



National Newsletter

– Salesian Past Pupils (Great Britain)

– National President: Patrick Morrissey

Issue No 1

March 2002

This is a revived venture from many years ago, but using a modern medium. We intend to create a National Newsletter, hopefully two or three times a year, to report to our Readers what is happening on the Past Pupils front throughout the Great Britain Federation of Salesian Past Pupils. Below is our first offering of this National Newsletter. Local Association information is listed in alphabetical order.

For information of future Events and News of past events see our Website:

www.salesians.org.uk/pp

BATTERSEA ASSOCIATION

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The Battersea Millennium Almanac was available at our AGM in October and constitutes, in itself, our report as it contains the Salesian for life Presentation by Patrick Morrissey, National President. It is intended that it forms part of the archive of the Salesians and a copy has been lodged with Fr Pat Sherlock SDB in his capacity as Provincial Secretary.

We intend to distribute it to our school leavers together with the questionnaire, when it becomes available at the forthcoming National Council meeting. We gave a complimentary copy of our Almanac to all staff at the College as well as the Salesian Community and the School Governors.

We are in the process of reformatting our Committee to make it more pro-active. The initial meeting is taking place on Mon 18th Feb 2002 and includes Frs. Des O'Riordan SDB and Peter Quinn SDB who will provide a source of SDB news and support.

Tony Doran a former professional journalist has joined, to form an Editorial Board. We intend to appoint an Internet Officer who will link with the Friends Reunited site, which has already generated new membership.

We propose to appoint a member of the teaching staff to provide feedback from the College and maintain an OSA presence in the Staff Room.

BLAISDON ASSOCIATION

President: Charles Springett
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It was with regret that Past Pupils were unable to travel to Rome for the Funeral and Celebration Service of the Rector Major owing to the very short notice and difficulties involved with making travel arrangements and overnight accommodation. However we Remember Don Vecchi SDB (RIP) in our prayers, and we know that Don Bosco's work will still carry on through the new Rector Major, Salesian Priests and Brothers, Salesian Sisters (FMAs), Past Pupils, Volunteers, Friends, Teachers and Helpers.

After sending out over 300 Blaisdon 2001 Christmas Newsletters to all our contacts, we were pleased with the number of calls, Christmas Cards and letters of thanks congratulating us on its presentation and contents. After meeting up, and countless numbers of telephone calls between us, Terry O'Neill, Fr Sean Murray SDB and I (Charles), we were pleased with the finished work. We had produced a colour photo on the front cover of our Reunion gathering outside the Village Hall, and other photo's of attendees on the inside pages, 12 pages in all, not bad for an Association who no longer has its School, but the family feeling is still very strong in the Blaisdon Old Boys, which shows with the numbers that turn up time and time again. We have had many calls from Past Pupils,

their families and friends who say that they were in Gloucestershire and just felt that they had to visit Blaisdon Village, it has a special pull and memories for so many.

Fr Sean Murray SDB has been staying in Newent near Blaisdon {special in his heart} with Fr Aidan Murray SDB for the last few months having a well-earned rest. During this time he was fortunate enough to go to Italy and visit Don Bosco's home village at Ediz {Colle Don Bosco} with Peter Hunter, a National Council Member, lucky people. They found it amazing and so interesting. Like other Associations, we have lost contact with a few more Past Pupils through them moving and not forwarding their new address, however the positive side is more contacts are being made, some through Friends Reunited on the Web. Suggest that you all log on to this site via www.friendsreunited.com and I am sure that you will find it interesting and informative.

I suggest that you also try the Catholic Children's Society via www.cathchild.org.uk (which is a direct Link from this National Website) where stories and memories of Past Pupils of St Joseph's Enfield and Blaisdon are recalled. Most of these boys were orphans or not wanted by their families, so do not be surprised or shocked by some of their early memories before they arrived at Blaisdon and who were fortunate to be placed in Salesian care at this most formative stage in their lives. This is all part of our living history. Some of our Old Boys, including Norman Taylor, Eric Natcher and Lionel Wilkinson recently met up in London at the Catholic Children's Society (formerly the Crusade of Rescue) and recalled memories for the Society records. Lionel had not met up for many years, {he left Blaisdon in 1940} and we are all looking forward to meeting up at our mini-reunion on 7th April.

Fr James McGuire SDB from St Peter's in Gloucester is at present in Nazareth House in Cheltenham, getting over an operation on his hips. He was doing quite well but he had to have a further operation for a prostate problem. He is looked after by the Nuns and Staff and is making better progress now. Fr Sean has been calling in to see him nearly every day, and he has a number of local visitors. We pray for his speedy recovery.

Fr Aidan Murray is the Parish Priest for Newent and Blaisdon and always makes anyone welcome who visits there, especially Salesians and Past Pupils. He has been very helpful to Fr Sean, Terry and me when we arrange to meet up in our efforts to create the Blaisdon Association Newsletter.

We are holding a Mini Reunion on the w/e 6/7th April. Those who are staying in B+B in the area over the weekend or anyone in the area of Gloucester are invited to join us in Blaisdon Village Hall on Saturday evening for a drink and a chat prior to our big day on Sunday 7th April. This is to celebrate the Ruby Anniversary of the Ordination of Fr Sean Murray SDB and Fr Aidan Murray SDB. A Special Mass will be held in St Peter's Church Gloucester, at 1pm with a Buffet Reception to be held in St Peter's Social Club afterwards. All Salesians, Old Boys, Past Pupils, Families, Friends, Ex Staff, Teachers etc are invited to attend, and we hope that members of the National Council will attend. All will be made most welcome. All we ask is that those attending notify us in plenty of time, as we do have to inform the caterers as to the numbers expected for the buffet. We do not want to end up short of refreshments, or on the other hand, too much. We are looking forward to a memorable day for these two great Priests of Don Bosco.

Having a call from one Old Boy to log on to the Cawdor Arms Hotel, Llandeilo, I did so and was amazed to see a photo of their reception area showing the Altar Front from the Chapel of Blaisdon Hall, with a short paragraph of its history. I was asked how the Altar Front had ended up in a hotel and not moved to another Church or Chapel? I was not able to answer and I expect there will be a number of Past Pupils who will be asking the same question. It would be interesting to hear

the views of the National Council, to be put on record for Past Pupils

At the moment Terry O'Neill is having a little difficulty with his eyes after hospital treatment and therefore cannot use his computer, but he will compensate with it by staying on the phone much longer to talk to you, even longer if you are paying for the call – "It's good to talk", so BT tell us, [only joking Terry]

Our contact numbers at present are 326, of which 267 were Past Pupils, 14 Ex Blaisdon Salesians and the rest are Past Pupils Families, Ex Teachers, Ex Staff and Blaisdon Friends.

BOOTLE ASSOCIATION

President: Terry Rimmer
Tel 0151 802 3000 (Office Hours)

The annual get together for our football match and post match revelry took place in September and was enjoyed by all who took part (see photos in the News section of this website).

It is hoped that a full committee will be established fairly soon so that other arrangements of interest to Bootle Past Pupils can be organised.

BURWASH ASSOCIATION

Not yet established. Any takers?

CHERTSEY ASSOCIATION

President: Sue Gregson

Mike Quinlan and Michael O'Sullivan organized an inaugural meeting to kick-start the Chertsey Association. It was attended by the National President, Patrick Morrissey. The meeting was well attended. A committee was set up to take the association forward under Chairperson Sue Gregson.

Patrick Morrissey, National President noted that the work being done at Thornleigh by Joe Lomax was the inspiration to Chertsey (as confirmed by Mike Quinlan).

COWLEY ASSOCIATION

President: Richard Blake
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An excellent AGM and Reunion Lunch took place last year at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford, preceded by Mass at the Salesian Parish Church in Cowley.

The use last year of the Randolph Hotel turned out to be an excellent choice and it is intended to hold this year's AGM and Lunch again at the Randolph Hotel. The Event is already listed in the Events section of this Website. It will take place on Sunday 22nd September 2002.

FARNBOROUGH ASSOCIATION

President: John Clenshaw
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Since our September 2001 report to National Council our Association has endeavoured to keep pace with the links to the College which were reinforced during the 2001 'Centenary Year' of the arrival of the Salesians at Farnborough and the establishment of the College.

In November we held our Remembrance Sunday Mass at the College for all Past Pupils and friends of the College. This was followed by the now well-established annual ceremony in the College Assembly Hall and the reading of the Roll of Honour to the many Farnborough Past Pupils who gave their lives in the 2nd World War. We were pleased that this event was well supported by families of the Past Pupils, members of the College Staff and descendant relatives of some of those listed in the Roll of Honour.

Later in November 2001 on the 17th we were able to join in the welcome given to Fr. Luc van Looy SDB, Vicar General to the Rector Major of the Salesian worldwide Community, who presented the prizes at the Centenary Prizegiving. The ceremony included several prizes donated by the OSA Farnborough through our continued sponsorship of the College prize Day Fund.

'The Centenary Year' was also marked by the production of the Centenary Book compiled and edited by our Rector's Delegate to the Past Pupils, Fr. Francis Sutherland SDB. The book was entitled "Many Lives through Many Eyes" and includes notes and

photographs from the Old Boys of their years at Farnborough, its history and the OSA (Past Pupils Association). It has been excitedly received, particularly by Past Pupils living abroad or living in distant parts of the UK. The College and OSA still has many copies to sell which we need to do to help cover the printing and production costs. The OSA is actively trying to widen the interest in this book, which is an exciting and inspiring read.

Following our last report to National Council the publicity from the Centenary celebrations gives our Association a 'task' to follow up and increase interest in the College and in the interest aroused in the Past Pupils Association (OSA) during the wonderful centenary events.

SHRIGLEY ASSOCIATION

*President: Joe Lomax
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There has been very little change in the membership of the Association. Just a few new members have been discovered including two nephews of Fr Laurence Martin. Fr Martin recently became an orphan in his eighties on the passing of his mother, a great and devoted lady, at the age of 105. Another member, Neil O'Connell, only discovered recently, passed away at the age of 83, leaving behind a disabled wife of 94. Contact is certainly maintained by email with many of our members. The present membership stands at 362, with 180 in the email group.

We joined the Thornleigh Association in the Don Bosco Mass at Thornleigh and there was a total of 60 Salesian Past Pupils including many children. The Glasgow Mass attracted 18 on the same day fed by Frank Allen's Italian cuisine. On February 23rd we have a Mass at St Gregory's in Bollington for the repose of the soul of Tony Booth recently deceased in France. He was organist there and at Shrigley before emigrating. Afterwards his ashes will be scattered over the grounds at his beloved Shrigley and then we proceed to Savio House for a quiet drink.

28 have booked for Peter Roebuck's talk at Savio House on March 2nd and 3rd on the "First ten years and the

erection of the Tilden Chapel". We are looking forward to this and are basking in the reflected glory of Peter's award of the CBE for his work in Higher Education.

17 have booked to go to the New Dolmen Hotel in Bugibba in Malta over Easter and the itinerary is gradually being agreed. Fr Joe Cini is organizing our two meetings with the Maltese ex-Shriglesians.

We are currently booking for the Annual Reunion at Savio House, this year August 30th, 31st and September 1st 2002. We adopted Savio House, donated £250 from funds and a further £240 from the Sale of copies off the 1953 Shrigley broadcast. A scratchy old record was re-recorded by the prospective son-in-law of Brendan Cleverley and then copied by another member of the Association. The "Price" was a donation to Savio House. Several of us attended the opening of the remarkable extensions to the recreational facilities at Savio House on Saturday February 2nd. Finally, due to the generosity of our members our bank balance is healthy.

THORNLEIGH ASSOCIATION

*President: Ray Riley (Temp)
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The present committee is:

President: Ray Riley
Secretary: Joe Lomax;
Treasurer: Simon Talbot
Website/registrar: Mark Higson
Recruitment: Glyn Hartshorne
Publicity: Anne Marie Ginty
Social Committee: Mark Higson, Glyn Hartshorne, and Anne Marie Ginty.
MORE ARE URGENTLY NEEDED

NEXT MEETING
Wed March 20th

The representative at National Council for Thornleigh on Feb 17th was Mark Higson
Email: markhigson@totalise.co.uk
MARK WILL BE OUR NEW SECRETARY.

Mark's address:
83 Carlton St, Farnworth, Bolton,
Lancs. BL4 7PJ. Tel 01204 796255.

He has constructed a new website for Thornleigh

The membership at September 23rd was 172 with an email group of 130. On February 17th it stands at 191 with an email group of 146.

The story of the last five months has been a mixed one. There has been gradual progress in numbers after the first surge to September. It has been very difficult to get people to take part in activities and so other types of functions have to be considered and someone has to come forward to organize them, even if it is only a group in a public "Hostelry".

The Mass with the Bolton Catenians saw 22 Past Pupils attending with only 12 having no connection with the Catenians themselves. The Christmas Dinner was cancelled as only 11 had booked. The joint Don Bosco Mass at Thornleigh on February 3rd was attended by 25 Past Pupils including families and was an improvement.

The AGM is planned for the second Sunday after Easter. We have had committee meetings before any activity but not many have turned up. The Head Girl and Head Boy were invited to the Don Bosco Mass; the Head Girl apologizing for having a previous engagement but the Head Boy did not appear.

A rugby team played and beat local and bitter rivals BOLTON SCHOOL by 2212 points to nil (or was 12:0) but no apparent contact has been made with the Soccer Club.

Vincent Collins, a Past Pupil, is researching the names that appear in the Roll of Honour of those who perished in the War and who are honoured at the back of the Chapel. A photograph of many of these was recently handed in. The local Parish Priests are not in favour of Masses being arranged at the same time as Parish Masses and the Christmas Eve Mass is in danger of ceasing. Nevertheless the joint Mass with the Catenians is fixed for this November and we could well continue with the Joint Don Bosco Mass with the Shrigley Association. On this point a letter was sent to the local Rural Dean on behalf of the Association regarding the Christmas Eve Mass and individual members were encouraged to send their own letters.

Letters were sent from the Association and on behalf of the "Old Boys Band" to Fr McGovern to help him cope with his operation for the removal of a bowel tumour.

To all thirsty Ex-Thornleigh students, of any drinking age or capacity:

We intend to have an informal get-together POSSIBLY on FRIDAY APRIL 12th at the VICTORIA INN, Markland Hill, Heaton, (01204 841136) at the suggestion of one of our committee members. He has already spent one pleasant evening with some of his Thornleigh contemporaries and thoroughly recommends it to us. This may be a small start to further convivial evenings so please see if you can get there and bring someone else. We could of course on further occasions go to other salubrious venues. This is only two days before the AGM which is at Thornleigh on Sunday April 14th at 2.00. Please come and help in one way or another. Your very presence is an encouragement.

The roll of Honour is taking shape a little more due to the tremendous efforts of Vince Collins. The other day Tony Bridden gave me a photograph of his form on which are some of those who did not survive the war. I hope to be able to see Tom Brown, Philip Derbyshire and Joe Quinn who were also contemporaries. Is there anyone reading this who may be a son, nephew, grandson directly or granddaughter of one who served in the 1939/45 war? If so please get in touch either with Vince or me.

I begged members to consider coming to Savio House for at least the talk on the Sunday. Last year we had TWENTYEIGHT attending the Sunday and asking for it to be repeated. We thought that Peter's kind offer to come all the way from Ulster to give us a talk on the first ten years of Shrigley's existence and the erection of the chapel would make it even more appealing so we extended the time from the Sunday only to the Saturday evening also to allow for relaxation after a journey - and of course a good natter. In the event over 40 attended. Well done and many thanks to those who came and enjoyed an exhilarating evening.

EUROGEX

The European youth part of the Past Pupils Federation

Peter Hunter, our Eurogex Representative, together with Father Sean Murray SDB, our National Delegate, attended a Youth Convention in Turin on behalf of the GB Federation. The warmth and affection that was shown to Peter from all whom he met from many countries in Europe and the Salesians (Fathers and Sisters) in Turin made an enormous impression on him.

The meetings took place in Becchi and Mornese, the birthplaces of Don Bosco, founder of the Salesian Community (SDBs) and Mother Maria Mazzarello, founder of the Salesian Sisters (FMAs), and also in Turin. The opportunity for Peter and the other young people from Europe to visit these important Salesian sites and to see Don Bosco's body in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians in Turin had a most profound effect.

The key purpose of the meeting was for the younger Past Pupils in Europe to determine, together, their role in their Associations and what they could do to promote the Past Pupils organisation. Peter was able to play a lively part in the discussions with the other Past Pupils on his ideas in this respect and to share with them some of the activities he is personally involved with in the GB National Council in addressing this important matter.

The Eurogex organisation is for the younger element of the Salesian Past Pupils, covering the ages of 16 to 30 years of age, to give them their own voice in the Past Pupil events in Europe.

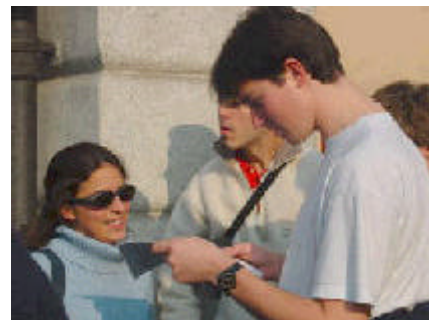
It seems the young Past Pupils also found time to enjoy each others company, besides the work they undertook:



"The birth of whatever it is to be, is a wonderful phenomenon to observe and difficult to describe. Giving life is something that requires strength, conviction, desire and hope. Giving birth is not all: it's necessary to feed it and

make it grow. This is our goal as Past Pupils of Don Bosco."

Bruno André Miranda (Portugal)



"Back to the places where it all started, back to its origins... impressive, touching, confronting... A meaningful week of spirit and prayers... deep thoughts and reflection. Past Pupils of Don Bosco meet, make contacts, exchange experiences, and gather with other youngsters with different cultures, background and perception. We had an enriching week that will leave an everlasting impression. More than ever Don Bosco is alive in us, youngsters from Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium and England. He is our source and the driving force. Torino, Valdocco and Becchi (Colle Don Bosco) is where it all started. It's good to be there and as good to have been there."

Helmut Devos (Belgium-North)



"What a fantastic experience, a Salesian experience. The meeting was held in Mornese and in Valdocco, and included a visit to the Basilica where Don Bosco's body lies. What a brilliant time we had having the opportunity to meet and share experiences with other past pupils from around Europe. I am still coming back down to earth, this is where it all began and you realise that DB was an amazing person, chosen by God to work throughout the world touching young peoples lives and creating the Salesian family. I was pleased to be the representative for England and thank all those who supported my journey."

Pete Hunter (England)

GLOBAL PAST PUPILS ACTIVITIES

Information about Past Pupils activities throughout the world is also available on the Internet and is created by Alex

Dockers, World Vice President. This can be found under www.donbosco-pp.info There is a direct link to this website from our Links page under "Follow Don Bosco".

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