
Old Wimbledonians Newsletter



April 2010

Dear Old Wimbledonian,

Welcome to the first edition of our new look newsletter.

This is the first of what we hope will be quarterly publications to keep you informed of people, events, successes and disappointments associated with the past and present pupils of Wimbledon College and the clubs and societies of the OWA.

In the next few pages I hope to provide you with a selection of recent events and news from various people who have contacted the OW's through our website.

The School Report



Under 13 Rugby Sevens
National Champions

At the time of writing, most members and staff had made it back in time for the start of the new term. Thankfully only a few had been left stranded by the after effects of the volcanic eruption in Iceland. Interestingly enough, a group of College students and teachers had been to the site of that very eruption on a Geography field trip in October - the second of what was hoped to be a regular annual trip (this may now have to be reviewed - the risk assessments are mind-boggling!).

Another casualty of the travel chaos was a planned exchange visit from a Jesuit school in Spain. This will go ahead at a later date and is part of a larger and longer term plan to strengthen the links between Jesuit schools throughout the world.

We would like to wish a warm welcome and our best wishes to our new Chair of Governors Dr Patrick (Paddy) Stone who is an old boy of the College (1979-84) and has a son Joseph in the 6th Form. Paddy replaces Andrew Kennedy who stood down

after 10 years of tremendous service not only to the school, but also, in many unheralded ways to the OW's. Andrew, who had 2 sons (James and Mark) at the College, was Chair of Governors through the major appeal and subsequent building developments which now stand as a testimony to his efforts, organizational skills and powers of persuasion.

There were a lot of happy parents last month as they received the letters confirming their sons' places at the College for the next academic year (2010-2011). There were, however, twice as many unhappy ones. Once again, there were more than three times as many applicants as there were places available. There is also an application process for the sixth-form and this, too, is over-subscribed. These are highly positive indicators of the College's well-founded reputation as a leading state school for Catholic children.



Guys & Dolls - March 2010

If you want to keep up to date with the weekly events and news from the College, then look up the College website at wimbledoncollege.org.uk.

Academic excellence, success in a variety of sports (the College Under 13 side won the National 7 a side rugby tournament in March), the performing arts (a range of musical and dramatic extravaganzas throughout the year), the support of charities – local and further afield (Project Manvi in India) and a strong religious ethos (described as "Outstanding" in a recent Diocesan Inspection) all combine in a way that should bring pride to us "old boys".

The Sports Report

The most tangible evidence of our existence is our sports ground and clubhouse in Coombe lane, which we share with Donhead. In 1997 the Cricket club moved from our former ground in Chessington and the Football and Rugby clubs moved from the leased Atkinson Morley ground and were therefore reunified on the one ground for the first time since 1984. The previous owners, the Civil Service, had ceased using it a number of years earlier and, being unable to sell it for development, sold it on to us. The Clubhouse was derelict and had been heavily vandalized, and the

pitches (particularly the cricket squares) needed a huge amount of work. 13 years on, the place is unrecognizable. The clubhouse bar and patio are a delight to visit, particularly at this time of year when the evenings are getting longer. The grounds are now in an excellent condition, a fact much appreciated by the numerous Cricket, Football and Rugby teams of the Old Boys, Donhead and the College.

Now that the Football and Rugby seasons are drawing to a close, we have to report that none of our teams have won any championships or promotions in their leagues. However, at a time when there are so many other things to do, and many similar clubs are experiencing difficulties, we are still able to field 3 regular rugby XV's and an occasional vets side on Saturday afternoons and four football sides (including a vets XI) on most Sunday mornings during the season.

The Cricket club has really blossomed as a result of its move to SW20 and can now field as many as SIX Saturday sides (some of whom play at the adjacent College ground) and 4 Sunday sides. There are few, if any, Old Boys clubs who can boast such progress.

However, the real success story of Coombe Lane has to be that of our burgeoning mini sections. The Cricket club set the standard 4 years ago by starting up cricket for Under 6's to Under 9's. Most of these boys are still with us and have been joined by, amongst others, a number of Donhead and College boys now up to the age of 13.

It didn't take long for a similar bunch of ex rugby-playing dads to want to emulate the success of the cricket club. Now, coming towards the end of their second season, the Wimbledonian Warriors boast over 100 youngsters from 6-12 years old regularly attending and honing their rugby skills on Sunday mornings.

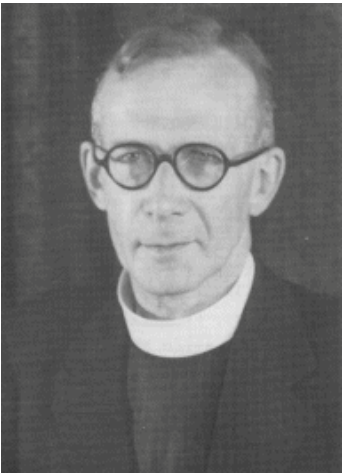
The biggest problem the ground committee now faces is how to accommodate all these growing sections in the limited area available. What a wonderful problem to have!

Although most of the readers of this newsletter have either hung up their boots, or were never that interested in sport anyway, it is worth reflecting that all those years of hard work and effort by so many people on our various grounds (including the current committee) have brought us full circle back to Coombe Lane 200 yards along the road from where so many of us stood shivering, drenched, covered in mud, grass and clay and I, for one, loved every minute of it!

If you are in the area, the clubhouse is open most nights. A glass of lemonade or something stronger is readily available at our well stocked bar and there may even be a game of cricket to watch on a summer's evening – idyllic!

If you would like to follow more closely the progress of the individual clubs, there are links to all of them on the OWA website at owa.org.uk .

The Non Sports Report



Fr John Sinnott

In a recent meeting of the **SINNOTT SOCIETY** in the College Hall, the guest speaker was Dr Tony Hall. He entertained and enlightened the audience (including a number of 6th formers from the College and the Ursuline) with a resume of an amazing career including studying medicine under Dr Roger Bannister (of 4 minute mile fame), running an American field hospital in Vietnam during the Vietnam war, being doctor to the England cricket team during the World Cup in Pakistan in 1987, specializing in the study of malarial diseases and, latterly, working for the MOD to look into Gulf War syndrome. In the middle of all this, he threw in an anecdote about a meeting with Mohamed Ali plus a number of cautionary

tales. The next meeting will be in November at Farm Street. The speaker has yet to be confirmed, but he will certainly have a hard act to follow.

If you would like to know more about the SINNOTT SOCIETY, would like to attend one of the meetings or feel that perhaps you could speak about some interesting aspects of your life, the Chairman, Colonel Ken Peacock would be very pleased to hear from you.

At the same meeting Ian Gordon, the OWA President, informed me that on 3rd and 4th July at Mount St Mary's there will be a meeting of the British Jesuit Alumni to discuss ideas for future links between the Old Boys (and girls) of the Jesuit schools in Britain and possibly further afield. Ian would like to hear from anyone who might have some ideas to put to the meeting and/or might be interested in attending.

As we go to press the Committee of the **OW SCHOLARSHIP** fund are interviewing 5 or 6 boys from Rhetoric to determine who, if anybody, will be granted an award this year. The fund, and therefore the awards, are not that substantial and have not been helped by interest rates and the current economic climate – all this at a time when fees are going up and places are harder to find. The committee would warmly welcome any help in this respect.

That veritable fount of information, the aforementioned Ian Gordon was also able to confirm that the **OW's LOURDES HOSPITALITE** have 2 trips planned this year. The first is from the 20th to 28th August, and the second is from the 28th August to 4th September.

If you are interested in going on one of these trips, or would like to contact any of the groups or people mentioned above, I will be pleased to pass on any information. I can be contacted by e- mail at owa@wimbledoncollege.org.uk

The News Report

Since taking over as Membership Secretary and assuming responsibility for this newsletter, I have had passed on to me numerous contacts from OW's visiting our website. To my shame, not all of these have been answered, but I am working on it as, indeed, I am working on making more news more frequently available to our membership. We are all too aware that often the only news we receive at the OW's is bad news which means that the website often resembles an obituary column. The intention is to become more proactive from a base at Wimbledon College and, from that base, to provide more information and updates to our readers.

So, here follows a selection of snippets of information about OW's that I have picked up in recent months.

At a recent golf day in memory of the late **Russ Johnson**, I caught up with his eldest son **Oliver (1984-89)** who is married with 2 children, still lives locally and is an investment banker. Ollie's younger brother **Luke (1986-1991)** now lives in Cambridge Massachusetts having finally settled down after a few years travelling the world. **Guy Bennett**, a near neighbour of Luke would love to be kept in touch with his old alumni. At the same event were **the Kelleher brothers, Tom and Dennis, Mark Bailham, Andy Kenny and Brendan Baxter** (now a serious looking solicitor).

Also living in the States, in Cumberland, Maine is **Mark Philips (1977-1981)** who is keen to get back in touch with any of his old contemporaries. One of these is **James Dyson** currently residing in Beijing with his wife and young son. He says he has been in China for 9 years now and is still playing the odd game of rugby. That is great to hear because James was considered by many to be one of the finest rugby players to have been at the College. He once, memorably, scored a hat-trick of tries for Richmond against London Welsh in the final of the Middlesex 7's.

One of our more recent leavers **Freddie Hick (2001-2004)** has been in touch and informs us that he played rugby at Donhead with **Danny Cipriani**. I am sure **Mr O'D** was proud of the pair of you. Who did he shout at most?



George Skivington in action at Wasps

While we are talking rugby, keep an eye out for **George Skivington**. He has been at Wasps with Danny Cipriani and has captained the England Saxons. At the end of the season he moves on to Leicester and it can only be a matter of time before he gets his first full cap for England. Good luck George.

Continuing the sporting theme, **Jay Tabb (1999-2002)** has been playing regularly in the Championship for Reading. They have only just missed out on a play-off place, but he assures me that next season they will be going all out for promotion to the Premier League. Jay could be our first ever Premier League footballer – not bad for a rugby dominated school!



Jay Tabb in Reading colours

Jean Birch, the daughter of **Frank Keast (1920-1925)** has been trying to find out more details of his school life. Frank is now deceased as are most, if not all of his contemporaries. Also, the College archives are not terribly informative. If anybody has any snippets of information, Jean would be very grateful to receive them.

Going back in time a little, **Brian Crowe (1949-1953)** has been in touch from Stronsay in Orkney. He has very fond memories of his time at the College. His first Headmaster was **Father Sinnott** followed by **Father St Lawrence** (what a dynamic duo!), and he talks with great respect of messrs **Milward** and **Laloux** and Fathers **Wetz**, **Hamer** and **Bermingham**. The leading sportsman in his day was **Joe McPartlin**, brother of **George, John and Gerald**, and our last full rugby international. Incidentally, Joe recently donated to the College one of his Scottish international jerseys and the programme from his first international exactly fifty years ago.

At a recent birthday party at the OW's (available for functions!) **Patrick Ward (1964-1971)** was proudly relating the successes of his four boys – all Millfield educated (presumably they couldn't get in at the College). Pat is a senior executive at J P Morgan and has nothing but good to say about the banking industry – a view not shared by capitalist-turned-chiropractor **Tony Kerrigan (1961-68)**.



Leeds Brewery Beers

The elaborate link to Tony Kerrigan was so that I can plug the **BIG PRIZE FUND**, which has now replaced the defunct 200 Club. For only £10 a month – less than the price of a pint of beer a week (slightly more if you drink at Witherspoons) you can be entered for a monthly prize and 2 more substantial prizes every 6 months. The actual value of the prizes is naturally dependant on the total number of members, but already several people have won sums of £500. If you would like to be involved, then you can contact Tony through me.

Having mentioned the price of beer, a more natural link is to young entrepreneur **Sam Moss (1999-2004)**. Sam left the College to study history at York University. During his time there Sam developed a taste for real ale and went to work for the

local brewery. He and a fellow undergraduate spotted an opening in the market and, soon after graduating, began to think about raising finance to open their own brewery. The end result was a very successful brewery in Leeds, with a small chain of their own pubs, and distribution throughout the North East of England. In the interests of research I have tested their products and can give my personal endorsement to their entire range. Further to this, if any of you have a daughter in the right age category, I can arrange a suitable introduction. Who wouldn't want a son-in-law with his own brewery?

The Last Report

I hope this has been of some interest and enjoyment to you. I am **Graham Turner (1961-1968)**, contemporary of the aforementioned **Tony Kerrigan** and **Rick Westley**, the OWA Chairman. Some of you may remember me from playing sport at the OW's, others may remember me as a former teacher at the College (just retired after 25 years) and some really old people may remember me as a boy at the school.

This newsletter will hopefully appear on a quarterly basis and will be sent to existing members and any other OW's who have sent in a contact e-mail address. It will also be posted out to paid up members who do not like to communicate electronically. Feel free to forward this to any of your old school friends and please tell them to contact me. Once again, the address is owa@wimbledoncollege.org.uk and I would love to hear any updates, comments or suggestions from you.

Graham Turner (OWA Membership secretary)

