

Blundell's Foundation



Pictorial

October 2003

Gaudy

As the opening of the extension to Gorton House was taking place on 6th September, it was decided to combine it with this year's Gaudy and to invite Old Blundellians from the 'Leigh' years (leavers 1983–2002) and their partners. The extension was opened by Claire Marshall (see article).



Claire Marshall opening Gorton House extension.

Those attending the Gaudy included:

Tom Armstrong (M 1991-93), Kwabena Asare (P 1997-2000), William Barton (M 1993-98), David Bishop (FH 1994-99), Andrew Chambers (W 1993-98), Rowan Chidgey (GH 2001-03), Kate Chidgey (GH 1996-2001), Nick Collins (FH 1988-93), Robin Corden (M 1993-98), Nic Corden (P 1996-2002), John Davies (OH 1997-99), Jonathan Day (W 1993-98), Alice Deuchar (GH 1994-98), Anthony Gordon (W 1991-96), Ian Grieve (FH 1995-2000), Ed Gunnery (NC 1989-94), Michael Hendon (M 1993-1998), Florence Holmes (GH 1992-94), Timothy Homan (OH 1993-98), Helen Kiss (NC 1993-98), Polly Knowles (NC 1997-2002), Jack Knowles (W 1996-2001), Stefan Kruger (P 1996-97), Rebecca Lancelles (GH 1996-2003), Victoria Lock (GH 1996-2002), Sean Moon (OH 1996-2000), Claire Peaker (GH 2000-02), Christina Pugsley (NC 1996-98), Matthew Pynn (W 1994-99), Katie Rumble (GH 1997-2003), Lucinda Rumbold (NC 1995-98), Philippa Sexton (GH 1998-2000), Arpad Toth (P 1992-94), Jacomina Wakeford (GH 1994-96), Timothy Way (W 1993-98), Rupert Webber (P 1996-2002), Frederick Webber (M 1993-98)

Several members of staff, both past and present, also attended, as did a couple of Governors. If I have missed anyone out, my apologies, but I hope you all had a good time.

Patricia Thompson
Foundation Administrator



Top (left): Lunch in the Big School and (right) Claire Marshall, who opened the GH extension and is now off to Mexico.

Left: Trying to get the group photograph!

Below: Group photograph outside Ondaatje Hall.



Letter from the Head Master



Head Master on Speech Day with David Fursdon, Chairman of Governors and John Clare, journalist, who presented the prizes.

Welcome to the start of Blundell's 400th year. It is a huge excitement for us to have reached this point and the major programme of these next few months should contain elements of pleasure for us all.

Whilst maintaining a strong sense of consciousness as to where this place comes from, recent developments represent continued vision for the future. The new Westlake, the Upper Sixth House, is making speedy progress. We have every hope that the dawn of 2004 will see

this great project added to the developments of the three previous years, which started with St Aubyn's joining us in the new millennium. The combined schools' total is just about 900 pupils. This terrific expansion gives us great hope for the future. Both the fiscal and educational developments of the outside world need careful incorporation into this so that Blundell's can retain its traditional stance of being the oldest educational institution of the two western counties.

The Foundation appeal for 2004 has been handsomely supported by large numbers of the school's well-wishers and we are very grateful for the combined generosity of the many varying Blundellian constituents. Speech Day this year featured the Education Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*, John Clare, who, having researched his subject in depth, delivered handsome tribute to the twin pillars of tradition and progression, which we represent. The Latin phrase "*Pro patria populoque*" stands firm as our fifth century unfolds.

Jonathan Leigh



The Director's Letter



Paddy Armstrong.

As described elsewhere, Blundell's main focus at present is on the creation of the new Westlake and associated pupil movements.

■ A look back over the Leigh years shows huge restructuring at Blundell's, coupled with expansion into co-education, a prep school and pre-school care. To the best of my knowledge there is no plan for further restructuring. This is a time for consolidation and phased improvement of facilities, both educational and recreational.

■ Achievement within the school continues to go from strength to strength, particularly academically. The A level and GCSE results just published are both the best ever recorded by Blundellians. You will read that public examinations have been 'dumbed down' and it is true that the style and content of examinations has changed over the years, but an 8% increase to 63% in A and B grades achieved at A level, plus 99% of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes is evidence of academic progress at Blundell's above and beyond national averages.

■ The Foundation and the Old Blundellian Club have been engaged in negotiations about a new database for several years now. We are on the verge of committing to a web-based database, which will allow OBs, parents and friends to adjust their own details on the database and, in a controlled fashion, to look at other peoples' details. The operation of the new databases needs clear explanation and will be the sole subject of our next mailing. Whilst on the subject of computing, I should report that, since I last wrote, Blundell's has

opened two more computer suites; one is adjacent to the CDT and Art areas and the other is on the ground floor of School House next to the Mathematics department. In addition, St Aubyn's has been provided with laptops to complement their computer suite.

■ Contributions to the 2004 Campaign continue to come in and we now have pledges and gifts amounting to about three quarters of a million pounds. We hope that as the quatercentenary finally arrives, more funds will materialise. Many thanks to those of you who have already contributed, and particularly to those who have attended or helped organise Foundation functions.

■ We hope to see very many visitors in 2004 and you will see from the centre pages that a lot of events are being organised. We would very much like you to see all the improvements and changes at Blundell's'. Please help us by giving notice of a visit so that we can organise times and, particularly if you are coming from abroad, help with local arrangements.

Paddy Armstrong



Life as a BBC correspondent

by **CLAIRE MARSHALL** (GH 1991–93)

Sadly, it wasn't for any kind of high moral reason that I ended up in journalism. In my teens, I wasn't intent on dodging bullets in order to bring the world the truth, or to develop meticulous research skills to bring down those big-time fraudsters.

Struggling through a law degree, with no desire to be a barrister or solicitor, I thought journalism would be a good career option mainly because every journalist I met seemed to really enjoy themselves. As one senior BBC correspondent put it to me at the time, "This is a grubby profession, but it is immense fun".

That seemed a good enough reason to me. But after six months of gruelling night shifts in the windowless Sky News building, fun didn't seem to be in plentiful supply. It was probably lack of sleep that led to a decision at 3 am one morning to resign and leave London for Peru. At that precise moment, it seemed like the perfectly logical solution. Countless Paddington Bear jokes later, I did have the odd doubt, but was far too proud to back down. The BBC had told me that no, there wasn't a queue of people competing to be Lima correspondent, and that yes, I could go there if I wanted, and send in reports if I found anything to report on.

Once I crossed the Atlantic, my new office became my wardrobe. A supermarket was being built outside my flat, and it was the only place – with a towel over my head – that I could record my voice without the drills being audible. I think I quite scared the man who came to mend my cooker, when I suddenly had to disappear into the cupboard and start talking to myself. Fortunately for me, although not for the poor Peruvian people, a huge corruption scandal and the ensuing collapse of the government, coupled with an earthquake, made my time there



Claire Marshall.

absorbing and fascinating – as well as quite profitable. I couldn't quite believe it – and still can't – that such a job existed. That you can actually be paid to discover a country by travelling around it and talking to people, with your only task being to tell other people about what you have learned.

After a stint covering the South America bureau, I was advised to come back to London to do some time with the BBC in London. More deadly night shifts – and then a reward. The bureau in Jerusalem needed an extra person for a few months; "as long as you know your Israeli Arabs from your Palestinian Arabs and your Israeli Christians". I started reading as much as I could – very quickly.

Then came a move to Spain. Almost immediately a huge oil tanker broke in two off the north-western coast. Such are the demands of the BBC, that I spent the first day filing back to back reports from a hotel room fifty miles from the coast, having not seen even one oil-covered seagull. However, the arrival of reinforcements from London and Brussels allowed me to get the wellies on and suitably squidge about

for the camera. I was upstaged by the King of Spain, who arrived and walked the black beaches with much more panache – in a pair of brogues.

The war on Iraq meant I was pulled out of Spain soon afterwards to help in the enormous BBC operation descending on the surrounding countries. It is a frightening thing to see a large pack of frustrated journalists waiting at a border with no news to cover, while a war is being waged just a few hundred miles down the road. The tiny town of Ruwashed on the Jordanian – Iraqi border had never witnessed anything like it. Prices tripled overnight, and villagers were seen leaving their homes with their possessions piled high so they could be rented for vast sums to TV crews. Once Baghdad had been taken and the border opened, it was a Wacky Races sprint to the capital. I arrived a few days later, and stayed for a month.

Now, it's back across the Atlantic. My new job is as correspondent based in Mexico, covering Central America, the Caribbean, and Venezuela. I have a lot of trouble in not appearing too smug to my friends, even if yet another move is a little daunting.



Devon Baroque



Artistic Director: Margaret Faultless

Patron: Sir Roger Norrington

Devon Baroque is a professional chamber orchestra with a reputation for exuberant and polished performances of baroque repertoire in the South-West. The ensemble evolved from a European String Teachers' Association workshop in 1999 led by Margaret Faultless, where a group of players was inspired to invite her to form a baroque orchestra.

The core group consists of string players and continuo, all of whom live in the West Country and they perform on original instruments from the 18th century, or on carefully copied reproductions.

Their repertoire centres on Corelli, Handel and Vivaldi, ranges from Biber to Bach and often includes wind or vocal soloists (including Lynn Dawson, Michael Chance and Mark Padmore) and choral ensembles.

In addition to concerts the group has a growing education programme to promote creativity and appreciation through listening and performance.

Devon Baroque will be performing in the chapel at Blundell's on Sunday 14th March. Two Old Blundellians will appear with them as soloists: Siona Stockel (GH 1993-95) and Orlando Schenk (NC 1985-90).

Tickets, which will include drinks and canapés (at 6.15 pm) before the concert, will be £15 and I suggest you book early, as this is bound to be a popular event.





1604 – Blund

Blundell's

Details, tickets, etc – please contact Patricia
at the Foundation Office

Confirmation: The Bishop of Crediton

The Russell

Devon Baroque Concert – 7.30pm Chapel

Choral Concert in Exeter Cathedral

Concert – Michael Mates and William Godfrey –
7.30pm – Big School

Eucharist for 403rd anniversary of Peter Blundell's death and
Dedication of Chapel Kneelers – The Very Reverend

Keith Jones, Dean of Exeter – 10.00am Chapel

Tiverton Festival "Last Night of the Proms" at Blundell's

Concert – Graham Caskie and Jonathan Leigh –
7.30pm – Big School

Art Exhibition including work by Lyons Wilson –
see back page for details of catalogue
OB Day

Start of School Celebration Week

School Fête and School Feast

Speech Day – am

Beating Retreat & Concert –

Band of the Welsh Guards – Big Field and Big School

Art Exhibition, Literature Exhibition

Organ Recital – Andrew Millington, Exeter Cathedral –
7.30pm

School Concert – 7.30pm Big School



Blundell's Celebrations – 2004

Old Blundellians

When writing to request tickets for any event, please include s.a.e.

Details, tickets for these events, please contact the Old Blundellian Club at the Colin Beale Centre

Saturday 10th January

Saturday 17th January

Saturday 23rd January

Saturday 31st January

Saturday 7th February

Saturday 6th March

Friday 12th March

Sunday 14th March

10th-12th April

Friday 30th April

Saturday 8th May

Sunday 9th May

Saturday 15th May

Friday 11th June

All June

Saturday 3rd July

Sunday 4th July

Monday 5th July

Tuesday 6th July

Wednesday 7th July

Thursday 8th July

Friday 9th July

1st-31st August

Saturday 11th September

September

Friday 1st October

Friday 10th December

Saturday 11th December

Champagne Celebration Party at Blundell's

Champagne Celebration Party in Bristol

Champagne Celebration Party in Hampshire

Champagne Celebration Party at St Peter's Lymstone

OB Dinner at Drapers' Hall, London – Guest Speaker:

Sir Anthony Kenny, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Oxford University (former Master of Balliol)

OB Rugby w/e at Blundell's; Squirrels v Tiverton (12th April)

Literature Exhibition

details from John Hollands, 2 Orchards Farm,
Buckerell, Honiton EX14 3GJ, tel: 01404-851383

Arts and Crafts Exhibition

to be arranged by Robert Julier – see back page

OB DAY: March from Old Blundell's to St Peter's – 10.00am

Commemoration Service – Bishop of Exeter – 11.00am

Grand OB and UVI Ball 8.00pm

OB Service in Chapel

Cricket v Lords Taverners and other sport

OB Cricket and Golf

OB Cricket and Golf

OB Golf at Tiverton and Discover the Doone Valley

Taunton Room Cricket

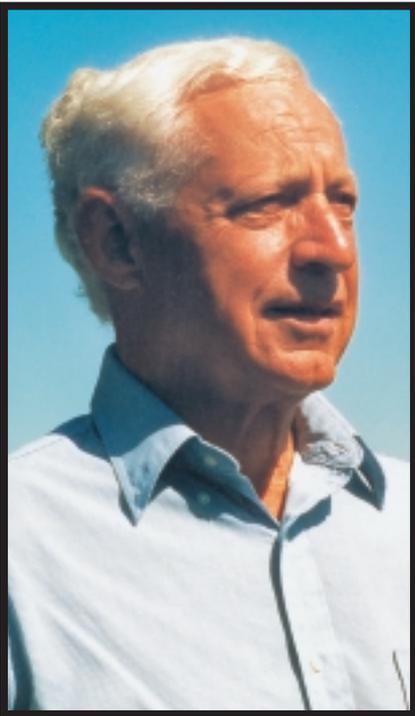
OB Supper and Concert at Blundell's



Blundell's in Time and Space

... a reminiscence

from **KEITH PALMER** (North Close 1944–48)



Keith Palmer

In 1944, towards the end of the Second World War, I left wartime Gerrards Cross at the age of thirteen for North Close and Blundell's School. In retrospect I am surprised at the separation between us students and the war. Of course, we were too young to realize the terribleness of the fighting and the sacrifices of the forces and the anguish of parents and families. We didn't read newspapers, rather we responded to the optimism of the BBC, the glamour of aircraft recognition, military training, badges and uniforms and rifle shooting in the Corps, trucks and tanks on the roads as the invasion force built up, and – towards the end – victories, the price for which in blood and treasure we could not account. In the safety of south-west England I am now surprised and grateful that we were never short of warm shelter, stout clothes and enough food, however plain. Neither was the school seemingly understaffed, although some boys had memories of good teachers now at the war.

My memories of food rationing are unusual for, given that the young male tends to accumulate material substances of value for the day when he can trade or binge, there were unusual consequences. In the dining hall at the end of each table were shelves, which held trays of jam jars, each lidded and labelled with a student's name. These were to receive the weekly ration of butter and sugar, the former stuck to the underside of the lid inside, the latter left loose in the bottom. Our tendency to hoard sometimes prevented us from eating the contents as we should have done and I remember in some cases how the butter pile would grow down from the top eventually to meet the sugar rising from the bottom. Then decay set in!

After two weeks or so of school I had got used to the routine and in particular to the ritual of evening prayers in which the boys stood around the wall of the North Close common room in order of seniority and the Housemaster would come through the green baize door, say a

few prayers, make announcements and then disappear until next day. On one such evening, R. L. Roberts, the Head Master, strode in trailing his gown and carrying his mortarboard under his arm. He was tall and slightly overweight. The effect was electrifying and we were agog. After the usual rituals he announced that a ring of homosexuality had been discovered in another House and that the boys had been punished and sent home. He had come to warn us against such sin and the punishment, both spiritual and corporal, that would inevitably accompany its discovery. With that he swept out in the manner he had entered. There was silence in the common room as we digested what was said. My own reaction was that, although I realized that I didn't know what homosexuality was, I knew I was guilty of it!

While memory fills with happy times, adventures, friendships, good teachers and sports and a multiplicity of colour, there were some dark times in the House where adult supervision was minimal and the rule and

judgment of prefects exalted beyond appeal. I was beaten with a swagger stick on an average of twice a term – something that would be illegal today – almost to the time when it became my turn to beat others. It wasn't until much later that I realized the harm done by this unsupervised practice not only to the beaten but to the beater too – humiliation on one side, arrogance and unjustified power on the other.

But there was one act of extreme cruelty, which I remember with acute clarity when an unpopular House member was stripped, tied down, and his posterior blackened with boot polish and topped with red ink. This was done in complete silence with the House looking on. I am ashamed now of my own silence, even my complicity as an observer, and I am still surprised that no adult was ever aware of this travesty and that nothing more came of it. Schoolboy justice, as embryonic as schoolboy intelligence, was not the even-handed socializer of then-popular opinion and I'm not sure why we ever thought it was. It appears to



me now that beating and bullying, customs now as extinct I hope as the life for which they were advocated as preparation, were among the last vestiges of training for the self-reliance and independence then considered important for our destination; an empire, with us its administrators and leaders. Few could discern that it was on the verge of extinction.

It would be unfair to leave this as a one-sided point of view. I have cherished the individuality and independence, characteristics which I can't help notice that I possess in unusual abundance in comparison to my peers and ones that Blundell's encouraged me to learn. It helped me to form character and nourish thought and these have seen me through some tough moments. On the other hand it has left me unduly insensitive to the feelings of others, especially women, and even lawless to the smaller social strictures, always ready to chart my own course with my own sailing directions. As a teacher of Physics in later life, my headmaster said to me once that while he wouldn't like to work for me, he would always follow me in an attack! Alas, there was much more work than battle. But I was the successful model, I think, of what the British, and Blundell's as their surrogate, wanted to create. I wish that they could have anticipated the more sensitive and co-operative working environments which emerged after the War, environments to which we were not particularly well suited.

Apart from the rigours of preparing for what was then called higher school certificate, getting into college was a very simple matter. None of my family had been to college and it was not until D. A. Rickards, my Housemaster in North Close and recently returned from wartime service, suggested that I go to college that any thought had been given to the matter. Since I had nothing else in mind regarding my future it was easy to fall in with his suggestion. He said that he thought I should go to his old Cambridge college, Pembroke, along with my friend 'Tom' Pierce. In forwarding this plan we would go be interviewed and

he would call the Senior Tutor to arrange this. Tom and I went by train to Cambridge for the interview and both were invited to attend. Such was college admission then. I gained my degree in 1954 and emigrated from what was then – and through no fault of its own – a dull and boring England, scarcely recovered economically from the war. Tom however went straight into the family business of planting tea in Ceylon. Several years later the business was nationalized and he returned to England. He told me he wished he had gone to college and his decision not to do so had been a mistake. The nudge to college from DAR was one of the most formative and important events of my Blundell's career and I was the first child of my family of business culture to go to college.

I write here to record my respect for and obligation to 'Slug' Chanter whose career as a Physics teacher I followed and whose example I made part of my own. I was a small boy at Blundell's for a year before he came but I remember that he stepped right up to the plate as a businesslike and experienced teacher. I regret that he was not popular with the boys. I think that this was for the worst of reasons – that he was not from the same class as most of us.

He embodied and taught me three things which have proved valuable over the fifty years since I learned them from him. First, the need to work hard and do your best always. Second, the skill and reward of disciplined thinking in science and third, the courage to be oneself and the needlessness of courting popularity. That was he.

I kept a diary in those distant days and, re-reading it recently, I found an incident in 1948 when I, a school monitor and a Company Sergeant Major (the alpha male) in the Cadet Corps, had neglected my Physics homework and EWC had designated Wednesday afternoon as the moment at which this omission should be put to rights – in his presence, in the science block. Unfortunately this was

the day of the annual inspection of the Corps in which I was to play a major part in drilling the Company in the presence of some Major General. My diary records that I had seen EWC, 'Ginger' Roberts and 'Pot' Abigail in animated discussion in the quad that morning and could easily guess their topic. Who won? Slug, of course, and I had to stay in. Now I honour him for doing what was best for me.

About ten years ago my wife and I visited him – it was my first return to Blundell's – and in a moment he had got his grade book out and was showing me my old scores. Even then he remonstrated with me as we found one grade to be zero! In that same visit my wife, an American, took the opportunity to remonstrate severely with the matron of North Close, a harmless and kindly soul several generations removed from "the Hag" of my own time, as to the school's responsibility for the difficulty she had had in getting me to change my socks, underpants and shirt more than twice a week.

Blundell's did well for me in those far off wartime days. It started me off intellectually and pointed me to an academic career that has been fundamentally rewarding, it taught me independence and responsibility, to behave myself and enjoy games and use my body well. But it denied me, in those formative years the company and experience of girls, leaving me crude and socially ill equipped in this area. It also denied me as a boarder the knowledge and company of my parents as I developed into adulthood; for going away to school is psychologically and prematurely leaving home. But, on the other hand, it introduced me to what have been my most pleasurable and long-lasting hobbies; music, reading and woodworking. Thank you, Jazz Hall, Blundell's Library however simple, and Willie Soukop.

So I am grateful for having had these two, EWC and several other masters, who in their honourable qualities were alike in doing what was best for me as best they could.



The Upper Sixth House



The Upper Sixth House (the new Westlake) is well on its way to completion, with occupancy by the current Upper Sixth anticipated in the New Year. The House has a three-storey east wing occupied by boys and the Housemaster, a central, single-storey, communal area and a western wing with provision for girls, three residential staff and the Sanatorium.



Top: The Upper Sixth House in early September 2003.

Above: An architect's impression of the new Westlake.

Left: View from the Upper Sixth House of the Colin Beale Centre with awning.

All rooms are equipped with washbasins and the vast majority will have single occupancy. Showers, baths etc., are in single units so there are no communal ablutions. Each floor of each wing is provided with a kitchen and a common area, in addition to large common rooms on the ground floor.

Careers and higher education resources are particularly focused on the House and much work has gone on during the last year to ensure that



links with pupils' previous Houses and School activities continue fully. For the Autumn Term 2003, Upper Sixth girls have moved to Thornton House and Upper Sixth boys are in Westlake. Boys and girls use the Westlake communal areas during the day and after prep.

Westlake and Thornton House pupils other than the Upper Sixth have been spread amongst Petergate, Francis House, Old House, North Close and Gorton House. Opportunities for leadership and administrative experience are now open to the Lower Sixth in these Houses.

The aspect from the upper floors of the House is excellent, with views over the remainder of the school, Tiverton and Knightshayes. There will be opportunities for Old Blundellians



visiting in 2004 to look round the new House, together with other recent improvements.

Above and below: Early stages of construction of the Upper Sixth House – July 2003.



Some Forthcoming School Events and Dates for 2003

October 20–25



Celebrating Trafalgar
1805 – art exhibition

October 21



School Big Band
Concert

November 9



Remembrance Day
Service

November 15



Allegri String Quartet

November 19–21



School Play –
The Browning Version

December 5



School Concert

ODDS

Blundell's Broadcasts, November 1945 and December 1948

■ Motet Club – Carol Service

Miles Amherst has had recordings of the above transferred to a CD by the BBC. Although not perfect they are well worth listening to. The CD can be bought from Miles for £5 (which will go to the Blundell's Foundation)
Miles Amherst, The Old Vicarage, Chaceley, Gloucester
GL19 4EE

Lyons-Wilson Exhibition

A catalogue containing 80 illustrations will be available early next year to complement the exhibition. The price is expected to be £9.99. Please contact Foundation Office for more information as soon as possible to give us an idea of how many to print.



OB Exhibition in 2004

It is very much hoped that Old Blundellian artists, craftsmen and designers will be keen to take part in an exhibition as a part of the 400th anniversary celebrations.

This is being arranged in conjunction with the Art department and will be shown in the Ondaatje building between 10th and 26th September 2004. At this early stage it would be helpful if you could let ROBERT JULIER know if you are interested by writing to him or by telephoning him at Marsh Cottage, Lower Washfield, Tiverton EX16 9PD (telephone: 01884-252729) or via e-mail to the Foundation Office (foundation@blundells.org)



Blundell's Foundation

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Old Blundellian Articles

We are extremely grateful to Claire Marshall and Keith Palmer for their contributions to this issue.
If you would like to write on a subject of special interest, do please let us know.