



# The Old Priorian Association Newsletter

Autumn 2016

THE OLD PRIORIAN ASSOCIATION, ST BENEDICT'S SCHOOL,  
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## President's Welcome

Welcome again to the latest issue of the OPA Newsletter which this autumn is being posted out with the school's own newsletter. This issue covers many aspects of Association and School life including of course sports, academia and even social networking.

If I may highlight two articles that caught my immediate interest. Firstly, Robin Nonhebel's entertaining account of his longstanding career in the History department of the school is the first in what is hoped to be a series of impressions of school life from teachers past and present. In it he manages to highlight with pinpoint precision various important aspects not only of school life but also of his own career development and as always is definitely worth the reading. Secondly, in what I can only describe as the heroic tale of Marina Ranger's epic marathon running, our very own OPA Secretary shows us some of the steely determination and dedication required to achieve

such a feat (no pun intended!) - very impressive and inspirational.

Of course mention should be made of the school's heroic Paralympian Dimitri Coutya who, soon after studying for and taking his A levels went forth and multiplied his talents at the Rio Paralympics. Although he missed out on the medals Dimitri did show his mettle to the world; God willing Dimitri will go from strength to strength - may he achieve greater things in the near future.

Other articles are there for you to browse through and if YOU yourself wish to contribute anything relevant to our newsletter publication, it will surely be considered by the editor and collator of articles, Edd Conway.

May I wish all the Association members and their families and communities a Holy and Blessed and Peaceful Christmas for 2016 while looking forward to a peaceful, prosperous and productive New Year 2017.



The President, "on duty", AL Results Day 2016

'A Minimis Incipe' - as they say. St Benedict, Patron of Europe, pray for us.

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



The OPA Remembrance Cross in the School Field of Remembrance, November 2016

## Remember the Old Priorians who died at The Somme 1916

As it is 100 years since the Battle of The Somme, please remember in your prayers the following three old boys of the school:

Private 9165 Frederick Gaillard Bundy (Came Ealing Priory School 1902), 10th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, died of wounds in 2/2nd

London Casualty Clearing Station, aged 21, on July 10th 1916. Buried in grave II.A.30, Heilley Station Cemetery, Mericourt L'Abbe. His family had inscribed on his grave the following: "We have loved him during life. Let us not forget him after death."

2nd Lieutenant Charles William

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# 2016 Annual General Meeting

The Association AGM, together with its associated Annual Memorial Mass and Lunch was held on Saturday 5th November 2016 at Ealing Abbey; once again our thanks must go to Giovanni Persano for the Benet Club welcome and facilities and to Concetta Vager for her splendid lunch.

At the AGM annual reports were received and approved on the Association's Council business through the past year, the financial state of the Association, the statistical analysis of current membership of 1415 and the sporting activities.

Elections for the year 2016-2017 were held and the following elected:

#### Officers:

President, Lewis Hill (OP 1975)  
Secretary, Marina Ranger (OP 2009)  
Treasurer, Kumaran Perinpanathan (OP 2009)

#### Council Members:

Frank Casail (OP 1984)  
Edward Conway (OP 2005)  
Sinead Leahy (OP 2008)  
Christopher Stevenson (OP 1964)  
Brian Taylor (OP 1960)  
Jessica Taylor-Beirne (OP 2009)  
Luca Uberai (OP 2010)  
Andrew Wilkie (OP 2008)

#### The following ex-officio Members were appointed:

Andrew Johnson (Headmaster)  
Rob Simmons (OP 1987, Junior School Headmaster)  
Catherine Bedwin (Bursar, St Benedict's School)  
Patrick Murphy-O'Connor (OP 1976, Governing Board)  
Jean O'Brien (Society of Parents and Friends)  
Richard Baker (OP 1959, Administrator OPA)  
Tara George (Development Director)

**By Richard Baker (OP 1959),  
Administrator, OPA**

## Remember the Old Priorians who died at The Somme 1916 continued

Joseph Davison (Came Ealing Priory School 1905), 9th Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales' Own), killed in action, aged 25, Flers, on September 14th 1916. He has no grave: commemorated in Pier & Face 2A, 2C & 2D, Thiepval Memorial.

2nd Lieutenant Cyril Edward Brietzcke Dean (Came Ealing Priory

School 1905), 121 Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, killed in action, aged 19, Comblès, on September 15th 1916. He has no grave: commemorated in Pier & Face 8A, Thiepval Memorial.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

## Social Media

The Old Priorian Association now has a presence on social media!

Please like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter and Instagram to stay up to date with events and news. We'd love to build on our ever-growing network and get you connected to fellow Old Priorians.

**Facebook**  
**/theOldPriorianAssociation**



**Twitter**  
**@oldpriorians**



**Instagram**  
**@oldpriorians**

## 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.

## Email Addresses

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

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

## Contact with other OPs

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

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

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

# Teaching a Way of Living

I wanted to introduce a new aspect in this edition, featuring the views of some of St Benedict's favourite staff over the years. Whilst there were undoubtedly many to choose from, where better to start than with Robin Nonhebel who reflects on his early years at St Benedict's...

It is June 1971. I receive a letter offering me the post of Assistant Teacher of History at St Benedict's. I accept. The very next day I am offered a job by the school at which I did my teaching practice. The vagaries of timing. Had the letters arrived in a different order, my whole life would have been changed. I would have a different wife, family, friends, a different career...

I remember my first lesson, a double period teaching O Level history to the middle stream, to Steve Lee, Alan Greaney and 32 of their friends. I am young and green, and L5.1 expertly keep me talking about nineteenth century social history for 80 minutes. Anything to escape doing any work.

The school buildings are a bit tired, but the monks, especially Fathers George and Gregory, are genial, the staff are pleasant and the boys keen to do well, especially on the rugby field. Teachers all wear gowns, including the sole full-time female teacher, Krys Mackersie. Chalk dust rises in clouds when the boards are cleaned. At least the gowns protect our clothes. Teachers are poor. My first annual salary is £1400. There are few cars in the staff car park.

I teach the whole U4th, the whole L5th, one U5th and two different A Level Special Subjects. Compared to today, the staff complement is tiny. Classes are large. Mostly I keep control, except for one group that drives me up the wall. Time flashes by, except, that is to say, when marking. This seems to go on forever. I look forward to coaching cricket, and my drink in the Men's Club when my work finishes at 9 pm.

The textbooks are prose-heavy and fact-laden with almost no illustrations. There are no TVs, no computers, no photocopiers, just books, pens and paper. In double periods, the pupils become restless but there is always the terrifying prospect of Gill Harrison, the L5th

Division Master, appearing at the door.

*'Do you want it now, or on Monday?'*

*'Monday, Sir.'*

*'You'll have it now.'*

The boy leaves the classroom and the door is left ajar so that the pupils can hear several thwacks of the cane. The rest of the lesson is quiet.

It is the mid-70s. I am appointed as Second Master of the Middle School. I can now afford another drink each evening. The young boys are keen, and love rugby and table-tennis. I settle down in my new environment. But suddenly and very sadly, the Head of History, Steve Walker, dies. I have to take over all his 6th form medieval history classes. Within 18 months I am back in the Upper School, and now I am a medievalist. I don't look back. No more modern history for me, at least at A Level. I leave that to Don Stuart. And what's more, the boys win the Oxford Sevens. There is great celebration.

With two fellow teachers, I start the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. Everything goes well at first until an April bronze award expedition near Tring. The boys arrive at the campsite on time. They erect their tents and cook a meal. Meanwhile it begins to snow. And then it snows

some more. It is not forecast. I take the school bus out to test the roads. We are at the top of a hill and the bus skids everywhere. My colleague and I decide that camping in freezing conditions is preferable to risking their lives in the dark on treacherous road surfaces. An Australian boy, not used to camping in -5 degrees in a summer sleeping bag, complains vociferously. We make it through the night except for one boy who has signs of hypothermia. I am reminded of this by his mother at every subsequent parents' evening. We all survive, though.

By this time it is 1980. I have got through nine years of teaching and have acquired several grey hairs. I have many friends on the staff especially Ian Stephen, who teaches me to speak Northern. And he comes to rescue me from wasps when they enter my classroom. Everything is alright with the world!

**By Robin Nonhebel (OP 2010, Staff 1971-2010)**



Robin Nonhebel (centre) with current History Department Staff



# Joe Simpson celebrates his Testimonial Year for Wasps



Joe Simpson (OP 2006), in action with the ball

Joe Simpson (OP 2006), the longest-serving player in the Wasps' squad, will be recognised in 2016-17 with a Testimonial Year supported by the club.

Joe, 28, is widely-regarded as one of European rugby's most exciting

players and has made nearly 200 1st XV appearances for Wasps since joining their academy in 2006.

The Joe Simpson Testimonial Committee (JSTC) has chosen three charities - MacMillan Cancer, School of Hard Knocks and the Dallaglio Foundation, to benefit from a programme of fundraising events including:

## **The Joe Simpson Testimonial Dinner - Wednesday 19th October - Ricoh Arena, Coventry**

A night in the company of Wasps stars past and present as the Testimonial Year kicks off in style at the club's new home.

## **The Night of the Nines - Thursday 26th January 2017 - House of Commons, London**

A unique evening with Joe and some of the legendary scrum-halves he has battled with over the years.

## **The Joe Simpson Celebration Dinner - Friday 24th March 2017 - The Grange Hotel, London**

Stars from the world of rugby join Joe in London to celebrate his career to date in style.

Joe also had an article published by the RFU recently where he was named a Premiership Hero for his service at Wasps. The article addresses his time at Wasps, his international ambitions and his Olympic bid that was thwarted by injury. The article can be viewed at <http://www.englandrugby.com/news/features/premiership-heroes-joe-simpson/>

## Juliano Fiori competes at Rio Olympics

Juliano Fiori (OP 2003) represented Brazil at their home Olympics in August 2016. They lost 40-12 to eventual Gold Medallists Fiji, 26-0 to a growing 7s power in the USA, and 31-0 to talented Argentina in the groups.

They were more competitive in the knockouts, losing to the USA 24-12 then 24-0 to a resurgent Kenya side. It has been a time of rapid growth for the Brazil 7s side ahead of the Olympics, making great strides against countries with considerably bigger budgets and more experienced players.

Juliano has proved on a number of occasions to be the heartbeat of the side and no doubt had a fantastic experience competing against the world's best players.

## Dimitri achieves his Rio dream



Dimitri Coutya

Dimitri Coutya (OP 2016), who left St Benedict's this summer after taking his A levels, competed in the Rio Paralympian Games on Tuesday, 13th September. Dimitri competed for GB in Wheelchair Fencing, at both Epee and Foil.

Pupils at St Benedict's watched, live, at school, where fencing is extremely strong, and where Dimitri was a very popular pupil.

Dimitri won a silver medal in the Foil and a bronze in the Epee in the European Championships held in Turin, Italy in May. This success qualified him for selection for Rio; after an agonising wait for over a month his place was confirmed.

Dimitri joined St Benedict's in Year 7, aged 11 years, with absolutely no fencing experience at all. He soon began to make his mark on the school circuit and then progressed to international competition; in July 2013 he became the World U23 Wheelchair Champion in Epee category B, while he was still in the Lower Fifth. Dimitri then progressed to adult competition.

Denis Cranwell, former Head of Fencing at St Benedict's School, observed Dimitri's progress over the years, and said: "Dimitri worked so hard in all the events and it's wonderful that his hard work has paid off. He has a real chance of a medal and all of St Benedict's will be cheering him on."

**Adapted from St Benedict's School website**

# Emma named London Rose

Having grown up spending many wonderful holidays in Ireland the end of our summer trip was always marked with the annual "Rose of Tralee Festival". Often associated with the Father Ted episode about the "Lovely Girls Competition" it was always something that I had wanted to take part in. Finally, this time last year, I decided to apply and was over the moon when I was told I was being invited to take part in the London selection.

In May of this year the gorgeous London Rose, Aisling Hillary, organised a week of events in which I met the 13 other girls also in the selection process. We went to lunch dances with the Irish elderly community at the London Irish Centre in Camden, a 1915 commemorative concert at the Southbank Centre and a Gaelic football game along with many other fun events.

On the selection day we were interviewed by three past roses and two men; this was followed by a Ball later on in the day where we invited friends and family and each was interviewed and performed a "party piece". To be chosen to represent London was very exciting but little did I know the excitement of what was to come. What was truly amazing were the friendships that continued with the other finalists so much so that many of the girls travelled to Kerry to support me at the festival.

In August I travelled to Dublin to meet 64 other finalists from all over the world. For a festival that is sometimes criticised for being "dated" I can proudly say that it is a celebration of Irish women across the global and the Irish diasporic community. The group of girls were some of the kindest, smartest and most fun young women I have had



Emma with Aisling McNeill (her roommate)

the pleasure of becoming friends with and how could that possibly be dated? We were dressed and kitted out in hats, dresses, shoes and bags sponsored by businesses within our own communities. We were whisked from events to tourist attractions, from a civic reception with Kildare County Council to the National Stud, from Kilmainham Gaol to the Guinness Storehouse. We were interviewed and photographed by the press and had little girls asking for photos and autographs. The excitement was immense.

Half-way through the week we were whisked down to Kerry where we were all put up in the gorgeous Rose Hotel and taken to many more wonderful events and even got to take part in three different parades. It was incredibly surreal to be sitting and waving on a float to tens of thousands of people. At this point we were introduced and paired up with 65 lovely guys who were equipped with safety pins, plasters, strepsils and all sorts and ensured we were happy and in the right place at the right time. They spoilt us rotten! In Kerry we had individual interviews, group interviews, stage interviews and judges' lunches. A

final 32 girls were then chosen to go through to the final, televised night with Daithí O'Sé himself! The lovely Chicago Rose, Maggie McEldowney was chosen to represent the 2016 class as the Rose of Tralee and is doing us all very proud.

What was the most amazing thing about the truly unforgettable and once in a lifetime experience were the friendships made and the overwhelming sense of community. The support I have had from friends and family has been incredible. My parents in particular knew everybody in Kerry by the end of the trip and the pride and excitement that the festival brought to my family was something I could not possibly have imagined.

I now have 129 new friends all over the world who I speak to almost every day. We have a trip coming up to New York in March 2017 to walk in the St Patrick's Day Parade and I have no doubt that the fun will continue long after we hand over our sashes to the very lucky girls who will fill our shoes next year.

**By Emma Murphy-O'Connor  
(OP 2010)**



Bernie and Pat Murphy-O'Connor (OP 1976), Emma's parents, at the Rose Ball



Martin Conway (far left) wins BAFTA

## Old Priorian wins BAFTA

Old Priorian Martin Conway (OP 1998) won a BAFTA in 2016 in the category "Television: Reality and Constructed Factual" for his work on the hugely popular *First Dates* which airs on Channel 4. Having left the school in 1998 to attend

Southampton University, Martin has worked his way up the ranks in television including roles on shows such as *The Apprentice*, *Bring Back Borstal*, *Britain's Got Talent*, *First Dates* and most recently *24 Hours in A&E*.



## WAYN - Where are you now?

It 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 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>

## Forthcoming events for your diary

Full details will be published in our email news and on our website:

**School Christmas Carol  
Reception**  
**Monday 12th December 2016**  
**The Cloisters and Ealing Abbey**  
**6.30pm**

**Old Priorian Oxbridge Dinner  
2017**  
**Friday 3rd February 2017**  
**Oxford & Cambridge Club,**  
**London**

**Old Priorian Association  
Dinner 2017**  
**Thursday 20th April 2017**  
**Lansdowne Club, London**  
**7:00pm for 7:30pm**

# A Celebration of 60 years of Girls



Tara George (Development Manager), Philly Codrington (School Governor) and Louise Brooks (OP 1993, née McGill)

A celebration of "60 years of Girls" was held on 23rd June 2016. It was a fantastic event that brought together around 50 Old Priorians from across the last 50 years, including men and women, as well as current students, teachers and staff. Father Alexander led an opening prayer and the event was hosted by school Governor Philly Codrington, who made a heart-felt speech following Headmaster Chris Cleugh, who reflected humbly and passionately on his time at St Benedict's over the last 15 years. Those who attended were treated to Prosecco and canapés, and we all received a lovely little silver charm as a gift and a memento of the occasion.

It was a wonderful event to attend, not only as an Old Priorian but also as the very first Head Girl,

appointed back in 2001 - an honour and a privilege, and at that time it marked an incredibly positive and progressive shift in the ethos of the school. Since then, that same ethos has continued to evolve and mature as the school has blossomed into a completely co-educational environment - for the benefit of the pupils and the school as a whole; genuinely teaching a way of living, within a modern Catholic community.

This event was an excellent opportunity to reflect on changes at the school, with old friends and staff, and to share our experiences and advocate our support for the development of the school in the coming years, within new buildings and under new leadership.

**By Katie Wilmot (OP 2002)**

## Organising a Reunion

Reunions are now more popular than ever and remain a great way to get together with old friends and rekindle school memories. If you are curious about what your fellow alumni are doing, then we are here to help in many ways - do please contact us. Much useful information about reunions, including guidelines for claiming a possible subsidy, is available at: <http://theopa.org/events/reunions>

# Our Association Secretary goes for a Run



*Pieterpad, here we come*

**M**arina Ranger (OP 2009) has given permission for the following account of her run of 500km in 5 days to be printed from her website: <http://running-ranger.squarespace.com/>

I'm still struggling to comprehend what Lucja and I just accomplished. It's hard putting the pain and exhaustion into words. My Dad doesn't think anyone will quite understand what it was that we achieved and put our bodies through unless you were there, seeing the suffering first hand. I knew this challenge wasn't going to be easy but I don't think I quite realised the scale of it before committing to the challenge.

It all started three years ago when Lucja and I met doing our first multi stage ultra-marathon in the Kalahari Desert. We have been great friends since, travelling around the world together to take part in ultra-marathons. Having done plenty of races together, we thought it was about time we organised our own challenge. After planting the seed in Lucja's mind of organising a challenge, she came up with the idea to run across The Netherlands in our pink Runderwear. Without thinking twice, I said yes! The plan we soon hatched was to follow the Pieterpad Trail which runs from the

north to the south of the country covering 500km. Being two young females we decided to raise money for breast cancer through the Pink Ribbon Foundation which fitted in perfectly with the idea of wearing our pink undies.

Planning for the challenge started in December and for the next eight months it became a secondary full time job to organise. These are just some of the tasks we had to organise between us:

- Coordinate all 13 support crew and define responsibilities
- Book accommodation for everyone and negotiating discounts
- Plan the route including a GPS spot for every 10km checkpoint (CP)
- Build a social media plan and schedule including the #500kin5days photo campaign
- Book all travel arrangements
- Find film producers willing to be part of the challenge
- Film, design, plan and create a launch video for the challenge (I travelled up to Edinburgh for this)
- Find a PR agent willing to work with us to get media attention - we found the lovely Craig Haslop, a lecturer in PR and Communications at Liverpool University

- Raise awareness of our challenge by promoting online through our social network platforms and by contacting many media channels
- Contact brands for free products e.g. recovery shakes from For Goodness Shakes
- Liaise with Runderwear and The Pink Ribbon Foundation
- Nutrition plan
- Organise crew car and caravan logistics
- Keep track of all finances
- Fundraise - bake sales, emailing for sponsorship, applying and presenting to companies for sponsorship, Crossfit event with breast checking tutorial

Our main base of training for the challenge came off the back of our preparation for Marathon des Sables, which both Lucja and I took part in in April. After a couple of weeks of rest after MdS, we had 13 weeks to prepare ourselves instead of a 16 week plan which I'd usually stick to for such a big run. Still, I knew I was in good shape after MdS so I just needed to maintain this level for the next few months. I can hands down say that this run was the hardest five days of my life. The sheer distance we had to run in such a short amount of time; on top of the fact that we had to organise the whole thing by ourselves puts this challenge on a completely different spectrum to any other.

These both led to a level of stress on the body and the mind that I never anticipated. When you're running on average 15 hour days on five hours sleep, there is no down time (like there is in the desert) and it makes it very difficult to find the energy to prepare for the next day. When we finished for each day,

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*A gentle stroll*



# Our Association Secretary goes for a Run continued



How much further?

instead of resting we would have to load the route map onto our watches, put everything on charge for the next day, eat the right food in preparation for the next leg, thread our blisters, get physio on our legs, shower, get our kit ready for the next day, pack up our bags for the morning, update friends and family back home of our progress, update social media for sponsorship, make sure everyone knows their duty for the morning and so on! As for sleeping, I'm not sure you could count all five hours as worthy rest. I'd be waking up in hot sweats, with joint pains and in panics about waking up in time for the next day. We were exhausted and I can remember running with heavy eyes thinking I could fall asleep while on the move.

With exhaustion comes emotion! I'm not normally the emotional type but I probably shed a year's worth of tears in the five days. I first cried 80km into Day 2, when my parents surprised me by arriving early. I've never seen my mum sprint so fast towards me with her arms wide open to hug me. It was too much for my sensitive emotions and I definitely set a few other people off too!

Our support crew were such a huge

factor in our success. We had a full support crew of 13 people, four cars and one caravan. It might sound overkill but when you factor in all the crew, bags and supplies, we had just enough room for everything. It also meant the crew could rotate on CP duty, checking into hotels, sorting out dinner, checking the route, buying extra supplies and keeping us company while running.

Each day we'd have on average one CP every 10k, although the crew sometimes had to improvise to shorten some CPs if we were having a bad time and felt it needed to be broken up. Half way through each day we'd enjoy a 20/30 minute lunch break where Joerie managed to sweet talk free spaces for the caravan to park and for the CP to be set up. We had campsites, someone's garden with a trampoline and even a couple of lunch tables in a beautiful monks' mansion!

The scenery was surprisingly varied and beautiful. There is more to Holland than just flat farm land! We passed through many small towns that often seemed completely empty (although apparently locals were taking photos of us from their bedrooms and posting them online) and smaller villages with cute traditional Dutch houses and immaculate gardens. The whole country looked a bit like a Polly Pocket village, perfectly neat and clean; designed, built and maintained to a very high standard.

The terrain was a mix of road and trail. We ran through several beautiful forests and lots of corn fields that trapped heat and became difficult to run through in the heat of the day. There were also a lot of open fields, long footpaths and road passes. We got our fair share of hills too believe it or not and even a decent amount of soft sand to remind us of being back in the desert!

The mixed terrain unfortunately wasn't enough to counteract the impact of the hard ground and number of miles travelled on our feet and joints. Day by day the feet were getting more swollen and tender and we were having to thread and tape an increasing number of blisters and hotspots. I chose to wear Hoka Cliftons for the run, knowing that I'd need the added cushioning and support but

stupidly bought only a 0.5 size up instead of 1 without knowing quite how much my feet would swell. For the last two days I switched back to my trusted New Balance Leadvilles, which had less cushioning but more space for the toes to breathe. Nevertheless, the rubbing was still so bad that I had to cut a massive hole in my shoe to create space and reduce the pain.

One problem solved, or rather helped, meant another escalated. With less cushioning, my knees were taking a lot more impact on every step and becoming increasingly sore. My right knee in particular was becoming extremely painful and causing me to limp whether walking or running. In my mind I had no choice but to run on so I opted for pain killers and mentally trying to block out the pain.

At times like these I remind myself of why I'm running. I think of how long and hard I train, all the social activities I miss out on, all the money that's been raised for charity, of people who have had to suffer even worse pain in worse conditions, of our support crew giving up their week for us and of everyone back home following and supporting us. I quite often felt like stopping but I always seemed to find something in me strong enough to persevere and get to the next CP no matter how horrendous I was feeling.

There were many low moments for me during the run. I woke up on day two in a mentally bad place. I remember hugging James goodbye wanting to burst into tears at the thought of what we were up against for the next four days. 20km into day two I was suffering from severe mid-foot discomfort. Much to both our surprise and by a complete timing coincidence, Joerie's foot specialist friend who lived nearby, met us at the next CP and gave me a foot massage. Past that point, my foot had completely recovered. I was told only after finishing the run that something had actually moved out of place in my foot and had I not seen the foot specialist, I wouldn't have been able to carry on for the next half of the day, let alone the rest of the week. He was a godsend and it was meant to be that he was there then!

The changing point in the run for me was just after the 250km point on day three when Lucja and I hit rock bottom. As we were running into CP6, Suzan and Rhianon held up a sign saying 'You girls are



superheroes'. We both broke down at the sign in floods of tears and from that point on I didn't stop crying for the next two hours. We were exhausted, sore, in pain and unable to regulate heat. But more than anything, it was a huge mental struggle. Trying to comprehend that we still had another 250km left to go was hard to digest so I found myself at an all-time low.

For the final two days, we were joined by Lucja's husband, Dion. This was a real game changer for Lucja, as her spirits subsequently picked up and the psychological impact of his support meant she felt surprisingly strong in comparison to the previous day. This was not the case for me however, as I felt my situation somewhat worsen knowing that I had become the weaker of the pair. As much as I love Dion, he doesn't have quite the same impact on me as he does Lucja.

James could see I was getting worse and became such a big part of getting me through the final two days. He ran with me for 40km on the last day, the furthest he has ever run. If there is one thing I'll take away from this challenge, it will be how powerful people close to you can be at influencing you to

carry on when you think you have nothing left. Knowing my parents were at each checkpoint was another boost getting me through each day. I could see how proud James and my parents were so I couldn't let them down by not finishing.

Lucja knew how much I was struggling and came into my room that evening to discuss the possibility of me not being able to continue on the last day. It was a hard conversation to have, knowing that I had put doubt in her mind about finishing together, but for me, there were no two ways about it; I had come this far so couldn't give up now and despite all the pain over the last few days I had never considered not completing the run. So I started the next day and despite the pain never getting any easier, ticked off one checkpoint at a time all the way into Maastricht where we would reach the finish.

I'll never forget the moment we reached the finish line. Neither of us could quite believe we had made it but it was such a euphoric feeling to finally get there and not have to worry about anymore running! It's still hard to comprehend quite what we have achieved and put our bodies through so I think I'm going

to be pinching myself for a while to remind myself we've just run the length of a country!

Having taken a serious battering to my body, I've dedicated a full two weeks of rest to allow my blisters to heal after being put on antibiotics to clear an infection and to give my knees a break since I have been limping around for the past two weeks. Our donations to The Pink Ribbon Foundation have reached over £7,500 so a huge thank you to those that have donated.

The whole experience was an emotional rollercoaster that I am still coming to terms with. Lucja and I have been on such a huge journey since we started running, so much of it together and I feel grateful to be able to have shared my greatest accomplishment to date with her.

I wonder when, or if, the reality of what we have accomplished will sink in, but I'll be forever proud to be able to say I've run the length of The Netherlands!

There are so many people to thank that made this challenge possible - to them all I extend my warmest thanks

**By Marina Ranger (OP 2009)**

## OPA Golf Day 2016

The Old Priorian Association Golf Day took place on 17th June 2016, for the first time in three years. Twenty-one OPs and Parents (Past and Present) gathered at Ealing Golf Club for a morning's golf followed by lunch. The weather was kind and in the end the OPA Quinnen Golf Trophy was won by Paddy Smith (OP 1961).



Paddy Smith with the Quinnen Trophy



The end of play

# OP Cricket Club 2016

2016 brought another very successful season for the Old Boys cricket club. We organised fifteen fixtures for the summer and whilst a couple were lost to the weather, we managed to play some exciting cricket. During the course of the summer over 30 players represented the club including many OPs and current school boys, but we are always looking for more! Some of the highlights of the season were winning the school 20/20 tournament, the nail biting loss to the school in the declaration game and Ben Chippendale (OP 2016) scoring his maiden century against Old Actionians.

The 3rd annual 20/20 tournament was held on 3rd July, and once again did not disappoint. In two one sided semi-finals, the School 1st XI and the Old Boys Cricket Club were victorious against the Staff and 2nd XI respectively. In a keenly contested final the Old Boys were victorious! Lost wickets at crucial stages proved the school's undoing. Many thanks goes to Keith Newell (Head of Cricket) who organised the event without much help! We are all very much looking forward to the Old Priorians exhibition weekend next year, with the traditional declaration game on the 1st July and the 20/20 on Sunday 2nd July 2017.

The club is very welcoming and we are always looking for more members and people with whom to socialise! Do come and join us - Contact: Matthew.codrington26@gmail.com or 07879 440502

**By Matthew Codrington  
(OP 2012)**



## News of Old Priorians May - November 2016

**Frank Arpino** (OP 1967): Is organising a reunion celebrating 50 years since leaving St Benedict's; if you are interested in this you can contact Frank via the OPA Office.

**Brian Bennett** (Staff 1988-2003): Died 7th June 2016, Aged 66. R.I.P. Brian taught Biology at St Benedict's from 1988, becoming Head of Biology in 1997.

**Edward Conway** (OP 2005): On 20th August 2016, Edward married Helena Jaszczolt at Ealing Abbey.

**Peter Desmond** (OP 1973): Peter is the Director of a Management Consultancy organisation - *Growth International*.

**Michael Devenish** (OP 1968): Died August 2016, Aged 66. R.I.P. Brother of Robin (OP 1961); Michael was a well known and respected architect, living in Skipton.

**Paul Fagan** (OP 1991): Emails to announce that he and his fiancée Heike celebrate the birth of their son, Federico on 16th June 2016.

**Michael Foley** (OP 1967): Died 9th August 2016, Aged 68. R.I.P. Michael joined the academic staff at Aberystwyth University in 1974 as a Lecturer in American Government and Politics. Since the 1990s he served there in a variety of leadership roles in International Politics, including Director of Graduate Studies and Director of Research, and most recently Acting Head and then Head of Department.

**Peter Fosbery** (OP 1961): Emails from Canada updating his Database details; he is still working in Insurance Consultancy.

**Ronald Hilvert** (OP 1967): Ron now lives in Manila in the Philippines; he works in the hospitality industry where he is the Managing Director of the Dusit Thani Hotels.

**Samuel Loveless** (OP 2016): Sam has been selected as an Alexander Ivashkin Memorial Scholarship holder at the Music Department of Goldsmiths University. Many congratulations! The Ivashkin Scholarship is worth £3,000 per annum (a total of £9,000 over the three-year BMus degree). It recognizes and supports excellence and/or potential excellence in musical performance.

**Anthony Murray** (OP 1959): Died September 2016, Aged 73. R.I.P.

*Brian Clancy (OP 1959) writes: Tony was a very good rugby player, but most of all he was virtually unbeatable throughout his early years as a sprinter; winning both the 100yds and 220yds for his age group with boring regularity on Sports Days - until we were in the 6th Form, when a young Chinese boy called Lionel Ku (OP 1959) (Lionel died in a freak storm in Singapore some 20 or more years ago) came to the school - he was, despite his small stature, also a very good sprinter and, for the next 2 or 3 years, Tony and he shared the sprinting honours on sports day - Lionel winning the 100yds with Tony second - and the reverse result in the 220yds! As far as I can recall, it never varied over the years until they both left in 1959.*

**Adrian Norridge** (OP 1961): Died 27th June 2016, Aged 73. R.I.P. Brother of Julian (OP 1963).

**Charles Read** (OP 1969): Now living in Buckinghamshire.

**Manoj Vaseekharan** (OP 2012): Manoj emails: I will be graduating with a First Class Honours Master of Engineering degree in Computer Science from University College London. I was fortunate to have many achievements during my time at UCL. Some of which include:

- Writing a research paper in my first year of study and presenting it at an academic conference in USA.
- Collaborating with Microsoft to develop technologies to aid the visually impaired.
- Working with Transport for London to help optimize the cycle hire scheme.
- Interning at Microsoft as a design intern, and at Citigroup as a technology analyst.

I have now secured a job with Morgan Stanley, an investment bank, as a technology analyst and will be starting there August 2016.

I hope everyone at St Benedict's is doing well. If anyone wishes to get in touch, they are free to email me at [manoj.r.vaseekharan@gmail.com](mailto:manoj.r.vaseekharan@gmail.com), add me on LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/manojvas](http://www.linkedin.com/in/manojvas) or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/manojv93>. I'd love to hear what my peers are up to these days.

**Pauline Walker** (Junior School Staff 1996-2007): Died 16th July 2016, Aged 68. R.I.P.



# OPRFC Update

The Old Priorian Rugby Club underwent some big changes in the Summer of 2016 with a number of new coaching staff coming in. Anthony Andrews, who had been with the club for a number of years as we climbed the league structure, and Dan Brown departed to pastures new. To help adapt to life in London 1, the coaching team was expanded. Greg Knights, who was the club's first ever coach in the 2008-09 season, returned after stints at Staines and Harrow to become Director of Rugby. He was joined by Adam Preocanin, a professional player at Ealing Trailfinders, as forwards coach and Neil Macfarlane as backs coach. Edd Conway (OP 2005) joined as a skills coach and to head up the 2nd XV on match days whilst Myles Stringer (OP 2004) remained in charge of Strength and Conditioning. After years of service, Andrew Wilkie (OP 2008) also stepped down as Captain to be replaced by Jack Dever (OP 2008).

The summer was spent introducing new concepts and wholesale changes to how the team attacks, defends and approaches set pieces. Myles took the lead in getting the boys physically prepared, putting them through some gruelling but focused sessions which saw their fitness improve drastically between testing. Pre-season fixtures, including a fixture against Broughton Park on tour to Manchester, brought game time and some inevitable injuries which were to have a big impact on the early weeks of the season. The first game was a 33-5 loss to a physical North Walsham side, which was unfortunately followed by a similar score line losing 39-6 away to Fullarians. The boys managed to get their first win of the season with a 17-3 victory against Sudbury with



David Wilkie (OP 2010), Stefan Rowell (OP 2008) and Will Clarke (OP 2008)

James Booth (OP 2008) scoring an excellent try.

Three tough weekends followed with losses to Brentwood, 38-7, Chelmsford, 28-26, and powerful Eton Manor 62-24. The Chelmsford score may not have been what everyone wanted, however it saw a number of second team players step up to cover injuries and absences to nearly produce a fantastic win. On Saturday 22nd October, however, a dominant defensive performance saw the OPs get back on track and register their second win with a superb performance against Barking. Andrew Wilkie (OP 2008), Aristide Goualin (OP 2008), James Booth (OP 2008) and Oscar Ward all scored as the home side romped to a convincing 29-3 win.

London 1 is a tough, physical league and the OPs will hope to be able to get players back to full fitness soon enough to show of what they are truly capable. Already a squad effort, the season is long and all are certain they can improve the results.



Jono Moore (OP 2010) prepares to throw in



Jack Dever (OP 2008)



Mark Machado (OP 2004)



Training at Perivale



Coach Adam Preocanin leads training



## 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

**Lewis Hill (OP 1975)**

President

**Marina Ranger (OP 2009)**

Honorary Secretary

**Kumaran Perinpanathan (OP 2009)**

Honorary Treasurer

### Council Members

**Frank Casali (OP 1984)**

**Edward Conway (OP 2005)**

**Sinead Leahy (OP 2008)**

**Christopher Stevenson (OP 1964)**

**Brian Taylor CB (OP 1960)**

**Jessica Taylor-Beirne (OP 2009)**

**Luca Uberai (OP 2010)**

**Andrew Wilkie (OP 2008)**

### Ex-Officio Council Members

**Andrew Johnson**

Headmaster

**Rob Simmons (OP 1987)**

Headmaster, Junior School

**Catherine Bedwin**

Bursar, St Benedict's School

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

Chairman, St Benedict's Governing Board

### Jean O'Brien

Society of Parents and Friends

**Richard Baker (OP 1959)**

Administrator OPA

**Tara George**

Development Director,  
St Benedict's School

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

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



## 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: <http://www.theopa.org>. Current School news can be found at: <http://www.stbenedicts.org.uk/Latest-News>.

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