



## **BELFAST ROYAL ACADEMY OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION**

### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER 2019-2020**

26<sup>th</sup> August 2019

Dear Member,

I am honoured to write to you as President of Belfast Royal Academy Old Boys' Association. This is a particular privilege as I am not actually an old boy of the School, having spent my schooldays as a boarder at Campbell College. However, I was a member of staff at the Academy throughout my working life, from the time of my appointment as a teacher of English, fresh from university in the summer of 1980, until my retirement as Headmaster in 2017.



In my time at the Academy I came to appreciate the special qualities of the School; its high academic standards and friendliness, its unusual diversity – both social and religious – and the exceptional range of opportunities it offers, which allow pupils to explore their potential.

The link between the school and its former pupils is a vital one – many of you, I know, have children or grandchildren at the Academy. I am delighted, therefore, as President of the Association, to have the opportunity to maintain and develop these links.

It will be a pleasure to work closely with my successor, Mrs Hilary Woods – the School is fortunate indeed to have such a capable and dynamic Principal. Her interest in the activities of the Association is very evident, and we value her support.

The support is reciprocal; each year the Old Boys' Association uses funds raised through events such as the Dinners in Belfast, London and Edinburgh, and donations, to make a financial contribution to school projects. Last year we funded the purchase of six playground benches.

The Association is indebted to those individuals who organize the various events which bring members together. Robin Reid continues to co-ordinate the programme of monthly lunches in golf clubs; they are well supported because they are good-humoured and informal occasions, where the food is good, and the company is excellent. I enjoy hearing stories about the School and the characters who inhabited it in the past. If recorded, these reminiscences would be a valuable resource for future historians of the Academy.

Through the efforts of Martin Blake and Michael McDowell the Business Breakfasts in 10 Square are now well established. Former pupils enjoy sitting down to breakfast together and listening to guests who speak briefly about what they have done since leaving the Academy. It is fascinating to hear about the careers of men and women whom I remember as pupils, brimming with potential or, occasionally, disguising it quite well. At the most recent Breakfast, Sarah Quinlan and Mark McCrory proved to be very engaging speakers.

The Old Boys' Golf Society continues to thrive under the guiding hand of Ken Knox. 36 golfers competed for the Picken Cup at Malone Golf Club in June. Jeremy Weir won the competition with a score of 36 points, with Stewart Beattie and Iain Knox in second and third place, a point behind. Dominic Walsh's Captain's Day Competition will be held at Royal Belfast on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> September.

Unfortunately, the cricket match between an Old Boys' XI and the School 1<sup>st</sup> XI had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. However, I am delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate the school team and their coaches on their victory in the final of Schools' Cup, in which they defeated the Methodist College 1<sup>st</sup> XI. Harry Warke, son of Ireland International Stephen Warke, captained the side. The Academy has won the Schools' Cricket Cup three times in the last five years – 2015, 2016 and 2019 - a tremendous achievement. Max Burton played in all three finals.

As I write, Iain Henderson is preparing to go to the Rugby World Cup with Ireland. I wish him well in Japan and congratulate him on his appointment as Captain of Ulster.

I look forward to the Dinners which will bring former pupils of different generations together in the course of the year. The Old Boys' Association annual Belfast Dinner will be held on the evening of Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November in the Europa Hotel. The Guest Speakers will be the broadcaster William Crawley and Paul Crute, Headmaster of the Royal School Armagh before becoming the founding Principal of the Nord Anglia International School in Dublin. The London

Dinner will be held in the RAF Club on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020; the Guest Speaker will be Michael Haslett, Captain of the 1997 Schools' Cup winning XV and now a leading figure in the world of finance. The former pupils' Dinner in Edinburgh will be held in the New Club, overlooking the castle, on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April; the Guest Speaker will be the surgeon and academic, Christopher Johnston. I hope that many of you will join a table of friends at one or more of these thoroughly enjoyable occasions.

As President of the Association I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their support and on-going contribution to Old Boys' business. We are fortunate to have an excellent team of Office Bearers – Philip McKenna (Hon. Secretary), Nik Simon (Hon. Treasurer), James Cole (Membership Secretary) and Iain Knox (Dinner Secretary). They, along with Louis Campbell and David Haslett, who do so much to ensure the success of the London and Edinburgh Dinners, are exemplary in their work for the Association.

Finally, I congratulate Robert McIlhagger, my predecessor, on his successful year as President. His leadership and his ambassadorial skills when representing the Association at Dinners across the province were enviable. I also congratulate Trevor Sturgess on his election as Senior Vice President, and I wish him every success for next year.

Yours sincerely,



Moore Dickson

BRA OBA President 2019-2020

## EVENTS & BRA OBA Website

<b>Annual Dinner:</b>	<p><b>Saturday 23rd November 2019 at the Europa Hotel.</b></p> <p>The dinner will commence at 7.30pm.</p> <p>For table bookings and reservations contact Iain Knox via the Alumni office: email: <a href="mailto:alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net">alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net</a></p>
Luncheon Club:	<p>Lunches are held monthly. For further information contact Robin Reid: email: <a href="mailto:judrobreid@gmail.com">judrobreid@gmail.com</a></p>
Business Breakfasts	<p>Three or four events each year, providing informational, inspirational and networking opportunities for all alumni. Starts at 7:45 a.m. with a buffet breakfast at 8:00 a.m. There are two short speeches and the event ends before 9:00 a.m. Tickets available through eventbrite.com.</p>
London and Edinburgh FP Dinners	<p><b>London:</b> Friday 13th March 2020 at the RAF Club, Piccadilly.</p> <p><b>Edinburgh:</b> Friday 24th April 2020 at the New Club.</p> <p>If interested in attending this joint venue with the Old Girls, please contact Louis Campbell at <a href="mailto:doc_malone2004@yahoo.co.uk">&lt;doc_malone2004@yahoo.co.uk&gt;</a></p>
BRA OBA Website	<p>The revamped BRA OBA Website: please see <a href="http://www.braoba.com">www.braoba.com</a> for event details, contact details, &amp; a range of history &amp; reference information.</p>
Old Boys' Cricket Match	<p>The Old Boys'/School cricket match will be held in June 2020 at the Castle Grounds. For further information nearer the time contact Andrew Magee: email: <a href="mailto:andycmagee@hotmail.com">andycmagee@hotmail.com</a></p>
Golf Society	<p>Picken Cup: Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at Malone Golf Club.</p> <p>Captain's Day: Friday 11th September 2020 at Royal Belfast Golf Club.</p> <p>For further information contact Ken Knox: email: <a href="mailto:ken@cd-group.com">ken@cd-group.com</a></p> <p>Telephone: 028 9034 1900.</p>
Academy Cricket Club	<p>Anyone wishing to join for the 2020 Season should contact Andrew Magee: email: <a href="mailto:andycmagee@hotmail.com">andycmagee@hotmail.com</a></p>
Academy Rugby Club	<p>Anyone wishing to join should contact:</p> <p>Colin Petrie: email: <a href="mailto:cjpetrie@sky.com">cjpetrie@sky.com</a> Telephone: 075 1841 8620</p> <p>Club lunches are held in the Clubhouse at HydePark before home league matches. For further information contact: Andrew Magee: email: <a href="mailto:andycmagee@hotmail.com">andycmagee@hotmail.com</a> Telephone: 078 9178 8515</p>

**Please note: It is important to keep members' contact information in the BRA Old Boys database up to date. We would be grateful if you would email your name and school leaving year, or any changes, to the BRA Alumni manager at: [alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net](mailto:alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net) Further information is available on the website, and in the Alumni newsletter.**