

Blundell's www.blundells.org

DIARY

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE BLUNDELL'S COMMUNITY

ISSUE No: 8

Choir tour to Venice

THE SCHOOL PLAY



THE SCHOOL PLAY

The Ghost Train

Onstage and behind the scenes

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INSIDE:



OB Andrew Reynolds and the World's toughest foot race

Days gone by: The military and Blundell's

Strange Discoveries: Mike Sampson - collecting history





CLASSIC VIEW

Drama productions at Blundell's

Prior to the opening of Ondaatje Hall, Drama productions were for many years staged in Big School. The photograph above shows a production of 'The Mysteries' which was performed on March 17th-20th 1986. This production was staged 'back-to-front' with some members of the audience seated on the raised stage.

In the early days, Drama at Blundell's consisted solely of the plays put on for Speech Day. The photograph on the right shows the 1886 production of Sheridan's 'Critic', performed, as many were, in the open air outside the Clock Tower.





Photograph by Andrew Nadolski

HEAD MASTER'S INTRODUCTION



Happy New Year and welcome to the eighth edition of the Diary. The idea as originally conceived was to give a flavour of what I regard as a rather special place. The excellent Blundellian, edited by Tim Dyke (Head of English) gave a comprehensive view of all that happens here each year, and therefore I wanted something different for The Diary. I wanted

it to be an educational experience for the pupils and I also wanted it to give an opportunity for us to highlight interesting and imaginative successes or projects or individuals. I knew it would have to be selective, unlike the comprehensive Blundellian.

This edition though, celebrates a very comprehensive view of the School indeed and it is not a view from inside which can sometimes be rather subjective, it is the view of the OFSTED inspectors who visited us in November. All inspections can be a nerve wracking experience particularly so when the inspecting body carries the weight and authority of the Department of Education, with all that entails. We felt we were well placed but it is true to say that we were not expecting such a resounding affirmation of what we are doing here. The inspectors rated the School as Outstanding overall and Outstanding in all six categories. The report is littered with wonderful soundbites, but at the heart of their report lies their powerful belief that there is a close and deep shared purpose here, which draws in all who are connected with Blundell's.

I would urge you to read the report in full, which can be found on our website.

Ian Davenport

Head Master

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REMEMBRANCE DAY

Heads of School, Lydia Ferris NC/W and Richard Paxton OH/W prepare to lay the wreath flanked by members of the CCF.



BARONESS DEAN VISITS BLUNDELL'S

There was great excitement in the newly started Politics 'A' Level class when the school had the pleasure of Baroness Dean's visit this November, to discuss political affairs and the general workings of the House of Lords. She had had an intriguing career, beginning as a trade unionist as a teenager and elected as General President of the print union SOGAT in 1983. Representing the industry's clerical and ancillary workers, she was the first British woman to lead a major trade union.

She was in this position when Rupert Murdoch moved his newspapers to Wapping, leading to the last key industrial battle in Britain. Baroness Dean became a life peer in October 1993 and continues to campaign to improve the lives of employees. We were very grateful to receive an inspiring talk from a strong and determined woman giving an invaluable insight into politics and the House of Lords.



On your marks....

The new year-long accumulative house sports points competition heralded the popular reintroduction of Westlake pupils back into their old houses for team events. The first two new events were a keenly contested campus relay and a tug-of-war, both of which were won by FH and NC.



Hard-hitting drama

This year's A2 devised performance, Euphoria, took the gritty subject of driving while under the influence of drugs as its theme. The pupils staged a car crash scene and, through the use of flash-backs, monologues and physical theatre explored the lives of those who had been the victims of the accident. This was a hard-hitting piece of drama that moved its audience. Emily Mayes, Ellen Howe, Vicky Cox, John Steer-Fowler and Ed Carlton combined their talents and acting skills to create an impressive performance and were ably supported by Sam Edwards who created the sound and lighting.





Boarders' paintballing

The boys' houses competed in the annual boarders' paintballing competition with OH narrowly beating FH. The Instructors commented on how brilliant the Blundellians were and that they had not seen that intensity of fire and smoke for many years!

MUSIC SCHOLARS PERFORM

The Music Scholars' concert played to a full house and showcased the best musicians in the school. For the first time ever it was in the Ondaatje Hall which proved a success despite pianos having to be dismantled and transported across the campus! The lights dimmed and a hushed audience settled down to a memorable night of performances. There were many highlights but obvious standouts were Alex Everett's virtuoso piano piece and Alex and Laura Macbean's



Alex MacBean

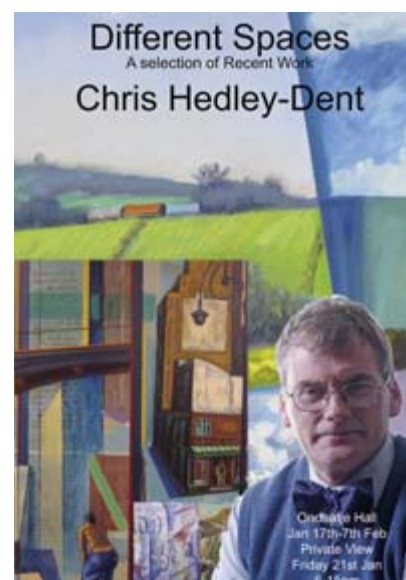
performances. A special mention must go to Anthony Liu and Max Berry from SH, who despite their young age, played at a high level on violin and trombone. Overall it was a brilliant evening filled with musical talent.

Philippa Horne GHYr11



Jess captains the boys!

Jess Mudge GH/W has been appointed Captain of Squash for this year and is undoubtedly the first girl to do so here. We highlighted Jess in our Winter 2009 edition as a rising star, and we weren't wrong! Jess has been our Number 1 squash player for three years now and kicked off the season by leading her men to a 5-1 victory over Sherborne. Jess won 3-1, Ben Hancock FH won 3-0, Gary Abdoll P won 3-0, Will French P lost 0-3, Matt Oddy P won 3-0 and Nick Cumberlege P won 3-0.



Different Spaces

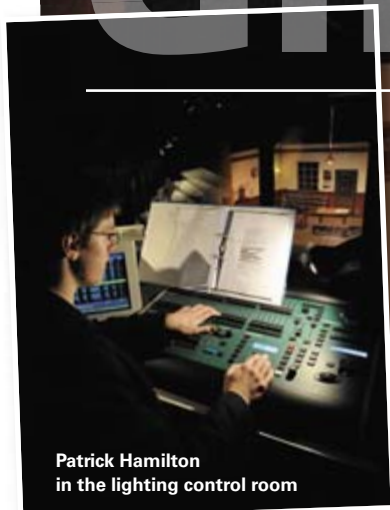
Chris Hedley-Dent of Blundell's Art department has had a major exhibition of recent work in Ondaatje Hall. Through exploring the local landscape of Dartmoor and the urban geometry of New York, Chris has created some stunning paintings and prints. Fragments, reflections and playful illusory surfaces dominate his images and the exhibition clearly demonstrates his serious commitment as a practising artist.

RDJM

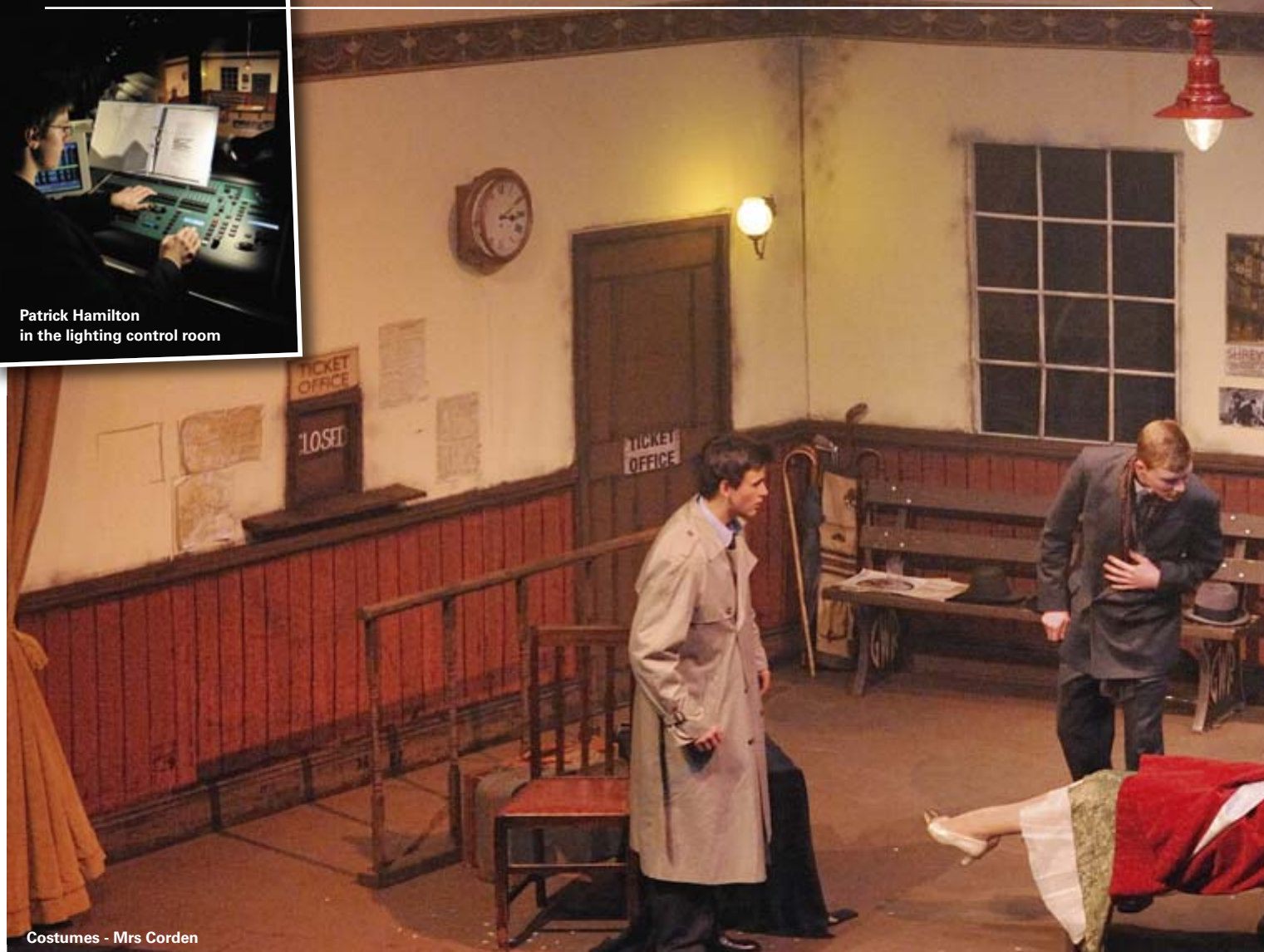


Spitfire Disco – the all OH or exOH band of Andy Cotter-Stone, John Steer-Fowler, Ben Grayson, Joe Wander and Jim Bremner performing at the 'Open Mike' evening.

The Ghost Train



Patrick Hamilton
in the lighting control room



Costumes - Mrs Corden



Ass't Stage Managers
Amy Young & Vicky Cox



Amy Young - 'smashing' glass sound-effects

After practising since the beginning of term, The Ghost Train was performed for two nights in November. A haunting play directed by Miss Baddeley, who chose it because of the appealing story and the twist at the end; it tells the tale of characters stuck in a railway station, who turn out be very different people than who they say they are, and of a ghost train mystery which turns out to be a hoax.

The play was written by Arnold Ridley who later became a television star as Godfrey in Dad's Army. The Ghost Train doesn't, however, have many similarities with the television show. The students performing had to work hard and concentrate throughout as the characters were on stage most of the time. Miss Baddeley said that because of this the set also had to be very engaging and detailed as it didn't change either.

With the help of a few Drama students, she changed the ending slightly and set the story in 1940 rather than 1920, involving German spies instead of Americans in order to relate to the author's own experience of fighting in World War 2.

The Drama department had the challenging task of staging and timing all the effects of the ghost train coming into the station with the steam, sounds and lighting. A lot of research also went into the props and costumes in order to create the effect of the era, with old advertisements around the waiting room and, as Miss Baddeley said, "there's always someone at the end who says that that fire bucket is wrong for that time period." The whole cast put their all into the outstanding performance and were a credit to the School showing that their diligence and time had paid off.



In-costume Ticket Collectors

The Ghost Train passes through the station



Main picture Charles Murdock: Ed Carlton, Teddie Deakin: Elliot Keefe, Julia Price: Eolande Diaz-Phillips, John Sterling: James Foan, Peggy Murdock: Victoria Payne, Richard Winthrop: Joe Wander, Miss Bourne: Lydia Cree, Elsie Winthrop: Indy Murphy, Miss Price: Flora Shadbolt, Miss Jackson: Flora Dickinson, Saul Hodgkin: Jamie Morris

Venice

December 2010

By Vicky Cox Yr 13

Some memorable experiences:

'The acoustics in the Gesuati church.'

'Singing Ave Verum in St Mark's... spectacular.'

'...the warmth and hospitality of the Venetian people.'

'Singing Goodnight Sweetheart everywhere...'

'Banter...'



Near Marco Polo Liceo



Campo San Stefano



St George's Church



Enjoying the snow



San Marco Basilica



On a traghetto



A 4.30am start by bus to Gatwick, arriving in Venice at 3pm. We took the waterbus and had an impressive view of the sunset- a memorable arrival at San Marco.

Awoken by the bells of San Marco at 7am for breakfast on Friday morning, we set off to meet Christine Marigonda, an Italian lady who took us to the Cavagnis School where we gave a concert to about 200 junior pupils in their chapel. Alex MacBean continued her role as conductor for all the accompanied items, which she continued to do for the entire tour. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed the cakes and drinks- the first encounter of the trip with the various Italian Christmas cakes, panatona and panadoro. We then went to St. George's Anglican Church to practice for upcoming services where, (after a snowball fight) we met Father Howard who had previously been the Archdeacon of Egypt. The evening was spent in a restaurant where Ed learned of his success at Keble College, Oxford! Back at the hotel many settled down for various games, including (of course) Boggle!

On Saturday, we met Silvia Marri who took us to the Marco Polo Liceo, where we listened to their choir sing Rutter's 'For the beauty of the earth.' We then performed for around 40 minutes. After lunch, we went to the Instrument Museum, where we gave a short recital in an excellent acoustic, and had the opportunity to look at some impressively old instruments. From there we went to the Gesuati Church where a grumpy lady at the ticket office let us sing for 'a minute' as we wanted to experience the marvellous acoustic. From there we went back to St George's for the evening Carol Service. When we arrived two professionals were practising with a young Serbian organist (who isn't allowed into the UK, despite being allowed in other EU countries). It was a beautiful service and we appreciated the quality singing of the soloists (one of whom had sung for Susan Boyle's recent album!). During dinner that evening, some were taken aback by an Italian Santa Claus peering through the restaurant window. Afterwards, a few explored the locality, whilst others retired for more Boggle.



The Doge's Palace

Alex conducting in San Marco

At the British Consulate

On Sunday, we went back to St George's for the morning service at 10.30, where we met Ivor Coward and Christine whilst drinking prosecco and eating more cake. Having said farewell to Father Howard, the afternoon consisted of a trip to the Doge's Palace. It was an interesting visit and with so few tourists, it was the perfect opportunity to appreciate the scale and beauty of the palace rooms. Some fun was also had in the prisons, particularly over the Bridge of Sighs. After there was some quiet time for shopping and relaxing in the hotel, before going to the Basilica of San Marco for the evening service. We were taken to the loggia – organ loft – overlooking the basilica, where we had no time to prepare or practice with the organ. It was amazing to be underneath the extraordinary domes with their remarkable decoration, and to be able to look round the various walkways in the roof and see the unusual design of the building. We could also see into the vestry where there were some remarkable paintings. Evening Hymn, the final piece of the service, received an impromptu (and much appreciated) round of applause from a sizeable congregation. That evening, the sixth form had a meal of their own while the staff and year 10/11 revisited an earlier restaurant.

Monday morning we went to the Sansovino School which had some unusual architecture. We then went on a traghetto across the Grand Canal, with a quick walk through the market to the Rialto Bridge and its church with the

medieval clock. After separating for lunch we met up for a walk to Vivaldi's Church – La Pietà – which unfortunately wasn't open. This left plenty of time for shopping before singing at our final venue – the Circolo Italo Britannico; a group made up of Italians, and British and American expats that meet regularly for lectures with its members. We were met by a professor of English Literature at Venice University, and taken to the venue – Palazzo Pesara-Papafava – used by Warwick University for some of its teaching. We had a pleasant time conversing with some fascinating people, and at the end of the evening we sang 'Goodnight Sweetheart' to the assembled and rather surprised clientele.

On Tuesday morning, we took water taxis back to the airport where Mrs Brigden enjoyed the prospect of being the likes of Sophia Loren for the trip, and AHB, his own private boat. We arrived back into the UK to discover A LOT of snow.



Sophie Loren aka DECB

STEVE GOODWIN

Art Department

interviewed by

Christina Lomas Yr 11

Portrait by Otis Baxter-Wright YR13

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT BLUNDELL'S?

My involvement with the School came about purely by chance. I was a final year student at Exeter College of Art working in the Printmaking/Photography Department at Bartholomew Terrace, a small department away from the main college. A letter arrived, beautifully handwritten from the Head of Art at Blundell's, Robert Julier, asking if we had anyone who would be interested in running an activity on Tuesday afternoons, introducing Photography to the pupils in the then new Art department, which is now the DT block. I think I started during the summer term in 1975, at the same time I was also doing a variety of other part time jobs. With the introduction of GCSE's in 1987 I became a full time member of staff, a decision I have never regretted.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FOND MEMORIES FROM TEACHING HERE?

Lots and lots of fond memories, in fact there are very few occasions when it has been anything less than an ideal job. I have enjoyed working with most of the students who have come through the department over the years; it is always pleasing to meet up with former pupils who invariably remind me of all the things that went wrong. It is usually those lessons which were far from perfect that you remember, like the time I had a Y9 group casting their hands in plaster of Paris. Strict instructions about making sure they can extract their fingers didn't sink in. After about 10 minutes the whole group were subject to the exothermic properties of drying plaster and I was seen running around the class with a hammer trying to break open the blocks. Another disaster was an attempt to explore traditional Japanese kite making using split bamboo, a material I didn't realise was absolutely lethal when split, the edges are like razors. Again within 10 minutes the classroom resembled a scene from a slasher movie.

HAS BLUNDELL'S CHANGED MUCH SINCE YOU HAVE BEEN HERE?

Blundell's has changed a great deal during my time at the School. In the late 70's it seemed to me a predominantly boy's boarding school modelled on a template that had changed little during the preceding 30 years. The staff were almost exclusively male, middle aged or older, steeped in tradition. I felt like an alien, unable to comprehend the seemingly labyrinthine rules and regulations that everyone else took in their stride.

The most important change to the School was the slow but inevitable move to co-education which has brought not only a civilising effect to the boys but also a complete change, for the better, to the common room. For me it is now a much more pleasant, enjoyable place to work.

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE CHANGED THE ART DEPARTMENT HERE IN ANY WAYS?

That's a question best answered by others. If we judge it just by the numbers taking Art at examination level then there has been a steady increase over the last 20 years, in particular those taking Photography at A level, which is my specialist area. Also while I was Head of Department one of the improvements I continually pressed for was a Sixth Form study area and extra classroom, which I am pleased to say was incorporated in the Popham Centre.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TEACHERS/PUPILS THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER?

Without doubt the most influential teacher I have worked with was Robert Julier, to whom I owe a great debt. He took on a very naive, callow student and spent a great deal of time passing on his considerable knowledge. I have also had the pleasure of working with a number of creative, dedicated and inspiring colleagues over the years, not least the present members of the Art Department. Bertie Matthew has done great things during his tenure; I am pleased to see the department continuing to develop. I am also pleased that we were able to employ as Artist in Residence a number of my ex-students, if they were willing to come back then I didn't put them off art too much!

ARE THERE MANY THINGS THAT HAVE CHANGED?

There are one or two things I am not glad about; the way that the examinations have high jacked learning for the sake of following the syllabus, being the most prominent gripe. The old A level Art syllabus allowed the L6th year to be a time of experimentation and development with no pressure to complete finished pieces. My second biggest moan is about the death of reading, too many of my students openly admit they read very little, information is 'cut and pasted' with no real understanding. I hope that I have embraced the new technologies, a necessity in photography which has changed completely over the last 20 years, but too much time is now spent staring at a screen rather than practical experimentation.

DEBATING THE WORLD

Model United Nations



Saturday the 20th of November saw Ed Carlton, Alex Everett, Ollie Tobey, Xan Winterton and the ever-reliable Mr Dyke head down to Exeter School to take part in what would be the first (and hopefully not last!) Model United Nations in this area.

Alex Everett Yr12



The Event was organised as a practice for the much larger regional competition to be held later that year at Haileybury, Hertfordshire.

Even so, first impressions suggested that this event was anything but a dummy run – a very tight ship seemed to be in order, and it was evident immediately that everybody was very much into the feel of the day, fully immersed into the mindset of their designated countries. For the most part, delegates had been able to choose their own countries in the weeks leading up to the event, and the Blundell's contingent ranged from the 'rebel' states of Vietnam, Zimbabwe and North Korea to Czech Republic. Ed must take full credit here for really throwing himself into the role, even to the point of buying a tie and pair of cufflinks emblazoned with the Czech flag, and learning a little Czech too! This was received very well by the 50 or so other delegates, and we knew that a interesting day was ahead.

Informal lobbying began without further ado, where everybody busily pitched their pre-written resolutions on the topics of the day; Post-Natural Disaster Humanitarian Aid, Stability in Georgia and Climate Change as a Source of Conflict. The leaders of the event largely stayed out of this part, instead leaving delegates to debate among themselves, as we tried to persuade other nations to co-

sign our resolutions for submission later on in the day. Alex, representing North Korea, struggled greatly here, given that for the large part his resolutions were (intentionally) rather far-fetched and controversial in the nature of North Korea itself, so for him, successfully finding signatures was rather difficult!

Once everybody from Exeter School, Prior Park (in Bath) the Maynard and of course Blundell's had arrived, the day could truly commence. The relatively formal procedure of declaring the day open was carried out, and after introductions from various staff that would be running the day, each delegate stood up and briefly outlined their country and their position on the topics. This gave us a very good opportunity in endeavouring to decide who to 'head-hunt' later on, and extensive notes were made on who might be prime targets.

Following this, informal lobbying recommenced with a much more clearly defined target – after 2 hours, all resolutions for debate in the afternoon would have to be submitted. However, this was not as simple as first impressions might suggest, because successful resolutions had to not only be signed by a minimum of ten other nations, but also the strict grammatical style and general layout of official UN resolutions had to be adhered to. Given this ultimatum, the next 2 hours were spent furiously debating, compromising and then cutting up and amending various resolutions into completely rehashed documents ready for submission! To put this into perspective, each of the 50 odd delegates arrived with one or two resolutions (apart from our team who had prepared all three!) and at the end of this period just 5 ended up being completed and submitted. Use of the I.T suites was critical here, as clauses were drafted and re-drafted, in order to not only follow the strict guidelines prescribed to us, but also to ensure everybody was happy (for the most part at least!)

Lunchtime arrived with a collective cheer – not in any way because the morning had been boring, but because it had been so emotionally and physically draining! Nevertheless, even lunch didn't remain uninterrupted, because in the meanwhile the moderators had been poring over our resolutions, and every few minutes somebody would have to go out and change a section of their resolution so that it was fit for debate in the afternoon.

So, after a well earned half-rest, the main part of the day could finally begin; the debate, which too was a surprisingly formal process. The issue was presented briefly by the moderator for each topic (a seasoned MUN participant from Exeter School) before the main submitter of the resolution literally read through the resolution, in keeping with convention at the real UN. This preceded a short speech where the speaker explained just why their resolution was so important and how each clause was necessary. Predictably, in some cases this caused quite a stir, so then the floor was opened to 'interventions' and 'points of information' where individual delegates, still representing the views of 'their' nation as a whole, could pitch in their

opinion as to why they agreed with the resolution. All the while this was taking place, notes were furiously passed between delegates, (for once a situation where note-passing is acceptable) as the debates continued in private too! Another more quirky tradition perhaps was that each of these notes had to be delivered by 'security personnel' who would read through each note to ensure it was acceptable, and then deliver it. One might be a little sceptical on how efficient or effective note passing was, but in fact for the most part it was an incredibly important part of the proceedings, particularly when it came to making decisions!

Obviously, the 'against' side of the resolution had to be argued too, so delegates were also allowed to stand and make their point about how they were not satisfied with the resolution. Again, the depth and perception of these debates was surprisingly detailed, and everybody was certainly playing their part well – indeed, for some people, you did wonder if they weren't secretly employed by these countries, such was the vigour and enthusiasm that they displayed!

When each resolution finally came down to vote (which took a good 40 minutes in one case as potential amendments were repeatedly proposed) the 'doors were locked and note passing suspended,' again, the formality of this event being reinstated! At this stage delegates were genuinely nervous in their anticipation of the result, and as such the successful passing of a resolution was greeted with applause – those who had achieved this certainly felt a sense of satisfaction, if not coupled with relief!

As the day came to an end, the formal proceedings were wrapped up and a brief award ceremony for those who had made contributions of note took place. Throughout the last few minutes, delegates had been voting for their 'Delegate's Delegate,' and Ed (representing Czech Republic) was one of the five to receive such an award. However, Ed's award-winning did not end there, as he also received one of five 'Highly-commended Delegate' awards. Alex (representing North Korea) then gratefully received an award for being an 'Esteemed Delegate,' which rounded off the day for Blundell's very much on a high note. It is also worth pointing out the considerable efforts of Xan (Zimbabwe) and Ollie (Vietnam) both of whom were highly influential during the resolution amendment process, and certainly made their mark on the day, even causing a few political upsets here and there!

We came away buzzing from a thoroughly enjoyable day, and not only was it an excellent opportunity to practice debating and to really immerse ourselves in the viewpoints of another culture, but also to make some very strong links with pupils from the other schools which continue to this day. Unfortunately we were too late to enter the Haileybury competition (which involves many more participants!) but who knows, perhaps in the future we can be involved in these national events, or even Blundell's could host its own MUN!

The Petergate Play



The Petergate play this year, as always was simply hilarious, under the expert direction of Louis Edmanson, "Run for your Wife" was a sell out. The lead was played by Jack Williams, a London cabbie with two wives, attempting to live two lives side by side. All is well until an accident leads both of his wives to reporting him missing. These two lovely ladies were played by Hugo Keefe and Lewis Honey, who made a pair of rather too convincing leading ladies. As always a lot of fun was had, not just in the actual performances themselves but also in the production of the play. Louis Edmanson Yr 12



Rising STARS

Joe's a Wonder!



Joe Wander is a dedicated and ambitious Music Scholar and he is always heavily involved in musical productions, school concerts and house music as well as other extra curriculum activities. He is a positive and enthusiastic leader in all musical enterprises and this is particularly evident in the OH House Music, where he motivates everyone and tries to include as many people as possible. He is also a leader of the impressive OH chapel hymn singing cohort. He has adopted an unusual technique on the guitar, which creates a unique sound and he fronts up several rock bands. Joe also plays an important role in the choir and has been on many choir trips, the most recent being the one to Venice. Another one of Joe's great achievements is being part of the chamber choir and it's a real testament to the range of his singing talent. As Joe admits 'music is a big part of my life' and he continues to advance his music talent through the Blundell's Music Department, fulfilling his determination to be an outstanding musical performer. He is undoubtedly a rising star and one to watch out for in the future. Rupert Batting Yr 11



There are two unsung heroes behind the scenes at Blundell's, who are fundamental to the running of the School, Mr Bron Chmiel and Mr Fred Chmiel. However, when asked, many pupils will not know who they are. Mr B. Chmiel is the Head Porter and lives in the Lodge opposite Petergate, whereas Mr F. Chmiel (his father) lives in the chalet by SH and is usually seen locking up on a dark night. Both men are very important to the School and greatly enjoy their various jobs.

Bron has a large variety of jobs to do and he still enjoys this aspect after thirteen years at Blundell's. The Head Porter has to keep the School running behind the scenes, such as organising and overseeing all the jobs that the Porters do around the campus, including the cleaning of the School. He enjoys this role very much because there is a large level of problem solving involved. Another factor which he coordinates is the arrangement of desks and chairs etc. for examinations and other large events.

However, he also works during the holidays as many of the very large events that take place at the school will take place during the holidays. Variety is the spice of life and Bron is on a various number of committees including the Beale Centre Committee, the Health and Safety Committee and the Evacuation Committee.

However, Bron has not always worked at a school as he has had many different jobs beforehand, most notable of these being a worker for Jaguar cars, where he helped produce cars for one of Britain's largest car manufacturers. Another memorable job was working on a council estate in Birmingham; however it is a job that will not be remembered for the right reasons. His favourite place of employment has definitely been at Blundell's as it is different to the other schools that he has worked at before because of the close interaction between pupils, teachers and staff. He quoted the commonly used phrase that Blundell's is like a "family" and that everyone gets along due to the large amount of contact that we have with one another.

Fred, Bron's father, has also done many different jobs before coming to Blundell's, including being a private driver and a scaffolding worker. Fred has not been here quite as long as Bron but he still gains great enjoyment from his job. He has been here for seven years now and his job has expanded as the School has got larger. He starts by unlocking early in the morning before most of us are out of bed and ends with locking up in the dark, late at night. Still, Fred is very devoted to his job and puts in plenty of overtime along with his already exhausting working hours as he really does enjoy working at Blundell's.

Unlike his son, Fred's job is very specific as he has to lock up all the buildings at night and make sure that the School is safe. He has to cover the whole school campus at dark with his torch to make sure that everything is locked up and therefore he has had many funny encounters, mostly involving him accidentally scaring students during their night time excursions. However, he is not scared himself as he is used to it and is from Birmingham! He is a tough individual who would probably tackle an intruder if it came to it.

The nature of their jobs means that both men are famous for having a lot of keys. Bron has a key ring of around 90 keys and is confident that he knows the use of every single key. However, Fred has a much larger key ring of roughly 300 keys, with 200 that he uses all the time, so he has a good idea what these keys do. However, it is the 100 or so uncommon keys that may only be used once a year that can confuse him, but the need for these keys is rare and so he manages very well.

Suffice to say that Bron and Fred play an incredibly important role in helping the school to operate smoothly and they undoubtedly deserve more praise and recognition than they get. They are both devoted to the School and see it as their home. I hope that this 'behind the scenes' piece shows how a school is not just about pupils and teachers, but also about a much larger community of people like Bron and Fred Chmiel who are just as important.

Team of the Term

Junior Colts A

In a term of Blundell's Rugby that has mainly been a "50/50" season there has been one team that have shone forth as the school's most successful senior side. Mr Brigden's last year of coaching rugby has definitely been one that he will not forget in a hurry.

A team that have racked up well over three hundred points against the strongest opponents on the western circuit are definitely ones who deserve this accolade. Led by ex-Prep School Barbarian Toby Pilkington at fly-half and boasting two other Barbarians in the form of the powerful Jonathan Reid at Number eight and the cunning Cameron Henderson at scrum-half, they have been all too strong a force for the likes of local rivals Exeter School and Taunton School, both being put to the knife by over fifty points. But, as we can see from the hard fought victories against King's College, Clifton College and Bristol Grammar, these boys are not just a bunch of show-offs.

One of the keys to the team's success is the way that they were able to get the better of sides from out on the wings. Paramount in this has been the newest inclusion to the side, Daiki Miyamoto, whose electric pace has earned him eight tries over the season. Jonathan Reid's place kicking was exceptional every game and all of the ruthless back line have been among the tries.

They are, from what I have seen, an exceptionally hard-working bunch, performing well in training as well as weekends and they have the potential to repeat this feat in the three years they have to come at Blundell's. No pressure lads...

James Hawkes FH Yr11



Jonathan Reid



Andrew Hamilton



Daiki Miyamoto



From left to right: Rob Verney, Alex Summers, Jack Grandfield and Jonathan Reid

U13A Rugby

A special mention should be made about the outstanding U13A rugby side which was completely unbeaten this year. The U13 coach, Mr Holman, reports that they have been a hard team for anyone to stop scoring. They have dangerous runners in many positions. The scrum is led by the towering presence of Will Scott, the strength of Ben Summers and Finn Neusinger's aggressive power and pace at No. 8. In the loose the intelligence, tackling and ball winning skills of Will Thompson and Charlie Wilder were often a key factor. In the backs the line was run by the mercurial Ben Steer, who is quite simply one of the best fly halves we have seen for many a year. Cam Seymour in the centre is a strong and fast finisher and Jacob Wood a secure ball player at full-back. They will be a very exciting outfit to follow over the next few years.



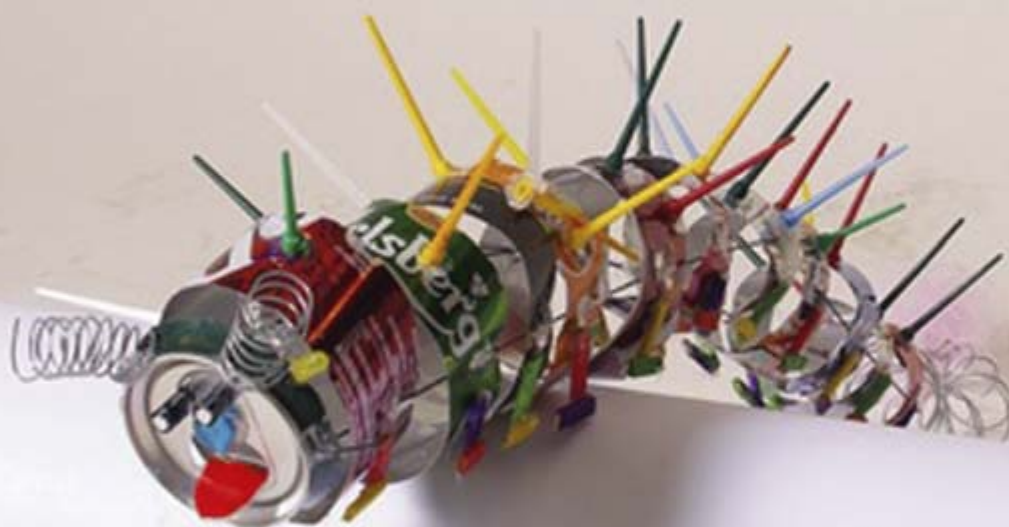
Cameron Seymour

Results

Cheltenham College **Won** 40-19
 Bristol Grammar **Won** 75-0
 Exeter School **Won** 48-26
 St Peter's, Lympstone **Won** 59-15
 The Downs, Wraxall **Won** 12-3
 Mount House **Won** 43-10
 Wellington School **Won** 75-0
 Taunton Prep' **Won** 64-0
 Clifton Preparatory **Won** 43-7
 King's Hall **Won** 26-7

leading edge

Blundellian artists have been once again recognised on the international stage, with two pieces of sculpture being shortlisted to the final ten in the Saatchi Sculpture Prize for Schools. Saskia Simonson's (Yr 10 GH) 'Hairy Caterpillar' and William Scott and Christopher Hamilton's (8L SH) 'Treeman' will both go on exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery in London from 19 January. They stand a good chance of winning the £250 prize but simply being selected from the thousands of entries is rich reward for their efforts. Congratulations to them; their work, plus all the other excellent work we submitted, can be seen on the Saatchi Gallery website at www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/portfolio



The new three R's at Blundell's



The three R's, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, have been at the core of learning forever and a day. However, there are some new R's on the block and they can be found in Design and Technology. They comprise Recycle, Repair and Re-use and they are having quite an impact as we move into an era of conservation of the planet's resources and perhaps some turbulent economic times ahead. The School has 'invested in the future' with a sophisticated processing unit to recycle plastics, which converts the waste into useable sheets for project work in DT. A programme of collecting all the plastic waste including milk, food and shower gel containers from the houses and kitchens is fully in place. We now have over 100 units a week to shred. Our currency has become High Density Poly Ethylene (HDPE) and Poly Propylene (PP) and the sounds and smell of the plastic munching machine are often apparent at the rear of the Amory workshops, as it shreds the bottles into granules before being heated into multi coloured sheets that are both funky and versatile. As can be seen from these clock and plant pots, we have already seen some innovative and imaginative artefacts emerging and the teaching staff can often be found wearing stylish plastic recycled neck ties. Well they think they are anyway!

More than 15 minutes.....



Jemma Robbins



Frank Thornton-Wood



Torzie Boylett



Rex Southwick

Using a combination of photography, digital image manipulation and paint, a small group of Yr 9's used the work of the influential Pop Artist, Andy Warhol, to produce a self portrait in the style of his Photo Screenprints.



Freya De Lisle



Oscar Mustard



Hector Pring



Grace Curtis

“WE’RE UP, YOU READY?”

Up until that point I hadn’t even been nervous, yet here I was, strapped to the front of an experienced parachutist, dangling out of the side door of an aeroplane with a 15,000 foot drop between me and the Devonshire countryside – now my heart rate went up.

When I volunteered to do a skydive to raise money for the Children’s Hospice South West, it all seemed so simple – get sponsorship, turn up, jump...

It was a lovely bright day at Dunkerswell Airfield; we checked in and had our comprehensive safety briefing. Then we kitted up and had photos taken before climbing into a small aeroplane.

The flight up to 10,000 feet seemed to take forever, it was the last 5,000 that flew by faster than I would have liked.



After another quick safety brief and tightening of straps the goggles went on. Then the next thing I knew I was dangling out in space, looking down at the ground far below, my heart was racing and then we were out.

We were falling so fast my eyes were watering beneath my goggles, all I could hear was cold air rushing past my ears. We pulled the parachute after a few minutes and everything went quiet; for a split second I thought I’d gone deaf, until my instructor asked how I was feeling.

It took me a while to answer because the view was just breathtaking. Once we had broken through the clouds Devon was just a carpet of green fields spreading out until it reached the north and south coastlines.

All too soon, we were down. It was an incredibly soft landing, skimming through the long grass next to the airstrip.

They were right; my first question was “When can we do it again?”

My group raised an amazing £5,000 for a really good cause and I am very grateful to everyone who sponsored me.

I’d recommend it to anyone.

Alice Walpole OB (Gorton House/Westlake)



DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S LETTER



It is with huge pleasure that I can introduce Emily Cairns who joins us in the Development Office as our Co-ordinator. Emily was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She graduated from the University of California, Santa Cruz with a degree in International Politics and also studied in Western Australia. She relocated to Devon and is engaged to be married to one of our fellow teachers, Henry Roffe-Silvester

in the Summer. Patricia who is known to so many of you, is stepping into a more part-time role; she will still be involved with a great many of you whilst working on our Database.

I am writing this having just returned from a visit to some of our OBs across the border in Scotland, hopefully by the time you read this the snow will be long gone and life will have returned to normal. It was with great delight that I met with so many OBs who have many treasured memories of their time at Blundell's. There was much enthusiasm from OBs in Scotland to form a regional group and meet on occasion. Late last year we had a very successful gathering of those connected past and present with the Military. If you are interested in attending another military gathering in the future, perhaps with a lunch and guest speaker, please do let me know.

By now you will have received your Annual Draw tickets to support the Peter Blundell Foundation Award. Please return your tickets if you can, as participation during uncertain economic times is when such awards really do make the difference, allowing pupils to attend Blundell's and benefit from all it provides. Another of our initiatives which will support this Foundation provision is Buy.at. Please use our fundraising web shop links when you're shopping online. You don't pay anything extra - and you help raise funds for us. There are even some special offers for web customers. Find our web shop at www.buy.at/Blundells (please bookmark this link for future use). There are over a hundred retailers supporting the scheme including Boden, Asda, Hawkshead, M & S, amazon.co.uk, Waterstones, ebay.co.uk, PLAY.com, Orange, National Trust, Pizza Hut, Intersport and many more. It is so simple to use, just type in the link above, click on any of the retailers you wish to use and shop away!

Many of you have already signed up to the Business Directory/Exchange initiative which will shortly be in operation on Blundell's website. Those who wish to do so may list their business and the services it provides together with contact details. We will have a number of categories to cover most businesses and services. Some businesses may wish to



Left to right: Patricia Thompson, Amber Oliver, Emily Cairns

extend a discount or incentive to other members of the Blundell's community; if you would like to register your company or services, please contact me.

MISSING

I am very aware that for a variety of reasons we have lost contact with some Old Blundellians as they have moved away from home, or perhaps changed addresses. We are keen to ensure that they remain aware of all the different aspects of Blundell's life since their time here; if you know the whereabouts of any OBs on the 'Missing' list on the OB website, we would be most grateful if you could ask them to contact us.

We continue to work towards supporting the School and its community. If you would like to know more about the Development Office and its areas of activity please visit our website www.blundells.org/devoffice or we can be found in the Senior School Bursary Building.

Amber Oliver
a.oliver@blundells.org

WINTER LUNCHES

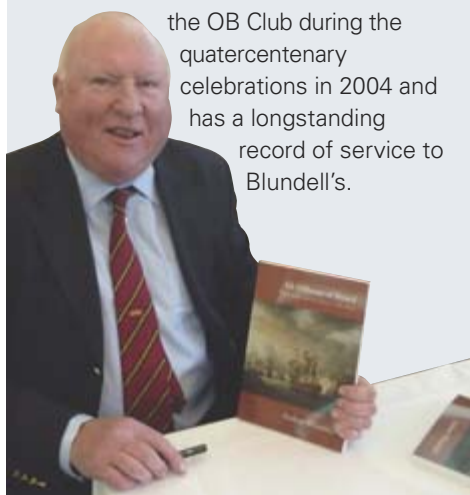


The OB Winter lunch programme continues to be well supported. Between twenty and thirty OBs and partners enjoy lunch in the Colin Beale Centre followed by a brief presentation on the second Wednesday of each month. The December presentation was by Lt Colonel Nick Cooper and OBs were persuaded to display Christmas spirit.

BOOK LAUNCH



Andrew Whitefield (NC 1957-62), having retired as managing partner at Ashford's in Bristol, has turned his hand to writing and his book entitled 'Mr Hilhouse of Bristol' was launched at the Brunel Institute next to SS Great Britain on 12th December 2010. The book traces the life of James Martin Hilhouse, Bristol's great shipbuilder and artist. Andrew was Chairman of the OB Club during the quatercentenary celebrations in 2004 and has a longstanding record of service to Blundell's.



PETER BLUNDELL FOUNDATION AWARDS

THANK YOU

A big thank you to John Beale (M 56-61) who has recently supported the first bursary within the 'Peter Blundell Foundation Award Provision' for an award which will be called the 'Beale Family Scholar'. The Beale family has been closely associated with Blundell's across three generations.



Since its foundation in 1604, Blundell's has influenced the lives of a great number of pupils.

It has been consistently praised for its outstanding teaching within a caring and supportive environment which, when combined with excellent facilities, has led pupils from extremely varied backgrounds to achieve their full potential. The School has always prided itself on having its heart based on a community ethos, and it attracts children from a diversity of backgrounds.

The Peter Blundell Foundation Award is an extension of the Governors' desires to extend the number of Foundation Awards, increasing the number of pupils who can attend the School who might not ordinarily have been able to do so because of financial constraints. The School is immensely richer in character because of this scheme. The ability to offer an opportunity to benefit from the deep rooted principles, which are at the heart of the School, is something rather special. There is nothing new here, but it would be wonderful to continue the development in this area.

We are exceptionally grateful to John for making this first bursary possible and are delighted the first Beale Family Scholar commenced tuition in September 2010.

Supporting Blundell's from Overseas

EUROPE

We have recently introduced a provision to allow our supporters in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, The Netherlands, Poland, Ireland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Luxembourg and Switzerland to make tax efficient gifts through the TGE (Transnational Giving Europe) network. Donations can be made through national TGE partners. Contact details for these are available on the TGE website, www.transnationalgiving.eu/tge

USA TAX PAYERS

There are substantial tax benefits available to US taxpayers who give to charities and foundations, but such bodies must be recognised as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service. We have set up 'Friends of Blundell's in America' which is a non-profit organisation recognised by the IRS as tax exempt under section 501 (c) (3). Donations to the 'Friends of Blundell's in America' are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Gifts to 'Friends of Blundell's in America' in the form of bequests, legacies, shares and tangible property allow the donor to claim a tax deduction. These gifts enable the board of the 'Friends of Blundell's in America' to make a grant(s) to the Blundell's Foundation.

Please contact the Development Office for details or with queries on either of the above tax efficient giving methods:
+44 (0)1884 232324 a.oliver@blundells.org

GOVERNORS' DINNER



For the first time in living memory the Committee of the Old Blundellian Club dined the Governors of Blundell's School. On 26th November thirty Committee members, Governors and partners began with drinks and canapés in Westlake by kind permission of the Housemaster, Peter Klinkenberg. They then proceeded to a four course meal in the Colin Beale Centre with appropriate wines. The President of the OB Club, Martyn Grose, thanked the Governors for coming and stressed the much improved relationship between Governors and OBs. Mike Bull, Vice Chairman of Governors thanked the OB Committee and agreed that the spirit of co-operation is very much in evidence. The Chairman of the OB Club, Paul Waterworth, thanked those who had organised a very successful evening.

Earlier on in the term the Committee of the OB Club had entertained teaching staff from the Senior and Preparatory Schools to drinks and canapés in the Colin Beale Centre. Both events were part of the Committee's aim to strengthen links with the School and Governors and to foster a more holistic Old Blundellian Club.



Main picture: Mike Bull, Governor's Vice Chairman, thanks the OB Committee.
Above: Pre-dinner drinks and canapés in Westlake foyer



Jonny Ison and Paul Waterworth listen!



Emily Cairns - Development Administrator - serves drinks



Left: Paul Waterworth thanks the catering staff **Above:** Guests enjoying dinner



Strange Discoveries



Postcard showing Junior House
(now Gorton House), posted in 1913.
)

One of my main duties as School Archivist is to collect historical, or potentially historical, material relating to the School or its former pupils, staff or Governors. Modern material – yes, history began a minute ago! – usually comes my way from the School Offices or members of staff.



**Blundell's School
Cadet Corps at camp
on Salisbury Plain in
August, 1903.**

Older items, on the other hand, can come from anywhere! When staff emptying shelves, desks, or cupboards come across a few pieces of yellowing paper they sometimes think of the Archivist, who is more than happy to sort through a pile of papers to extract some little gems. Only recently, a treasure trove of papers and books was discovered in one of the cleaning cupboards. Admittedly, on checking, most of the finds were duplicates of material already in the collection – but there were some truly interesting discoveries, such as an edition of the New Testament in Greek, dating from 1624, and a book of Law Cases penned by Peter Blundell's 'right dear and honourable friend', Sir John Popham, published after his death in 1656. Also in this Aladdin's Cave was a large collection of World War II newspapers, once used for teaching history, but of little use in today's School now that they are easily available on-line – a good home has been found for them with the Southwest Airfields Heritage Trust. Structural alterations around the School can sometimes also uncover long-lost items. When work was being done in the David Japes Room a couple of years ago, a certificate awarded to our Nobel Prize Winner A.V. Hill was found, along with a wonderful cane, complete with metal ferrule.

A lot of very interesting material in the Archive has been given over the years by Old Blundellians, often when they too are clearing out various nooks and crannies in their homes. In the case of large quantities of papers and books, it is a good idea to get in contact with me before sending anything as I may already have copies. A fair proportion of my time is spent answering enquiries, mainly from the public, concerning former pupils. As well as sending out information derived from the Archive, I

also receive many details about Old Blundellians' subsequent careers – which all adds to the history of the School. Occasionally, items of Blundelliana appear for sale on eBay; I have recently purchased a 1903 photograph of the School Cadet Corps, a 1913 postcard of Junior House (now Gorton House), and a 2004 Quatercentenary medal.

The whereabouts of Blundell's material is often surprising, but a recent discovery will take some beating. A week before writing this article I received an email from a man who had been staying with his wife in a National Trust holiday cottage. In the bedroom, he noticed two wooden boards, both headed 'Honoris Causa' followed by a long list of names and awards. Two of the names he recognised; A.V. Hill and Cyril Joad. On returning to his home, this naturally curious man looked up the two names and discovered that the only link between them was that both had attended Blundell's School. These were almost certainly two Blundell's Honours Boards. One thing I have not mentioned, nor did he in his initial message, was the location of this holiday cottage. I assumed it was somewhere in Devon, or possibly Cornwall or Somerset, but imagine my disbelief when I was told the property was near Ticknall in Derbyshire! How did the boards make their way from the School 'up north'? – We will probably never know. The state of play at the moment (December) is that we are communicating with the National Trust about the possible return of the boards.

Mike Sampson



**Blundell's Honours
Boards in one of the
bedrooms at the National
Trust property of
Southwood House Farm
near Ticknall, Derbyshire**

THE REICHWALD TROPHY



This popular event was held at Blundell's on 17th October 2010. A mixture of OBs, pupils, staff and guests competed for the Reichwald Trophy. The remarkable thing about this year's competition was that no less than six current National Champions competed. This probably translates to six World Champions – possibly a unique happening in Blundell's sporting history. The Champions ranged from Under 14 to over 60 and included pupils, guests and staff.

The Reichwald Trophy was won by pupil Samuel Wyatt-Haynes and Alistair Hellewell who beat Alex Rew and Tom Wardle in the final. Maureen Reichwald presented the trophy and lunch and tea were enjoyed in the Colin Beale Centre.



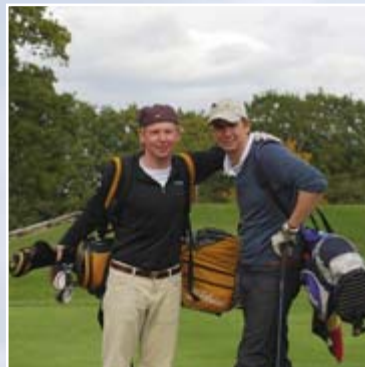
OLD DEER PARK

Chad Murrin (FH 1969–73) was at Old Deer Park watching London Welsh play Plymouth Albion and bumped into James Wilson (NC 1971–76), who is a surveyor living in Chiswick and a keen supporter of London Welsh. Also present was Ryan Hopkins (M 1997–99) who continues to play with distinction in the Plymouth front row. Ryan is married with an 8 month old daughter and has nearly completed 10 years as a professional rugby player.

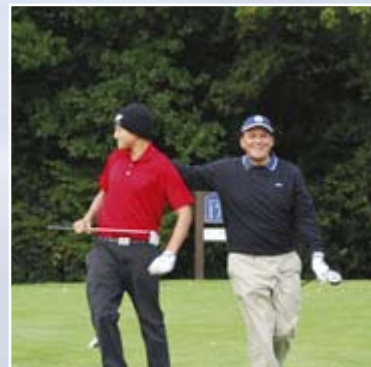
Left to right: **James Wilson, Ryan Hopkins, Chad Murrin**



BLUNDELL'S



The Winning Team



Matt and Tom Pynn Gary and Gerald Abdoll



Team Klinkenberg

CHARITY GOLF DAY

We were treated to wonderful weather for our Charity Golf Day held at Woodbury Park Golf and Country Club on Thursday 21st October, on the truly superb Oaks championship course. Twelve teams turned out to compete for a wealth of prizes and to support Devon Air Ambulance Trust and the Peter Blundell Foundation Award provision during the October half term.

The winning overall team included current pupil Gary Abdoll partnered by his father Gerald and Old Blundellian brothers Matt (94-99 W) and Tom Pynn (97-02 W). There were two equal second teams: Peter Klinkenberg, Housemaster of Westlake, with guests Steve Ripley and Simon Curling and former housemaster of Francis House Norman Ridgway. The other team comprised last year's winners Governor Cedric Clapp (60-65 P) and Old Blundellians Ross Aldridge (62-67 P), Richard Swarbrick (77-82 M) and Graham Howe (67-72 M).

Best Man of the day was parent Lester Kemp and Best Lady guest Jane Darby. Best pupil was Tom Ansell who also won the 'Nearest the Pin' on the 18th hole. Best Old Blundellian was Tom Pynn, Best Parent was Giles Boylett, and Best Guest was won by David Parry and Norman Ridgway equally. Longest drive on the 8th was won by Peter Klinkenberg and Longest drive on the 14th by Cedric Clapp with the only other prize-winner being Mark Hunt who secured Nearest the Pin on the 5th.

There were numerous Raffle prize-winners and we are extremely grateful to Total Decor who donated the first prize of £500 of Interior Design. A huge thank you to all our sponsors which included The Jolly Vintner, Travis Perkins Ltd, Maidenhead Independent Ltd, Tiverton Golf Club and our hosts Woodbury Park Golf and Country Club and of course to all our participants who ensured we had the most enjoyable day. Please do support us again next year.

Main picture: **Old Boys Clapp, Swarbrick, Howe and Aldridge**
 Right: **Parents Parry, Boylett, Clarke and Birchmore**
 Below: **Head Masters Ian Davenport (Blundell's), Jim Massey (Mount House) and John Price (Chilton Cantelo)**



Right: **Jack Menheniott, John Smith, Terry Moss and Paul Middleton**
 Below: **Tim Frost, Mr & Mrs Darby and Tony Frost**



some say...



SPEECH DAY 2011



OB Ben Collins (FH 1988–93) has agreed to present the prizes and speak at Speech Day, 8th July 2011, beginning at 2.30pm.

After St Aubyn's, Ben moved to Blundell's as a boarder in FH and then on to University at Exeter. After graduation he went into motor racing.

He has competed at many levels in a wide variety of motor sports with considerable success and performed stunts for many films. He recently moved from the back to the front pages of the newspapers when he was revealed as 'The Stig'. For those not familiar with 'Top Gear', 'The Stig' is a white suited racing driver who test drives cars for the programme wearing a tinted helmet and is, supposedly, unidentified. After speeches Ben will be signing copies of his book, 'The Man in the White Suit' in the Colin Beale Centre next to the marquee on Big Field.

OBS IN SINGAPORE



Paddy Armstrong stopped off in Singapore on his way back from a marketing trip to the Far East and caught up with Paddy Sumner (FH 67–61) and his wife Sue. Paddy is on secondment to Singapore for Henderson's, but will return soon to the UK to pursue his ambition to become a Master of Foxhounds.

Martin Langdon (OH 1980–83) also has a base in Singapore. During the week he works as a coffee broker and is CEO of HangKie which decaffeinate coffee at a new plant in Ho Chi Minh City.

Above: Paddy Sumner, Paddy Armstrong and Sue Sumner after dinner in Singapore
Right: Chau and Martin bonding at the Singapore Sevens



OLD BLUNDELLIAN DAY 2011

Old Blundellian Day will take place on Saturday 18th June. The theme for the day is 'The Law'. All OBs are very welcome, but we hope that those having a connection with the law including judges, barristers and police officers will attend.

President for the day: Judge Paul Waterworth

Preacher: Reverend Judge James Patrick

Reader: David d'Arcy Hughes

Programme

- 10.00 am** AGM of the Old Blundellian Club in the Colin Beale Centre
- 11.00 am** Service in School Chapel
- 12.00 noon** Drinks Party in the Colin Beale Centre for Old Blundellians, invited guests, the Head Master and Staff
- 1.00 pm** Buffet lunch in the marquee on Big Field
- 4.00 pm** Tennis against the School
- 4.30 pm** Tea in the Colin Beale Centre

Tickets for the Day, including pre-lunch drinks, lunch and tea are £20 per head. To facilitate catering, bookings must be made before Wednesday 8th June. Tickets are available from Paddy or Janet Wooff at the Colin Beale Centre. (obclub@blundells.org /01884 232010)

OB CRICKET CLUB 60TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The first OBCC matches were organised by Ted Crowe in 1951. We have decided to hold a special 60th Anniversary Dinner to mark this historic moment. This will be held on Saturday, 1st October 2011 in the splendid new Long Room in the Colin Atkinson Pavilion at Somerset CCC at Taunton.

This should be a memorable occasion, which we hope will be supported by a large number of past and current OB cricketers and supporters. The OBCC has invited Vic Marks to be our Principal Guest Speaker. Spouses and partners are welcome at the Dinner.

Details of the event are as follows:

Ticket price: £45 per head

(£30 for OB's who left Blundell's after 2002)

The Ticket Price includes a pre-Dinner Reception, a three course meal (vegetarian option available) with wine. Please advise any special seating or dietary arrangements at the time of application.

Time: 7.15 for 8.00 pm **Dress:** Black tie or lounge suits.

Application Form: May be downloaded from www.blundells.org/obclub

In case of queries: Tel. 01884 232010 or Email: obclub@blundells.org

Hare and Hounds

The 57th Thames Hare and Hounds Alumni Race 2010

It was "firm, easy, overcast, warm(ish)" according to the results sheet. And so it was. The ice had cleared and there was no excuse.

Neither was there the promised water splash through Beverley Brook to remind us of running down that hill to the Lowman and coming out the other side with frozen feet. It was just us and over 100 other runners from 20 schools.

But what a team! Katharine Rackham led the Blundells team magnificently coming first lady in the field. She ran the 5 miles in 34.01 minutes coming in 50th in the field overall, – a very good run indeed especially in recovery mode after an infection. Next came Alastair Knight in 38.31 minutes making him 79 in the field or 12th in V50 category. Now this was not only a very good run, it was done without a rugby ball in sight though he did wear his rugby boots just in case. The final member of the team, Giles Stimson (moi), did not make the results sheet.

Our blood is up though - led by Katharine we can bag a few trophies! So come on all you Russell winners down the years – let's show Ampleforth, Dulwich, Winchester and the other winners this year a clean pair of heels! The tentative date is 10 December 2011. We look forward to seeing you there, whether running or not. **Giles Stimson OB**



The first Blundell's H & H Team



Tom Vantreen and **Emily Luther** got together when they were 14! Emily was in NC and Tom was in OH. They remained an 'item' and were married on 5th June 2010 in Emily's village church in Warnbrook, Somerset by David Hamer, Emily's ex Houseparent and School Chaplain.

Old Blundellians from left to right are: Amy Foan, Polly Knowles, Tory Kingdon, Tom Reddaway, Lucy Persey, James Baudouy, Abby Kirvan, Tom Vantreen, Eddy Vantreen, Emily Vantreen, Will Vantreen, Charlie Kingdon, David Luther, Rev David Hamer, Mrs Carol Hamer, Bobby Frankpitt, Lucy St Johnstone, Charlotte Vantreen, Natalie Hitchens, Danny Ginn



Ben Hutchen (FH 1988–93) married Rachel in September 2010 in the company of many Old Blundellians. Most of the OBs in the photograph are Bristol based and have met regularly since they left school in the 90s and included are two couples who were all at Blundell's. Jon Coad married Abby Sessions-Hodge and James Sessions-Hodge married Rachel Newman.

Left to right: Tilly Hardick, Tessa Hardick, Rory Hardick, Tom Babbington, Rachel Sessions-Hodge, Steve Clapp, Nick Collins, Ben Hutchen, Rachel Hutchen, Amy Greenman, Alex Knott, Bex Knott, Hannah Odell, Fazi Collins, Tamsin and Matt Armstrong, Abby Coad, Jon Coad
Front: James Sessions-Hodge, Jem Wren, Graham Odell

Andrew Reynolds
(SH and W 1996-2003)
and the World's
toughest foot race

The Challenge

From the city streets
to the Sahara Desert

The Challenge:

To take on the World's toughest foot race, The Marathon Des Sables 2010, a totally self-sufficient race covering over 156 miles in the Sahara Desert.

2 years ago living in Warwick Avenue in London, it seemed light years away and over a chilled beer or two, seemed a good enough challenge at the time. WHY? Aside from raising money for a personal charity close to me, Charities in Manchester, I don't know the reason, I have always gone by the ideas of why do a swim in the pool when you can take on lakes, why trek through the peaks when you have Everest, why row on a machine in the gym when there's the sea, and for me why do a marathon in the UK when there's the Sahara Desert, then again most would say I'm just plain NUTS! But to be honest after a week in the desert covering 156 miles, and enduring temperatures touching 52 degrees Celsius I'd find the reason, no more so than on the long stage, and crossing the finishing line to strangle the race founder Patrick Bauer.



Preparation:

For 6 months leading to departure from Gatwick I'd average 30 - 40 miles a week, even now running round Hyde Park makes me want to shoot myself.

I'd be lying if I said my training was of an Olympic standard. Many hung-over Saturday mornings dragging my kit to my office in Mayfair, then to sweat it out for 12-15 miles realising that the 5th beer might not have been a good idea or the kebab on the way home!

To add to my very British style training, most of my winter and spring training was spent in minus weather. The 50KM ultra-marathon in February was 5 degrees Celsius, a brilliant help for the 52 degrees in the desert, though the 300 or so Brits doing it had much the same comedy of training.

The road to the start:

One thing I do remember is the buzz of the flight before we landed. Our chartered flight of about 200 or so Brits chatting away, then as we banked over the desert it was like Claudia Schiffer had walked on the plane, complete silence! It truly is that moment when you know ok now this is for real! The Barbour I was wearing at the time, pretty much melted like Panini over my back as we disembarked, the hedge fund look doesn't quite work in these climates!

Like kids in a new school, we were advised to team up in 8's for the bivouacs. Thankfully, given my mouth runs 100mph most days, I'd managed to team up with a couple of guys on the flight; Aussie Kris and another Andy. After this we linked up with the rest of our group that would become tent 91, and still the one funniest group of guys I've been around! THE DADS ARMY!!!

Tent 91:

Robbo – Welshman, much talk directed at rugby.

Peter – Kiwi, with slippers that I'm sure he borrowed from the Queen.

Big Andy – Ex-medic, decided to stop smoking prior to the race, would see MDS as better than a nicotine patch!!

Frank – The senior father figure of the group, though with a head pretty much like an egg!

Geoffrey – Climbed Everest, though wore shorts that looked like underpants!

Ben – Director at pharmaceutical company had more drugs than the docs on site!

Kris – Aussie, closest to me in age, too close at times with his unforgiving feet, though took me back to days in Devon and the Russell.

Me aka little Andy – the youngest of the lot, and would spend much time saying 'I don't eat happy meals'.

We spent one night at our 5 star hotel in Ouazarate, before being transported to the desert in buses then by army trucks, to a campsite in the middle of nowhere, this circle of bivouacs like some pagan group getting ready to sing 'come by ya'!! Only one thing on my mind, I hope they have toilet facilities, I'd certainly learnt survival skills at Glastonbury! 48 hours were spent nervously waiting for the start of the race, kit checks, last minute safety briefings, salt tablets, flares, anti-venom pump, signal mirror; not quite my usual running equipment in London.

Stage 1: 29km (brutal reality check)

So here we are, 6am would become the daily wake-up call, consisting of Sherpa staff pulling down our bivouacs to transport them to the next campsite. The stove would be lit, and the breakfast ration packs opened, I can still taste the strawberries and porridge. After a week, most of this would find itself in a bush before the start. I still believe that I lost a stone in weight over the week not because of the distance, but the sheer fear of having to face my ready meals once again.

>>





It's time, we made our way to the start, usual start time would become 8.30am. The best way I could condense the attitude was a comment from a French runner, 'treat it like a day at work... you work 8.30am til 2pm, and go home'. To some extent this helped though, and take each day as hitting a series of checkpoints, but if my job was to run in the desert Monday till Friday, think I'd call in sick!

Five minutes to the start; AC DC playing 'Highway to Hell' in the background, heart pumping, all the weeks of training and my initial thought was 'oops I've only brought 3 pairs of socks', 7 days in the Sahara could be a problem! Within minutes those thoughts very much behind me, we were off and the great buzzing atmosphere couldn't be further from my day to day environment. My thoughts very much on friends and family, the charity I was raising money for - now it was my turn to repay them by completing this race!

Stage 1 would be a wake-up call; 1,113 competitors began and 100 would drop out on Day 1, simply through pushing too hard. Coming over the dunes during the first stage, I'd witness the first casualties, a number of people resting up near the safety land-rovers attached to drips. I knew then you can't complete this race by going 100mph, the Sahara would soon show you who's boss. You have to run within yourself; it is a complete test of mind and self-control, even drinking, managing the 1.5 litres you're given between each 10k checkpoint, sipping frequently and rationing your intake. I felt many of us were naive before the race, and we were half-heartedly listening to the race organisers, but after Day 1, I realised how right they were. It is managing your body not necessarily the distance. It is easy to dehydrate, neglect your feet, forget to take salt-tablets; since witnessing the casualties, I very quickly became respectful of my surroundings.

Stage 2: 35.5km (the climbs)

Another 6am alarm clock call. One thing you become very aware of is that the event is as much a mental challenge as a physical one. After each stage there are no banners, no clean showers or nice beds; it's quite simply a rug under a bivouac. You carry the rest of the kit, though the continual salvation is that your pack, initially weighing approx 13-15kg (less water), will become lighter as the days wear on. With no shower for a week you can understand the bus drivers need for in car air fresheners on our return journey after the event!

So Stage 2 would be over some of the toughest climbs we'd experience over the week; 20km in and we're scaling the dizzy heights of the desert. Best way I can describe what it's like, is

climbing one of the peaks in the UK, though pretty much in a sauna.

But with all the physical pain, to make it all that bit easier you must have fun. Though the peak of the dune below that was what we were going over into the finish of Stage 2, after 30km into the race.

Ascending the last climb into the finish saw flares going off and medics swarming over the peak; I take my hat off to the medical staff assisting in the event, aka 'Doc Trotters' as they were called. All voluntary people give up their time to help bonkers people like myself to complete this challenge. Though most were French speaking, I used the international gesture of thumbs up to let them know I was still alive.

Stage 3: 40km (the dry hot bed, aka oven)

This would be my first experience of what it's like to be running in 52 degrees Celsius. At this stage you need to conserve and break the distance up into run and march. When you hear the mud cracking, and the insides of your pack looking like a bomb site of melted ration packs, you know it's been a tad hot. For me this was second to the night stage, one of the toughest days I'd experience. Twice I was close to running out of water near the check-points and many had to shout across to other competitors for water. Into CP3 the last of the day before the finish, was the worst scene of people taken ill. When people are saying 'can't find his pulse', it does hit home the vicious sting to the event.

On this day Ben, one of my tent comrades in the Dad's Army tent, pulled out of the race, though he stayed with us throughout the week lending support after each stage. Again, it highlights the sheer camaraderie of the event. I met so many international people, all with the same team spirit. We weren't here to race each other, it was to get every person over the line, that was all.

Stage 4: 82km (night stage)

During the three stages prior to the dreaded night stage the aim was to conserve as much energy as you could to finish the double marathon stage. After covering 3 already this would be the toughest day; you break this and you're almost home!

The long stage; I could go on for hours about this point, but will keep it short as best I can. Beginning at 9am, with the elite runners setting off 3 hours later, this would prove to be my toughest challenge of both mental and physical endurance, with a time limit of 36 hours to complete. To break this down in my head, my goal was to hit Checkpoint 4 before dark - some 50km into the distance - hit CP5 and cook up some rations. The route from CP5 to CP6 was lit by a giant laser to guide you in to the final stage, before a final 5km push to the end to finish the 82km.

Up until this point the one thing that gets all runners through is management of their feet. I'd been quite lucky; buying a shoe size too big was a great idea, the extra room allowed for the slow swelling of my feet. But closing in on the night stage hitting CP4, my feet were in a very bad way and I was reluctant to look at them too tired to take them out and check. A welcome sight below was fellow Brit James Cracknell, trotting through as part of the elite runners. I did my best to run alongside, but there's a reason he's an Olympic athlete.



...I chose not to look at my feet, they were in too much pain, instead I placed two water bottles under my legs to help reduce some of the swelling.

Closing in on CP4 I spotted one of my fellow tent buddies Geoffrey, who was in a pretty bad way; a combination of heat exhaustion and dehydration. He'd just finished trying to get some rations down him, walked 10 yards from the bivouacs and got rid of most of what he'd eaten. Like myself he too pressed on and we all cracked our glow sticks and donned the head torches like hillbillies. It's at this point when the darkness is setting in, that you find the reasons why you're here. Those switches that lie dormant in your brain are turned on, what drives you, what makes you go that extra mile.

After 19 hours I finally reached the end of Stage 4 and fully clothed, not even bothering to undress, I crashed out (into my sleeping bag), every bit of energy left out there on the desert floor. I chose not to look at my feet, they were in too much pain, instead I placed two water bottles under my legs to help reduce some of the swelling.

Stage 5 (rest day)

Like Christmas Day this is pure paradise. A day to mend your feet or quite simply sleep, sleep and more sleep, given much of this event you do endure much deprivation.

Throughout the day, more competitors would drip feed in, finishing the 4th stage in the 36 hour time limit. With the last runner clapped into the finish, again was another sign that we were all here as one group, no first, second, third, but completion!

Stage 6: 42.2km (last marathon)

The last marathon distance we'd cover and spirits were pretty high, seeing the back of the long stage. It's surprising how quickly the body repairs itself and we were all born again. Some were looking to crack decent times and Rory Coleman, a veteran Ultra marathon runner, was clocking in his 689th marathon! For me this was a time to soak in my last full day in the desert, and survive another day of cooking!!

Later that evening, I think summed up how much we'd all spent in energy. The organisers had put on an orchestra performance and film of the race over the week and bearing in mind our tent was the closest to all the festivities, not one of us was awake, all in the land of slumber!!

Stage 7 21.1km (all dunes but the finish in sight)

Quite possibly one of the most satisfying days I've ever had. You could shoot me, through glass, there was no way on earth I was not going to cross that line by this point!

This would be just a half-marathon distance, though not making it too easy for us, Patrick Bauer made the course all dunes, we dubbed it 'KING KONG'S SAND CASTLES'!!

Just one check-point to reach before the finish my fellow tent mate Andy and I decided this is it no rest here, lets go flat out to the finish and get out of here. The MDS was quite literally a 'highway to hell', but we had only 5km to the finish of dunes.

The last final push to the end, I know it to the last stride but boy I was in need of a shower!! The feeling and emotion very hard to sum up in words, you could say warmth, but I'd had enough of that over the week. I think just one of self-fulfilment, but more importantly real respect for the surroundings. The Sahara can turn, but this time it was harmonic, allowing us mortals from all corners of the globe to cross as representatives of various charities, this time the desert had donated!

Conclusion: would I do it again?

NOPE, for me I'm always looking for the next thing. The Sahara - been there; to keep the spice you have to try new things and push boundaries. For anyone else wanting to do this would I say take-it on? Absolutely, PUSH YOURSELF AND FIND THOSE LIGHT SWITCHES!!

Andrew Reynolds

Blundell's Days gone by



Blundell's from its foundation in 1604, has always had close contacts with the military; whether through the chosen profession of its pupils or their parents. On one occasion (thankfully, the only one) it was even used as an Army H.Q. - in October 1645 a part of Fairfax's New Model Army and was based at the School during the siege of Tiverton Castle. As Britain's Empire grew during the succeeding centuries, Blundellians could be found in every part, administering and defending its possessions. Indeed, the first European settler of Durban in South Africa was a Blundellian, Francis Farewell, a naval officer. Blundellians have operated at many levels within the armed services. After a distinguished military career, serving in Ireland, the West Indies and New Zealand, Charles Cornwallis Chesney was appointed Professor of Military History at Sandhurst in 1858 and later at the Staff College, Camberley. Old Boys fought in the Crimea territory and in South Africa where 13 lost their lives, and the carnage of the two World Wars resulted in the deaths of no fewer than 367 former pupils, with many, many more being injured. National Service left the post-war School leavers, with few exceptions, a taste of the Forces until it was abolished in 1960. South East Asia and African independence and the time leading up to it, saw many Blundellians in important positions, such as Gen. Sir Douglas Gracey who was Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan from 1948 to 1951. In more recent times conflicts in Korea, Malaysia, Northern Ireland, the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the all too short peaceful intervals have all seen Old Blundellians operating in a wide variety of roles within the armed services. Along with the blood, sweat and tears, there have also been lighter moments...



Cadets parade on Big Field



A large crowd enjoyed Beating the Retreat



OB and School shooting teams

OB SHOOTING AND MILITARY EXHIBITION

OBs attending the very popular Military Reunion took the opportunity to shoot against the School and both teams enjoyed a lively contest. Sadly, James Postle, the School shooting coach and Housemaster of School House will be leaving at the end of the year as his wife has been appointed Principal of Cheltenham Ladies College.

After lunch Tim Courtenay brought some of the military plaques in Chapel to life with the help of Blundell's archivist, Mike Sampson. OBs also enjoyed the comprehensive exhibition of military memorabilia in the Gym.



Main picture: The Military Band entertains
Right: Visitors enjoying Mike Sampson's exhibition
Far right: Drums from the CCF archives



MILITARY RECEPTION 25TH SEPTEMBER 2010

It was wonderful to see so many Old Blundellians and currently serving past and current parents in attendance. We feel it proved to be a wonderfully relaxing event, enjoyed by all.

The CCF was inspected by Brigadier Stephen Hodder, Commander of the 43 Wessex Brigade, with the Devon & Somerset ATC Music Wing presenting the 'Beating Retreat'. Our Archivist Mike Sampson produced a highly informative and interesting exhibition of Blundellians and their associations with the military over many generations. Many participated in the various 'shooting activities' on the ranges and during the afternoon a few rekindled some memories back at the original range at Chevithorne. Others undertook a tour around the school paying particular attention to the many changes which have taken place over the years.

We adjourned to Big School for lunch with presentations from both Brigadier Hodder and Chairman of Governors David Fursdon. Following the lunch we had a real treat with Lt Col Tim Courtenay (54-59 OH), OBE, DL who presented a commemorative tour of a number of OBs featured on plaques in the chapel.

Thank you for all the interest and support for making this event such a success. Additional thanks go to our guest speakers Brigadier Stephen Hodder, Lt Col Tim Courtenay and to Michael Amory for allowing us to visit Chevithorne on the Saturday afternoon.



David Fursdon, Chairman of Governor's, addresses
170 attendees at the Military Lunch

Blundell's Days gone by

We have been fortunate to secure a number of articles from a selection of OBs with a Military affiliation. A sample of excerpts is printed here, but for the full articles please look at the OB Club website



Christopher Harrison
(FH 28-33)

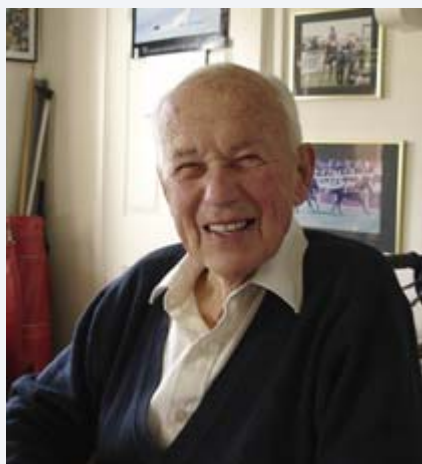
Christopher arrived at Blundell's in 1928. He thoroughly enjoyed his tennis days and went on to play at Queens. He was greatly encouraged by his

Housemaster W R Lewin to appreciate classical music. He won the Blundell's exhibition to Sidney Sussex in Cambridge.

After graduating, he joined the Colonial Administrative Service in Nigeria with the Royal West African Force. He was heavily involved in the war with various roles in command. He flew gliders, thrown in at the deep end by his District Officer who was another Old Blundellian from North Close Godfrey Allen.

Upon his return from Nigeria he went to work for the English Electric Company in Stevenage, (now British Air Systems) making guided missiles and continued to be involved in military liaisons jobs.

He is enjoying his retirement in Gloucestershire with his second wife Janet and is still a very active actor in the village Filkins Players Theatre group. Amazingly active and fit for a gentleman who has just celebrated his 96th birthday, is still a keen gardener and grows for the village gardening club.



Sir A G Norman KBE DFC (OH 30-34)

Sir Arthur Gordon Norman, or Gerry as he prefers to be known has had one of the most fascinating lives since leaving Blundell's, he has been afforded some of the highest honours possible.

Perhaps it started back with some of his first Masters, Ron Seldon, Joe Thug Thosby, Little Frenchy who he recalls made a distinct impression on him, he firmly believes Blundell's was and still is a school of

exceptional quality. At School he particularly enjoyed Fives, Cricket and Rugby under his initial Head Master Wallace and then Gorton who commanded such high levels of respect. Rupert Westall, his History and Careers Master recommended him to go to a meeting at 'De La Rue' the world's largest security printers who were at the time printing bank notes in London.

He had a distinguished career in the Royal Air Force during WW2, where his outstanding efforts and courage were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions during 'Operation Elaborate' (the ferrying of Horsa gliders from Portreath to Rabat-Sale in Morocco).

After the war he came back to De La Rue and went on to become one of the UK's top business executives, becoming Chairman of the company in 1964.

Throughout his life he has enjoyed the company of many treasured Labradors. He still regularly travels to Australia for family visits and has 17 grand and great grandchildren.

It is wonderful to hear the tales of such a gentleman who clearly holds much affection still for his time here at Blundell's.



Philip Woodward

D.Sc. (Oxon)

(OH 32-38)

Masters who treated us as personal friends abounded in my days at Blundell's, from headmaster Neville Gorton, who turned the school from a hierarchy into a family, to musical monster Jazz Hall and Maths master A R B Thomas, who helped everybody with everything, in and out of school. He would pack too many boys into the back of his car and take us to Bristol to hear Furtwängler conduct the Berlin Philharmonic. Look him up on the web and see what Gorty thought of him. His teaching was the cornerstone for my career in information technology at the government's once highly secret radar establishment TRE.

After World War 2, I was invited by Harvard University to lecture on Random Processes. Meeting so many clever people there, I began to feel like a random process myself. I met young Oliver Selfridge, whose grandfather founded Selfridge's in London, and wealthy Oliver Straus whose grandfather was co-founder of Macy's in New York. Just before my return from the USA, Ollie Straus had secretly prepared a unique leaving present. One morning, he asked me to favour him by tuning his new London-built harpsichord, and

then for no obvious reason asked me to take a look at Bach's Fifth Brandenburg concerto. I am mighty glad I did, for in the afternoon of that very day, a contingent of the Boston Symphony Orchestra turned up to accompany my performance.

It was Blundell's that instilled in me the importance of taking hobbies seriously, be they music, handicrafts, or whatever. In 1984 I made a new kind of pendulum clock (Google "Woodward on Time"). Because this was only a hobby, the award last year of the Tompion Gold Medal from the Worshipful Company of Clockmakers founded in 1631 is the achievement I prize most of all.



Cdr Joe Blake RN
(M 33-37)

Cdr Joe Blake left Blundell's nearly 75 years ago now.

Joe commenced his education at 5 years of age with a private tutor twice a week with prep in

between. He became a founding member of St Aubyns School until he was 13 when he transferred to Blundell's as a Day boy. He recalls cycling into the town each day 'whatever the weather' with his Straw boater adorning his head. Each day finished at 6.00 pm where the return cycle was conducted, a quick supper and further 2 hours prep. There wasn't much spare time with Saturday Morning School, afternoon Rugger matches and Church on Sundays, but on occasions he did get to go shooting and hunting with the Tiverton Foxhounds.

He has memories of family trips to the Channel Islands when he first experienced the challenge of the sea which led him to choose a career in the Royal Navy. He joined as a special entry cadet via tough competition for which he was well prepared at Blundell's.



His naval training was completed by the end of 1940 and in 1941 he was the navigating officer of a destroyer, also responsible for both communications and radar. He remained grateful for the theories learnt in the Science

block! His naval career ended in 1970 when he became responsible for the restoration of the Brunel steam ship Great Britain, finally retiring in 1986.



R Stacey (Dick)
(M 33-38)

Dick's father chose Blundell's as a 'Notable Public School which accepted Day Boys', a decision Dick never regretted. As a matter of interest the fees were £45 pa.



Blundell's educated him well enough to get a Direct Entry Commission in the Royal Marines (thanks largely to his cadet corps performance and athletic ability which incidentally led him

to represent the Navy as a shot putter and discus thrower on many occasions). In 1941 he qualified as a Signals Specialist and married Lindy who was to become a Naval V.A.D. and served in RN Hospitals in Portsmouth and Plymouth.

A varied and busy life ensued following his retirement in 1958 within the business and voluntary sector.

Now aged 90 and happily ensconced in Abbeyfield Rest Home in Twyford (Tel 01962 711243 or dickstacey@btinternet.com). He looks back to his days at Blundell's with nostalgia and greatly admires its development of 'extra curricular' facilities over the last ten years. He reckons he's had a wonderful life but admits his mischievous and risqué sense of humour has let him down. He deeply apologises to those he's offended.



Oliver Perks
(W 34-38)

Oliver Perks was born on February 10th 1920, in Bristol. One of six children, he went to Blundell's School and then in 1938 to Exeter College, Oxford to read Law. He had

only completed a year of his studies before the WW2 broke out.

Oliver initially joined the 72nd (Northumbrian) Field Regiment R.A. on the 15th August 1940. He was commissioned in 1943, and then served in the 90th (City of London) Field Regiment Royal Artillery.

He has recently set up a website to celebrate his 90th birthday, and features his wartime blog in the form of detailed recollections covering the period 1940-1945. Oliver has an amazing memory, and recalls his WWII experiences with candour and humour, describing both the serious and trivial events that he was a part of.

Oliver is a keen photographer, so selections of his wartime images are also featured as well. www.oliverperks.com.



Alan Fradgley
(NC 34-39)

Major Alan Fradgley is very much involved with Blundell's, keeping in touch with and supporting the OB Club since he left the

school back in 1939. Orphaned at 12, he was looked after by two Uncles, one of whom was a Blundellian and remembered the NC Housemaster (and Bursar) EG Peirce from the time when he was a young science-master back in 1902. He enjoyed his days at Blundell's which coincided with the stimulus of the Gorton reforms. In particular, his days and discussions and outings with Lyons-Wilson, the art-master, who had recently arrived from Sedbergh. He remembers being taken by Gorton to hear Emily Pankhurst speaking at the Guildhall in Exeter and, on another occasion, spending a weekend Retreat (with Gorton) at the Franciscan Abbey at Cerne Abbas

He remembers that NC contained a surprising number whose parents were abroad; in the army, planters, or colonial service. He went into the Army Class in the 6th form under the fatherly guidance of G.V. Hotblack, himself a decorated veteran of the 1914-18 trenches, and took the Army Entrance exam at 18. He left in the Summer term of 1939 going to the Royal Military Academy which in those days was at Woolwich, but only after he won the Popham Dicken Prize of which he is very proud of.

He was commissioned in early 1940, the very last regular sapper to come out of Woolwich before it amalgamated with Sandhurst. Playing rugby against other unit sides he often came across someone wearing Blundell's Field Socks. There were Blundellians also among his early instructors and COs. He served for 4 years in India, Burma, Malaya and Siam, mostly with the Bombay Sappers & Miners. His Divisional commander in Burma was the much-loved Blundellian, General Douglas Gracey.

After the war he went to Kenya and again found a helpful bank-manager in Mombasa who also hailed from the School. There he met and married his wife, she later sadly died in childbirth with their second son. He was allowed to retire from the army on compassionate grounds and went to work for Perkins Diesels in Peterborough where he met his second wife Pam who was helping him look after his oldest son until she passed away in 2007. He now has great pleasure and joy from his four grandsons.

We are very grateful to Alan who did some of the research for the magnificent School Roll of Honour, and it is with delight we still see him at so many events being held at the School.



Reverend Derek Chapman
(OH 36-40)

Reverend Chapman was granted a cadetship in the Indian Army whilst at Blundell's, with whom he served as an officer until independence in 1947. He was then granted a regular commission in the British Army with whom he served until he was accepted as a candidate for ordination in 1951.

Early in his ministry he was granted a Chaplains Commission in the Territorial Army and was Chaplain for 5 years to the Kent and County of London Yeomanry. In 2008 he and



his wife celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary; with a loving daughter who they both feel is one of their greatest achievements.

During his time at Blundell's he learnt to box (which stood him in good stead) and also to play rugby. He also learnt to survive in adversity, very useful in the war. He felt he was thoroughly spoilt in OH. Before the days of central feeding the housemaster owned a farm and they lived on the fat of the land. All for £50 a term, all found!

He feels he was a poor scholar and had to sit school certificate four times before passing as he was rather occupied elsewhere playing cricket etc.

When the war got underway some of the grounds staff were called up and it fell on some of the boys to fill the gaps, his particular job was to cut the grass on Big Field. They were also responsible as members of the OTC for 'guarding' a factory in Tiverton (belonging to the then Chair of Governors) during the hours of darkness.



Peter Brooksbank (P 39-43)

Peter recalls his world being ruled by Dr N Gorton and William Thoseby, in his days at school, he was never particularly athletic and ended

up in the 'Sani' one afternoon after being knocked out by a full toss cricket ball whilst umpiring. He did enjoy the shooting and was a key instigator in 'tractor polo'; for those of you in the know I am sure this would be an 'extra curricular activity' even now.

With CCF giving him a head start when he served with the Royal Engineers in India and Malaysia.

Overall he feels Blundell's was a good preparation for the approaching adult environment he entered into. 'Much fun, much excitement, a little misery, but heck, this was wartime, it could have been much worse'.



John Hollingshead
(NC 42-46)

John was born in 1928 in Ilfracombe, North Devon. He attended Blundell's and was enlisted in 1946 undertaking an Officer cadetship at Sandhurst

where he secured a commission into the Devonshire Regiment in 1948.

During the next 10 years he had a multitude of different roles and he finished his military career in 1967.

He emigrated to Western Australia with his family and managed the family hotel business before becoming the First State Organizer of The Muscular Dystrophy Research Association of WA before retiring in 1996.

He feels that Blundell's enabled him to make lifelong and enduring friendships; allowed him to set standards for self discipline and physical endurance e.g. The Russell (the toughest cross-country course he ever ran including Sandhurst). It also gave him a love of tradition, the import of team work and loyalty and an appreciation of music and the Arts. The Corps training did much to alleviate the initial shock of the first day of enlistment as a NSM!

He has been awarded many honours during his career including the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2000. He has been married to Helen since 1953 whose love and encouraging support over the last 57 years has enabled him to lead such a fulfilling and varied life. They have 2 sons and 2 daughters with 8 grandchildren.



John Hollands (OH 46-51)

Although still President of the OB Cricket Club, John Hollands gave up playing the game a few years ago at the age of seventy. He first

played cricket for the Blundell's 1st XV in 1947 with his last game on Big Field in 2003; a run of 56 years. He retains his interest in the game, of course, and after taking over the reins of the Ted Crowe Room at the Taunton County ground on the death of Ted Crowe, he now takes things more easily as the Librarian.

John Hollands continues to spend his winters away from Devon in sunny Tenerife. There, he keeps himself occupied by writing novels (14 to date). His first novel was published by Cassell's in 1956, so he's been at that for over fifty years as well! His book about his time at Blundell's (What a Fag!) was widely acclaimed and sales to people associated with Blundell's has exceeded 1,200. His latest publication is 'War Poems of a Young Soldier'. It is a collection of 45 poems about the Korean War, in which he was awarded the Military Cross as a platoon commander.

John Hollands has always been a keen supporter of the Old Blundellian Club and has served on the OB Committee for over 35 years.



Tom Holden (W 49-54)

I was fortunate to go to Mr Seldon's House, Westlake, where I spent a very happy time. I ended up as Head of House and the Head of School with an Exhibition to Oxford. Things changed on 16th September 1954, when with my good friend Bill Roberts, we reported to Topham Barracks for National Service. Our feet didn't seem to touch the ground, but some time later we emerged from Eaton Hall as Officers.

Bill went to Nigeria and I went to Kenya. It was still Mau Mau time so it wasn't long before I was on active service with the 4th Uganda Bn of the King's African Rifles in the Aberdare Forest. My Sergeant happened to be Idi Amin – then unknown – and the photograph above was published in The Daily Telegraph. We were just about to intern 120 Sudanese Mutineers, who had killed their Officers and fled into northern Uganda, where we had been posted.

After National Service I took my degree in Geography at Brasenose College and was fortunate to be invited to start teaching Geography at Eton College. After my first year I got married and we have three children and seven grandchildren. I experienced a very enjoyable tenure of fifteen years as a House Master, followed by a final seven as Loser Master or Deputy Head in charge of the five hundred junior boys.

I have been retired for twelve years and enjoy many volunteer roles. So just like at Blundell's there is never a dull moment!



Lt Cdr Rob Backus
(OH 86-91)

We were treated to a rare visit from RN Merlin this summer. Many members of the CCF and other pupils from the school had a firsthand tour of his huge helicopter.

Son of Rear Admiral 'Sandy' Backus and brother of Alastair who also went to Blundell's (91-96). He grew up in Lustleigh, Devon and now lives in Thornford, Dorset with wife and two young daughters.

Rob left Blundell's in the Summer of 91 having won the Russell 5 times and been awarded full colours for Rugby, Cross Country, Athletics and half colours for Shooting. He completed a Royal Navy Flying Scholarship at St. Just, Lands End and topped it up to a Private Pilots license before joining the Royal Navy in 1992 as a University Cadet Entrant.

In the RN he was a Gunnery Officer and Navigating Officer of a Minesweeper before moving across to the Fleet Air Arm. He was the first Ab-Initio Merlin pilot in 2000. Since qualifying he has served in all 5 Merlin Squadrons, operated from all Merlin capable Ships, all around the world including hostilities off Iraq in 2003. In between flying tours he did two years as a Principal Warfare and Operations Officer in a frigate before returning as Senior Pilot on 820 NAS.

He has recently left the RN for pastures new...



Maj T J Symonds BA(Hons) RLC (NC 87-92)

Symonds was commissioned into the Royal Logistic Corps from the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst in 1999. Embracing the diversity of his Corps he attended the Officers' Long Port and Maritime Course in 2003 before deploying as the Operations Officer of the Port Task Group to Umm Qasr in Iraq on Operation TELIC.

Following promotion to Major in 2006 he returned to 16 Air Assault Brigade as a Staff Officer. This included a deployment to Afghanistan in 2008 on Operation HERRICK.

He assumed command of 43 Close Support Squadron in 2009 and is currently deployed in Helmand leading Combat Logistic patrols to ground holding battle groups throughout the complex terrain of Lashkar-Gah, Nad-e-Ali and Babaji.



Tim has two daughters (Poppy aged 3 and Molly aged 2). His wife Georgina is also a serving member of the Royal Logistic

Corps. He enjoys most sports, but errs towards those with an emphasis on adrenaline such as skydiving and snowboarding.

At the beginning of November Muscat radiates in degrees of the upper twenties. The furnace sea breeze brings the ubiquitous smell of Frankincense through the Sultan School's corridors as pupils etch from right to left, recording the intricacies of Arabic Grammar.

An opportunity from the Orient

The school bell clangs, announcing the end of the day and the beginning of celebrations marking the Sultan's 40th anniversary. The school auditorium fills with long, glinting Razha swords that shake in hands oscillating to the rhythmic thud of double skinned drums. Adolescent aspirations blend into a stoic line of white

Dishdashas and silver Khanja daggers gleaming below proud, protruding chests.

*'eish As-Sultan, 'eish As-Sultan
Long live the Sultan, Long live the Sultan!*

They cry as a united youth. The warriors ascend to the stage, and swipe at each other's feet in the tribal dance of their forefathers. They swish into the wings and purposefully leave the stage. The audience of pupils, parents and staff look on, as out of the darkness echoes;

*Bismallah Ar-Rahman
Ar-Rahim, La ila ilaa
Allah wa Muhammed rasoul
Allah
In the name of God the
merciful and the
compassionate, there is not
god but God and Muhammed is
his prophet.*

Stage lights illuminate a young boy who sits perfectly still, fluctuating his voice to the looping Arabic of 7th Century Arabia, *The Qur'an Al-Karim*.

My mind is cast back to the vastness of the Empty Quarter from whence these words came. I picture the wind crafted dunes, the melodic camels, the smiling Bedouin and the cold nights. Mornings broken by vortexing winds that flash all objects in their path with a flotsam of sand. The desert is dangerously seductive. Embedded car tires so easily lead wayward travelers adding to the piles of camel skeletons scattered across her unforgiving sands.

But this evening I am on firmer ground. I can feel the reassuring tiles under my feet. I am safe in the knowledge that tomorrow I will be looking over the shoulder of Haytham who will still be struggling to read his mother tongue, to Ayman who is still trying to extract the passive participle from the active, to Laila who is more interested in the infamous Potter than possessive pronouns.

Thanks to the Anglo-Omani society's 'Gap Year Scheme' this is possible. If I were 18 and departing from the corridors of Blundell's I would head to the south of Arabia and teach, learn and live in a nation even Wilfred Thesiger would still today be able to recognize for her ancient Arab traditions.

The Anglo-Omani Society are offering Blundellians Gap Year placements of a three month duration at the Sultan's School from October to January and January to April each year. For more information about the school go to <http://sultansschool.org>. Please write your application to Nigel Knocker at nigel.knocker@btinternet.com.

Charlie Leigh (Westlake 1997-2004) is the author of *Educating an Englistanee...Inshallah*, a book chronicling his travels at 18 around the Middle East from Istanbul to Jerusalem, overland via Iran and Yemen. The book launch will be held at the Colin Beale Centre in March 2011.

FUTURE EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2011

- 5th OB Committee Meeting & lunch**
Colin Beale Centre, 10:00am **Contact:** OB Club
- 9th Winter Lunch**
Colin Beale Centre, 12:30pm
Speaker Mr Robert Horsey **Contact:** OB Club

MARCH 2011

- 9th Winter Lunch**
Colin Beale Centre, 12:30pm
Speaker Mr Richard Giles **Contact:** OB Club
- 12th Veterans Russell Race** - 3.15pm, Fun Run 4.00 pm
Contact: Development Office
- 12th Milestones 75th Anniversary Reception**
Colin Beale Centre, Optional Tour of Old Milestones
4:30pm onwards **Contact:** Development Office
- 17th La Traviata Garden Opera**
Devon Community Foundation
Big School 7:30pm Tickets: £20ph
To book tickets contact: 01884 232401
or email c.francis@blundells.org
- 19th Squash v OBs** 2:00pm **Contact:** OB Club
- 25th Hockey v OBs** 6:30pm **Contact:** OB Club
- 26th Football v OBs** 2:00pm **Contact:** OB Club
- 26th Fives v OBs Fives Club** 2:30pm **Contact:** OB Club

APRIL 2011

- 2nd OB Committee Meeting & lunch**
Colin Beale Centre 10:00am **Contact:** OB Club

MAY 2011

- 19-21st Devon County Show** Westpoint, Exeter
- 11th Private Garden Tour, Trelissick Garden**
Feock, Cornwall (near Truro) Garden Tour and Lunch
Contact: Development Office
- 26th 1604 Society Legacy Lunch**
Ted Crowe Room, Somerset Country Cricket Club
If you have made a pledge for Blundell's to be a beneficiary in your will, you are eligible for membership of the 1604 Society if you so wish. This entitles you to attend the annual lunch for which you will receive an invitation if we are aware of your intentions. Please let me know if you are eligible to attend and have not previously made me aware of your most generous support.
Contact: a.oliver@blundells.org

JUNE 2011

- 4th OB Committee Meeting & lunch**
Colin Beale Centre 10:00am **Contact:** OB Club
- 9th The Light Bar for Drinks** Casual Drinks Reception
London; near Liverpool St. Station 6:00-8:00pm
Contact: Development Office
- 9-11th Royal Cornwall Show**
The Royal Cornwall Showground, Wadebridge,
- 18th OB Day** (Details on page 24)
approx 10:00am-4:00pm **Contact:** OB Club
- tbc OB and Parent Cricket Lunch**

JULY 2011

- 3rd OB Golf Day**
Dartmouth Golf and Country Club
Contact: Development Office

OLD BLUNDELLIAN CRICKET FIXTURES

- 7th Blundell's School v OBCC**
Time: 11:30am *Home Match (at Blundell's)*
- 25th OBCC v Sou'westers**
12:00noon *Home Match (at Blundell's)*
- 26th OBCC v Devon Dimplings**
12:00noon *Home Match (at Blundell's)*
- 27th Castle Cary CC v OBCC**
12:00noon *Away (Castle Cary)*
Contact: OB Club

- 14th Public School Veterans Match**
Century Range, Bisley 5:00pm
Shooting followed by drinks at North London Rifle Club ending with a Dinner at the Fox
Contact: OB Club

SEPTEMBER 2011

- 2nd Sidney Sussex Dinner** Cambridge
For the Blundell's community that live or work in and around the Cambridge area or have attended a Cambridge College.
Contact: Development Office

OCTOBER 2011

- 1st OB Cricket Club 60th Anniversary Dinner** Long Room in the Colin Atkinson Pavilion at Somerset CCC at Taunton **Contact:** OB Club
- tbc Mike Sampson's (Blundell's Archivist) book launch**
with Authors and Artists reception and exhibition
Colin Beale Centre **Contact:** Development Office

NOVEMBER 2011

- 4th Blundell's London Dinner**
Carlton Club, London **Contact:** Development Office

Old Blundellian Club Contact Details

Email obclub@blundells.org
Tel 01884 232010
Address Old Blundellian Club,
The Colin Beale Centre,
Blundell's School, Tiverton, Devon EX16 4DT
Website www.obclub.co.uk

Blundell's Development Office

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