



THE OLD BORLASIAN NEWSLETTER

Summer 2026

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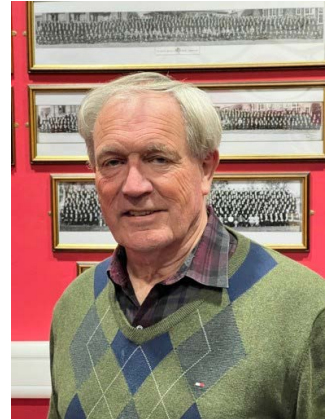


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Message From Our President – Brian Martin

I was delighted and honoured to take over as Club President this year. It will be a challenge to follow Kay Mountfield and Greg Lim, whose huge contributions to the school and the club, particularly in celebrating the school's 400th anniversary, cannot be matched. However, it is a challenge that I can look forward to with confidence, because of the support of our very active committee.



I was very proud to join the school in 1969 and was able to take advantage of the many opportunities offered to pupils, many of which were supported by the Old Borlasian Club. In the intervening 50 years, the school has tripled in size, become co-educational and embarked on major developments such as the Mountfield Theatre, Sports Hall and Sixth Form Centre. These facilities offer pupils the opportunity to excel at an amazing range of activities in the Arts, Sports and Sciences, supported by a dedicated staff who give up their free time to support the activities.

The club has always supported these activities by donating the prizes and ensuring club representation at the awards ceremonies and prize giving. In addition, the club contributes to many other projects such as the creation of the Stuart Lever Room and funding the new flagpole.

Although the club cannot fund the major projects the school has planned, such as the repairs to the chapel and new boathouse, it and its members will always make significant contributions.

Alongside supporting the school, the club has a variety of social gatherings throughout the year, providing opportunities to both keep in touch with the school and other members.

The success of the club is dependent on maintaining and building membership and the committee works hard to promote the club to current year 13s with reduced subscriptions and events designed to maintain their links with the school and their peer group.

A Trip Down to Memory Lane – Borlase in 1916

Even though delightful weather greeted Speech Day held on the Headmaster's lawn, the overall mood was a sombre one as the country moved into its third year of conflict. Mr Westaway, HM Inspector of Schools, whose range of work takes him from the Thames to the Tweed, mentioned to Headmaster Skinner that he knows of no school that has been so badly hit by the war as our own. To begin with, on the outbreak of war in August 1914, every single member of the staff was either on the reserve of officers or voluntarily enlisted and therefore the School was deprived of the whole of its teaching staff en bloc.

The cricket and football teams have had a fair measure of success against City of Westminster School, Alleyn's School Dulwich and Reading School. Against arch rivals, RGS Wycombe, Borlase endured a heavy loss in the cricket but gained revenge later in the season in Marlow skittling them out for a paltry 36. In football the School put on a dominant display against RGS winning 5-1 including a brace from F. Peddle.





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The annual Athletic Sports were held on Colonel's Meadow. There was a large gathering as well as a big contingent of the officers and men of the Royal Engineers now quartered in the area. There were in all 9 Challenge Cups to be competed for and Shaw proved to be the pupil of the day taking not only the Championship Cup but 4 other cups by winning the cross country, 1 mile, ¼ mile and hurdles whilst in the 100 yards he was only beaten by Michaelson by inches.

The Roll of Honour in The Borlasian – Old Boys who have fallen for their King and Country:

Rifleman RG Aycliffe 1906-09	Queen's Westminster Rifles
Captain JEW Bath 1903-05	5th Royal Berks Regiment
Trooper RG Buckell 1904-10	Royal Bucks Hussars
2nd Lieutenant LC Carey 1910-12	East Surrey Regiment
Captain Vincent Coldwell 1892-98	4th Indian Cavalry
2nd Lieutenant AH Davis 1894	1st Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry
Midshipman DA Dickson 1906-10	HMS Hawke
Rifleman PR Dye 1898-1902	Queen's Westminster Rifles
2nd Lieutenant LA Gaffney 1907-13	6th Royal Minster Fusiliers
Captain J Neil Guthrie 1895-96	Irish Guards
2nd Lieutenant WH Haly 1892-98	3rd Hampshire Regiment
Rifleman PF Harris 1907-10	King's Royal Rifles
Major BH Howard 1889-91	47th Sikhs Indian Army
2nd Lieutenant KRB Kershaw 1901-06	9th Gordon Highlanders
Trooper J Langley 1889-94	Royal Bucks Hussars
2nd Lieutenant AG Lewis 1911-12	1st Monmouthshire Regiment
Captain EH Murphy 1898-1900	5th Leicestershire Regiment
Lance Corp JWC Reading 1901-07	London Rifle Brigade
Captain AO Trefusis 1893-99	9th North Lancashire Regiment
Captain HW Trefusis 1891-98	Northamptonshire Regiment
Private T Street 1884-88	South African Infantry
Sergeant WC Wellicome 1901-02	5th Seaforth Highlanders
Captain WG Woodroffe 1904	Middlesex Regiment

Old Borlasian Club - A Helping Hand

Below is a list of donations over the years from members of the Old Borlasian Club...





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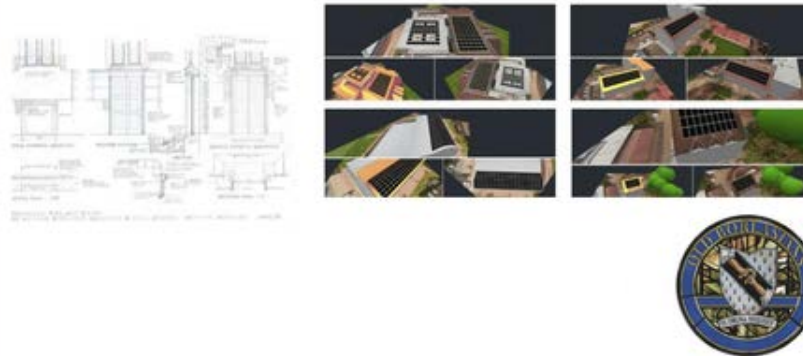
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- 2007 Old Borlasian Club Centenary Stained Glass
- 2006 Boat donated to the Boat Club by Steve Dance
- 1999 £1500 donated to purchase a freezer for the Home Economics Dept
- 1998 Tripartite Stained Glass window in the Chapel donated by Stuart Lever
- 1992 School Development Fund started by Stuart Lever
- 1990 Gift of a Lectern designed by Jack Dean
- 1985 £15, 000 Donation to the Boat Club by ETR Cook
- 1973 A Portrait of Mr Booth presented to the School by the OBC
- 1954 A Rowing Eight donated to the Boat Club and named "Baggy"
- 1948 A Silver Salver presented to Mr Booth marking his 21 years service
- 1940 Seascape painting donated by Garfield Weston, father of Gary Weston
- 1938 The Toovey Loving Cup presented to the OBs by TR Toovey MBE
- 1931 Books given to the new Library
- 1924 Donations for the Chapel panelling and pews

...and we have continued to assist with more recent School projects...

£36,000 needed for the Chapel improvements to make it fully functional again.

New Fundraising Campaigns:



£500 for each solar panel. Set to pay for itself more than 4 times over in its 25 year lifespan.

Funding projects:



...as well as trying to find ways to help with brand new projects.





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Mr Edward Riley FIC (1831-1914) and the Borlase Chapel

In 1901 Edward Riley and his half-sister, Miss Wilson Mitchell, made a donation for the building of a workshop complete with tools and a lathe on the School grounds. Being a Chemist and closely associated with analysing steel manufacturing processes in the 1860s, Mr Riley was clearly keen to get Borlase fully engaged in Chemistry at an early stage.

A long time resident of Marlow and Governor of Borlase, Riley was a benefactor not just to Borlase, but to the whole town. In October 1913 Riley offered to fund a chapel in the School grounds, to be built by W & T Sellman.



1984

The Chapel opened in the summer of 1914, but sadly Mr Riley died later in the year. In memory of him, his widow, Mrs Emma Riley, had the centre window built with an inscription laid on a brass tablet:-

“This window was given by Emma Riley in memory of her husband, Edward Riley FIC, for many years a Governor of Borlase School, who died on 12 September 1914”.

The Riley legacy lives on not just at Borlase but across the Oxford Road with a beautiful expanse of verdant green called Riley Park. Managed by the Riley Park Trust the link below provides more information on the park’s rich history:-

<https://rileyparktrust.co.uk/history/>



2024



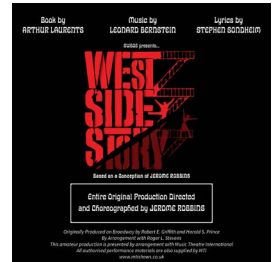


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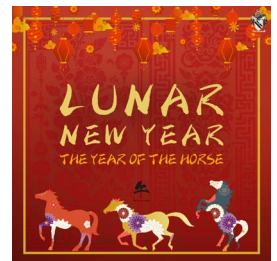
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Borlase Today

This year's Senior Musical, a series of jaw dropping performances of *West Side Story*, was met with much acclaim. Borlase has developed a strong reputation for artistic brilliance over the years and *West Side Story* was no exception, with a number of "sold out" evenings and rave reviews from all the parents and other guests.



The Borlase Canteen staff put on an impressive selection of Chinese cuisine to celebrate Chinese New Year back in February. A wide range of vegetarian and meat options of noodle and rice-based dishes as well as Fortune Cookie Muffins were welcomed by the pupils - trade was thought to be pretty brisk during Chinese New Year week!



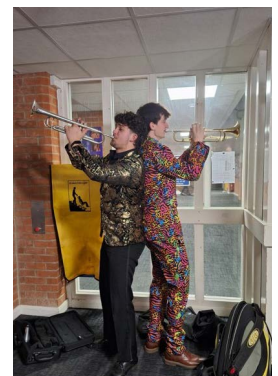
After a convincing victory against Royal Latin Grammar back in January the Borlase Rugby 1st XV met Lord William's School Thame in the County Cup Final in March. After 2 losses against Thame earlier in the season, Borlase raised their game for the final and won 33-31. An incredibly tight match that went to the last minute before a penalty kick just inside the halfway line from Captain, Alexis, sealed the Cup for Borlase.



Borlase Hockey continues to thrive with all 4 of the School's Year 7 and * A team Girls' and Boys' squads qualifying for regional finals. At the U14 South Central State School Championships, where we fielded an unprecedented 5 teams, Borlase's Y9 Girls A were crowned Champions while the Y9 Girls B team grabbed a fantastic 3rd place. The Y10 Girls squad are going to be exceptionally strong next year.



It is wonderful to hear that Jazz continues to feature prominently as a post curricular activity after former Art teacher, Rod Hamer, pioneered Jazz at Borlase in the 1980s. Many OBs from the 1980s will never forget Humphry Lyttelton's performance in the School Hall.



Matthew Wells & Harley Hillier





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Poetry Corner

THE ART GALLERY, 1963

Many masterpieces hanging on each wall
People creeping softly down the hall
Business men or women with tired feet
Making for the nearest vacant seat.
They tiptoe round obscuring other's view
Spying round for anything that's new
Renoirs, Monets and Pissaros
Leonardos and Ucellos
Every artist to Picasso.
The ignorant are there and those who know
Squinting through glasses with distasteful frown
Comparing subtle nuances of grey and brown.
Those who stand with raptured smile and stare
And those who walk straight through with head in air.
Dinner-time and everyone meets there.

D. Muir, UVI

SEASONS, 2018

The summer still hangs
heavy and sweet with sunlight
as it did last year.

The autumn still comes
showering us with gold and crimson
as it did last year.

The winter still stings
with a piercing icy bite
as it did last year.

The spring still arrives
like a whisper in the dark night
as it did last year.

The only one who has changed is me.

KS4 winner: Fin Anderson (Y11)

SPIDERS, 1973

Spiders I hate,
Spiders I despise
As they look at me
With their beady eyes.

There's one in my room:
How dare it do that!
For I'm utterly scared
And I'm calling the cat.

Oh! my big sister told me
Of a spider one day
That crept in to join her
In the bed where she lay.

She lifted it up
By one hairy leg
And speared it upon
A large brass coat-peg.

O Spider, O Spider!
Keep out of my house,
For you even frighten
My sister's pet mouse.

Get out, oh, get out
You horrible thing!
For I do not like you,
You Devil of Spring.

W. M. G. Halstead. 2B

Save the Date

Marlow Town Regatta & Festival 2026

(The OBC will have a pitch in the enclosure.

Please join us for a Summer drink!)

Saturday 13th June 2026

Old Borlasians XI v Borlase XI Cricket match

(Match starts at 13:00; 30 overs per side)

Friday 26th June 2026 at Marlow Sports Club



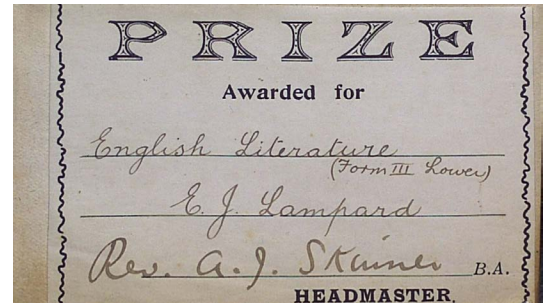
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Borlase Literary Prize

In the early 1900s there were a number of prizes and certificates awarded to pupils by form and by subject. During this period there was a particular form classification outlined as follows:-

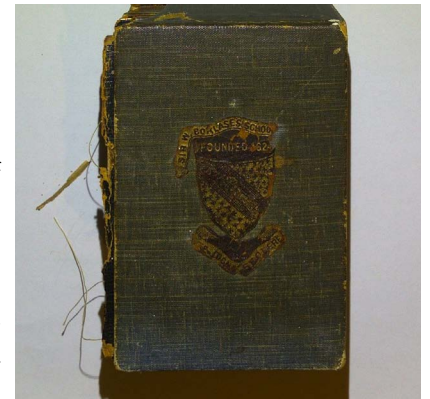
- VI Form
- V Form
- IV Form
- Upper III Form
- Lower III Form
- Shell



The Reverend AJ Skinner, who was Borlase's Headmaster from 1904-27, read out E. J Lampard's name at Speech Day in 1914 and an English Literature prize was presented to E. J Lampard by General Sir G.W Higginson, Chairman of the Governors.

The prize consisted of a pocket case of John Greenleaf Whittier's Poetical Works (Volumes 1-4).

John Greenleaf Whittier was a 19th century American poet from Massachusetts. He was a Quaker and strong advocate of the abolition of Slavery in the United States. Whittier became popular in English education during the late 19th and early 20th centuries primarily because he was enshrined as one of the "Schoolroom Poets" (or Fireside Poets), a group whose work was considered foundational for American students. His poetry was esteemed for its accessible style, moral clarity, and focus on familiar themes that aligned with pedagogical goals of the era. "In School Days" and "Snow-Bound" were 2 of his most famous poems and Whittier is honoured with numerous schools and Whittier College bearing his name in the United States.



We are extremely grateful to the Williams family (Kenneth Williams OB 1946-53 and Timothy Williams OB 1978-84) for donating this set of books to the Old Borlasian Club.

Marlow Town Regatta - Come and Join Us!



The OBC will have a pitch at the Marlow Town Regatta Festival on **Saturday 13th June**. All Old Borlasians are warmly invited to join us for a complimentary drink and snack, catch up with old contemporaries, share memories, and enjoy the rowing on the river. We hope to see you there!





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Obituary - Benedict Romain (OB 1999 - 2006)

As some old Borlasians will know, Benedict died in 2023 when he was in the Philippines and, despite being a strong swimmer, was caught in a rip tide and drowned. There was an added poignancy in that he was there with Stella on their honeymoon. To fill in the story: after Borlase, Ben had gone to Oxford Brookes for an Art Foundation Course and then did his BA in Art & Design at Cardiff University. He established a highly successful career as a sculptor, dovetailing between working on film-sets and doing private commissions for individuals or institutions. He also found time to race down to the sea when the wind and tide conditions were ideal for surfing, which he loved...and could be found skate-boarding when confined to land.

The family (which includes his three brothers who were also at SWB: Jamie, Matthew and Tim) have now decided to commemorate him by funding a lifeboat in his name ("Ben's Boat") via the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI). It will cost c. £110,000 but we are confident we can reach it as we have already received substantial donations that will make it possible. If you can add anything, whatever the amount, that would be much appreciated, but don't worry if you can't or are committed elsewhere.

The boat will be stationed in Flint, North Wales and we will let you know the final details and an invitation to the launch once it's arranged.

We are collecting through JustGiving, which is simple, fast and totally secure. It can also reclaim Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer, which makes your donation worth even more without costing you anything extra. Once you donate, they send your money directly to the RNLI specifically for Ben's boat.

You can have a look at the JustGiving page for more details by going to: www.justgiving.com/page/benboat

The photo shows Ben alongside his sculpture of a prayer book morphing into a dove outside Maidenhead Synagogue.



Where are they now?

Jamie, Matthew, Benedict and Tim Romain

Since leaving Borlase Jamie went into advertising and is now a Creative Art Director. He is married to Beth and they live in Oxfordshire with their two daughters. You have seen many of his advertising campaigns on billboards or television without realising they were his! Matthew has followed his long-held dream of becoming an actor and has had plenty of roles in the West End, at the Globe and also abroad, including in Hamlet on a world-wide tour marking the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and performing in every single country in the world (bar four war zones). Benedict had a successful career as a sculptor until his sad death in 2023 (see article elsewhere and details of the lifeboat for which we are fund-raising). Tim worked at the BBC for some time and then did a PGCE to retrain as a history teacher, which he now does in Bristol, where he lives with his wife and two children.





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Obituary - Nigel Rees Ashton (OB 1972-1978)

A Life of Dedication and Passion

YES Rees, he was Welsh and always made sure everyone was aware of it.

Nigel Rees Ashton was a remarkable individual who left an indelible mark on all those who knew him. Even during his brief illness, Nigel remained committed to his community, attending meetings and the final game of the season at Riverwoods.

Family Above All

Nigel's greatest pride was his family. He leaves behind his wife, Hilary, and three children—George, Harry, and Isabella. Nigel's affection for his family was evident, and he delighted in sharing stories about their lives, always with a twinkle in his eye.

Education and Sporting Achievements

Nigel attended Borlase School in the 1970s where he entered fully into the life of the school and excelled as a sportsman, participating in rugby and cricket. His sporting journey included playing for Marlow Park Cricket Club as an opening batsman and wicketkeeper, where he faced formidable bowlers and achieved brilliant stumpings. One of the funniest moments was when Nigel tried to put on a cricket helmet—which was not commonly worn until this century—when he faced a Pakistan B player late one evening. Suffice to say, it was never going to work and Nigel, as ever, strode to the crease helmetless whilst the team were crying with laughter. Nigel also contributed as a cricket coach.

Rugby: A Passion and Calling

Rugby was Nigel's passion and being Welsh at a time when Wales were good at rugby, anyone else who was within earshot when we used to watch the Six Nations down at the club were painfully made aware of this fact. Nigel knew everything about the latest front row laws, so every time there was a stoppage in

play, he would explain the nuances of front row play and why the game was stopped, while we feigned interest or got another drink.

He found his calling in the front row, representing various teams for Marlow and earning more than 300 caps in the 1st team. He travelled and played for Manly in Australia, although the exact team remains unknown. His technical expertise as a prop was well respected, as was his coaching with various youth teams, especially when his boys started to play.

Nigel was an old-fashioned front row, proud of being sent off, the black eyes, the broken fingers and always the first to buy his opponent a beer or two. He made friends in other clubs that endured.



Nigel Ashton playing for the Old Borlasians against Borlase 1st XI in 1983

Wit and Wanderlust

As an avid tourist, Nigel would regale with his dry wit and exploitations on the various tours attended. Tours to Europe and the USA(Texas) and Canada where himself and a certain J.C took themselves off on a mini ski tour ... sorry what goes on tour stays on tour.

Aswell as rugby tours, Nigel travelled the world ... rugby and cricket in South Africa and Australia; USA, China, Europe and the Middle East for work.





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Professional Life and Community Engagement

Nigel's character, personality and powers of persuasion built a highly successful career in sales, he explored entrepreneurial ventures and worked for several local authorities. His presence was felt not only on the field but also within his professional and community life.

Beyond his sporting and professional achievements, Nigel was renowned for his infectious humour and unwavering generosity. He brought laughter to every gathering, delighting friends with his entertaining anecdotes and insightful perspectives, whether debating rugby tactics or sharing tales from his travels. Nigel's kindness and camaraderie ensured that newcomers felt welcome and valued, and he had a remarkable ability to lift spirits.

Most recently, Nigel was the Chairman of Marlow Rugby Club—a position he held with great pride. He served with great dedication, commitment and positivity.

Legacy

His legacy lives on in the cherished memories of those who had the privilege to know him and in the enduring bonds he fostered within his community. As we remember Nigel, we celebrate not only his accomplishments but the warmth, wit and steadfast friendship that made him truly irreplaceable.

Our thoughts are with Hilary, George, Harry, and Isabella. Thank you, Nigel, for the memories and the joy you brought to those around you.



Nigel (back row, second from left) playing for the Old Borlasians in 2022





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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

OBC Badge:

OBC Members £5



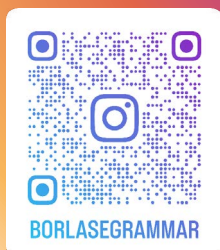
All proceeds go towards supporting Borlase. Please [email us to order](#). Please include the items you would like to order, the quantity and your address.

Please Note: Merch is for Old Borlasian Club members and if you are not currently a paying member, you can join for a small membership fee of £25 a year.

If you would like to join, please email us at obclub.membership@gmail.com.

Join Borlase Instagram!

[@borlasegrammar](https://www.instagram.com/borlasegrammar)



OLD BORLASIANS



**YOUR CLUB NEEDS
YOUR SUPPORT**

If you are not already a member, we would love you to join the Old Borlasian Club. Please email for the membership form.

We are also keen to receive any anecdotes or memories you have of your time at Borlase.

Please send them to obclub.membership@gmail.com

