



THE OLD BORLASIAN NEWSLETTER

Spring 2024

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Message from Headteacher

Wishing you all a very happy 2024 which, as I'm sure you'll be very aware, is the 400th year of the school's founding. While the main celebratory events take place later this year - I hope to see many of you at the Dinner on June 29th or at the Summer Festival on July 13th - "400" has been a recurring theme throughout the last term at school. When we arrived back in school after the Christmas break, Cloisters, Home Square and the route to the Mountfield Theatre had been decorated with bunting, adorned with the commemorative crest. All year groups were welcomed back into school with an assembly which reminded them of the story of the founding of the school and how this year provides us with an opportunity not only to look to the past, but also to examine the present and to consider our hopes for the future. Fittingly, I feel, the school song was sung by each house in the first Chapel assembly of the year. Then, later in January, we were able to open the Centenary Hall, a beautifully designed social study space for our 450 Sixth Form students to work in during their non-contact periods with desk space, laptop and USB charge points and The Stage cafe. Nevertheless, the showpiece of this modern space is a beautiful stained glass window which picks up the theme of the 400th anniversary, cleverly marrying different motifs from the last 400 years to where the school is today. You will read more in this newsletter and in The Borlase Review about events such as the incredible Jesus Christ Superstar musical production and also the Jazz Night which paid tribute to Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson while showcasing the extraordinary musical talent in the school. Success has continued to be found on the netball courts and the hockey, rugby and football pitches with many teams reaching the latter stages of district and regional competitions although the unseasonably wet winter and spring has meant that our new Director of Rowing has only been out once on "our" river since his arrival in November! I look forward to bringing you further news as we move on through the year.



With best wishes, E Goodall

Message from our President

Happy 400th Birthday to Sir William Borlase's Grammar School! Founded in 1624, the School is celebrating four centuries of history this year with a variety of events. A particular focus for Old Borlasians is on Saturday 29th June, when there will be an Exhibition, Celebration Dinner and Ball. Book your tickets [here](#).

At the end of 2023, we held the traditional Old Borlasian Club President's Sherry Party to thank the staff for all their hard work over the past year. As always, the event provided a festive end to the term.

On the same day, we finally took delivery of Borlase: The First 400 Years book, which I have been editing over the past few years. If you pre-ordered a copy, I hope you have enjoyed reading it. Copies are still available to buy [here](#) and from the Marlow Bookshop. Our next publication will be A History of Borlase Boat Club written by Tony Compton (OB 1957-1964). Do get in contact if you are interested in ordering a copy.



To begin the 400th anniversary celebrations, the School unveiled a new honours board in the Cloisters, celebrating members of staff who have given 20 or more years of service to the School. The Old Borlasian Club was pleased to support this initiative. Read more about that below.

Everyone who has the privilege to attend Borlase becomes an Old Borlasian when they leave the School. However, membership of the Old Borlasian Club requires a small annual subscription of £25. This income from our members allows the Club to support the current generation of Borlasians. For example, we sponsor the prizes for the annual Performing Arts, Sports and STEM Dinners as well as the Old Borlasian Prize awarded at Speech Day, and we donate to building campaigns and other development projects around the School. We can do this work only with your support. So, if you are not already a member, please consider joining us in this special 400th anniversary year. Details of how to subscribe are at the end of this newsletter, and all members receive an enamel Club badge....As the School Song says, "And let the song ring loud and long, *Te digna sequere*"!

Gregory Lim (OB 1997-2003), President





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Events Coming Shortly – Do Join Us!

Saturday, June 29th, School Open Day & Exhibition, 10.00am - 2.00pm

The school will be open to the whole Marlow Community to see the buildings, old and new, read and hear about the school's history, see some of the current work including sport, music, dance and drama.

Saturday, June 29th, Exhibition, Dinner and Dance, 6pm - 12.30pm

Old Borlasians, Staff and Parents (past and present!) are all invited to celebrate the past, present and future of the school. A wonderful evening with live Jazz and canapés on Cloisters Lawn, a chance to see the Borlase 400 Exhibition, three course dinner prepared by SoJo Kitchens; the launch of the Borlase 400 Rebellion Beer, a fantastic live band and DJ!!



Tickets are selling very fast so please don't delay! The Box Office opened 3 weeks ago and we have just a few tables left, so please [reserve your tickets](#) now to avoid disappointment.

Friday, June 28th, Borlase Cricket Match Old Borlasians v Borlase, Marlow Sports Club, 12.30pm

Parents, Old Borlasians, Students (after the whole school Borlase 400 sponsored walk) are welcome. The sun will be shining and there will be tea and cakes served - how civilised!

Saturday, July 13th, Borlase 400 Summer Festival

Tickets will go on sale after Easter. An afternoon and evening of live music performed by Borlase musicians and alumni, stalls, refreshments, activities - Watch this Space! All the family and friends are welcome!!

Rebellion Brewery brew special "Borlase 400" Craft Beer

A huge thank you to Mark Gloyens (OB 1981) and Tim Coombes (OB 1981) and the other Directors at the Rebellion Brewery for their wonderful support for the Borlase 400 Celebrations!

This week, a group of Old Borlasians, former staff and current staff were invited to the Rebellion Brewery to help create the limited edition Borlase 400 brew. Following a tour of the Development Brewery, the group enjoyed selecting the foundation flavours for a limited edition 'Borlase 400' beer, using special ingredients inspired by Lady Borlase's cookery book.

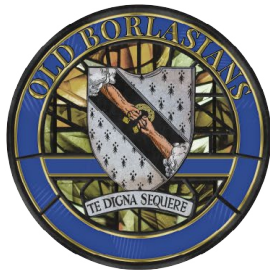


The brewery will start to brew the 'Borlase 400' in May, in their Development Brewery, where they brew smaller, 500 litre batches of diverse beers. They will produce two batches of the 'Borlase 400', using local water from the sunken borehole on the brewery site. It will spend one month in the fermenter at 10-12 degrees and then be bottled ready for the Borlase 400 Celebration dinner on June the 29th. We can't wait to share this very special limited edition with you all!

Volunteer Photographer required

If you are a professional event photographer and would like to help us capture our Borlase 400 Events for posterity, we would love to hear from you. Do contact kaymountfield@swbgs.com or icains@swbgs.com





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Senior Musical – Sir Tim Rice attending the opening night

The choice of show this year was Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's Jesus Christ Superstar. The show was a new departure for the school in so many ways - the writers, the genre of music, the theme of the show, the style of movement was all different from previous works we have performed. Mr Miall, Director of Performing Arts and Musical Director was keen in this anniversary year to create a new challenge for this very strong cohort of musicians; therefore a rock opera was the choice - through-sung, contemporary band and one of the most powerful stories ever told. He invited Miss Mountfield back to direct alongside the Drama staff in the newly renamed Mountfield Theatre. The choreography was led by Miss Ramnarine and once again Mark Hartley, Jenny Chislett and the Tech Theatre students created a stunning set, lighting and sound design. The show was an outstanding success performing to packed houses on all four nights. The company and principal cast gave impressive performances every evening; many of these singers/actors are also members of very successful rock and contemporary bands who are taking next year out to explore recording and performing opportunities.

On opening night, the school welcomed a special guest in the form of the lyricist of this show and of a whole cannon of successful musicals. Sir Tim Rice was very impressed and effusive in his praise of the production and performers. He spoke to the audience after the show and met with the cast, spending over an hour chatting to them and having photographs taken.



Jobs at Borlase:

Theatre Manager & Teacher of Production Arts

Deadline: 9.00am Monday 22nd April 2024

Applications submitted via email should be addressed to Mr Ed Goodall, Headteacher and sent to Mrs Anna Summerfield,
Director of HR at asummerfield@swbgs.com.





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Celebrating Borlase's Longest-serving Staff

At the end of September 2023, Ed Goodall contacted me asking whether the Old Borlasian Club would like to support an idea that he had had for a new honours board in the Cloisters, celebrating members of staff who had given 20 or more years' service to the School. What a wonderful idea, I thought. Of course, the Club would be delighted to support this wonderful initiative.

For many years, Andy Howland (Staff 1989–2008) had maintained a list of the long-serving teaching staff at Borlase. So far, so good! However, we wanted the board to be as inclusive as possible and, therefore, also to recognize the long service of many non-teaching members of staff. Finding accurate records for these individuals proved to be more difficult as they were not routinely listed in [The Borlasian magazine](#), which was a major source of information on the teaching staff. Nevertheless, with the use of HR records, archive research and many e-mails back and forth, a list began to emerge.

Impressively, we identified 66 individuals who had given more than 20 years' service to Borlase since 1900. The longest serving of these was Russell Sage (Staff 1934–1987), who taught Modern Languages at the School for 42 years and was also master in charge of rowing. Of the more recent Staff, many generations of Borlasians will affectionately recall Cynthia Ayres who taught Biology for 39 years (Staff 1970–2013, over two periods), Peter Heywood who taught Design & Technology for 35 years (Staff 1984–2019) and Tony Shannon who taught History and Politics for 35 years (Staff 1974–2009). The longest-serving Headteacher in this period was William S. Booth (Staff 1927–1956), ably supported over those 29 years by his wife, Mrs Minnie Booth, followed by the Rev. Albert J. Skinner (Staff 1904–1927) and Dr Peter A. Holding (Staff 1997–2018).

As mentioned above, dedicated service was not restricted to the teaching staff. Similar commitment has been shown by School secretaries, receptionists, bursary and administrative staff, laboratory technicians and language assistants. Caretakers seem to have especial longevity: Aubrey W. Brown (Staff 1937–1961), Cyril Smith (Staff 1962–1986) and Ray Kipping (Staff 1994–), currently supported by Brett Bagley (Staff 2003–) and Rick Neill (Staff 2004–).

And long service is not a relic of the twentieth century! As many as 13 current members of Staff have been at Borlase for 20 years or more. The longest serving of these is Paul King, who joined the Staff 35 years ago in 1989 to teach Geography. Does he have the stamina to surpass Mr Sage's record of 42 years? Only time will tell! Other teachers with similarly impressive service are Hugh Robson who teaches English and plays the Chapel organ (Staff 1996–), Karen Rooke who teaches Biology (Staff 1999–) and Jane Blane who teaches Geography (Staff 2000–).

We thank and celebrate all these individuals for their long and dedicated service and for helping to shape both Borlase School and countless generations of Borlasians into what they are today.

Gregory Lim
President





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Old Borlasian Tennis Match

We are organising an Old Borlasian Tennis Match against a School team at 2 pm on Friday 17th May. There will be mixed teams, and the event will probably comprise three or four sets of doubles. If you are interested in playing for the Old Borlasian team in this fixture or would like to receive more information about the event, please email obclub.membership@gmail.com



The Cricket Match of the Season – Old Borlasians XI v Borlase 1st XI

As we continue to endure a very wet period of weather those sunny, warm days (hopefully!) will soon return and what a better way to spend your time than watching the annual school cricket match between the Old Boys and the School 1st team on FRIDAY 28TH JUNE at Marlow Sports Club.

The Old Boys won in style in 2022 only for Borlase to come storming back last year with an exciting victory on the very last ball! There's talk that the 2024 1st team has some fine cricketers amongst its ranks so it should be another intriguing match. Start time is 12.30pm.

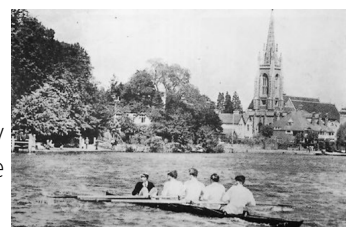


The Borlase Boat Club

Calling all Borlase rowers.

A history of Borlase Boat Club is about to be published in the Spring.

It has been written, not by that well known German authority on rowing –Hans Away – but by Old Borlasian Tony Compton who rowed at Borlase in the early 1960s and has been an active member at Marlow Rowing Club for the past 60 years.



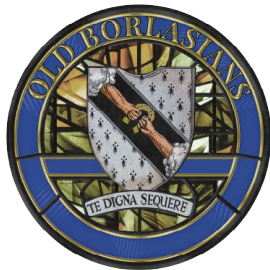
Tony has traced rowing right back to the late 19th century when boys at Borlase first started messing about in boats.

It's well illustrated with crews from every decade since the official formation of the Boat Club in 1921 together with many anecdotes from key people involved in its development and will be of interest to anyone who enjoyed the sport of rowing at Borlase.

A limited number of copies will be printed for sale through the School or the Old Borlasian Club.

For more information, to register your interest or pre-order contact Tony Compton. tony.compton@btinternet.com





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Borlase and RAAC

Borlase is one of 4 schools in Buckinghamshire and 234 schools in total containing a small amount of low risk RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete). RAAC was used as a cheaper alternative to standard concrete in the 80s and 90s.

It has now been confirmed that Borlase will receive grant funding to remove it from its buildings.

All pupils remain in face-to-face education with no disruption to the delivery of teaching or risk of school closure.

For further information on how RAAC has affected schools [please click here](#).

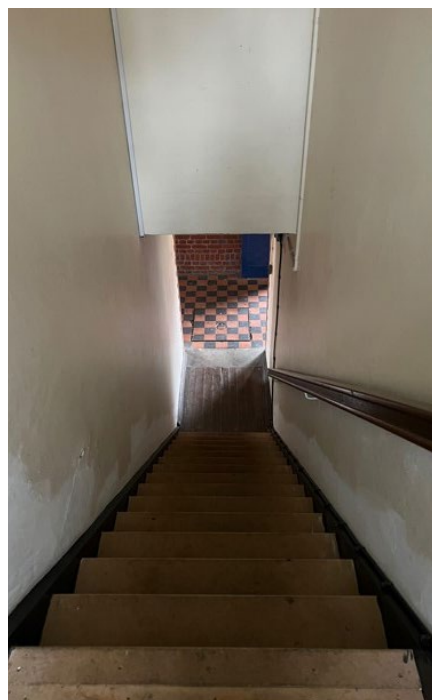
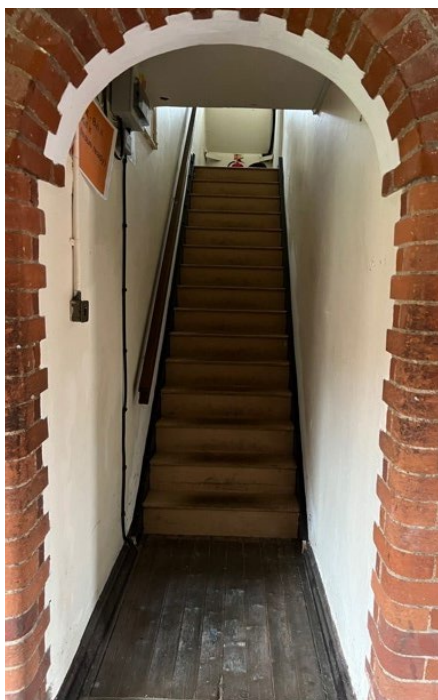
A trip Down Memory Lane – The Prefects' Study

Some Old Borlasians may well remember these revered steps from the Cloisters - this steep staircase that one would often dread as a new school recruit but would then come to respect as the balance of power shifted in school life.

Yes the Prefects' Study - a place of mystery and foreboding to those pupils that were instructed to knock on the door, a den of secrets, intrigue and the odd skulduggery for those that inhabited it!

The room is now the School's IT Department - a room where bugs are confronted, viruses removed, parts replaced, credentials checked and the odd firm tap administered to monitors to get them working again

No change here then!





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Where are they now? – DAN NIXON (2005 – 2012)

I consider myself a third-generation Borlasian. In fact, during my school years all three generations of family were at Borlase simultaneously; Margaret Nixon in Finance, Cathie Wells teaching and me studying (ostensibly).

From relatively early on in life I was certain of my career goal to be an engineer. I spent many a joyful hour in the technology workshops during Key stages 3 and 4 (but rarely actually finished a project). My sixth-form years saw me busy studying Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Geology, but I still managed to find time for my numerous hobbies both in and out of school.

As a member of Astronomy Club, I was given the opportunity to travel to space camp in Alabama (and became potentially the only person to dance the Time Warp in lunar gravity)! I was also an active member in two of the senior choirs, a hobby that I continued throughout university - in fact I met my wife Lucy at the Imperial College Choir. I also participated in the production of *Fiddler on the Roof* (I do still occasionally dance around the kitchen singing my favourite musical numbers). Outside of school my main passions were music and martial arts. Whilst I don't play my piano as much as I probably should these days, I am a second-Dan black belt at Tae Kwon-do and even occasionally instruct classes.

My schooltime efforts were rewarded with yet more studying when I finished at Borlase and went on to read Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College London. During uni I spent my free time singing, tap dancing and eating cheese (occasionally at the same time).



After four years of books and one particularly off-the-wall project making a 3D printer that cooked chocolate brownies, I finished university with a Master's and went straight on to design ejection seats for fighter jets at Martin-Baker in Uxbridge. Here, my school days rigging ballpoint pens to launch themselves across the classroom came in very

useful! After another four-year stint, I traded in climbing around in cockpits and blowing up aircraft canopies for space-grade heat exchangers when I moved to Reaction Engines in Culham.

Nowadays I live in Oxford with my wife and spend my workdays adapting technology from a futuristic rocket engine to more immediate applications like Formula 1, hydrogen fuel cell flight and hypersonic aircraft.

My love of engineering is still strong - there's nothing like the feeling of holding a finished product and then mercilessly testing it to destruction! Even after all these years, I still regularly meet up with the tight-knit group of school friends I made at Borlase and with whom I spent so much time around the school grounds (mostly hanging out in places we weren't meant to have access to and pushing each other into bushes).



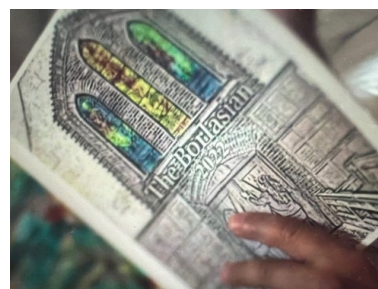
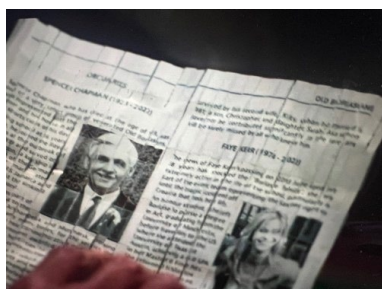


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The Marlow Murder Club & Borlase

I'm certain that many of you were intrigued by The Marlow Murder Club television program based on Robert Thorogood's book. During the production, there were several references to Borlase that you may have noticed. I've included a couple of screenshots below, but I'm sure you eagle-eyed viewers would have spotted even more.



Poetry Corner

THE EARLY MORNING RUSH

(with apologies to Robert Browning)

I sprang from the bedclothes as quick as could be,
The alarm went, a call came, the bell rang, all three!
"Hurry up!" called my friend as the door-bolt undrew.
"You'll be late", said my Dad, and I knew this was true.
Behind shut the front door, the bolts were replaced,
And off to the 'bus-stop we ran with all haste.

Waving good-bye to mother we started to race,
Neck by neck, stride by stride with unfaltering pace.
Hanging on to my satchel, I pulled my scarf tight,
Took my cap from my pocket and set the peak right.
And from Wycombe church steeple we heard the clock chime,
My friend broke the silence with, "Yet there is time!"

We just kept on hurrying, my friend and I,
To catch the next bus we were still going to try,
For if we did not, how our school-friends would laugh,
As the next wouldn't come for an hour and a half.
I looked at the 'bus-stop and saw something bright,
And "run", gasped my friend, "for the 'bus is in sight".

And all I remember is friends sitting round,
As in perspiration I nearly was drowned,
And no voice but was praising this effort of mine
To catch the last 'bus and arrive there on time.
So I've written a poem which I dedicate
To all boys at School who try not to be late.

P. Curtis (III B)

Spring

The joy of spring,
Is quick to bring
Warmth to the heart of the land.
The days grow longer,
The grass now stronger,
Spreads to clothe the land.

Animals dance in the cold winter snow,
The sun heals all their pain.
Spring has arrived,
The bees leave their hives,
And the beautiful flowers now reign.

The catkins soon leave,
The sun brightens trees,
The birds sing songs of joy.
The winter gloom,
And freezing doom,
Retreat to worlds unknown.

Peter Bamford, 3A





THE OLD BORLASIAN CLUB

PLEASE FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW:

1. Arrange your annual standing order on 1st July of each year directly with your bank.
2. If you are joining part way through the year, please make a payment for the current year.
3. Complete the contact section at the bottom of this form and send it to us as a scan or photo.

STANDING ORDER

PLEASE ARRANGE DIRECTLY WITH YOUR BANK BY PHONE OR VIA YOUR BANKING APP

| BANK | BRANCH | SORT CODE |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Lloyds Bank | Marlow | 30-95-36 |
| BENEFICIARY'S NAME | ACCOUNT NUMBER | |
| The Old Borlasian Club | 01631827 | |
| AMOUNT IN FIGURES | AMOUNT IN WORDS | PAYMENT DATE |
| £25.00 | Twenty five pounds | 1 st July every year |

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS BELOW:-

Name:.....Email:.....

Mobile:.....Years at school:.....

Address:.....

PLEASE TICK THE FOLLOWING BOXES:-

☐

I consent to my contact details being stored in a database maintained by Sir William Borlase's Grammar School and to receiving communications from the Old Borlasian Club and the School. Your data will not be shared with any third parties.

☐

One of the functions of the Club is to encourage Old Borlasians to remain in contact with each other. Please tick in the box if you consent to your contact details being shared with other members of the Club

PLEASE SCAN OR TAKE A PHOTO OF THIS DOCUMENT AND SEND AS AN ATTACHMENT TO obclub.membership@gmail.com

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT