



THE OLD PRIORIAN ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2019



ST BENEDICT'S  
1952

## Contents

### 3 Old Priorian Association News

### 8 St Benedict's News

### 10 Alumni News

### 14 In Memoriam

### 15 Upcoming Events

Front Cover: St Benedict's School, Aerial View, 1952.

## President's Welcome

Dear Old Priorians,

Please enjoy perusing the pages of this latest Old Priorian Association Newsletter. Inside there is lots of news from across the year, including an article highlighting the OPA Annual Dinner, held at St Benedict's for the first time in over 15 years! The Dorabros were our guests of honour and they gave a combined and entertaining speech about their fundraising activities for Teenage Cancer Trust. Heroic efforts, one and all indeed, which are covered in greater depth on page 12. Karis Halsall (OP 2005) provides a fascinating insight into her career in scriptwriting and television.

OPA Golf Day news, by Joe Simpson (OP 2006), and stories of Reunions, from 1963 and 2009, featuring therein, as does News from St Benedict's School and an update on school life from Andrew Johnson, Headmaster.

So as the evenings gather into Autumnal shades that then deepen into the mid-Winter solstice celebrations of Christmas, snuggle up with a cup of cocoa and a warm blanket, central heating on, and imbibe the contents judiciously.

Enjoy!

With best wishes,

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

## OPCC Summer Season 2019

The OPCC had an enjoyable summer of cricket in 2019. Once again, we were able to boast an age range of 15-32, whilst also maintaining the distinctly mediocre standard of cricket.

We played 14 fixtures in total last season and have now been entered into the prestigious Cricketer Trophy for 2020. We are always looking for new members and players, whether that is playing regularly or once a year. We will be going on our inaugural cricket tour too, which is something to look out for.

The team highlight of the season was winning the Dom Young Cup and Basil Nickerson Trophy in some keenly contested matches against St Benedict's

students. Some personal highlights, for me, have included Harry Britt (OP 2014) scoring 105 against Richmond and Josh Chippendale (OP 2018) getting 5 wickets against St Benedict's pupil cricketers.

If you would like more information about the OPCC, or to be involved in any way, please contact me by email at: [matthew.codrington26@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.codrington26@gmail.com)

**Matt Codrington (OP 2012), OPCC Captain**





## OPRFC Preseason Update 2019

The OPRFC kicked off their sixth season at Level 6 in September. Behind the scenes, Simon Jukes stepped down to concentrate on his teaching commitments and was replaced as Forwards Coach by Adam Preocanin. Adam is also a coach at National 1 side Old Elthamians and previously coached at OPs for the 2016-17 season.

Preseason featured two squad games against local sides, giving the OPs opportunity to provide game time to plenty of players, including 12 recent leavers, which is a great sign for the future. A 33-10 win against newly formed Ealing 1871 (the men's amateur side) was followed by a 36-12 victory against Grasshoppers under the lights on Friday 30th August.

As is often the case, weddings and availability caused havoc in September as the season kicked off. The OPs were on the end of some chastening away losses at Harpenden and semi-pro Southend whilst a home loss to Amersham and Chiltern showed some promise but was undermined by uncharacteristic errors. Towards the end of the month, performances picked up with a 57-5 victory over local rivals Ruislip marking the first win of the season. It was a good team performance with Captain Joe Wellings (OP 2010) scoring two tries in

the effort. On the 5th October, the OPs managed to follow this up with a hard fought 32-24 win away at Woodford. A young OP side, featuring 18 year old Luis Gomez-Rose (OP 2019), who confirmed the win with a late try. Jono Moore (OP 2010) worked the ball to Aristide Goualin (OP 2008) who scorched up the touch line before passing inside to returning Captain Alex Ozegovic (OP 2012) for the crucial score.

Most pleasingly, the club has already played three 2nd team fixtures, as we continue to re-build the depth and consistency of the 2nd XV. The two league games resulted in narrow losses, 20-19 against Hammersmith and Fulham and a late, heart-breaking loss, 34-32, in Hackney against Old Streetonians. The third game, a friendly with Ealing 1871 2nd XV however was a morale-boosting 22-18 win with the Porter brothers, Dan (OP 2008) and James (OP 2016), inspiring the side.

The club is always looking for players, supporters and sponsors. Please feel free to get in touch for more information.

**Edd Conway (OP 2005), OPRFC Director of Rugby**





# Annual OPA Golf Day 2019

The rain earlier in the day did little to dampen the spirits of the OPA Golf Day at Ealing Golf Club on Friday 14th June. By the time the first four-ball was teeing off, the weather had cleared and the sun was out. Although three holes were waterlogged and out of action, the rest of the course was in remarkably good condition, and due to only fifteen holes being available, most gross scores were looking impressive! The greens were lightning fast, as usual, giving any four-putters a rock-solid excuse.

As well as the best individual on the day, there was a team competition. This was to be played with the 'Terror Ball'!

Each foursome was given one yellow ball for the round, which was rotated around the team each hole. Only the points scored with the Terror Ball counted towards the team score. Once the ball was gone, it was gone and your team stopped scoring. This led to enthusiastic ball searches and retrievals over the course of the round. As anyone who has played Ealing will know, the River Brent manages to meander through the golf course in such a way, that it feels as though you are playing on an estuary. This culminated with our team's ball ending up in a shallow but particularly muddy bend in the River Brent - not my fault!

Being the youngest, my teammates nominated me to be lowered, face first by the ankles into the river to scoop out our ball. Two minutes and 5 balls later we managed to retrieve our ball. Unfortunately, the very next hole the ball went missing off the tee, my fault this time around!

Sam Codrington (OP 2000) did make me feel slightly better when he proudly admitted he had sliced his ball away on the third hole.

Afterwards, the club put on a BBQ for everyone to sit down, refuel, complain about how many shots they had dropped, and what scores they should have actually gotten. I was sitting next to Andrew Wilkie (OP 2008) discussing what an unlucky round

we both had when we were summoned for the prize giving. Much to my surprise, when the winners were announced, Mr Wilkie was joint winner with Tomasz Herbich (OP 1970).

All in all the day was a tremendous success. There was a great blend of different ages and abilities, the atmosphere was friendly and relaxed. It was a fantastic afternoon! This was my first OP golf day and I will definitely be back again. I highly recommend anyone with an interest in golf, barbecues or beers to come along in the future.

**Joe Simpson (OP 2006)**



# Annual OPA Dinner 2019

This year's Annual Old Priorian Association Dinner, held on Friday 26th April, marked the first time the Dinner was held back at school in over 15 years. St Benedict's welcomed back 109 Old Priorians, from 1954 to 2018. Tours were made available to Old Priorians, who wished to see the developments and growth of St Benedict's since their time and included the state-of-the-art Sixth Form & ADT Centre (constructed in 2015).

There was a buzz of excitement and chatter as old school friends reunited and reminisced of their schooldays in the building where their friendships were formed. The food provided by St Benedict's Catering Department was delightful and the OPA extends its thanks to Nick Cave, Catering Manager, and his team.

This year's guests of honour were the Dorabros, consisting of James Deehan (OP 1912), Charlie Crane (OP 1912), Lirim Gula (OP 1914) and Rufus Scholefield. They discussed their fundraising journey for Teenage Cancer Trust, with the goal of raising £100,000, through undertaking a series of challenges

over 2019. (For more about their journey so far and their upcoming final challenges, please see page 12)

Their collective speech reminisced about their time at St Benedict's; the life-long friendships they had made, the events that had shaped them into the men they have become, and the reasons behind their incredible fundraising efforts. Their speech was a mixture of hilarious anecdotes about their time at St Benedict's and heartfelt gratitude and affection towards their school, all while highlighting the important fight that many brave young people across the UK are facing.

The Annual OPA Dinner is a fantastic opportunity for Old Priorians of any year to come together and socialise with their fellow OPs. It is definitely one of the highlights of the OPA's social calendar! Please do consider joining us back at school on Friday 24th April 2020 for the Annual OPA Dinner 2020.

**Olivia Davies (OP 2015)**





## The Class of '63.....

.....or, more accurately, some of the Class of '63 since we weren't, of course, the only boys leaving school that year.

We had grown up together, over many years in the Junior, Middle and Senior Schools, and by the time our A levels were over, and with us contemplating our first jobs or, for the bright sparks, university, we were ready for a bit of down time.

What followed was unusual in that few boys, let alone 10, are close enough in their sixth form years to consider going on holiday together. And in the early '60s, to book a villa on the Costa Brava was a little bold to say the least.

So off we went by train, plane and automobile for three weeks of sun, sea and sand armed with the latest Bond novel, a wind-up record player and some suppositories (don't ask!). Looking back, memories become a little blurred but the terrible wine, awful gin (burning a hole in the stone staircase) and dreadful Bisontes cigarettes have etched themselves on this particular memory.

Fast forward thirty years to Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club and a black tie reunion. Another twenty years to the Mitre Hotel at Hampton Court for a 50th reunion, now with wives who really wanted to know what was going on. Sadly, we had lost Pete

Quinnen in the intervening years and we were to lose Brian Codd before our next get-together in 2017 in Toronto with Tony and Penny Bourne.

And so to this year, the 56th anniversary of what we always called "The Party", held in Normandy at Brian and Sue Smart's wonderful country house.

The show goes on and the reunions more regular - can't think why! Could be Cornwall next.

### Michael Beales (OP 1963)



L to R: Tony Bourne, Nigel Wilson, Mickey Beales, Anthony ("Mitzy") Gaynor, Mike Davis, Brian Smart, Simon Codrington. Insert: Paul Andersson.

## Shampers May 2019

**Roll Call:** James Anscomb (1958), Anthony Baker (1958), Richard Baker (1959), Brendan Caulfield (1963), Brian Clancy (1959), Peter Coleman (1970), Andre de Moller (1959), Patrick Gardiner (1957), Mike Henderson (1956), Chris King (1960), John Lindley (1959), John Maloney (1957), Stephen Novy (1961), Anthony Phillips (1957), David Randell (1957), Bernard Stutt (1955), Brian Taylor (1960), Patrick Tobin (1960), Tony Trigg (1959), Gordon Wilson (1960), Nigel Wilson (1963).

The years above tell a story for themselves - a generation of Old Priorians from yesteryear.

We gathered once again on 8th May 2019 at Shampers in London for a reunion lunch, twenty-one of us this time. It is good that we are able to maintain our numbers in spite of the years that we have behind us!

As our ages lengthen so it seems does the length of "lunch hour" and a most convivial event, extending

well into the afternoon was enjoyed by all - news, reminiscences and general chat. We gather again in November.

### Richard Baker (OP 1959)



L to R: Andre de Moller, Chris King, Patrick Tobin.

# Class of 2009: 10 Years on...

A decade is a significant period of time.

As Napoleon said, 'One must change one's tactics every ten years if one wishes to maintain one's superiority.' Whilst that may have been necessary for him, the old tactics of the 2009 Old Priorians were still going strong when we met for our ten-year reunion on Friday 6th September 2019.

As usual, we gathered at a drinking establishment; over forty of us met at No 17 Dickens Yard, a modern bar in the new urban quarter in the heart of Ealing. This was a slight upgrade from our last reunion at the Haven Arms back in 2015 but, as I have said every time I have written an article about these events, it was as if nothing had changed.

Despite many OPs now being settled outside of Ealing and fully immersed in the world of work, the same sense of camaraderie was present. Whilst we spent much of the time catching up and discussing what everyone was up to, it was also a great opportunity to reminisce and laugh about our time together at St Benedict's. The memories came flooding back.

Typically, the night did not end at No 17 Dickens Yard and we went on elsewhere. There was yet more laughter and even some singing - courtesy of Mr Tom Jewers (OP 2009). Overall, it was a highly enjoyable and successful reunion and I hope we

can all meet again soon.

I am grateful to Marina Ranger, our 2008/09 Head Girl, who co-organised the event with me, and also to Tara George, Development Director, and the Old Priorian Association for all their support.

If we are still going this strong in 2029, I will be delighted. I suspect our 'tactics' for our 20-year reunion will remain largely the same.

## Anthony Searle (OP 2009)



L to R: Anthony Searle, Michael Rogers, Karl Fenton.



## Organising a Reunion?

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

Contact us at [opa@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:opa@stbenedicts.org.uk) for further assistance.



## From the Headmaster

It has been another superb year at St Benedict's, packed with inspiring events, opportunities and achievements.

This summer we had the best set of top grades at A level for 6 years: 42.2% of results were A\*-A grades. More than 80% of our sixth form leavers gained places at their first choice universities, with five taking up Oxbridge places this year.

The GCSE results were also very pleasing, with 58.3% of exams graded 9-7 (A\*-A), and 36.9% at 9-8 (A\*). Nine students achieved straight 9/8 grades, and 27 of them, almost a quarter of the year group, achieved straight 9-7 grades.

We have had a series of excellent talks: visiting speakers have included Professor Bijan Modarai (OP 1992), a cardio-vascular surgeon; Professor Francis Campbell, vice chancellor of St Mary's University Twickenham; historian Michael Wood; Professor John Sloboda (OP 1968), who gave the Richard Baker Science Lecture; and Lord Patten (OP 1962), guest of honour at Prize Giving.

The co-curricular life of the school is as vibrant as ever. The Duke of Edinburgh's award scheme

is thriving, with 189 awards this year, and CCF recruitment is burgeoning, thanks to an exciting schedule of exercises and competitions.

The Sports Department continues to train and play fixtures against a range of top schools: successes have included the U12 girls' Middlesex Hockey Tournament win, while the 1st VII won the Middlesex U18 Rugby 7s plate. In fencing, St Benedict's won the London Quadrangular, an annual tournament for the four best fencing schools in London.

Music and Drama have been as impressive as ever, with a remarkable production of *Les Misérables*, and an outstanding concert at St John's Smith Square, with Mozart's Haffner Symphony, Requiem and Clarinet Concerto on the programme.

Finally, St Benedict's Day was a wonderful celebration of our Benedictine ethos. Bishop Peter Doyle, Bishop of Northampton, was Principal Celebrant at Mass, and pupils raised well over £8000 for four charities: The Passage, Mary's Meals, Aid to the Church in Need and Papyrus.

Thank you to all OPs for your continued support.

**Andrew Johnson, Headmaster**

## Development Office News

I am delighted to share the news that together the St Benedict's community raised £100,000 for our Junior and Senior School Landscaping Project and Bursary Appeal Fund. We were particularly delighted to work with Katie Wilmot (OP 2002), Architect, on our Landscaping Project, which will be completed over October half-term.

Our thanks to Professor John Sloboda (OP 1968) for his generous support of the Music Department with the endowment of the John Sloboda Musical Scholarship award, encompassing the Colin Atkinson Musical Attendance Programme. (Colin was St Benedict's Head of Music from 1966-1978).

The next phase of the School's development includes the installation of floodlights at the Perivale Playing Fields. This project will greatly enrich the sporting and outdoor opportunities of our students. The floodlights will also have a very positive effect in the wider community allowing longer training and development opportunities for our local sports clubs including our alumni clubs the OPRFC and OPCC.

My sincere thanks to all Old Priorians who generously supported these appeals.

**Tara George, Development Director**





# A Brief History of St Benedict's Library

St Benedict's Library has been located in one of the schools most impressive rooms since 1957, displaying high ceilings, oak panelled walls and handcrafted English oak furniture, made by the famous Robert Thompson. The main library boasts a bank of east facing windows that ensures the room is bathed in early morning sunlight and is bright and airy throughout the day.

As the Senior Librarian, I have been interested in the history of the library since taking up position in 2016. I began researching in 2017, using the library's collection of 'Priorian' magazines to discover the history and evolution of the libraries over the years. From the first edition in 1927, up until present day, there have been various incarnations of the Libraries at St Benedict's. This history and development has provided a fascinating insight into the life of St Benedict's over the schools more than hundred-year history.

## The Early Senior School Library

The Senior School Library was mentioned in the very first edition 'The Priorian' in 1927, with the Librarian listed as J. O'Connor. The library was initially stocked through book donations, receiving from several kind donors, many detective novels and light books. In 1939, the Senior Library was only available for use by Prefects and Sixth Formers.

In the 1940s, the Senior Library was initially located on the first floor of the Eastdown building. In 1950, a liberal supply of magazines and journals were provided to encourage interest in current affairs. After installing bookcases, the library was set with an extensive collection of some 200 books on loan.

## The Memorial Library

Under the Headship of Dom Bernard Orchard (1945-1960), the Senior Library was given real focus and investment, using the War Memorial Fund raised in the late 1940s. Dom Bernard provided the provision of a proper and permanent library for the use of the senior boys.

In 1954, work began on building the third floor of the classroom block along Eaton Rise for the new Senior Library. The architect, John E. Sterrett, FRIBA, was employed again to complete the block. There are various reports of the library building project in The Priorian. In March 1957, the Senior School library was opened, boasting a splendid room, furnished with chairs and tables, handmade by Robert Thompson Craftsmen Ltd. To formally open the Library, named the 'Memorial Library', the Right Rev. B.C. Butler, OSB was invited as guest speaker, he announced to students, parents and friends, "I declare open this Memorial Library, dedicated to the memory of those Old Boys who gave their lives for their Country in the First and Second World Wars."

## The Gerard Library

In 1962, an additional library was added below the Memorial Library to accommodate the Middle School. This was run by Lower fifth pupils and called The Gerard Library, in memory of Dom Gerard Hayes, Headmaster in 1960. A new room was added to the Memorial Library in 1967. This room came to be known as the 'Reading Room', it held the book stacks, and was where the Librarian worked. It is now called the eLearning room and contains a suite of computers where various lessons occur.

## The Library in the Twenty-First Century

In 2012, under Librarian Diane Maxton and Assistant Librarian Argentina Barreto, the main library was extended into what used to be the Science Demonstration Room. This room became the Middle School Book Room and is designated for students in years Form 3 to Upper Fourth as a space for encouraging reading for pleasure. Kristabelle Williams Pearce took over as Librarian from 2014 to 2016, before I took up post in September 2016. Today, the Senior School Library holds over fifteen thousand books, numerous computers and is open to all. The impressive Robert 'Mousey' Thompson furniture is still used today. We hope to continue celebrating the history of St Benedict's library and ensure that it is central to pupil's enjoyment, learning and studies at St Benedict's now and into the future!

## Miss E. Wallace, Senior Librarian

This article has been abridged. To read the full article, go to [stbenedictsconnect.com](http://stbenedictsconnect.com) and join the "St Benedict's Library" group.



# Alumni News

Bringing you all the latest news from the Old Priorian community.

## 1950s

### **Bernard Scholes (OP 1954):**

Canon Bernard emails - *"As a Group Chaplain with HCPT for most of the last 30 years, I am always pleased to see the St Benedict's contingent so actively helping. I have recently written a novel (now published) and proceeds from its sale are going to HCPT; the novel is called Unleaving and is published by Saffire Press. It is available from [www.saffirepress.com](http://www.saffirepress.com), directly from me at [bernardscholes@aol.com](mailto:bernardscholes@aol.com), or even from [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk)! Price is £9.95 plus postage.*

*I was a pupil at St Benedict's 1948-1954; my twin brother Andrew sadly died a short while ago. The OP I have most often met has been Dom Francis Rossiter (OP 1949), former Abbot, who was a near neighbour as I was Parish Priest at Hanwell, next door to Ealing Abbey parish for nearly 15 years, till I retired 7 years ago."*

### **Adrian Kellett (OP 1957):**

Adrian emailed immediately after he received his winter 2018 edition of the Newsletter: *"School song as requested in OPA Newsletter, p.9 - words and music attached. It's a great relief to know that my decision to hang on to the original for more than 60 years has not proved entirely pointless!"* Many thanks Adrian for your very prompt response to Peter Davis's efforts to trace the music of the School Song 'Benedicti Fillii'; it is good to know that your archival treasures are so comprehensive and that you read "News of OPs". We shan't hesitate to use your help again.

### **Patrick Mulvey (OP 1958):**

Patrick launched his new book, *The Yoga of Knowledge*, in London in May. The book is the outcome of a lifetime study of Eastern and Western philosophies, of Hindu and of Greek thought. He seeks to see what East and West share and where they part. What Patrick asks is; "can East and West together tell us about leading our best lives?"

## 1960s

### **Edwin Heath (OP 1960):**

Edwin was very much hoping to attend the OPA Summer Sports event, in July, together with his twin brother Martin (OP 1960); unfortunately Edwin had a rehearsal that day with the London Welsh Rugby Club Choir for an upcoming concert - he has been a member of the choir for nearly 25 years. Now a retired solicitor having enjoyed an illustrious career as the 2nd partner in a firm which started off as a "twosome" and expanded quickly to 10 offices and 10 partners.

### **Anton Wills-Eve (OP 1960):**

Anton had booked in to attend the OPA Annual Dinner 2019, but just before the Dinner he emailed to say how very sorry he was to have to cancel; after so many years away, he had been looking forward to seeing the School and meeting up with his old friends. His doctors had strongly advised that his attendance was not really "on". Anton said that from a medical point of view (see OP News Winter 2018 Newsletter) he knows how lucky he is to still be around and still able to write a fair bit for his own amusement. He sincerely thanks all the St Benedict's family who pray for him.

### **Michael Beales (OP 1963):**

Michael emails - *"My wife Gill and I are celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary this month and we're keen to get in touch with Fr Francis Rossiter, who married us in Ipswich in 1969, when he was Abbot. (OPA Administrator helped with contact).*

*In 1963, to celebrate finishing our A levels, ten of us decided to rent a villa on the Costa Brava and have a bit of a rave. It was quite a "forward" thing to do in those days; the 10 were Messrs. Peter Quinnen, Brian Codd, Nigel Wilson, Mike Davis, Tony Bourne, Simon Codrington, Brian Smart, Anthony Gaynor, Paul Andersson and myself. Sadly, the first two are no longer with us. We've had reunion gatherings after 30 years, 50 years, 54 years (in Canada) and 56 years (in France)." (See page 6 for Class of '63 56th reunion in France)*



**Christopher Hopper (OP 1963):**

Chris emails that he has now joined St Benedict's Connect; he obtained a Diploma in Transport and Distribution Management through a distance learning course at the University of Salford organised by the then Institute of Transport, thus gaining post nominal CMILT; he also has the post nominals F. Inst.T.T. as he is a Fellow of the Institute of Travel & Tourism.

**2010s****Ryan Griffin (OP 2013):**

Ryan has recently qualified as a doctor, after receiving a 1st Class Honours from Imperial College London. He is currently working at the Royal College London Hospital in their ICU Department.

**Leila Kirby (OP 2016)**

Leila has been awarded a First in Biomedical Sciences from King's College London and was presented with the Eli Lilly award for Best Pharmacology student. She is currently on a graduate scheme with BDO as a forensic accountant trainee and is working towards becoming a chartered accountant.

**Alex Levy (OP 2016)**

Alex has been awarded the Gibbs Prize for best performance in theology in the Final Honour School of Philosophy and Theology at Oxford University. He is in Jesus College.

**Natalie Maalouf (OP 2016):**

Natalie was recently in touch with the OPA regarding the Annual OPA Oxbridge Reunion Dinner. Natalie is currently in the third year of her medical training at Brasenose College, Oxford. We look forward to welcoming Natalie to our next Oxbridge Dinner in February 2020.

**Vinciane Allicar (OP 2018):**

Emails that she will be studying the Global Biomedicine Bachelors at Karolinska Institutet in Solna, Stockholm from September 2019; she has moved to Jarfalla, Sweden.

\*some entries have been edited for length and clarity.



stbenedictsconnect.com



Facebook /theOldPriorianAssociation



Twitter @oldpriorians



Instagram @oldpriorians

The Old Priorian Association has grown a strong presence on social media over the year and would love for you to join our online community.

Join us on St Benedict's Connect, like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram to get live updates on OPA and St Benedict's events and news. We love building our ever-growing network and getting you connected to other Old Priorians.

St Benedict's Connect is our new online platform, exclusively for Old Priorians, where you are able to share any news or updates, discover employment/internship opportunities or mentoring and get involved in the Old Priorian Association and all our Old Priorian events.

Since our launch in January 2018, we have built up a community of over 700. Signing up to St Benedict's Connect is quick, simple and free!

**Tell Us Your News!**

If you would like to share with your fellow OPs where life has taken you since leaving St Benedict's, please get in touch.

Contact the OPA Office at  
[opa@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:opa@stbenedicts.org.uk)

# The Dorabros 2.0 - Our Story So Far

It's less than 100 days to go until we set off on our adventure across the Atlantic!

What a year it has been, following months of planning, training courses and sponsorship meetings, the Dorabros kicked off their campaign when Lirim and James ran the Marathon Des Sables.

On the 5th April, we set off to take on the world's toughest footrace, a 251km running race across the Sahara Desert that requires competitors to complete a gruelling six marathons in five days. Everything the Sahara had to offer, including the largest blister the race doctor had ever seen, could not slow them down and the boys smashed it out of the park.

Next, it was the May Ball, unbeknownst to us this may have been the hardest challenge of the year. We wanted to bring together all our supporters and create a truly memorable evening - we think we may have just succeeded on that front! The challenges of organising dinner for over 300 guests and all of our raffle and auction prizes was completely worth it to see everyone's enjoyment. We raised a huge amount of money for Teenage Cancer Trust and we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us and every single guest that made the May Ball such a special evening.

Our third challenge was a trans-European cycle ride. We flew out to Monaco in May and met one of our sponsors, Y.Co Superyacht Company. We embarked across the south coast of France and after a few days turned northward and set our sights on home. In nine days we covered over 1500 km and had the best time taking in everything France had to offer us, we arrived to a warm reception at Y.Co London with nothing but happy memories of our cycle.

Since then, we have been hard at work on our boat and in the sea preparing for our final two challenges. On Sunday 22nd September, we set off for Dover, pencilled in to kick off our swim across the Channel on Monday 23rd; 21 miles of water separates us from France - jellyfish, seasickness and the world busiest shipping lane stand in our way, but our preparations, largely thanks to Ralph Crane and Fiducio stand us in good stead and we are excited to attack the swim.

After that, we are on the countdown to Sunday 3rd November. When our boat is shipped to La Gomera, the start line of the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge in December. We have completed our mandatory training hours and love spending time out on our boat. Once our boat is shipped, we will focus on the charity. We are having a leaving party in Ealing on Saturday 23rd November before we depart for the biggest challenge of our lives on Sunday 1st December.

Everything we are doing is in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust. We are aiming to raise a £100,000 to finance and support a new treatment unit at the UCLH Macmillan Cancer Centre in London. We regularly visit the Hospital, where we spend time with the young people taking on the biggest challenge of their lives. We are moved by their courage and want to support the innovative work of Teenage Cancer Trust. To learn more about what we are aiming to achieve, please visit: [www.dorabros.com](http://www.dorabros.com)

We are racing for those who can't.

**James Deehan (OP 2012), Charlie Crane (OP 2012) & Lirim Gula (OP 2014)**





# In the Spotlight - Karis Halsall

When I first started at St Benedict's in 2003, A Level Drama wasn't even one of my chosen subjects. I couldn't make the timetable work and my dad, who some of you may know as Mr Halsall (a very long serving and very loud member of staff) wasn't too keen on me doing two 'artsy' subjects - I took Art as well. I chose Government and Politics instead, I'd always fancied myself as a bit of a voice of the people/revolutionary - if I could understand the inner workings of politics, maybe I could change things? Ah, the naivety of youth!

Several weeks in, it became very apparent that Government and Politics and I were just not going to see eye to eye, I went to the Head of Sixth Form, Miss MacTaggart and switched to Drama. In a strange way, I have (what I perceived as) the desperately boring minutiae of the British Governmental system to thank for my current career.

After a particularly successful final piece, where we directed/devised a contemporary retelling of Othello, I decided that I wanted to go to Drama School to study to be a Theatre Director. I was accepted into the prestigious Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. We had a compulsory writing module, which was headed up by the brilliant screenwriter and playwright Rebecca Lenkiewicz. Rebecca encouraged me to submit my first script to the Royal Court Young Writer's programme. On the merit of this, I was selected to take part in the programme, then immediately fast tracked to the Invitation Only group. Less than a year later, I was asked to join the "Super group" of writers alongside Nick Payne, Alia Bano, Penny Skinner, EV Crowe and Anya Reiss. It was an incredible experience and ignited my passion for playwriting.

Between 2009 and 2013, I steadily grew my portfolio with several short pieces and rehearsed readings commissioned, developed and performed at the Hampstead Theatre, The Old Red Lion, Theatre503, Hightide Festival, Headlong, the Bush Theatre and Nabokov. In my first 'commercial' success I was commissioned to co-write the anti-FGM piece 'Little Stitches', which toured various theatres in London in summer 2014. In 2014, I established my own theatre company, Luminary Theatre and in 2016 we had great success with HYSTERICAL, a dark comedy exploring mental health, in collaboration with HOAX, a female clowning company. HYSTERICAL previewed at the VAULT Festival, and won the People's Choice Award. It went on to tour the South East, including Brighton Fringe.

This career path has been anything but easy. After three very intense and tough years at Drama School, I graduated in 2009 - straight into a recession. Once again, I found the British Government influencing my

career. The change of Government in 2010 brought serious cuts to the arts budgets. Consequently, many literary departments and new writing initiatives vanished or downsized, and theatres started taking less risks, which meant newer talent was side-lined for older, more established work that would put bums on seats. Not ideal when you're trying to forge a career as an unknown writer! All of the work I've made in the last 10 years has been crowdfunded as it's now near impossible to get Arts Council funding. Another big challenge has been that women's writing only makes up 28% of plays performed on British stages yearly, despite there being just as many women writing as men. Believe it or not, that's an improvement. It was 17% when I started. Another challenge is staying positive. Rejection is a huge part of this career, and you have to learn to make peace with it and not take it personally, even when the work feels like you're bearing your soul. Resilience is key - I've seen plenty of brilliant writers give up. If I'm anything, it's resilient - and probably a little bull-headed and stubborn.

In 2017, theatre started to feel particularly suffocating. Tickets now seem to price out those on lower incomes and it feels like more of an exclusive art form. I wanted to make work for everyone, so I turned my attention to television. I headed off to Goldsmith's to do an MA and learn the craft of writing for film and television.

This year I was commissioned by BBC Three and BBC Northern Ireland to write an episode for their series The Break, which showcases new writers. I wrote the episode 'Clean', which is available on i-player now. It's my first piece for television and I'm immensely proud of it!

I am currently based in Northern Ireland, working on a feature film, which explores men's mental health. Mental health in Northern Ireland is at crisis point and I want to use my own experiences to tell an irreverent story of redemption - encouraging people to speak out and end the stigma.

My work aims to explore the most crucial and pertinent social issues of our time. I vehemently believe in theatre, film and television as a vehicle for social change, one that can change hearts and open minds through building empathy, by offering new perspectives and provocations to its audience.

So in a weird, roundabout way, although I never made it through Government and Politics A Level and into the world of politics, I use storytelling as a way to communicate with people, and hopefully, eventually incite structural change.

**Karis Halsall (OP 2005)**

# Obituaries

## **John (Kerry) Downes (OP 1948)**

Died 11th August 2019, Aged 88. R.I.P.

## **Michael Duggan (OP 1948)**

Died 22nd January 2019, Aged 86.

Michael was a retired solicitor - a sole practitioner. He and his wife Maeve moved to Shropshire in 1983 and finally settled in Mid-Wales in 2007. Michael loved his work and it was always a source of pride to give his best. Although, failing in health, he was delighted to receive, in December 2016, from the President of the Law Society, a Certificate of Congratulations on competing fifty years on the Roll of Solicitors. R.I.P.

## **Martin Russell (OP 1951)**

Died 6th July 2019, Aged 84.

Father of Christopher (OP 1997) and Philip (OP 2000). Martin was a great supporter of all that the OPA endeavoured to do and for many years was an OPA Council Member and served as the Treasurer of the Old Priorian Association. R.I.P.

## **Peter Watson (OP 1952)**

Died 22nd August 2019, Aged 83.

Peter gave his time and thought generously to the Association; for many years he was a Council Member and during that time served as Association President from 2000-2001. R.I.P.

## **Peter John Mallett (OP 1969)**

Died 20th January 2009, Aged 58. R.I.P.

## **John Phillips (Staff 1977-1992)**

Died 11th June 2019, Aged 68.

John was a member of the Modern Languages Department. R.I.P.

## **Peter Sweeney (OP 1979)**

Died 19th August 2019, Aged 58.

Brother of John (OP 1977, RIP) and Mark (OP 1978). R.I.P.

## **Dermot Costello (OP 1988)**

Died 25th March 2019, Aged 49.

Brother of Aidan (OP 1983) and Eugene (OP 1986)

and son of Denis (Staff 1961-1995). To them and his wife Liz and his children Niamh and Conor we offer our deepest sympathy. R.I.P.

## **Jonathan Andall (OP 1996)**

Died 30th September 2019, Aged 41.

Brother of Hogarth (OP 1988) and Colin (OP 1994). Jonathan had been living in Guyana. R.I.P.

## **Laurence Hooper (OP 1999)**

Died 25th January 2019, Aged 37.

Brother of James. Laurence was a Dante specialist, gaining a PhD in Italian whilst at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He was Professor in Italian at Dartmouth College in Hanover and held three fellowships in the USA. R.I.P.

## **Mark Bushby (Staff 2005)**

Died 29th September 2019.

After teaching music at St Benedict's, Mark went to Notting Hill & Ealing High School and then Queen Anne's School before joining St Joseph's College, Reading, first as Deputy Head Pastoral and then most recently as Head of the Prep School. R.I.P.

## **Dai Barnes (Staff 2005-2014)**

Died 2nd August 2019, Aged 48.

After teaching at St Benedict's for nine years where he was head of IT, Dai went to Oundle School where he became Head of Digital Strategy. We offer our thoughts and prayers to his family at this time. R.I.P.



**Save the Date!**

## Robin Nonhebel History Lecture 2019

Wednesday 13th November  
6:30pm  
Orchard Hall, St Benedict's School

**"The Polish Campaign of 1939"**  
by Roger Moorhouse

Email: [development@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:development@stbenedicts.org.uk)  
to register your attendance



St Benedict's School  
Eaton Rise, Ealing  
[development@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:development@stbenedicts.org.uk)

**Save the Date!**

## Richard Baker Science Lecture 2019

Tuesday 3rd December  
6:30pm  
Orchard Hall, St Benedict's School

**"The Science of Population Forecasting  
- or is it?"**

by Professor David Coleman (OP 1964)  
Emeritus Professor of Demography,  
University of Oxford

Our thanks to Dr Francis Cuss (OP 1972) for his generous  
endowment of this lecture series,  
on behalf of Richard Baker (OP 1959), Former Teacher  
and OPA Administrator.



St Benedict's School  
Eaton Rise, Ealing  
[development@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:development@stbenedicts.org.uk)

ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL'S

## 3RD BIENNIAL CAREER FAIR 2020

INSPIRE FUTURE OLD  
PRIORIANS.



ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL  
Eaton Rise, Ealing



13 FEBRUARY 2020 | 6 P.M.  
ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL

The perfect opportunity to represent your  
industry and demonstrate your passion to  
inspire future generations of Old Priorians.

For further information on getting involved  
in the St Benedict's Careers Fair 2020, please  
email [careersfair@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:careersfair@stbenedicts.org.uk)

## THE OLD PRIORIAN ASSOCIATION OXBRIDGE REUNION DINNER 2020

*The annual reunion dinner for Old Priorians who  
studied at Oxford and Cambridge.*

7 FEBRUARY 2020 | 7PM |  
THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CLUB, LONDON

BLACK TIE/LOUNGE SUIT ATTIRE

[rsvp: development@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:rsvp:development@stbenedicts.org.uk)



# The Old Priorian Association

## Founded 1927

The Old Priorian Association was formed on Friday, 1st 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 other 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.

Full details about the Association and its activities can be found at [www.opaealing.org.uk](http://www.opaealing.org.uk)

The Association has office facilities within the School and may be contacted by:  
Email: [opa@stbenedicts.org.uk](mailto:opa@stbenedicts.org.uk)  
Telephone: 020 8862 2249  
Post: The Old Priorian Association, 54 Eaton Rise, Ealing, London W5 2ES

### 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



### 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](http://www.opaealing.org.uk). The School website and School news can be found at: [www.stbenedicts.org.uk](http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk)

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