



# Old Boys' Association Newsletter

April 2016

## President's Welcome and Report

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Belfast Royal Academy Old Boys' Association Newsletter. I am the third President to be elected from the Grammar School first form intake of September 1955 with previous Presidents being John McGimpsey and Geoff Simon. This may be some reflection of our school days and the fine works of our form master the late Mr J. A. Paul who taught history and was also responsible for the cricket team of that year. The under 14 cricket side photograph of 1957 (below) contains all three future Presidents along with Mr Paul and memories of an extremely well organised side with John McGimpsey as captain are still fresh in my mind. On one occasion a victory in Downpatrick was well celebrated when Jimmy Paul bought ice cream for the entire team and scorer! This was deeply appreciated by all concerned on a fine sunny day.

Continuing on the cricket theme it is with great pleasure that I remind members of the success of the Andrew Forbes first eleven in winning the Ulster Bank Schools' Cricket Cup in the June of my year. This unique occasion was reported in the Belfast Telegraph by Ian Callender who is one of the Province's most eminent sports reporters and at the time of writing he is in India reporting on the Cricket 20/20 World Cup. He is also responsible for one of this year's articles from Old Boys.



B. W. Whiteside, G. R. Simon, D. Scofield, R. D. Williams, R. S. Hamilton, E. P. Coppel, W. J. Kirk, T. A. Bellieu, D. F. Boyd, Mr. Paul (Scorer)  
M. K. McCready, B. O'Hara, J. G. McGimpsey, A. J. Espley, A. M. Cole (Captain)

## Golf News

Picken Cup at Malone G.C. Thursday 18th June 2015 – Winner: Sheldon Coulter

Iain Knox's Captain's Day at Royal Belfast G.C. Friday 11th September 2015 – Winner: James Beattie

Ferguson Cup for best aggregate score over two outings – Winner: Adrian Brown

Provisional dates for 2016 competitions are:

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at Malone GC and Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at Royal Belfast GC

To book your place, please contact Ken Knox: e-mail [ken@cd-group.com](mailto:ken@cd-group.com) or Iain Knox [iain-knox@cd-group.com](mailto:iain-knox@cd-group.com)

## **Ian Brick**

It is with deep sadness that I mention the passing of Ian Brick.

I first came into contact with him on the School trip to Paris in 1959 when Ian was an accompanying Prefect and one of the "older boys". The visit was in the capable hands of teachers Perrins, Davies and Snowball and their fine arrangements were expedited by some senior boys including Ian who kept the less mature travellers in order in a way that was appreciated by all concerned. It was not realised at the time that Ian was only a few months older than the major body of the group!

Ian was also an excellent rugby player and although kept out of the hooking position in the first fifteen by the very talented "Spike" Turney he went on to Captain a second fifteen that played fourteen, won eleven, drew three and lost no games in the season 1958-59. This was probably the most successful second fifteen ever and the school magazine of the time described the team as "unique" and "I. Brick led the forwards intelligently by example and vocally." This was a rugby year that had two future Internationals in Ken Houston and Sam Hutton in the ably lead first fifteen under the ubiquitous Eddie Hilditch. It was only Ian's amazingly early entrance to Queen's University Belfast that prevented him from further advancement in the School Rugby Club.

His subsequent success in business and life is well noted and sincere condolences are offered to the entire family circle. The following obituary appeared in the Belfast Telegraph on 13 July 2015:

Dr Ian Brick died on July 5 aged 72 after a long battle with cancer. Dr Brick was born in Belfast, in 1942, to humble beginnings in a two-up, two-down house with an outside toilet in Rosebery Street. He was the son of an insurance salesman and grandson of an east Belfast joiner, who worked in the shipyard and on the construction of Parliament Buildings at Stormont.. In 1959, at the remarkably young age of 16, he went to Queen's University, Belfast, initially to study medicine, but later transferring to physiology, graduating with honours in 1964 and gaining his PhD in pharmacology in 1967.

It is as president of the Students' Union that 'Brickie' is best remembered and it was then that he met his beloved Katherine. He later donated \$1million to Queen's to renovate the Students' Union, and the union bar, Brickie's, was named after them.



Ian and his wife moved to England after their wedding in 1968 and lived there for 10 years, while Ian rose rapidly through the ranks of ICI. In 1977 the family moved to Dublin and Ian started work for ICP. A career opportunity with the company took the family to the United States in December 1984. They lived in Connecticut for two years until Ian began working in Nashville in 1987, which became their home base. In 1990 Ian founded the company Pharmaceutical Laboratory Services (PLS) in Baltimore, Maryland, which he eventually sold in 1994 and began an early retirement. After many years of hard work, Ian and Katherine began travelling and meeting friends in every country. They became very involved in the Nashville community, helping to twin Belfast and Nashville as sister cities in 1996. Ian was also a founding member of Queen's University's Foundation Board, where he worked to raise \$160m and remained active with the university until Katherine's untimely death in 2008. In 2011, Ian was honoured for his service to Northern Ireland education services by being appointed an officer of the Civil Division of the Order of the British Empire.



## **Ian Callender 1971—1976**

Having 'sailed through' primary school – one of the best in the class! – passing the 11+ was always seen as a formality so BRA, my nearest grammar school, was also going to be the place of my secondary level education. After that, I must confess, it all went downhill fast.

It was certainly no fault of the teachers at the Academy; rather it was my lack of application. If not interested in a subject, I was invariably left behind and to this day, for example, I find Science a bore! Fortunately, I was always good at Mathematics and English Language; with the latter ensuring I have been able to make a career out of journalism.

From BRA I went to the College of Business journalism pre-entry course, thanks to a last-minute pull out. There was an intake of 12 back in 1979 (the most famous was, one, Eamonn Holmes) and apparently I was No. 13. It proved lucky for me because, five days before the first day of term, I received a call inviting me onto the course.

It was the most enjoyable year of my life. I loved every minute of every course and always remember being the first one in and my task was to collect the papers from the nearby newsagent every morning. I read them voraciously, always starting at the back with sport – cricket and football my first love.

I don't think anyone was guaranteed a job at the end of the course but anyone who wanted one, I believe, got one and a week after my last day in Brunswick Street I was sitting in the Carrickfergus Advertiser as Sports Editor.

The title was grander than the job – I was the only person writing sport – but from day one it was my task to fill the three, sometimes four (!) sports pages. Under the editorship of the brilliant John Rooks, who had forgotten more about reporting than I would ever know, it was the perfect start for any would-be journalist. As the weekly paper to the Newsletter, it proved a natural progression to Donegall Street and three years later I joined the NL Staff as a sub-editor in the news department.

Four years later, I got my dream move to the sports desk and, by 1989, I was cricket correspondent, covering Ireland's matches at home and, when expenses and cover on the 'desk' allowed, away. My first overseas trip was to Zimbabwe in 1991, a three week tour with my most vivid memory dictating copy one Friday evening, via an operator, on a crackly landline from one public phone at the cricket ground. My 400 words report must have taken half an hour! I have no idea who paid for the call!

How times have changed in the last 25 years. Now you never speak to the sports' desk; everything is done by e-mail or text and, from Ireland playing five or six games a year and going on tour every three or four years, they are now playing up to 40 games a year, with more games in our winter than summer all around the world. Indeed, such was the exponential rise in Ireland matches that before the 2007 World Cup finals in the West Indies, I took redundancy from the News Letter – they had just moved from Belfast to Carn and, no-way, was I going to travel 75 miles a day – and, in another good break, was immediately appointed cricket correspondent for the Belfast Telegraph on a freelance basis.

The move has allowed me to report on the successful Ireland team at eight world cups – the most recent, the World Twenty20 in India in March, my third visit despite my dislike of the food! My passport also shows visits to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, UAE, Canada, Namibia, Kenya, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana and closer to home, the Netherlands, Spain and, even, Cyprus.

It's been a wonderful journey and, with Ireland now on the way to possible Test Cricket status, it is a journey which still has far to run.

Maybe it's just as well that I always enjoyed watching cricket more than playing it, and those days of scoring matches at BRA have not been entirely wasted.



## REUNIONS

### 1966

On Friday 8th April, a 50 year Reunion of leavers from 1966 took place in School. Including some staff from the 1960s, over 70 people were present, with many travelling from places outside Northern Ireland such as England, Scotland, Kenya and Singapore.

Those attending assembled in the afternoon in the Library, where lively conversation was accompanied by music from the School String Quartet. Following a short speech from the Headmaster, the attendees enjoyed a School tour, an evening reception in the Library and a buffet supper in the Jackson Suite.

There was a marvellous atmosphere throughout the day and the Reunion proved to be a wonderful occasion, thoroughly enjoyed by all who were present, some returning to School for the first time in 50 years!



### 1995

On Saturday 27th June 2015, the class of '95 held their 20 year reunion. Around 60 former pupils gathered at the school for an ice cream reception, followed by a short talk by the headmaster. Off we all went on a school tour and of course it seemed like only yesterday that we were walking the very same corridors going to class.

After reminiscing at the school we headed into Belfast to 21 Social for some more refreshments and an inter-house quiz, won by Cairns. The stories and memories kept flooding back late into the night. Looking forward to the 25th Reunion in 2020!

A big thank-you to all who attended or sent their best wishes from other shores. Thanks must go to Claire McGimpsey, Michael Bennett, Michael McDowell and George Armstrong who helped organise the day and of course Louis Campbell, who helped us greatly just like he did 20 years ago!