

**OLD BLUNDELLIAN CLUB**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 18th JUNE 2016**  
**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

2015/16 has been another successful year for the Old Blundellian Club (OBC).

The OBC has over 4000 registered members ranging in age from 19 to over 90. It would be unrealistic to expect that it could fulfil all the needs of every one of those members.

However, the range of activities and facilities which we do provide is quite extraordinary and is the envy of many other alumni associations including those of some of the largest independent schools in the country.

In this report, I shall pick out only a few of the highlights from the last year.

**Dinner**

Perhaps the highlight of the social calendar was the magnificent dinner held in November 2015 at CTC Lymstone, courtesy of the commanding officer, Col, Kevin Oliver. Our renewed thanks go to him and his staff for allowing us to hold this function in such an atmospheric venue.

We have found that support for formal occasions of this sort is greater if they are not held too frequently. It is unlikely that there will be another dinner on this scale for two or three years.

**Carol Concert**

The OBC was well represented at the first ever school carol concert held in Exeter Cathedral in December 2015. The President and the Chairman of the OBC were the formal guests of the Governors and a splendid, joyful and moving occasion it was too. Several Old Blundellians joined the enlarged school choir and produced a thrilling musical event.

**Speech day**

Perhaps it is a measure of the good relations which the OBC now enjoys with the School that the President and the Chairman are now routinely invited as guests to the School's annual speech day.

For the last two years, the OBC has hosted a lunch on that day for OB parents of current pupils and each occasion has been oversubscribed. The event is to take place again on Speech day in two weeks.

Similarly, in May 2016, on the occasion of the school 1st XI match against the MCC, a lunch was hosted in this building and again, it was full to capacity.

## **Winter Lunches**

The monthly lunches held between October and March in the Beale Centre continue to be popular. Thanks go to Old Blundellian Mike Daniels for chairing the lunches and to Janet Wooff for their organisation, attracting a variety of interesting speakers and dealing with the catering.

## **OB Overseas Ambassadors**

The building of a team of OB's prepared to act as Ambassadors in foreign countries (to provide information and advice to current Blundellians and OB's on such matters as travel and local universities and work opportunities), continues and now number 13. Details can be found on the OBC section of the Blundell's website.

## **Website**

We continue our policy of posting up to date information on the website on a very wide range of topics. We appreciate that not everyone has access to or chooses to use the website but if you are interested, may I recommend that you have a look.

On the topic of internet based facilities, I apologise if you are amongst those who have had difficulty during the year in gaining access to the OBC database. I am afraid that there have been technical problems and the school's IT department and the Development Office have been working on this. It appears that there are some issues connected to the facilitators of the application. It is possible we may have to make a decision whether or not to change the providers but that is likely to prove expensive and to be avoided if possible. Meanwhile we are doing everything we can to rectify matters.

When logging on to the database, please ensure that you have the correct username and password. If you are experiencing any difficulty with this do contact the office at the Beale Centre who will do their best to help.

## **Beale Centre**

If anything signifies in a practical way the current vibrancy of the OBC, it is the use now being made of the building.

The Beale Centre is, of course, an OBC facility and the Club always has first refusal on its use. That use is considerable.

In addition, as part of the function of the OBC to promote the interests of Blundell's, the school uses the building several times each week. The new reading room is proving very popular for small meetings, interviews, private study, counselling sessions, dinners and functions and the like.

It is appropriate that it should be recorded that the room has been named the “Abram Reading Room” as a mark of the generosity of Charles Abram, a current member of the committee of the OBC, in providing funds, in memory of his late wife, for its fitting out.

During the year, the kitchen at the BC has been refurbished to a professional catering standard and we are grateful for the financial support provided by the school for this work.

### **OB Choir tour to Venice**

This took place in December 2015 under the leadership of the former director of Music, Mr Andrew Barlow and culminated in what was a magnificent concert in St Mark’s Basilica.

### **Miscellaneous**

I have no time to mention all the many other activities. These include the sourcing of OB’s to give careers advice and talks to current Blundellians and lectures to the wider Blundell’s community; the holding of a sporting weekend, liaison with the Development Office over the Waterloo Battlefield Tour in May 2016 and the development of relations with the Junior School so as to embrace former pupils there who may not move on to the senior school.

All the while, the Club endeavours to maintain communications with Old Blundellians and to provide a point of contact. We would like to do more and we would like to do some things better. However, we do not have unlimited resources and we endeavour to nurture those we do have in the best interests of the membership.

### **A Farewell**

After eight years as your Chairman, I have decided not to seek re-election. The time has come for fresh ideas and energy. May I please take this opportunity of thanking all those who have served on the committee during my period of office. Their enthusiasm on behalf of all members has been a delight.

I express my gratitude to both Paddy Armstrong and Janet Wooff for their sterling efforts on behalf of the Club.

I thank the Governors of the School, with whom the Club now enjoys good relations, for their support; the current Head, Nicola Huggett, who has brought a breath of fresh air to our committee deliberations and also to her predecessor Ian Davenport; and finally, to the Development Office, most particularly Amber Oliver, with whom the OBC now works so closely in the delivery of joint projects and events.

We meet today in June 2016 on Old Blundellian Day. Not so many years ago, the very continuation of this event was threatened by a lack of interest. Now, once again, it is a function which seems relevant and worthwhile. So it is in many ways with the OBC.

I depart this office with confidence that the Club is in good health. The improvement in the atmosphere surrounding and directed towards the OBC over eight years is extraordinary.

The OBC is now consulted and respected and it is a tribute to all those who have worked to create this vibrant alumni association. The OBC is an integral part of the whole Blundell's community, both here in Tiverton and Old Blundellians across the world.

But of course, there is much more that can and will be done. My hope is that the OBC will continue to provide for you, every member, a link between your past and the present and a continuing interest in what is happening in the years to come.

Paul Waterworth  
Chairman Old Blundellian Club