

# Blundell's Foundation



# Pictorial

October 2002

## Projects Update

Since the last Pictorial, Governors met and approved Phase I of the Blundell's Vision. This involves extension and refurbishment of Gorton House and School House, a new Modern Languages building and a start on the Pool Antony pitches.



*New Modern Languages Block*



Work began at the beginning of the Easter holiday and proceeded, examinations and teaching permitting, through the summer term. The end of term signalled the beginning of the most complex building programme undertaken by Blundell's in recent times. It is remarkable that so much was done in so little time, especially as the school was let for a three-week period in the middle of the holiday. The changes in more detail are on the centre pages of this issue.

# Letter from the Head Master

July 2002

This year we had a sparkling end to the Summer Term with the BBC presenter from the *Today* Programme, Sarah Montague, giving away the Prizes and making a hugely personal speech, which had very direct appeal to contemporary Blundellians. She concentrated on the pertinent idea that, whilst this was a day all about the excellent results recorded throughout another strong school year, it was also instructive for people to realise that there were educational lessons to be gained through the experience of not always succeeding.

We had had a Speech Day where it was possible to predict that the School will be as full in its 398th year as it has ever been and where we could extol the balanced strengths of both boys' and girls' sport as well as another strong generation of musicians and dramatists, not to mention artists. Outstandingly we were able to praise two young men who have reached international standard within their own age group, Ben Boswell, the outgoing Captain of Rugby, and Sam Westlake who has thrown the discus and put the shot for his own age group, as well as representing Britain and Ireland at the senior level.

The Spring Term had included a fascinating and productive trip for both Emma and me when we flew out to Kenya to visit six different schools. Based in Nairobi we were able to travel up country where we visited the Old Blundellian, Alan Bateman, currently the Headmaster of Pembroke House School at Gilgil. Subsequently we met with a number of Old Blundellians for an evening at the Muthaiga Club, kindly organised by David Gray. The OBs had travelled large distances in some cases for this occasion and we enjoyed an evening of splendid conviviality at which it was possible to talk quite a bit about recent developments at Blundell's. As ever



Head Master enjoys evening at the Muthaiga Club (shades of 'Out of Africa') with (back row) Old Blundellians John Carver (W 1937-40), Alan Bateman (W 1953-59) and David Gray (OH 1950-55) and (front row) Andrew Doig (P 1982-87) and Steve Collins (P 1964-68).

the bond, which pulls Blundellians together so effectively after they have left school, was highly evident. Throughout the Summer Term we have seen great progress taking



Jonathan Leigh with Alan Bateman, OB and Head of Pembroke House School, Gilgil in Kenya.

place with the extension of facilities for the younger age group in School House and an addition to Gorton House. As well as that, the new Modern Languages Block has made huge progress and our overall facilities should be very considerably strengthened by the start of the new term.

Plans move on apace for the arrangements for 2004 and by the time of the next Pictorial's production we hope to be in a position to give a clear outline as to how all this is going to work. As this headship moves into its next phase, this is clearly a time for looking ahead with considerable anticipation whilst realising the considerable weight of the values extolled by previous generations.

*Jonathan Leigh*

Jonathan Leigh





# Blundell's Governors

**Having reduced the maximum number of Governors to sixteen at incorporation, Blundell's has a streamlined and youthful Governing Body.**

Main Board meetings take place termly at the school, with extraordinary meetings as necessary. David Fursdon continues as Chairman with Sir Ian Heathcoat Amory as Vice Chairman. Martyn Grose (FH 1947-52) provides Old Blundellian input in addition to wisdom and wit and has had Brian Currie (P 1947-53) by his side until recently. Brian's resignation was reluctantly accepted at the summer Board meeting, but the good news is that he will continue to help with the Foundation and fundraising. Further good news is that Chad Murrin (FH 1969-73) has agreed to take over as a Governor from Brian.



Chad Murrin

Chad is a very involved Old Blundellian, particularly on the cricketing front, and is currently in a senior position with 3i in the City.

Another recent addition is Linda Smith who has served for a year and has used her experience in the employment field to good effect on the School's behalf. For those of you interested in statistics we now have three female Governors and the arrival of Chad and Linda brings the average age of Blundell's Governors down to 54, the lowest in recent times.

The sub committees also meet termly. Robert Breare drives the Finance and



Jonathan Leigh, Sarah Montague (Guest Speaker), David Fursdon (Chairman of Governors) and Councillor Nick Thom before Speech Day 2002.



General Purposes committee with panache and energy, Judge Bill Taylor leads the St Aubyn's Committee magisterially and Ann Mayes' education

Brian Currie and Linda Smith are entertained by Sir Ian Heathcoat Amory.

experience and wisdom is put to good effect in chairing the academic committee.

In addition, Brian Wills-Pope carries marketing responsibility and Mike Bull oversees Property and Estates matters. All Governors are now fully engaged with the School and each is on at least one sub committee. Rather like a good football team there are defenders, play makers and strikers, but unlike footballers, there is no financial reward. We are all very grateful to the Governors for their service and dedication.



Brian Wills-Pope, Ann Mayes, Susan Robinson and Mike Bull are amused by Nick Swarbrick.



# Did Peter Blundell celebrate with a glass or two of wine when he founded Blundell's School in 1604?

If so, it would have probably been the popular "Sack" or sherry of his time but I wonder if he would have encouraged the first Blundellians to follow the Shakespeare character, Falstaff's advice "If I had a thousand sons, the first humane principle I would teach them, would be to forswear thin potations and addict themselves to sack"?

There have since been thousands of sons and daughters who have passed through Blundell's and while we have no sack we do have a great list of wine that Falstaff would undoubtedly enjoy!

The Blundell's Wine Club aims to give you the chance to enjoy a selection of wines from around the world. Two wines will carry a specially designed label to celebrate the 400th anniversary. You can pick any of the wines to make up a mixed case and have the wines delivered to your door. A substantial percentage of the proceeds will go to the Blundell's Foundation.

There are no supermarket lines here, but you will find the prices competitive, the wines tasty and with specially designed labels on the Blundell's house wines, a unique bottle on your table. There is real quality and value in the "Les Maurins" 2000, a claret that will benefit from some ageing; the Viognier offers a refreshing alternative to the usual white varietals. We have also put together a cracking mixed case that we are calling the Christmas case, but Christmas could come early with these wines around the home!

Whenever you choose to drink them the important thing is to enjoy these wines, maybe experiment with something new and make a toast to old Peter Blundell.

We would like to hear your views on the wines and how we can build the Blundell's Wine Club.

Cheers for now,

**Ed Whitefield** (FH 1987-91)



Ed Whitefield

*Ed Whitefield has worked in the wine trade in South Africa and since then has worked in the wine department at Christie's auction house in London and for Uvine, an online wine trading company. He is now living in Cornwall and looking to start his own business.*





# Working in New Zealand

by **HARRY AKERMAN** (P 1986–91)

**One of the great advantages of doing medicine as a career is that it lends itself to working overseas. As juniors our contracts are short so that a year out of the NHS is easy to organize, and with many tempting countries short of doctors this means there is plenty of choice of places to go. New Zealand and Australia are the two most popular countries for UK doctors to go to, and both rely heavily on the 'Poms' coming over to augment the numbers of their own juniors. In Queensland three years ago they admitted to us on our first day that either they needed to open another medical school or rely on us doing stints over there. One locum agency took 250 junior doctors just to Queensland the year after we were there, and on our first day in New Zealand half the new registrars were English.**



*Harry Akerman*

Working overseas is regarded by most consultants as a positive thing to have on your C.V. Most of the jobs that we do we are able to get accredited by our medical councils as part of our training, and so the year does not have to be regarded as academically wasted. The type of work we undertake in the UK and over here is obviously very similar – they are both first world countries with first world diseases and first world health systems (I think the NHS still falls into that category!). A year here also gives us the chance to have some time away from the rat race for jobs and the constant awareness of impending exams.

If you really want to see a country then working is probably not the best way to do it, a decent length 'sabbatical' gives you more scope for travel. Whilst working for a year gives you income to

see the highlights of a country throughout all seasons, limited annual leave leaves you restricted to weekend trips away for your chance to do the majority of your sightseeing. This means that you therefore have a 4–5 hour driving radius around where you work for places you can see, and so deciding which city to go to will shape your year. We picked Dunedin, which at 110,000 is the 4th biggest of New Zealand's cities and the most southerly of them situated 4 hours drive south of Christchurch on the South Island's East Coast. Dunedin owes its presence to a fantastic natural harbour made by the Otago Peninsula that stretches 30km out to join the Pacific. Here, amongst spectacular beaches and sand dunes, there are seal, yellow-eyed penguin and Royal Albatross colonies. The city itself is about a 3-hour drive

through the old goldfields from the bustling commercial Queenstown and the smaller more laid back Wanaka. Both these resorts are on their own spectacular lakes and very popular holiday destinations as hot, dry summers for the vineyards and snow for the nearby ski fields in winter make them ideal locations. Fiordland National Park in the South West of the Island has the dramatic Milford and Doubtful Sounds, and many of New Zealand's 'Great Walks' are also within weekend reach.

Our year here will finish in December and we will all find it very hard leaving New Zealand. New Zealanders are rightly very proud of their country and are aware of the importance of protecting it and their environment. It is a shame that it is so far from home, as the gruelling flight over here puts many people off. For those of you who have never been it's time to start planning, and for those who have no doubt plans for your return are already in place.

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## *UVI House to be built on the Corps Ground*



*Artist's drawing of the UVI House facing towards Big Field.*

# 2002 Projects

## Gorton House

Increasing demand on places for girls led to a need to increase Gorton House capacity by 25 or so. An extension has been added to the North of the House providing extra rooms, recreational space and showers. The existing showers and changing areas have been considerably improved and brought up to date. The tutor's flat has been extended and refurbished and a second, spacious staff flat has been built so that adult, resident presence is appropriate for the increased number of girls in Gorton House.



## School House

The demand for places at 11 has increased dramatically since School House was altered to take 60 or so pupils in 1996. Pressure for places comes partly from the local primary schools, but also from an increased transfer rate now that St Aubyn's is on the Blundell's site.

Flexi boarding is on the increase in the 11-13 age group and the need was detailed as space for 140 boys and girls in School House as boarders, flexi boarders and day pupils. The obvious solution was to take over the Mathematics block next door, move Maths into existing Modern Languages and create a new Modern Languages Department.



Phase I of the project was levelling and draining 'Beale's Tip' to the south of School House and seeding it. This was achieved in the autumn of 2001 and the pitch is now a dedicated School House games area adjacent to the House.



The top floor of School House has been converted into matron's and tutors' accommodation plus some pupil space. New rooms, showers and changing areas for boarders and flexi boarders occupy the second floor. A second common room for Year 8 pupils has been created on the ground floor and improved heating and fire alarm system have been put in throughout the House. The extra space has also allowed some dedicated teaching rooms for School House to be retained.



## Parking

Visitors to the school will already be familiar with the new access from Blundell's Road past School House. Increasing numbers of Flexi boarders, more pupils' cars and more staff prompted a whole school parking survey by a firm of consultants.

The result is the extension by 30 spaces of the Big School car park, a dropping off zone behind Big School and School House, the closure of the Porter's Lodge and Chapel accesses and a general separation of soft-bodied pupils from hard-bodied vehicles.

## Knock on effects

The movement in the Modern Languages and Mathematics departments triggered a variety of other moves. Geography has moved into the History department, Economics and Religious Studies are in the main classroom block, Classics has its own dedicated space and a further ICT suite has been created in the CDT department. For those of you who visit wishing to relive old memories, a map is available to help you find your way around and to detail current room usage.

## Modern Languages

The School House improvements rendered Modern Languages homeless, so a purpose built classroom block was needed. The obvious site was between the Gymnasium and the Tuckshop overlooking Big Field. This involved the demolition of a remarkably ugly single storey brick building used for storage and changing.

The new building is architecturally innovative in some ways but, most importantly, provides state of the art teaching rooms for the Modern Languages Department of appropriate sizes for GCSE and A level groups. Also in the building are changing and showers for School House day pupils and teaching staff. The muniment room has moved from the History department to a specially designed room on the second floor.

The roof coverings are in Sedum, a vegetable material designed to link in with Big Field on one side and School House quadrangle on the other.

## Pool Antony Pitches

After much deliberation by Mid Devon District Council planners, permission was given, with 18 conditions attached, for a change of use from agricultural to sport for 12 areas of land at Pool Antony to the East of St Aubyn's.

Work has begun on levelling and draining the site with the first of four pitches coming on stream in September 2003. The remaining pitches will be ready for September 2004 and will be accessed by a bridge from the St Aubyn's site.



## Director's Letter

It has been a pleasure to see or communicate with a great many Old Blundellians since the publication of the last Pictorial.

■ Blundell's secured an excellent report from the Independent Schools Inspectorate in November 2001 and I flew out to Singapore soon afterwards. Mark and Anne Tozer were excellent hosts and Mark organised a gathering for local Old Blundellians. He has agreed to co-ordinate Old Blundellian activities in the Far East and will be in touch soon with those of you in that region.

■ The first two 2004 Campaign Board meetings have been held in the Colin Beale Centre under the Chairmanship of Sir Ian Heathcoat Amory. Plans are well ahead for the fundraising and social events associated with Blundell's quatercentenary. Details of events planned for 2004 will be available before Christmas. We are particularly pleased to have Chad Murrin (FH 1969-73) and John Beale (M 1956-61) as our Co-Presidents for the fundraising campaign. Dates of OB campaign receptions are:

**Wednesday 8th January**  
in Bristol  
early evening

**Wednesday 15th January**  
in London  
early evening

**Thursday 23rd January**  
in London  
early evening

**Wednesday 29th January**  
in Southampton  
early evening

**Saturday 1st February**  
at Blundell's  
lunchtime reception

Official invitations to the above events will be sent later in the year.



Mark Tozer in Singapore.

■ The Balliol dinner was well attended and well organised by Mark Beard who was accompanied by his bride-to-be – congratulations Mark! John Mattingly (P 1950-54) hosted an excellent Boat Race party on the Tideway for the most exciting race in recent times.

■ A brief visit to South Africa in June included dinner in Cape Town with Colin Davies and Rupert Day, followed by an excellent OB gathering at the Bryanston Club in Johannesburg. The event was organised by Graham Treagus. I was well looked after – particular thanks



South Africa OBs – (from left) back row: Julian Russell, Nick Skipworth-Michell, Rick Ackroyd, Graham Treagus. Front row: Rob Harvey, Paddy Armstrong, John Stobbs.





to Graham and Annette Treagus and Julian Russell. Julian was elected South African OB co-ordinator and will be in touch about future events.

■ The versatility of the Colin Beale Centre was very much in evidence on OB Day. Not only did we enjoy an excellent lunch in the main room, but lunch was followed by tea in the same place only two hours later.

■ Good progress is being made towards merging the Old Blundellian and Foundation databases to produce a bespoke package providing appropriate fields for OB social events and Foundation business. Thanks go to Richard White (M 1954-59) and Andrew Goff (TH 1983-88) for their enthusiasm and experience in this project.



*Paddy Armstrong with OBs and their wives – Annette Treagus, Eleanor Russell and Caryll Ackroyd in South Africa.*



*Rupert Day, Colin Davies and Paddy enjoy a drink in Cape Town, June 2002.*



# Blundell's Revisited

by **CHARLIE HAMILTON** (W 1977–82)

Head of Geography

**It would be true to say I was more than a little apprehensive about returning to Blundell's in September 2001 to continue my teaching career some 20 years after I left as a pupil.**

Taking over from the legendary Jerry Salter who has nurtured and inspired thousands of young Geographers during his 32 year reign was a daunting enough prospect. Add to this the fact that my A Level Geography teacher, a man I seldom listened to then, is now the Chairman of Governors (a man I listen to with bated breath today) and my squash coach/physics teacher now the Director of Finance, you see my predicament. I did not have to wait long before the obvious concerns that my rather undistinguished past would catch up with me were realised. Two days after my arrival a colleague in the Common Room asked Charles Noon if he had taught me as a boy. "No," he replied, "we all failed!"

My apprehension was not helped by a genuinely held belief among many in the teaching profession that returning to one's alma mater doesn't really smack of progress. Walking into chapel on the first day of term and being ushered to the same 'wickers' that I had sat in as a thirteen year old in 1977 did indeed feel like a retrograde step. However, my doubts over whether this constituted progress might have been well founded had Blundell's not changed so drastically over the intervening years. The traditions and architecture remain, thankfully, and there were a few old faces on the staff that I remembered, but the ethos and spirit of the school has changed enormously. Some of these changes have undoubtedly been thrust upon the school by shifting paradigms within Independent Schooling, some by Educational Theorists and some by successive

governments, all trying to make their own mark. Other changes have been brought about by market forces; but whatever the root causes these changes have undoubtedly been for the better. Blundell's today is not the school I went to and quite rightly. Being fully co-educational means that Blundell's now offers a far wider range of extra-mural activities than I remember. The more bullish pursuits that took place behind the scenes in boarding schools in the 70's and 80's and which made life a misery for the more vulnerable are also gone. Blundell's today strikes me as a far more empathetic institution offering its pupils a unique education and insight into the world around them. And what is unique about Blundell's is not something readily quantifiable – you need to experience the place to understand it. Victor Kiam was 'so impressed



that (he) bought the company'. I don't quite fit into that league but I am sufficiently impressed to be sending three of my own through the system and I am happy and proud to be a part of Blundell's again!

## Lunch at the Colin Beale Centre for a group of 1993ish leavers – 24th August 2002



Fazi Goman (Nick Collins' fiancée), Nick Collins (FH 1988-93), Annabel Dixon (Steve Clapp's girlfriend), Jeremy Rostron (FH 1988-93) and Niccie London (Ben Collins' girlfriend).

From left to right (back row): Caroline MacPherson (GH 1990-92), Ben Hutchen (FH 1988-93), Nick Collins (FH 1988-93), Melissa Dobson (GH 1991-93); (middle row): Rachel Newman (GH 1991-93), James Sessions-Hodge (FH 1988-93), Ben Collins (FH 1988-93), Hannah Babbington (GH 1991-93), Jeremy Wren (FH 1988-93); (floor): Jon Coad (P 1988-93), Steve Clapp (P 1988-93).





# Sex and The City

by MEI LAI HIPPISELEY-COXE (GH 1990–92)

**From Blundell's, Tiverton, to Sex & The City, Manhattan. That's where an expensive boarding school education in a previously all boys' establishment landed me – as a Set Costumer on a TV show for HBO about the (sex) lives of four single women living in New York.**

Of course, other stuff happened along the way, as I left Blundell's a decade ago. To whizz through it quickly – plans to raise goats on a farm in France with Tom Vanstone (Milestones) didn't materialise, in part because we broke up, and in part because my mother made me move to Los Angeles, her new home. Obliging, I went and lived there for four years. I started work as a Production Runner on commercials produced by my father, Nicolas Hippisley-Coxe, (P 1958-63) and from that went into Wardrobe. Work on *Evita* prompted a move back to England as well as the transition out of commercials into films. After three years in London I moved back to Los Angeles, supposedly to finish up on *Mission Impossible II*, which I had prepped in London before it went to Sydney, and then LA, but last minute Union problems meant I was out of a job in California with 30 boxes still winging their way from England.

Since there was nothing keeping me in Los Angeles, I moved to New York. I didn't know anyone, but thought it would be a good compromise between London and LA. A job at The New York City Opera got me into the Union - which is basically the only way you can work in the film industry – and from that I eventually got hired on *Sex & The City*. My job varies depending on the type of production- in this case it is purely to be on set with the actors. While normally I may be required to shop, source, swatch, research etc, on *Sex & The City* there is a whole separate design team led by Patricia Field. Pat has been a prominent part of the New York fashion scene since the 1960's – Manhattan's closest thing to



Vivienne Westwood, even though she is not a fashion designer.

Along with the Assistant Costume Designer and 3 shoppers, Pat finds the distinctive outfits for the four lead women – Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis and Cynthia Nixon – that initially put this show on the map. A tailor is on hand to alter and/or customise, leaving open many more options on what can be used. I gather in the old days, before AOL merged with HBO's parent company, Time Warner, that most of the clothes were bought, but nowadays with a smaller budget, a lot of the clothes are loaned out from showrooms. They get the free high profile publicity and we get to come in under budget. With one other costumer I dress the four girls and anyone with a speaking part. An additional costumer does all the background. There are often last minute changes either from Pat, or a Director, sometimes an actor. It's never tantrums, just logistics of the colours on set, or what the other characters are wearing in the same scene etc.

Once a costume has been established I have to maintain the continuity of the look set, as 5 minutes of screen time is shot over a few hours. Ironically, I work the hardest when the actors are naked. Sex scenes require a certain amount of sensitivity, since the actors are often wearing very little – a strategically placed thong perhaps, in front of a film crew of over 30 men and women. When the camera moves position, or goes in tighter, it's possible to cover them up more, like add boxer shorts to an actor, or a strapless top for an actress.

If you've read this article in hopes of some dirt on the girls, I am afraid I will have to disappoint you when I say that they are the best part of my job. SJ (Carrie) has an incredible amount of energy that keeps spirits up, even at 4am. Kim (Samantha) is very smart and not like her character at all. Cynthia (Miranda) is a bit of a hippie in real life, very mellow, in her own world and the 'easiest' of them. Kristin (Charlotte) likes to be very involved in the development of her character, and even insists on choosing all her own jewellery!



## Some Forthcoming School Events and Dates for 2002

**October 3-4**

Blundell's Classics Department Presents



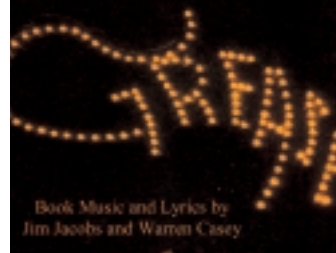
**Classics Dept Play:  
Medea**

**October 12**



**Allegri  
String Quartet**

**October 15-17**



**School Musical:  
Grease**

**November 8**



**Music Scholars'  
Concert**

**November 10**



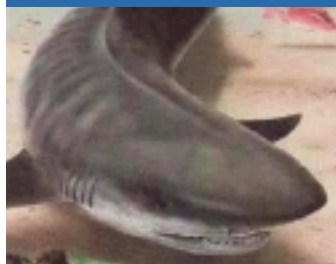
**Remembrance Day  
Service**

**November 12**



**European Theatre Coy  
L'Ecole des Femmes**

**November 15**



**Lecture: Sharks  
by Richard Pierce**

**December 6**



**School Concert**

**December 10**



**Carol Concert**



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## Old Blundellian Articles

We are extremely grateful to Harry Akerman, Ed Whitefield, Charlie Hamilton and Mei Lai Hippisley-Coxe for their contributions to this issue. If you would like to write on a subject of special interest, do please let us know.