



# WHITGIFTIAN ASSOCIATION

Whitgift School, Haling Park, South Croydon CR2 6YT. Tel: 020 8688 9222 [www.whitgiftianassociation.co.uk](http://www.whitgiftianassociation.co.uk)

President - RICHARD BLUNDELL

Chairman - JOHN ETHERIDGE

Editor - RICHARD BLUNDELL

NEWSLETTER 390 - JULY/AUGUST 2020

## VINCIT QUI PATITUR

### FROM JOHN ETHERIDGE, WA CHAIRMAN 2019-20

I know that, for some time, there have been rumours abroad concerning the status and future of Whitgift Sports Club ('WSC'): I am now pleased to be able to give you the facts.

Hitherto, WSC has been owned by Whitgiftian Association Trust ('WAT') (formerly known as The OWA Trust) and leases the clubhouse and grounds at Croham Road from Whitgiftian Association ('WA') which, through OW Trustees Limited, owns the freehold of both.

WAT has now agreed to transfer ownership of WSC to WA (through OWTL): once effected, this transfer will inter alia simplify the structure set up when WSC split from the WA in 2012.

As you will know, at WA's last AGM in December 2019, its constitution was changed to enable it to provide direct assistance – financial and otherwise – to WSC upon condition of the above transfer, provision of which the '2012 split' currently makes extremely problematic. Accordingly, upon its completion, WA will be in a position to help regularise WSC's financial position and make some early, targeted investment in site infrastructure.

Since 2012 many OWs have been involved in running WSC and the individual sports clubs, involving many, many hours of unpaid work. That WSC has struggled under the yoke of the terms of the 2012 split, albeit itself well-intentioned, is, to my mind, entirely understandable and should in no way devalue their contribution – we who view the Croham Road facility to be the beating heart of the old boy community owe each of them a debt of gratitude. I would also like to express my personal thanks to the trustees of WAT for agreeing to the transfer of WSC to WA.

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### REFLECTIONS FROM THE FRONTLINE:

WE HAVE A UNIQUE CHANCE TO  
FORCE CHANGE, WE SHOULDN'T  
LET THE OPPORTUNITY PASS



**Dr Sam Barke, OW (2000-05)  
& Whitgift School Sports Doctor**

**Usual Job:** Sports doctor & Orthopaedic Surgeon

**Covid-19 Role:** Redeployed to Intensive Care

With organised sport and elective operating cancelled early on in the crisis, I was available for redeployment and was asked to go to NHS Nightingale North-West in Manchester for the first weeks of its existence. Like most Nightingale hospitals we ended up receiving far fewer patients than we'd prepared for. This is obviously a positive thing as it means the NHS has been able to manage cases within its existing resource. Since mid-April I have been back in London and am working in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

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A professional survey of the clubhouse was carried out in February 2020 by an independent London firm of surveyors and the many recommendations contained in their report are being considered by the WA committee with a view to implementation as and when resources permit.

For the avoidance of doubt, we are absolutely committed to the continuance of sporting activities at the site - I have already spoken personally to representatives of the WSC's constituent sports clubs in this regard. As regards the administration of WSC itself, further discussions will take place as soon as practicable with a view to agreeing a revised modus operandi, one which institutionalises good corporate governance practice while affording the sports clubs the greatest degree of autonomy practicable.

For those who have used the clubhouse mainly for social purposes, I can reassure you that every effort will be made to enhance the facilities at the clubhouse, so as to improve the visitor experience. All WSC members, including those who enjoy WSC membership by virtue of their membership of WA, are most welcome to use and enjoy the club's facilities.

I would finally and especially like to thank Suzanne Piscina, WSC's on-site Manager, for all of her efforts in keeping the club running smoothly before entering a period of furlough, which I hope will soon come to an end. I look forward to working with her in the future. I am considering holding a reception at the clubhouse, at which all OWs will be welcome, but that is, obviously, dependent on the government's pronouncements on releasing lockdown.

Finally, if any OW wishes to contact me on any Whitgift related matter I may be contacted on [office@whitgiftianassociation.co.uk](mailto:office@whitgiftianassociation.co.uk) or on my personal mobile, as shown below. My best wishes to each of you.

**JOHN ETHERIDGE, OW (1981-88)**  
**WA CHAIRMAN**  
**07774 041058**

Last week I wrote to a group of colleagues asking them how their working lives had changed during COVID. Many of the responses were as you'd expect - long hours, high stress, disruption of normal routine - but every reply also highlighted positives. Processes that have been needing change for years that have now been rushed through, camaraderie in the workforce and the appreciation from the general public of the work that healthcare professionals are doing.

For me, the biggest take-away when this is all over will be what can be achieved when "needs must". People will have seen much in the news about how quickly the Nightingale hospitals were built but what has been far more impressive is how quickly working practices have been conceived and implemented across all NHS hospitals in a situation that we had no blueprint for. Healthcare workers have had to adapt quickly and have been required by necessity to work out of their comfort zone and deal with situations that many have not felt prepared for. I have felt great pride in seeing my junior colleagues - many who are only a year or two out of medical school - take on responsibility that is usually reserved for far more experienced doctors and doing so with great professionalism. This is a credit to them but has only been possible because of a flattening of hierarchy and the return of feeling truly part of a team and being supported.

While much of our work has been upsetting - the mortality rates in intensive care units is well documented - it has also been rewarding. I feel hugely privileged to have watched patients talk to their families (via FaceTime, of course) after weeks on a ventilator, see them take joy in eating for the first time in over a month, and clap them as they are discharged from the intensive care unit. But, as hard as it has been, I also feel privileged to have been able to care for the dying. To pass on messages of love from their loved ones who can't be by their side, to hold their hand in their last moments, to be there to say goodbye.

It looks like we will shortly be starting to reopen non-emergency health services and I will await the call as to when I can return to orthopaedics. It is becoming increasingly clear that there are indirect health issues that have been created from delays in access to treatment during the crisis and it will take significant resource to try and clear that back log and minimise the long-term impact.

There will understandably be a temptation to rush back to "normality" as quickly as possible when this is all over but we have a unique chance to take a moment, reflect on some of the positives that have been seen during the crisis, and to implement change that is long overdue to ensure those positives remain. We shouldn't let that opportunity pass.

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# NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL

If you were to ask any teacher why they chose to do the job, I can guarantee that their answer would not be, "because I want to do something that involves an office, computer and a phone." However, that has been the 'new normal' for the Whitgift teaching staff over the past few months as Microsoft Teams lessons conducted from home studies have become the new classrooms and screen time has gone through the roof. In a way, we are fortunate that this technology exists; without it, education simply could not continue given the restrictions currently in place.

However, when it was announced that Year 6 students would be returning to the school straight after half term, and Year 10 and 12 boys two weeks later (albeit only in a limited fashion), there was a sudden flurry of emails from teachers to their Heads of Department – all requests to be put on the active teaching roster from frustrated educators itching to be able to do their

job properly. I have been one of the lucky ones allowed back to teach in the school and it is wonderful to see boys in the classroom (all socially distanced, of course!) eager to learn, or outside letting off steam with best friends they have been denied seeing for so many weeks.

In an attempt to keep things as normal as possible during these strange times, the school has endeavoured to maintain as many of the routines the boys are used to as possible. Whilst the conventional House competition could not continue, meaning Brodies' were crowned champions for the 2019/20 curtailed season (congratulations, although Mason's were not far behind when events ground to a halt!), a six week lockdown version was created in its place, with the different year groups being set a new assignment each week (ranging from photography to creative writing – all things which can be submitted online) that is passed onto a Housemaster to judge on the Friday.



Currently Cross's are storming ahead in this, but I do find it rather suspicious that their Housemaster is by far the most ICT proficient out of all of us! In addition to the live lessons taught on Teams and weekly homework set on Firefly, boys have also not been denied the opportunity to sit their traditional end of year exams (I am sure they were delighted by this!), which were also set remotely on Firefly, and teachers are all currently busy marking these and producing the usual comprehensive set of end of year reports.

The Teams technology has also allowed us to keep up our provision of co-curricular societies, with the regular debates on current topical issues drawing larger audiences online than when they are held in their traditional venue, the CLR.

The society which has attracted the largest audience since lockdown began has probably been the Whitgift Afro Caribbean Society. The society was founded two years ago by Learning Support teacher and Old Whitgiftian, Mr David Powell, and it has obviously come to particular prominence in recent weeks due to the Black Lives Matter protests which have occurred in response to the killing of George Floyd in America.

In a missive sent out to the Whitgift community, the Headmaster had this to say about the society's latest meeting: "I was glad to be present, alongside around 80 students and staff, at a

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## NEWS FROM THE SCHOOL CONTINUED

(virtual) meeting of the Whitgift Afro Caribbean Society yesterday. The meeting discussed recent events in the light of what race means to those present. I want to commend Mr Powell, Miss Williams and those Whitgiftians who spoke at the meeting for what was a measured, deeply felt and courteous discussion. I want to highlight one contributor especially, who asked 'what can regular people like us do to prevent that kind of thing happening again?' There are many possible answers to that question, including some of the ideas suggested by black students in recent letters to the press, and petitions to schools and governments. We need to listen to, and consider these, and I undertake to do so." The issue has also been discussed in virtual assemblies and

form periods and it has been something that the Whitgift student body has been very passionate about.

And that is it from Whitgift at the moment. Plans are afoot for a virtual Celebration of Whitgift Life and hope remains that with a return to normality by September, we may be able to put on a belated graduation event for a year group that has been denied so many things, but as things stand, we will just



have to wait and see what fate has in store.

Vincit Qui Patitur!

**DOMINIC EDWARDS, OW (1988-96)**

## FROM THE EDITOR

Many congratulations to Anne and Raman Subba Row, OW (1943-50), on the celebration of their diamond wedding anniversary which had to be marked at home due the current lockdown, sixty years on from that special day at the Savoy Chapel.

I hear that whilst our most capped rugby club prop forward was out on his bicycle taming the Boxhill Olympic zigzag, he was

tackled by a motorcar which unfortunately was not fooled by his best match-day side step. However, I understand he is recovering well and is now out of hospital and at home under rehab instructions.

Unfortunately we have recently lost our oldest member at the grand age of 102, however we congratulate Ronald Branton, OW (1930-38), on reaching his

centenary in April and he was happy to chat about his junior days in the 'dumbbell' School buildings of North End when I presented him with an OW striped



scarf ready for his hoped for return visit to the OWVRC back at the School Range.

Finally, commiserations to Rory Burns, OW (2001-06), who was on the losing side in the recent episode of BBC's Question of Sport although he did answer his home cricket question correctly!

**RICHARD BLUNDELL, OW (1956-63)  
WA PRESIDENT #77**

## NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



A new Director of Development has been appointed to manage the Alumni Relations and Development team at Whitgift.

Thomas Northcote joins the School with experience of development from The Leys and The University of Cambridge (Downing College). Thomas will focus on shaping and delivering Whitgift's strategic goals and is keen to grow the team further to provide more opportunities for OW involvement. He looks forward to meeting and connecting with OWs and members of the wider Whitgift Community through the School's new networking platform Whitgift Connect ([www.whitgiftconnect.co.uk](http://www.whitgiftconnect.co.uk)), and in person when regulations allow. You can contact Thomas at [T.Northcote@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:T.Northcote@whitgift.co.uk).

## WHITGIFT BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

During these uncertain times please do not forget that Whitgiftian Benevolent Society is here to help in all kinds of ways. Only in the last week or so we have had two requests from OWs for financial assistance due to the effects of the Coronavirus. So please do remember our existence and keep your eyes and ears open for anyone requiring any assistance.

Contact: Hon Secretary, Peter Dunn, [peterdunn75@gmail.com](mailto:peterdunn75@gmail.com)

**RICHARD MARTIN, OW (1956-63), WBS CHAIRMAN**

## WAT BURSARY APPEAL

The Chairman of the Whitgiftian Association Trust (WAT), Lord Graham Tope, OW 1955-61, has announced that the Trust has reached its first objective of raising sufficient funds to carry out John Whitgift's wish of educating the young of Croydon regardless of means.



The WAT Bursary Fund will educate one local Croydon boy starting in September and we all wish him well for his Whitgift career.

WAT continues to expand the Bursary Scheme and will be liaising closely with the School's new Director of Development Mr Thomas Northcote at Haling Park.

## OW APPOINTED AS BBC DIRECTOR-GENERAL

Old Whitgiftian, Tim Davie, OW (1980-85) has been appointed Director General of the BBC. He will become the Corporation's 17th Director General in September, when Lord Tony Hall steps down.

After attending Whitgift, Tim went to Cambridge University before embarking on a career in marketing, which saw him work for Proctor and Gamble and PepsiCo before joining the BBC as Director of Marketing, Communications and Audiences in 2005.

During his time at the BBC, Tim worked as interim Director General (after George Entwistle resigned in 2012) for six months, and most recently as CEO of BBC Studios (formerly BBC Worldwide).

Tim stood as a councillor for the Conservative Party in Hammersmith in 1993 and 1994 and was Deputy Chairman of the Hammersmith and Fulham Conservative party in the 1990s. In 2018, Tim was awarded a CBE, for services to international trade. He is Chairman of Comic Relief, a



Trustee of the Tate and the Royal Television Society, and in 2018 was appointed as Chairman of the Creative Industries Council.



# NEWS FROM THE GOLF SOCIETY

There is very little to report on for the last quarter, for reasons that will be evident to all.

We are however fortunate in that golf, at least, has been permitted for the last few weeks, albeit with some unusual playing conditions and constraints. The different methods that golf clubs have adopted to prevent the ball falling too far into the hole, so that players do not have to touch the flagstick, are a wonder to behold, but hopefully they will be museum pieces before long.

The golf society has not met since lockdown was imposed back in March, which means, first and foremost, that our much-anticipated Centenary event in June had to be postponed. We now hope to hold the celebration next June instead. Also casualties were Alan Blok's Captain's Day, and the Cyril Gray competition for our over-50s side.

However, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Pip Burley's first President's Meeting will be held at Kingswood in late July, although we are

not yet certain whether, or to what extent, we will be able to enjoy the club's catering after we play golf. But at least we will be able to meet – socially distanced, no doubt – and to play, and we hope now that we are able successfully to complete the remainder of the society's calendar. Also of note is that the society's Grafton Morrish team has qualified for the finals in October. They did not have to swing a club, it has to be said, in order to qualify. The tournament organisers decided that the finals will take place, in North Norfolk, but that the regional qualifying could not take place due to the lockdown; instead they chose to invite all those schools who qualified for the finals in 2019 to participate again this year. Whitgift are one such school.

If any OW wishes to join the society (or a parent, or a teacher at the school) and take part in our open meetings, they will be very welcome, whatever their playing standard. The Hon Sec will be happy to hear from them at [peterbgale@sky.com](mailto:peterbgale@sky.com). Best wishes to all readers.

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

## LAUNCH OF NEW ALUMNI NETWORKING SITE

Whitgift has recently launched Whitgift Connect, an online platform for OWs to keep connected. It aims to establish and facilitate new connections and enhance existing ones, serving as a convenient networking point, whilst also highlighting projects, publications, and alumni events.

The platform, complete with a mobile app, will also offer a selection of stories from across the School.

For more information or to contact the Alumni Relations team please email: [alumni@whitgift.co.uk](mailto:alumni@whitgift.co.uk).



## RECENT DEATHS

**REV FELIX BOYSE LVO**  
OW (1930-35),  
D. 31ST MARCH 2020, AGED 102

**MIKE HOLLAND**  
OW (1956-61),  
D. 7TH JANUARY 2020, AGED 76

**ANIL KARPAL**  
OW (1979-86), D. 22ND MAY  
2020, AGED 51

**DAVID WALLS**  
OW (1951-58),  
D. 28TH APRIL 2020, AGED 78

## ++ NEWSFLASH++

The Clubhouse is reopening under very strict controls, currently on Saturdays 4.00-10.00pm and Sundays 1.00-7.00pm. Full booking details on the WSC web site at <https://whitsports.co.uk/>

## WHITGIFTIAN ASSOCIATION 500 Club SUMMER DRAW 2020

**1st prize £100**

Ian D S Beer, Ticket 88

**2nd prize £50**

Richard Jones, Ticket 110

**3rd Prize £50**

John S Straw, Ticket 192

**4th Prize £50**

Peter Crane, Ticket 140

Independent Scrutineer:  
Mrs Susan Hooker MA  
(Staff 1985 – 2015)

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

[treasurer@whitgiftianassociation.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@whitgiftianassociation.co.uk)