



OLD BANCROFTIANS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**At 6.30pm on Monday 12th October 2020
Via Zoom**

NB: It was agreed that voting would be by show of hand on screen.

1. Apologies for absence

Robin Wolstenholme; Simon Marshall; Susan Day.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM held on 25th March 2019 and matters arising

Minutes were accepted, bar 2 errors:

- The spelling of David Giles's name on p1
- David Leighton was a trustee, not the President of the SFSF on p7.

3. Treasurer's report (Michael Watts). Accounts as on the 31st December 2019

Firstly, I must thank both David Riddle and Stewart Fairhead for their work on the independent examination, which is greatly appreciated.

I am pleased to present the accounts and I will leave it to the AGM for any specific questions to be raised. However, I can comment on the specific aspect of the accounts as follows:

- Website costs have increased this year due to an agreement the OBA had with the School to contribute towards the Bancroft's Connect system.
- Going forwards into 2021, the regular website costs will substantially reduce as a new website has been produced.
- The OBA has agreed since the year end to buy the stock of *Floreat* from the Foundation for the sum of £30,000. This is not included in these accounts since it was agreed post year end, however, given it is a material amount, a note is included to reflect that.
- Creditors and receipts in advance (balance sheet) have fallen, as there was an accrual included in the accounts in respect of a previous donation to the Foundation, which was paid during the year.

The accounts show a surplus for the year. The accounts for December 2020 will show an in-year deficit, due to the purchase of the books from the Foundation, but given the brought forward reserves, this will still leave the OBA in good financial health.

4. President's report (Steve Dodd, OB 72-78)

It has been an honour to serve as President for 2019-20 in what has turned out to be a very exceptional year. Nevertheless, I can certainly say it has been worthwhile, interesting and very enjoyable. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the OBA Officers and Committees and Susan Day for all their support during the last years.

One very interesting by-product of the Covid 19 situation is the extra ordinary growth of the OBA community online, largely thanks to the OBA Facebook group and the efforts of Gordon Brown and his group of helpers.

Although not without controversy, it certainly highlighted how much we need to do as an Association to appeal to our wider membership, and certainly be aware that Bancroft's was not a happy place for all and that is also something that the School is actively working on.

- Past Presidents' Dinner

For my first event as President, I attended the OBA Past Presidents' Dinner. It was great listening to the banter, memories of the past and looking forward to the future with a range of ages from John Hollis, President when I left the school in 1979, to the youngest, Amanda Campbell, President in 2015 when I was Chairman. The years seem to pass so quickly but I certainly hope that my year as President will not pass too quickly. Lastly I must thank Jeremy Bromfield, President in 1997, for organising the event and for arranging what was probably the largest single portion of selected cheeses ever served – it was enough for the table!

- 5 & 10 years on Reunion

It was a particularly well attended event, with I think one of the best turnouts in recent years. I think perhaps that my mention of a Cross Country event on OBs' Day was warmly received and I can say that I will take part. It was also good to see so many former teachers from that time, including previous Head, Mary Ireland and former Deputy Head, Marwan Mikdadi. It was a pleasure to meet so many young faces and I hope that in the coming years they will be OBs who take an active part in the OBA and Bancroft's Connect.

- Visitation Day

This was an excellent event, perhaps this was encapsulated in a song performed by the Prep Choir "I wish I knew" (how it would feel to be free). I had the honour to attend Visitation Day on Friday and to hear what a successful year was had by the both the Prep School and Senior School. The School is clearly in great health both academically, in music, in art, a whole range of extracurricular activities, events and sports, so I would like to say: Congratulations on a successful year.

- OBs' Day

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to the School for once again hosting OBs' Day and arranging such fantastic weather. It was great to see so many fellow Old Bancroftians, their guests and members of staff. It was a special day for me as it was 40 years since I left in 1979. We also ran the first OBs' Day Cross-Country event. There was a small line-up of 15 or so and I must say a big thank you to Chris Butler for organising it and to Bob Baker for starting it! To my knowledge, nobody stopped for a cigarette or a vape!!! Congratulations to the winner and it is with great pleasure that I can say that School won the House cup. It was even more memorable as I broke my ankle on the way (!) but apart from missing the presentation to the Netball team, it did not prevent me from enjoying the day.

We also saw John Lever MBE retiring as a MoS.

As in previous years, we welcomed back the Reunion Groups and my thanks go to those who made the effort to organise them:

Pete Richardson - 40 years on (from leaving) – I owe you a beer maybe next time we are at West Ham!

Marcus Grace – 50 years on

Merf Jones – 60 years on

Geoff Springett – 65 years on

I would also like to make a special mention of OBs who have travelled far to be here today:

40 years on: Edward Witt 1979-1986, from the USA (no set reunion in place for 40 years on starting from this year)

60 years on: Rick Lugg and Colin Isaacs, both from Canada

John Harris, from the USA

It was also especially wonderful to welcome the 70 + years on group; clearly Bancroft's was good for you!

Also present were:

Name1	Surname	start	leave
Fred	Emery	1944	1951
John	Hasselgren	1949	1956
John	Hollis	1943	1948
Roy	Holloway	1944	1950
Neville	Joseph	1948	1953
Elna	Joseph		
Geoffrey	Milesen	1941	1948
Geoffrey	Roberts	1946	1954
Michael	Ross	1949	1956
Dick	Shervington	1948	1953
Harry	Sternschuss	1942	1949
Leslie	Parsons	1933	1939

Leslie Parsons was the oldest at 97!

- OB Dinner

This was a very memorable event – a full house and a return to normal activity. Many thanks to my son Matt for being my guest speaker. I guess a father-son double act doesn't happen often. Thank you to the School, the Head and the catering staff for making it all possible.

- Northern Dinner

The Northern Dinner was an excellent event, comprising a small but select crowd. Many thanks to Graham Perch for organising the event.

Unfortunately that's pretty much where the year ended, although we had Committee Meetings by Zoom, as the work of the Association doesn't stop.

- Website

We are now pleased to announce that a new website will soon go live. We have been able to include elements from the old website like the WW1 pages and the WW2 pages will soon be added.

This is a new more modern format, ideal for tablets and phones and much less expensive to run and easier to edit. It will be a very useful tool for the future:

www.oldbancroftians.com

Thank you to all for a great year!

5. Chair's report (Amanda Campbell)

This is a strange report to write and deliver, as our AGM should have been held in late March and we are now in mid-October, hosting a Zoom AGM. For the past year we have been exploring how we can best meet the needs of our members, who are not only spread across the globe but also from a broad age range. Whilst some prefer the traditional dinners and meetings, we know that this is not how younger members may choose to engage with each other. What makes our alumni group special is that we do hold onto the firm friendships we established at School and meeting with our peers is still important. It is at Bancrofts' that we made many friends for life. Bancroft's Connect was launched as a joint venture with the School and we have had some success in getting members to use this platform to post items that are of interest to other OBs,

but this platform is really about so much more. It should be a place for Bancroftians of every generation to communicate and correspond, whether it be for career development, sharing news or finding lost year group members. Social media continues to grow. Particularly during lockdown, it became the main conduit for communication with each other. There were some frank and honest discussions held and I am grateful to Simon Marshall for his responses on behalf of the School.

We are an alumni group steeped in tradition, but this does not mean that we can't or won't embrace change. Indeed life for many has changed and we must adapt and change how we function as an Association with current thinking.

We are ready to embrace change and it is with our members that this can be driven forward. The OBA is not about sitting around a table with an agenda that does not change, but in order for us to be an Association that has something for everyone. This requires OBs to take an active part in achieving that goal.

Yes, there are a General and Executive Committees, but these are not closed shops. We want to hear from you and however small you think your contribution may be, it will be welcome.

It is difficult at present to arrange anything due to the current circumstances, but when life does get back to some sort of normality, it would be good for our alumni group to have events for all, where we can meet with each other.

The current Committee have not been idle during this period, a new website is being launched, Facebook has required more manpower to oversee the huge numbers of OBs who engaged in the platform during the past six months. We have purchased copies of *Floreat*, the School History written by Jeremy Bromfield, to give to all the Year 7 entrants as a way of welcoming them to the OBA family.

We will continue with established events such as OBs' Day, 5&10 year-on Reunion, City drinks and regional gatherings, as these are popular and well supported.

The OBA has a total membership of circa 6500 registered on the database. Obviously, as with most association groups, numbers registered is high but there is a much smaller representation of active members. We now actively manage one database directly through the OBA Office with approx. 4000 email addresses and updated records. Membership increases by approx. 120-140 each year. The membership is managed via the Foundation Office at school by Susan Day who supports the OBA in many ways.

I know that many Old Bancroftians work in the NHS and medical services and during lockdown will have worked beyond the call of duty. Thank you to all who have been working to save the lives of others in this pandemic.

I would like to record my thanks to Susan Day who manages our affairs on a day to day basis. Hers is a varied role and I am grateful for the time she puts in. To those on the Committee who volunteer their time so that we can all stay connected: it is greatly appreciated; and lastly to Steve Dodd our current President who has had a strange tenure but who has been the face for our association this year and will continue on during this time of change.

6. Elections:

NB: It was agreed to change the Presidential year to mirror the School year. The Presidential year will now run from September to August, from Leavers Day to OBs' Day.

- a) Steve Dodd was re-elected as President. Because of the pandemic, he will continue as President until 31/08/21, as most of the events did not take place this year.

- b) Amanda Campbell (Chair); Michael Watts (Treasurer) and Claude Lavender (Secretary) were re-elected.
- c) Merfyn Jones, Julian Blake, Jeremy Bromfield and Kevin Campbell, as Past Presidents, were re-elected as members of the General Committee, as well as Gemma Wicks. Others may follow if and when they show an interest.
- d) David Riddle and Steward Fairhead were re-elected as Independent Examiners

7. Reports from School and Foundation

- **School:**

Simon sent his apologies as he had not been able to produce a report, due to the extra-work occasioned by the pandemic.

- **Foundation:**

Chris Butler (MoS) left in January. The School is now looking for a new Foundation Director but this has been delayed by Covid and has now paused, so there has been no Foundation fund-raising since then. There is a fund-raising group in the meantime and they are looking for volunteers. Please contact Susan Day if you can help. As a result, there is only one new Foundation Scholar this year, but there are 12 currently at School.

8. Reports from Charities

a) The Educational Development Fund (Jeremy Bromfield and Kevin Campbell)

There has been *ad hoc* meetings, dealing with applicants to Covid-related grants since lockdown. So far, there have been 12 awards amounting to £20K.

Some School trips were cancelled, so there is more money available to balance the books, but the EDF may need to draw on reserves.

b) The Sixth Form Scholarship Fund (Martin Sumner)

The Fund has had to draw on its reserves, despite an influx of donations for which the Fund is very grateful.

In view of the level of fees, the Fund was only able to sponsor a single Scholar last September. There are one other in each of the L6 and U6 at the moment. The last Scholar went to Medical School, which is comforting in these days of pandemic demands.

There has been no progress on the merger yet. The School is taking legal advice and the Fund is waiting to hear from them.

We are looking for someone to be appointed as replacement trustee. Volunteers welcome.

9. Reports from clubs and societies

- **Golf Society (Adam Kodish)**

Our season started fairly normally, playing at Ipswich GC on 9 March and being able to eat a meal together afterwards.

Just after that, the pandemic restrictions worsened and we were only able to play a few evening fixtures over the Summer.

We managed to play our Autumn Meeting at Cromer over 3 days, 6 people attended which aligned well with the Covid-19 Rule of 6.

Lionel Smith is this year's Captain and Malcolm Fleet is Vice-Captain and will retain these roles in 2021.

We hope to be more active in 2021, most likely in the Summer months but depending on the restrictions in place at the time.

- **Football Club (Chris Hall)**

The Old Bancroftians' football team have started their new season in Division 5 North of the Arthurian League after a strange finish to last year's league with the last few games being hit by Covid.

We have a clear aim this year, which is to be promoted into division 4. The OBs have had a good start to the season with a 3-1 victory over Old Albanians in the season opener, with a fantastic couple of goals by Ryan Martin. The Old Bancroftians have had a good turn out so far including some returning OBs but we are always on the lookout for new OBs who would like to come and play for the club. If you are interested in playing, please contact Calum Meikle calum.meikle@hotmail.co.uk or Ricki Jacobs rickijacobs@icloud.com.

***There was no other business.
The meeting closed at 7:27pm***

Next AGM: Hopefully next March, hopefully not via Zoom!