

# THE OLD BORLASIAN NEWSLETTER

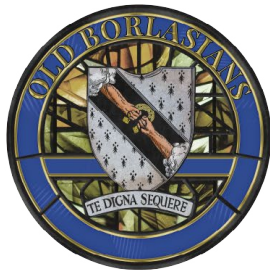
Spring 2023

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# THE OLD BORLASIAN NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023

## Introduction

On behalf of the Old Borlasian Club (OBC) committee and the Borlase Alumni Relations team, we would like to welcome you to the Spring 2023 Old Borlasian Newsletter. For a lot of you, this will be the first time you have received the newsletter in this format and we hope you like it.

For those of you that don't know, the OBC runs alongside the school alumni work and we have decided to bring together the quarterly news into one newsletter.

Every student, upon leaving Borlase automatically becomes an Old Borlasian and part of the alumni community. However, there is also the option for you to support the school more by becoming a member of the Old Borlasian Club. The Club raises funds for various projects, prizes and awards through its annual membership subscriptions, with all of the money raised going back to areas of need within the school.

The Club certainly believes in the mantra 'Once a Borlasian, always a Borlasian', but ask that if you want to give a little bit

of support back to the school, please subscribe to the OBC. It is a small subscription of £25 per year and your first year's subscription includes a [free OBC tie or scarf](#). Please [email](#), if you would like to join.

At this time of year, we are writing our annual Borlasian Magazine. If you have any articles or stories you would like to share, please [contact us](#).



Many thanks and we hope you enjoy the newsletter!

## Message from Old Borlasian Club President

Dear Old Borlasians,

Welcome to this first newsletter of 2023. The school is entering a time of change, with the announcements that Kay Mountfield is stepping down as Headteacher later this year, and James Simpson (Senior Deputy Headteacher) is also leaving the school to take up the post of headteacher at Churston Ferrers Grammar School. We thank both of them for their long service to Borlase and The Old Borlasians Club.

The Old Borlasian Club was pleased to host its annual Sherry Party on the last day of term before Christmas to thank the staff for all their hard work. It was a most enjoyable and festive occasion. Afterwards, Tony Compton was presented with an engraved tankard to thank him for his service as secretary of this Club from 2016 to 2022.

The Club continues to support current students with donations of £500 to fund prizes at each of the upcoming Performing Arts Dinner, Sports Dinner and STEM Fayre, at

which particular success and achievement are recognised. Your membership subscriptions enable us to support the school in this way, and we are very grateful.

Finally, as the 400th anniversary of the school's foundation approaches in 2024, I am continuing to work on an updated history of the school, to be published later this year. It will soon be available to pre-order, and advance subscribers will have the opportunity to have their name printed in the commemorative book, so watch out for more information! If you have any interesting photographs from your time at the school, do send them in.

Best wishes,

Gregory Lim (OB 1997-2003)

President





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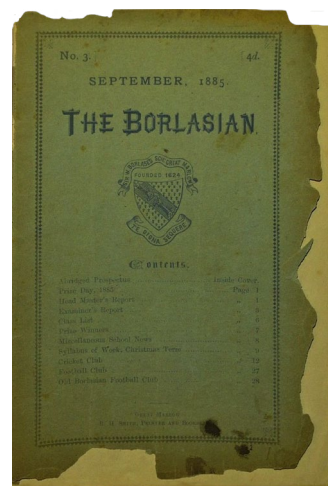
## New Headteacher, September 2023

Our new Headteacher for September, Mr Ed Goodall is coming to Borlase from his position at Dr Challoner's Grammar School. He is already at the school, when he has the time, to see the current students taking part in their various performances and shows and is avidly following Borlase's achievements on Twitter. He is very much looking forward to joining us in September.



## LAUNCHING The Digitised Borlasian Magazines

As part of our 400th Birthday celebrations, together with help from the OBC the school is delighted to share, for the first time, our digital copies of the Borlasian Magazines going back as far as 1885. We would like to give special thanks to two Old Borlasians in particular. Julian Bussell (OB 1977-1984) for digitising all our photographs in the archive collection and all the Borlasian magazines up to the 1940s, and Harry Elliott (OB 2010-2017) for completing the project and animating the digital magazines for everyone to enjoy. Without these two Old Borlasians' many many hours of hard work, we would not be able to share this part of our rich history with you today, and to look into the lives of many Old Borlasians and staff, who have gone through the school in years gone by.



**Can you find the years you were at Borlase? Please Click >>**

## Old Borlasian Represents Oxford in Boat Race

Old Borlasian Sara Helin was one of the rowers to represent Oxford in this year's boat race against Cambridge. Unfortunately for Sara, success did not go Oxford's way, but once again it was a thrilling race.

There is a great pre-race article on The Times website that is worth a read. It tells a bit more of Sara's rowing story and how she is keen to help make rowing more accessible to state school pupils – [click here for full article](#).

It quotes Sara "We had to tie our boats to sticks in the mud at school" which is something that hopefully will be a thing of the past with the proposed new school boathouse.

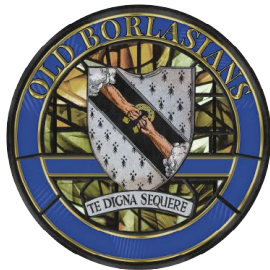
However, this does require some significant fund raising. If you are interested hearing more, please contact the schools Director of Development, Ilona Cains on [icains@swbgs.com](mailto:icains@swbgs.com).



Sara Helin (first right standing near centre)







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## Sara Helin (OB 2012–2019)

She was voted in as President of the Oxford University Women's Boat Club in 2022 and is currently doing an MEng in Engineering.

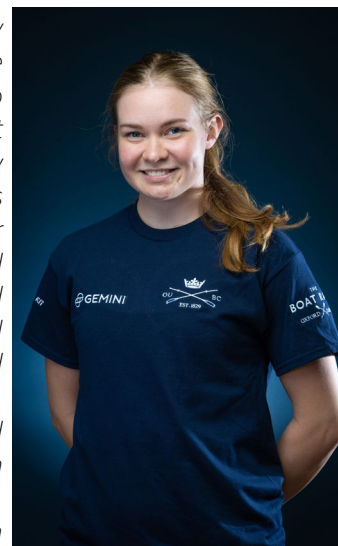
Sara learnt to row during her time at Borlase and we are very proud of her achievements!

### Oxford University Women's Boat Club 2023 President Announcement:

*"We are delighted to announce that the OUWBC President for the 2022-'23 season is Sara Helin, who is in her fourth year studying Engineering Science at St Peter's College."*

*Sara learned to row at Borlase Rowing Club where she enjoyed success in the Great Britain trialling circuit and won multiple medals at a junior national level. Since coming to Oxford, Sara helped St Peter's College Boat Club to winning blades at both Torpids and Summer eights. Sara raced in the 7 seat of the 2021 and 2022 Osiris crews and most recently in the HRR Island Cup 8+.*

*Her teammates had this to say about the appointment: "There could not be a better person to take on the role of President this year. Sara is fiercely principled and approaches every challenge thrown her way with resilience and integrity. She is an experienced and gritty racer yet still remains approachable and friendly to all her teammates. She is a highly respected team member, standing her in great stead to lead the club. Her enthusiasm and passion for the sport and the club are unrivalled, I can't wait to see what she achieves this year."*



*We are all looking forward to seeing what success we can achieve under Sara's leadership!"*

## Poetry Corner

A couple of Spring Poems from The Borlasian Magazine 1984 edition:

### The Butterfly

The butterfly flicks its fancy wings in flight  
So colourfully painted and crisp  
With many a magnificent pattern in full view  
It flutters from flower to flower  
Collecting sweet nectar with nimble movements  
On many a bright, bold buttercup  
It stops.

The fields are in full flower around this brilliant butterfly  
Yet it knows nothing of the shortness of its life  
Its pleasures, plights and perils,  
From its creepy, crawling caterpillar days  
To its sweet nectar-dipping adult life,  
And soon this seemingly ceaseless energy  
Will be gone for ever.

Edwin Ayres, 2A

### The Grasshopper

Smooth and green I'd like to be,  
Jumping in the grass,  
Rain or snow, hot or cold  
I'd watch the world go past.

Human's feet bother me  
Stamping here and there.  
If only they would stop and think!  
I'd like to make them stare.

Cheerful creatures that we are,  
Chirping all day long:  
Orchestral sounds we like to make  
To accompany our song.

Stephen Butler, 2A





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## Boathouse Update

This brings us on nicely to a short piece that was posted on the [UK property Forums website](#) at the end of last year:

*“Planning permission for a new boathouse in Marlow has been granted after 20 years of work.*

*Marlow and District Schools Boathouse Trust, a joint venture between Sir William Borlase’s Grammar School and Great Marlow School, set up in 2002 to deliver a boathouse both schools could use, has won consent for a sustainable scheme which is on Green Belt land at Lower Marlow Reach.*

*Maidenhead-based TP Architects appraised six sites before the final choice was made – a site within reach of both schools with good accessibility to the Thames near the Marlow bypass bridge in Little Marlow Country Park.*

*TP Architects was able to demonstrate the required ‘very special circumstances’ for Green Belt development and the design was praised by Buckinghamshire Council officers.*

*The buildings will be clad in stained cedar boarding, chosen to give a rustic, agricultural appearance, suitable for the setting. It will provide a permanent base for more than 1,000 pupils, offering racking for a variety of boats with accommodation on the first floor, in case of flooding.*

*Facilities will include changing rooms and showers, a training gym, coaches’ office and a balcony with views over the river. The building will incorporate a solar array and high levels of insulation and rainwater will be harvested and used to wash boats.*



*Ed Drysdale, director for TP Architects, said: “The approval provides an amazing opportunity to enhance the schools’ rowing offering. The sport is very strong and successful in the area and is in great demand at the two schools.*

*“By granting consent for very special circumstances the council has enabled the trust to create a purpose-built facility where there would have been an otherwise limited opportunity. This will ensure the continued growth of the sport for future generations in the sustainably designed facility.”*

*Funding will now begin to raise the approximate £2 million cost of the project.”*

A lot of fundraising to do for this amazing project, please let [Ilona Cains](#) know if you can help.

## Where are they now?

**Fleur Thomas** (OB 1989-1991)

Fleur, who served as president of the Old Borlasian Club in 1999-2000, is now His Majesty’s Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and she is enjoying the varied opportunities that this role presents, including meeting His Royal Highness Grand Duke Henri as well as Boy George and members of Culture Club! Fleur writes more about her experiences in the forthcoming 400th anniversary history book.







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## Obituaries

Barry Sayer, Teacher at Borlase 1980-1989

Barry Sayer came to Borlase in 1980 as a young trained teacher from the University College of Aberystwyth, and impressed everyone with his enthusiasm for his subject, his organisation, and his energy, which was present not only in his teaching but in his contribution to Rugby and tennis on games afternoons. His rapport with Borlasians was one of his strengths; others were his attention to detail, his conscientious approach to marking and his willingness to contribute his ideas and opinions to the English Department.

His clear, unprejudiced and balanced arguments, together with an excellent knowledge of his subject and a sensitive approach to the work of criticism and correction of pupils' efforts gained him wide respect and considerable esteem in the staffroom. He was guided by a firm moral sense, grounded in Christian teaching. He was always supportive of those who had the burdens of responsibility, offering encouragement and focus to discussions of the curriculum and management issues.

After leaving Borlase in 1989, he made his career in Portugal and then Brussels, teaching the subject in the international

schools there. His regular Christmas cards were always welcome, and it was good to see him from time to time at examination board training and briefing sessions on new syllabuses. His early death is a cause of sadness to many former colleagues, mixed with gratitude for having worked alongside such a thoroughly decent human being.

Andrew Stafford (Former Staff 1981-2000)



## Old Borlasian Brewers

It is certainly common knowledge, especially if you live in Marlow, that Marlow has a most wonderful asset to the town in [Rebellion Brewery](#). If you have not been, it is a must!

However, it is not necessarily common knowledge further afield or that it is the brainchild and hard work of two Old Borlasians, Mark Gloyens (OB 1975-1981) and Tim Coombes (OB-1981). News is travelling though and one Old Borlasian Teacher, Tony Craig (OB 1969-1995), took pen to paper when he found out!

Thank you Tony.

### *A Tale of Real Ale (in SWB colours!)*

November 6's Sunday Telegraph had a full page advert. for Marlow Rebellion Brewery with brewer "Freya" holding two boxes of bottled ales, sponsored by Lloyds' Bank, which had just helped the installation of a new eco-friendly bottling plant.

So next day pen was put to paper to congratulate Old Borlasians, Mark Gloyens and Tim Coombes, and Freya, on such green publicity!

November 30<sup>th</sup>, as I was over the Ties to Barnard Castle for some milk, wife Jan kindly took delivery of a hefty brown box. On opening, therein, "The 12 Days of Christmas" ~ 10 bottles, 2 glasses, a pair of socks, and a "Malty Christmas & Happy New Year" poem!!

So replied with Christmas cards for the boys - now 60 or thereabouts, and, inspired by the contents thought about a poem and a calligraphy challenge! Copy enclosed to John Barry OB SWBS-Notre

14.02.23





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## The Boarding Years – Remember This?

Some of you may not be aware that Borlase once offered boarding to pupils. Called “Sentry Hill” it was situated at the top of the Henley Road adjacent to what is now Harleyford Golf Club. With Sentry Hill filled to capacity, there was a need for more accommodation and “The Heights”, a large house next door to Sentry Hill, became vacant and was acquired as a junior Boarding House. At its peak the number of boarders reached 65.

An excellent book, “Sentry Hill – The Boarding House Years” assembled by Michael Symons (OB 1961-1965) aka “Stodge” and ex-boarder) provides a comprehensive time line of events.

**1956** Ernest Hazleton arrives as Headmaster at Borlase at the age of 47. At that time there were 338 boys in the school and he was the first Headmaster with a family since 1880. Crucially he had been a resident House Tutor previously at Clifton College in Bristol.

**1957** Mr Hazleton quickly realised that there was a steady loss of pupils when parents, who were stationed at RAF Medmenham, were posted overseas (as was quite common in those days). Using his knowledge of boarding house management and administration, he put a plan to Bucks County Council to start a boarding house for the school.

**1958** In November a letter from Bucks County Council confirmed that the Ministry of Education had given approval for the purchase of Sentry Hill to provide a boarding house for the school.

**1959** Sentry Hill together with several acres of grounds were purchased for £11,000.

**1961** The boarding house opens with 29 pupils.

**1963** In September the first school rugby match (vs University Old Boys) is played on a newly laid rugby pitch.

**1969** “The Heights” is purchased as accommodation for eight first formers and an extension added to the Dining Room in Sentry Hill to cater for them.

**1973** There was no new year group in 1973 (when Bucks changed from 11 to 12 plus) so the only new arrivals that year joined existing year groups.

**1974** Margaret Thatcher MP, previously, Secretary of State for Education and Science, was a VIP guest at Sentry Hill to celebrate Borlase’s 350th anniversary

The peak year when there were more than 60 pupils. Ernest Hazleton retires (457 pupils at the school by then) and Roy Smith takes over as the new Headmaster.

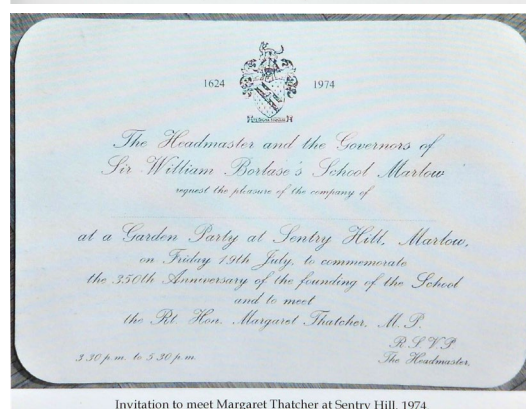
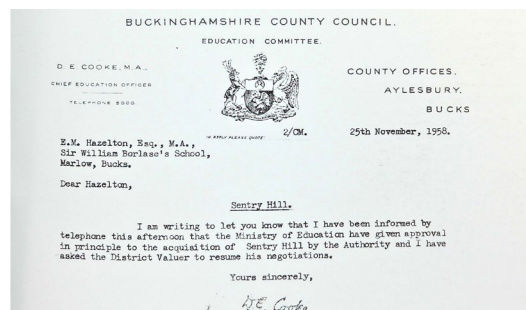
**1983** The closure of Sentry Hill is announced to take place in 1985, the chief cause being the departure of the RAF from Medmenham.

**1985** Sentry Hill was sold and it became a private home again.

**2000** Sentry Hill in the 60s Reunion – 50 came.

**2010** Last Ever Get Together “open to all former inmates” – 100 came.

**2024** Another Sentry Hill reunion to commemorate the School’s 400th anniversary?



If you have any stories regarding your time staying at Sentry Hill please [email us](mailto:info@borlaseian.co.uk).







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## Current School Update

Please find the link to the most recent [Borlase Review](#), where you can find the most recent updates at the end of each term.



SIR WILLIAM BORLASE'S  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL



THE BORLASE REVIEW

Issue 15  
Date: 12/01/2023



Inspire  
Empower  
Shape The Future

Front Page of most recent Borlase Review.

## Don't forget the 'Merch'!

Don't forget, we have fantastic Old Borlasian Club merchandise available:

### OBC Scarf:

OBC Members £15

Non Members £30

### OBC Tie:

OBC Members £12

Non Members £20

### OBC Badge:

OBC Members £5

Non Members £7.50

All proceeds go towards supporting Borlase. Please [email us to order](#). Please include the items you would like to order, the quantity and your address.

