

# **T.O.G.S. NEWS.**

## **The Newsletter of Torquay Old Grammarians Society**

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**\*From the temporary editor:** ( Graham Bradshaw).

I am pleased to be able to publish another Newsletter. This is due to members responding to the request for anecdotes etc. and for these articles I thank you.

The frequency and content of our Newsletters are determined by information which comes to us from Old Boys themselves, from the School and from what we are able to extract from the Herald Express.

We would very much like more from members themselves, whether it be in the form of extended career summaries or anecdotes from their time at the School. The more we get, the more frequently we are able to publish a Newsletter.

### **Subscriptions - New rates will apply from Oct. 1st 2008.**

Members are reminded that all annual subscriptions not paid by bankers order fell due on 1<sup>st</sup> October. Further, student memberships taken out 3 years ago have now expired and 10-year subscriptions taken out in 1996 also are now due.

From the Society's point of view the easiest method for renewal is by bankers order, since this avoids the cost of sending out reminders. For members it represents the cheaper option - £5 per annum compared with £6 if paid by cash/cheque. The 10-year membership is now £30.

Renewal cheques should be made payable to T.O.G.S. and marked for the attention of the Treasurer.

### **Ties**

The TOGS tie is now available from the Treasurer at £9 (inc. p&p) and is proving to be very popular with members.

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### **Obituary.**

## **W. H. Pethick MICE ( 1934 -' 41 )**

Son David writes:- I write with regret to inform you that my father Bill Pethick of 15, Woodland Court, Knoll Hill, Bristol B59 1NR , died on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2007. He had been suffering from dementia for some while.

Bill was born in New Zealand on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1923. His family returned to the UK in 1926 or 27. He attended Torquay Grammar School and on the outbreak of war joined the Local Defence Volunteers. From the age of 18 he served in the RNVR, flying as observer/navigator in 827 Squadron on HMS Furious. In 1944 he took part in Operation Tungsten to attack the German Battleship "Tirpitz" in Kaa Ford in northern Norway, and was later mentioned in dispatches.

After the war he became a Civil Engineer, moving from job to job and ended his career as a senior manager with Proctor & Gamble in Essex. He retired to Dorset and latterly to Bristol. He leaves a wife, Tereora and two children, myself and my sister Elizabeth.

## **Reminder**

**Old Olavians' generous gesture.** The Old Olavians' 1940's group have about 50 members who were evacuated to TBGS during World War II. They have offered two tickets to their Annual Dinner at the Royal Air Force Club to two members of TOGS - preferably who were at the School during the same period. The Dinner will be held in April 2008.

For further details please contact the Hon. Sec. John Pearce.

## **News of Old Boys.**

**Lee Farmer** ( 1983-88) prepares for his biggest ever challenge this spring - an attempt in March to scale Mount Everest. Lee is an experienced climber and his progress can be followed online at [www.leefarmer.co.uk](http://www.leefarmer.co.uk). (Herald Express).

## **The Christopher Penford Trophy.**

This trophy was awarded for the first time this year. The Old Grammarians beat Torquay "Tics" at the annual Boxing Day rugby tournament. Torquay Athletic 15 pts, Torquay Old Grammarians 22 pts Results to date : Tics have won five matches and Old Grammarians have won four matches. The trophy has since been engraved to show the results for the past 9 years.

## **News of the School.**

### **School Prize Giving Day .**

Every stroke counts when you are a world champion rower. And the same applies in life, British team rower **Marcus Bateman** (1994-2001) told Torquay Boys' Grammar School prize-giving day. Old Boy Marcus was always a gifted athlete but it was only three years ago that he tried rowing for the first time while on placement at an American university. He is now in the senior men's national rowing squad and has gone from strength to strength, is already a world championship winner in the super eights, and is considered a real prospect for the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He told the boys that other teams would be fighting for a gold medal as badly as they would. "The only thing that gets you through is knowing that you have to work hard to get there" he said "In an eights it is really down to team work , working with the guys around you, knowing they are working as hard as you are, that they are helping you and you are helping them. Every stroke counts. That applies to whatever you are doing. "Don't think something doesn't matter, that you won't bother. It does matter and it will pay off if you do make every stroke count and especially if you have put in in the kind of passion and commitment that you have shown here. (Courtesy of the Herald Express)

Marcus presented the many awards after congratulatory speeches by the Headmaster Mr Roy Pike and Chairman of the Governors Mr Brian Wills-Pope.

In Sept 2007 an article in the Herald Express stated that T.B.G.S was ranked the third state school in the country as we reported in the Autumn Newsletter. When the School league tables were published this January the School was said to be in 10<sup>th</sup> place in the country including the independent public schools. Congratulations are again due to the Headmaster, Staff and the Pupils on this excellent result.

### Memories.

**Michael Cattell (1960-1966) writes:** It seems such a shame that so few of the TOG's now contribute to the content of the newsletter and I must admit that I, for one, given how easy it is to communicate by email, am very much at fault.

My time at Torquay Boys Grammar School was, from an academic point of view, not particularly high flying, but it did give me an excellent grounding, and I went on with the knowledge I gained from that place of excellence, to enter the world of business to do 'rather well'.

For me it has always been sad to read of teachers at TBGS who have passed away. Their obituaries always seem to be rather clinical and factual, and more often than not, lack any schoolboy anecdotes that would give many of us a twinge of emotion by adding an extra dimension to their memory.

One staff member in particular, Bob Roper the art teacher in the 50's and 60's was a teacher who I am sure influenced a great many pupils, whether they were artistically inclined or not. A man who in the modern age would be considered hugely politically incorrect, his methods of corporal punishment, in particular 'The Twist' (twisting the hair adjacent to the ear) were especially painful for those who fell foul of his exacting standards. His methods of marking were also memorable, standing the scholars before him, demanding they held their homework out in front of them. The slightest crease in the paper, a sign of artwork stuffed inside a blazer pocket, would result in him exaggerating the blazer stuffing process by seizing the offending artwork and scrunching into a ball before handing it back and marking it with a less than favourable grade, a sure way of ensuring pristine work was presented the next time around.

But more than just teaching art in its purest sense, he taught well, a subject that was in addition to the art curriculum, namely architecture. This was a subject that enabled a great many of his pupils to appreciate the finer points of this field, and in particular, medieval architecture. I still remember his famous saying which we all had to learn by heart '*These massive piles of masonry, punctuated the English countryside, a constant reminder to the subjugated Saxons, of the near presence of their Norman overlords*' A saying I still remember reciting with alacrity with a group of TOG art students in the bar at the Grand after a reunion many years ago.

I still carry with me, thanks to Bob, the ability to determine the age of an ancient church by the shape of its windows. Totally worthless you might think, but it came in very useful some forty years later when I acted as chauffeur to my son on a sketching trip for his A level coursework, which required him to draw as he put it 'old buildings'. On our travels we came upon an old church at a place called Shotwick not far from the Dee estuary in Cheshire. As we walked through the Lych gate, I heard myself saying aloud, 'Mmm, Norman church with dog toothed doorway, Early English additions with further modifications in the Decorated style' My son looked at me disbelievingly, until we stopped in the church porch where a brief history of the church was displayed in a laminated poster. It read 'The church was built originally by the Normans and you will

toothed doorway in was added in the 13<sup>th</sup> Early English with the Decorated style of

**TOGS Reunion Dinner 2008**  
**7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008**  
**Riviera International Centre, Torquay.**

note the fine dog front of you. The aisle century in the style of further additions in the 14<sup>th</sup>

century.....my son looked at me for the for the first time as if to say, well Dad perhaps, for the first time you sound like you really do know what you are talking about! My credibility rose one hundred percent! ..... Thanks Stringy!

**Gordon Stuart ( 1972 -1978) writes:** Hello, hope this is of interest. The Handlebar Club were asked if they would like to judge the "Big Geordie Beard Day" at Newcastle Falcons Ground Kingston Park on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007. As the most local member of the HBC I was asked by the club if I would like to attend, too right! The Big Geordie Beard day was a charity event coinciding with the Falcons European Challenge match

against Connacht and inspired by the recent signing of bearded Allblack prop Carl Hayman. The Beard competition was held post match in the West Stand bar. Judged by Dr.David Bellamy and myself and compered by ex Scotland and British Lion's lock forward Doddie Weir.

Prizes were awarded for the best "Home Made" (false) beards and best "Home Grown" (Real ) beards.

### **Kenneth Charles Kirby (1940 -1946).**

Kenneth has been very ill and during his enforced confinement had, as you do, been thinking about his youth and schooldays. His daughter Judith wrote in December, to say he was wondering about old School friends and the teachers - had we got any information on his peers and the school? Kenneth started the Grammar School proper on September 16<sup>th</sup> 1940 and one of his close friends at that time was a boy named John Trethewey.

I was able to recommend "The Centenary Book" which Judith duly purchased and was impressed by the amount of information in it. I contacted Christopher Madge and Don Roberts who started the school the same year and Don was able to provide a lot of information to Judith about those times - we did not know what had happened to John Trethewey or another classmate named Swan at that time. Another contemporary was Brian O'Gram who now lives in Canada.

In Mid-January Don telephoned me to say he had traced John Trethewey to Kent and Mr Swan to Dorset. What a result! Thank you Don for your hard work. Judith is very grateful for Don's efforts and we trust the information was the tonic Kenneth needed to speed up his recovery.

## **Annual General Meeting held on Friday November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

**Clive Angel** did not wish to be re-elected to the committee due to health problems. We thank him for his input over the last five years. Clive also compiled and edited "**The Centenary Book**", a mammoth feat of which he can be justifiably proud.

**John F Alford** was elected to the committee

**Graham Willis.** Graham each year pays for an entry in the Daily Telegraph referring to the forthcoming Annual Dinner of TOGS. The Committee on behalf of TOGS thanked Graham for this generous gesture.

The Committee recommended that membership fees be increased from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

### **Officers:**

Patron:	W H Hore
President:	David Simmons
Hon Sec:	J.V. Pearce
Treasurer.	P. Whatton

**Committee:** D Cavaliere, J F Alford, B Holmes, C Madge, C Turner, G.P. Willis, S. Margetts.

**Vice- Presidents: (who also serve as Committee members )**R E Pike, D. Reid, Don. Roberts, D. Brunsdon, Simon Whittaker, Len Lewis, Graham Bradshaw.

### **Honorary Members.**

Current Staff:- Roy E Pike (Headmaster), Chris. D Penford

Former Staff:- Barry K Hobbs (Headmaster 1982- '86), Peter J Hewitt (Deputy Headmaster), David Berry (Deputy Headmaster), Gilbert Head-Rapson, John B Hopwood, David Johnson, Don J Roberts, David Golder, Ian Kay, David Kerswell, A.K.Hele.

Governors:- Chairman Brian Wills-Pope.