

# T.O.G.S. NEWS.

## The Newsletter of Torquay Old Grammarians Society

Torquay Boys Grammar School, Shiphay Manor Drive, Torquay. TQ2 7EL  
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### 2009 Annual Dinner

The Annual Reunion dinner was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 in the Riviera International Conference Centre. Sixty-five diners were welcomed by the President Michael Angelos (1947-'53). The President introduced our new Patron Denis Reid (1933-'39), Freeman of the Borough, who had entered the preparatory Grammar School in 1926 and had also spent 32 years as a Governor of the School. Denis had known all five Headmasters of the Grammar School.

The School was represented by the Headmaster Mr Roy Pike who gave a short speech outlining his hopes for the future of the School and ongoing developments.

Mr David Golder who was a member of staff at the school from 1963 to 1995 gave a short amusing speech about his introduction to the school in 1963.

The M.C. Mr Don Roberts took the traditional roll-call, the first to sit down being Mark Foale and Will Pike who left the school in 2008 and the last to sit down being John Holmes B.E.M. who was at the school from 1926 to 1930.

The Society is indebted to **Mr Graham Willis** who once again paid for an insertion into the events column of the Daily Telegraph recording the holding of the Annual Dinner.

### T.O.G.S. Annual Reunion Dinner 2010.

The Riviera International Conference Centre has been provisionally booked for the 2010 dinner to be held on Friday July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Further details and a ticket application form will be included with the Spring Newsletter.

The 2010 Dinner will represent 25 years of the reformed Old Grammarians Society. After the success of the Dinner at the Barton Road premises when we said goodbye to the old School (approx 350 diners), the then Headmaster, Mr Barry Hobbs, asked Don Roberts and David Simmons to try and revive the defunct society which they did with some success. Every year since a Re-union dinner has been held on the first weekend in July with three exceptions. In 1987 the Committee tried to increase the turnout at the dinner by holding it at Easter time in the hope of attracting more of the Old Boys who were at University. In the 1997 a dinner had to be cancelled due to unfortunate administrative errors, and in 2005 the dinner was held a week later than our usual preferred date due to all suitable venues being booked up.

As a result of announcing the annual reunion dinner on the website of Friends Reunited, on which approximately 3,300 old boys' of the grammar school were listed, I received many messages of apology from those unable to be with us and wishing us well for the Reunion.

### Correspondence.

**Dr Colin Ross (St. Olaves Grammar School 1937-'46)** had a letter published in the **Herald Express** as follows: "On Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> 1939, 70 years ago, a special train bearing the school took a unique journey across the breadth of Southern England arriving at Torre station in the early

evening. The pupils were bussed up to the Torquay Grammar school (Barton Road), where a fleet of volunteer motorists was waiting to deliver them in singles, pairs and even bigger groups to foster parents across the town.

It would be five and a half years later, at Eastertime in 1945, before the school would return to its Tooley Street home which had miraculously escaped damage during the blitz. The surviving old boys from those days ( about 10% of the 400 - Ed) are now in their twilight years but they still remember the remarkable camaraderie which existed in the school at that time and, with maturity, appreciate the magnitude of the generosity and sacrifice of their former foster parents who sadly are no longer with us”.

**Dennis Raines ( 1940’s)** wrote to the editor in a similar vein. Dennis lives in New Zealand and also corresponds with Don Roberts. He writes:- As year 2009 commemorates the outbreak of World War 11 - 70 years ago, my mind immediately goes back to Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1939, when approximately 400 pupils from St. Olaves & St. Saviours Grammar School, arrived at Torre station at about 5 pm. to be transported to the Great Hall of Torquay Grammar School. At the time it was pouring down with rain, and the question was asked of a local “Is it always like this?”. The quick reply came back ”Down in Devon it rains six days out of Seven!”. We knew we had arrived in the West Country.

I cannot express sufficiently in words my appreciation of the kindness shown by the Headmaster Mr Harmer, his staff, in absorbing such a large number of additional pupils at short notice, and the remaining five years of the war. A rare achievement.

Editors note: We thank Colin and Dennis for their kind thoughts. We have many members from 1940-45 who shared the school with St. Olaves including Don Roberts, Graham Avery, Alan Braund, Peter Collier, M.P.Gilbert, Colin Hatherley, Ken Kirby, John Trethewey, Christopher Madge, Alex Robertson-Kellie, Ian Satterley, Alan Swan and Bryan Webber, all of whom attended the 2009 Re-Union Dinner. Also the late Eric Chave (1931-2009). Your Hon. Sec. John Pearce shared the family home in Chelston with two of the evacuees. Several letters and articles from Old Olavians’ remember the school tuck shop run by two ladies, and being boys, all remember having their faces pressed to the shop window of Bradshaw’s Model shop ( no relation, Ed.)

### **200 Squadron ATC Open Evening 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009.**

**John Pearce (1948-’53)**, your Hon. Sec. writes “I, together with David Simmons received an invitation to attend on the occasion of a planned open evening, as a means of parents and would be members of the Air Training Corps. finding out what the Squadron was able to offer. On arrival I was approached by the current C.O., one Flight Lieutenant Christopher Milford, to ask if I, in the absence of the invited guest, would inspect the Squadron and take the salute at the March Past. Added to this was the opportunity to present Gliding Wings and Duke of Edinburgh Award Certificates to a number of the cadets. Apparently Johnny Johnson who had been asked to carry out this role had been taken ill at the last moment and could not attend. Hence the sudden decision to “drop me in it” I was delighted to accept and considered it a privilege, even though it was at the last minute, and agreed to do the honours. I asked the C.O to explain to the parents and cadets who I was and thank him for doing so. The reason behind this was because of my previous involvement as Commanding Officer of 1528 Grammar School Squadron back in 1972 - when Chris Milford was a cadet in the Squadron. I think it was in 1979 that the squadron reverted back to 200 (Torquay) Squadron which was its official designated founder number back in 1940/45. Although still operating in the grounds of the Grammar School and encouraging pupils of the school to join , it is in fact a town, rather than a school squadron.

Having inspected and spoken to a number of cadets, both male and female, I was delighted to note their terrific upbeat confidence and to listen to their aspirations for their possible future in the RAF. One young girl cadet expressed a desire to play trumpet in the RAF Central Band. That made a change from wanting to fly fast jets and become a fighter pilot. I commented on this to Chris Milford and said he should be proud of the cadets under his command”.

### **Old Boys’ Memories.**

**Steven Cox (1982-’89)** writes:- “ I was at the Grammar School in the Eighties; a time of miners’ and teachers’ strikes, mullet haircuts and cheesy pop music. I feel I was very fortunate to come across some supportive, motivational teachers, and had a great time in a lot of areas: particularly music and the performing arts and general knowledge quizzes.

It’s 20 years this year since I left, but I remember vividly performing, with several of the teachers and many of the boys, in “Oliver” in my first year - it was the last school production at what we came to call “The Old School” i.e. Barton Road. I had to take over at the last minute one night in the title role when Paul Williams became ill during the performance, and don’t remember much apart from the backstage crew and the staff members being very encouraging, despite my mates in the chorus taking the mickey out of me!

I remember being roped into playing the piano at the official opening of the school attended by Sir John Fieldhouse, in 1983 (that was probably by Barry Hobbs or Dave Golder). I became involved with quite a lot of musical activities both through the school, on the piano and later the bassoon, and outside it.

What I enjoyed most about the school was the team spirit, whether it was supporting the school football team at Plainmoor, or helping to raise money for our House charity days (Davy’s charity at the time was Guide Dogs for the Blind). I fell into competing for the school in many quizzes, firstly against the Girls across the paddock and then in county competitions, especially in what was the Devon Air Interschools quiz.

I had a great time representing the school in these competitions. They were not only fun, but gave us the chance to meet other schools, pack out the school hall/dining room and win cash prizes!! I remain indebted to several ex-teachers: Peter Hewitt, Robert Andrewartha, Alec Vernal, Dave Golder, for their patience and going the extra mile with the team, quite literally in the case of the first-named as they were the ones driving us to several of the quiz venues.

TBGS was an environment where achievements, both academic and sporting, were recognised and encouraged, and I remember my 7 years there with a lot of pleasure”.

**Philip Healey (1977-’81)** writes: “Dear Mr Pike, Just a quick line from an “old boy” finding the TBGS website at random- I arrived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year I think around the time you appeared in 1978?

Trusting that the school these days applies encouragement to pupils of all abilities, aside from the dash for Oxbridge and is perhaps more diligent in following the welfare of late arrivals, who can easily have a life of hell at school because they stand out from their peers, to the detriment of their academic performance and suppressing the desire even to come to school. It was heartening to discover that Jeremy Clarkson had similar difficulties and it did not do him any harm in the long run.

On a more positive note, despite my infamous 4<sup>th</sup> year report having Mr Bunce’s memorable comment that I “lacked drive”, I did leave the school with a strengthened determination to succeed in life and subsequently ground through an HND, Degree and Msc. In engineering fields (STILL failing to grasp calculus !), ending up in Hong Kong in 1996 and I have been running my own engineering consultancy here for the past 10 years. I have also by accident carried out some part-time lecturing at Hong Kong’s City University at MSc level and have been a guest lecturer to local engineering institutions in a

particular specialisation I have, related to fire engineering.

So, in the precise words of the late lamented Mr Joslin, don't dismiss the "Stupid Thick Devonians!"

In addition to Mr Joslin I have fond memories of the many staff who attempted to educate me, including Messrs. Head Rapson, Golder, Berry, Kay, Granger and Roberts.

Hoping they are still around even if not teaching, and also hoping you managed to preserve the culture of the Library Workshop in the transition to the Shiphay site.

Best Regards, Phil Healey B.Eng.(Hons.) MSc., C.Eng., M.I.Mech.E., M.I.E.T., Affiliate CIBSE, M.I.E., RPE (MCL) ”.

### **News from the School**

The **International Baccalaureate** has been introduced into the syllabus of the school this school year. Twenty seven students have been admitted to the two year course including eight girls. The school also has well established international links and teaches a wide range of languages. The Headmaster stated that "While it may not suit everyone, The International Baccalaureate is a qualification every ambitious student should consider". (Herald Express).

**Planning Application.** Thank you to those local members who supported a planning application to build housing on a problematic scrubby area on the school campus. Work is about to start on this social housing project and monies received by the Grammar School will be spent on refurbishment work at Shiphay Manor.

**2009 Examination Results:** In a letter to parents, The Headmaster, Mr Roy Pike wrote the following:- "I should just say that our GCSE results were phenomenal. Not one boy who entered five scored fewer than five.

All others, including one of our students who was very ill just before his examinations, scored over five A\* - C. In fact, of the 143, the pass rate was 99.2% - that is the highest ever pass rate - and 60 boys gained eight A's and A\*'s or more. The point score per candidate again was the highest ever and Adrian Wong, a boy two years young, scored ten A\*'s. Sadly he has moved to the South East and will be attending school there.

In the core subjects, e.g. Mathematics, there were 114 A's and A\*'s, 101 in Science and 112 in English Language. It is probably worth noting that given Art is not part of the academic entry test, congratulations to Mr Davis and his team on the points total – and given the constraints under which the Religious Studies department works, their results and points were similarly fantastic. But, in fact, well done to everybody – a brilliant performance all round for what was a less academically strong year. At GCSE the school stands at 15<sup>th</sup> boys' selective state school in the country.

At 'A' Level it turned out to be, in Mr Dobbs' words, 'a stellar year'. Nationally, in the leagues we are the 11<sup>th</sup> boys' state school and the A's and B's are a record 77.8% with A – C of 92%. Again, congratulations to all involved – 14 to Oxbridge, 10 medics and boys going to high quality universities across the country. AS was not so strong and there will be quite a taxing year on staff next year to endeavour to maintain the high standards”.

( The Old Grammarians Society pass on their congratulations to The Headmaster, the staff and pupils of the School for once again producing such excellent results -Ed.)

### **News of Old Boys**

**Steve Ridgeway (1962- '69 )** Following the Grammar School went to Oxford Polytechnic. In 1981

joined Cougar Marine (Miami). 1985-'86 Project manager Virgin Atlantic Challenger and “throttle man” to Richard Branson on the transatlantic attempts.

In 1989 joined Virgin Atlantic airline and became managing director in 1998 and Chief Executive in 2001.

In 2003-'04 Non Executive director of British American Racing (BAR)

**Paul Dunn, Commander R.N. (1981-'88)** has been honoured in the Queen's birthday honours list with the award of the O.B.E. This was awarded in recognition of his “outstanding performance” as the commanding officer of the Vanguard Class Submarine HMS Vigilant between August 2007 and July 2008. He is currently based at the Maritime Warfare Centre at HMS Collingwood, Fareham, Hampshire.

**Daniel Watson, Dr (1996-'03)** BSc. (Hons.) MBCHB (Hons).

**Russell Haines (1986-1990)** Former T.B.G.S. pupil Dr. Russell Haines has gained his PhD in the Electrical and Electronic Engineering Department at the University of Bristol with a thesis entitled “Verification and Performance Analysis of Extended Petri-net MAC Protocol Designs for Reconfigurable Radio”, after six years of part-time study. Russell is also a European Engineer (Eur Ing), a Chartered Engineer (CEng) and a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE). He's now Chief Standardisation Officer at Toshiba Research Europe in Bristol, and is living in Westbury on Trym with his wife Nathalie and his two daughters, Ellie and Martha.

**Paul Hawkins (1950-58)** Still sweating it out in Dubai running an executive search consultancy for financial institutions around the Middle East - summer temps 40-45 degrees - phew ! Dubai has gone through a boom and bust period with property prices and stock markets going sky high up to a year ago and then collapsing much as Hong Kong did many years back. Took the locals by surprise as the younger ones had only seen prices go one way. Markets starting to rebound now and the worst is over but as those of you who are familiar with the Middle East will know, the future of the Gulf countries depends almost entirely on oil prices. Stay around 50 to 80 dollars to the barrel and everything will be OK but if you see the price go below 20 I might be home looking for a job together with many others! Still follow football and cricket with a passion and was delighted to see the lads at Plainmoor finally winning promotion back to the football league. It was also good to see Freddie battering the Aussies and Owen knocking in goals (and missing them) for the other United but as I write England are 92 for 8 at Headingley. Dubai Sports City now has an international cricket stadium and hosted an Australia vs Pakistan ODI series recently. Our daughter is now working with me here in Dubai. Anyone visiting Dubai or would like any information on Middle East please let me know at [paulscotthawkins@yahoo.com](mailto:paulscotthawkins@yahoo.com)

**Dafydd Bury (2002-'09)** Hockey player Dafydd is starting the next stage of his career this month buoyed by a couple of big summer successes. He will start his studies at Exeter University and will play for their club, who have six sides competing in various national and regional divisions. Dafydd is hoping to build on his summer success with Wales U18s, for whom he claimed a bronze medal in the 2009 European Championships. Since the he has just returned from the UK School Games in Cardiff with a gold medal

He created three goals in the 5-0 win over Scotland and scored crucial goals in the 2-1 win against England and the 2-1 defeat of Ulster. (Herald Express)

**Chris Read (1989-'96)** Former England cricketer Chris brought his coaching academy to Devon during the Autumn half-term break. Read, who originally played for Paignton and was educated at Torquay Boys' Grammar School. He is currently captain of Nottinghamshire and has played in 15 Test matches and 36 one-day internationals. The new £2.5million Sir Christopher Ondaatje Cricket Centre at the University of Exeter was booked for three days for the academy sessions. Day one, Sunday, was for cricketers in the U13-14 age range.

Monday was reserved for U11-12s with Tuesday set aside for the older age groups from 15-17. (Herald Express)

**Dan Hallett, Lt. RN (1991-'98)** from Abbotskerswell, is a navy education and development officer serving on HMS Ark Royal. The 20,000 tonne invincible class aircraft carrier dropped anchor in Torbay at the beginning of November. The carrier has undergone a £12million revamp and is embarking on training operations in the Western Approaches. Dan went to America on HMS Albion in 2004 and on HMS Sutherland to the north of Russia. (Herald Express)

### **Congratulations to the following old boys:**

**Ryan Kenny (1999-2004)** Swansea University 2-1 Business Studies.

**Daniel Tanner (1999-2006)** Swansea University 2-2 Ancient History.

**Mark Downing(1999-2006)** Sussex University BA 2-1(Hons) International Relations & Development Studies

**Ben Wills (1999-2006)** Exeter University BA 2-1(Hons) Drama.

**Tony McLaren (1999-2006)** Oxford University 2-1 History

**Will Pullan (1999-2006)** Durham University 1<sup>st</sup> History

### **Olympic Hopefuls- Sponsorship requested.**

The following old boys of the school have more or less put their career choice on hold so that they can chase their Olympic dreams. Both are in dire need of sponsorship so that they can fulfil their potential.

**David Swift (1997-'04)** David obtained his degree in Sport and Exercise Science at Bath University. At T.B.G.S. he discovered rugby football but at university he concentrated on Athletics, trained every day and won a GB vest. Towards the end of his time at university he was asked to join 800 others to trial for the sport of Bob Skeleton. After 8 weeks of trials (each weekend) he was one of four to be selected. Of that four only he remains. Because of his talent in the sport he has been fast tracked to the International Cup. In the great Britain squad for the Winter Olympics in Vancouver in 2010 there are six athletes who could make the three man team and David is one of them!

At this time he is in Calgary, Canada training for his first race of the season - he is then in America for his next three races and after Christmas follow four races in Europe.

David has turned down the chance of an R.A.F Commission to follow his dream and although he has some funding it is not enough to support himself, and he has to put any spare hours in at a local supermarket.

David's prospects of being in the Winter Olympics in 2014 are very high and there is a good chance he will be there in Vancouver next February. He won a silver medal in the World Junior (under 23) championship last year. No rookie has ever done so well in their first year of competition and he was

the highest placed rookie in the world rankings last year. For more information on David and his sport - website([www.swiftslider.co.uk](http://www.swiftslider.co.uk))

**Jai Geyer ( 2006 -'08)** Champion Ski racer Jai Geyer has set his sights on winning a place in the 2014 Olympic Games in Russia. Jai who is 19 started skiing at four, was racing within a year and by the age of 15 held the English, British and European dry slope championships. He spent last winter racing in the French Alps, where he capped the season by winning the giant slalom event at the British Junior Championships in Meribel. In 2007 Jai skied for Great Britain at the Winter Youth Olympics held in Spain. He is now in the middle of five weeks pre-season glacier training and then switches to his winter base of Meribel for what is a make-or-break season on the competition circuit. He has twice been offered places in the Great Britain Development squad but has been unable to take them up for financial reasons. To make it to Russia in 2014 Jai has to start scooping the podium places that will move him up the rankings and into a place that will attract the funding which will help raise the £25,000 needed to take up his GB place. Twice he has deferred starting an engineering degree at Loughborough University to pursue his dream of skiing at the highest level. For more information on Jai and his sport log on to his website ( [www.jaigeyer.com](http://www.jaigeyer.com))

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

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

Copies of the T.B.G.S. Centenary Book are available from the School. Tel. No. 01803 615501

### **Contact Details.**

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Treasurer: Peter Whatton E-mail address : [whattonp@talktalk.net](mailto:whattonp@talktalk.net)

### **Obituary.**

**Eric Chave (1931- 2009)** Eric was a stalwart member of the 1940's group of our society and attended the school between 1942 and 1949. Eric left wife Jillian and a daughter Alison. We are indebted to Jill for providing us with the following information:-

Eric was born in 1931 and attended Ilsham Primary School and became a choirboy at St Matthias Church. In 1942 he joined the grammar school and on leaving in 1949 he joined the National Provincial Bank. He left to do his national Service in the R.A.F. and was commissioned. He considered making the R.A.F. his career but eventually decided to go back into banking. He returned to the Strand branch but was soon sent to Plymouth. After a short stay there he was sent to Southampton 1963 to 1965 and then promoted to accountant at the Penzance branch and left there to become branch Manager at Ottery St. Mary (69-73). He had another promotion to Gillingham, Dorset where he retired in 1991. In 1997 Eric and Jill achieved their ambition to return to his beloved Devon and Ottery St. Mary where they had been so happy. Because he had been a bank manager he was always in demand for treasurerships and to be auditor for various organisations. Masonry was one of his great joys both in Gillingham and Exeter and he was treasurer of both lodges. He was a member of Ottery St. Mary Choral Society and also a

lifelong supporter of Torquay United through thick and thin and was often derided for this. Up until 2008 when Eric was taken ill, Eric & Jill's retirement was full and active, mostly involving events with other people. They also enjoyed many holidays in Europe and Scandinavia and several cruises, the last big one being to the Baltic in December 2007.

### **Memorial Shield**

The **55 Mile Trophy** in memory of **Adam Bynoth**. The Headmaster is pleased to report that one **Dan Phillips** (Ten Tors Team Leader) had been selected to receive the trophy at the forthcoming Speech Day on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in recognition of his achievement in this event.

### **Notice of 2009 AGM.**

**This year's AGM will take place on Tuesday 24th November at 7.30 p.m. in the School Library.**

#### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 27th November 2008 (to be signed by the President)
3. Matters arising
4. Secretary's Report
5. Treasurer's Report and presentation of Annual Accounts 2008/09
6. Registrar's Report:.
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of Committee
9. Appointment of Auditor for 2009/10
10. Headmaster's Report
11. President's Report
12. Any other business

Nominations for Officers, Committee and items for the Agenda should reach the Secretary before the AGM.

#### **Present Officers:**

Patron: Denis Reid (sine die)

President: Michael Angelos

Hon Sec: John V. Pearce

Treasurer: P. Whatton

Registrar: D Simmons -

#### **Nominations received:**

Michael Angelos

John V. Pearce

Peter Whatton

**Committee:** D Cavaliere, B Holmes, C Madge, C Turner, G.P. Willis, John Alford, D Simmons

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