

# The Old Royals' Association



## ORA NEWSLETTER

YOUR LINK  
TO THE PAST  
PRESENT AND FUTURE

### **REMEMBRANCE 2017**

**Sunday, 12th November  
10.50am in Chapel  
Refreshments in Victoria Hall  
Lunch at The Goldthorn Mercure  
Contact Mike Masters**

Part 2 of Frank Nelson's  
The Life of an Orphan

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



I am honoured to be trusted with the President's role and now Chair of the ORA and I am hoping to bring some fresh ideas with me to rejuvenate the Association and gain more members from recent years. Unfortunately having been on the Committee for a number of years I have seen a gradual decline in renewed membership and it is one of my goals to turn this around. Along with the school we aim to appeal to everyone reading this to update their details for our database and hopefully in time we can email out the newsletter. We are working hard on establishing a new website which will be updated regularly and I hope you will take a look at it and send us your approval. As I have said before I would really like to hear from pupils who left recently, maybe to let us know University results or Internships, or just some anecdotes from your time at the school.

As President of the ORA I feel privileged to be taking part in the service in Chapel on Remembrance Sunday once again. Last year the service was a befitting tribute to our fallen heroes but equally had references of reconciliation. After the service every year we attend a luncheon at the Goldthorn Hotel and it would be a pleasure to welcome new faces to join us.

Sarah Woods

### **ORA Remembrance Day Lunch**

Goldthorn Mecure, following Refreshments.

If you wish to attend, it is essential that you let Mike Masters know by Monday 6th November on

**07774409579 or at [oramembership@btinternet.com](mailto:oramembership@btinternet.com)**

## Editorial

This edition sees the final part of Frank Nelson's 'Life of an Orphan.'

It would be nice to have more input from Old Royals, even a brief note to say where you are & what you are doing. That of course includes those who are more recent leavers than Frank Nelson, or indeed myself or any of the Management Committee.

My thanks to David Miller for his email, which informed me that the last edition was the first he had seen his name in!

Our congratulations go to Aleksandra Kamienska who has been awarded a First in Economics at Cambridge, she is starting on an investment banking programme with Barclays.

Nigel Green

**If you are happy to receive Your Newsletter by email alone, please email Mike Masters who will amend our database. The more people who opt for this the more money we can devote to other projects.**



I assure you that both uniforms, and dormitories have undergone a radical change!

As well as the summer camps, the Army Cadets of the Royal Wolverhampton School were given the opportunity to provide a guard of honour for Prince Phillip upon his visit to the town in the late 1940s. I'd like to report that it was an exciting experience, but in reality I remember being bored and worn out following our commute to and from The Town Hall, as unlike our Prince, we travelled by foot, not vehicle. Back on campus, our performing arts students were tasked with the job of organising the annual theatre production. Held at Wulfun Hall, located next to the Civic Hall, our students paid homage to classics including Gilbert and Sullivan's "HMS Pinafore" and "Pirates of Penzance". All the local schools Were invited to attend, teachers, as well as the general public. To my knowledge, these performances continued in the years following my leave in 1949.

In my last year, I found myself preoccupied by various sporting activities including football, cricket, and cross country running. In the winter, unable to afford my own, I was thankful to a friend who would lend me their boots for games and practise. When summer rolled around, I'd prepare by tending to the grounds. Armed with a roller, I'd work my way up and down the pitch, ensuring our playing field was in its finest condition ready for the onslaught that myself and our team would deliver in the coming season.

The last two terms of my final year were spent studying for the school certificate. Like schooling today, our mock exams were held first, with our final exams taking place in the following term. The results came out in the August following our school departure, and in them I found that my studying had paid off, I'd passed.

Having spent the last 12 years as a boarder at The Royal Wolverhampton School, I felt more at home at the school than I did at my family home. I'd only spent time in that home on my holidays, and if I recall correctly, the absence of friends made for a lonely experience. My holidays were endured by regular housework and hours spent counting down the days until I would return to school.

The one thing I would change about my time at The Royal Wolverhampton School, and perhaps the one question that still remains is, why was there no guidance offered to us when we departed? There was little information given to us regarding our job prospects, career opportunities, and available resources (if any). The Lord knows that we needed it, and I believe my transition would have been a lot easier with it in hand.

### Life After School

Having moved to Australia in 1985, I have felt a need to know what happened to my father when he died in 1937, as I was never told. After making many enquiries, I eventually discovered he was buried in a pauper's grave, as at the time, there was no money to pay for a funeral. This somewhat staggered me, as I knew that he had served as part of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry between 1914-1918.

The Battalion he was attached to, was posted to the Far East until mid 1917, serving in

India, China, Singapore, and South Africa. They spent their time quelling riots, a job usually reserved for the regular soldiers who at the time, were posted back to Europe for the beginning of World War I. Following their time in the Far East, the Battalion was ordered back to Europe by ship, docking first at Southampton, and then without leave, posted on to the war front in France; still in their tropical kits. With a change of uniform, they remained in Europe until the War ended in 1918.

When discharged from the army, my father followed in his father's footsteps and began working as a plumber, later becoming a master plumber as the time went on. However, by the mid 1930s he became ill with Tuberculosis and by March 1937, he was laid to rest in an unmarked, unknown, pauper's grave in Halesowen, Borough of Dudley, West Midlands, England. Unlike today, we had no welfare system, and families were left to fend for themselves. It is times like these that remind us to be thankful for the support we are given today.

We are now left where we began. Following my father's death, I began my time as an orphan at the Royal Orphanage School Wolverhampton. In my later years, I've spent time reflecting, trying to discover ways to signify my father's importance or to serve as remembrance of his life. On my recent visits to the school, I've often gazed upon the aged



and ill-working fountain that resides in the School's entrance. I've observed the many words and pictures that are exhibited around its faces, as I never had the opportunity as a student.

One picture in particular illustrates a few orphans attended by their guardians, being greeted into the front entrance. The words "Providing for the orphans" is neatly scribed above it. These words inspired me, and in memory of my father, I have made a donation toward the fountain's renovation. Not only will it be a significant reminder for myself of my father and my childhood, but also a beacon that

signifies the importance of family, hard work and humility for the future Royal School generations.

May you all find success your studies, and family in your peers. As I sit dictating my story to one of my youngest granddaughters, I know I've found mine.

Frank Nelson (Nelly) 1937 - 1949  
O.R.A Life Member

## Founder's Day 2017

This year's Founder's Day was held on April 1<sup>st</sup>, which I am reliably informed is the actual date that the school was founded and as many of you will know this day has danced around the calendar for many a year trying to fit into the school's busy timetable.

This year the day started with the usual service in the chapel conducted by Old Royal Andrew Bagnall and the Bible reading was directly related to the carved message above the school's main door of 'I was a stranger and you let me in'. The choirs from both the Junior and Senior schools gave stirring renditions of 'Amazing Grace' and 'Can you hear?' and there was a greater feeling of inclusion of the current pupils in the programme than in previous years.

This year's Founder's Day was also the first year as a Free school, or at least since the 1950's, and Mark Heywood's address reinforced the fact that the school has actually returned to its original purpose and John Lees initial intentions.

Sarah Woods as the President of the Association also spoke of her pride at being elected as President during such a changing time in the history of the school. Following the service the Old Royals dined in Victoria Hall and we were able to catch up and share our differing school experiences with different generations of school leavers.

The AGM followed and all the details can be seen in this issue of the newsletter. The annual ORA v School football match was then played on the all-weather pitch which the Old Royals managed to win with a score of 3-2.

On a personal note I am not only an Old Royal but have a daughter in year 12 and this means that any changes made to the school for the past fourteen years have been a gradual and almost seamless process but I am always interested to see the reaction of visiting Old Royals to the changes from their time at the school to the present day. It is certainly a place of memories, some good with some not so good but the bond between former pupils is and will remain a strong one based on a shared experience. The school is not a museum and it did not close on the day you left but is now a lively place full of driven, motivated, and happy pupils. It is vital that the current pupils feel a sense of inclusion on Founder's Day as after all it will not be very long before they themselves become Old Royals and are in the driving seat of the Association.

The school is certainly a very different place to when I attended and you would find the same with enough of the old architecture remaining to stir the memories.

The attendance of Old Royals on Founders Day remains disappointing and the Association is very aware of this issue and is working hard with the assistance of the school to try and provide a good reason to return and reinforce the connections between former pupils.

Founders Day 2018 will not be on April 1<sup>st</sup> but surely you would be 'foolish' to miss it!

Stuart Gettings.







A level Results  
20% A\*/A grades

Lukasz Rzczkowski OR  
addresses the School on Prize Day



Members of the Sixth form presenting a  
cheque for £544 to the Rotary Polio eradica-  
tion programme. The money was raised  
through their Dinning Club in association  
with The Rotary International Interact Club.



Cupcake Baking  
(Never saw a cupcake, never mind baking  
one- Ed)



## The Official Opening of The Royal School as a Free School

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2017, My wife Elizabeth and I were lucky enough to be invited to attend the official opening. The students of the Junior School, dignitaries, staff and guests waited on the front drive for the arrival of HRH Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex KG GCVO.

When he arrived, he was met by various people including the Deputy Lieutenant of The West Midlands , the Sheriff of The West Midlands and the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Councillor Elias Mattu together with Mark Heywood, Principal, and members of staff. Then he walked around the drive, talking to Junior and Senior students.

After he visited the CCF field to meet the Royal School Army and Air Force cadets, he came to the Victoria Hall to meet the assembled guests. We were arranged in groups and he spoke to us individually for a few minutes.

Then as Patron of the School, HRH Prince Edward unveiled a Plaque in the Victoria Hall. After about 2 hours, he left to attend other events in the Midlands area.

Mike Masters







## **MINUTES**

### **Present**

*Members:*

N Green , M. Masters, M. George, M. White, Sarah Woods, Mrs H. Hall, S. Gettings, A. Mason, A Hague, D. Craig, B. Prendergast, J. Belam, L. Rzeczkowski,

*Guests:-*

Mark Heywood, (Principal), Peter Hill, Elizabeth Masters. Jaemi Hodgson, Francesca White, Magda Drewosz, Abi Rhymes.

### **1. Apologies**

F. Nelson, Pauline Gibbs, P. Ward, Pauline Ward, B. Oldham, Trish Oldham, Nick Woods, Andrew Bagnall.

### **2. Subscription to the School**

Because of the change in the financial status of the school, there was no donation directly to the School ; instead it was decided to increase the donation to the Prize Fund from £200 to £300. Efforts are to be made to ensure the donations linked to a prize would be documented. The cheque was accepted with thanks by Mark Heywood on behalf of the School.

### **3. Minutes**

The Minutes of the 2016 AGM had been circulated in the October issue of the Newsletter. They were accepted unanimously as a true record .

### **4. Matters Arising**

There were none.

### **5. Annual Accounts/Treasurer's report**

The Hon. Treasurer, Martin White, circulated the annual accounts and explained the salient points. He mentioned that the General Funds have increased mainly because of the large number of leavers this year. The greatest outgoings are the hard copy mailing of newsletters although the number of members receiving electronic copies is steadily increasing. The number of members has increased from 414 last year to 435 this year.

Margaret George asked if there were any ideas on how to spend some of the £11540. Mike Masters suggested that some would be used to buy more ORA awards ( the crystal ware). Mark Heywood said there were many possible demands on the fund such as Football kit and Redecoration of the School Chapel.

Martin stated that there were no requests this year for Trust Funds so the surplus is carried forward. With regard to the membership subscriptions there is a downward trend due to our aging membership although there was a slight increase in 2016.

In conclusion, there is a healthy overall surplus so it could be used if we find a need. Finally there is a need to meet with school leavers and /or future leavers as the School Membership scheme finishes.

The accounts were approved unanimously by the meeting. Nigel Green proposed acceptance of the accounts and this was seconded by Sarah Woods. Mike Masters thanked Martin for all his work for the Association.

### **6. Report of the Management Committee**

The Chairman Mike Masters read his report to the Meeting and this will be incorporated in the June Newsletter and is also available on request.

### **7. Management Committee Elections**

There are 3 vacancies on the committee not including retiring member Mrs H. Hall who has indicated that she is willing to stand for re-election. Mrs H. Hall was duly elected as there were no further nominees.

### **8. Election of President 2017-2018**

The Management Committee has proposed the re-election of Sarah Woods as President of the Association 2017-2018. This was carried unanimously by the Meeting.

### **9. Any Other Business**

There was none.

The Meeting was closed at 2.55 pm.

The next AGM will be on Founder's Day 21st April 2018 in the early afternoon following lunch. Please take this as official notice of the AGM. There will be a Chapel Service in the morning and sports fixtures will be held following the AGM

Early Notice.

The Association is looking to hold a Ball on the weekend of Prizegiving in the Summer of 2018.

**Your News could appear here.** Send News to the editor, Nigel Green (see back page)

### **THE ROYAL WOLVERHAMPTON SCHOOL LODGE NO. 8170**

The School Lodge was founded in 1967 by Old Boys, Teaching Staff and Governors. It meets five times a year in the Victoria Hall and afterwards an enjoyable festive board is held in Clarence House. Details from:

**John Jarvis,  
113 Rosemary Crescent West, Goldthorn Park,  
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## COMMITTEE

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