

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

A year ago I welcomed and introduced you to our new headmaster, Paul Vicars. I am sure you will be keen to know how the year has been for him. (at item 9) This time I have another special introduction to welcome Carol Keegan who has been appointed Alumni Officer. She is part-time but already totally engrossed in this new role. Carol has met the Council last month and we are all confident that the relationship between school and OB Society will grow and prosper during the coming years.

A specific effort has been made this year to include the growing number of girls / ladies in the Society's events. This term we hope to see an increasing number at the Celebration Dinner this evening, the London Dinner on 17th November and the new pre Christmas lunch at the Athenaeum in Liverpool on 1st December.

There has been a strong emphasis this year to communicate and keep in touch with the more recent leavers. The prime mover has been Pippa McKeown who sadly has felt the need to stand down from Council at this AGM. Pippa has made an extremely positive contribution during her short time on Council not least of which has involved social media and tonight's dinner.

Many thanks Pippa.

The sporting calendar is an important element in the year and on this occasion the Grafton-Morrish success was very special and not for the first time. The Hoblyn Trophy at Royal Liverpool continues to be extremely popular whereas the Golf Day at Heswall, thoroughly enjoyed by so few is being reviewed to introduce a more exciting, competitive edge.

The rugby events at Birkenhead Park on Boxing Day and at the OB weekend have drawn plenty of spectators and provided a high standard of play. The Old Birkonian teams for hockey, netball and lacrosse should all be parading their new kit this weekend.

In our attempt to help the school economise in regard to the summer edition of the "In Focus" magazine, I enclosed an insert this year offering an option for 2018. This has brought about a sizeable flow of replies, some anxious to read their hard copy at breakfast time but others quite happy to receive a digital

version. A particular bonus was the many comments that were part of their replies –

“The elaborate and varied content” “the quality of the magazine”

“After 54 years since I left, the magazine still draws me in and makes me feel an integral part of the community” “Having been associated with several schools, I would place the OBS at the top of my list.” “From my previous experience, Archives were usually located in a cupboard next to the cleaning fluids.”

However, a number expressed disappointment concerning the change of date when they sent their apology, not least our 1st Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones who is in Scotland this weekend coping with the events surrounding the formal naming of the new aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales. I think he had planned to be with us last weekend? However, moving forward, I feel sure that Carol will be keeping a close eye on the Calendar from here on.

Archives continue to be the nerve centre of the Society and now that there is a more direct link with the School via the Alumni Officer, it is hoped that some of the weaknesses, especially in the database will be resolved soon.

As always I thank my Council Colleagues for their support and commitment and also the army of volunteers who help to keep the Society active in all departments, both social and sporting.

Finally, I would like to thank our retiring President for the close interest he has shown during his two years of office.

WRE 2017