



# The Old Priorian Association Newsletter

Spring 2014

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## President's Dinner 2014

On 27th March one hundred and seven OPs and their guests gathered at the Royal Over-Seas League in London to hold the annual President's Dinner. As usual there were many regular faces, but it was a great pleasure to welcome back three or four OPs whom we have not seen for many years. All attending enjoyed the occasion and the opportunity to renew old

friendships and make new ones. Diners were entertained by three speeches: Those of Mary Keal, as President and Richard Baker, as Guest of Honour are reproduced in full below. The Headmaster, Chris Cleugh also spoke about current School activities and his aspirations for the future of St Benedict's School.



(LtoR): Andrew Wilkie (OP 2008), David Wilkie (OP 2010), Charlie Stringer (OP 2008) and Edd Conway (OP 2005)

## President's Speech

Father Abbot, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen.

In 1981 London held its first ever marathon, 6747 people took part; the first episode of *Only Fools and Horses* was broadcast to what was termed moderate viewing figures and Peter Sutcliffe admitted to being the Yorkshire Ripper. Riots erupted around the UK; the SDP political party was created; the ZX81, the first home computer,

was launched by Sinclair Research, *Chariots of Fire* was released in the cinemas; Bobby Sands died whilst on hunger strike at the Maze prison; Shergar won the Epsom Derby; Brian Robson became Britain's most expensive footballer in a £1.5 million move to Manchester United; Salman Rushdie published his novel, *Midnight's Children*; The Human League's *Don't You Want Me* and Adam and the Ants *Stand and Deliver* were both No 1 for five

## From The President

Dear Old Priorians

And so it is time for another newsletter and I have only good news to deliver!

I presided over my first Council Meeting as President in January of this year and I was pleased to welcome Marina Ranger, Sinead Leahy and Matt Goldsworthy, our new young recruits for the Council and Ayelsha Patel as our new Treasurer - I look forward to their fresh perspective on how the OPA can progress in the future.

I also presided over my first President's Dinner on the 27th March and I think I can safely say a great evening was had by all. Many thanks to those of you who attended - It was wonderful to see so many OPs catching up. There are photos from the evening on our website.

Our next events are the Golf Day on the 20th June, followed by our new style Sports Festival on Sunday 6th July, details are on our website or you can contact the OPA office if you wish.



**Best wishes**  
**Mary Keal (OP 1983)**  
**President, The Old Priorian Association**

## President's Speech continued

weeks; Peter Crouch, amongst others, was born and Princess Alice, the longest living grandchild of Queen Victoria, died aged 98.

And I started my sixth form education at St Benedict's School.

I vividly remember walking in through the Orchard Hall entrance off Marchwood Crescent to what can only be termed a barrage of verbal abuse. I have never wanted to be a stand-up comedian or politician but I, very quickly, knew what it was to be heckled. You must bear in mind this was about 8.30 in the morning of my first day at Benedict's - I did wonder what I had done coming to this school! Bizarrely the next event was the parading of the girls on the stage before the whole school in the Orchard Hall, incredibly embarrassing but I guess that way everyone knew who we were, in case the skirts and whiff of perfume were not enough to give it away. 1981 was the year that St Benedict's made a concerted effort to have more girls in the sixth form - there were eleven of us in lower sixth. We were also the first year to wear full school uniform. I had a rather uncomfortable visit with my mother to the boys' school uniform department in Peter Jones, where the poor, ever reddening young male assistant refused to measure me for my blazer. I have to admit that I had not worn a boy's jacket before and in fact I never did manage to do up that blazer due to the buttons being on the wrong side!

St Benedict's had had girls in the sixth form for a few years but we had arrived on a grand scale, however, it did seem that the school really wasn't ready for us. Sixth Form games, as now, was on a Wednesday afternoon and we could go home, a privilege that a few of the less sporty boys wished they had. I loved playing sport and decided that I would go down to Perivale and play tennis. I think it quickly dawned on the sports staff that the field was not meant for girls. I had to change in the groundsman's outside toilet which was round the back of his house. This had no light, so I had to leave the door open so I could see what I was doing but it did have a flushing toilet, a sink and a concrete floor - so who was I to complain. That first afternoon I happily played tennis and then watched the 1st XV play. Later on I was chatting to John Delia outside the boys' changing rooms, nearly gassed by the smell of Brut wafting out from them, and he was heard to utter that it was all very well me being down here on a sunny September day but he bet me that I would not be there when it got cold and rainy. I am proud to say that I won the bet and did not miss a single games afternoon and watched nearly every first fifteen match - this was of course helped by the fact that within a few weeks I started going out with Paul Hoban, a member of the team!

I very quickly realised that if I was to survive my time at St Benedict's I would have to get involved in school life, with others I set up a netball

team, I helped out with school plays, I was asked to join the editorial committee for the Priorian magazine and perhaps most importantly I actually sat in the sixth form lounge. It was a daunting place to be, but it was fun. I have clear memories of quite often being 'the look out' - the teachers seemed loathe to tell a girl off. Perhaps the funniest time was whilst a darts fight went on - thank goodness for the padding in the shoulders of the blazer is all I can say! I doubt very much that Health and Safety would allow a darts board anywhere near school nowadays. Anyway I must have done something right because Father Anthony, the then Headmaster, and the legendary Mr Stuart, my tutor, asked me if I would like to be a Deputy Head Boy. It really did not occur to me at the time that that was a weird title to give me - I was more worried about taking a position away from a boy who had been in the school for years when I had only been there for one. It was an absolute honour to be selected and I can confirm that I managed to never take an assembly - a privilege that often befell the Head Boy and his deputies. It was not long after taking office that a few of us were taken for a day to the Hillingdon Dry Ski slope in preparation for our ski trip. Thinking about it now it probably was not the best idea to go off to the pub at lunchtime, not tell anyone, let alone asking permission. Rob Banathy, a fellow Deputy Head Boy, and I both got a Saturday morning detention following an incredibly scary and uncomfortable meeting with Second Master Basil Nickerson. I would like to apologise now for not thinking of the bigger picture.

Today St Benedict's is a very different place to thirty odd years ago, it is now fully co-ed from Nursery to Upper Sixth, there are 1094 pupils enrolled, of which 346 are girls. It is constantly progressing and adapting to changing times. I understand that Ealing Council has approved plans for two major projects at the school, a planned investment of £12 million, benefitting both Junior and Senior School. As I am sure most of you are aware facilities at the playing fields are fantastic - there is even under floor heating I am told and the smell of Brut has been replaced with that of Lynx and Impulse. Girls are no longer an add-on, an after-thought - they are equals.

And so I come on to explain the essence of St Benedict's - or rather I can't. I can't put into words what



Mary Keal (OP 1983)



makes a Bennies boy or girl - what it is about this school that produces a well-rounded, good person time and time again. Maybe it is that everyone has their place and are valued, maybe it is that some are given that much needed second chance, maybe it is that everyone is accepted - rugby player or not - or maybe it is the fact the Rule of St Benedict is embedded throughout the community - those qualities of perseverance, stability, hospitality, obedience and humility. The ISI Inspection report of 2012 mentions that the pupils are well educated in line with the schools aims, and the Benedictine Mission of 'teaching a way of living' permeates throughout school life. Pupils show respect for themselves, for others and for the world around them and are learning 'how to live'. They enjoy excellent relationships with peers and adults alike and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school provides a family atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, included, secure, well known and valued. In fact I would say that despite the challenges the school has and will continue to face, Bennies boys and girls are still being produced and the core values, the essence of St Benedict's, remain unchanged. And for that I am glad. I am grateful that I attended St Benedict's; some of my best friendships were formed in those two years and I urge you, as Old Priorians, to continue to support our School. The educators of today are facing ever greater challenges. Did you know that in 2010 the top 10 in demand jobs did not exist in 2004? Current teachers are now preparing pupils for jobs that don't yet exist, using technologies that have not yet been invented, in order to solve problems we don't even know are problems. It is estimated that 4 exabytes of unique information will be generated this year - that is more than in the previous 5000 years. It is predicted that by 2049 a £1000 computer will exceed the computational capabilities of the entire human species. St Benedict's, therefore, faces great challenges and we, as Old Priorians, should do all we can to help and encourage the pupils and staff to meet these head on and enable future OPs find their place in our ever changing world.

In 2013 Pope Francis became the 266th leader of the Roman Catholic Church; *Argo* won the Oscar for Best Film; Willcom announced the development of the world's smallest mobile phone weighing just 32g; Bill Gates became the world's richest man with a fortune of \$72.7 billion.



(LtoR): Michael Clark (OP 1954), Catherine de Cintra (Bursar), and Patrick Foy (OP 1970)



A Group of 1999 and 2000 OPs

Justin Rose won the US Open; The British Lions won the test series in Australia; Andy Murray won Wimbledon. *Safe Haven* by Nicholas Sparks was the bestselling e-book; Welsh footballer Gareth Bale moved to Real Madrid for a world record transfer fee of £85.3 million. Robin Thicke's single *Blurred Lines* was No 1 for 4 weeks; The European Space Agency revealed data indicating that the universe is 13.82 billion years old.

And I was elected President of the OPA.

It is an honour to be part of the wider Benedict's community and I will do all that I can to support this

great School. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor Paul Fagin for all his hard work in hauling the OPA into modern times and I am already indebted to the wonderful Richard Baker, who works tirelessly for the Association, we would be lost without him. Thanks also to Chris Cleugh and Catherine de Cintra for their continued support of the OPA. And I thank you all for being here this evening and supporting us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask that you charge your glasses and be upstanding and toast The School. - **The School**

# Guest of Honour's Speech

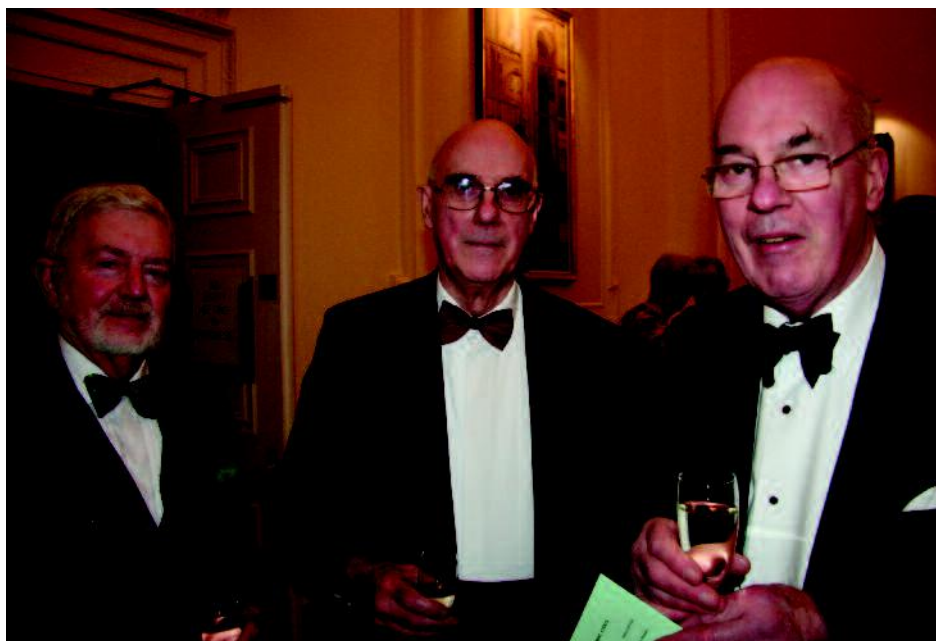
In this day and age of great technological advances, if one seeks advice from the internet about what makes a good speech there are many gems of advice to be found: A good speech has three parts: the beginning - "tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em"; the middle - "tell 'em" and the end - "tell 'em that you've told 'em". Or a good speech is like a bride's gown, short enough to provoke interest and resting on just two good points. Perhaps the best advice may be that given by Gilbert Harding to the Twenty Club at School in 1959 - the notes for a good speech can be written on the back of a postage stamp! - I don't think my efforts tonight will follow any such advice too closely; I shan't be divulging any "state secrets", but I hope I can stir some memories in you all. Remembering that rules and advice are given for the guidance of the wise and the obedience of fools, I shall try to do my best in my allocated time. I must ignore the requests I have received from many of you here tonight to "remember to mention so-and-so" - I wasn't aware when I accepted the Association's invitation to be their Guest of Honour, that Guests of Honour were assailed with so much advice on what to say and so many "requests" for a mention of this, that or the other, especially in my case, events associated with the CCF, but perhaps that is a hazard of being at the end of 2249 and opa@stbenedicts.org.uk! I am perhaps going to disappoint you all!

How many of you can remember what you were doing over 66 years ago? Most of you here don't have that span of years behind you yet, so it's an irrelevant question, but I do and I was about 6½ years old then. With my twin brother Anthony (here tonight) we were taken by our parents to a "Big School" in Ealing for interview and entrance test; I can only remember one small point about the occasion - that great Headmaster, Dom Bernard Orchard was interviewer, examiner and final arbiter all rolled into one; he set the "entrance exam himself" and I remember distinctly a simple problem of numbers: something like  $3 \times 4$ . I had no idea what the X was (we must have done simple multiplication at nursery school using a different notation!) and I clearly remember looking across to Anthony sitting close by to see what he had made of it! Did I cheat in my entrance exam to St Benedict's? If I did I hope that I have made amends for it since! Anyway we both passed and so in September 1947 I started my life at St Benedict's, a life which has continued almost without break, for well over six decades.

Well, what of School days; they were happy and provided I polished my techniques of avoiding most things sporty, they were good; four years in the Junior School passed I suppose insignificantly as did two years in the Middle School and then six years in the Upper School. We coped with a proper black pitch,

covered as it was in black cinders, as a playground, School lunches in a "tin" refectory, sited roughly where the Cloisters' Hall is now, - lunches which in the just post-war (that's WW2!) period managed to keep us fortified for a long afternoon's work and probably defy all comparison to the excellent lunches provided by today's in-house catering department. Those lunches did give me a taste for institutional rice pudding, probably made with water rather than milk and which today seems to have totally disappeared from the School menu. If the Headmaster and those members of the Board of Governors here tonight can bring any influence to bear, then please have "School Rice Pudding with Jam" re-instated! When one was promoted a prefect in 1958, the Refectory was also home to "Prefects' Tea" daily at 4.30pm with wads of bread, marge and jam and cakes - most welcome after a hard days "learning and prefecting" and before a long journey home on the underground; we were indeed privileged! A large tin hut also served as our gymnasium - held together by flakes of rust, totally functional and probably a lot more fun than the state of the art Gym we have today - mind you "health & safety" hadn't been invented in those days. In the senior school most of my extra-curricular (another modern term!) activities were devoted to the CCF where I managed to rise to the rank of Staff Sergeant in charge of the Signals Section. For the last three years of my CCF cadet service we were joined in the Contingent by a new young officer 2nd Lt B. Nickerson; known to most of you here. I am delighted to see the way Basil, since he arrived in 1956 has supported and continues to support, now with his wife Clare, everything about St Benedict's. In the sixth form I had studied the physical sciences at A/L especially developing a joy in Chemistry and all the "stinks and bangs" it had to offer; in those days we had just three laboratories, Chemistry, Physics and Biology; it was in 1958 as I was finishing my last year that the Science block as it is now, was built - a great expansion for the sciences! And so after twelve years as a pupil it was time to move on to spend three years at Bristol University reading for a degree in Chemistry.

It was during my time at University



(LtoR): Brian Clancy (OP 1959), Richard Baker (OP 1959) and Anthony Baker (OP 1958)



that I became convinced that I wanted to teach. I had no plan to return to St Benedict's and as I was finishing my degree in 1962, I signed up for the new PGCE which was just coming into place. In May that year the then Headmaster, Fr George Brown, who knew of my wish to teach, wrote to me saying that in September he was making a junior appointment in the Chemistry Department - was I interested?. His advice - "A fortnight in front of real pupils in the lab will teach you more about teaching than any course". And so it happened: I cancelled the PCGE and accepted his offer of a teaching post at St Benedict's, which was to last the whole of my working career.

And so what can I tell you in the short time that I have tonight about my paid working life at St Benedict's; the Chemistry, the IT, the sport (oh yes that did feature in a very small way during those 38 years!), and of course the CCF. Chemistry teaching did change dramatically over those years: the exciting became less so and the routine became more proscriptive. We went through phases of "combined sciences" and even for three years tried to get to grips with the "Nuffield Chemistry" that was being pushed in Schools. It was in my Chemistry classes in the early eighties that girls "began to appear" as a regular feature; I did not believe in discrimination so I had no "problem" in always teaching them using their surnames, just as one did the boys - they were of course "Honorary Gentlemen" and seemed to thrive on it. I'm not sure who was most nonplussed on the occasion when one year they presented me with an "m.c.p." tie as a Christmas present- I still have it; thinking quickly, I took the wind out of their sails and on the spot thanked them for their kind gift of a tie from the Manufacturing Chemists & Physicists Society - pupils will accept an awful lot if it is told them with a straight face! I'm delighted to see some of "my Honorary Gentlemen" here tonight and I'm sure that Daly and Sheehan are none the worse for their experiences. In case you are wondering *mcp: Male Chauvinist Pig*. By the early 90s chemistry was becoming the poor relation of the sciences and I must admit I was becoming less charmed with its teaching. However "rescue" was at hand.

Up until 1992 there had been no Information Technology teaching in the school; a few staff and perhaps a larger number of pupils "dabbled"



Headboy, Joseph Curran and Headgirl, Karina Walker, Guests of the OPA at the Dinner

with early computers, but there was nothing formal; personally I had dabbled from the early 80s with the Sinclair and Amstrad machines (who remembers the ZX81?). In 1992 the then Headmaster, Dr Tony Dachs, asked me if I would be prepared to move sideways and start up Information Technology teaching in the school; I explained that I was only an "amateur", but he had confidence that I would cope and the addition of a couple of specialised training courses would see me through! So it was we started with a small IT Centre of 12 teaching machines and a single server all in the same room - my goodness look at the ITC facilities in the School now, both teaching and administrative and one really sees the meaning of a *minimis incipit*. It gives me a little pride to feel that I helped start it for real at St Benedict's.

As I mentioned earlier I am particularly "un-sporty" in the physical sense. But none-the-less I did manage to leave my mark on Sport at St Benedict's in two spheres. One summer (I forget the year!) the Games Staff were so short of colleagues to take cricket at Perivale on a Wednesday afternoon that Basil in desperation and as a last resort, asked me to go down to Perivale and supervise thirty or so pupils who had opted to take cricket and could not be left to their own devices! To cut a long story short, my talents as a cricket umpire only lasted for three weeks, although I must add that they were

still short of umpires after my demise! I had arguments with "higher authorities in the cricket sphere" about white coats (I didn't seem to be allocated one), a small piece of plastic (I wasn't sure what this was for - it turned out to be a bowler's marker, but again not allocated) and the "wet weather programme" - a rather more senior umpire had to come down to the bottom of the lower field where I was "in charge" and order 30 drenched individuals back to the pavilion after I had insisted on going on in the pouring rain: a little rain never hurt anybody and I wasn't going to lose any time in my moments of glory as a cricket umpire at Perivale.

My other contribution to sport at St Benedict's was as scorer for many years for the Staff Cricket XI; scoring didn't seem too complicated a mathematical process and there was a sheltered score box out of wind and rain so what better way to socialise with colleagues before, during and after these regular summer evening matches. We even went on tour to the West Country where my sporty colleagues tried to improve my skills in ten-pin bowling, but alas! - I don't think the pub's indoor bowling alley suffered too much damage.

And what of the CCF. This of course was a great passion for me for 29 years as an officer, finally retiring in 1991 as a Lieutenant Colonel (the highest rank attainable to CCF officers), commanding the School

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## Guest of Honour's Speech continued



Aidan Costello (OP 1983) and Marie Sheehan (OP 1984)

CCF for the last 13 years, when I felt that it was time to hang up my boots and let the next generation of younger officers take over full command.

Let me start at the beginning. At summer camp 1962 in Sennybridge as a raw 2nd Lieutenant who just joined the CCF and knowing very little, I was appointed Camp Orderly Officer for the day: all went well until the evening when, whilst I was sitting in the officers' mess after dinner the phone rang - the orderly officer was required down at the cadets' NAAFI where a disturbance had broken out! Heaven help me! So down I went to be greeted at the door by two of our own cadet under officers saying: "Don't worry sir, we're with you all the way". I must say that to this day I remember how that bolstered my self-confidence and I managed to cope with the situation and calm things down in the NAAFI. So once again after 52 years let me say thank you to those two cadets for their support that evening; they are known to many of you and each in his own way has made his mark on St Benedict's - Under Officer William Twist and Under Officer Christopher Patten; I wonder if the Governor of Hong Kong or the Chairman of the BBC ever realised that he and Bill Twist, played an important role that evening, by offering their support, in my wanting to make a go of the CCF in an officer role - I was sure it would be fun!

The Uniforms changed from Battledress to Lightweights & Pullovers; the weapons changed

from the .303 rifle to the GP Rifle, the Bren to the GPMG; the radios (38s and 18s) were updated and then on most occasions actually worked well. Blanco lost out and was never seen again! Arduous Training became Adventurous, probably because of "Political Correctness" - I'm sure in its arduous guise it was certainly adventurous as some of you here tonight can confirm; Ten Man ration packs (which contained the best loose leaf tea you could get anywhere on the civilian or service market) became 24hr ration packs. Many changes but all I'm sure for the good and the important thing was that the government of the day felt that the Cadet Force Movement was well worth the expense and made a valuable contribution to the education of young people, not just as potential service recruits, but as future members of the country's work force who might just remember what a SMEAC was and how it might be applied to a non-service work situation in life.

Well what about girls in the CCF I hear you say - they can join the CCF now. Well, of course! That's the way things have changed over the years and not for the worse (or maybe not for the better!) - Who knows? In my time as Contingent Commander there was a murmur of "why can't we join". Even when MOD gave general approval my approach as Contingent Commander was "over my dead body"! It was not an appropriate activity for young ladies or even honorary gentlemen! So there were no girls in the CCF in

my time. But the powers that be have played their trump card: not only do girl cadets now thrive in St Benedict's School CCF, but they have appointed a lady officer to Command the CCF at St Benedict's. I do wish Captain Nicky Woodroffe every success in her venture and hopes she derives as much enjoyment from the CCF as I did.

And so in 2000 at the age of 60 possible retirement loomed on the horizon and although I could have taught on until I was 65, I felt it was the right time to go; teaching as a career was changing rapidly and I wasn't sure that five more years would be of great benefit to me or more importantly to others. A teacher's pension after 38 years wasn't going to be too bad financially so why not hang up chalk, mouse and all the other paraphernalia of school mastering and live out the rest of one's life "free of bells". Except I hadn't bargained for the OPA! The Association has been part of my life since leaving school in 1959 when I joined, paying the princely sum of £5 for Life Membership. In the early days I would attend the Dinners, Reunions and not being adverse to "politics", the Annual General Meetings; I would even spectate at some of the OP rugby and cricket events. In the mid-sixties I was invited and elected to join the Council as an ordinary member, but soon to be "elevated" to the position of Assistant Treasurer with special responsibility for Membership. So I made my contribution as an Old Priorian, but work with the CCF especially as I had become Contingent Commander in 1978, became more demanding and so in the 80s I took a break from OPA work.

In the early 2000s, despite the dedicated hard work of many OPs, the Association was going through the doldrums and it became obvious that something serious needed to be done about its administration; after a lot of hard work by the then President, Joe Kearns, the School stepped in and offered the Association facilities within the School - an office, telephone, computer and perhaps most valuable of all some part-time help from one of the Trust Office staff. So it was that Margaret Moore became Administrator of the OPA, retiring this year after over a decade of devoted service. Of course once the facilities were there, OPs start to make use of them and Margaret's OPA workload increased considerably beyond the initial specification. At the 2003

AGM a volunteer was called for to help Margaret with her work for the Association. Thinking that a couple of hours work a month might be rather fun and keep me out of mischief and certainly having no fear of running a computerised OPA system, I raised my hand and so the ex-officio position of Assistant Administrator was born! Eleven years later I'm still a fixture in the OPA Office, although now I usually work one day a week even though it is a "late" start at 9.30am and knocking off about 3.30pm; when the workload of events demands it (eg The President's Dinner - yes! even as your Guest of Honour this year I still did the Administration!) then it's sometimes two or even three days in a week that will find the office manned. Telephone calls,

emails, newsletters both electronic and printed, circulars etc. all emanate from the office for the hopeful benefit of members of the Association. And I'll be back in the office next week to deal with the post Dinner survey that we shall be sending out! So please respond!

I must stop for I can see the President giving me that "shut up Baker and sit down" look. It has given me the greatest pleasure to talk to you tonight and tell you a little about the experiences of one rather antique OP in his association with St Benedict's at Ealing. We are all Old Priorians here tonight and we each have our memories of School - the good times of which I hope there were many for each of you; and the not so good times -

and for each of you, like me too, there were those occasions I'm sure, not many I hope, when we just wished "it would all go away". Thank goodness St Benedict's stayed!

We survived and surely that is what life is all about. Remember - Life is lived forwards but understood backwards. In our experiences of life we should not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around us in awareness. Please - Do not walk behind me, I may not lead; Do not walk in front of me, I may not follow; Walk beside me and be my Friend - Friendship is surely one of God's greatest gifts. My Friends - Please rise and drink a toast with me to:

**ST BENEDICT'S AT EALING**

## Covent Garden the home to OP Christmas parties

Despite work parties, social engagements, jobs and family, at least two groups of Old Priorians were able to celebrate Christmas in each other's company. First up was an OP Christmas Lunch on Thursday 19th December at Sophie's Steak-house and Bar. The collection of OPs included Martin Borthwick, Nicholas Farren, Jerome Bradley, Iain Leopold (all OPs 1999), Sam Codrington, Luke Engmann, Alex Pereira-Inacio (all OPs 2000), Andrew Wilkie and Adam McCulloch (both OPs 2008).

Just 24 hours later and another group of Bennies boys descended upon Covent Garden, this time for dinner at Belgo Centraal. Those indulging in Belgian beer and moules included Adam Hanke, Joe Gleeson, Michael Dalton, Hamish Orr-Ewing (all OPs 2004), Edd Conway, Alex Wightman, Nick Hallisey, Adam Smith (all OPs 2005), Jez Maxton, John Gleeson, Matt Davis and Rahul Ramanuj (all OPs 2007). The 'Secret Santa' gifts ranged from clothing to books, alcohol and more and a



Michael Dalton (OP 2004) sports his 'Secret Santa' gift

festive time was had by all! If you arrange a reunion or Christmas party then feel free to get in touch and let us know about it.

## Old Priorians go International



Aristide Goualin (OP 2008), front row, far right, with the Nigerian Team

Whilst I don't doubt that hundreds of OPs have 'gone international' in the past year, a talented few have taken it a step further by representing countries on the rugby pitch. First up was Aristide Goualin's (OP 2008)

appearances for Nigeria 7s. Aristide writes:

*"I represented Nigeria in three IRB sevens tournaments in 2013. Two in Morocco and one in Kenya. It was very challenging to play sevens in such heat and also against some tremendous athletes. It was also brilliant to play with Nigerian talent based both in the UK and Nigeria.*

At a similar time, Jamie Zachariou (OP 2012) was off to the Dubai 7s to represent Cyprus.

Most recently Jamie Harries (OP 2011) turned out for Wales Students against England Students. He writes:

*"Since leaving St. Benedict's senior school, I have been playing my rugby for UWIC more formally known as Cardiff metropolitan university. Where I have been studying Sport Conditioning, rehabilitation and massage. Recently I was selected to train with Wales university students and picked to represent the international side against England students, starting on Friday 7th March 2014 at blind side flanker; the intense training over the previous two month has helped to develop me further as a player as well as gaining confidence in my own ability. The game was a very physical encounter, Wales students winning the first half 9-7, but England students won over all 26-16.*



# The Old Priorian Association Award

**The 2013 Award was made to Jessica Taylor (OP 2009) to help with her voluntary work in an Israeli hospital. Jess reports:**

As part of my postgraduate nursing studies, I got a chance to travel abroad in order to experience what it is like working in different conditions, with language barriers and varying philosophies behind nursing practice. Although I have a keen interest to work as a nurse in struggling communities around the world when I qualify, whilst I was still in training I wanted to travel somewhere where I could learn practical nursing skills to bring back to the UK and enhance my practice, rather than attempt to offer little knowledge and few skills to help to communities abroad who are lacking in decent, affordable healthcare systems. After much deliberation, I chose Israel not only because of its highly advanced approach to medicine and nursing, but also because I did my undergraduate degree in Theology, and I thought it would be a perfect time to finally visit the area of the world to see the places and sites which have impacted upon thousands of years of history, politics, and religion (and three years of my undergraduate life!).

I travelled to Israel with my boyfriend, Sean, in August, (who proposed to me during our time in Jerusalem!) and had a whirlwind week of seeing all the main sites, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, walking the Via Dolorosa, the Western Wall, the Mount of Olives and spent an incredibly humbling afternoon in Yad Vashem where all the victims of the holocaust, not just the Jewish population but everyone who

suffered under the Nazi regime, including those with mental and physical disabilities, were remembered. We also travelled to the Dead Sea and the Roman fortress of Masada, passing sites on the way such as the fallen city of Sodom, and Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered. The 47 degree heat was almost unbearable in the Judean desert, and we were looking forward to spending the next few days getting lost in the markets in Tel Aviv and relaxing by the sea. We were unable to visit Jericho or Bethlehem (both in occupied territory), due to the tensions heightened by the Syrian conflict. When the week was over I was to travel up to Nazareth alone to the English Hospital there, founded by the Edinburgh Medical Missionaries Society and leave my fiancé to fly back to the UK.

I was living in hospital accommodation for the next month, which consisted of my own little flat. It was nothing special but had a proper bed, a pomegranate tree in the courtyard, and a gas mask in case of chemical attack from Syria. I later ended up in the hospital emergency department due to an allergic reaction to flea bites from the bed, but at least I had fresh pomegranates during my recovery. I very quickly discovered that the hospital had no air conditioning. This was hard to get used to at first, but the medicines room was air conditioned so I spent a lot of time helping during drug rounds! My first week was spent on an adult dialysis unit, and this was my first challenge, as I am a paediatric nurse so not used to dealing with unwell adults. Everyone undergoing dialysis was extremely poorly so not often wanting conversation, (and most being elderly, few of them had any English and I had no Arabic or Hebrew) so I spent that settling in week by giving hand and foot massages during their 4 hour dialysis treatment. Initially some the older patients were hostile to me, due to the tensions surrounding the vote on British military intervention in Syria, but I got to know most of the patients quite well, especially the ones who spoke some English, and by the end of the week I was being inundated with requests to meet everyone's family, and being



Jess and the Israeli scenery

offered Arabic treats such as baklava, and (possibly one of the highlights of the trip) prickly pears. The nursing staff took such great care of me and it was an honour to spend time with them. Their knowledge and skills were of such a high standard, and they had so much love and respect for their patients.

I then spent some time on the paediatric ward which was, unexpectedly, a far greater challenge for me. Despite the fact there was incredibly advanced medical knowledge, there was little understanding of psychological trauma and long term effects of children suffering pain. There was no attempt to play with or distract children during invasive procedures, the doctors and nurses never spoke to the children but rather to the parents, and emotionally distressed children were ignored. This was more difficult to cope with for I was observing a big cultural focus on children being ignored, and that emotional sufferings are not regarded as being an issue. This was reinforced by instances where young girls were admitted due to unexplained tummy pain, and they were diagnosed with 'social problems' and sent home. No counselling offered, no psychiatrists to assess them, and the girls really had no one to talk to about what was troubling them. And as I spoke neither Hebrew nor Arabic, there was little I could do. I did manage to set up a manicure bar where all the girls on the ward and I would paint each other's nails, which was great fun and gave them something to do as there were no TVs, books, or toys for them to enjoy during their stay. We even managed to paint the nails of one of the mums, but she had to take it off before she went home to her husband as he wouldn't allow it. It was things like this where I saw such juxtapositions everywhere in Israel. A mixture of old and new, and a clash of religions and cultures;



Jesse with Colleagues



Orthodox Muslim and Jewish mothers who weren't allowed to wear nail varnish or show their hair next to young boys and girls listening to One Direction and watching Hollywood movies. Jewish people working on one side of the street and Arab people on the other, never crossing paths. It was incredibly hard to get your head around, but there were some great moments of these contrasts such as when the call to prayers at the mosque coincided with the church bells at the Church of the Annunciation. Occasionally this was interrupted by gunfire and protest around the hospital, but it was mostly a soothing sound of the bells and prayers. My last week was spent in the neonatal intensive care unit, where premature babies born as young as 24 weeks gestation

were cared for. I have previously worked in neonatal units and could offer some guidance to the nurses in terms of developmental care, and it was during this time I ran breast-feeding workshops for new mums. It was such a privilege to be part of such a vital time in their babies' lives, and try to take away from the stigma that breast feeding is something shameful. I also spent some time with the nursing students and prospective students, discussing the benefits of nursing as a career, for many women in the Arab areas of Israel including Nazareth do not go into higher education or have jobs. On days off from the hospital, I managed to go on some great trips with other volunteers - to Cana, Haifa and Lake Galilee which included descending down Mount

Arbel. The visits to Capernaum and the Church of the Loaves and Fishes were particularly special for me and were a wonderful opportunity to spend some time in prayer and reflect on my time at the hospital. Before I knew it, it was time to come home, and apart from a tricky situation at the airport (it turns out the pips in medjool dates actually look like bullets in airport scanners) and being escorted around the airport by armed security, I made it safely home with some great souvenirs and some fantastic memories. I could not have undertaken this trip without the help of The OPA Award, so I am extremely grateful for it and encourage others to apply for it!

**By Jess Taylor (OP 2009)**

## St Benedict's School News



*Investors in People: L to R - C. de Cintra, M. McCarthy, C. Cleugh, N. Hull and R. Simmons*

**S**t Benedict's School has been awarded the prestigious Investors in People Gold award, joining a select group of fewer than 700 organisations in the whole country. Norman Hull (Director of Professional Development in the Senior School) and Monica McCarthy (Deputy Head in the Junior School) steered the school to the Gold award; the summary of the report to the school ended with the words: "This is a superb result for everyone connected with St Benedict's School." Just prior to that, the School received an 'outstanding' rating following the September 2013 Diocese of

Westminster Inspection. The inspectors were hugely impressed by what they saw in the School and the Diocesan Chief Inspector, Mary Jo Martin, sent her congratulations to Chris Cleugh, Headmaster: "It is so good, so confirming and so important to have external inspectors recognise and acknowledge the outstanding quality of education you offer."

Ealing Council has approved planning permission for two major building projects at the School, with a total planned investment of £12 million. Phase 1, hopefully starting in July 2014, will be a new ADT

department and new Sixth Form centre in the Senior School. This will be built next to the Science Block along Montpelier Avenue and the present ADT building will be demolished to make space for it. Phase 2, to follow on immediately after the first build is completed, will be the replacement of the Ark in the Junior School. This will provide a new EYFS centre, classrooms for PP2 and PP3, new reception and office areas and will also allow the present Nursery to be brought onto the main site. Headmaster Chris Cleugh said: "These projects are hugely exciting and will ensure that the School offers the very best accommodation for Teaching and Learning. The decision demonstrates the commitment of the Governors to see the School continue to flourish in the years ahead."

St Benedict's has become a Biking School. The School is working in partnership with Ealing Council and the Bicycle Society to reduce the number of cars on the roads and encourage cycling. Ealing is the first London borough to pilot this scheme and St Benedict's is one of only two schools participating. The borough has allocated £50,000 worth of funding to St Benedict's. BMX and all round cycling enthusiast Rob Reed, the founder of the Bicycle Society, is working in the School for a whole day each week during this school year. There



*Junior School girls racing against the clock*

have been very successful Bike Swap days and a Bike Day in the Junior School. Bikers' Breakfasts are available on Thursday mornings and Bike Mentors have been appointed. Bike Week took over the School from 13th to 17th January. Throughout the week children had the opportunity to test themselves on cycling machines, courtesy of the Rollapaluza team, and the culmination of the activities came with the Finals on Friday. All children who cycled to school during that week were entered into a draw and the lucky winner of a £250 bike voucher was Callum Larkam (Fm 1).

In October Tom Blackler (L4), Mariana Makarewicz and Philip Harper (Fm 2) accompanied Becky Machin, the Junior School's Environmental Co-ordinator, to the Star Accreditation Award ceremony at City Hall. St Benedict's was presented with a Gold Star Travel Award for being the Best School in West London. Deborah Streatfield, the Head of Careers, was in Downing Street in February at the special invitation of Matthew Hancock, Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise, to attend the Careers Inspiration Vision Celebration. This invitation recognised the tremendous work Mrs Streatfield has done through her charity My Big Career. Twelve pupils took part in the annual Rotary Club Youth Speaks Competition, held at St Benedict's. Ben Farmer, Rebecca Walker and Caroline Gakpetor (L5) who spoke on 'Making an Impression' won the Award for the Best Overall Team in the Senior Section and they go on to the London Regional Finals in March.

Headmaster Chris Cleugh, Father Alexander Bevan, Peter Allott (Deputy Head) and Joe Foley (Assistant Head) attended the triennial International Conference of Benedictine Educators in Manila, during the October half-term. Just prior to that Typhoon Haiyan had struck the southern Philippines and the Benedictine sisters who hosted our group had a school and a hospital in that region severely damaged. In the weeks that followed pupils and staff in both Junior and Senior Schools raised over £6,000 for the nuns of St Scholastica's College in Tacloban to help with their relief effort. The culmination of the fundraising effort was to fill with coins a giant wave drawn out on the floor of the Cloisters Hall. There was huge excitement as the empty wave gradually began to fill, with pupils, staff and parents emptying their pockets of loose change.

Head Boy Joseph Curran and Head Girl Karina Walker have kept up the tradition of Oxbridge offers, Joseph for Natural Sciences at Pembroke College, Cambridge and Karina for English at St Hugh's College, Oxford. They were also among the five Sixth Form students gaining excellent grades in their Extended Project Qualification - the others were Sebastian Strug (A\* and full marks), John Boyle (A\*) and Rhavine Chandrapala (A).

The Krupa Percussion Ensemble was awarded the Ensembles Music for Youth National Partnership Award, sponsored by Birmingham Conservatoire. Drum teacher Ben Gale, was directing the Ensemble at the Royal Albert Hall on 10 October,

where they were performing in the hugely popular Music for Youth Primary Proms. Head Boy and flautist Joseph Curran (U6) was the overall winner of the annual Music Festival out of over 250 entries. Open Mic Night in November was a huge success and these events are now a regular feature of the Music calendar. The Middle School production of 'Lord of the Flies', staged in October and directed by Drama Teacher Richard Gee, was a truly 'dramatic' experience in its excitement and emotional impact. Two excellent short plays, '5 Words' and 'Symptoms', written, directed and acted by Sixth Form Drama students, were staged at the end of the Michaelmas term. In the Lent term, Head of Drama Katie Ravenscroft directed 'Show Time', featuring a cast of over sixty pupils, staff, musicians and Old Priorians. It was a wonderful evening of Music and Dance, raising money for Cancer Research UK and Maggie's Cancer Support Centre, London.

Senior School pupils learnt how to save a person's life as part of practical training during 'Restart a Heart Day.' Ten Sixth Formers attended a Mock United Nations conference at Tudor Hall School in Banbury, with Rhavine Chandrapala (U6) winning a 'Highly Commended Delegate' award. German and Spanish departments had exchange visits with our partner schools and we even beat the Spanish students in the football match! Maths Week closed the Michaelmas term with 'insanely' difficult problems to solve. Jack Leonard (L4) said: "We did it in the end and escaped insanity! It was one of the best Maths lessons I have ever had." Sixth Formers supported Amnesty International's 'Write for Rights' campaign by sending Christmas cards to people suffering human rights abuses.

The CCF, in partnership with Wilson's School, Wallington initiated the organisation of the very first joint NCO's Cadre at Longmoor Camp during the October half-term. Six cadets from St Benedict's attended as participants, with senior cadets SSM Jonas Davidson and SSgt Tim Baker helping as Assistant Staff. Corporal Jem Walker-Browning was the runner-up in the 'best student' competition. Dr Charles Tannock MEP explained the workings of the European Parliament to Sixth Form Government and Politics students.

Music Week in the Junior School was truly inspiring with internationally renowned choral group, Voces 8, leading one of the



workshops. Form 1 visited the Tower of London and followed that up with a Terrible Tudors day, which included a Banquet and playing Hopscotch. The Nativity plays were enjoyed by parents, staff and pupils with 'Hey Ewe!' being a particular hit - the re-telling of the Nativity from the sheeps' point of view. Beowulf visited the Junior School and the children had tremendous fun re-enacting the story. Their sword skills were very good too! The Junior School Carol Concert in the Abbey Church was a wonderful finale to the Michaelmas term. Lower and Upper Preps got their new topic of 'Storms and Shipwrecks' off to an exciting start with a visit from the Hobgoblin Theatre group. Citizenship Day provided a wonderful opportunity to dress up as a good citizen. The children were inspired by a number of speakers including our local MP, Steve Pound, shadow Northern Ireland Secretary.

The 1st XV enjoyed a very successful season with a final figure of 15 wins, 1 draw and 4 losses. The wins included victories over St Paul's, Tiffin, Campion, Dulwich and Whitgift - some of the top schools on our circuit. The one draw provided the heartache moment of the season as our boys went out of the NatWest Cup, with Hampton progressing as the away team. Team captain Michael Ledger was named Player of the Month in the

February issue of Rugby World - a great achievement. St Benedict's won the Middlesex Cup at U18 and U13 level and the U13s are shaping up to be a superb team. They won 17 of their 20 matches and three of the players - Oisin O'Cleirigh, Thomas Goode and Tomek Tsang - were selected to represent the Independent Schools Rugby Football Club known as 'The Lambs', at South East divisional level. Juliano Fiori (OP 2003) is hoping to be in the Brazilian rugby sevens squad at the 2016 Olympic Games, which will be held in Rio de Janeiro. Juliano was Head Boy in the school's centenary year, 2002.

The U16 girls' hockey team made history by winning the England Hockey Association U16 Girls London Schools trophy, the first ever hockey tournament victory for St Benedict's. With one match remaining, they not only needed to win their final match against Croydon High but had to improve their goal difference by at least four. The girls set to the job and won 10-0, with county player Monica Clifford scoring four of the goals. The U14 girls came within a whisker of lifting the same trophy for their age group, losing in the final on the second round of penalty shots to Notting Hill and Ealing High. The U12 girls won 9 out of 10 hockey matches played, avenging their only defeat to Sacred Heart HS with a 2-0 victory in the return

match. Eleven girls and eight boys now play hockey at county level, a testimony to the huge progress made under Head of Hockey, Nikki Woodroffe.

The School Fencing championships at the end of November, the Battle of St Benedict's, saw Charlie Worthington (U6) retain his Epee crown. David Cuss won the Senior Foil and Duncan Ashby triumphed in the Junior Foil. Dimitri Coutya, our U23 World Champion in Wheelchair Epee fencing, scored a remarkable treble in the British Disabled Fencing Association National Championships held in Sheffield in December. He won Gold medals in Foil, Epee and Sabre. St Benedict's hosted the inaugural St Benedict's LPJS Fencing tournament on the weekend of 15/16 February. It was a huge event with over 150 fencers competing in five age categories from Under 9 to Under 17, with parallel competitions for boys and girls. For the third year running St Benedict's Junior School were the Ealing cross-country champions. Over 150 Junior School and Form 3 Dance pupils passed their exams in December, with 90% gaining the highest award of Honours. Pupils and staff enjoyed a super Ski trip to Les Menuires during the February half-term.

**By Marek Nalewajko, Marketing Director, St Benedict's School**



St Benedict's 1st XV



# School Lunch and Tour 2013

On Sunday October 6th some forty old boys who left between 1955 and 1965 (give or take a year!), wives, headmaster Chris Cleugh, his wife Tina and staff past and present gathered in the Cloisters. After brief introductions over a glass of "bubbly", a warm welcome by Richard Baker on behalf of the Association and grace we sat down to an excellent lunch. Our table of a dozen or so was well represented by old boys of the fifties. It wasn't long after talking about families, careers and grandchildren etc. that an old copy of *The Priorian* surfaced and there was a 1960 1st XV rugby photo. The team was quickly named and potted histories expounded along with many school tales, stories and reminiscences. Fifty/sixty years had disappeared in a flash.

After lunch Marek Nalewajko, the School's Marketing Director, kindly took us on a tour of the school. Much has changed over the years with new buildings and alterations and much more is planned. The Middle School is now relocated in to the Main School and so the school is on one site, although the Junior School still resides in its own separate building; the Abbey Church is fully restored. Yet much is still familiar as we walked down old corridors past classrooms and library. Comments flew thick and fast as schoolboy stories were related. Areas were recognised - wasn't that the old chemistry lab, 4th year classrooms etc. and then on through the old house part of the school. Was that the old staffroom? Were those Steve Walker's rooms? Sixth form and prefects common rooms identified. And then at the far end the chemistry and physics labs, but in the 50's I recall Neil Moss teaching physics and of course more importantly lunchtime "rugby tactics". So back through the corridors and library, past the music area with all sorts of electronic and traditional equipment. How things have changed with modern technology. Throughout the school there was much evidence of displays of school work and designated curricula areas. In our day we had of course one main classroom, desks and chalkboard. We were adept at ducking the duster! Not so now - the pupils move. Back on the tour all the time there was much reminiscence of long forgotten school stories and incidents as they flooded back into



Tina and Chris Cleugh with Paddy Smith

our minds. Outside we stood near the old black pitch. Close your eyes and you could hear the noise and hubbub of several entwined football games, or hear the measured tread of marching feet as the cadets 'got on parade'.

As expected there has been much change and development over the years but as ever a school is all about the staff and pupils and as such the school motto, *A Minimis Incipe*, is as appropriate as ever. And on a personal note it was great to meet again after so many years Father Francis and Basil Nickerson. Finally thanks must go to all those helping hands who organise such events both on the day and beforehand including Richard Baker. Brian Taylor, Catherine de Cintra (the School Bursar) and of course

thanks to the catering staff for the excellent lunch they provided.

Good food, good company, good memories.

**By Paddy Smith (1953-1960)**



Physics Laboratory 1958 ...



... and today 2014

# OPRFC Report

At the time of writing, the OPRFC are on the verge of yet another promotion, this time up to London 1 North to join the likes of Ruislip, Tabard and Sutton & Epsom. The club has only lost one league fixture this season and 2014 started with a strong 74-7 win over UCS Old Boys. The remainder of January and February saw victories over Hampstead (29-9), Hammersmith and Fulham (29-11), Harpenden (33-5), and a Cup win over Rochford Hundred (28-12).

In retrospect, March was a tough month but the OPs were able to grind out the necessary victories in the league. The OPs were unable to get the crucial 4-try bonus point in the first match of the month, at home to St Albans. With their favourite 1st XV pitch too damp, the OPs had to move to a smaller pitch at Perivale and the fixture proved to be a bit of a slog. An unusually poor attacking performance saw the OPs score just the one try, by Adam McCulloch (OP 2008), in a 13-0 win. The boys were more impressive the following weekend, away to Beaconsfield. The first hints of Spring were in the air on a sunny, warm day and the OPs attacking flow was starting to reappear as they caused Beaconsfield a number of issues. The game was close and competitive for the first hour with the OPs leaving it late to confirm the 31-9 victory thanks to tries by Jack Dever (OP 2008), Joe Codrington (OP 2002) and two for Jarleth Hughes.

Saturday 15th March saw the OPs biggest test yet, away in the London Final of the National Cup to Guildford RFC. Unbeaten Guildford had a significant size advantage but the OPs managed to keep in touch until half-time despite struggling at the set piece. As the game went on, the OPs struggled to gain parity at scrum time and the superior size of the opposition began to take its toll as the OPs succumbed to a 28-15 defeat. The dream of playing at Twickenham Stadium was over but the OPs needed to get their focus back on the league quickly and get the defeat behind them. It was probably fortunate that the next fixture was a tough home game against Chiswick - the only side to have beaten the OPs all season. A slow start put the OPs in trouble and it was only a James Booth (OP 2008) penalty that kept OPs in



*James Booth's conversion against Twickenham with OP support behind*



*Jack Dever runs with the ball*

touch, trailing 12-3 at half time. Strong words from coaches Ant Andrews and Paul Jackson were needed and the OPs looked like a different team in the second half. Line breaks by David Wilkie (OP 2010) and Edd Conway (OP 2005) saw chances come and go before Joe Codrington (OP 2002) split the defence to score. Continued pressure saw Edd Conway (OP 2005) claim a James Booth (OP 2008) high ball and stunning interplay between Joe Codrington (OP 2002) and Jack Dever (OP 2008) led to Seb Oddi scorching down the left wing for the decisive score in a 17-12 victory. March concluded with an utterly dominant 88-0 victory against Hemel Hempstead, Jack Dever (OP 2008) star of the show with an incredible five tries.

April sees the final push towards the league title and Saturday 5th saw the OPs travel to rivals and league leaders Twickenham. The OPs have had some epic battles against Twickenham but went into the game confident having won all three previous meetings. Twickenham were hoping to win the league that day with a win and they took a fortunate early lead thanks to an overthrown line-out which they capitalised on to score. The OPs fought back, putting Twickenham under huge pressure resulting in two James Booth (OP 2008) penalties before a breakaway

try for Twickenham sent their huge support into rapture. Again the OPs rolled up their sleeves and fought back, David Wilkie (OP 2010) making a superb line break before passing inside to ever-present Jack Dever (OP 2008) to score. The OPs were losing 15-13 as the half-time whistle went. Feeling that the scoreboard wasn't really reflecting strong OP performance, the boys stepped up the pace and intensity in the second half, strangling the Twickenham attack and not allowing them any 'front foot ball'. With over 250 people present (approximately 70 were loyal OP support) the touchlines were nervous but the smaller OP crowd erupted when forward pressure saw Adam McCulloch (OP 2008) score from a driving maul. Shortly after, the OPs worked the ball wide to Seb Oddi who unselfishly passed inside for Jack Dever (OP 2008) to get his second. Only a few minutes later the OPs were again clinical, Seb Oddi getting his own deserved try stretching the lead to 28-15 with Twickenham shell-shocked. The opposition fought their way back and gained an important try to cut the difference to 8 points but it wasn't to be enough for the home side as the OPs celebrated a fantastic 28-20 victory to put the league title in their own hands.

The OPs now have to play HAC home and away and good victories in both games will secure a second successive league championship. They also remain in the Middlesex Bowl with a mid-week game coming up against local rivals Ealing Amateurs for the first ever meeting between the two clubs. You can keep up to date with OPs progress at [www.rugby-in-ealing.co.uk](http://www.rugby-in-ealing.co.uk) and if you are interested in playing, sponsoring or have any queries then contact [oldpriorianrfc@googlemail.com](mailto:oldpriorianrfc@googlemail.com).

**By Edd Conway (OP 2005)**



*The Squad after victory away at Twickenham*



# Births, Marriages and Deaths

## Birth Notices

Our birth notices from alumni of St Benedict's, with our hearty congratulations:

Sunday, 1st September 2013  
To Alexander (OP 2002) & Katherine Racicot (USA), a daughter Annaliese Irene

Wednesday,  
25th September 2013  
To Oliver (OP 1992) & Kate Bradley (UK), a daughter Anna Sophia, a sister for Michael and Rory

Saturday, 4th January 2014  
To Paul (OP 1998) & Emma (OP 1998, née York) Whitehouse (UK), a daughter Amelie Rose, a sister for Eliza (aged 2½)

## Death Notices

Our death notices in remembrance of alumni, and staff of St Benedict's. May they rest in peace

Anthony Page Preston (OP 1957)  
Died Friday, 30th August 2013, aged 71; Tony lived in Blenheim, New Zealand and died whilst on holiday with his family in Sydney, Australia

David Willis (OP 1948)  
Died February 2014, aged 84; Brother of Peter (OP 1944)

Robin Duke (OP 1960)  
Died 6th March 2014, aged 69

Richard Mulcahy (OP 1954)  
Died 30th March 2014, aged 76; Brother of Maurice (OP 1958, RIP 2013)

## Your News

If you would like to share where life has taken you since you left St Benedict's with our readers, please get in touch! Simply complete the **"Where Are You Now?"** form on our website [theopa.org](http://theopa.org) or get in touch with our Development & Alumni Relations Office.

# Vintage Reunion Lunch

On Tuesday 12th November 2013 Ian Blackaller (OP 1957) arranged another of the biannual lunches for OPs of the mid-fifties to mid-sixties vintage; lunch was held at Shampers Wine Bar, just off Regent Street and as usual extended to a full four hours of convivial reunion. The Association is as always most grateful to Ian for his organisation that goes into this informal gathering. For the record twenty one attended:

Tony Sparks (51), Bernard Stutt (55), Basil Nickerson (Staff 56-94), Ian Blackaller (57), Tony Brunning (57), Kevin Hannigan (57), Tony Japes (57), Brian Lee (57) Anthony Phillips (57), David Randell (57), James Anscomb (58), Anthony Baker (58), Desmond Baker (58) John McGrath (58), Richard Baker (59), Jim Dapre (59), Rob Davies (59), John Lindley (59), Brian Taylor (60), Gordon Wilson (60) and Brendan Caulfield (63)



John Lindley and Basil Nickerson

## In touch with us recently...

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

**Bernard Stutt (OP 1955)**  
Surrey

**Peter Stutt (OP 1955)**  
Devon

**Tony Brunning (OP 1958)**  
London

**Louis Prat (OP 1958)**  
Northants

**John Bastable (OP 1959)**  
Australia

**Jeremy Cox (OP 1960)**  
West Sussex

**David McLean (OP 1960)**  
New Zealand

**Patrick Nunan (OP 1962)**  
Ireland

**John Green (OP 1966)**  
Yorkshire

**Tony Ginty (OP 1969)**  
UK

**Steven Vantara (OP 1981)**  
UK

**John Downe (OP 1982)**  
London

**Adam Michalski (OP 1985)**  
Wellington, New Zealand

**Giles Rowbotham (OP 1997)**  
London

**Alexander Pereira-Inacio (OP 2000)**  
London

**Alexander Racicot (OP 2002)**  
Kansas, USA

**Katie Wilmot (OP 2002)**  
London

**Aurelian Nacroux (OP 2003)**  
Japan

**Rodrigo Sanchez (OP 2004)**  
UK

**Katerina Soukeras (OP 2008)**  
London



# Organising a Reunion

**R**eunions 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. If you need any further information or would like our assistance with locating fellow alumni please contact us.

## Who to Invite

Decide on the group that you would like to invite - former classmates, members of a sports club or society or a mixture of all of these and more.

There are no fixed rules and you can make the criteria as wide or as narrow as you choose. Remember, you should also consider if the invitation is open to friends, partners and children.

## Style of Reunion

You will need to consider the timing for the reunion; if you are inviting people from overseas the date should be set early (perhaps up to a year in advance) to allow people to arrange holidays around the reunion.

You should have an idea of a budget for the event and remember to consider all costs such as transport, car parking and accommodation and so on. Moreover, it is useful to find out how much people are prepared to pay before any final arrangements are made.

Another factor to consider is the format of the reunion; for example

an informal meal and a chat in a pub, a tour of 'old haunts', both in Ealing and throughout West London, or a weekend full of activities - the only limitations are the budget and your imagination...

## Making Contact

Let us know whom you would like to contact and - with the help of your Year Marshal - we can forward invitations, letters or emails to your former classmates on your behalf. Naturally, replies can be sent directly to the organiser, but the Association will be more than happy to offer administration support to help you coordinate your event.

It is useful to send out an initial letter or email to the group to gauge the level of interest for the reunion and what preferences there are towards location and the type of event. Also, an old photo from your school days enclosed with this letter may prompt fond memories to be relived and encourage attendance. When you have made the final arrangements a second letter should be sent out informing the group of the date, location and so on - again, we will undertake this mailing for you if you wish. And remember to include an RSVP date to ensure that everyone replies in sufficient time.

## Follow up

To encourage and inspire other reunions we would be delighted if you would write a brief summary about the reunion to be published on the website. Photos would also be very welcome.

# Email Addresses

**D**o please remember to keep us informed of any email changes and encourage OPs who may not be on our emailing list to let us have their addresses. Please **DO NOT** send us listings from your own

address books - Data Protection prevents us from using them; addition of an email address to our database requires an email from the person concerned!

# Contact with other OPs

**T**he OPA Office is happy to act as a "Forwarding Agency" for email contact - If you wish to contact an OP whose email address you do not have then email us and we will forward your email address to the person concerned (provided we have an email address for them!)

saying that you wish to contact them by email; he or she is then free to contact you if they wish.

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

## Future dates for your diary

**F**ull details will be published in our email news and on our website:

### OPA Golf Day

Friday 20th June 2014  
Ealing Golf Club

### Junior School "Quik Cricket" Tournament

Saturday 5th July 2014  
Perivale Games Field

### OPA Summer Sports Festival

Sunday 6th July 2014  
Cricket, Tennis and Netball  
Perivale Games Field

### OPA AGM, Memorial Mass and Lunch

Saturday 8th November 2014  
St Benedict's, Ealing

## WAYN - Where are you now?

**I**t would help us to maintain our database records accurately and it would help the Careers Department of the School, if you would take a few minutes to visit the Website and complete the WAYN Form which can be accessed from the Button Link on the Portal Page. This applies especially to those of you who have left School in the last few years and are now on the first rungs of the ladder in that great big working-world or still in further education; having said that, don't let us put the rather "Older OPs" off supplying their information - the occupation "Retired" can be just as useful, providing of course we know what field it is that you have worked in!

All information supplied is treated with the confidentiality you would expect. Many thanks in anticipation of your help; the following link will take you straight there!  
<http://theopa.org/contact-us/wayn>



## The Old Priorian Association

Founded 1927

### The Old Priorian Association

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, 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

**Mary Keal (OP 1983)**  
President  
**Lewis Hill (OP 1975)**  
Honorary Secretary  
**Ayelsha Patel (OP 2004)**  
Co-opted Honorary Treasurer

### Council Members

**Frank Casali (OP 1984)**  
**Edward Conway (OP 2005)**  
**Matthew Goldsworthy (OP 2007),**  
**Co-opted**  
**Sinead Leahy (OP 2008), Co-opted**  
**Marina Ranger (OP 2009), Co-opted**  
**Brian Taylor, CB (OP 1960)**  
**Peter Watson (OP 1952)**

### Ex-Officio Council Members

**Fr Thomas Stapleford**  
Chaplain  
**Chris Cleugh**  
Headmaster Senior School  
**Rob Simmons (OP 1987)**  
Headmaster, Junior School  
**Catherine de Cintra**  
Bursar, St Benedict's

### Patrick Murphy-O'Connor (OP 1976)

Chairman, St Benedict's  
Governing Board  
**Giles Codrington (OP 1980)**  
Society of Parents and Friends  
**Tsungayi Mhizha**  
Administrator  
**Richard Baker (OP 1959)**  
Assistant Administrator  
**Marek Nalewajko**  
Marketing Director,  
St Benedict's School

Full details about the Association and its activities can be found at:  
**theopa.org**

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

**Email: opa@stbenedicts.org.uk**

**Telephone: 020 8862 2249**

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



## A New Style Newsletter

Readers will have appreciated that this is the second Newsletter in our new style. The first edition produced very pleasing comments from readers and the new Editor, Edward Conway, has been happy to continue in this way. If you have any comments then please contact the OPA by any means shown above.