

THE OLD CESTREFELDIANS' SOCIETY



*Non quo sed quomodo
1594 to 1991*

Ninety First Annual Dinner and Reunion

The 91st Annual Dinner and Reunion took place on May 6th 2022 at the Technique Stadium, home of Chesterfield F.C. The 80 attendees, including two former masters of the Old School, Peter Miles and Chris Cohen, spent a very enjoyable evening in the company of old friends and colleagues.

Derrick Priestley, OCS Secretary, was Master of Ceremonies for the event, this being the first organised by the new Reunion Committee. All were very sorry to hear of retiring President, David Allsop's indisposition which prevented his joining the Dinner and the other events of the day and wish him a speedy recovery.

During the meal, Derrick Priestley, on behalf of the retiring President, raised glasses with groups and individual members including, those starting at School in the various decades from the 30s through to the 80s, Past Presidents, former masters, oldest, youngest, most distant, etc., no-one was excluded. Official business followed the loyal toast and the toast, in silence, to those no longer able to meet.

The toast to the Old School and the Old Cestrefeldians' Society was proposed by Ian Christison, Treasurer of the Society. In his presentation he mentioned the creation of the House system by Headmaster, James Mansell, the change of School badge from interlocked CGS letters to the familiar crest initiated in 1953 by Bill Glister, recollections of the tarmacking of the top field at the same time, the 28 acres of sports ground at Storrs Road and Speech Days at Bradbury Hall.

Keith Seacroft then proposed that the new President of the Society should be John Drabble, Large House, 1960 entry. He justified this by reference to John's encouragement to him to attend the Reunions again after many years, his breadth of involvement in School activities, music, rugby, CCF and subsequent academic success in Physics leading to a career in IT and climbing the management pole within Blue Circle. John also created and maintains the Society website.

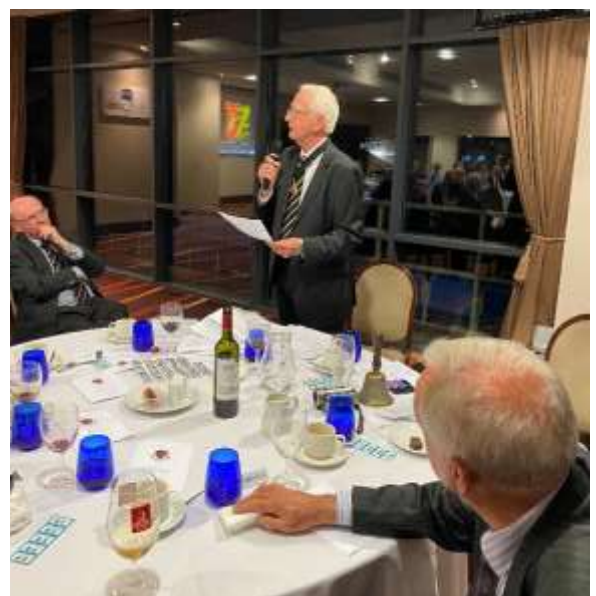
In accepting the proposal, first suggested in 2019 but delayed by Covid-19, John said how honoured he felt and wondered whether the surprise proposal had resulted from a request to promote the Society website at the 2019 Reunion, which he now felt duty bound to do. In the intervening three years though, various speeches had been composed and binned and themes developed.

The most significant theme was that of anniversaries. The centenary of the Society had been in 2020 but this was the first opportunity to celebrate it. There seemed some irony in the fact that the Society, formed as the country emerged from Spanish Flu, had not been able to celebrate its centenary because of the onset of Covid-19. Despite celebrating 100 years, gaps meant that there is some way to go before we have had 100 Presidents. John and many others present would also have celebrated their diamond anniversaries of joining in 2020.

2021 was the diamond anniversary of many others present and also 30 years since the school at Brookside became Brookfield Community School. It had been a privilege earlier to be involved, as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative, in the planting of an oak tree at Brookside and also one at Sheffield Road by the Vice-Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, remembering staff and pupils of the educational establishments on each site. Thanks are due to our own Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire, Brell Ewatt, for helping facilitate that.

2022 was best left for the Queen to enjoy the moment.

John thanked OCs who had helped provide material for the website and encouraged the provision of more articles on OCs who have done great things for adding to it. Also when clearing out attics etc. he asked that consideration be given to providing



relics found for the website or preservation. The value of the Facebook page was also mentioned and the material that had been obtained by that route.

Copies of masters' images taken from the 1967 School photograph had been left on tables. All but two of the staff were identified.



John paid tribute to a number of those staff and others for all they had done both academically and in developing interests in sport, music and drama.

He said that he hoped that in his period of office he could provide some service in preserving the memory of them and of the Old School.

John's installation as President was undertaken by Andrew Elliott, President in 2018, in place of David Allsop.

At this point, Frank Gorman, Chairman of the Old Cestrefeldians, Trust gave a brief summary of its activities and grants. Total expenditure on renovations, grants as prizes and the book and booklets now exceeded £20,000. More contributions would be welcome so that more grants could be given.

The formalities were completed by the competitive singing of the School Song, followed by more sedate singing of Jerusalem to a recording of the School Choir and Orchestra.

Who knew being installed could be so much fun?

Past President Andrew Elliott installs John Drabble prior to the Tree Planting Ceremony at Brookfield Community School witnessed by Past President Michael Hadfield.

Photo courtesy of John Ramsay.



*These three photos courtesy of
Mike Barker
and
Nigel Brackenbury (69ers).*