



Old Boys Newsletter No.19

The official Newsletter of the Old Boys Association, incorporating past pupils, parents & staff

Editor: Kirsty Schaffler · Tel: +27 21 761 8074 · Fax: +27 21 762 6120 · Email: schaffler@wpps.org.za

Assisted by: Pauline Pearce · Email: mpearce@lantic.co.za

TERM 3 2012

Past Staff



Matron Thelma Raath (1968-1983) joined the school at a stage when the boarding complement, with the completion of the new dormitory in the van der Riet block, was at its highest in the School's history. She had about 80 boys under her direct care, aged 6 to 13 and was on hand also to deal with any emergencies that might occur among the day boys. She was twenty five years old but calm and capable beyond her years.

Thelma's flatlet and sick bay adjoined the 'Anchorage' dormitory. Thelma remembers the busy weekends, first dealing with the cuts, grazes, bumps and the occasional broken bone resulting from sports matches, and then keeping the resident boys from further afield occupied for the rest of the weekend. Helped by the duty master, they would go on outings to the beach by train, tobogganing on the dunes at Hout Bay, to Kirstenbosch, Cecilia Forest or up the mountain, and sometimes camping in the Cederberg with Mr Rod Wade and family.

Wet winter afternoons were often spent at the Headmaster, Peter Daunceys' home, for high tea and carpet bowls.

Thelma's 'kingdom', in addition to her sick bay, included the new 'dorm', the old junior dormitory in the attic, and the seniors' accommodation both in the vacated dining room (now the library), and for a while the hardy souls out on the balcony – before its demolition.

Thelma was special, always ready with a comforting hug, and a story and goodnight kiss at bedtime. She adored 'her boys', and joined in all their activities with enthusiasm, including acting as Akela in the Cub Pack, and was kindly and empathetic towards her sick, injured or otherwise distressed charges. The first term of the year and the arrival of the new 'babies' was always a trial, and Matron had her hands full, day and night. One little chap spent his first week in tears, wandering around wailing 'Maaamie' – 'like a little lost hanslammetjie'.

A little farm boy cried whenever he was told to wear shoes – something he had never experienced. Thelma coped with it all, but confesses near panic when faced with the traumatic experience of having to give first aid treatment to a boy who had fallen under the mower cutting the field, and sustained horrific injuries, but again she coped - as always, magnificently.

Many Old Boy boarders have written to us about this special matron. She took a keen interest in 'her' boys when they left to go on to high school and kept in touch with them. Wetspups was very lucky to have such a caring person as part of the school family for 15 years. We appreciate the fact that she comes to all our past staff get-togethers, where the memories flow!



Matron Leah Harding (1930-1940), known to the boys as 'Squinty', was an Australian ex-military nurse who looked after the boarders. Although viewed

by some boys as rather formidable, most men who have written to us about her, remember her with respect and love. She inspected their fingernails, knees and teeth every morning at the end of breakfast to ensure that her charges were clean and presentable at least for the start of the day. She oversaw their diet and dished out sennapod tea at regular intervals and made them gargle once a week with a solution of permanganate of potash. Not the most pleasant of experiences! If she spotted a tie that was being sucked, she dipped the end of it in eucalyptus oil or bitter aloes and some men have said that whenever they smell eucalyptus, it takes them back to memories of Squinty. She really came into

her own when any of the boys were sick and cared for them like a mother, and as one old boy writes: "She took her job so seriously that she was reluctant to hand us over to our real mothers!" Leah Harding was a wonderful help to Christine Stansbury, wife of the founder, who was responsible for the running of the boarding house and domestic arrangements. Imagine Christine's distress when, suspecting something was wrong, she went into Matron's room one morning in 1940 to find that Matron Leah had died in the night. She was sadly missed by all of the school family and fondly remembered by many.

News from
St Andrew's

Marcel Bovijn (2003-2007) took part in the EP Duathlon Championships in Port Elizabeth in May. He was placed 4th U18 home and was selected to the Eastern Province Duathlon team to take part in the South African Championships in Worcester on 17 June.

We are extremely proud of **Gregory Slack (2000-2007)** who went to participate in the 2012 St Andrew's Ireland Model United Nations (SAIMUN) debating competition in Dun Laoghaire, Dublin.

News from **Around the world**

We were pleased to welcome **David Richardson (1954-1957)** who dropped in during a brief visit from Vancouver in August. David was Head Boy in 1957, and a keen and talented sportsman, having represented the school's first teams in rugby, cricket, boxing, athletics and swimming. Originally from Canada, he recalls his time at WPPS, where he arrived aged 10 as being a happy and formative period in his life, and he was interested to see and hear about the changes and developments at the school since he was here. Although David spent much of his professional career in this country, he has been back in Canada since 1980, CEO of the Christian Movement Africa Enterprise Canada and Director of AE International, and of course happy to be close to his two daughters and nine grandchildren. You can read more about David in Newsletter No. 15.

davenles@shaw.ca

On the 20 May 2012, **Warwick Beamish (1996-2002)** and his family celebrated his graduation as a newly-capped History Major. 36000 people attended on 'the lawn' - the hallowed heart of University of Virginia, which was established by Thomas Jefferson in 1819.



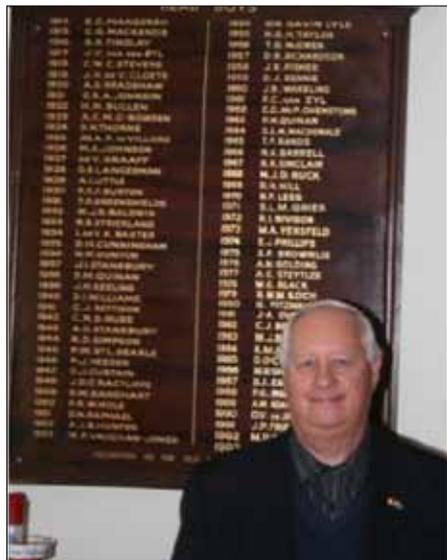
Anton Raubenheimer (1976-1982), in his role as MD of the management company, was prominent at the opening of the magnificently redeveloped Blue Route shopping mall in Tokai last April.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes (1953-1954) will continue his life of superhuman challenge and adventure next southern winter at the age of 69, when he returns to Antarctica, the coldest place on earth and at the coldest

time of year. He and Dr Mike Stroud, his companion on previous expeditions will attempt to cross the continent; 3200km, again on foot, in temperatures as low as -90c and in almost permanent darkness. Whereas on a previous summer crossing, they pulled 200kg sleds with all their food and equipment, the nature of this expedition demands more sophisticated back up. Two Caterpillar tractors will pull sledges containing everything necessary for survival in the lethal conditions, including their living quarters. As with his previous expeditions, medical research and care will benefit from sponsorships of the undertaking. Read more on Ranulph Fiennes - BBC news.

Judd Berg-Graul (2002) was advised to take time off from his 'tennis' scholarship at Cornell University in the USA, and to get involved with another sport for a while. Professional Football was his choice, and not only that, but to be a 'goalie' - a thankless position where one can be a hero, but more often a villain! He has been training with professional clubs both in South Africa and the UK, and has recently been offered trials at Everton and at West Bromwich. Good luck, Judd, and keep us in the picture. Judd's younger brother Charles is at Eton, where he has played in the U16 national 'Rugby Fives' competition. (For those of you who didn't go to St Andrews, that's not five-a-side Rugby, but the ball game played on a squash type court, using padded gloves instead of a racquet!)

It was good to catch up (via mum Vaunda) with the whereabouts of the Parsonage brothers. **Jonathan (1991-1995)**



News from SOUTH AFRICA

who is at Harvard on an Oppenheimer scholarship, **Ben (1992-1997)** who is a CA with PriceWaterhouse in New York and **Chris (1993-1999)** who is working in the property market in London. We would love to hear from you, especially with memories of your time at Wetpups and your lives now.

Our sincere sympathy to **Hugh Childers (1953-1959)** and his family, following the tragic death of his son, Paul.

Hugh lives in Brisbane and has shared the WPPS era of his memoirs with us. It is too long to quote in full, but here are a few snippets which might strike a chord with some of his contemporaries, and possibly be read with disbelief by younger OWs. Any of Hugh's friends, or others who would be interested to read the full account could contact him at childers_hugh@hotmail.com or childers.mana@uqconnect.net.

"Hugh's Sub A classroom was in the pavilion, which served not only its primary purpose, but also as a classroom, art room, carpentry workshop, store and boxing hall. He recalls the smell of canvas, sweaty sports gear, wood glue paint, wood shavings and mould; none of which will ever be experience in the sparkling new Centenary Pavilion.

Perhaps his most painful memory of WPPS is of the compulsory cold showers after cold, wet rugby in winter. Total misery! Classes were small - only six in his Form VI group - almost individual teaching, but the staff didn't have it easy, particularly the one-eyed Afrikaans teacher, the snappily dressed prissy Mr Lubasheur who had a very quick temper. **Rohan Vos (1952-1959)** and **Chris Breen (1954-1961)** were particularly adept at 'winding him up', usually by being discovered getting up to mischief on his 'blind side'.

The food was memorably appalling - always over-salted, sometimes over-spiced, and either under, but more usually over-cooked. Boiled caterpillars were a regular supplement to the boiled cabbage, and bits of the ancient wooden spoons were sometimes unearthed. Friday's large whole fish, skinny and boney, its eye challenging the reluctant diners to eat, was particularly disgusting. How things have changed!"

Hugh pays particular tribute to the two generations of the Stansbury family who ran the school with such commitment for half of its life to date. He acknowledges that the school did a great deal for him: 'I shall never forget my seven year life journey at Wetpups' (*Hardly surprising, with memories like these, Hugh! Thank you for them. Ed*)

David Grier (1968-1973), not too long after having completed a physically and emotionally exhausting run from the north to the south of India, has just returned from the UK, where, having got the OK from the 2012 Olympic Committee, he embarked on the 1350 km run from John O'Groats to Land's End - the full length of mainland Britain. He achieved this in 25 days, averaging over 50 km per day. Then over to Ireland, where he ran from the northernmost to the southernmost point in 7 days at an amazing average of 72 km per day. And as if that was not enough, he ran the entire 120 km length of Hadrian's Wall in one very long day - all for the benefit of his Miles for Smiles Foundation for children born with facial deformities - a remarkable man.

It was good to have a response from **Doug Murray (1979-1982)** to the photo of the 1981 Boarders in the last Newsletter: he is in the 4th row from the back, third from the right.

Amongst many memories, he mentions his initial awe on arrival at the school, at the beards among the staff (male that is!). He remembers the entrenched routine in the boarding house - the goodnight kisses from Matron in the junior dorm, and the bedtime stories - particularly Mr Ernie Hand's tales of his abduction to Planet X by aliens who had landed on the Mount Royal field. They could never catch him out by finding a flaw in the story, so believed him. Happy days indeed.

Doug now lives in Fleet, Hampshire and works locally, developing financial asset management software. His children, Nic (ex Wetpup) and Ash are at school locally, and his wife Ilona teaches in nearby Farnborough. Doug visited Cape Town briefly last Easter to run his eleventh 'Two Oceans', in weather that made him think he was still in England! doug.ilona@gmail.com

Arthur Williams (1979-1981) recognized himself in the front row, 3rd from the right. Arthur went to Bishops, Stellenbosch and National Service after Wetpups. Now married with two children, he lives in Monaco (poor guy!), where he has a small company trading in paper and board, supplying printing and packaging companies worldwide.

arthur@scwilliams.mc

(*Good to hear from you Arthur, and thanks to Nigel Gwynne-Evans (1982) for putting you in touch. You are now on our mailing list for future Newsletters, and you can see earlier ones on www.wpps.org.za. Go to Downloads and Old Boys' Newsletters Ed*)

We are pleased to be in contact with **Paul De Wet (1959-1960)** in Ashton, who remembers his early days at WPPS.

"I was a very unhappy boy in the boarding house when I got to Wetpups in 1959, hardly able to speak a word of English and also having to contend with all the 'volksvreemde' boys and masters. So I started to read, ensconcing myself in the wonderful library mainly with offerings from Enid Blyton. I read the whole damn lot in the end under inscrutable gaze of John Dering Nettleton V.C. The next year I won the Std 6 prize for spelling, to this day being able to get around without a spellcheck. Miss Saint-Hill, my English teacher, was like a saint and gave me a lot of encouragement to try and master the English language."

Paul continues to produce his well-known Shiraz, and to breed racehorses on his Zandvliet Estate.

If you find yourself hungry, thirsty and in Noordhoek, you can always pay a visit to **Dougie Boyes (1981-1987)** at The Toad in the Village, a watering hole and restaurant that he runs with Bob Skinstad and others. **Matthew Pearce (1977-1982)** says the ribs are to die for, and if they are sold out by the time you get there, you can stop off at The Toad on the Road, Dougie's other pub in Lakeside on the way home.

Another senior Vetpup, **David Morrell (1934-1940)** was taken seriously ill while on holiday with his wife Norma in Gauteng recently. Norma became ill too on their return to the Cape, requiring surgery, and they had to spend time in a convalescent home. We are happy to report that they are now back in their Hermanus home. David has been an invaluable source of information on the early days at Wetpups for the Centenary book. Our best wishes for a speedy and total recovery go to them.

CENTENARY PAVILION

Earlier this year WPPS unveiled its most recent gem of a project to friends, family and the public – the brand-new Centenary Pavilion. Located on the Mount Royal field, the new building is a central point for teachers, parents and Old Boys to meet for sports matches and other events. It will attest to lasting memories and life-long friendships made on the sports field, and will build on the school's strong family ethos and the close-knit community, that for many boys and parents lasts long after school days have been left behind.



EVENING OF THE ARTS

In September, the 14th Evening of the Arts was held. The standard seems to be better each year and the number of boys participating increases. This year, items included a scintillating percussion ensemble of 8, a junior wind band of 17, a senior wind band of 24, a string orchestra of 20 and an African marimba band of 8. (It must have been difficult for director of music, Philip Pringle, to choose only 8 as he has 10 African marimba bands in all!) In addition the classical guitar group, senior choir and chamber choir performed. A thought provoking short play and an energetic dance group from Grade 7 lent variety. In total there were over one hundred boys taking part. The Old Library was transformed by an outstanding display of art work from every grade. The cultural life of Wetspups is flourishing!

The week after Evening of the Arts, over 50 boys enjoyed a 4 day cultural tour to Gauteng where they entertained other schools and joined them in a final massed concert.



BREAKFAST CLUB

Dr Bool Smuts (1977-1979) who is the Director of the Landmark Foundation spoke at a Breakfast Club Meeting.

He detailed the findings of their work in trying to save leopards in particular and predators in general in the Western and Eastern Cape from extinction, due mainly to illegal trapping and extermination by farmers. The Foundation is determined to stop the slide of biodiversity loss across South Africa. It is a challenging mission which deserves the support of everyone who is concerned by the trend.

Bool is both a medical doctor and a conservation advocate.



Congratulations



James Thompson (1993–1997) was a member of the Men's Lightweight Fours rowing team that secured South Africa its third gold medal in the London Olympic Games. They produced a stunning final 500m to edge ahead in one of the closest finishes ever seen at the Games.

Chase Hyde (1993-2000) is currently studying his Masters in Mechanical Engineering and has been selected to row in The World University Championships in Kazan, Russia.

Justin Nel (2002-2010) has been selected for the U16A WP Hockey side and **Gareth Tate (2004-2010)** made the

B team. They competed in the nationals during the July holidays.

Nick Fenton-Wells (1993-1999) captained the WP Vodacom Cup team which won the competition this year. He was a member of the Stormers team earlier this season, and is now playing for Saracens in the UK.

Dillyn Leyds (2003-2005) was a member of the Springbok U20 team that won the IRB U20 World Cup competition at Newlands recently.

At the end of February, **Justin Fiske (1980-1986)** arrived in Basel. In his luggage he had

countless screws, cedar wood and endless lengths of cords. Using these materials and thousands of stones collected along the shores of the Rhine, he created complex installations with fascinating mechanics – suspended stones, pure poetry and beauty. The Filigree installations enter into a dialogue of the scenes with objects from the Museum's collections and the striking roof architecture about becoming, being and passing. Justin's exhibition 'Suspended' was on display at the Museum Der Kulturen Basel from 26 April – 15 July 2012.

Craig Stacey (1935-1941) celebrated his 85th birthday in August - our belated very best wishes, Craig.

Family News

Congratulations to **Guy Mandy (1986-1992)** who is engaged to Liesjie de Vries.

Justin Von Bonde (1998-2000) has chosen a wonderful woman, Frances Glyn-Owen to be his life partner. They will be getting married in February 2013.



MARRIAGES

Samuel Leith (1983-1989) married Lauren on 3 March in Auckland, New Zealand.

Anthony Fox (1983-1989) married Karly Porter on the 21 April.

BIRTHS

Samuel Leith (1983-1989) and Lauren, welcomed a son born on 9 June 2012 in Cape Town (his application is already in for Grade N 2017).

Congratulations to **Chris Haw (1994-1999)** and Dzvinika on the birth of beautiful little daughter Sophia in August.

WPPS staff families are growing at a rapid rate, with seven births this year! (What is the kitchen putting in the tea?!?)

OBITUARIES

John G.H Gasson (1942-1953) arrived at WPPS in 1942, having failed the entrance examination to Bishops Prep! Although 'second choice', his five years at WPPS were, by his own admission, happy. He and his brother Patrick were two of several boys who made the long train journey to and from Bulawayo twice a year. He was in the 1st XV, and also in the Boxing team. He matriculated from Bishops, went on to UCT to study law, and in 1953 was awarded the Rhodesian Rhodes Scholarship. He once wrote, *'I owe my Rhodes Scholarship to my time at WPPS, not necessarily in what it taught me academically, but in what its*

ethos enabled me to become'. He studied Law at Pembroke College where he graduated with a MA and Bachelor of Civil Law. He was called to the Bar at Grays Inn in 1957, but soon decided to return to Bulawayo to practise Law. In 1959 he was appointed an Advocate of the High Court of Southern Rhodesia. He was offered a teaching post at UCT, but in 1964 chose instead to return to London to take up an appointment in the Lord Chancellor's Department, where he was appointed head of the Policy and Legal Services Group. He was appointed Secretary of the Law Commission from 1982 to 1987, and was invested as a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (Civil Division) in 1990.

The above obituary was inadvertently omitted from our last edition.

Dr Oliver Lester Schreiner Scott (1926-1932) died on 25th May 2012 in London. Born in 1919 he attended WPPS from 1926-1932 and went on to Bishops. His brother Peter had also attended WPPS. He left S.A. in 1937 to study at Cambridge University and then to St. Thomas' Hospital London to complete his medical training. He joined the RAF in 1942 and served until 1946. He briefly returned Cape Town to work at Groote Schuur Hospital, before returning to the UK in 1948. He became one of the leading Dermatologists of his day in London and carried on working into his early 70s. He enjoyed an active retirement and over the years had enjoyed regular trips back to Cape Town to visit family and friends. He is survived by his two daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

It is sad to have to report the death in July of one of our senior old boys, **John Mellish (1937-1940)**. John served in the South African and Royal Navy late in WW2. He returned to Cape Town, and worked for a while for the Shell Company. Always a talented rugby player he was an active member of Villagers and in 1947 was selected for the WP Currie Cup side. John was well known in the Elgin/Grabouw area (one that boasts several old Wetpup farmers) having represented the Massey Ferguson agricultural machinery company there for over twenty years.

We record with sadness too the death of one of our eminent old boys, Rear Admiral

Peter Tomlinson (1935-1936), at the age of 89 years. Peter was in the rugby, swimming and boxing teams at WPPS, and went on to Bishops and UCT. He originally joined the South African Air Force as a sergeant early in WW2, serving in the Air Force's motor boat flotilla, and only joined the SA Naval Forces, as an Able Seaman in 1944. He was commissioned in 1945 and served for a while in HMS Swale, based in Mombasa. He was one of sixty naval officers who joined the Permanent Force in 1946, and later helped to transform the SA Navy into a modern and effective maritime force. He served as an officer in several SANF ships between 1947 and 1961, when he was appointed Senior Officer Commanding in the Minesweeping Squadron and later Executive Officer of SAS President Pretorius. Ashore he served as Acting Director of Personnel, and as South Africa's armed forces attaché in Argentina, as Chief of Naval Staff, and as acting Chief of the Navy. He was based at the Silvermine communications and operations centre from 1978-1982, with the rank of Flag Officer Commanding Naval Operations. WPPS extends its sincere condolences to his family.



We are very sorry to hear of the untimely death of Douglas De Jager last month. Although not an old boy himself, Dougie sent both his sons, **Douglas Jnr (1984-1990)** and **Adrian (1985-1991)** to WPPS. Dougie was a generous benefactor to the school, supporting a number of bursary boys and donating equipment to the sports department. He was an enthusiastic and popular member of the parent body and

will be sadly missed by many friends. Our sincere sympathy to Douglas, Adrian and all the family.

Brian Batchelor (1940-1945) went on to Wits after leaving Bishops, to study Mechanical Engineering, and thus to follow both his father and his grandfather in the profession. Brian joined his father and helped to grow the business into a highly successful one that represented several foreign companies in South Africa. Brian was an active and tireless member of Cape Town's Round Table no.9, particularly enjoying participation in their popular annual fund-raising 'Melodrama'. He put his mechanical talents to good use for Round Table too, driving and maintaining their charity 'Blue Train' at Moullie Point – so enjoyed by generations of children. WPPS extends its sympathy to his wife and to the extended Batchelor family.

It is with sadness that we record the death in March of **Michael Waterson (1936-1938)** aged 83. Michael studied law at Oxford and was admitted to the Bar in London. Back in South Africa a year later, he held positions of Judge's Clerk for two years, before joining Rand Mines. Down the years he became Chairman of several coal mining companies, but eventually he went back to legal practice and was admitted to the Johannesburg Bar, becoming involved largely in 'pro Deo' work. A member of the United Party, which his father had represented in Government pre 1948, he was one of the first members to break away in 1959 to form the Progressive Party.

It is always particularly sad to have to record the death of a boy who is remembered by boys still at the school. **Andrew Meddick (2002-2009)** tragically succumbed to viral meningitis earlier this year while in Grade 10 in Kidd House at Bishops. Andrew was always a fantastic role model for the younger boys. He immersed himself completely in the life of the school; he showed tremendous commitment and displayed a 'passion for excellence' in all that he did.

Our heartfelt thoughts and ongoing prayers go to his parents, his brother Dominic, his close family and his friends.



Forthcoming Attractions

Remembrance Day

You are warmly invited to attend the annual WPPS Remembrance Day Service, dedicated to our fallen heroes.

DATE:

Friday, 9 November 2012

TIME:

10.30

VENUE:

The Stansbury Hall, WPPS
Wreaths will be laid at the base of the flagpole in the Forecourt

HELP PLEASE!

We have found a lot of school group photographs dating from the early 1930s to 1960 which unfortunately have no names on them. Thanks to David Morrell's remarkable memory about 70% of the 1934 group have been identified. If anyone feels that he could help us identify those, or any other year group we would be very grateful. We could meet up with you and bring the photograph.

Please phone Pauline and Malcolm Pearce on 021 715 8666 or email mppearce@lantic.net.

Facebook

Please join us on Facebook. I have included the link below:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/OLD-WPPS-Western-Province-PrepSchoolAss/277292728963383>

THE CENTENARY BOOK

This is a final call to all Old Boys, particularly those from the 1980's onwards, for your memories of your time at the school. We NEED your input!

Where Are they now?



Form 2A 1985



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