lucien Mac-Fall (saxophone), Fernanda da Silva (piano) and Conor Moon (bass).

Professor Sloboda delved into the reasons why classical concert attendance is in decline and presented his research in fascinating detail. He concluded that the decline is due to the formality and distant relationship between the performer and attendee, rather than a dislike or disinterest in classical music. He presented multiple case studies and surveys to evidence his conclusion. The lively Q&A session which followed demonstrated how thought-provoking and engaging Professor Sloboda's lecture was. His lecture highlighted

how our reactions to music are dependent on the environment in which they are presented and how comfortable we feel in that environment. It definitely had us rethinking our opinions on Classical Music!

The evening was brought to a close with a short address by Dr Francis Cuss (OP 1972), who generously endows this lecture series in honour of Richard Baker (OP 1959).

Our thanks to those who joined us for such an interesting and stimulating evening.

The 3rd Annual Richard Baker Lecture Series will be held on Tuesday 3rd December 2019 at St Benedict's Senior School.



LtoR: Francis Cuss (OP 1972), John Sloboda (OP 1968), Richard Baker (OP 1959) and Max Lubowiecki (U6)



The Upper Sixth Jazz Band

Contact with other OPs

The OPA Office is happy to act as a 'Contact 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.

The John Sloboda Musical Scholar Award

by Tara George, Development Director, St Benedict's School

We are delighted to announce the endowment of a new Music Programme - 'The John Sloboda Musical Scholar Award' which will also encompass the Colin Atkinson Musical Attendance Programme.

The Award and Attendance Programme, generously endowed by Professor John Sloboda, OBE FBA (OP 1968) will offer a Music Scholarship Award to a Sixth Form student, while also providing financial assistance to encourage musical performance attendance for Fifth and Sixth Form students.

It is very much Professor Sloboda's hope that the Scholarship Award will encourage a life-long passion for concert attendance and music-making for the recipient while creating awareness in the Fifth and Sixth form about the range of repertoire in the public arena and to encourage more regular attendance at a variety of live music venues. The Colin Atkinson Attendance programme will offer the opportunity to attend musical performances of excellence and to foster an interest in becoming a regular concertgoer.

On his recent endowment to St Benedict's Music Department, Professor Sloboda commented: *'St Benedict's School has long encouraged musical excellence, not only in performance but in musical appreciation. When I was a pupil in the 1960s, I was enormously enriched by encouragement from staff and fellow students to develop myself as both a practicing classical musician and as a regular concert attender.'*

During his tenure as Head of Music, Colin Atkinson was an exemplary model and guide for what being

a musical citizen should mean. I am delighted to be able to support these enhanced opportunities for sixth-formers which reflect the spirit of Colin's influence, so ably built on in the present era by his successor Christopher Eastwood. High quality experiences outside the confines of the School campus can be transformational for those who experience them, and I applaud the initiative of the school to extend these opportunities further. I hope that other-musically inclined Old Priorians may be moved to join me in getting behind these initiatives.'

Director of Music, Christopher Eastwood also commented on the Endowment:

'I am delighted that John is supporting our musicians here at St Benedict's School. There is a huge amount of interest in the practices of public performance and I look forward to helping our pupils develop a love for, and understanding of, concert attendance. As a cultural capital of excellence for music, London has such a wide variety of performances of which I hope St Benedict's pupils will take advantage.'

If you would like more information or would like to support the programme please contact Mrs Tara George, Development Director at: tgeorge@stbenedicts.org.uk



Professor John Sloboda

WAYN - Where are you now?

It would help us to maintain our database records accurately and it would also help both the Development Office and 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 Link on the Home 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 off the rather 'Older OPs' from supplying their information - the occupation 'Retired' can be just as useful, providing of course we know what field it was that you have worked in!

The Dorabros: Raising money for Teenage Cancer Trust

by James Deehan (OP 2012)

The Dorabros, named after the Dorado fish, are four friends brought together by a thirst for adventure and their desire to do something worthwhile. Charlie Crane (OP 2012), Lirim Gula (OP 2014) and I became great friends while at St Benedict's. Our friendship withstood competition for the same position in the school's first XV and we grew up dreaming about adventures and challenges around the world. I left for Edinburgh University in 2012 and spent four years in Scotland in the company of Rufus Scholefield, an ambitious rower from Jersey. During our time in Edinburgh, Rufus became acquainted with the majority of my friends from London and it was not long before the Dorabros all became firm friends.

Charlie, Lirim and I have now returned to London and we are embarking on our respective careers. However, we also share a determination to help those who are facing somewhat different challenges. In the UK, seven young

people aged 13-24 are diagnosed with cancer every day. Therefore, we have decided to undertake a series of gruelling challenges to raise awareness and sponsorship for the Teenage Cancer Trust during the course of 2019.

We are preparing to swim the Channel, complete an Ironman triathlon, cycle from Rome to London, run the Marathon des Sables - a 250km desert ultra-marathon - and row 3000 nautical miles across the Atlantic Ocean, racing in the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge. We have one of the toughest years of training and racing ahead of us. We are aiming to raise £100,000 to finance and support a new treatment unit for the Teenage Cancer Trust at the UCLH Macmillan Cancer Centre in London. Whilst at St Benedict's, we lost one of our fellow classmates to cancer. The School was devastated by the death of Andre Ambramian (R.I.P. 2010, Lower Fifth pupil) and this has been a huge driving factor in the cause we are representing.

By combining all of these events into a large team challenge, we hope to maximise the impact of our efforts and raise as much support as possible. We want to attract sponsors to a team that is not only beneficial for their own CSR and publicity but, much more importantly, a team that will make a huge difference to the Teenage Cancer Trust's fight against cancer.

You can get in touch and subscribe to our journey by email: team@dorabros.com

Donations can be made and much more information found on our website dorabros.com. We also have an Instagram page @dorabros, please follow for updates on our training and journey when the challenges begin!

We are hosting a May Ball and Auction at the Royal Garden Hotel on 11th May. All those affiliated with St Benedict's would be very welcome. Tables can be bought at: dorabros.com/ball



LtoR: James Deehan, Charlie Crane, Lirim Gula and Rufus Scholefield

The Annual Old Priorian Oxbridge Reunion Dinner 2019

by Lewis Hill (OP 1975), President OPA

It was early in February that we gathered under the auspices of the extraordinary confines of the Oxford and Cambridge Club in St James's to dine on excellent food, converse and socialise.

The guest of Honour this year was Martin Kaufman (OP 1965), product of St Benedict's and Balliol College, Oxford, gaining a degree in History, and now CEO of 'Martin Kaufman Philanthropy', a charitable

organisation sponsoring education and culture.

His after-dinner speech described his journey since St Benedict's as well as aspects of his own development (from Catholic to Humanist, Rebellion to Reconciliation) in a floodlight of good-humoured observation culminating in his approval of the many 'good positive changes for inclusivity' at work in the school.

His colleagues and contemporaries included the welcome return of Lord Patten of Barnes (OP 1962), also from Balliol and Denis McShane (OP 1965) from Merton (both associated with the political sphere) as well as Ian Stephen who was instrumental as St Benedict's Careers Officer in steering former pupils along the right paths to go up to a number of these Colleges.

It was good also to see Lorcan O'Brien (OP 2018) while in his first year at Jesus College, Oxford (reading Philosophy and Theology), as well as Matthew Barrett (OP 2018) reading German at St Peter's, Oxford.

All in all, a worthwhile evening spent in good company with good people and despite the raised security (armed police presence at Green Park Underground!) it was a wonderful evening with people sharing a common Ealing educational heritage, shared recent memberships justified by works and faith and a vision for a more human, humane and liberal, charitable society.



Chris Patten and Martin Kaufman



Lorcan O'Brien and Matthew Barrett

Your News

If you would like to share with our readers where life has taken you since you left St Benedict's please get in touch!

Contact the OPA Office via email, writing an article for us to include in the next edition.

News from Old Priorians: August 2018 to February 2019

Richard Baker (OP 1959):

After the Blessing of the new War Memorial on 11th November 2018, Richard wrote to Shaun Hullis and Tara George (two members of the War Memorial Committee): I must write to express my feelings about today's ceremony; I know a little of how much hard work you both especially, and others too, have put into the 'new War Memorial project' Part 1 - its creation (with the trials and tribulations of the last couple of weeks in its final delivery!) and then Part 2 - its Unveiling and Blessing. There has of course been a myriad of 'bits' in between, but it has now all come together in its final great fulfilment.

Today's Unveiling, Blessing and its following 'magnificent' Tea Reception were so appropriate, effective and enjoyable - a marvellous and memorable occasion. Well done and I offer my thanks not only personally, but also on behalf of The Old Priorian Association - its current members, but also perhaps on this occasion of a group of Old Priorians, one of whom I knew personally, who cannot now speak for themselves, but whose names we will remember for ever. The cadets on Duty were as usual the greatest credit to St Benedict's School CCF under your command - a splendid demonstration of Service, as they were too at our OPA Annual Memorial Mass yesterday; my special thanks to yesterday's four, including for the first time a lady cadet - Well done. Writing not only as OPA Administrator, but as Contingent Commander 1978-1991

Benedict Ball (OP 1988): Died 11th November 2018, Aged 49. R.I.P.

David Cassidy (OP 1983): Emailed in November: By chance I have just stumbled upon a transcript of Mary Keal's speech (as OPA President at the Annual Dinner in 2014: (http://opaealing.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/newsletter_2014a.pdf)). I was interested to read it, Mary being a contemporary of mine (although I don't recall that I was ever brave enough to speak to her, or at least not at my

initiation) and hear mention of a few other contemporaries who were part of my life for 7 years. I often wonder what has become of everyone; from time to time I look up a random OP 1983 name on the internet but with one or two exceptions there is little to be found.

I'm writing because a couple of things that Mary said in her speech do not sound correct: *'The sixth form girls were paraded on the stage at assembly on the first day of term'*. I was there and I'm certain that this did not happen; It also strikes me as something that would not have happened! *'The head/deputy head boys often 'took' assembly'*. The most the head/deputy head boy ever did, as far as I recall, was to attempt to 'keep order' before the headmaster (usually) appeared to 'take' the assembly; taking Assembly was never a task undertaken by any boy. I'd like to know that my memory is not letting me down on these couple of points!

Richard Baker who was teaching in the School during this time, responded:

'Thank you for your email; good to know that OPs do read our Newsletter archive on the website. I was at the Dinner when Mary made her speech and certainly didn't hear then any 'comments about accuracy'! I think that her comment about 'paraded on stage' may have been made with a little poetic licence indicating that specific reference had been made to them by 'someone in authority'. As a member of Staff at that time, I certainly do not remember such a 'parade'. With regard to 'taking Assembly', you are quite right that it was the senior school officials (pupils) who saw to it that the daily Assembly was 'ready and in good order' in the Annex for the Headmaster (or his deputy) to say Prayers and give formal School announcements. The senior pupil certainly did take an active part in the 'gathering together' of the Assembly. How one exactly describes this, especially in an after-Dinner speech which is meant to be 'captivating' is open to question; certainly for a short while before each Assembly, the senior pupil concerned was up on stage alone and 'in charge'.

Brian Clancy (OP 1959): Emails on hearing of the death of Brian Lee: I was in Fr Kevin's Scout Troop with Brian; we were at camp together at Heythrop (the then Diocesan Seminary) in July 1952. David Everett, Antony Phillips, Tony Weldon, Bill Treadwell myself and Brian were in the same Patrol - *The Kestrels* would you believe! On a totally different point, I have been approached by Tony Murray's (OP 1959) widow Virginia, to ask me if I can find out some information about Tony's rugby career after he left Benedict's. Can anybody help in this quest?

Raymond Codd (OP 1966): Died 17th January 2019, Aged 71; brother of Brian, (R.I.P. OP 1963). R.I.P.

James Curtis-Ward (OP 2011): Emailed in September that he was currently looking to move to San Francisco for work and seeking any OPs living in that area of the USA. In January this year, James reported that his move to San Francisco had been very successful; he was settled in the city and was working for the Government. He'd be happy to assist any other OPs if they were out in California - please contact James through the OPA Office.

Francis Cuss (OP 1972): In November 2018, Francis made a special visit from America to attend the second Annual Richard Baker Science Lecture which he so generously endows. The Lecture this year was given by Professor John Sloboda, OBE, FBA (OP 1968) on *'The Psychology of Concert Attendance'*. He emailed after the event saying he would like to reiterate how much his wife Ros and he had enjoyed visiting St Benedict's again and how gratified he was with the turnout for the lecture. He hopes that it stays popular, because it's a great place for mixing and reconnecting.

Michael Davis (OP 1964): In February 2019, true to his word in the Summer News, Michael and his wife Dinah visited the School from their home in Cheshire and spent a very happy time 'seeing and meeting'. In a post-visit letter to the Headmaster he

expressed his and Dinah's great pleasure in the warm welcome they had received and in seeing the development and progress made at St Benedict's since his last visit.

Peter Davis (OP 1971): Has for many years lived in Alberta, Canada. He was enquiring about the School Song 'Benedicti Filii', which forty years ago we used to regularly sing; is it still used, and could we supply him with the lyrics, translation and music? Regretfully the echoes of the School Song have not been heard for many years now, but a trawl through *The Priors* (Vol 1 No 2 Dec 1927) produced the lyrics (composed by Dom Basil Bolton) and a translation which was sent to Peter. Tracing the music has been a problem and if anyone can help, please contact the OPA Office.

John Deehan (OP 1967): Fr John is now Parish Priest of Kentish Town in the Westminster Diocese having been Parish Priest of Eastcote for a number of years.

Peter Hearn (OP 1967): Peter was a very close friend of Raymond Codd, R.I.P. and writes of Ray's activities at School and afterwards: Ray was Head of School in 65-66 and in the same year he achieved high ranking in the CCF - he was a Senior Under Officer. He excelled at all games, ending his school career as Captain of the Rugby 1st XV,

Captain of the Cricket 1st XI, Captain of Athletics and Cross Country. After he left School, he went to St Luke's College in Exeter where he again shone in Rugby and later played for and captained Rosslyn Park and Middlesex; in the early 70s he had trials for England and Ireland and captained The Barbarians. Ray taught at Haileybury, Whitgift and finally at King's Taunton where he was Head of PE and Games and where he completed his teaching career.

Peter Hubner (OP 1960): Died 28th October 2018, Aged 76; brother of Martin (OP 1962). R.I.P.

Martin Hubner (OP 1962): Martin writes of his brother Peter (R.I.P. 2018): My dear brother Peter died suddenly after a major heart attack whilst out cycling near his home in Kirby Muxloe, Leics; It was totally unexpected. Peter was very fit, played tennis, kept to a very sensible diet and did not drink - always concerned that we should follow his sensible and healthy example. I know I could not replace Peter at the Old Priors Association, but the least I can do now for such a decent chap is stand in for him. As you know Peter was a loyal supporter of the Old Priors, and a credit to St Benedict's School, having obtained a First at London University, qualified as a doctor at the Middlesex Hospital, was a founding member of the Groby Road Heart Unit outside Leicester and a world-renowned heart

consultant. He was a devout Catholic, a real Christian, always ready to help others, especially those who may have failed in life. Before he became a doctor, he wanted to be a priest. There will not be another Peter Hubner, God rest his soul.

Paul Hodgson-Jones (OP 1978): Emails his news: Both my brother Peter and I were in the CCF, though I don't remember if Peter stayed on in Upper Sixth. I was the S/Sgt in QM stores in my U6 year, but then went on to be U/O in PTC for my Oxbridge seventh term. After leaving school in December 1978, I worked at Wedgwood on Regent St for some months before going to KCL (and The Sorbonne) to read law - a joint degree course which gave me an LLB and a Maîtrise en Droit. On graduating, I worked briefly for my father in his oilfield supplies business then joined the civil service. In 1997 I left what was then ECGD (now UK Export Finance) and joined RBS. In 2000 I moved to Chubb insurance as a Surety underwriter, returning to banking in 2007.

I have been with Sumitomo Mitsubishi Banking Corporation Europe (SMBCE) ever since and will likely stay here until I retire, which may be sometime in next few years as I turn 60 on 1st June 2019. My work is in project & export finance and this takes me abroad a lot - I write this from Stockholm between meetings! I married



A Wreath is laid on behalf of all Old Priors

Sarah Hodgson (and formally changed my name to Hodgson-Jones) in August 1995. We have three children: James (1996); Peter (1997); and Katie (2001). We have lived in Hertfordshire since 2002 where both Sarah and I are local Councillors. In general, I lost touch with most of my old school mates in the mid-80s having moved around a lot after graduating. It would be nice to regain contact with some of my old chums, so will investigate the OPA website.

Brian Lee (OP 1957): Died 24th May 2018, Aged 80. R.I.P.

Eoghain Murphy (OP 1986): Emails that regretfully he would be unable to attend the second *Richard Baker Science Lecture*, the musical theme of which he would have been most interested in, as that night he had to attend an important Council meeting - he had been elected to the Bryanston & Dorset Square Ward of Westminster Council in May 2018.

Mark McComish (OP 1984): Died 8th January 2019 at his home in Malaga, Spain, Aged 53; brother of Paul, (R.I.P. OP 1972). R.I.P.

Kumaran Perinpanathan (OP 2009): Reports that he is proud to be the Godfather of Harold Taylor-Beirne (see below) who was baptised by Fr Thomas at Ealing Abbey.

Michael Rapazzini (OP 1957): Died 25th November 2018, Aged 79; brother of Richard (OP 1962) and Adrian (OP 1964). R.I.P.

Richard Baker wrote to Michael's daughter, Barbara: I write not only as the Administrator of the Old Priorian Association, on behalf of the President, Lewis Hill (OP 1975), not only as the 'newish' organiser of the 'Shampers Lunches' held twice a year in London, but personally as one of Michael's school friends at St Benedict's School at the end of the fifties. It was a shock, although perhaps not totally unexpected from the latest news we had heard at our Shampers Lunch on 7th November, when I received the email from Anthony Phillips yesterday telling me of Michael's death.

My memories of schooldays back in the fifties are becoming 'hazy', but I do remember Michael's friendship especially as we were both together in the Signals section of the Combined Cadet

Force - he was of a senior rank to me but we did work happily together. I left School in 1959 two years after Michael and we would then meet up at various Old Priorian functions, especially some of the formal Dinners; he was always a great supporter of the OPA and all that it did. And then in more recent years we met up again on a number of occasions at our 'Shampers Lunches' at which a group (sometimes over 20) of us who had left school in the late fifties and early sixties would meet twice a year for a rather leisurely four-hour lunch in London. Michael was a great supporter here too. Michael was a sincere person of integrity and will be missed by all who knew him; to you and all his family I offer our deepest sympathy and I will certainly remember him in my prayers. May he Rest in Peace.

Pamela Stuart (Junior School Staff 57-99 & Deputy Head): Died 30th November 2018, Aged 85; Husband of Donald (R.I.P. Senior School Staff 69-95) and Mother of Iain (OP 1987). R.I.P.

Jessica and Sean Taylor-Beirne (both OP 2009): Announce the birth of their son, Harold Francis on 20th August 2018.

Malcolm Upton (OP 1961): Raises a query - any further comment would be welcome: As I get older, I realise that if I don't ask soon, nobody will know the answer! My question is - does anybody have a record of the *places we visited* and also *where did we stay* when a group of us, led by Fr Dunstan and Mr Nickerson, flew to Switzerland (in 1960 or 1961?), hired two minibuses and drove through France to Spain? I know that we visited Barcelona, staying in an almost finished guesthouse at the monastery at Montserrat, also visiting and staying in Avignon. We visited the Caravelle factory at Toulouse, where I seem to remember we stayed in a hostel and were attacked by fleas! Andorra was another place we stayed as was Albi, where I have pictures taken from the cathedral tower of the gardens laid out below.

I also remember visiting, in France, a monastery where we were shown how bees found their pollen and told each other how to find the pollen, as well as meeting a monk working on coloured glass which he made thinner to get lighter colours before setting it in concrete. Another highlight for me was a visit to a dark cathedral like church

where we were told to listen to the organ being practiced as the organist was famous - I have no idea where that was, but it has left me with a liking for loud organ music! Our return was fraught as we were unable to fly as we expected - I never understood why - but we had to return by train from Switzerland. I hope somebody has some information which I am sure will bring back even more memories.

Basil Nickerson, (Staff 56-94): now 87, replied: As far as my memory goes:

- 1) We slept 'rough' at Avignon on the way to Montserrat via Barcelona.
- 2) Montserrat: Inter alia we went on the lift up the mountain.
- 3) We stayed at the very large Monastery of En Calcat; there you young men recorded Tin-Tin in English for the boys of the School and on the Sunday, we went for tea with a local lady and had fruit in sherry. When the monk who was looking after us got us back one day late for Lunch, he got a real 'ticking off' from his Abbot.
- 4.) Andorra: You all got under the weather with the brandy, so I was left to spend a day climbing in the hills on my own!
- 5) Toulouse: We stayed in a Franciscan Friary and, as you say, went to see the Caravelle factory.
- 6) Font Romeu: A walled town in the hills in Southern France. When Fr Dunstan went for a meal with his friends near-by, the rest of us had a wonderful Sunday Lunch with plenty of wine, never feeling either full or inebriated!

Anton Wills-Eve (OP 1960): Emailed in mid-December: Thanks for the details of the OPA website change which I received today. You may recall my several requests for prayers in recent years, well you must all be very good at them - I have just celebrated 19 years of active cancer and four terminal prognoses but am still going despite also having a fractured spine, and five other serious illnesses which have left my medics stumped. 19 years of cancer treatment (never in remission) is believed to be a record, certainly for the UK, so please keep me on the 'pray for' list and above all in the next Newsletter thank everyone who has prayed for me; do remember me to any of my aged confreres.

Jerzey Zubrzycki (OP 1959): Died 2014, Aged 70. R.I.P.

Reconnecting with Old Priorians

by Tara George, Development Director, St Benedict's School

In January this year, the Development Office in partnership with the Old Priorian Association was delighted to launch St Benedict's Connect, a new online networking platform exclusively for Old Priorians. The aim of the platform is to enable Old Priorians to stay in touch, seek or offer career opportunities, arrange and/or attend class reunions all while being kept up to date with the latest news from our Old Priorian Community.

***'I believe this is a very significant development at St Benedict's, which has the potential to offer great benefit to OPs seeking to gain work experience, to find a job or to develop their career. It also offers a practical and up to date way of helping OPs keep in touch with each other, and with the school.'* - Andrew Johnson, Headmaster**

A key feature of St Benedict's Connect is the Mentoring Programme. The programme will offer Old Priorians the opportunity to become Mentors, through facilitating work experience, internships, careers advice or

something as simple as reviewing a CV. Old Priorians can also request mentorships to assist them with their university and career aspirations.

Xavier Crean, former Head Boy and one of our first Old Priorians to access the new mentorship programme, was absolutely delighted when he was offered a Banking Intern opportunity via the platform. Xavier had previously struggled to find an internship but after joining the site was able to access a suitable placement. ***'St Benedict's Connect is a fantastic tool for keeping in touch with OPs, accessing employment opportunities and internships. Signing up was easy and took no time at all!' - Xavier Crean, (OP 2015)***

Other features on St Benedict's Connect include a 'Jobs Board' offering a range of employment and internship opportunities. A 'News Feed' where you can access or post articles relevant to the Old Priorian community. A 'Members Directory' which now lists over 400 Old Priorians and is growing day by day!

'The first thing that struck me about St Benedict's Connect was how visually engaging it is. There can be no mistake that this is a portal for careers provided by St Benedict's. My personal experience of using the site was made easy by the fact of how user friendly it was.'

The level of work and commitment that has gone into constructing this for Old Priorians is a testament to the commitment from the OPA, the School and the Development Office to take the benefits and rewards that St Benedict's has to offer to an even greater level. There can be no doubt this will make a difference for those that choose to engage with it. Not many educational establishments offer such a service. Is it worth spending your personal time on exploring? I would say almost certainly!' - Alex Pereira-Inacio (OP 2000)

If you would like to join St Benedict Connect please visit the platform using the website address: www.stbenedictsconnect.com or contact Mrs Tara George at: tgeorge@stbenedicts.org.uk



OPA Mentoring and Networking Evening 2019, LtoR: Catherine Bench (OP 2015), Lirim Gula (OP 2012), Katie Wilmot (OP 2002), John Boyle (OP 2014), James Deehan (OP 2012) and Walid Haddad (OP 2010)

Shampers marches on ...

by Richard Baker (OP 1959)

It is very encouraging that as the 'head gets older, the tail gets younger!' Our group now covers vintages from 1955 to 1970 and the sadness we feel in knowing that some of our loyal lunchers are no longer with us, is lessened in knowing that younger generations are joining us.

At our second gathering in 2018 we had to announce the sad death of Peter Hubner (OP 1960) who died on 28th October, just ten days before he was to have joined us at *Shampers* for the first time. We also signed a greetings card to Michael Rapazzini (OP 1957) who was seriously ill; Michael was a loyal supporter of our lunches in past times and would always ensure that his visits to the UK from his home in Milan were during a period when a *Shampers Lunch* was being held. Sadly, we learnt that Michael died on 25th November. May they both Rest in Peace.

Twenty-four of us gathered on 7th November with two new faces with us for the first time - John Merrigan (OP 1959) and Chris King (OP 1960); a warm welcome to them both and we hope to see you regularly in the future. The usual excellent lunch facilities at *Shampers* allowed our larger than usual gathering to relax and enjoy each other's company for an extended 'lunch hour'.

For the sake of 'history' gathering together this time were: James Anscomb, Anthony Baker, Richard Baker, Geoffrey Bennett, Tony Brunning, Brendan Caulfield, Brian Clancy, Peter Coleman, Patrick Gardiner, Kevin Hannigan, Mike Henderson, Chris King, John Lindley, John Merrigan, Andre de Moller, John Moloney, Stephen Novy, Anthony Phillips, David Randell, Bernard Stutt, Brian Taylor, Tony Trigg, Gordon Wilson and Nigel Wilson.



Mike Henderson and Brian Taylor - in thoughtful mood



L to R Clockwise: Brendan Caulfield, Geoffrey Bennett, Stephen Novy, Chris King, Gordon Wilson and Peter Coleman

HCPT Lourdes Trip 2019

by Jessica Taylor-Beirne (OP 2009)

Myself and my husband, Sean, organise the annual Lourdes trip for Group 10 of HCPT (Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust). HCPT is a charity which has a special place in many Old Priorians' hearts. The charity takes over a thousand disabled and disadvantaged children to Lourdes at Easter on a once in a lifetime pilgrimage holiday. St Benedict's has, for many years, provided a group of 6th formers as volunteers to help out and assist the children on this pilgrimage.

Group 10, one of the many HCPT groups, was formed by Sean Taylor-Beirne and I, after we decided to start a group formed of previous St Benedict's helpers, in order to tap into the network of willing volunteers from the School and allow them the chance to continue working with HCPT.

This year we have several fellow OPs travelling as helpers, and we are anticipating taking eight children, with needs ranging from severe disabilities where they are reliant on intensive medical interventions on a daily basis, to children suffering through difficult home circumstances. It offers the children a unique and special

experience, and their parents a week of respite, as all of the care needs for the children are met by the volunteer helpers. It costs £850 for each child we sponsor, and all this money is raised by voluntary donations. If you would like to make a donation towards these costs, please do contact me. If you are interested in travelling

as a helper with HCPT GROUP 10 next year, then it would be great to hear from you; moreover, if you have any children or vulnerable adults in mind who may benefit from travelling with HCPT then please do get in touch. For further information please contact me at group10@hcpt.org.uk or via the OPA Office.



Group 10

Update from the OPRFC

by Edd Conway (OP 2005)

The OPRFC head into the final weeks of the season with their best ever finish still a possibility. This is in large part due to excellent form before Christmas which saw the side head into the break having won 10 and lost 5. This was achieved on the final weekend with a close fought win over local-rivals Ruislip despite horrific weather making it hard to play any real rugby.

The run since Christmas has been tough, playing against very good teams from the top half of the table.

Particularly heart breaking was a run of close losses, 28-25 against Southend, 17-13 against third place North Walsham and 12-10 against HAC under lights at Grasshoppers. All games that could have gone either way, but we weren't able to quite get the extra score needed to win. The HAC game was an excellent occasion, hosted on a Friday night at Grasshoppers outstanding new facility. It was preceded by School playing against Hampton and approximately 150 people were there to support the OP



We need that ball!

game following at 8pm. The OPs led through a superb try - Conor Dolan (OP 2015) making the break and offloading out of the tackle in spectacular fashion for Ross McIntosh (OP 2010) to score. HAC however scored with four minutes remaining and, despite a last second push from OPs, managed to hang on for the win.

On Saturday 16th February the club hosted a Ladies Day lunch for the home game against Luton, which saw the side return to winning ways, finishing 42-5. Tough fixtures remain, including two long journeys to Diss and Sudbury, but the boys will keep going until their hard-earned summer break finally arrives.



Forthcoming Events for your Diaries

Full details will be published in our emails and on our website:

OPA Annual Dinner 2019
Friday 26th April 2019
St Benedict's School: 7.00pm to 11.00pm

Before Dinner there will be the opportunity, for those who have booked, to make a tour of the many developments that have taken place in recent years.

Annual OPA Golf Day
Friday 14th June 2019
Ealing Golf Club

OPA Business Networking Evening
Tuesday 18th June 2019
St Benedict's School

OPA Summer Sports Festival
Sunday 7th July 2019
Playing Fields, Perivale: 2.00pm

OPA Annual General Meeting, Memorial Mass and Lunch
Saturday 9th November 2019
St Benedict's School, Ealing Abbey and Benet Club: 10.30am

The Annual Richard Baker Science Lecture Series 2019
Tuesday 3rd December 2019
The Orchard Hall: 7.00pm

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.

With the advent of GDPR there must be formal application from our Website to have your email address included on our distribution lists.

Wales' autumn squad: Old Priorian Jonah Holmes

by Jonah Holmes (OP 2010)

I have only fond memories of my time at St Benedict's. Although being a part of the rugby culture has a huge bearing on my experience, the learning environment created by those who taught me played a massive part in my personal development. I cannot thank them enough.

It's not exactly been a tough ride for me since leaving in 2010 but it's probably fair to say that my school days are some of the best times of my life. As for many Old Priorians, the friends closest to me now are the ones I made at school and I've not heard of another ex-pupil organisation providing as good a community network as Bennies do.

I was particularly lucky to be part of a collection of year groups in which there were many, many talented sportsmen and this enabled me to develop as a rugby player and follow the likes of the Ellis brothers and Joe Simpson into the Wasps academy straight after 6th form.

After an unfruitful few years, I made the move to Leeds Carnegie. There I began to enjoy rugby again and had a great time living in such an exciting city, before the move down to Leicester.

Having struggled to get game time in my first season, I was as shocked, as most people were, to get the call up to the Wales Autumn Series squad and get my first international cap, although they do hand them out to anyone these days!



Jonah Holmes

I strongly believe that luck plays a huge role in where we end up but the support from those at Bennies and the values instilled in us from an early age have empowered us to get to where we are now and

for that I will be forever thankful. I hope sport at St Benedict's continues to enrich the lives of its students as it has already done for so many, myself included.



Aerial View of the Playing Fields

St Benedict's Annual Jazz Soirée 2019

by Katie Wilmot (OP 2002)

On Friday 1st March, the Orchard Hall played host to a fantastic Jazz Soirée. The evening opened with guest vocalist, Linley Weir and Friends, which featured St Benedict's teachers Paul Michael and Matt Fletcher on Double Bass and Drums, respectively. Linley beautifully delivered a great opening set, including some classic Gershwin numbers, with

excellent solo performances from her accompanying musicians.

She was followed by the St Benedict's School Junior Jazz Ensemble, which showcased a fantastic group of promising young musicians, from wind and brass to piano to drums. Next up was the St Benedict's Big Band, who finished with a wonderful arrangement of 'Somewhere

over the Rainbow', conducted by music teacher Dominic Field and including no less than five trumpet players!

The Senior Jazz Ensemble, featuring Mfon Bassey on vocals, Fernanda Da Silva on Piano, Conor Moon on bass, Jack Leonard on drums, and Lucien Mac-Fall on Saxophone, opened with an excellent and technically challenging arrangement of 'Red Clay'. They ended with an incredible rendition of Etta James's 'I'd rather go Blind', led by Mfon's sensational and effortless silky-smooth vocals, for which the group received a standing ovation from the audience.

The evening concluded with a final set from Linley Weir and an impromptu collaboration with the Senior Jazz Ensemble, who joined her for the final song of the evening, James Taylors' 'You've got a friend', which ended with full crowd participation as the bridge looped and Mfon continued to accompany with staggering vocal ad-libs. This collaboration was wonderful to witness, especially as it will be the last time the current Senior Jazz Ensemble perform together (they are all Upper 6th).

The inspiring and relaxed evening was attended by around 100 people and tickets included charcuterie platters, dips, olives and cheese. Bread for the evening was kindly donated by current parents, Richard and Sharon Vaughan. All proceeds went towards the Annual Fund 2018/2019, with over £1,000 raised for the school's landscaping project.

Katie Wilmot (OP 2002) was the Lead Vocalist of the St Benedict's Senior Jazz Group, 'Jazz Bistro', 2001-2003, with Richard Cummings (OP 2001) on bass, Errol Hui (OP 2001) and Robert Wyrobek (OP 2002) on Piano, Mark Lyons (OP 2002) on electric guitar, Ben Plocki (OP 2001) on Saxophone, and Marco Taylor (OP 2001) on drums.



St Benedict's Big Band



St Benedict's Senior Jazz Ensemble

Social Media



stbenedictsconnect.com



Facebook /theOldPriorianAssociation



Twitter @oldpriorians



Instagram @oldpriorians

The Old Priorian Association has a presence on social media. Please join us on St Benedict's Connect, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram to stay up to date with events and news. We'd love to build on our ever-growing network and get you connected to other Old Priorians.



The Old Priorian Association - Founded 1927

The Old Priorian Association was formed on Friday, 1 July 1927 with the name reflecting its beginnings within Ealing Priory School, which was the name of St Benedict's School at the time.

The Association was established to form a centre of union for former pupils of the School and to hold meetings to renew old bonds which connect its Members and alumni with the School and Ealing Abbey. A vital role of the Association is to forward and promote - in every practical way - the interests of the School, whilst conducting its business according to *The Rules of The Association* (see OPA Website), which form the structure within which it operates.

The Association is governed and run by a Council consisting of three elected Officers, no fewer than four elected Members and a number of Ex-Officio Members.

Elected Officers

Lewis Hill (OP 1975)

President

Marina Ranger (OP 2009)

Honorary Secretary

Kumaran Perinpanathan (OP 2009)

Honorary Treasurer

Council Members

Frank Casali (OP 1984)

Alex Pereira-Inacio (OP 2000)

Christopher Stevenson (OP 1964)

Brian Taylor, CB (OP 1960)

Jessica Taylor-Beirne (OP 2009)

Katie Wilmot (OP 2002)

Ex-Officio Council Members

Andrew Johnson

Headmaster

Rob Simmons (OP 1987)

Headmaster, Junior School

Catherine Bedwin

Bursar, St Benedict's School

Joe Berger (OP 1976)

Chairman, St Benedict's Governing Board

Jean O'Brien

Society of Parents and Friends

Richard Baker (OP 1959)

Administrator, OPA

Tara George

Development Director,
St Benedict's School

Full details about the Association and its activities can be found at:
www.opaealing.org.uk

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

Email: opa@stbenedicts.org.uk

Telephone: 020 8862 2249

**Post: The Old Priorian Association,
54 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London
W5 2ES**



Your Newsletter

Please do let us have your news and views for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Full details of the Association can be found at: **www.opaealing.org.uk**. The School Website and School News can be found at: **<http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk>**

Please also remember that submitted image files must be of high resolution and as large a file size as possible.