

# OLD PERSEAN NEWS

Michaelmas Newsletter 2008



## A Message from The President



Since I last wrote we have been busy as usual. We nearly defeated the school in our annual cricket match. The sun shone for a change and it brought out the best in the team. In a high scoring match the school won in an exciting finish by one wicket in the fading light, with the Old Perseans scoring 190-8. We'll have them next year for sure! As a bonus this year, due to popular demand, we produced a 2nd X1 who won another close game against the school 3rds by 9 runs. Many thanks to those who organised these matches and to all those who turned out.

The dinner, as usual was most enjoyable. It was in the academic year 1997-8 that our new Head, Ed Elliott joined the school and it was fitting that our 10 year reunion group was there to welcome him to his first Old Persean dinner as Head. A further report and photos are included in this newsletter. My thanks go to Amanda and Liz in the office for arranging it all.

I'm delighted to announce that the golf tournament – The Stockbridge Cup – is being resurrected thanks to Ollie Plumridge and Andy Baker. They plan to return to Lakeside Lodge at Pidley, St Ives on Sat 4th April. There

is accommodation there which was popular last time for those that are coming from a distance. Please get your names in early to help the organisers sort out numbers. Ollie's e-mail address is [ollyplumridge@gmail.com](mailto:ollyplumridge@gmail.com) for all the details.

*Ashley Edgar*

### Future Events

**Thursday 6 December** – Lehman Brothers Varsity Match

**Tuesday 16 December** – 7.30pm Carol Service, St John's College Chapel (Please contact Amanda Augstein on 01223 403838 if you would like to attend)

**Saturday 4 April 2009** – Stockbridge Golf Tournament

**Wednesday 6 May 2009** – OP Open Day

**Saturday 27 June 2009** – OP Cricket Match. We intend to hold the 2009 OP cricket game on the afternoon of Speech Day. We hope that a number of current Perseans will stay on to watch the match and enjoy the post Speech Day refreshments.

# News

## OP Dinner

The Old Perseans Annual Dinner was, once again, held in the beautiful surroundings of Gonville and Caius College on Friday October 3rd. An excellent time was had by all as a group of nearly 80 Old Perseans joined together in the sumptuous Dining Hall at Caius College. A wide range of ages mingled, chatted and celebrated their 40th, 25th and 10th anniversaries of leaving The Perse School.



The evening proved to be great fun with pre-prandials in the magnificent reception rooms of The Lord Colyton Hall. Old Perseans were able to catch up with long lost friends and colleagues, meet current and former teachers and look at scrap books, photos and memorabilia of their time at The Perse.

Ashley Edgar, President of the Old Persean Society introduced the current alumni staff at The Perse and Ed Elliott gave a humorous and poignant account of his time at school, leaving everyone in excellent spirits and eager to stay on for after-dinner drinks in the college bar.



## Old Persean Telethon September 2008

Our thanks go out to all Old Perseans who contributed to our Access to Excellence telethon campaign. Over 500 Old Perseans were contacted by members of the Upper Sixth who had just left the school. The callers updated OPs on developments at The Perse School and enjoyed listening to accounts of what life used to be like here. Many amusing tales were shared and the recent leavers got a real and colourful feel for the school's history. As ever, Old Perseans were very generous in their support of the school's current bursary campaign and The Perse's desire to maintain its

direct grant traditions by providing means tested bursaries to pupils whose families could not otherwise afford our fees. Over £72,000 was pledged in the telethon and we are now only £300,000 short of our £3 million fundraising target.

## Where a Perse education takes you...

After Christmas we hope to publish a series of articles profiling Old Perseans who have used their Perse education to kick-start interesting and varied careers. We hope that the series will be an inspiration to current Perse pupils, as well as demonstrating to the wider community that The Perse School is a good preparation for life. If you would like to take part in the series please contact Amanda Augstein on 01223 403838 email [alumni@perse.co.uk](mailto:alumni@perse.co.uk).

## Old Persean Open Day 2009

This will take place on Wednesday 6th May and features a celebratory lunch, tours of the school, and the opportunity to become a pupil again and participate in classroom activities. Last year OPs enjoyed rifle shooting in The Range, Scout activities and a technology class. The Old Persean Society AGM will also take place on the Open Day. Please make a note of the date in your diary.

# Your Stories and News

## Warren Bennett (1999) & David Hathiramani (1999)

After leaving Perse, Warren took a gap year, where he undertook voluntary work teaching Maths in Uganda. He then graduated from Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, with a Distinction in his *Aeronautical Engineering* Master's Degree after which he studied an MBA course at the highly selective CDI in Paris, and worked in marketing strategy. At the CDI, Warren developed a passion for business, starting a small importation business with suppliers originating in India and



*Online Business of the Year – A Suit that Fits*

Nepal. He's travelled extensively – as well as Uganda, he's worked on Flight Theory in China and Web Design in Nepal.

David graduated from Imperial College London, in Computing. He then joined his brother in starting up APS, a recruitment company in Cambridge. The company grew from £500k turnover 2002 to £6m in 2005. David left to pursue his interest in systems and software, working in IT for leading recruitment company, Eden Brown, quickly graduating to becoming IT manager. In 2006, David met up with old school friend Warren and together they realised that, in combining their love of suits, passion for business, and complementary skills sets, they could reinvent the way that people think about ordering a suit.

In 2006, David and Warren founded A Suit That Fits.com, the world's first online hand-tailored suit-making company. With over forty billion possible style, fabric and colour combinations, A Suit That Fits.com offers the largest range of quality suits in the UK. Using unique web technology, the service gives customers the flexibility to design and completely customise their individually hand-tailored suit at an affordable 'off-the-peg' price, starting at £110. This is completely new to the tailoring industry and unique to A Suit That Fits.com – while suits are traditionally sold as packages, A Suit That Fits.com are the first tailoring firm to offer complete transparency on suit pricing, offering a basic model that can be built up and completely customized.

The suits are produced in Nepal, where the idea for the company originated while Warren was volunteering; he met a small family of tailors in Nepal, who made him a fine hand tailored wool suit. Warren and David started with no tailoring experience – simply a passion for suits, and a confidence that they could use their engineering and software backgrounds to simplify and improve tailoring for the

internet. They trialled the idea at Hampstead market, selling their first suit within twenty minutes of opening, and quickly realised it was a viable business idea. So, working through the night they created a simple website that was just about able to take payment. They then rented office space in the heart of London, using money loaned from a credit card. They have been self-funded since the start and now, two years later, have a team of sixteen, £1.4m turnover, and are thrilled to have recently been awarded the Small to Medium-sized Business of the Year, South-East, at the National Business Awards, and 'Online Business of the Year' and 'Entrepreneur of the Year' at the Startups awards.

Warren and David passionately believe in building long-term relationships through responsible business – achieving commercial success while respecting people, communities and the environment. Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries, and they firmly believe in contributing back into the Nepalese community. To this end, they pay more than 50% over the local rate for manufacture, ensuring both the quality demands of customers are met, and that the tailors they work with enjoy working with them. On top of wages, 5% of the cost of each suit is donated to the Nepalese school that introduced

Warren to the original tailoring family. The donations are committed to projects, the first of which is the creation of a science block in the school. Speaking on this subject, Warren says, "We believe that funding local projects like this will make a lasting difference to the Nepalese community, who we work so closely with."

#### **Colin McFarlane (1980)**

*Reproduced from an interview by Paul Kirkley, The Cambridge Evening News*

When the 18-year old Colin MacFarlane left The Perse School in Cambridge to pursue a career in acting, he promised his friends he would "wave to them from the TV screen one day". But the former Perse pupil's achievements have proved far bigger, as he can be seen looming more than 50 feet high in the summer blockbuster that shattered worldwide box office records.

"It's surreal, but I'm obviously very excited to be in a film that's part of cinematic history, says Colin of his role in the new Batman film The Dark Knight, which enjoyed the biggest opening weekend in movie history. Reprising the character of Gotham police commissioner Gillian B Loeb – first seen in Batman Begins in 2005, Colin plays a pivotal role in the dramatic



*Colin McFarlane*

events of Christopher Nolan's critically acclaimed action thriller. The film is the latest success in a 20-year career that has seen the 46-year old actor and director gradually conquering the worlds of theatre, television and radio, but it all could have been very different if Colin had pursued his original career choice as a lawyer.

"I still remember my headmaster at The Perse saying to me that I was going to study law," he recalls. "I said to him, 'Actually I think I'm going to do drama, because I'm only attracted to law so I can perform in a courtroom'. He said, 'But Colin, you're black!' And I said 'Am I, sir?'" Colin was one of three brothers sent to The Perse School by this father who worked for the RAF. "My dad decided he wanted us to have a good education, and the RAF would pay for two thirds of the school fees, so he sent us all to board at The Perse," he recalls. Arriving in 1973 at the age of 11, Colin spent seven "wonderful" years at the school. "Cambridge is my spiritual home," he says. "I love it. Whenever, I go back I go, 'Oh yes, this is home'. Although when I was 17 I remember wishing I lived somewhere a bit livelier!"

After leaving The Perse in 1980, Colin went on to study drama at Loughborough University – and has been acting almost constantly ever since. "Touch wood I have never been out of work," he says. "When I left university I worked for IBM for eight months, and remember saying I'll never work in an office again! I spent my first two and half years doing extra work. Then the first real part I got was for a film called The Dutch Girls. After that, I never looked back. I've been really lucky. I did about seven years of theatre, then I heard about voice-overs which has allowed me to look after my family."

Now dividing his time between Lincoln and London, where he shares homes with his wife Kate and 17-year old son, Joshua,

Colin says the success of the Batman films – and a spin-off US TV show, Gotham Cable News, in which he also appeared as Loeb – is now opening doors for him in Hollywood.

### Ed Francis (1998)



Ed Francis

After leaving The Perse in 1998, I volunteered in Uganda for an NGO called SPW on an environmental community development programme in the east of Uganda in the Mt. Elgon region. My time in Uganda influenced me to apply for a place at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London to continue my studies in line with what I was doing in Uganda. I graduated from SOAS with a 2:1 in Geography (with particular reference to Asia and Africa) having enjoyed my time at SOAS considerably, especially the courses in anthropology, development studies, cities, history and languages. Following graduation, I was employed by SPW to assist in the set up of a new Country Programme in Zambia which was to work with young people on sexual and reproductive health education, HIV and AIDS, and life skills dissemination. I worked my way up over 5 years in Zambia to become a Senior Manager (focusing on measuring the impact of our intervention). I then applied for (and got) a job with SPW in Sierra Leone to lead the organisation as Country Director. SPW Sierra Leone has a multi million dollar 5 year grant

from DFID to scale up our model of youth development (focusing here on HIV and AIDS, sexual reproductive health, life skills information, re-integrating youth into society following on from the devastating civil war as well as providing young people with options to better their livelihoods) to a National Programme over the coming 4 years working in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. Exciting stuff!

I have fond memories of the Perse, but that might just be me looking through the rose tinted glasses of time! Lots of memories about Mr Rowlinson – I hope I have the spelling of his name right, as he would've been the first to tell me my spelling was not too hot at the time! I remember the constant battle with 'unnecessary'; the Mummery – Ed Parcell and the comment 'don't tempt me Parcell'. I have fond memories of Latin lessons and can still remember Caecilius et al. Most importantly, I made some of my best friends there and I am still in touch with a fair few of them. Not bad after 10 years. I was disappointed I was unable to attend the Old Perseans dinner as it would have been good to catch up with many of the guys I've not seen for a long time.

### Richard Dent (1950)

Six of the 70-year old Old Perseans met recently in the Trout Inn near Oxford for a most enjoyable get-together and lunch. Some of us had not met since we left school or university over 50 years ago. But we managed, quite surprisingly, to recognise each other in spite of loss of hair and a few wrinkles around the eyes! In fact, we all looked and felt pretty fit.

Unfortunately, James White another contemporary of the 1950 vintage, could not be with us because of his Parkinson's problem but we very much hope to arrange another meeting in two years time near James' home in Harpenden. I will keep you posted! Those present in

the photograph from left to right were:- John Harris, Derek Taylor, Richard Dent, John Pope, Ben Moore and David Owen.



#### **Peter Manuel & David Forman (1950)**

Two close friends Peter Manuel and David Forman who first met at Perse School in 1946 and who left the School in 1950 had only their second reunion since leaving School. The 58 year Reunion took place in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, on 20th & 21st February 2008.

David, a retired Dentist and now keen travel photographer, passed through Brisbane on the second leg of a round the world trip. On the other hand Peter travelled only 100 miles east from his home in Toowoomba to the now fast developing City of Brisbane. Brisbane grows at the rate of 1500 people a week and is the fastest growing area in Australia.

After leaving School in 1950 both Peter and David attended Guy's Hospital London. David studied Dentistry and Peter Medicine, yet

for some strange reason, neither knew of the others' attendance at the same London Hospital.

Peter changed course to Economics and migrated to Australia in 1959, and this meant that the two friends lost contact with each other the day they left the Perse Boarding House. Recently, Peter, while contacting the school, learned that he was not alone in Australia and that Michael Collins, an old pal from Glebe Road, was living in Melbourne. Also, with the kind help of Jennie Wallis, Peter was able to be reunited with his old friend David.

Peter and David, through the new technology of computers, keep in touch weekly and have kept the wires hot sharing chat, pictures and jokes as well as the many other interests they have in common.

Peter wrote to the school recently – "I have now returned to the smaller provincial City of Toowoomba, which is about the same size as Cambridge and feel sad that so much distance separates me from my old mate David, but also at our age not knowing if we will ever meet again. We have planned a meeting, perhaps 2009/10 so hope our health remains reasonably good.

David and I would both like to send our best wishes to Keith Barry whom we hope is recovering from his recent health scare\*. Also, to my Upper Sixth Form partner, Rodney Dale, whom we relied on to accurately detect the difference

between male and female fruit flies. If the experiment was to test an inheritance theory based on sex then it was a disaster, because the plague of fruit flies resulting produced astronomic numbers of each sex, and we lost track of the number of generations involved. If nothing else, we learned the meaning of chaos!"

**\*Editor's Note:** *Keith has recovered well and plans to attend a lecture at school at the end of November.*

#### **Geoffrey Carnell (1945)**

After teaching in the English Department of Edinburgh University for 47 years – 34 years full-time, the rest as an honorary fellow, I have just retired. At the age of 81 this hardly seems premature. My last assignment has been helping with the supervision of a thesis on a 17th century commentary on the Book of Ruth. Ruth did not behave in a lady-like fashion, which caused anxiety in biblical scholars at the time. The subject is most entertaining.

I am not idle, being secretary of Edinburgh's Peace and Justice Centre; an ecumenical venture dedicated to supporting efforts of many kinds to foster a more just and sustainable world order than we have now. Our most tangible achievement has been attaining funding for projects in schools around Scotland to tackle bullying and other kinds of violence. There is a glossy report, *Overcoming Violence*, which I would be happy to send to anyone interested. Write to me at The Peace & Justice Centre, St John's Church, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2 4BJ.

#### **Jean-Yves Kanyamibwa (2005)**

Now in his 3rd year studying Medicine at St George's, London, Jean-Yves with Old Persean Alex Maxwell (2005), will return to his native Rwanda during December 2008 to look at ways St George's charity "Skip Kids" can help children in Rwanda. Jean-Yves is recorded in the Guinness Book of Records for dribbling a basketball and plans to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games for Rwanda. He is



*Peter Manuel & David Forman*

looking for support for the charity projects in Rwanda and we will report on his progress in future editions. For more information about SKIP projects see [www.skipkids.org.uk](http://www.skipkids.org.uk).

**Geoffrey Clee (1949)**

Some items in the recent summer newsletter stirred my memory. Regarding the Perse 5th Scouts photograph (page 5 Summer 08 Newsletter), the lad 11th from the right, one row from the back is Robin Kipping. He was a junior Wimbledon tennis player and his father was a well known Cambridge University professor of chemistry. Robin took the enclosed photo of me coaching John Polkinghorne in shot-putting for his 'all round athletics badge' on the Hills Road playing field, circa 1946/47. Sir John Polkinghorne was, of course Master of Queens College before retirement. I have not seen him or Robin Kipping since schooldays.

Whilst Phil Wilkin (page 5 Summer 08 Newsletter) and the scouts were at West Runton summer camp in August 1945, I was with the CCF army section at a camp in the grounds of Inveraray Castle on Loch Fyne. We had two weeks of brilliant sunshine which was very unusual for the Scottish Highlands in August. Abiding memories are of the swarms of midges and how cold the waters of Loch Fyne were, even in mid-summer. We



Clee and Polkinghorne

travelled there and back by train from Cambridge station and each journey took the best part of a day. Like the scouts, we had no inkling that the war with Japan was over until we returned and found preparations underway for the VJ (Victory over Japan) celebrations on Midsummer Common.

Regarding Sir Peter Hall; I think he underestimates his acting ability as he was a brilliant Hamlet in the Perse Players' production c.1947/48. The previous year we had both been in the Taming of the Shrew with Peter playing Petruccio. For inspiration we were taken by coach to a theatre to see the late Trevor Howard in the part. I followed Peter as head-boy in 1948/49 and our paths have not crossed since I went to the Rex Cinema a year or so later and found Peter installed as the manager complete with dinner jacket and black tie!

**Do You Recognise Yourself? The Perse 5th Scouts – 1945**

We were overwhelmed with letters and information regarding the 1945 Scout Troop photograph which was published in the Summer 2008 newsletter. Thank you to all who contributed information. There are still a few unnamed boys but this is a huge improvement – thank you. Please see updated names below:

**Back row:** ?, ?, Web, ?, ?, ?, ?, Chaplin, ?, ?, ?, Lovegrove, Dent, ?, ?, ?, Adey, ?, ?, Payne, Fowler, Stearn, Rose

**Fourth row:** Chaston, ?, ?, ?, Tervil, ?, ?, Saggars, Doggett, Kirkup, Harris, Cator, Pope, Kipping, Robinson, Sharman, Newnham, J, Rusted, Milne, ?, ?

**Third row:** Fine, ?, Watt, Elbourn, Marsh, Lamont, Bolton, ?, Everett, ?, Witherow, Mann, ?, ?, ?, White, Cornell, Murray, ?, Foster, ?, ?, ?, Marsh, ?, Tyack, Young, Mills

**Second row seated:** Marr, Harris, Mitchell, Anderson, Morris, Francis, Bishop, Foster, Davey, Hawkins – Headmaster, MacFarlane Grieve – Scout Master, Ramsbottom, ?, White, ?, Court, ?, Wilkin, Mason

**Front row:** Scupham, Coe, Burgess, Gadsby, Nathani, Lovelace, Macmillan, Lafrate, Kay, Collins, Brookes, Goodman, ?, Littlechild, Israel, ?, ?, ?, Milner, ?, ?



# Dipping into the School Archives...



*Pelican original newsletter header*

## 40 Years Ago

Extract from an article in the 1968 Pelican Magazine

*This has undoubtedly been our poorest rugby season for a very long time. With only 4 regular members of last year's side returning, it was obvious from the start we were in for a hard season. However, only in the match against Norwich were we completely outclassed. In the other games scores finished fairly close in the game.*

*MA George (Captain.) He started the season as a prop, but soon moved to side wing and quickly settled into this new role. He was our best loose forward and started many good moves.*

*STQ Williams (Vice Captain). The first half of the season he played on the right wing, where it was hoped his acceleration and speed would bring him many tries. He then moved to one of our problem positions of outside centre. Here he was able to take far more part in the game and improved greatly. As vice-captain he carried out his duties off the field efficiently.*



*1968 Rugby*

## 25 Years Ago

Excerpts from the Pelican Society Reports 1982-1983



*1983 Cricket days*

**Lethargy Society** *This famous school society has been restarted (had it ever stopped?) and is now under new mis-management. Our non-activities of the term included a fascinating discussion on the physical fitness gained or lost by stirring a cup of coffee with a tooth-pick. Unfortunately, the debate on 'The Place of the Slug in 20th Century Society' never happened as nobody turned up. However, our daily 'snooze-ins' in the hall at 8.55am have received unprecedented attendance and has given great encouragement to our decaying ranks. Next term we hope to open negotiations on annexing the School Council and we start our campaign for comfy chairs in the dining room and free sleeping pills for history lessons.*

**The Suicide Chess Report** *This term's idea for a walnut chess table with hand-worked marquetry and gold-leaf embellishment was abandoned, in favour of a pencil on Formica version. This didn't matter since nobody could tell the difference anyway.*

*The walkabout quiz was a failure because no-one would answer the questions in case they got them right.*

## 10 Years Ago

Extract from an article in the 1998 Pelican Magazine



*Alex Brain, Nick Elvidge & Tom Oates*

**Macbeth: The Story Backstage** *After two months of gruelling rehearsals, the production looked like any other: lines not learnt and tempers beginning to fray. Costumes donned and cod-pieces adjusted before acting for the first time under Mark Burrell's mesmerizing lighting, and accompanied by a soundtrack of sorts, we acted the first four performances in front of a two-thirds full lecture theatre. Despite this rather subdued crowd, we produced a solid performance with few mistakes. The second night saw a larger and more youthful audience who reacted better to the mishaps resulting from a slippery floor and Mr Potter's malleable metalwork. A word-perfect final performance saw a culmination of the good points from the three previous nights. Mr Green deserves the headmaster's Monday morning praise. Our personal memories will always be the antics of a cod, an ox, a time traveller and the mysterious wizard who made backstage life so much more enjoyable ...*



*Max Kennedy as drunken Porter*

## Degree News

OPs were awarded the following degrees:

**Nicholas Bassett** (2002)  
MBBS Medicine

**James Goddin** (2005)  
BSc Medical Sciences

**Janani Jayawardena** (2005)  
BSc Medical Sciences

**Daniel McNaughton** (2003)  
BSc Medical Sciences

**Benjamin Morrison** (2001)  
MBBS Medicine

## Announcements

Simon Akam (2003) has been awarded a US-UK **Fulbright Scholarship**, one of the most prestigious award programmes operating worldwide, to enable him to further his studies at Columbia, one of the top US universities.

Since its foundation in the aftermath of World War Two by leading US Senator J William Fulbright, approximately 15,000 students from the UK have been given the opportunity to study in the United States and nearly 27,000 US nationals have come to study in the UK on Fulbright exchanges. The Fulbright Programme works to promote peace and understanding through education exchange in the belief that this is an essential vehicle for mutual understanding between individuals, institutions and future leaders.

## Missing OPs

The last newsletter was returned from the following people: *(please could you advise the development office if you know their current address).*

**Alan Cheung** (1995)

**Richard Moore** (1956)

**Charles Luo** (2005)

**Kerry O'Connell** (1968)

**James Flett** (1983)

**Howard Mead** (2001)

**William Elbourn** (1961)

**Richard Brooks** (1952)

**William Bryant** (2005)

**Nicholas Sedgwick** (1962)

**David Wright** (1982)

**Charlie Styles** (2005)

**Victor Lesk** (1992)

**Jonathan Palmer** (1980)

**John Saunders** (1956)

**Edward Pennington** (1994)

**James Tarbit** (1998)

**Lucan McRitchie Pratt** (1985)

**Charles Osborne** (1995)

**James Yarrow** (1992)

**Adrian Dunlop** (1994)

**Benjamin Brooks** (1995)

## Deaths

**Alfred B Field**  
(25 September 2006)

**Barrie S Jay** (10 March 2007)

**Roynon Howes** (June 2007)

**John G Cannon** (13 June 2007)

**Brian Willett** (7 July 2007)

**Derrick Smith**  
(19 September 2008)

## Limited Edition School Print Now Available

Painted in watercolour by Alison Roberts, the Perse School framed print is available to order with a choice of frames: beech, dark-wood, mahogany or pine. The image shows a summer cricket match on the school fields. The print is approximately 12" by 15"

For more information or to order the Print, please call the Development Office 01223 403838 or email [development@perse.co.uk](mailto:development@perse.co.uk)



*Alison Roberts Print*

Deadline for copy for the Summer Newsletter is Friday 5th June 2009. Photographs, articles and comments are always welcome. Please contact Amanda Augstein at [alumni@perse.co.uk](mailto:alumni@perse.co.uk) telephone 01223 403838 or write to the OP Society, The Perse School, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 2QF