

OLD VICTORIANS

January 2011



Centenary Service in Dunblane Cathedral 2008. School colours on display with SSM Duthie and DM Tomkins.

The end of the association? Leigh Bissett (Acting President)

I have to be honest, the association has taken a bit of a backward step in the last few years (giant leaps back actually). The online presence - facebook, the death of a dedicated character (Ron Smith) and probably increasingly busy lives and a reduction in the community aspect of the association means people cannot dedicate the time to the association.

There is no other way round it - the association is currently pointless, utterly irrelevant. I am sure I will have a "vote of no confidence" at the next meeting but the fact that there is never a meeting that makes a quorate level - I am neither currently the President, nor can I be voted out.

So here is the big question - shall we call it a day and let the school take over the "alumni / supporters" work that the Old Victorians used to do or not?

There has been a suggestion that we hand over the database of Old Victorians to the school so that the development office (formed in 2008) who can then keep in touch with the alumni and promote the good works of the school.

I am of course happy to try and revive the association, indeed, I have started up a new website www.oldvictorians.org.uk which is easier to use and easier to update so we hope to keep current, however, if the

membership does not feel we serve a purpose anymore then perhaps we need to call it a day?

We do not have a committee at the moment - therefore it is me and one other running this committee. If we cannot form a group at Grand Day 2011 or pull together a quorate meeting of the Old Victorians, it in simple terms would probably mean we can hand things over to the school. If we can get people to offer some time then I am at your service but the time has come to decide -

OVA's stay or OVA's go?

Rev John Silcox

26 years of dedicated service to QV

An Interview with the Man himself

When you first came to interview at the school did you think you would be here for 26 years?

No. At first when I started I was overwhelmed with the very different ministry than the parish where I came from but by the time I realized I was happy in the work several years had passed and different people were kind enough to say that I was able to be of assistance to them.

The school was one hundred in 2008 and you have seen about 1/4 of the schools history pass by, what was the biggest change in that time?

There is a sense in which basic human nature does not change and in that way the boys of 1984 are very much like the boys and girls of 2010. What has changed dramatically and will continue to change at an increasing pace is the nature and form of society and family life. I do not welcome all these changes.

Within anything there have been highs and lows? Would you be comfortable sharing your highest and lowest moments in your ministry at the school?

My lowest moment was with one of my early tutor group when because of his continuing disruptive behavior which I failed completely to get him to take responsibility for he was asked to leave the school. I later heard through others that he had got into severe trouble in the big world and was in prison. I believed that I should have been able to help him avoid this in his life, but I failed.

One of my more positive moments was with my first Higher Philosophy class of eleven pupils. They all passed the Higher. That was a definite highlight and a source of great personal rejoicing.

I used the word ministry but did you have any particular goals when you came to the school and what were they?

I was already an Army Chaplain in the Territorial Army and I wanted to continue this which I did for a further 10 years. I wanted to get more involved with the Cadets in the school and with the sport of target rifle shooting.

So, why after 26 years did you decide to go?

There comes a time when you know the School would be better served by somebody new. I have not regretted this decision and am delighted with Mr. Boyd as my replacement. I know that the school will give him every support in his work just as they extended that kindness to me.

I know it is a difficult thing to do but on reflection, how do you think that the boys and girls will look back and remember you?

I really did not expect all the fuss and emotion that was so kindly shown to me on my retiral. It quite took me back and I am still surprised by it to this day. It is always the case that you do your job in the most caring and loving way possible not looking for any acclaim. I shall certainly miss each and every one of them.

On a lighter note, I know that you had lots of nicknames when I was at the school (all affectionate), did you have any particular favorites or did you know them all? How many can you actually reel off?

Johnny Rambo comes to mind so do references to my lack of hair. I will always remember my first form class (S1) who, coming up to Christmas, presented me one day in class with a comb which had all the middle teeth removed just leaving two or three at each end. That was great fun to receive and I carried it around in class and used it for a long while afterwards, much to the hilarity of the boys. I firmly believe that it is good for you to laugh at yourself from time to time.

Is there anybody you would like to give a special thank you to for the last 26 years?

Yes but the list, including yourself, is just too long to publish - God knows each one however and I am content with that.

So, what does life have in store now?

I have taken up the support of one of the smallest local churches and since the Minister there has a long term illness I have already been preaching and assisting with the congregational meetings. God willing I will continue with this for some time to come.

Will you keep in touch with the school and Old Victorians Association or do you think you will have too much to do in retirement to be involved?

I hope to keep in touch with everyone but feel that, just at the moment, it is important for me to keep a low profile for a while to give Mr. Boyd a better chance to settle in and make his own distinctive mark within the School Chapel.

Finally, is there any message you would like to share with all the boys, girls, friends that you have met in your time at the school?

I believe that the small daily things are what are really important and in real danger of being lost and deemed unimportant in our modern fast living world. I mean the daily ethical moral and spiritual choices and decisions which involve not only self but family and our very important friends. We are not able often to change the world into a better place but we can change ourselves to be better, more caring and more humanly loving people. George Orwell recounted a story once in the Tribune about Sir Walter Raleigh. Raleigh was in the Tower of London writing what was to be his mammoth history of the whole world when he witnessed an argument between two men that resulted in the death of one of them. Raleigh was unable to find out the reason for this single argument but the event affected him so much that he burnt what he had written about the history of the world and gave up on the project completely. Having failed totally to understand the immediate local event which he had just witnessed first hand he felt he could not understand the larger picture of world history. So I would say leave what the world thinks is important but which you cannot change – look always at the small daily things in your life that you can make better. One day you might just wake up and realize that you have actually made the whole world a better place!

God Bless.
John.

Degrees / Commissions / News

All the news from Old Victorians

Stewart Anderson

Stewart has graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Architectural Technology in 2008. Congratulations.

Leigh Bissett

Leigh graduated with a medical degree from the University of East Anglia, Norwich and an Honours Degree in English law from the University of Dundee. Congratulations.

Katrina Leith

Katrina has graduated with an honours degree from the University of Edinburgh in Nursing. Congratulations.

Alistair Spence

Tornado Pilot took the Battle of Britain Salute this year which was the first parade Sunday taken by the new chaplain.

Mr. Ben Patterson

It is with a heavy heart that we must announce the death of Mr. Patterson, a former Deputy Head of the school he was known for his stature, his keen rugby skills and generally good nature with all the boys who attended the school. He will be missed. A formal Eulogy will be posted on the website when it has been written.

Mr. William Walford

Better known as Bill or Billy he attended the school from around 1937 we have worked out. He learned to play the tuba and double bass and went to to serve in WWII. A full copy if his eulogy will be placed on the website in due course for people who knew him to read. Bill leaves behind many loved ones and thoughts are with them in this difficult time.

Memorial for Vic and Ron

We want to plant a tree in memory of these two great supporters of the association but to do justice to their contribution we need to have enough support from members. We will announce a time for this and we would value your support.

Memorial Wreath

Kindly laid by Mr. Duncan McLay on behalf of OVA's.

Peter Onslow

Recently composed a piece for the Choristers of the Chapel Royal. Now working in St. Georges International Boarding School, Switzerland.

Without your support, this newsletter is pointless.

Log on to
www.oldvictorians.org.uk
to tell us what you are
doing now.



Mrs. Wendy Bellars

Headmistress of Queen Victoria School, Dunblane

By Mrs. Wendy Bellars

I was pleased to be asked by Leigh Bissett to write a few hundred words for the OVA Newsletter, as I have been impressed by the work of the two OVA Committees with whom I've had the pleasure of working since I joined Queen Victoria School in January 2007. It is clear to me that members of both Committees had nothing but the best interests of the School and its pupils at heart, and I was saddened to witness the discouragement of both groups as they tried their hardest to organise events and move the Association forward, only to be met with little support and also with a great deal of criticism from those who – it seemed to me – were not prepared to do anything themselves, but were keen to criticise what was being done by the Committee. I do hope that the new OVA Committee members will meet with a more positive response.

As far as the School is concerned, we are always happy to see Old Victorians. There is a need to follow certain security-related protocols and to remember that the School is the home of its current pupils (and many staff); most OVs respect these points, however, and visits go well. Large gatherings of OVs, for example on Remembrance Sunday, are particularly poignant. Yes, we sometimes feel embarrassed on behalf of younger OVs who want to come back only to show off that they are no longer at School, and occasionally talk (or worse) during the Parades – but they are a small minority and do not, I know, represent the feelings of most of you for your old school.



Mrs. Wendy Bellars at Dunblane Cathedral Centenary Parade

Photo care of RAF Photography

The outgoing OVA Committee made an extremely generous donation to the School, through the Development Office, of around £20,000, all of which is going to specific projects that will benefit current and future pupils. We are fortunate to be funded for the essentials by the Ministry of Defence, but there are definitely non-essentials (such as a small kitchen for pupils to use in their own House, or benches and tables on which to sit out during the days of the summer term) which make life better for Victorians, and which help to reassure parents that this is an organisation which not only looks after, but also cares for, its young people.

What of the future? I sense that the OVA needs to change. Most OVs keep in touch with one another by Facebook or other social media. OVs are spread around the country, and indeed around the globe, perhaps more than ever before, but with these means of keeping or

getting in touch, you can arrange to meet wherever is convenient for you. There is probably no longer a need for a specific OVA Weekend here at School. Similarly, the £10 that used to be levied from each leaver's parents, for the OVA, no longer earns anything for the leaver. It is time for the School to decide what it is going to offer to its leavers in terms of keeping in touch, newsletters, perhaps copies of The Victorian for a year or two – and we shall get on with those decisions.

I wish you luck with your own decision-making as an Association, and would finish by saying that you are always welcome here at the School, either individually or collectively. Please let me know what and how you are doing, and if you would be prepared to speak to a group of current Victorians, to give them the benefit of your experience: that would be extremely helpful.

With best wishes to you all.





Some memories of the school - a Lino cutting by high miller placed on the facebook site and an ariel photo of the school below. Something you want to share - email

oldvictorians@hotmail.com



QVS Development Office

How can you support the school directly?

The QVS Development Office and the OVA have been enjoying an increasingly open and mutually beneficial connection recently, especially with Catriona Yates returning from her maternity leave over the summer. The Development Office has now been up and running for two years and the School is really benefiting from the support of OVs, parents, grandparents, members of the public and trusts. It's not an easy time to solicit money from people, or from businesses and trusts, but this doesn't mean we aren't trying as the pupils at QVS still need support, especially as MoD budgets are being stretched even thinner.

It has been said, with great truth, that children are the forgotten victims of war.

Catriona says: "At this time, as we are publishing our new Wish List which details projects we hope to be able to finance over the next 12 months, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the OVA for its great generosity of their £20,000 donation to the School. You have helped us to fund

so many worthwhile projects and put a big tick next to most of our old Wish List items – thank you so much."

The money you raised will fund: a refurbishment of Trenchard House kitchen (P7-S1), a sports equipment storage area, tents for Grand Day, 7 round benches with 6 seats attached to each one and 3 traditional upright park benches, drama club items, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Combined Cadet Force equipment and most importantly in many ways, a donation to the Commissioners' Welfare Fund.

Catriona says that she doesn't know of many former pupil associations who'd be so willing and able to fund such a vast array of projects which will make such a positive difference to the School and pupils, and that will also have lasting impact. "The entire School community wishes to thank the OVA members who enabled this donation. Thank you. We know that you have not forgotten our very special pupils and their reliance on the generosity of others."

David Gargaro

Trumpet and Conducting Brilliance

Born in Munster, Germany in 1986, David began playing trumpet aged 9 and conducting aged 15. A large interest in the art culture of North America influenced David to accept a prestigious scholarship from the Dewar Arts Awards, and a Howard Hanson scholarship from the Eastman School of Music to pursue a Bachelors degree in trumpet performance with the world renowned James Thompson and conducting with Brad Lubman.

As well as having master classes in trumpets with some of the world famous musicians he has also played with and directed over one hundred orchestras and ensembles that include the Edinburgh Symphony Baroque Orchestra, Brighton Symphony Orchestra, National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, Edinburgh Youth Orchestra and many more - the list is too long to publish.

In addition to winning the Scottish Concerto Competition, David has also received 1st places in the Edinburgh, Perthshire and Glasgow Music Festival Brass Open Classes. Other competition awards include a place in the final of the prestigious Edinburgh Royal Choral Union, first place in the Young Musician of the Year in Perthshire, and a finalist spot in the Directors Recital Prize at St. Marys Music School.

Notably, David was invited to play the American National Anthem at the Edinburgh celebrations marking the 229th anniversary of American Independence by the American Ambassador Cecile Shea. Recent engagements have included studio recordings for International Artists such as Siobhan Wilson on the MyMajorCompany Label, and solo recitals in venues such as Kilbourn Hall. David has also appeared live on WXXI in the Live from Hochstein Concert Series.

Previous teachers for conducting have included John Grundy, former Director of Music in the Sydney Opera House, and the world renowned Brad Lubman. Recent conducting engagements have



included work with the Genovian Philharmonia, Music at the Atrium Ensemble, New York Youth Symphony and Oistrach Symphony Orchestra in Chicago..

David currently studies at the Bard College Conservatory of Music with Conducting Director Harold Farberman and College President Leon Botstein. David also studies privately with the New York Philharmonic's Assistant Conductor, Daniel Boico.

More information on David

<http://www.davidgargaro.co.uk/>

Have you got a Story?

I know it is difficult to talk about yourself but it is an ideal opportunity to tell us what you have been doing since. Go on the the website or facebook site to give us more details.

David was a pupil at QVS who has gone on to Musical Excellence.

Have you got a story to tell, then email oldvictorians@hotmail.com

Grand Day 2011

24th June 2011 - For your diaries

Grand Day this year will be held on the Friday 24th June 2011.

If you left school in 2001, 1991, 1981, 1971, 1961, 1951, 1941, 1931, 1921 or 1911 try and make a special effort to get up as we are trying to encourage decade reunions. Get on to facebook / email / phone and communicate with all your friends. We will put a page up nearer the time to see who is coming along so PLEASE PLEASE do think about coming this year to make sure we don't lose the valued association.

Use www.oldvictorians.org.uk to register attendance nearer the time.

CONTACTING US

WEBSITE:

www.oldvictorians.org.uk

OLD WEBSITE:

This is being kept active as it contains lots of useful information on it.

www.oldvictorians.org

FACEBOOK GROUP:

Search for Queen Victoria School on facebook
(closed group)

EMAIL:

oldvictorians@hotmail.com

