



# Pictorial

News from the Blundell's Foundation

November 2005



Above: Chad Murrin welcomes guests

## Jersey dinner – 14th June 2005

Blundell's has had a long and fruitful association with the Channel Islands over the years, particularly with St Michael's Preparatory School. The flow of pupils has declined somewhat since the 80s, when up to 15 Blundellians got the flight to Jersey and Blundell's squash teams regularly visited.

It was decided to follow up a visit to St Michael's by the Head Master and the Registrars with a dinner in Jersey. Chad Murrin (FH 69-73), now a Blundell's Governor, volunteered to chair the dinner.

Below: OBs reminiscing



...continued on page 3



**Above:** The Head Master addressing the School and guests on his first Blundell's Speech Day

## From the Head Master

I am now in my fourth term and enjoying it every bit as much as when I started. One of the delights for me is the time I have spent with Old Blundellians.

Whilst the school may have changed physically over the past years with the introduction of School House, the building of the Westlake Upper Sixth House, the purchase of St Aubyn's and the introduction of full co-education, it seems to me that the core values of Blundell's remain firm and strong. The roots of the school are both broad and deep. There is a powerful sense of something rather special about the Blundell's community and whilst it is hard to explain precisely how this develops, one thing is clear to me: Blundellians and Old Blundellians alike have a strong sense that their talents would lie relatively undeveloped without the kindness, inspiration and assistance of their friends and their teachers. There is so much more to a school than academic results. This year, as you

will no doubt have read, Blundellians achieved their best ever A Level results catapulting us up the infamous league tables, but what was equally impressive about last year's Upper Sixth was their eagerness to engage in so many aspects of school life outside the classroom; it was no accident, therefore, that they were so successful inside. This, too, seems to be a feature of the reminiscences of former pupils.

It is, as it has always been, a very exciting time to be a member of the Blundell's community. This Pictorial will give you a sense of this. I am deeply in debt to Paddy Armstrong in the Foundation Office and his Secretary, Patricia Thompson. If you wish to have a regular insight into school life, I now publish my words to the school at Latin Prayer each Monday on the school webpage.

Ian Davenport  
Head Master  
October 2005

"It is, as it has always been, a very exciting time to be a member of the Blundell's community..."

### Hong Kong dinner 15th October 2005

Twenty or so Old Blundellians and parents gathered for dinner at the Chinese University in Hong Kong on 15th October 2005. Thanks are due to Blundell's partners in Hong Kong, Dr and Mrs Wing Cheng, for making the arrangements.

The dinner immediately followed a seminar at the offices of CJR Education, Dr Cheng's business, at which the benefits of UK education, particularly at Blundell's, were put to potential parents.



**Above:** Blundell's first Hong Kong dinner

**Below:** Pupils' seminar before the dinner







**Left: The Head Master speaking**

Master, plus an amusing address from Chad Murrin and one or two unscheduled orations. Drinks in the bar followed dinner, and Peter Byrne (FH 79-84) ensured that his ex-Housemaster slept particularly well.

Mr and Mrs Davenport so enjoyed Jersey that they chose to return for their family summer holiday. It is hoped to hold another dinner in Jersey next year; details will be circulated after Christmas.



**Above: Drinks after dinner**

## Jersey dinner – 14th June 2005

continued from page 1

A Jersey man himself, Chad married one of the island's outstanding squash players and so has impeccable credentials to head up Blundell's first dinner in Jersey.

Twice daily flights from Exeter to Jersey made it easy for Mr and Mrs Davenport and Mr and Mrs

Armstrong to attend the dinner on the school's behalf.

Nick Bettany very kindly suggested that the Victoria Club would be an ideal venue. Thirty guests, including a good representation of 1980s FH OBs, sat down to dinner and heard news of the school from the Head

# Friends of Blundell's School

Friends of Blundell's (FOBs) was formed in 1996 and exists to support the ethos and strengths of the Blundell's family and its endeavours.

## Who are we?

The Committee comprises parents from across the school, and includes the Head Master, Mr Ian Davenport, and the Second Master, Mr Randall Thane.

## What do we do?

- since 1998, we have organised and run the annual Summer Ball for the Sixth Form, their parents and staff, held in the marquee on the evening of Speech Day.
- Committee members also run the second-hand uniform shop (located in the Music School). It is open on leave weekend Saturday afternoons and on specified dates in the school holidays.

- we organise flower arrangements and refreshments at some school functions and concerts.
  - in 2004 – Blundell's Quatercentenary year – we supported and assisted at many events.
  - we purchase items for use by pupils and to support their activities.
- Recent initiatives include: televisions and CD players for the Sanatorium, refurbishment of the 6th Form Centre, kitchen equipment for pupils in Westlake, books for the Art Department, frames for display of pupils' art work, funding of the purchase of the mini-marquee for sports events and Speech Day etc, multifunctional disco unit for school socials, donations to Houses, large gas barbecues for use by Houses, funds to create a

Roman mosaic, three shelters for the all weather pitch ...and more.

## How are we funded?

Funds come to us from the profits of our second-hand uniform shop and from the annual family membership (£15). Membership for current parents is automatic, unless you choose to opt out. All funds are used for the benefit of the pupils.

**Plea for help: Fiona Kingdom, who has (wo)manfully run the second-hand uniform shop for some years will be stepping down in July. We need more helpers, please!!!! If you are interested ring Patricia Thompson (01884-243262). This is not a huge commitment in terms of time if there are several of you to help.**

## Director's Letter

Following a hectic 2004 it was inevitable that 2005 would be a little quieter. Nevertheless, much has happened. The outstanding performance of the year came from those Blundellians who took A level and GCSE in the summer. The increase of 10% moving A and B pass grades at A level to 75% of all examinations taken is a remarkable one. The outstanding GCSE results augur well for the future.

The change in emphasis since my arrival at Blundell's in 1967 has been quite remarkable. Then sport was particularly important, drama and music were to be enjoyed by those who were interested, and work was something that had to be done to allow pupils to enjoy the rest of their time at school. Now, Blundell's ranks as a serious academic institution, with achievement in public examinations the top priority. That is not to say that other areas are neglected: I cannot recall sport, music, drama and art ever being in better shape. The academic achievements have been made without becoming more selective, simply by hard work and a change of direction.

I went to Australia in January and visited David Gilbert (Former Master) at his Melbourne farm. He would like to see any OBs who remember him and still has a great fondness for Blundell's despite many years teaching at Geelong. I was able to see OBs in Melbourne courtesy of Nigel and Val Creese. Several of us also drank a toast to the school whilst in Sydney.

The academic achievements have been made without becoming more selective, simply by hard work and a change of direction



**Above:** John Mattingly and Paddy up in the air

**Below:** Paddy with OBs in Nigel Creese's garden



During the year school representatives also saw OBs in Jersey, Hamburg and Hong Kong. The purpose of the dinners organised in these cities is to bring everybody with a Blundell's connection together. Past, future and current parents are invited as

**Right:**  
**Paddy with David Gilbert**  
**Down Under**





well as Old Blundellians. This produces an interesting mix and parents are particularly interested in Old Blundellians' career paths. In a similar way invitations were sent out for the breakfast at the Royal Cornwall Show. These Blundell's gatherings were both informative and fun, and we hope to continue them.

We are in the process of rewriting and updating the Foundation website ready for the introduction of the next database update in the New Year. If anybody has material they would like included on the website, please let us know. Unfortunately, we are unable to advertise commercial services. You will have received the school Newsletter during the summer. We intend to send this out every year, as it provides an excellent record of what the pupils and the school have been doing. We feel it complements the Pictorial, which will keep you up to date with changes at Blundell's and future plans.

There have been changes in the last year in that most important group of people who play such a large part



**Above: Peter Lowry with a great view of California**

(P 50-54) in California, was a helicopter ride over Los Angeles with Peter Lowry (FH 77-82) at the controls. Dates are not yet final for the various dinners planned for next year, but I hope to see as many of you as possible either at Blundell's or further afield.

**Paddy Armstrong**

**Below: Paddy with Old Blundellians in Sydney**

in the development of Blundell's at no cost, and quite often with little thanks. Departing Governors are: Dr John Jones (representing Balliol College, Oxford), Martyn Grose (FH 47-52), Nick Swarbrick (representing the teaching staff). New Governors are: Dr Keith Hannabuss (representing Balliol College, Oxford), Cedric Clapp (P 60-65), Revd Canon Mark Rylands, Dr Bill Cuthbert and Vivienne Heeley (representing the teaching staff).

Without doubt the highlight of my year, during a visit to John Mattingly



“Next year, I’ve now decided, I’ll get going again via the Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait and Indian Ocean to return home...

# Why grow old at home?

**Many people find themselves, like me, set adrift in middle age. My wife had died and my two sons emigrated, so I found myself in Cape Town, faced with the dismal prospect of working alone for the foreseeable future just to pay for a confounded house, car, TV set ...in fact, just to exist!**

For a while I’d been sailing – firstly in dinghies with the family and later with a buddy in keelboats. Mike counted me as his “C” crew – the

“A” ones were the racing maniacs who could be relied on to shout for more canvas whatever the wind strength, while the Bs were his family, and with them he had to behave and keep the boat upright! I was the relaxed, beer-in-hand, cruise-up-the-coast, go-for-an-adventure crew and with me he’d always dreamed, over the campfire and a scotch, of the day we’d sail off over the horizon! With time though, those dreams had faded into the never-never land of harsh reality – his money was tied up in



**Above: San Blas Islands, Panama. Mormake-Tupu river**

his house, and he had a young family who called that home! Faced with this depressing future I decided that life is full of chances and nothing’s for certain except that we’re going to die sooner or later and until then, living frugally, I could manage! I took early retirement, sold my half-built cottage and existing 19’ Fandango and ploughed everything into Solvesta, a 33’ steel, mono-hull cruiser.

Cape Town is halfway down a long slope in sailing terms – to the east is



**Above: Leaving Cape Town**

**Right: Trinidad, motoring**







**Above: Sydney Opera House at last!**



**Above: Galapagos. Talking to a Waved Albatross**

**Below: With Mike and Erica Welford, Canberra**



"uphill" and west is "down", so leaving had to be a commitment to a long voyage and to make sure we stuck to our decision, Mike entered us in a race going west two years ahead ...then reality intruded – he realised that with a family to care for, he still wasn't able to leave! Sadly we decided that he could only do the race – after that he'd go back to work, while I went on alone. At that time I had just a hundred and seventy hours logged, most of it with him as skipper, in his 23' Fusion or Fandango. I wasn't the temperament to be a "real" sailor, but with comprehensive Sailing Guides, GPS and common sense we knew I would get by – but self steering gear was now an essential.

In November 2002 we left Cape Town as part of the Governor's Cup race to St. Helena in the mid south Atlantic. Here Mike left the boat to return home and subsequently emigrate to Australia. I went on west and found I loved the open, empty ocean, living a normal life but just keeping a watch every couple of hours, day and night. From Fernando de Noronha off the Brazilian coast to Trinidad is a sea-lane, so I borrowed a watch keeper from another boat. The southern Caribbean I did alone in day-sails, via the Venezuelan offshore islands,



**Above: At anchor in BoraBora, French Societies**

Dutch Antilles, Colombia to the San Blas islands of Panama. From The Canal, the course was what's laughingly referred to as the "Coconut Milk-run", via Galapagos, the Marquesas, the Societies and Tonga to New Zealand to catch up with my eldest son. Finally Mike rejoined me for the last lap and now I'm with my youngest for a year in Australia.

Next year, I've now decided, I'll get going again via the Great Barrier Reef, Torres Strait and Indian Ocean to return home and, with the peace of mind gained alone with the sea, I feel I'll be able to put down roots again.

Colin Davies (FH 58–61)





# Germany Dinner on 21st May 2005

Following a successful Blundell's Germany dinner in Munich in 2004, Hamburg was selected as the venue for the 2005 gathering. Again, parents were invited as well as Old Blundellians, and a home team of Mr and Mrs Davenport, Mr and Mrs Klinkenberg and Mr and Mrs Armstrong made the trip to Hamburg.

We were delighted to welcome our German partner of many years, Barbara Glasmacher. The dinner was held at the Anglo German Club, with drinks before dinner taken on the terrace overlooking the River Alster. About 50 guests enjoyed an excellent buffet at the Club, including a witty address by the Head Master.

Plans are already in train for the 2006 dinner and the German leavers of 2005 have decided that Hamburg will again provide the venue. Details will be sent out in February.





## The Life of a Shipping Agent

# A Night at Sea

**I was born in Bermuda, a 21 sq mile series of limestone Islands jutting out in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, and grew up loving the sea.**

In my early years I would spend hours watching the cruise ships docking in Hamilton harbour fascinated with the sheer size of them and wondering what far off land they had come from.

Little did I know then that in my adult years to come, I would be involved in every aspect of the shipping life in Bermuda.

In a short time of returning home to Bermuda having had 4 glorious years of studying and playing every sport offered to me at Blundells, I joined a local Shipping Agency. Within a month of working there, I was involved in my first medical transfer of a sick crewman off shore.

I was advised that a ship was diverting to Bermuda to disembark a crewman who had suffered a recent heart attack and would be arriving offshore within the next 12 hours. My duties were to ready a pilot boat and its crew, go out to sea with a local Ship's Pilot and Doctor, and return to shore with the patient. He would then be transferred to the local hospital and at a later date I would organise his repatriation to his homeland.



**Above: Julian Sykes**

It all seemed straightforward enough until I discovered that the ship's time of arrival offshore was to be 3.00 am the next morning. This would mean that the transfer would take place 5 miles out to sea in the Atlantic Ocean in the dark!

At 2.30 am, I boarded the Pilot boat in St. George's with Pilot and Doctor in attendance. Once the 40 ft pilot/rescue boat departed the safety of the local harbour, within \_ mile of passing over submerged reefs, the open ocean of the Atlantic greeted us with 15 ft swells and 35km winds. The ride out was a little bumpy to say the least.

Nearing the ship I wondered how on earth we were going to board the 30,000 ton, 700 ft Tanker. When I saw a rope ladder dangling 50 ft down from the deck to the sea I had my answer.

The Pilot always goes first up the ladder as he is in charge of making sure the vessel stays clear of the nearby reefs. The Doctor is next as

he's the man to attend to the patient and then it's the Agent's turn, mine! With my heart racing at double its normal rate, I edged towards the ladder. However, before I began clambering on to it, I had to wait for the pilot boat to ride up with the next 15 ft ocean swell and then at its apex, grab the 'Jacob's Ladder' and then start my climb. All this is carried out whilst the ship is moving ahead at around 5 kms and its propellers churning away at the stern are a major distraction!

Having successfully made it to the top and after completing the necessary paperwork with the captain, there was then the daunting task of getting off the ship and this time with an extra passenger. The patient was brought to the deck wrapped in blankets and strapped in a metal stretcher. He was then lowered by ropes down to the pilot boat below, where the waiting crewmen made him safe.

...continued overleaf



“...my body and mind had just experienced the most amazing and exhilarating event of my life...”

The Pilot, Doctor and I followed but in reverse order this time with me going first. I think I found it more difficult to start my climb down as once I had a firm grip on the top of the ladder I had to swing my legs out over the side of the ship into oblivion and then find my footing on the first available wooden ladder rung. That successfully achieved, I proceeded down. However, on nearing the waves below, I stopped my descent and waited for the pilot boat to ride up toward me with the next wave. I had already been advised that if I went down too far, there was the chance of being crushed between the pilot boat and the steel hull of the ship, so I waited. Once it was a few feet away, I turned towards it and jumped across on to its deck, where a crewman was there to steady me. Then, gripping the grab bars located along the outer side of the cabin I made my way hand over hand back to the stern of the boat, where I could enter the safety of the cabin.

Once we were all safely on board, we made it back to shore where an ambulance was waiting at the dock for its new delivery. After checking the patient into the hospital, my job for the night was done. However, I found it impossible to go to bed as

my body and mind had just experienced the most amazing and exhilarating event of my life to that date. More trips to sea were to follow!

I have gone on to do many more transfers at sea, with one case ending up with me having to escort the sick crewman back to a hospital in Gothenberg, Sweden by air. With neither of us speaking each other's language, I was pleased not to have lost him in transit and to have completed the mission with both of us in tact.

Although each 'Medico' case is different, I have been advised by a

sea faring mentor that I should never lose the 'fear' when boarding vessels offshore, as one lapse of concentration could be disastrous out there. I love the sea as it is a beautiful place, however it must always be afforded the greatest of respect.

Just to finish however, I feel that perhaps the academic, sporting and general life lessons learnt during my 4 years at Blundells have stood me in good stead for the adventures and life trials that I have come across so far. What a wonderful place it was to learn!

Julian J. Sykes (NC 74-78)

## Royal Cornwall Show

**Blundell's supported the Royal Cornwall Show at Wadebridge between 9th and 11th June this year. Paddy Armstrong and Peter Klinkenberg enjoyed meeting parents and Old Blundellians in the distinctive Blundell's tent.**

A joint breakfast with the Country Land & Business Association was arranged for the Friday morning in the CLA tent, to which parents and Old Blundellians in Cornwall and members of the CLA were invited. The outgoing Cornish CLA chairman, Richard Sloman (W 67-71), was present and the Head Master spoke about Blundell's to about 100 breakfasters. The then National President of the CLA, Mark Hudson, also spoke. The new National President of the CLA is David Fursdon, Blundell's Chairman of Governors. Congratulations, David, on your appointment and we look forward to further co-operation between Blundell's and the CLA.



**Above: OBs and CLA members at breakfast seminar**



# Gaudy 2005

A Gaudy was held on September 24th for Old Blundellians who were at the school between 1970 and 1980. A select group of OBs and former staff followed drinks in Ondaatje Hall with an excellent buffet lunch in the Colin Beale Centre.



**Above:** Nick Swarbrick listening carefully



**Above:** Drinks in Ondaatje Hall

We have now covered all age groups of OBs with recent Gaudies and this was a repeat for this year group. The purpose of Gaudies is to bring back OBs to Blundell's within year groups and to give them the opportunity to see changes to the school and mingle with some of those who taught them. Now that we have more than covered a full cycle we are open to suggestions from OBs as to what they might prefer in the way of arrangements and timing.



**Right:** Lunch in the Beale Centre



# Some Forthcoming School Events and Dates for 2005-6

2005 November 30  
December 1



School Play

2005 December 9



School Concert

2006 March 11



The Russell

2006 March 17



Choral Concert

2006 June 24



OB Day

2006 July 4



School Fête

**NB**

## The Blundellian

At present a relatively small number of Old Blundellians receive this excellent magazine, which is published annually and provides a complete record of the school year.

Anyone wanting to buy a copy please send a cheque for £16, made out to Blundell's School, to Patricia Thompson (address below). If you live abroad please contact Patricia for details of postage cost.

## Blundell's Merchandising

See enclosed brochure.

## Blundell's Online

Please remember to go Online and change your address when you move so that we can keep in touch with you. Click on Blundell's Online on the school website ([www.blundells.org](http://www.blundells.org)) and follow the instructions.

## Blundell's Foundation



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