



WHITGIFTIAN ASSOCIATION

Whitgift School, Haling Park, South Croydon CR2 6YT. Tel: 020 8688 9222 www.whitgiftianassociation.co.uk

President - RICHARD BLUNDELL

Chairman - JOHN ETHERIDGE

Editor - RICHARD BLUNDELL

NEWSLETTER 388 - MARCH/APRIL 2020

NEW YORK'S FIRST WHITGIFT REUNION

New York City had its very first Whitgift reunion. David Drinkwater OW (1976-1983) hosted an informal dinner in Manhattan. The invitation was sent to all OWs in America and five attended; a small number in the grand scheme of Whitgift leavers but good considering this was the first ever reunion of its kind.

The group, that included leavers from 1964-2009, representing a range of generations, met for drinks and dinner at The National Bar and Dining Rooms and are looking forward to the next gathering that

will take place early 2020 and have high hopes for a larger turnout.

"It's always entertaining and rewarding to meet up with OWs," David said. "Our group shared memories from the 1960s through to the 2010s of the school... we look forward to continuing the NYC



reunions this year and hopefully can arrange some get-togethers around the US as well."

ZOHRA JERAJ
WHITGIFT ALUMNI OFFICER

OW CARMAN RE-UNITES WITH OLD FLAME!



Old Whitgiftians, WA President Richard Blundell (OW 1956-63), Colonel Nigel Gilbert (OW 1956-63) and Major Patrick Marsland-Roberts (OW 1953-60) enjoyed a rare day out on their Carmen Livery Company visit to 19 Tank Transporter Squadron RLC Bulford Camp.

As part of the day, the Carmen liverymen were shown over the impressive array of vehicles including the specialized tractor + trailer used to transport the 70 tonne Challenger 2 tank. They were also treated to demonstrations of the vehicle capabilities across Salisbury Plain from inside the cab.

It was also a special day for Col Nigel Gilbert who was reunited with his vehicle from 55 years ago when he was just a 2nd Lieutenant as Troop Commander of 7 Tank Transport Regiment. Photo taken 15th July 1965.

RICHARD BLUNDELL OW
(1956-63)



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



The President tells me that following his successful formal Dinner at the School last year, he plans something completely different for this year. As the WA constitution calls firstly and most importantly for communication between all Old

Whitgiftians he is planning a more relaxed evening buffet supper at the clubhouse where old and new friends can meet

together to enjoy each other's company.

Obviously groups of friends, clubs, societies, forms, years, houses and subjects are warmly encouraged to form up and come along; the only stipulation being everybody must wear an item of Whitgiftian apparel.

Partners are of course welcome, so come along and fill the clubhouse with OW fellowship.

As previously mentioned, contact for this year's Founders Day Service and Breakfast should come through me or the Alumni office at the School.

RICHARD BLUNDELL #77

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

At what event might you expect to hear an eclectic programme including the likes of George Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue played on a harmonica, an Oasis medley sung by a thirteen-year-old sporting a Liam Gallagher trench coat and shades, and Adele's Rolling in the Deep being driven along by a tub-thumping tuba bass line? That's right, the beginning of February saw the annual extravaganza that is the House Music competition roll into Big School to rock the joint.

The winners this year were Dodd's, who with the aforementioned harmonica virtuoso, Brian Wong, leading the way, were deserving champions. Arguably the

stand-out moment of the night, however, fell to Mason's stalwart, Adedamola Amusa, who sung his own song, Courage, whilst accompanying himself on the guitar. He is a real talent, both as a songwriter and singer, and you may be hearing him on your radios in the not-too-distant future!

No sooner had the last music stand been stacked away, the backstage wizards set about transforming Big School from a rock arena to an Elizabethan stage, because the very next night, the Second Form Shakespeare evening was upon us.

The afternoon dress rehearsals were the usual organised mayhem, with the older boys looking on in jealous awe as class

loads of junior boys dressed in soldiers' uniforms, regal garb and dresses were ferried back and forth from the English corridor to Big School by increasingly manic members of the English department. What I always find the most entertaining spectacle of the

day is when the boys all sit down together to eat dinner. Where else would you see King Lear breaking bread with Bottom, or Lady Macbeth sharing a joke with Cleopatra?

The measure of the evening's success and importance should be measured not by the quality of the performances (getting over 200 thirteen-year-old boys to perform some of the most demanding material in theatre in one venue at one time is quite some challenge, let me tell you!) but by the enjoyment and wide-eyed wonder of those young minds taking part, and given some of the comments I heard from the boys at the end of the night, "Sir, I had no idea Shakespeare could be so fun... Sir, I loved that. When can we do it again?" I would say that it was a triumph.

Whilst the Second Form were pitting their wits against the Bard, the Lower First and First Form were taking on Roald Dahl, finishing the half term off in joyous fashion with their two-night run of "Fantastic Mr Fox". The cast did a great job of making every character distinctive.

The audience watched apple cider-swiggling Farmer Bean become increasingly deranged as he led Farmer Bunce (renowned for his goose liver donuts!) and Farmer Boggis (who stinks of chickens) in his plan to stop Mr Fox stealing their ducks, chickens and turkeys once and for all! In doing so he





starts destroying the countryside and launches a war against nature.

The set and staging were amazing, like a layered woodland cake that brilliantly placed the animals in their subterranean burrows while at the same time showing the farmers in action above ground. The projected animations, courtesy of the Whitgift Audio Visual Department, tied together the digging and tunnelling with the world above perfectly.

Sixth Former and co-director, Sam Kelly, worked tirelessly with the young cast - some of whom had never appeared on stage before - who loved having an older student to learn from. "These young actors, the youngest in our school, have worked incredibly hard for each other, and Miss Seal and I are incredibly proud of them all," commented Head of Performing Arts, Mr Pirrie.

In hockey, the school's strength in depth has reached such a level that we now enter two sixth form teams into national cups, with the Firsts playing in the England Hockey National Competition, and the Seconds in the Independent Schools National Competition. both progressed into the fourth rounds of their respective events. All the other teams entered into national events - the U13s, 15s and 16s - have yet to be knocked out. Even more impressive, the U13s are yet to lose any of the fifteen matches they have played, having scored over one hundred goals!

Choral music continues to flourish at Whitgift and 2019 was no exception. Our Choristers have travelled around the country to sing Evensong and at various concerts, and have built up considerable fame beyond Croydon and South London. So much so that BBC Radio 4 followed one of our Minster Choristers, Third Form student Ben Naylor, for a whole term, trying to find out what life is like as a boy chorister. This resulted in the spectacular Christmas episode of Radio 4's series *The Untold* which aired on 23 December.

This was topped the very following day by a television broadcast of *Midnight Mass* at Croydon Minster on BBC One. Twenty-one of our Minster Choristers and Choral Scholars sang live on air with millions watching! They did the School, the Minster, and Croydon proud and put us on the map for choral excellence.

Director of Choral Music, Dr Ronny Krippner, said, "I would like to congratulate them all for what was a very special occasion and I know this is something that will stay with them all their life. Well done."



Michaelmas Term saw the widest ever variety of speakers visit the school as part of the Academic Enrichment programme, as well as four excellent seminars on 'Space' and 'Enlightenment' from pupils and staff. Highlights have included Professor Meric Srokosz's insightful and data-driven lecture on the impact of climate change on our oceans, ex-Olympian Derek Redmond's inspirational talk on 'Dealing with Adversity', and Professor Richard Harvey's culturally engaging exploration of artificial intelligence and its future.

Whitgift was fortunate to have also received a visit from Dr David Mitchell, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy at New College of the Humanities, who spoke on the virtues of studying the Humanities. Talks such as these are a key reason for the school's continued success with regards to Oxbridge applications, with 14 boys having their offers confirmed for these famous academic institutions this year. Students will be studying a wide range of courses including History, Law, Politics Philosophy & Economics, Medicine, Music and Natural Sciences.

Continuing the academic theme, three students with a passion for Computer Science and building their own PCs at home were given the task of putting together the final parts of a new STEM desktop PC to give students access to a second, very high specification machine

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL CONTINUED



in the Design, Technology & Engineering department. The computer, a new AMD Ryzen 9 3900X processor paired to a GeForce RTX 2080 Ti graphics card with 32GB RAM and a couple of very fast Solid State drives, will aid the STEM programme. This will increase our ability to model complex computer algorithms, render CAD designs and animations and run analysis in the virtual wind tunnel of the STEM Green Powered car which won several trophies and was a runner up in the International final at Silverstone last year.

Back in 2017/18, a total of 100 young native trees were planted in the onsite woodland area known to Whitgiftians as the Copse. This year, the plan is to double that number with over 200 saplings added to the site. A group of students have worked tirelessly during

their lunch times alongside grounds and garden staff, teachers, support staff and the Headmaster to make the enterprise a success.

The Copse is a really important part of the ecosystem at Whitgift, being home to a number of species of animals and insects, as well as contributing to the clean air on site. Special thanks should go to Daniel Ratling (Head Groundsman) and James Mallett (Head

Gardener) who have managed the project, and to those students and members of staff who have braved the muddy ground to get behind the scheme! One Upper Sixth Former, who obviously sees himself as a budding punster, described the scheme as a breath of fresh air and commented how he would be sorry to leave this summer because he would not see it through to its fruition!

And finally, by the time you read this, the national semi-finals for the U18 rugby cup will have taken place and we will know whether or not our first team are making the trip to the hallowed turf of

Twickenham for the second year in a row. Hopefully, none of you will have made the trip to Allianz Park to support the boys on Wednesday 4th March, as advertised in the previous newsletter. After sending that to press, I found out that the RFU had announced a late budget cut to their provision for schoolboy rugby, meaning that the national semi-finals were to be played at the home ground of the schools drawn first on a date of their choosing. In our case, that meant a neutral tie becomes a tough away trip to Sherborne on Saturday 7th March.

Whatever fate has in store for the side, one piece of positive news for the school's rugby is that two of our boys, Olly Hartley and Joe Vajner, have been selected for the England U18 squad, so there will hopefully soon be a few more names to be on the look out for in the professional game.

DOMINIC EDWARDS OW (1988-96)



WHITGIFTIAN ASSOCIATION

JOIN OUR CELEBRATIONS...

...AS THE OLD WHIGFTIAN GOLF SOCIETY MARKS ITS
CENTENARY YEAR AT CROHAM HURST GOLF CLUB WITH A
VERY SPECIAL GOLF DAY ON JUNE 16TH, 2020

Further details from Peter Gale, Flint Cottage, Quarry Road, Oxted, RH8 9HF

e-mail: peterbgale@sky.com

GOLF SOCIETY NEWS

With some trepidation, given current weather patterns, over twenty society golfers will set off for Deal on the Kent coast to contest the 2020 Scratch Cup on March 1st. In part at least, this serves as a trial for the Halford Hewitt team, and so it is limited to the best, and no doubt hardiest, golfers the school has produced. Assuming your correspondent survives (and I will only be watching), a report will feature in the next newsletter.

Also in that newsletter should be a report on the Halford Hewitt itself. Whitgift has been drawn against

Wellingborough in the first round on Thursday 2nd April, and will be looking for its 100th match win in the competition, in which the school first featured in 1935. Why not come along and support the team as they try to secure this little bit of history? All you need is an alarm clock (the match starts at 7.45am), a SatNav set for Royal St George's, Sandwich, and potentially some warm clothing.

There will be lunch with the team afterwards in the RSG clubhouse, and hopefully they will all be fit and well. The last time we played

Wellingborough, in 1963, Ian Caldwell broke his wrist on the 18th trying to extract his partner's ball from some particularly thick rough. The records do indicate which partner put him there, but this article does not!

The first of the society's four open meetings is also in April, but at the end of the month on the 28th. It is Captain's Day, at West Hill Golf Club. If you wish to participate in our events, and/or join the society, you should contact the secretary at peterbgale@sky.com. All levels of handicap are equally welcome.

PETER GALE (HON SEC)
OW (1963-69)

UPPER FIFTH (1952-53) REUNION 2019



Our 67th anniversary reunion took place on 7 November 2019, chez mois. Our Honorary Member (my wife, Angela) and Ailsa Boyle, John Webb's partner, came up trumps yet again with a splendid lunch. We – that is those in the attached photograph (from left to right standing: John Hamilton, John Sutcliffe, Ian Brown, Brian Halfacre, John Webb; and seated: Kenneth Rokison and myself) just did all the talking.

But first we drank a toast to absent friends – living (10), “lost” (1) and deceased (9), not least to Noel Parkinson who had sadly died in July and of whom some (myself included)

had known for 74 years (we were at Elmhurst School, South Croydon, together, prior to entering Whitgift).

“It is a truth universally acknowledged” (quote) that when a party of over 80s foregather,

conversation will inevitably turn to ailments and so it did. Nothing morbid but a recognition of what ‘real’ life is like at our ages and offering helpful hints over dealing with various malaises.

But very quickly something triggered a jump back 50 years in recalling an altogether different ‘real’ life for most present, namely doing National Service from Catterick to Singapore and Suez, with references to British Foreign policy of the period, the Anglo-American special relationship and earliest experiences of flying, both in military and long-forgotten commercial aircraft.

In no time we pressed on back to

School-days – a post-War Whitgift in 1947 to 1956, including the gastronomic experiences of whale-meat, horse meat and bully-beef for all; while for some musical/drama delights of performing in annual Gilbert and Sullivan operas begun by John Odom and Ian Smith (with scenery painting led by Bob Jones), and lustily singing (or in my case, by order, mouthing), in House Music Competitions. And debating in the Head's (E.A.G. Marlar's) weekly philosophy and religion lesson. We recalled one on: “Do animals have souls?”.

But not for too long did we dwell in the past. Rather, acknowledging the intellectual, physical, and cultural benefits of a Whitgift life that had supported us over the past seven decades, we turned our wide-ranging discussions forward to the issues of today and tomorrow's worlds. I would like to claim that we avoided the dreaded Brexit word but my memory may well be failing me, alas! But what I am certain I recall correctly is that we remain loquacious! And ever optimistic over at least someone from the Upper Fifth of 1952-53 benefiting for an eighth decade and literally keeping the name alive a while longer yet.

PETER WARREN OW (1947-56)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Mon 9 Mar	OWGS AGM and Dinner	School	18.30
11-13 Mar	School Play "French without tears"	PAC	19.30
Wed 18 Mar	Music Concert	Royal Festival Hall	19.00
Fri 20 Mar	Founder's Day Service and breakfast	Whitgift House	07.00
Sat 28 Mar	OWRFC Supporters Lunch	WSC	12.00
Thurs 2 Apr	Halford Hewitt golf v Wellingborough	Sandwich	07.45
Fri 5 June	Presidential Buffet Supper	WSC	19.30
Tues 16 June	OWGS Centenary Celebrations	Croham Hurst GC	

FIXTURES

6-8 Mar	OWVC - SW Fives Tour	A	
Sat 7 Mar	School 1st XV v Sherbourne	Cup	A 14.30
Fri 13 Mar	School swimming 1st IV	Bath Cup	A 09.00
Sat 21 Mar	OWRFC 1st XV v OMW Trinity	L	A 15.00
Thurs 26 Mar	School 1st VII National Sevens	R/Park	09.00
Sat 28 Mar	OWRFC 1st XV v Teddington	L	H 15.00

CHESS CLUB UPDATE

The Old Whitgiftian chess team played the annual fixture against the school at the start of January. The Old Boys managed to increase their overall lead in the series with a 13-3 win, though the apparently one-sided final score doesn't reflect the competitive nature of the games.

The young average age of the school's team also suggests that the fixture will be keenly contested in the coming years. The OWs also play in the Croydon and District Chess League, and the club captain Matt Hortin OW (1984-91) is very keen to hear from any interested players, including "lapsed" players who

RECENT DEATHS

PETER BATEMAN

OW (1945 - 1953)

D. 1ST JANUARY 2020, AGED 84

MATTHEW BERRY

OW (2002-06),

D. 9TH JANUARY 2020, AGED 30

GRAHAM DUNCOMBE

OW (1952 - 1958)

D. 23 DECEMBER 2019, AGE 79

ROBIN MORRALL

OW (1950-59)

D. 3RD DECEMBER 2018, AGED 79

DR JAMES WADDELL

OW (1943-52)

D. 28TH FEBRUARY 2017, AGED 83

WHITGIFTIAN ASSOCIATION 500 Club

WINTER 2019 DRAW

1st prize £100

D S Straw Ticket 46

2nd prize £50

J R M Branston Ticket 23

3rd Prize £50

Rev'd Canon PH Kelly Ticket 72

4th Prize £50

C R Owen Ticket 70

Independent Scrutineer: Peter A Dunn
OV FCA, OW (1956-64).

To join the 500 Club and be in for a chance to win a quarterly prize, please contact

treasurer@whitgiftianassociation.co.uk.

would like to rekindle their love of the game (matthortin@hotmail.com).

To date, in the League this season, the OWs have drawn 2-2 with South Norwood and lost 1-3 to both Streatham and Lewisham. We are hoping for our first win of the season against Coulsdon next month.

Submissions for NEWSLETTER 389 covering May/June 2020 closes Friday 17th April 2020.

All news and photographs should be sent to editor@whitgiftianassociation.co.uk