

Bangor Grammar School Old Boys' Association

The Grammarian

Magazine 2017



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Chairman's Message

Geoffrey Miller

Fellow Grammarians,

This is my third and final letter to you as Chairman of the Association and so, if I may be forgiven for taking a little time to reflect on my time in office, I am pleased to say it has coincided with significant advancements for the school we are proud to call our alma mater. You will see from the Principal's Report that whilst this year has been the most challenging in recent memory, with the tragic deaths of two fine pupils and a regarded staff member too, the reaction of the whole school family has shown it in the finest light. This was probably best exemplified by the wonderful fundraising night organised by Year 14 in memory of Peter Clarke. It was a truly inspirational event and one that evoked a real sense of community.

It is hard to believe, but nonetheless true, that the current Year 12 pupils (5th Form in old money!) have known no other school than that at the Gransha Road site. For those boys and the generations to follow, it will be the focus of their memories in the same way the Clifton Road and College Avenue sites in all their glory are for those of us from an earlier time. But in a very real sense there is a continuity that spans the years, whether sporting, academic or cultural, and there are ties that bind. This is reflected by the cover of this year's magazine, marking the 90th anniversary of the Debating Society – by far the oldest club within the school and without doubt its most consistently successful. It is fitting that in this celebratory year the senior team has once more won the Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition, establishing BGS as the premier school in the history of this event. Later in the autumn a special debate involving both current pupils and old boys will be held in the former Council Chamber at Bangor Town Hall (details of which will be published on the Grammarians website).

That website, together with the links to Facebook and LinkedIn, provide an effective means for Grammarians to keep in touch with each other and to find out about upcoming events and activities. Partly on the back of this development has been the revival of an Edinburgh Dinner, the first in quite a few years. This will take place on 27 October in the Scott Room at the Royal Scots Club. Further details appear later in the magazine; if you wish to attend please do sign up and ensure it becomes as much a fixture in the Grammarians calendar as those at Bangor and London.

One aim I have harboured during the past few years will finally reach fruition later this year. This is the Wall of Fame, which will celebrate the sporting legends who laid the foundations of their future triumphs while pupils at this school. The list is long and the sports diverse, but includes rugby, cricket, hockey, athletics, sailing, golf and soccer too! This project has been developed in association with the school and the Board of Governors. There will be an event in December to mark the unveiling of the first stage. It is



Retired Archivist Barry Greenaway (left) receives a Grammarians Plaque from outgoing Chairman Geoffrey Miller

hoped this can be extended in the coming months and years to encompass other past pupils who have distinguished themselves in the fields of culture, science, politics and the arts, with displays in those departments of the school most associated with their subsequent areas of achievement. Again, it would be my desire that these displays could be replicated on a virtual Wall of Fame on the website.

No consideration of individual achievement in the context of the school's history would be possible without an archive. BGS has been fortunate that over the past two decades Barry Greenaway has served as School Archivist. His dedication to the task of cataloguing and collecting material covering all aspects of school life has been unparalleled. We at the Grammarians are particularly grateful to him for his unfailing willingness to offer advice and assistance whenever it has been sought.

As you can see from the photograph attached to this letter, on behalf of the Committee I presented him with a Grammarians Plaque as a very small token of our appreciation. His will be a tough act to follow but we look forward to working with whoever that might be in the same cooperative spirit as we have with Barry.

I cannot end this letter without a note of thanks to all the members of the Committee who have served with me over the past three years. Many have distinguished themselves in the role of Chairman in the past, whilst others will hopefully do so in the future. Each gives of his time freely for the benefit of the Association and of the school we all share and which played a part in shaping the people we are. So in conclusion may I wish you happy reading of this year's magazine and exhort you, whether as alumni or Grammarian, to become involved in our activities and make your contribution to the future success of BGS.

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Dates for your Diary

Edinburgh Dinner

This previously popular dinner for past pupils who reside in the Edinburgh area will be revived on Friday 27 October, the venue being the Scott Room at the Royal Scots Club, Abercromby Place. Visit the Bangor Grammarians website or Facebook page, email dinners@grammarians.co.uk or tel. 0795 1843604 for further information

Bangor Dinner

Friday 10 November, Marine Court Hotel, with guest speaker Patrick Coghlin. Booking form included with this magazine, or email dinners@grammarians.co.uk for further information

Grammarians AGM

Monday 4 December (6.30pm), at the School

Boxing Day hockey matches

Tuesday 26 December, BGS pitches, Gransha Road

London Dinner

Provisional date is Friday 16 March 2018 (the night before England/ Ireland at Twickenham) at a new venue – details to be confirmed

For updates on these and other events, please visit www.grammarians.co.uk or the Bangor Grammarians Facebook page

** Ken Best's photograph on the front cover of this edition of The Grammarian includes the NI Schools Debating Competition Cup, secured once again in 2017, Debating Society minute books dating back to 1927, archive photographs, the (renamed) Maurice McCord Bell, the gavel and a brick from the Crosby Building, which boys touch for good luck before participating in debates.*

Grammarians Committee, 2017

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Content design: Carolyn Scott



Principal's Report

Elizabeth Huddleson

The three aims at Bangor Grammar School are Excellence, Community and Opportunity. Never more so than during this academic year have I seen, tangibly, what the word 'community' means within BGS. Since writing last year's article the School has experienced an academic year full of tragedy – with two pupils and one member of staff passing away in the past six months. Both boys had cancer and had battled it very bravely for a couple of years. Peter Clarke died on his 18th birthday in October, while Joshua Martin died at the end of February, having been on the cusp of completing his GCSEs.

Mrs Claire Greenaway died in November following a long illness. She had joined the staff in September 2011, teaching Geography, RE and Art, and prior to her illness had been appointed Assistant Special Educational Needs Coordinator. She gave willingly of her time both in and outside the classroom, where she was heavily involved in hockey coaching.

The school community and in particular the boys have been remarkable and I have been constantly reminded of the resilience and tenacity of our young people, given the number of times I have had to call the whole school together to break bad news. The past six months have been a timely reminder to all within our community of the gift of life and the importance of living each day to its fullest.

Positives

Thankfully there have been many positives which have helped to keep the school community upbeat and smiling.

Bangor Grammar School continues to be heavily oversubscribed for entry into Year 8. At the other end, academic performance continues to improve, with notable success in Drama, Technology and Design and Moving Image Arts. Morgan McCartney was placed second in NI GCSE – Technology and Design; another pupil, Jamie Parke, was placed third in GCSE Drama, while Zach Fitzgerald has his movie shortlisted for recognition at the Moving Image Arts Excellence Awards.

Further examples of excellence extend to our extra-curricular activities. As reported last year, we won the Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition in April 2016, defeating Abbey Grammar School, Newry. Having beaten RBAI in this year's semi-final, the final in April past between BGS and Belfast Royal Academy proved a thrilling experience with BGS being the overall victors.

For those of you who were keen debaters, the Debating Society at Bangor Grammar School is 90 years old in 2017. We are the most successful school in the history of the NI Schools Debating Competition, having made it to the final on 11 occasions – more often than any other school in Northern Ireland. For context, the second most successful school is RBAI, finalists on five occasions. Both BRA and BGS, until April 2017, had won the Schools Cup on four occasions. Given our most recent win we are now the



Lord Dunlop, (then) Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office, presents the NI Schools Debating Competition Cup to Archie Arran and Jack Steen

leading school in terms of success, having been finalists in five of the past seven years. No other school comes close to that record of success.

We have been a dominant force in NI Schools Debating over the past decade. All credit goes to this year's victors, Jack Steen and Archie Arran, but also to dedicated staff members Sam Wolfenden and Mark Dickson who tirelessly give of their time to host debates and prepare the pupils for competitions.

Sporting successes

We also continue to succeed on the sporting front. The Badminton Club has stayed true to form, winning the Ulster Senior Boys Cup. Amongst our pupil body we have the Irish No. 1 in Tennis (Harry Ellesmere) and the Ulster No. 1s in Table Tennis at U-21 (John Ewing), U-13 (James Skelton) and U-12 (Max Skelton).

In terms of Athletics, a Year 11 pupil, Jakob Swann, is the Irish No. 1 in minor 800m, while Year 12 pupil Aaron Sexton is the Irish No. 1 at 100m and 200m. In Hockey we have one pupil, Harry Dow, on the U-18 Ulster squad and Stephen Hamill is in the Ulster and Irish 16s. Jamie Lyall, one of our Year 9 boys, is in the Ulster U-13 Talent Development squad.

In Rugby we have pupils in the U-19 (Matthew Agnew), U-18 (Zach Kerr and Aaron Sexton) and U-17 (Ben McCrossan, Sam Murray, Adam Pritchard, Gareth Wells and Riley Westwood) Ulster Development squads, with one boy currently being tipped for a call-up to the Irish U-18 squad. Given the sizeable numbers now involved with development squads, we were approached by Ulster to become a member of the Ulster Rugby Schools Academy



The Danske Bank Schools' Bowl winners are led by captain Charlie Blair (centre, left)

– one of only five such schools in Northern Ireland. We are currently fourth equal across the province in terms of players in the academy structure (behind RBAI, CCB and Ballymena Academy).

BGS won the Danske Bank Schools' Bowl competition in March, following the 1st XV's unexpected defeat in the third round of the Schools' Cup. I have to say though it was timely given that the final against Regent was scheduled in the middle of the week that Josh Martin passed away. A minute's silence was held in advance of the match and at Regent's request both teams wore black arm bands. The resounding 41-3 victory gave BGS an opportunity to celebrate and I have to say it was such a relief to be able to bring the School together for a good reason and to see the pupils and staff enjoying the victory and receiving our first piece of silverware in Rugby for nearly 30 years.

For the first time in many years, sailing is back on the BGS map. During the current academic year two groups of boys have availed of a 10-week sailing programme organised through Ballyholme Yacht Club.

New approach

In terms of opportunities for staff, we now have two new teams operating in the School: the Quality Assurance Team (putting in place frameworks to measure quality and progress in relation to Learning and Teaching, Pastoral Care and Careers Education) and the Communications Team (streamlining how we communicate to make better use of social media to promote our successes).

Both teams involve teaching and non-teaching members of staff. It is a new approach within the School and it is already making a very positive impact in terms of the value of all staff, irrespective of job title. Staff wellbeing has been very much to the forefront of our school development plan, with a group of staff members engaging with the 'Couch to 5K' programme which culminated in a park run in June 2016. The aim this year is a six-mile fun run building up to maybe a half marathon. Given that I have to 'lead by example', I find this not only a positive way to keep fit, but it also allows me to engage with staff outside the formality of the working day. I should point out that I absolutely despise running and this is very much an example of me going the extra mile – quite literally – for my staff!



Students who enjoyed the trip to Salamanca in Spain are pictured with Mr Robinson and Mrs Henry



Enjoying the Politics visit to Washington are: Chris Connolly, Charlie Quinn, Coist Rowan, Jack Faulkner, Andrew McLarnon, Ethan Magee, Frazer Atkinson, Adam Parkinson, Tommy Hare and Bertie Parkinson

Overseas trips

Opportunities for the pupils continue to abound. There have been numerous trips in the past year – a German exchange to Lachendorf, a Spanish trip to Salamanca, the History trip to Poland and the Politics trip to Washington, the annual Ski trip to Austria, a Rugby tour to Dublin and a Hockey tour to Bath.

One of the key events in the past year was the invitation last July for our pupils to be part of the Somme Centenary Commemoration. A group of 25 boys from Year 10 and Year 14, led by Vice Principal Mr Gilmore, travelled to France to participate in the official service to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, in conjunction with the British Council. The photograph capturing the minute's silence, which was published the following morning on the front page of the Daily Telegraph, showed David Cameron (then Prime Minister) at the memorial service with BGS pupils.

Shared education

The latest initiative in which we have engaged is Shared Education. This has involved us in a formal working partnership with St Columbanus' College and Bangor Academy, resulting in many projects that are now up and running – for example, joint student council meetings and the appointment of pupil anti-bullying ambassadors, with all three schools working collectively towards achieving the Rights Respecting School Award.

At the top level the three Principals worked alongside nine Bangor Primary Principals and their respective leadership teams to offer and deliver a leadership conference in May,



Anti-Bullying ambassadors in the Shared Education partnership involving Bangor Grammar School, St Columbanus' College and Bangor Academy

thereby enriching the skills and capabilities of 70 senior leaders in the Bangor area. This is a very exciting element of Education to be a part of and one where the Bangor schools are taking the lead.

This has been another busy and productive year for the School. Hopefully these highlights have given you a flavour of life during the past year at Bangor Grammar School.

(Written in May 2017)

A new name emerges from the earliest days of Bangor Grammar School

Bangor Grammarians are deeply indebted to a New Zealand-based family historian who has identified one of the very first teachers at Bangor Endowed School (later Bangor Grammar School).

The information supplied by Peter Michel, who lives in Auckland, places Edmund Cephalus Cornes at the school around 1858, within two years of its opening and at a time when the headmaster was William Hanly Ball.

Mr Ball, who in later life was appointed Rector of St. John's Parish Church in Dromara, County Down, is now recognised as the earliest-known headmaster of the school. Yet until two years ago, when the Grammarian magazine first reported his connection to the school (not to mention his blood ties to the family of first American President George Washington), his name was nowhere to be found in the historical records of Bangor Grammar School.

Now, with Peter Michel's newly-discovered information, we possess a much greater knowledge of the school's very earliest days. Regrettably, however, no images exist of either man, but in light of the major developments in only two years, that situation may very well change in the coming days and months.

Peter has been writing a book about the three sons of a Cornes family, who emigrated to New Zealand in the middle of the 19th Century. They were the sons of a Major John Cornes and his wife Margaret (née Graham), daughter of Henry Graham, who Peter believes was in the 27th (Inniskilling) Regiment of Foot, an Irish infantry regiment of the British Army.

Margaret was born in Bangor around 1810 and died there at her home at 26 Ballymagee Street (now High Street) on 4 September 1894. "In researching all this," he explained, "I came across your website and was, of course, interested to read Mr Trevor Gray's history of the school, which included no mention of Edmund Cornes."

He explained how Edmund, who had trained as a teacher in England, was living with his mother at Ballymagee Street in the late 1850s, while Major Cornes was away on military duties. At the time the Endowed School was located at nearby Front Street (later renamed Main Street).

By the time of the next United Kingdom Census, in April 1861, Edmund was back in England working for the War Office. He married in Bath in 1863 and emigrated with his wife to New Zealand in 1870, subsequently teaching at various schools.

In October 1874 he placed the accompanying advertisement in a local Thames (NZ) newspaper. Thames was the centre of gold mining at the time and Edmund had followed his brothers who were both gold mining prospectors.

Incidentally, Edmund was given his rather unusual forename from the fact he was born at Cephalonia in the Ionian Islands, in the late 1830s, while his parents were living on a military base there.

A PRIVATE SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS
WILL (D.V.) be OPENED on the 1st of November next, under my supervision. Mrs CORNES will attend the younger children, and give instruction in Plain and Fancy Needlework.
Terms—£1 1s per quarter (from 1st November to Christmas 10s 6d). Latin, Mathematics, and Science, 10s 6d per quarter extra.
Address—EDMUND C. CORNES, Hape Creek Road, Shortland, late of H.M. War Office, London, Teacher of Classical and Mathematical (Endowed) School, Bangor, Ireland, and Pakuranga, Eureka, Shellback, and Kauwaeranga Schools, Province of Auckland, N.Z.
N.B. References to parents of former pupils, by whose request I am influenced in opening this School.

A black and white photograph of a person climbing a mountain peak. The person is silhouetted against a bright sky with a low sun, creating a strong backlight effect. They are wearing a hat and a backpack. The mountain landscape is visible in the background with some clouds.

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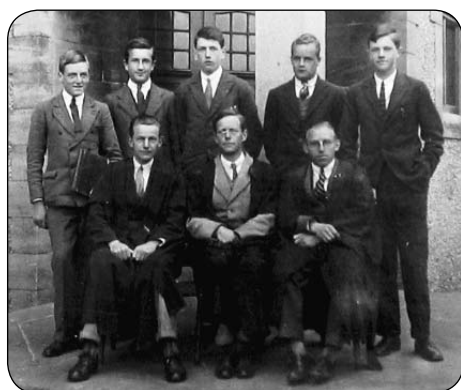


Bangor Grammar Debating Society – 90 Years and still going strong

Sam Wolfenden

I recall clearly the moment I first encountered the old minute books of the Bangor Grammar School Debating Society. I was relatively new to teaching and an even more recent arrival to debating. A battered bell arrived in my classroom (the gavel, it seems, had disappeared long before) and then, a few days later, a pile of old leather-bound books. I was intrigued. Choosing one at random, I flicked it open to reveal page after page of neat cursive script. The paper had yellowed with age and the binding was so fragile that I feared the book would come apart in my hands, but the words that leapt off the page were still fresh and vivid. The story they told was remarkable.

The minutes record that the first Bangor Grammar School debate was held on Saturday 5 February 1927, in G Room of the Crosby Building, beginning at 7.20pm. Mr A. L. Hawtin, the Society's founding president, took the chair and, from the tally of votes, it would appear a crowd of 34 boys had gathered. The motion was 'that in the opinion of this House, Wireless is a blessing to Mankind'. The boys had little experience in debating. We are told the first speaker referred to the use of wireless radios in hospitals and the home, but that 'there was then a long silence'. Mr Hawtin was clearly moved by the speaker's plight: the minutes record that 'he asked some questions of the proposer to which he received some quite irrelevant answers.' The debate, however, continued and the motion was carried by 10 votes.



One of the earliest photographs of the Debating Society committee, dating from 1928/29. Back (from left): J. G Pyper (Hon. Secretary), J. L. E. Millen, G. F. H. Wynne, A. C. Fox, C. H. Godden (Hon. Treasurer). Front: A. L. Hawtin (President), M. Wilkins (Headmaster) and R. E. Russell (Vice-President)

The standard of debating may have been dubious, but every school debate since has shared certain characteristics with the first. For a start, it is impossible not to be struck by the boys' sense of humour. It seems that at almost every meeting, motions of censure were brought against the officers of the Society. These often involved some tongue-

in-cheek criticism of the Honorary Secretary for his failure to post adequate notice of the debate.

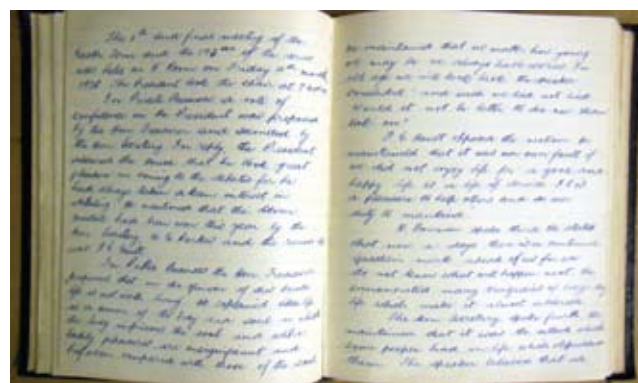
The early minutes also record frequent demands for the Honorary Treasurer to provide a financial report. As the Society's funds seemed to consist only of a single halfpenny donated by early Debating Society stalwart J. G. Pyper, providing such a report was never especially onerous. It is interesting to note that at a special Ten Year Anniversary Debate, the same J. G. Pyper, now an Old Boy, 'inquired if the Hon. Treas. had any knowledge of the halfpenny... The Hon. Treas. replied that some former Treasurer had made suitable use of it.'

The wit and humour of Grammarians has been remarkably consistent over the years. By way of example, I provide an extended quote from the minutes of a debate held on 11 November 1988. By this time, Mr Hawtin had been replaced by the redoubtable Maurice McCord, who succeeded him as President in 1966. The minutes begin as follows:

'It was 3.39, Friday afternoon and there were 55 members packed into Room 148: either the President had lost his wallet or it was time for another weekly session of the School Debating Society. (For those interested, the wallet made one of its rare public appearances when it swerved to avoid the on-coming price of a round later that evening.)'

The humour was perhaps a little more irreverent with the passage of 60 years, but not by much.

The BGS Debating Society has always, however, been about a great deal more than humour. Over the decades, the minutes record debates about the legacy of one World War and the onset of another, about the rise of Communism and its fall. As Northern Ireland entered its 30-year nightmare in 1968, the debates also began to touch on themes much closer to home. It is impossible in the space of a short article to provide detail on all of these, but I would like to refer to one remarkable debate, held in March 1938. It was the last



Minutes from March 1938, reflecting the boys' views on the subject 'Life is not worth living'



The Debating Society committee in 1937/38, featuring a number of the names mentioned in this article. Back (from left): H. Bowman, W. F. E. Gault, M. Wilkins (Headmaster), H. D. Evans. Front: G. C. Fidler, A. L. Hawtin (President) and W. E. Parkes (Hon. Secretary)

of the term, a term in which the boys of BGS had debated everything from the 'growth of jazz', to the League of Nations, via the Partition of Ireland. Now they turned their attention to the future. The motion, unusually sombre for an end-of-term debate, was that 'Life is not worth living.' Speaking that night were four boys whose names appear frequently in the minutes of debates held in the late 1930s: F. E. Gault, G. Fidler, H. Bowman and W. E. Parkes. They didn't know it, but on the night they spoke, German troops were already pouring across the Austrian frontier, moving the world a step closer to war.

All four boys spoke with eloquence that evening, and I still read their words to my classes every year on Armistice Day. Fidler spoke for the motion: "In old age," he argued, "we will look back and wish we had not lived." Bowman agreed, speaking of a "continual question mark ahead of us." "We do not know," he contended, in words that were to prove painfully poignant, "what will happen next." They were challenged, however, by Frank Gault. He argued

forcefully that "a good and happy life was a life of service. It is a pleasure to help others and do our duty to mankind." Frank Gault died three years later, serving his country in the Royal Air Force.

The Bangor Grammar School Debating Society continues to thrive. Today, we are the largest and most successful School Debating Society in Northern Ireland. We have won the Schools Cup on more occasions than any other school, successfully defending it in 2017 to ensure we held it in our 90th Anniversary year (a picture appears in the Principal's Report). Boys continue to meet on Friday afternoons, now in Room U7, to argue, pontificate and debate. I am confident that Mr Hawtin, along with his successors, Maurice McCord, Rodney Jones and Philip Moore, not to mention their students, would not only approve but feel very much at home.



Winners of the Belfast and Northern Ireland Junior Chamber of Commerce Debating Competition in 1977/78 with (back) Dr R. Rodgers (Headmaster) and Mr M. McCord (President). Front: C. Woodrow, D. Rhodes, I. McDonald and G. Miller.



Members of the Debating Society in recent years with Headmaster Stephen Connolly and President Sam Wolfenden



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School play role gave me a belief I could perform in front of a bigger audience

Gary Gillespie



Can one brief incident in one individual class change the course of one person's life? That's a question I have been contemplating recently and the answer seems to be, "Yes."

First of all, let me point out that I know I am far from a typical BGS past pupil. Undistinguished in the classroom and on the sporting field, I drifted through my school career with the belief that the hours between 9am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday, were simply there to delay real life and, more importantly, fun.

I regarded homework as something of an optional extra. Games periods were spent in the hilarious company of the 4th XV. Even among the fourths I stood out as someone who loved the game but who had no natural talent whatsoever. During one match for Dufferin House I believe I set a new school record for the most number of positions played in one game, as those in charge tried to find somewhere I would do least damage.

It has been said that if you remember the Sixties then you weren't really there. Well, I remember exactly where I was throughout the Sixties. I was at the Grammar with a cast of memorable characters like Paddy, Lel, Dumble, Sea Rat and Frug. I cheered the boys in my year as they swept to success in the Medallion Shield and then again as they matured into the first side to bring the Schools' Cup to Bangor. It was easy to spot someone special at the heart of the team and, when the inevitable happened and Dick Milliken became an Irish international and British Lion, I was proud to tell anyone who would listen that "I went to school with him you know".

However, as others were achieving great sporting success or preparing to achieve outstanding examination results, I was still drifting along with no idea where the current would take me. I enjoyed two subjects more than any others, English Language and English Literature. Jack Murphy and Michael Foley fired my enthusiasm – particularly for Pinter. But it was George Heuston who found the switch to light up my interest. He had a great line in sarcasm: when I told him I was giving up cross-country running in favour of golf, he barely lifted his head as he announced that Arnold Palmer would be trembling in his shoes.



George Heuston
'found the switch
to light up my
interest'

However, he knew English and he knew me. One morning he announced that our homework was to learn the great "once more unto the breach" speech from Henry V. He turned a deadly stare on me as he said it and I knew there was no doubt who among us would be tested in a couple of days time. There was nothing for it but to learn the thing. Then something strange happened. As I began to go over and over that amazing rallying cry I suddenly got it – I understood not just the meaning but also the flow and the sheer power of the speech. It was a joy to learn.

And when George nominated me to be the first to recite, I stood with the certainty of someone who knew what he was doing and let rip. It was with an air of surprise on his part and disappointment on mine that he stopped me a little before the end. He muttered something along the lines of "good to see you can do the occasional homework on time" and that was that. But after class someone, I wish I could remember who, told me it had been quite good and I should audition for the school play. This was something that had never occurred to me in my previous six or seven years in the school. I did audition and within a few days found myself not as a spear carrier but as the lead – Antonio – in *The Merchant of Venice*. I loved it and within a short time I had also become a founder member of a new local amateur drama group.



Members of the Dramatic Society in 1968/69 with Headmaster Randall Clarke and inspirational English teacher Michael Foley. Back (from left): D. McQuillan, D. Gray, P. Hindley, M. Stevens. Middle: G. Hall, K. Sterrett, P. McKinney, S. Russell, R. Hall, K. Smith, T. McCaughan, N. Gray. Front: J. Lewis, A. Woodburn, W. J. Martin, G. Gillespie, C. Frazer, I. McConaghie, P. McDowell and R. Sweeney.



Gary Gillespie's final broadcast on UTV

Fifty years on and I am still performing with them. But more importantly, that school play gave me a belief that I could perform in front of a bigger audience, and George Heuston's English classes gave me a vocabulary and knowledge of grammar which put me on a path towards newspaper and radio journalism and eventually a 31-year career in local television. Those days have ended but I am still acting, not just on the amateur stage but also in small TV roles from PG Wodehouse to Game of Thrones and even a couple of movies. And it all stemmed from that one incident in one English class. Thanks George.

Footnote: Gary Gillespie can still sing the school song and recite the complete "once more unto the breach" speech.



FROM THE ARCHIVES – The School's Under-14 rugby team in 1945-46, with headmaster Mr Maurice Wilkins (right) and teacher Mr R. E. Wood. Back (from left): W. Thompson, D. L. S. Martin, R. H. McGimpsey, D. S. Dunlop, J. J. Briggs, T. H. Jacob, C. K. Carter. Second row: A. M. Cinnamon, T. Archer, J. C. Lytle, B. J. Mairs, T. E. A. Thompson, D. Cairns, J. S. Russell. Front: R. J. A. Simms and E. K. Devenney.



FROM THE ARCHIVES – Members of the School's 1st XI cricket team in 1952, with headmaster Mr W. J. Ricketts (centre) and teachers Mr J. C. McKeown (left) and Mr W. T. W. Johnson. Back (from left): J. T. Blundell, J. K. Hearst, J. M. Cumming, R. Thompson, W. Jackson. Second row: R. F. Thompson, F. M. Fitzsimons, R. S. Beckett, R. Loughhead, K. McClements. Front: R. R. Anderson and W. N. Clements.

New book recalls father and uncle who served in two World Wars

Past pupil Alastair Walker (1955-62) is the author of a recently published book, *Two Men Two Wars*, which tells the stories of two men, his father, Alec Walker, and his uncle, Norman Hanna.

Alec fought in a Scottish regiment in World War I and was wounded, overcome with gas and captured in April 1918. Following repatriation he came to live in Bangor and during World War 2 became Home Guard Sergeant in charge of an AA battery at Ballymacormick Point.

After leaving Bangor Grammar School (which he had attended from 1934), Norman Hanna emigrated to join his brother in Canada, surviving the sinking of the *Athenia* on 3 September 1939 on the way.

He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and was posted to Castle Archdale in Fermanagh, flying Sunderland flying boats from Lough Erne to attack U-boats in the Atlantic. Unfortunately he was lost when his plane disappeared in December 1943 en route to Gibraltar.

The book was written primarily to pass the story on to future generations of the family and only a small number have been printed. A few are available for anyone interested in purchasing one and £2 of the price (£7) will go to the Royal British Legion.

Alastair entered BGS in 1955, his brother Colin having been Head Boy the previous year. His career was in education, beginning as a Chemistry teacher and finishing in 2004 as Head of Education Services with CCEA.

A lifelong interest in ships and the sea resulted in a book, *Four Thousand Lives Lost* (History Press 2012), on the inquiries chaired by Lord Mersey into the sinking of four liners from 1912-15. He lives in Bangor and he and his wife have a daughter and a son.

• Bangor Grammarians will forward any enquiries about *Two Men Two Wars* to Alastair. Write to editor@grammarians.co.uk





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Grammarians' Bangor dinner proves an outstanding success

The 87th annual Bangor Grammar School Old Boys dinner, held at the Marine Court Hotel on Friday 18 November 2016, proved an outstanding success.

Special honours go to the legendary Class of 1951 (the year they started at BGS) with a truly remarkable attendance of 16 past pupils – bearing in mind the smaller school population at that time – while the ever-reliable Class of 1975 (the year they left BGS) managed 10.

Just as important was the very welcome representation from year groups spanning all the other decades into the 21st Century, along with a number of present day Sixth Formers, attending as special guests of Bangor Grammarians.

While Principal Elizabeth Huddleson was unable to be present as she was in Paris on school business, a short video presentation, showing a typical day in her busy life, was projected onto a large screen following an excellent meal prepared by the hotel.

Also in a break from tradition, rather than being addressed by a guest speaker, the audience was entertained and enthralled by recent past pupil Joel Mawhinney who is gaining considerable acclaim for his skills as a mentalist.

Grammarians chairman Geoffrey Miller extended a warm welcome to everyone and thanked his committee colleagues for their endeavours to ensure the event's success.

All photographs courtesy of the County Down Spectator



As ever, the Class of 1951 was well represented at the dinner



Paul Blair, Billy McCoubrey, Terence Bowman, Robbie Jackson, Peter Blair and Alan Black, all Class of 1975



Mentalist Joel Mawhinney (right) has Old Boy Carl McClean under his spell! Picture by Ken Best



Martyn Wells, Lyn MacCallum, Raymond Whiteford and John Neill, all Class of 1969



Trevor Gray and James O'Fee, Class of 1967



Gary McNinch, Class of 1975, Norman Irwin and Don McQuillan, Class of 1972



Richard McCord, Class of 1992, and retired history teacher Maurice McCord



Jack Cargo (left) with Brian Kelly, Class of 1973



Brian Johnston, Class of 1970, and Raymond Martin, Class of 1973



Gary McMahon, John McBlain and Russell Moore, all Class of 1983, with Ronnie Patton, Class of 1975



Grammarians chairman Geoffrey Miller, Class of 1978, with entertainer Joel Mawhinney, Class of 2016, and Board of Governors chairman Paul Blair, Class of 1975



Don McQuillan (fifth from left) with dinner attendees from his table: Michael McCord (1990), Andrew Williamson (1987), Neil McIvor (1987), Barry McAllister (1978), Allen Chapple (1957), Noel Graham (1967), Billy Hanna (1965) and Sam Beckett (1975).

Class of 1967 stages well-attended reunion

A reunion of past pupils who left Bangor Grammar School in 1967 was held at their alma mater on 2 June past. Following a reception under the old School Clock, the group assembled for photographs, followed by a modern version of an old-fashioned school dinner cooked by the catering staff.

Guest of Honour for the evening was Maurice McCord, who taught history at Bangor Grammar School from 1959-1999. Old Boy Jim Dornan, Professor Emeritus in Maternal and Fetal Medicine at Queen's University, was master of ceremonies. The event was organised by Old Boys David Carson and Warren Cree.



Guest of Honour Maurice McCord is pictured with members of the Class of 1967 at the anniversary dinner. Back (from left): Adrian Gill, Robin Gray, Derek Taylor, Peter Davidson, Barry Martin, Roy Willis. Middle: Alan Pinkerton, Noel Graham, Roger Clegg, Trevor Gray, Michael Martin, Bob Hannah, Jimmy Kirk, John Preston, Ian McCullough, James Ferguson, James O'Fee. Front: John Hunter, Roy McCartney, David Irwin, Jim Dornan, David Carson, Maurice McCord, Warren Cree, Len McCormick, Philip Arnold John (JB) Martin, John McLeavy, Richard Armstrong.



Students and Grammarians in joint tribute to former pupils who fell at the Somme

Ken Best

Following on from the annual Remembrance Day services at the School, Bangor Grammarians have, over the past few years, been involved in various events to mark the centenary of the First World War.

In 2014 they published and distributed 'Remembering Their Sacrifice', which recorded the stories of the 37 former pupils who fell in the conflict. This was followed in 2015 by participation in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Living Memory Pilot Project, while last year marked the one hundredth anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Somme. Understandably, the commemorative events that took place on 1 July 2016 drew the most attention, but the Commission was anxious to ensure there was public awareness that the Battle had raged on until November 1916.

To do this they developed the Living Memory Project 2016 to highlight the significance of the 141 days' duration of the Battle. The aim was to mark the period with a rolling programme of events throughout the United Kingdom. Given the fact that seven former pupils died at the Somme, Grammarians played their part in this important anniversary by holding their ceremony on 15 September 2016, and involving current pupils, former pupils, members of staff and Governors.

That particular date marked the centenary of the start of the Battle of Fler Courcelette, while another significant aspect was that it also saw the first use of the tank on the field of battle. In planning the day's programme, Grammarians aimed to cover the full breadth of experiences from the time. It consisted of a series of elements from the broad spectrum of international events that influenced the state of the War at the start of July 1916, right through to the personal stories of those former pupils who lost their lives in the trenches around Thiepval.

Head of History Sam Wolfenden, in an introductory presentation, traced the developments leading to the need for the 'big push' that would become the Battle of the Somme. He also highlighted the part played by the 36th Ulster Division, as well as putting into context the massive losses suffered by the men on both sides.

Former pupil Alan Black, currently serving in the Army Reserve, delivered a talk about the development of the tank

and how it was rushed into use in an effort to make a huge impact at Courcelette. He explained how the potential of this new 'super weapon' was undermined by technical and practical difficulties in the field and the hoped-for advantage it promised was squandered for little real benefit. Alan's presentation was complemented by a series of illustrations by another former pupil, David Pentland, whose book *Century of Tanks 1916-2016* was recently published.

School Archivist Barry Greenaway examined the impact of the War on the home front, and in particular the deaths of those seven former pupils in the 141-day campaign at the Somme. He noted the very high proportion of the past pupil 'population' who had volunteered to serve King and Country, with many of that number losing their lives. He used a photograph of the whole School taken in 1912 to illustrate the point. Barry further explained that the Rev. James McFeeters, who was Headmaster during World War One, was so deeply upset at the deaths of what he saw as 'his boys' that it led to his early retirement.

The programme continued with Adam Crothers, Ben Emerson, Calum McDaid and Josh Hardy, all Year 11 pupils, who performed their own work which had been broadcast as part of the BBC Ten Pieces Concert at the Royal Albert Hall the previous July. This took the form of letters written at the Front to be sent home to their families. Their experiences of life in the trenches and the frustrations and anxieties of the individual soldiers were truly brought home by this compelling presentation.

The seven past pupils who died at the Somme were remembered with the retelling of their individual stories by current and former pupils. For the first group of three, Holt Hewitt and brothers Arthur and James Hollywood, participants paid a visit to the cemetery on the town's Newtownards Road. The trio lie where they died in France but they are recorded on family gravestones in Bangor. Appropriately, respects were also paid to the Rev. McFeeters, who is buried in the same graveyard. Floral tributes reflecting the School colours, together with individual memorial cards, were laid on the various graves.

On returning to the School, the stories of the remaining



School Archivist Barry
Greenaway



Head of History Sam
Wolfenden



Paying respects beside the family grave of a former BGS pupil who was killed at the Somme in 1916

four former pupils, Ernest Hind, Stanley Maxwell, Frank Brown and Robert Hughes, were related in similar fashion. The personal details of those young lives lost a century ago brought an immediacy and realism that proved tangible. Once again, floral tributes were placed at the First World War memorial board in the Assembly Hall.

Current Year 14 pupils performed a very moving extract from 'Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme' by Frank McGuinness. The play features a group of young Ulstermen coming to terms with their emotions and fears as they prepare to go over the top at the Somme. The event was brought to a fitting conclusion with a piece entitled 'Hero of War', written by Rise Against and performed by pupils from the School's Music Department.

For those who participated and/ or attended on the day, the wide and varied content of the centenary event brought the significance and experiences of the Battle of the Somme into sharp focus, placing them in a historical context that ranged from the international through to the individual.



Year 14 pupils in a scene from 'Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching to the Somme'



Past pupil Alan Black (1962-75), who in addition to delivering a talk about the development of the tank at the Battle of the Somme event on 15 September 2016, also laid the wreath on behalf of Bangor Grammarians at the school's annual Remembrance Service, held on Friday 11 November 2016. Picture by Ken Best

Grammarians support Ypres bell project

Earlier this year Bangor Grammarians agreed to a proposal put before the Committee to donate £250 towards the Bells4StGeorgeYpres project.

The appeal target (which was reached) was £195,000 and the main element of the project will be to install a ring of eight change ringing bells into the tower of St. George's Memorial Church in Ypres, Belgium.

The project has a number of component parts:

- Installation of the new set of eight change ringing bells which have been cast at the bell foundry of John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough
- The repair, by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, London, of a set of 16 Victorian handbells previously owned by Great War veteran and bell ringer Charles T Coles, for use by local and visiting ringers
- The renovation of the proposed ringing room with fine oak panelling and fitting to provide a space of beauty and purpose
- The installation of a comprehensive sound control system which will preserve the tranquillity of the Church as a place of remembrance when the bells are used for practice or for longer periods of ringing but will allow the bells to be heard in their full glory when ringing for services or significant events.



This picture, courtesy of A. Sherriff, was taken in Loughborough at the casting of the second and fourth bells



Of Work and Art

David Pentland



David Pentland in Fifth Form
(1974)

The usual question I'm asked regarding my job is "So what is it you actually do?" My answer is however usually confused, so I will make an attempt to explain it here.

I have always been keen on art. From an early age my brother and I were encouraged and taught by our father, an avid amateur artist. He had us colouring in scribbles on paper as soon as we could hold a crayon, and painting shortly afterwards. Alongside this we also enjoyed making plastic model aircraft and playing with Airfix toy soldiers, which in turn led to a lifelong interest in military history.

On occasion we built civilian aircraft or cars, but most of the time we were saving our pocket money for the ships, tanks, troops, bombers and fighters of World War Two. Later we detoured into much earlier and later periods, reading and playing specialised board wargames on anything from the Trojan War to Vietnam.

Ironically, I don't recall drawing or painting anything military, bar a German Messerschmitt 109, during my schooldays (it was not my best work). Most of my subjects were birds or animals (I suppose I was attracted by their colours and patterns), or fantasy and science fiction.

Although I took Art at A-Level, and was accepted for a direct entry into Art College, I changed my mind on advice from an art lecturer that there was a dearth of work in the art field at the time. Instead, he suggested I go for a more secure career and move into art at a later date. Not having Maths and Physics A-Levels scuppered my chance to apply for architecture, so as an alternative I took a prolonged detour into quantity surveying. Several years of college and work later I finally concluded I had taken a wrong turn and started to put together a plan to get back on track, to find work in commercial art.

This was more easily said than done. I found myself in a Catch-22 situation, where no one would employ me without either an art degree or a portfolio of commercial work, and I couldn't get commercial experience without a degree. I eventually solved the problem by working for printers who were happy to let me design and illustrate a variety of brochures, corporate identities and leaflets for them at a reasonable price. It also proved a useful learning experience seeing how printers worked and the technical side of the industry, information that would stand me in good stead for the future.

Alongside this, I also undertook quite a few large-scale architectural modelling and presentation projects, thanks to having learnt architectural design and drawing during my quantity surveying training. In my opinion nothing goes to waste.

With a new portfolio under my arm I finally realised my ambition to become a professional freelance illustrator, working initially in advertising. Although much of the work I had done for the printers was graphic design, I was drawn (pardon the pun) to and employed by advertising firms for my illustration work. Advertising agencies always had an in-house design team of trained graphic artists, but illustration was normally a specialist field and was bought in as needed.



Royal Irish Regiment press ad

Working in advertising proved to be challenging in a variety of ways. I had to learn to accurately interpret the client's brief, agree a price and produce the artwork within deadline. I also had to be versatile and proficient in a range of styles and media. This could range from pencil and pen drawings to oil, acrylic, gouache, watercolour, airbrush or pastel paintings. All these factors forced one to think and work quickly, usually under pressure, and most of all develop a mindset of not worrying too much about where the next job was coming from. This last point is of extreme importance for a freelancer, and I've known some good artists and designers who were unable to deal with this aspect of the work. For myself, in over 10 years working in advertising I don't think I was ever unemployed.

During this period, however, I still retained an interest in military history and began to look at ways to combine it with my illustration work. I started to do some personal aviation paintings, and even some for the occasional private pilot client. I was hankering to produce images more to my own taste rather than storyboards for TV ads, but advertising paid good money and my alternative was a leap in the dark.

It was a strange serendipity then that there was an unexpected downturn in commercial work due to the client's desire for the latest fad of computer artwork. To be honest it wasn't the computer-generated imagery of today or even 15 years ago, but rather crude photo-manipulation. The art directors realised this but their hands were tied. Nevertheless it gave me the opportunity to make the break, and although I continued to take on some commercial work the bulk of my effort was directed to military aviation paintings.

Along with a good and enthusiastic friend, we planned local and mainland exhibitions, while at the same time finding

new clients in the form of American Military History and Aviation magazines. It was the international exposure from these publications that really helped in boosting my profile, and at a time when such advertising was expensive, they were paying *me*.

It was also thanks to my magazine artwork that shortly after this I was approached to work with my now long-time agent, who specialised in military art and prints, and it was he who suggested I try painting a new subject: tanks.

Given my longstanding interest in all things military and specifically WW2, it's really strange that it never occurred to me to draw and paint tanks until this time. It was a moment of epiphany. My knowledge of AFVs (Armoured Fighting Vehicles to give them their correct name), battles and their commanders allowed me to simply start painting.

My paintings normally tell the story of a historical event or encounter and aside from the importance of creating an interesting composition, with all the rules that entails, the aspect of accuracy is also of major importance.

Initially my research depended on books, magazines, videos and interviews. Nowadays, of course, the Internet and YouTube have proved invaluable. Details such as time of day, location, sun direction, weather, forces involved and specific type of vehicle must be considered. As an example, there were three main variants of the famous German Tiger I tank, with different camouflage patterns, markings and turret numbers depending on unit or theatre of operations. It's important to go the extra mile to check such details, as any mistakes are sure to be picked up by experts at a later date.

Obviously my artwork is geared towards a limited market, but despite this my clients range from private collectors, military regiments, video and boardgame companies to books, magazines, stamps, box art for model kits and limited edition prints.

Recently I was commissioned by the Royal Artillery to produce a painting commemorating their 300th anniversary, while currently I am working on a 16-painting series of the Falklands War for a commemorative coin company.

I must admit that I am very happy painting my subject of choice, but sometimes a change is also good, and I occasionally stray into other interesting areas. In addition to landscapes and portraits, I was very honoured to be invited to supply several Star Wars paintings for its director, George Lucas.

Last year saw another long-time dream come true, with the publication of my first book, "A Century of Tanks 1916 – 2016" – an illustrated history of 100 years of the tank.

Right, must get back to the drawing board!

Email: davidpentland@yahoo.com; Website: davidpentlandart.com; Facebook: David Pentland Art



David Pentland with his Royal Artillery 300th anniversary painting, 2016



BALLOON BUSTER – Leutnant Fritz Roth, Western Front, 25 January 1918



STALIN'S STEEL FIST – Soviet Josef Stalin JS2 tanks, Berlin 1945



THE TIGER'S ROAR – German WW2 tank Ace Otto Carius, Lithuania 1944



UNEXPECTED VISITOR – One of David's official Star Wars paintings



'A CENTURY of TANKS, 1916 – 2016' – the front cover of David's new book

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'Slashing open blisters and then pumping in iodine seemed to do the trick'

Allan Smith



New boy Allan Smith shortly after starting at BGS in 1975

I do think back to Bangor Grammar quite often. Personally I got a lot out of school and for that I will always be grateful. Some memories are indelible – as if they happened yesterday – while others are hazy and almost defy belief. Some just won't go away. I still have a dream that I've started school in First Form and lose that little bit of card that mapped out lesson, time and classroom and it all just goes wrong from there on my first day. Memories can be terribly tedious to others but I've been asked to pen a piece so I'll just crack on.

My transition from Ballyholme Primary to BGS was both daunting and exciting. I tried everything I could on the club and sports side of things and it was the CCF and rugby that grabbed my attention in the end. I was fortunate to represent Ulster schools at rugby and yes we did beat Leinster – one of the most enjoyable games I have ever played. We were captained that day by BGS's Eddie Coulter, who had played in our 1978 Schools Cup final-winning team as a Fourth Former – a fine player and solid man.

CCF took me on a 100-mile march over the Nijmegen bridge in the Netherlands; indeed, we were the first Ulster cadet force to do the march and, to go the proverbial extra mile, we wore back packs (therefore doing the adult version of this tough march). The Army's way of slashing open blisters and then pumping in iodine seemed to do the trick. You get different medical advice today: "Don't use

iodine... it is so strong it can even kill the cells you are trying to heal." The bridges at Nijmegen and Arnhem were to feature again in my life over 30 years later as you'll see below.

A CCF trip to Berlin saw us being escorted into East Berlin in army transport and absolved of any search procedures as we were 'military'. I believe the Stasi files still have a pictorial record of the greetings that were extended to the East Berlin border guards when their cameras were trained on us. Thankfully no diplomatic incidents were caused and I am certain the headmaster's rulebook would have no precedent before or after for dealing with such incidents!

Thinking back, some stand-out teaching names come quickly to mind: Dougie Rea, Jimmy Welch and Duncan MacPherson on the rugby front, Barry Greenaway for CCF and Ray Mowat for his Geography teaching. Outstanding was Mike Foley for his utterly brilliant approach to Hamlet – he was so in his zone in those lessons. In contrast, some Chemistry lessons could have only been made more dangerous if a loaded gun had been introduced but those are stories for another day! History was just confusing and a missed opportunity which ignored the heritage of our home soil – quite bizarre with hindsight.

I wonder if other traditions continue. "OK, so there's always the Trident in Bangor" went our unofficial school song in 1978 (the Trident on High Street became the Sportsman, then Wolseys). Yes, it was Colin Bateman who whipped up the Stiff Little Fingers frenzy (and rightly so) and yes most of us bought the single 'Alternative Ulster' which provided the quoted line. It is hard to explain now but it was the hallmark of those years, having seen our town centre blitzed four years earlier and being searched on entering many shops. I don't think we really understood the politics back then – we were just frustrated and desperate for some excitement, which punk supplied from 1977 to 1979.

Activities were scant in those days as bands just wouldn't come over and play but music did make a different impact. One was a May Day when Mod riots (as in music, not Ministry of Defence please note) were supposed to come to Bangor to emulate the fighting on Brighton seafront. We



BGS cadets in East Berlin in 1982, with Allan far right



The 1982 school prefects, with Head Boy Edwin Coulter and Allan Esler Smith 'guarding' Headmaster Tom Patton

were all sent home early... but despite best efforts could find no riots to watch. My satchel artwork then moved on to its B52's phase.

Without many cultural activities it was inevitable that folk would just get together and do their own thing and through this strong friendships were made. Like all of you reading this, some friendships stay strong and some drift away but as a testimony to this I went cycling this past summer in France with three old boys who live in three different countries. Anecdotes always help bring us back together, whether it was the genius of collective and thunderous stamping of feet when told to realign in form lines for assembly or the solemn and respectful tributes we paid in the same hall to our war dead.

Delving back to school memories usually brings a smile rather than a frown (except for the disgraced teacher which I won't dwell on but must, obviously, mention). I know I'll never have the chance to burst through the doors again into the quad or run down the stairs ("No running, boy!") in Crosby House. For that reason I grabbed the chance back in 2012 to film a brief piece called 'bursting through the doors again' at the time of the final Grammarians dinner in the Assembly Hall before demolition. It's on the reference links on the school's wiki page or on my YouTube channel 'Allan Esler Smith' and there are a few cameos to watch out for.



A publicity photograph for Allan's latest book



Members of the Class of '82 at the London Dinner in 2005, namely Messrs Bewley, Jennings, Stephens, Henderson, Smith and Service, with the chairman of the Board of Governors, Allan's father Stanley Smith

One you might spot is Dick Milliken who inspired me, in a careers talk, to become a chartered accountant, which led me to a career in audit, then corporate recovery with Price Waterhouse and later City Investigations where I managed the investigations and recoveries team at the Investors Compensation Scheme (predecessor of the FSCS). I then set up my own accountancy and tax business, I write books and I look after the Estate of my late uncle, Brian Desmond Hurst, the Belfast-born film director who was a veteran of Gallipoli and was later mentored in Hollywood by John Ford. His films include Scrooge, Tom Brown's Schooldays, Malta Story and the battle of Arnhem epic Theirs is the Glory (also the title of my recent book). I have also been co-editing The Good Retirement Guide for the past few years and from 2018 I will be sole editing the text, which brings lifestyle, tax and finance planning together.

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Long-serving teacher Robert still regrets a missed 'selfie' with Mrs Huddleson

A career summary as told to Lyn MacCallum



Robert Stevenson grew up in South Down, on a farm which nestled within an arc of mountains in the high Mourne. He attended primary school in Ballymartin and then progressed to Kilkeel High School and Liverpool University. Consequently, he was not particularly au fait with an institution called Bangor Grammar School. In fact, when he turned up for interview on Friday 1 April 1977, he assumed it would be a co-ed school. Thus began his education into the ways of the legendary establishment which was to monopolise his entire adult working life.

He was interviewed by Headmaster Dr R. J. Rodgers and Head of English Jack Murphy. Apparently, as they had particularly wanted a master for rugby, the Headmaster had been reluctant to appoint him. Hence, had it not been for the stubbornness of Mr Murphy, who insisted Robert was the "best candidate by far", the school might have gained a rugby genius and gone on to win Schools' Cups galore.

Whilst specialising in English, he also occasionally taught Religious Studies (to GCSE), ICT, French, Music, General Studies (Media Studies/ Journalism), along with Key Skills, of which he became the co-ordinator for a while. Games duties included tennis, badminton, swimming and table tennis.



Robert Stevenson and Headmaster Dr Robert J. Rodgers with members of the Minor Tennis team in 1978. Back: P Morrison. Front: T. R. Morrison, N. Armstrong and I. Boal.

For the first decade of his career, the great triumvirate of Murphy, Foley and Dalzell represented a formidable presence in the English Department and Robert learned much from them. However, it was in his mid-career that



Robert Stevenson with members of the Public Speaking team in 2011. Back (from left): Tom McFerran, Christopher Walker, Alex Polkey, Conor Ardill. Front: Mitchell Davidson, Sam Haley, Daniel Gherardi and Reece Simpson.

the strongest professional bonds were established. There was great fulfilment in working with Michael Andrews, Donald Cairnduff, Prudence Bates, Caroline Erwin, Andrew Gray and Melanie Cree. Given the strength of these professional links, they still meet up socially – and on an increasingly frequent basis as the years advance. There was always a bit of good-humoured rivalry, but it never compromised their strong working partnerships and mutual loyalty.

Robert's time as a Teacher Governor (January 1998 until December 2001) was fascinating, coinciding as it did with some major, traumatic events in the school's history. It was a period which spanned three headmasterships. New policies and procedures in Child Protection were introduced at school level and indeed on the national statute book. During the birth-pangs of this new legislation, he found it illuminating to sit around a table with experienced and prestigious people such as Lady Sylvia Hermon, Raymond Parker, David Gray and the late Liz Roche, to name only



Robert Stevenson with members of the Public Speaking team in 2013/14. From left: Tom McFerran, Daniel Orr, Archie Arran and Adam Barr.



Robert (right) attending an English Department farewell in his honour back in June 2015. From left: Prudence Bates, Hamish Matheson, Caroline Erwin, Donald Cairnduff, Ryan McAuley, Andrew Gray and Melanie Cree.

a few. This position afforded Robert the chance to hold to account those in authority and to ask probing questions.

Three things which he attempted to change by means of working parties and committees were: (a) the dropping of the compulsory canteen rule for Forms I and II; (b) discontinuation of the X title for the fifth intake group in favour of the Form Teacher's initials for all; (c) putting forward the case for co-education. Two out of three was a reasonable success rate!

Robert's examination responsibilities enriched the final decade of his career, making the autumn term very busy. Assistant Examinations Officer status comprised both internal and external elements. As editor of the Gryphon magazine for two decades (1993-2012), with a publication deadline that came hot on the heels of onerous examination duties, his final hard copy Gryphon was published on the last day of the old school, 20 December 2012. He recalls being sick with exhaustion into a classroom bin and the sheer uncertainty about whether the magazine would be delivered to the College Avenue site before demolition started!

The annual deadline for colleagues to submit their material was the end of September, but when asked if staff invariably honoured this deadline, his wry response was: "If there had been a Friday detention for staff who were more than two weeks overdue with their articles, I could have

filled it." Consequently, he made perennial announcements at Monday morning briefings, within earshot of Senior Management, some of whom were ironically guilty: "Let's be done with double standards, Ladies and Gentlemen. You would not tolerate this from Year 11 students who are this late with coursework assignments!"

Robert's 50s were the most fulfilling of his career – not least due to memories of Scripture Union meetings and occasional school camps to Moffat in Scotland and Murlough House, outside Dundrum.

He regarded Stephen Connolly as a personable and compassionate Headmaster, and with Elizabeth Huddleson, as Principal for his final year in school, his joy in teaching continued.

Any regrets? Long pause... No, not particularly. Apart from countless trivial daily things, there remains the one regret he still nurses, involving his final day in the school. In the heat of the moment he failed to take a 'selfie' with Mrs Huddleson against the backdrop of the standing ovation with which his colleagues and the boys had honoured his almost four decades of service.

Robert gave the boys the same advice that he would give himself for his retirement. Inspiration for these valedictory remarks was gleaned on his five-minute walk into school that morning, Tuesday 30 June 2015, which had dawned with a rather unseasonably thick sea mist. He later took his position behind the lectern in the new Assembly Hall, asking the pupils whether they had noticed what had happened to that morning's mist. All heads immediately swivelled westward towards the windows to see the rugby pitches bathed in midday sun. The point was made. Without apology for citing the Bible as his favourite book, he explained that it speaks of life as just that – a vapour. It is so short. He reminisced about having met some of his senior colleagues, recalling even what they were wearing on that first August day in 1977 at the start of his career – most now long gone. His conclusion was that we must see every day as a gift – and one to be used to work hard, play hard (sport and music, rather than less sociable types of 'fun'), spending time with family and friends, and aspiring to higher values and standards.

Wise words indeed.

BGS news from 1967/68

- Michael Foley was appointed to the staff in 1967, with his production of *The Merchant of Venice* winning the following year's Drama Trophy for the Best School Production
- Jack Dalzell joined the English Department in 1968
- The 1968 General Inspection report criticised the 'lack of adequate Music in the School' (leading to Ian Hunter's appointment in 1969)
- By 1967 the School was fielding no fewer than 10 rugby teams
- Table tennis, under the guidance of Mr Bonar, first enjoyed noteworthy success, with Don Eadie representing Ulster Schools and Ulster Juniors in 1967
- John Elder played cricket for Ulster Schools in 1968
- Hockey was also making its mark, with the 1st XI winning

their section of the Milk Marketing Board Championships at the beginning of the 1968 season

- The School enjoyed its first golfing success in 1968, winning the Ulster Schools' Golf Championships (defeating Regent House in the final) and going on to represent Ulster in the Irish Schools' Championships. The team, consisting of Dick Milliken, Richard Young, Paddy Buckler, Billy Kirk and Gordon Williamson, lost out to St Joseph's CBS, Drogheda in the final

- The Head Boy and his Deputy were first invited to attend the Old Boys' dinner in 1968, but with the proviso they would sit 'at an ordinary table next year', and...

- In an effort to modernise the School, a new flannel scarf replaced the old knitted one in 1967!

(With thanks to Trevor Gray, whose *History of Bangor Grammar School* can be downloaded via our grammarians.co.uk website)

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Traditions eschewed, Grammarians' London Dinner goes mentalist

The 32nd annual Bangor Grammar School Old Boys' London Dinner was held once more at the Wesley Hotel, on Friday 24 March 2017, attracting old boys who had collectively attended the School between 1944 and 2016. A particularly strong showing from the 1993-2000 cohort was much appreciated, whilst Des Morrow, Tom Patton and Barry Greenaway were all much missed and we hope to welcome them back next time.

The Principal, attending her third dinner and thus suitably emboldened to reorder events, provided a pre-dinner update on school business, which rightly started on a

sombre note given some of the personal tragedies the school community had endured over the previous year. Moving on to better news, the continued success of the Debating Society, celebrating its 90th anniversary, generated a rousing response from some former members, as did the usual round of sporting successes (Schools Cup notwithstanding). Mrs Huddleson's speech done, there followed an excellent meal prepared by the hotel, accompanied by the fervent Bacchanalian libations that distinguish many Grammarian gatherings!

When all were suitably replete, Mike McConnell led the loyal toast to the Queen and Geoffrey Miller, having provided his swansong address as Grammarians Chairman, led the toast to the School.

Having broken tradition with a pre-dinner speech from the Principal (and not to be outdone by the previous November's Bangor Dinner), rather than being addressed by a guest speaker, the audience was entertained and enthralled by recent past pupil Joel

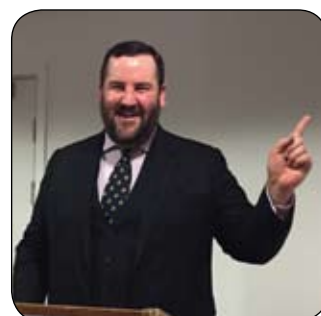
Mawhinney who proved a thoroughly entertaining mentalist. Heckling was ably provided by Philip Bownes and the sartorial elegance award was stolen by Aaron McCalister.

Dinner attendees having been bamboozled by the mentalist, a hearty rendition of the School Song followed; notionally led by your humble dinner organiser, who ended up in a different key to everyone else – hasten back Barry Greenaway!

Next year: there is a tentative aim for Friday 16 March 2018 (the night before England/Ireland at Twickers) and a new venue – details still to be confirmed.



Former Dinner Organiser Mike McConnell



Dinner Organiser Stephen Montgomery



Adam Harbinson addresses the London Dinner



Pictured at the London Dinner are (from left): Joel Mawhinney, Mentalist; Geoffrey Miller, Chairman of Bangor Grammarians; Elizabeth Huddleson, School Principal, and Stephen Montgomery, Dinner Organiser



'Photobombing outrage at London Dinner' – (from left): Adam Harbinson, Philip Bownes, Aaron McCalister, Colin Gault and Joel Mawhinney



Enthralled by mentalist Joel Mawhinney's act are (from left): Michael Rea, Patrick Kerr, Sean Curran, John McAlister, Geoffrey Miller and John McBlain

Secretary's report

Peter Blair



The committee of Bangor Grammarians, under the continuing chairmanship of Geoffrey Miller, met on 10 occasions during the year.

The Bangor Dinner was held in the Marine Court Hotel on Friday 18 November 2016, with former pupil Joel Mawhinney as guest of honour. Swiftly earning himself an excellent reputation as a Mentalist, Joel kept some 80 Grammarians mesmerised by his skills.

The London Dinner took place on Friday 24 March at the Wesley Hotel. There were 26 Grammarians in attendance, comprising past pupils from the 1940s to the current decade. Joel Mawhinney again provided the evening's entertainment.

The usual sporting events took place during the year, with the golf outing, held at Bangor Golf Club on Friday 16 September, attracting 14 competitors. The Boxing Day hockey fixtures took place at the school. Two matches were played, indicating that this continues to be a very popular event.

The Grammarian, under the editorship of Terence Bowman, is again an excellent magazine with articles on notable events at the school, the many and diverse activities of our past pupils, and the work of the association. The magazine, as well as the traditional printed version, is also supplied in electronic format to new schoolboy members and is an option to be encouraged for all members.

The association continued to support the careers initiative in the school with Grammarians contributing to the interview skills day and the careers fair.

Grammarians also took part in the Living Memory Project on 15 September 2016. This event started at the school, continued at the Somme Centre near Conlig, and then ended at the Newtownards Road Cemetery in Bangor. Thanks are due to Ken Best for the work he put into this excellent and very moving event.

The committee made Ian Henderson, former chairman of the Board of Governors, an Honorary Grammarian for all his work on behalf of the school over many years.

In conclusion, may I pass on the thanks of the Grammarians Committee to the Board of Governors for giving us permission to use school facilities for our meetings and activities. Thanks also to the Principal and to the teaching and administrative staff for all their support over the past year.

Treasurer's report

Norman Irwin

Due to printing deadlines this report details our transactions between 1 September 2016 and 30 June 2017 (the financial year for the Grammarians runs from 1 September to 31 August). The major items of income related to the Bangor Dinner and advertising, with £1,980 and £620 received respectively.

Life members accounted for £2,010, while the ballot at the dinner brought in £500. School membership monies had not been received from the school at the time of writing.

On the expenditure side, the cost of running the Bangor Dinner amounted to £2,125. The Grammarians donated £500 to the Cancer Fund created by the Sixth Form and £280 went towards marking the centenary of the Battle of the Somme.

Travel and accommodation costs for the chairman and guest speaker to the London Dinner amounted to £397. Insurance costs remain competitively priced at £501. Postage costs also remain low at £125 due to the hand delivery of this magazine by committee members and other volunteers.

The balance in the bank on 30 June 2017 stood at £6,591. My thanks to the school for collecting and collating Old Boys membership scheme monies, also to John Adrain and Clive Briggs for auditing the accounts.

The audited accounts for the full 2016/17 financial year will be available at the AGM in December.

Indoor Football

During the winter a group of old boys play indoor football on a Thursday night, commencing in September. The new school provides a great hall which can accommodate five-a-side and seven-a-side matches. The games are competitive but played in good spirit. If you wish to turn out please ring Norman Irwin on (028) 91459826.



If Music Be the Food of Love, Prepare for Indigestion*

Paul Lyttle

I feel very flattered to be asked to contribute a piece to the *Grammarians* magazine – it's hard to believe just how much time has passed and how many events have occurred since my schooldays in Bangor.

I really only had one thought in my head from the age of 12 and that was to be a professional musician. As my parents used to say, what do you want to be when you grow up? And I would say a guitarist – their answer, son, you can't be both!!

School must have suffered, although between rugby, humour and thinking I knew it all, I muddled through. I remember the look of shock on Bertie Styles' face when he handed me my A-Level results – three Bs, which was fairly OK: entrance to Queen's assured, longevity at Uni. NOT! Instead, Rock and Roll took over my life, first with Joe Creighton and Len McCormick in The A-Side (along with Mike Harrison and Jonas Brown, both now sadly deceased). Those first gigs were only a foretaste of what I knew I had to do.

I joined Reaction (in Belfast), had a few years with The Carpetbaggers and then The John Smith Band, which was musically the most serious and gratifying. Meanwhile, Queen's University had had enough of me (I had a 10am lecture every morning, but I was playing gigs until all hours and was rising about lunchtime, so work it out for yourselves).



First Former Paul Lyttle in the late 1950s



The school's Athletics Team in 1964, with Paul Lyttle (back row, second). Also included with teachers George Heuston and Jimmy Welch and Headmaster Randall Clarke, are (back row): W. Hanna, R. Lightbody, R. G. Macauley, T. Wells, W. G. McCready, F. McMullan, M. McCaughan, P. McBurney. Middle: D. Brennan, J. Ward, W. M. Davidson, P. Gay, R. Donald, R. Jones, R. Clegg, P. Murgatroyd, A. Topping. Front: R. Milliken, J. Young, J. Thompson and T. Mahood.

music scene and quickly turned totally professional along with a move to Dublin. This was not because of the security situation, which was dire, but because three-quarters of our work was south of Dublin and it was costing too much in fuel, accommodation and time for frequent home visits.

So we were very much on our way. We signed with Decca Records in London, dabbled with Eurovision and did a heap of TV, including the iconic *Top of the Pops* and *The Geordie Scene*, which became *The Tube*. I have at least 100 TV shows on VHS tape in the attic – and they're staying there!

I got a good 20 years out of Chips, not to mention a comfortable lifestyle, but like any good thing there comes a time when it fragments and no longer has a place in the public psyche. I joined the real world and worked in the retail and distribution business for another 20 years. That is over now and what am I back doing – which I swore I would never do again – yes, you've guessed it, playing gigs!

It took me all of a year to get comfortable with it again

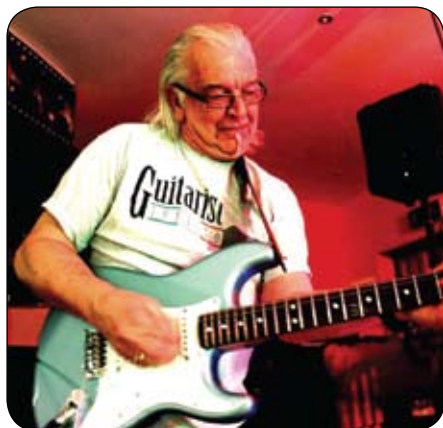
Then I got a call from Colin McClelland, editor of *City Beat*, the North's leading music magazine in the late 1960s/ early 1970s, asking if I would like to join Chips, who were causing a stir around the better venues in Belfast at the time. They wanted a keyboard player/ vocalist as the two keyboard men in the band were professional people with great jobs and the band was beginning to get in the way.

I went to a first rehearsal and chanced my arm – nothing changes – as I had never done the keyboard thing with a band (having had just a few piano lessons as a child), and was better known as a guitar player. I somehow managed to bluff it, joined the band and the rest is history, at least it is in my head!

Specialising in vocal harmonies, Chips burnt a trail through the showband-dominated Irish



*TV stars – Chips appeared on *Top of the Pops* and *The Geordie Scene**



Paul Lyttle today – still playing gigs

(age being such an enemy to the brain), but I have my confidence back and it's going well.

To finish, here's a little anecdote from my time with Chips. Irish country venues are weird. It was whilst doing a festival in the local community hall at Kanturk, in the depths of County Cork, that we decided to impress the gathering with an a cappella (unaccompanied vocal) version of Neil Young's 'After the Goldrush' with great blue and green lights and lots of smoke. Off we went but suddenly there was panic and four security men with fire extinguishers started dousing the stage. They thought it was on fire – so much for atmospherics in Cork – and kinda blew the moment!

It's been lovely to talk to you all.

** Sixties album title by Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Titch*

Former chairman wins golf competition

The 2016 Grammarians golf competition took place on Friday 16 September at Bangor Golf Club. Once again the event enjoyed fine weather and a course that was in excellent condition.

Unfortunately school time-tabling changes meant it was not possible to hold the traditional Grammarians v. School v. Staff match. It is hoped this was reinstated for the 2017 competition, which was held just after the magazine went to press.

A keenly contested individual Stableford competition for the Ritchie McKee Cup did take place. Winner with 39 points was immediate past Grammarians chairman Paul Weir, and runner-up was Gareth Boyd.

Thanks go to Bangor Golf Club for hosting the event, and especially the caterers for providing an excellent meal afterwards.



Ritchie McKee Cup winner Paul Weir



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Simon Maltman



Simon Maltman in his young days at Bangor Grammar School

“Of Mice and Men is a compelling tale of misfortune and tragedy, set in a microcosm of the 1920s American west,” he paused, before continuing: “I think I’ll read that again.”

And he did. That was Mr Cairnduff – my English teacher – almost 20 years ago. He was reading my book review to the class and was kind enough to be quite complimentary. I’ve never forgotten it. I think I took a ‘beamer’ as we called it and I certainly beamed inside.

I have been asked to share a little about my experiences at The Grammar and how they have helped me to develop as a writer. I have recently found some success as a novelist and short story crime fiction writer (*A Chaser on the Rocks* and *More Faces*, both published by Solstice Publishing). At the moment I’m working on this full time, while looking after my two children.

First though, I should point out how school helped me to develop in my other career path. For 13 years I worked as a manager and support worker in social care services, supporting people with learning disabilities and mental health conditions. A large part of my interest, and indeed passion for this area, started while at BGS. I was a member of the ‘Community Service Group’ for several years (let me emphasise this was not a court order!).

Now, I admit that at first some of this had to do with trying to avoid ‘winter sports.’ I felt I had served my time at BallyMac, rolling around in the mud with the best of them. I volunteered at Clifton Special School and really enjoyed my time with the children there. It certainly pointed me in the direction of the support service work I went on to do for many years.

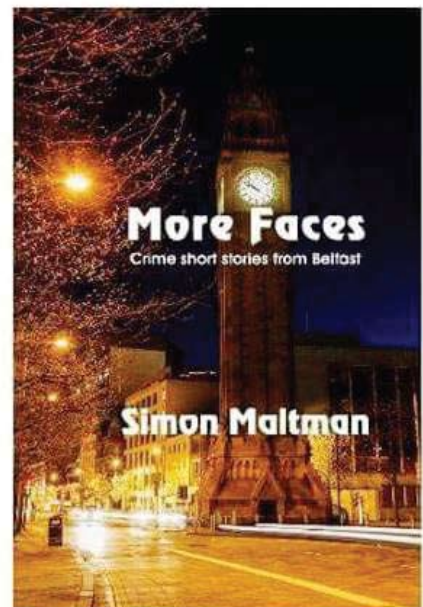
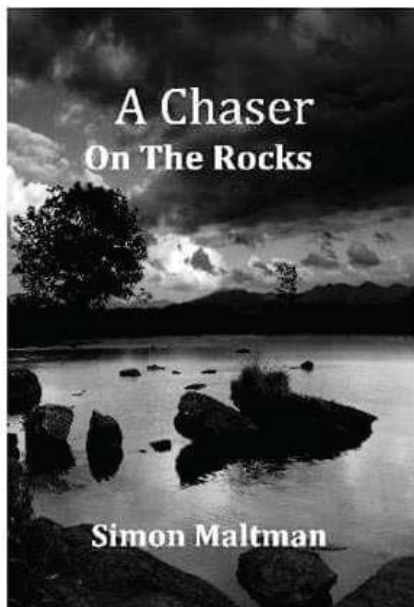
So, back to the crime. Well, I can’t say I led a life of crime while at school; I was really quite a ‘good little boy’. There were a few exceptions; getting caught about to light a banger in the toilets during Barry Greenaway’s yearly charity movie for one. I did get put into a few detentions with Mr Anderson in Chemistry too, but then everyone did, and they were really quite enjoyable. I recall the police being called during some tomfoolery at a boating lake on a trip to Moffat as well, but I am fairly confident I was only an innocent bystander.

There is one confession I should make though, and I will protect the innocent by allowing the teacher involved to remain nameless. We shall call him Mr Brass. This was in the days when chalk boards were still the cutting edge of teaching technology, with overhead projectors still viewed as magic cubes. It became habit that at lunchtime, several times a week, my fellow delinquents and I would sneak into Mr Brass’s room and relieve him of his board duster. Each day a new one would appear and, therein, a potential new addition that could be added to our bounty. This became quite a substantial haul. After several weeks, we arrived to unburden him yet again and found he had been reduced to using a dust cloth. We took this too.

A few days later I was in class and I realised that enough was enough when I witnessed that he had to use his sleeve to wipe away the chalk from the board. I repented. It was close to Christmas and I wrapped up all of our swag in festive paper and appended a note saying: “To Brassey, Merry Christmas.” I left this outside his room one day while he was teaching, knocked the door and ran. I hope that went some way to making amends!



The departing Year 14 (Upper Sixth) group in the late 1990s, with Headmaster Dr Nick Argent and Mr D. Cairnduff



Simon Maltman today with the covers of his crime stories *A Chaser on the Rocks* and *More Faces*

School certainly instilled a love of reading in me. When it came to thinking up what to do for my English Literature coursework, I wanted to use some song lyrics if possible. I had chosen a few by Dylan and also Led Zeppelin's *Stairway to Heaven*. Mr Cairnduff suggested I read some Philip Larkin and compare the two as 'modes of expression.' That's what I went on to do and I found I absolutely loved Larkin's style, resulting in my purchase of everything he'd ever written! Another memorable moment in English class was when Maurice Leitch, a local novelist, was invited along to speak with us. He was very interesting and also provided the insight that you could be an author from Northern Ireland. This was before our own Colin Bateman had made his mark and the following recent explosion of local writers, particularly in crime fiction.

It has been very pleasant thinking back to my old school days. I still socialise with several school friends in 'real life' and many others in 'social networks.' I never did receive a blue blazer (I'm not bitter... much – surely just an oversight?), but I remember that I did win an award once in Sixth Form. I think in all my years at BGS I only ever did manage that one award – but I was very pleased. It was called the 'Elsie Patton Memorial Trophy' and it was for literature.

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John Blundell as a member of the Under 14 XV in 1950/51

JOHN BLUNDELL

John Blundell (a member of the Class of '53) was one of the first to sit the new 11-Plus test in 1947. He joined Bangor Grammar School, having completed a term at Grosvenor before his family moved to live in Bangor.

John was a keen sportsman at the school, playing for the cricket, tennis and rugby teams. Unfortunately, he sustained two serious knee ligament injuries when he was 17, putting an

end to his playing days, although he continued to be an avid sports fan for the rest of his life.

On leaving Bangor Grammar School, John went to Stranmillis College and trained as a teacher. He later studied at Queen's University where he gained a BSc in Economics. John's first permanent teaching post was at Ashfield Boys' High School in East Belfast, where he taught mathematics. After Ashfield, he spent a decade as Deputy Headmaster at Gransha Boys' High School.

Much of his career at Gransha coincided with his twin sons' time at Bangor Grammar School, which created a conflict of interest when Mark and Paul were playing against teams from his school. Daughter Joanne went to Glenlola and was Head Girl in her final year much to John's delight. At least she didn't have to worry about meeting Gransha boys on the rugby field with a grudge against her dad!

John was a keen golfer and a long-standing member of Clondeboy Golf Club. He served as Juvenile Convenor, Council member, Captain and President in his years there. John was also a keen

supporter of Bangor Rugby Club throughout his life. He could watch sport incessantly if allowed to, and really wanted Des Lynam's job if the truth were known!

He was also a member of the Round Table and a former Churchwarden at Bangor Parish Church.

John, who completed an MSc in Education in his late 30s, was appointed in 1988 as Headmaster at Glastray High School (just outside

Ballyhalbert), where he spent the final 10 years of his career. He oversaw the introduction of both the National Curriculum and LMS (Local Management of Schools), where schools became responsible for managing their finances for the first time. He fought hard with the Education Board to obtain a new science/technology building, the introduction of a Sixth Form College, and the renaming of the school as Glastray College.

John maintained an interest in Bangor Grammar School both as a parent and as a past pupil. He was chairman of the Old Boys Association (1977/78), now known as The Grammarians.

He died on 15 November 2016, aged 80. John is greatly missed by his wife Betty, three children and eight grandchildren.

JACK CANAVAN

John Henry (Jack) Canavan, late of Bryansburn Road, who passed away on 18 May 2017, was, it is believed, the last surviving Bangor Grammar School pupil from the 1920s. Aged 98 – he was born in Belfast on 14 October 1918 – he was also very likely the oldest (known) former pupil of the School.

Mr Canavan attended Bangor Grammar School between 1927 and 1930, leaving early to support his family. Having trained as a joiner, he helped to build a number of houses around Bangor. Appointed Clerk of Works in 1964, he became Building Control Officer in 1977 and subsequently Chief Building Control Officer for the then Ards Borough Council, retiring in 1983 at the age of 65.

Mr Canavan and his late wife Muriel were married on 6 June 1946. They had two children, Colin (who attended Bangor Grammar School from 1968-73) and Fiona. He was also proud grandfather to triplets – Luke, Marianne and Natasha (born in 2007).

During the 1940s he played football as an amateur for Cliftonville and Ards. In the 1950s he was a member of Knock Motorcycle Club and competed in motorcycle trials including the Scottish Six Days. Following his retirement he took up bowls and played for Castle Bowling Club in Bangor.

Jack maintained an interest in football and the building trade to the end of his life. He was particularly intrigued by the development of the former Bangor Grammar School site at College Avenue and would often ask to be taken there to see what was taking place.

WALTER DOWDALL

We remember with fondness and deep respect our esteemed friend and colleague Walter Dowdall, who passed away on 20 February 2017, aged 89, after a lengthy illness.

Born on 14 April 1927, Walter attended Bangor Grammar School between 1938 and 1944. He was a "one company man" who joined Dunlop Drapers in Belfast as a rep., going on to become a director before his retirement in the 1980s.

Not only did Walter serve on the committee of Bangor Grammarians (formerly the Old Boys Association) for a remarkable 62 years (having joined the body in 1954 while still in his 20s), he also joined the School's Board of Governors in 1973 and in time established himself as its longest-serving member.

Walter was elected chairman of the Grammarians on two occasions, in 1964/65 and again in 1991/92. A stickler for rules, his aim was a simple one – to 'get things done.'

While closely associated with the sport of hockey in Bangor for



Walter Dowdall as a member of the Medallion XV in 1940/41



many years (he served as president of the Irish Hockey Union in 1976), Walter played for the BGS Medallion XV in the 1940-41 season.

During the largely-attended funeral service on 24 February at Wesley Centenary Methodist Church, the minister, the Rev. Brian Anderson, described Walter as “dependable,

thorough, a clear thinker and a listener” who had enjoyed a “well-lived long life of giving and gracious unselfishness.”

In addition, Walter gave “fruitful, honest and committed service” to his church, not only as a circuit steward but also as a qualified preacher.

As evidence of his community-spirited nature, Walter’s other interests included road safety, representing Bangor on the Northern Ireland Road Safety Council.

Grammarians chairman Geoffrey Miller, who said Walter would long be remembered as a committee stalwart, extended sympathy to his wife Eileen (they were married in 1965) and the family circle, and also to Walter’s many friends.



DENNIS DUNLOP

Dennis Stewart Dunlop was born on 25 April 1932. In 1936, at the tender age of four, he began his education at Aubrey House, a privately-owned Primary establishment, remaining there until its closure in 1938. Despite being two years too young, he was accepted as a pupil at Bangor Grammar School by Maurice Wilkins, the then Headmaster, marking the start of an association with the school which lasted over 60 years.

Dennis attended Bangor Grammar School until 1950; he was Head Boy (1948-1950) and captain of both the Medallion XV (see picture) and the 1st XV. In his Senior Certificate, he was placed first in Northern Ireland in both Advanced Maths and Art and was accepted to study Civil Engineering at Queen’s University Belfast.

After graduating in 1953 with a BSc (Hons), he joined Ferguson and McIlveen Civil Engineers & Architects where he spent the remainder of his professional life, retiring as Senior Partner in 1994. His legacy lives on today in the numerous projects he led with the enthusiasm for which he was so very well known: the Caves at Marble Arch, the Ulster American Folk Park, Carnfunnock Country Park and the Lagan Weir, to name but a few.



During his busy professional life, Dennis was appointed to the Board of Governors of Bangor Grammar School, serving for 17 years (four as chairman). He was a fierce champion of education and of Bangor Grammar School in particular. He led the development of the College Avenue site, including a new sports hall, a state-of-the-art technology building and planning for a science block, which was completed after his retirement from the Board in 1997.

He was rightly proud of the role he played in the transformation of the school during this period.

Dennis battled a debilitating neurological illness for many years and died, peacefully, on 18 December 2016 at his home in Crawfordsburn. He is survived by his wife, Rosemary, his children, Stewart, Judith and Ruth, and his sisters, Kay and Helen. He will be remembered for his professional expertise, his integrity, his loyalty to his family and friends, his sense of fun and his love for all things good in life.

GORDON FULTON

Gordon Fulton, who died on 25 September 2016 aged 67, attended the school from 1960-1967 and in his final year was Head Boy. He was one of the first students to enrol at the New University of Ulster.



At one stage Gordon had planned to become a Presbyterian minister, but instead, he taught English at Foyle College for most of the 1970s. Although obituaries said he started his acting career with Derry-based amateur group the 71 Players, in fact he had been a leading actor in the school’s drama productions in the mid-1960s, playing Hotspur in Henry IV, Part One in 1965 and in Molière’s The Miser, as the eponymous Harpagon the following year.

He gave up teaching at the age of 33 and went to study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. After he returned to Ireland he worked alongside acclaimed Kerry playwright John B. Keane in Tralee and with Roma Tomelty’s Centre Stage Company, where he added challenging roles to his repertoire such as Krapp’s Last Tape and Last of the Red Hot Lovers. He also acted with the Tinderbox Theatre Company and one of his last stage roles was as a priest in a Brassneck Theatre Company production of The Sweetie Bottle at the Grand Opera House in Belfast.

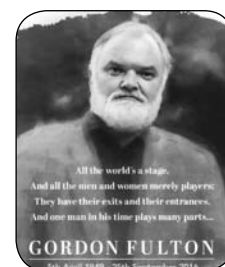
Roma Tomelty described Gordon as a consummate actor who could play a huge range of parts, from Shakespeare to Sam Cree. She added: “He also took classes in our summer schools for 20 years and passed on his enthusiasm about Shakespeare to hundreds of children who called him The Legend.”

In 2012 Gordon was seen by millions of Game of Thrones fans across the world in the second season of the hit HBO series. He played Lord Portan in the episode The North Remembers.

Gordon had been supported by the Arts Council, with a residency award allowing him to work with the Stanislavski Theatre Group in the USA. In 2011 he appeared in Conor McPherson’s play The Weir in the Keegan Theatre in Washington DC, where he had studied in the 1980s. He also had a number of roles in films like Salt on Our Skin, Wilderness and Sunset Heights.

But it was his portrayal of Sammy the barman in Give My Head Peace which ensured he was recognised in Northern Ireland long after the character had vanished from TV screens.

Gordon is survived by his wife Ann, two sons and a granddaughter.



DAVID A. KERR

Past pupil David A. Kerr died on 22 July 2016, in his 84th year. He attended Bangor Grammar School between 1940 and 1949, when he entered Trinity College Dublin at the age of 16. He graduated BA and B. Comm. and later became a Chartered Accountant.

Most of David's working life was spent in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and he retired in 1992 as a Director in the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

David had fond memories of his time at Bangor Grammar School and established many firm friendships which lasted until his death. His three sons, Patrick, Charles and Roger, all attended Connor House and Bangor Grammar School between 1970 and 1990.



David Kerr as a member of the Debating Society in 1948/49

GIFFORD McCONKEY

George Gifford McConkey, who passed away at the Ulster Hospital on 2 April 2017 following a short illness, was 79.

Gifford, as he was known to his many friends, was born on 28 March 1938 and attended Bangor Grammar School between 1950 and 1955.

Although his name for many years was synonymous with Bangor Football Club, his sporting accomplishments at the School were both diverse and noteworthy. Not only did he play rugby for the Under-14s in 1951-52 and the Medallion XV in 1952-53, he also turned out for the BGS cricket 1st XI in 1955.

He was an enthusiastic member of the Old Boys Association (Bangor Grammarians) and was a frequent attendee at the annual Bangor Dinner.

The former vice-principal of Gransha Boys' High School, who resided in Groomsport, was Club President at Bangor FC. He had previously served as Club Secretary, as a Director and then Chairman.

He was a former President of the Irish League Ltd. and the NI Schoolboy FA. He also represented Bangor on the County Antrim FA and was a life member of the Irish FA.

According to a tribute by Bangor FC, Gifford attended Bangor's home matches until the final few weeks of his life, as well as regularly attending Northern Ireland international home games.

Gifford is survived by his wife Elizabeth, daughter Amanda, son Chris and daughter-in-law Helen, and the wider family circle. Following a private service at Roselawn on 6 April, a Service of Thanksgiving was held in Wesley Centenary Methodist Church, Bangor.



Gifford McConkey, a member of the Under 14 XV in 1951/52



MICHAEL WHITFORD

Michael Whitford, who passed away on 20 September 2016, attended Bangor Grammar School between 1991 and 1998, having passed his 11-Plus at the town's Kilmaine Primary School. Michael was a member of 1Y to 5Y and later Lower and Upper Sixth S, in School House. His father Robin and brother Philip also attended the school.



A diligent student, Michael worked hard through his seven years at BGS, also playing hockey – although outside school Michael's sporting passion lay with football. A keen supporter of Glentoran FC, West Ham United FC and Northern Ireland, Michael also loved playing any kind of football he could.

Michael was a popular student amongst his peers and a true gentleman. He certainly lived up to his nickname of 'Whitty', given that he had a sharp wit and also supported West Ham, the club's initials making up the first two letters of his nickname! West Ham also won the FA Cup on the day Michael was born in 1980, and remain the last second tier side to have won the competition.

Michael was a good friend of mine going back to 1990, when we played alongside each other for the 10th Bangor Boys' Brigade football team. He also enjoyed playing five-a-side with work friends. As well as being in the same football team, hockey team and class at Bangor Grammar, Michael and I later worked together in Tesco.

Ambitious and hard-working, Michael started his own company, MW Tax Services, in 2012. He had married Emma on 8 August 2009 and was the proud father of two lovely children, Benjamin and Theo.

While fighting cancer from 2013 to 2016, Michael was very active and open about his illness, helping out with any cancer-related charity he could, and featuring in a BBC documentary.

I know his family, and indeed Michael himself, would appreciate donations of any size to OPANI, which is the Oesophageal Patients Association (Northern Ireland) and is a National Registered Charity, or to Marie Curie (Northern Ireland), which provided nursing care for Michael in his final weeks. The website addresses are www.opani.org/ and www.mariecurie.org.uk/who/what-we-do/marie-curie-northern-ireland



Jonny Blair

•A heartfelt joint tribute penned by Michael's long-time friends, Jonny Blair and Jordie McCluskey, can be read by visiting the Bangor Grammarians Facebook page or grammarians.co.uk. At the time of going to press it had been viewed by almost 5,000 past pupils and friends.

Brian Ralph Graham, born on 17 May 1940, who attended BGS from 1953-57, passed away at Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, on 26 July 2017.

The Class of 2016

Luke McWatters



People always say your time at school flies by, but it is only now that I am out the other side that I truly realise it. Life since then has moved very quickly and it really does seem like only yesterday I was walking out of my last A-Level exam and stepping through those gates as a pupil for the last time.

I vividly remember transferring to Bangor Grammar in second year and beginning my first day there – it involved meeting Mr Connolly in his office and then being introduced to my form class and form teacher Mr Dickson. I could never imagine that five years later I would be Head Boy of that year group and of our incredible school.

As a year group we shared many great memories throughout school and especially in our final year – the highlight for me was winning the Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition alongside my Deputy Head Boy, and one of my closest friends, Curtis Irvine. Having the opportunity to debate in the Stormont Chamber with a wall of blue and gold behind us was an unforgettable experience. I was ecstatic while holding the trophy aloft on the steps of our historic Parliament with the anthem of ‘Comgall Noster’ ringing out. The experiences we had and the opportunities afforded to us by Bangor Grammar have shaped our year group into the young men we are today.

Personally, I have had a fantastic first year studying Modern History and International Relations at the University of St Andrews. Being able to expand upon my interest in history and my love of current affairs has been extremely interesting, though I’m not sure I was expecting so much reading! Outside the lecture theatres I have been trying to make the most of all that St Andrews has to offer. I have continued to play hockey for the University and play in the University six-a-side football league. An avid musician in school, I have continued performing at acoustic café nights and different musical events.

I have been involved heavily in youth work through an organisation called Young Life, while through an organisation Just Love I have been involved in raising awareness around global issues and UK-wide social issues. I have also engaged in local politics in Fife to ensure I can make an impact, even in the four short years I will spend at St Andrews.

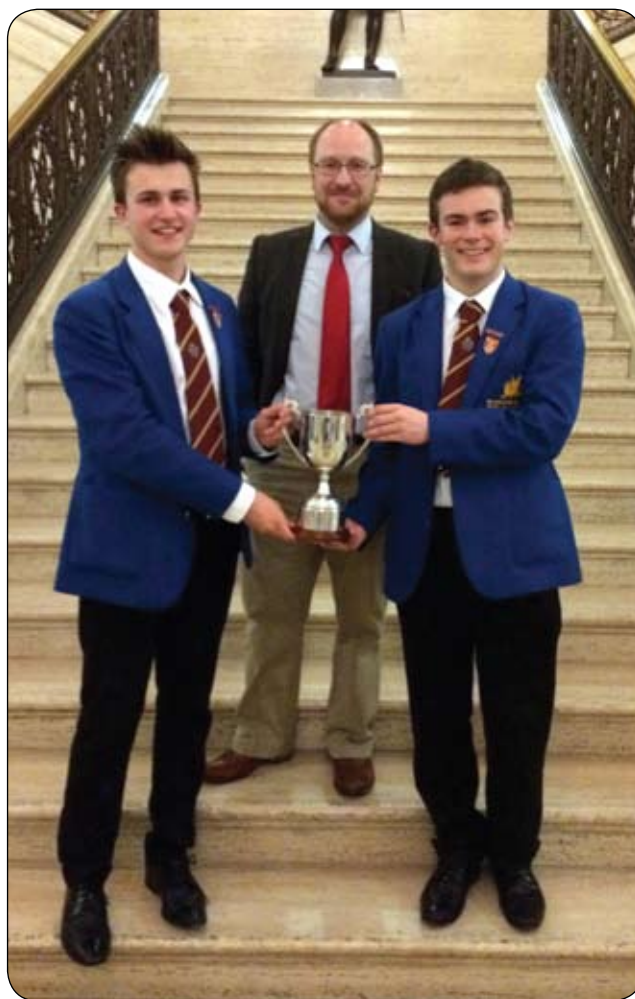
Academic success at A-Level meant we had boys heading off to university all over the UK and some even further afield. It would be impossible to give an account of what everyone is up to now but hopefully this will give you a flavour.

The Class of 2016 is well represented in all walks of student life at some of the country’s finest universities. Matthew O’Boyle, having been to America with the Sutton Trust, is now studying at the illustrious Duke University in South Carolina. From the photographs I have seen and the conversations we have had, Matthew has immersed himself there and is representing us proudly Stateside. Thomas Kane is studying Divinity at St Andrews, while also playing for the varsity water polo team that recently won the Scottish BUCS League.

Curtis Irvine and Tony Heron have both been heavily involved with Just Love in Durham and St Andrews respectively, participating in a 24-hour Stand for Freedom and spending one week eating only boiled rice and beans to raise money for Tearfund. Both have also been furthering their endeavours behind the lens at university. Curtis’ photography business has flourished, with his eye for detail resulting in him covering several weddings this year, and Tony has been making some incredible promotional videos.

Our year had some very talented hockey players, with Matthew Riordan now playing for the Queen’s University 1st XI, while John Darragh at Strathclyde in Glasgow has been elected vice-captain of their 1st XI.

Debating was a popular activity amongst our year group and many have continued the Grammarian tradition at university.



Head of History Sam Wolfenden with Curtis Irvine and Luke McWatters, winners of the NI Schools Debating Competition

Some have incorporated their skills in oratory into their degrees, like Jamie Fulton and Mason Murray who are studying law, while Matthew Bradley is now President of the Queen's Debating Society, with Matthew Bryson another very active member.

Something I find fantastic is the number of boys excelling in their post-BGS lives away from academia. Chris Kent is now in full-time employment and has also come back to work with the Bangor Grammar CCF. At school Chris was extremely passionate about CCF as RSM and it is inspiring to see him continuing to give back to its work today.

Joel Mawhinney decided to pursue his passion for mentalism and is forging a very impressive name for himself. He has performed all over the island of Ireland and throughout the UK – even performing for the Grammarians, both in Bangor and in London. He recently became a Brand Ambassador for Benetti Menswear in Dublin and has worked alongside renowned mentalist David Mead. He performed his own hometown show 'Phobia' at the new SPACE Centre in April and was back in August for the Open House Festival. With Joel continuing to excel, I wouldn't be surprised if we see him going on to great things. Remember that name and keep your pin code safe from him!

I think I speak for all of us when I say we are proud to be Grammarians. Bangor Grammar helped to mould our year into a group of diverse and well-rounded individuals. It is the place where many of my closest friendships were made and it is what continues to tie us together. While we are scattered across the UK, and beyond, we continue to represent the Gryphon. I wish every member of the Class of 2016 all the best for whatever they choose to pursue and hope your days spent at Bangor Grammar continue to be a source of great memories and future opportunities. Floreat Bangoria!



Mentalist Joel Mawhinney, now a Brand Ambassador for Benetti Menswear in Dublin

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Archivist's Report

Barry Greenaway



General

By the time this edition of *The Grammarian* is published, I shall no longer be School Archivist. It is time that someone younger took over the role and I sincerely hope such a person will be found.

My time as Archivist has been enormously rewarding for me but the past few years have been increasingly difficult due to a growing lack of interest on the part of the School in the archival collection. It is now well over four years since we moved to Gransha Road. The School photographs, the winning team photographs and the individual achievement photographs are still gathering dust in the undercroft, instead of being displayed where the boys can see and be inspired by them. Only the current Sixth Form has seen them before in College Avenue.

The Archive Facility is not just a collection of records: it is the School's heritage. It has been described as 'the Soul of Bangor Grammar School' and I would like the *Grammarian* family to know what it contains and how it functions. Below you will see a short description of The Bangor Grammar School Archive Facility. These records are the heritage of a great School and my personal tribute to it. I ask only that the School's heritage, whether physical, digital or spiritual, be cared for and that each new generation of boys, staff, parents and governors be taught to know, love and respect not only it but also what it represents.

Contacts

Those listed below sought assistance/ made contact from September 2016 onwards and the Archivist was happy to provide the services requested:

Allan Smith; Ken Best; Lyn MacCallum; County Down Spectator (updating Iain Gray); Gary Greer (Somme); Bangor Rotary (request to speak); Robert Scott (on cricket photographs); Ray Elliott (on the Sir Walter Smiles Cup); Terence Bowman (who ran it to earth along with two other 'lost' trophies); Andy McFeeters (his father's writings); Stephen Montgomery; Mark Reid; Michael Dempster; Gerald Glass; Carl Phillips; Cameron Woodrow; Mireille McNutt; Sam Wolfenden; Carl McClean.

The Bangor Grammar School Archives

Back in 2003, when Stephen Connolly asked me to continue as Archivist on the day I retired as Librarian, the Archives had already been part of the Library for over a decade. It had all begun with a bequest from the family of *Grammarian* Edgar McNeilly, a former Chairman of the Board. The gift was his personal archive of 227 items relating to Bangor, North Down and Ulster in general, both before and after the Second World War. Out of it grew both the General Archive and, of course, the School Archive. Edgar's bequest is still with us and separately catalogued as the McNeilly Archive.

The catalogued archives consist of four separate collections: The McNeilly, The General, The Stockton and The School Archives. The General Archive is a collection of events, personalities and matters of general interest, nationally and internationally. In particular it contains a collection of original newspapers going back to the early 20th Century. The Stockton Archive is the gift of Norman Stockton, the eminent political commentator. It is a unique collection of 121 politically-oriented documents relating to the latter half of the 20th Century in Ulster and a record of a remarkable professional career.

The School Archive consists of 1,742 catalogued artefacts and items (to date), covering every sector of School life, past and present. The collection includes such precious items as the original hand-written Deed of Bequest (1828 and 1856) which established Bangor Endowed School; a full set of the *Gryphon* magazine from 1946 onwards; examples of an earlier School magazine called 'BES' (1920s); all annual school photographs (also digitised) and septennial photographs from 1919 to the present; all known school registers; all known silver trophies and other trophies; all existing framed winning team photographs, and a sub-archive of Connor House artefacts and records.

Of especial note is the collection of Honours Blazers and caps presented by Old Boys or their families and dating back to the early 1930s. The School Archive Facility is recorded in a Catalogue of just over 2,300 entries using a system I devised 24 years ago, since there is no universally accepted format for archive material. Apart from the catalogued items, Old Boys' original reports and files from the 1930s until manual files were cancelled in 2004 are preserved in a bank of box files and filing cabinets, together with a card index of Old Boys from the same period. The card index, arranged alphabetically, provides an individual's School number which enables one to find a file.

There is one other provision within the Archive Facility and that is the Bangor Grammar School Register. This is an unpublished digital record of all known pupils and staff from the late 19th Century to around 2013. It also includes Head Boys, Team Captains, CCF Regimental Sergeant Majors, Governors (Chairmen) and Speech Day Guests of Honour. There may be some gaps (one is not infallible!) and it is, of course, designed to be annually updated. Y14 leavers are asked to complete an information pro forma but it has proved very difficult to include leavers under Y14.

In conclusion, I want to record that the custom of using the words from the School Song, *Carmen Nostrum*, as the School's 'battle cry' – as shown below – was instituted in the latter years of the last century by the School Archives. I am very happy to know it is now used by everyone.

Floriat Bangoria!

Some acquisitions since September 2016

A.M. Gray: Position of Trust (novel by member of BGS staff), 2014
 BGS Abaana Uganda Project, 26 June – 11 July 2015 (inc. two newsletters)
 BGS Parents Association Ball, 3 October 2015 (documents)
 BGS Remembrance Service, 2015 (two copies)
 BGS junior poetry classes, 2015
 Grammarian Dinner, 2015 (documents)
 BGS School Diary, 2002 (issued to pupils)
 BGS Child Protection summary and fire notice, 2016
 Cancer Fund for Children acknowledgement certificate; other 'thank you' certificates, 2015
 Duke of Edinburgh Award attendance register (blank)
 BGS Work Experience pupil log, 2016
 Funeral service sheet for Una Bonar, wife of Irwin Bonar, 2016
 Shakespeare Schools Festival, BGS at The Mac theatre (Macbeth highly commended)

Parental advice for GCSE candidates, September 2016
 BGS World Challenge 2003, Tanzania
 BGS Carol Service 2015, Bangor Parish Church
 BGS AQE information evening for P6 parents, April 2016
 BGS Medallion XV results for 1965/66 (inc. dates)
 BGS events/ occasions/ activities, 2015/16 (from notice boards)
 BGS Prospectus, 2016/17
 BGS staff phone numbers and House allocations, 2015
 BGS Public Examination special charges, 2015
 BGS Weekly Bulletins, 2014/15
 BGS Assembly Announcements, 2014/15
 Gaw Cup for Junior Long Jump, 1933 (IMO)
 Eadie Bowling Cup (Cricket), 1983
 Curry Cup for senior singles badminton championship (presented by T. McA. Curry), 1962
 BGS 1st XV and Medallion XV display photographs with labels (various dates)
 BGS Administrative information, 1990s

'Lost' swimming trophies are recovered

Bangor Grammarians can report that no fewer than three seemingly lost swimming trophies have now been restored to the School Archives thanks to an online appeal.

Former pupil Steven McQuillan – whose attention was drawn by a friend to last May's appeal – contacted Grammarian editor Terence Bowman to say he had the Sir Walter Smiles Cup, which was first awarded back in 1950. The winner then was Ray Elliott, whose memories appear elsewhere in this edition of the magazine.



Steven McQuillan with the trio of recovered trophies

Steven and his brothers Mark and Peter, all top swimmers, brought considerable honour to the school during the 1990s and early years of the 21st Century. The trio of recovered trophies – the Sir Walter Smiles Cup (for the top individual swimmer at the annual BGS Gala), along with the Intermediate Victor Ludorum Cup (presented by Mrs M. Lampe in 1973) and the Open Individual Medley Cup (presented by Hugo Simpson in 1980) – were won by one or other of the brothers in the late 1990s. Even they can't be sure which and there are no reports in *The Gryphon* or *The County Down Spectator* to help confirm the winners' identity.

The School Gala, which had moved from Pickie Pool to the Indoor Leisure Centre at Castle Park in the early 1970s, was discontinued before the turn of the Millennium and the school did not seek the return of the trophies, which joined a small

mountain of other awards gained at that time by the sporting McQuillan brothers.

Two of the three trophies were not, in fact, among those listed with photographs in the online appeal. Interestingly, both the Lampe Cup and the Simpson Cup were presented to the school by a parent of a previous Sir Walter Smiles Cup winner (Paul Lampe and Conrad Simpson).

Given the success of the appeal and the likelihood that other cup winners from that period might not have been aware of it, Bangor Grammarians hope more past pupils might still come forward. Cups for the backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly, plus freestyle (BGS and Connor House), as well as the Inter-House Shield, remain 'lost'. Your help in bringing about their return will be greatly appreciated.

Please contact Terence Bowman via terencehbowman@gmail.com or call him on 0795 1843604.



The Sir Walter Smiles Cup, first awarded in 1950



Trophy winners from the Bangor Grammar School swimming gala, held at Pickie Pool in September 1966. From left: W. R. Rowley (breaststroke), W. D. McKeown (freestyle), R. H. Thompson (freestyle, Connor House), W. R. Anderson (diving), D. A. Eadie (captain of Dufferin House), and R. Whyte (top swimmer, backstroke and butterfly). Picture courtesy of the County Down Spectator

I think of Bangor Grammar School as a community, not a building

Ian Hunter



After suffering a perforated appendix on 3 January 1969, I found myself in hospital for 16 days. Soon after being discharged, the advertisement seeking a music teacher for Bangor Grammar School appeared in the daily newspapers.

I remember nothing about the interview other than there were only two people present, Headmaster Randall Clarke and me. Before it, I recall sitting outside his office and Betty Sangster confirming some of my details and telling me in no uncertain terms just exactly what I was qualified and not qualified to do in the school. Most memorable was the aroma of their two offices. It wasn't a 'bad' smell but rather a distinctive one and it stayed there all my 32 years in the school.



*A staff group from the early 1970s (from left):
Irwin Bonar, Matt Gillan, Lowry Johnston, Peter
Lagrué and Jack Murphy*

And so it was that in September of that year I, along with George Cameron and Tony Ragg, started teaching in BGS. Unlike some of my colleagues, my dealings with, and memories of, Randall Clarke were (and remain) good ones. No one could ever doubt that his heart was in BGS and the school came first in order of importance.

The Staff Room in the old Crosby House was a small, old-fashioned place. One of the first faces I saw there was Bill Langtry's. Bill, with his deep, booming, bass speaking voice, had taught me at Annadale Grammar School. To the younger me he was strict, appeared very serious, severe and a bit scary. It probably didn't help that I hated science, was lazy and unlearned in it. However, I was soon to learn that if ever there was a man made of cotton wool and wrapped in steel it was Bill Langtry. I enjoyed his friendship and help, and admired his dedication to BGS.

Daily Assembly included a badly-sung hymn, chosen from a limited range in the school's own hymnbook. The piano was played by Joe McKeown, then Head of Science. I did not interfere with the status quo. Many years before me, Joe had been a choirboy in Belfast Cathedral and we met socially at some annual past choristers' dinners. His colourful life was kept well-hidden and included being a Rosicrucian and a young

placard-carrying protester for teachers' rights. He was responsible for creating the school timetable and reputedly the first thing he did each year was to insert free periods for himself on Friday afternoons!

At that time the only female teacher on the BGS staff was the wonderful Head of Art, Miss Edith K. Addy, who called all her colleagues 'Mr'. On one memorable occasion, standing on the stage with other members of staff behind the Headmaster, as the hymn was announced she turned to her neighbour, a Geography teacher and subsequent VP and SVP, and said: "Tell me Mr X, are you singing the words or the tune today?" I still don't know if this was a reflection on Joe McKeown's piano playing, Mr X's singing or both.

In those very early days, with the Music Department still in its infancy, I had a little more time in the Staff Room than soon became the case. I mostly sat in silence and often marvelled at the intellectual conversations of men like Jack Murphy, Mike Foley, Jack Dalzell and George Heuston – an English Department worthy of any university faculty. Along with the likes of Bruce Greenfield, they spoke in sentences in which I seemed only to recognise the conjunctions. Pupils taught by them were indeed fortunate.

Of course, many moans of discontentment were aired in this room. George Heuston often ended these with "Someone should tell the Headmaster", though he was numbered amongst those unwilling to volunteer to actually do so!

During my 32 years in BGS, Jack Murphy was the only teacher to die in service. His death was untimely and deeply sad, widowing his equally young wife, Rosie, also at one time a member of the Maths Department teaching staff, and denying so many boys the benefits of his mind, philosophy and teaching. When I think of the Bangor Grammar School where I worked, I think of a community not a building, and our community had been robbed of Jack Murphy by the cruelty of illness.

Amongst other things during my four years as a student preparing for a life of teaching, I learned the importance of the caretaker. Back in 1969 at BGS that was Jim Crossan, a tall, thin, gentle giant of a man whose office was the garage outside Miss Addy's Art Room and what was the first Music Room. It was here that the legally-required photograph of the Monarch



*'The wonderful Miss Edith K.
Addy'*

was kept hanging. Jim was ably assisted by Alex Colville, a parent whose son, Mitchell, studied Law at university, and Alex Lightbody.

I also recall John McCutcheon, who left for a similar job in Bloomfield Road PS, where BGS Old Boy, musician and trombonist Julian Byers became Headmaster. By the time Fred Neill became caretaker the Music Department had moved from its first location to Room 27, eventually Plus 26, at the end of the downstairs corridor in the Orlit Building, and then to its last place in College Avenue, the entire top floor.

It was here I was working late one afternoon without noticing the cleaners coming and going. Eventually finished, I locked the Department and went down to the main door but found it was also locked and the school was deserted. Fortunately a Payphone had been installed in the corridor close to the Staff Room door. From here I called the Bursar who lived nearby and he arrived to release me. The fortunate result of this experience was me receiving the key to the school's main doors. 'Fortunate' not only for me but much more frequently for the number of pupils who went home on a Friday afternoon only to remember they'd left their instruments in school and needed them over the weekend!

It was on one such occasion that I walked down through the Connor House playground to unlock the door outside the Medical Room and go upstairs to the Music Department. On opening the door I was met by the most incredible heat and the presence of a Morris Mini squeezed into the limited space in the corridor. The explanation was that Fred had painted the Mini and the heating was on full in the Orlit Building to dry the paint!

Eventually the school was fortunate in appointing Matt McClements and Peter Sharpe to the Maintenance Department. The Music Department simply could not have made its music in the varied locations it found itself without the willing and total co-operation and help of these two gentlemen. On my retirement Matt and Peter quietly presented me with a tool kit and on the lid's card, after my name, is the suffix 'HMM' – Honorary Maintenance Man. To this day it remains one of my most treasured possessions.

After the number of female teachers started growing, and led by a Scottish lady, pressure increased to form a Staffroom Committee to arrange social aspects of the teachers' lives in BGS. One of the first actions of the new group was to democratically arrange for the provision of daily newspapers.

People were invited to list their suggestions – a mixture of the serious and the witty – on a page pinned to the notice board. At the subsequent general staffroom meeting, voting supported first one, then a second and then a third newspaper. Voting was then invited for the purchase of a fourth daily paper, prompting a certain senior member of staff to ask why we needed more. He certainly didn't have time to read more than three papers a day!

The questioner was utterly bewildered by the gales of laughter which greeted his statement. This same person, noted and respected as a brilliant teacher of his subject, is fondly remembered by many former pupils for the phrase: "Now watch the board while I go through it one more time!"

I think affectionately of so many colleagues, including the following:

- Gordon Thomson, who always addressed the HM as 'Mr Headmaster' at formal meetings;
- The Art teacher who introduced me to the phrase "the best of bad taste", one I've felt compelled to use far too often;
- The History teacher with a love of Wagner but who claimed his favourite piece of music was 'Edelweiss' from The Sound of Music;
- Harry Eadie with his catchphrase "Get off my cricket pitch!" in the days when it was located outside the wooden huts near the hedge at the back of some College Avenue houses;
- Bruce Greenfield who hated the misuse of the word 'first' as in: "When we were first married". He would ask: "How many times have you been married?" or "Do you mean, 'When we were married at first'?"
- The endlessly patient Head of PE who was evicted from his teaching room, the gym, every time it came to public exams, concerts, speech days, carol services, etc.;
- The Head of Geography who plunged Enniskillen into darkness by hitting electric power cables when out practising his javelin throwing in the grounds of Portora Royal School where he then taught;
- The English/ History teacher whose work in retirement as School Archivist seems not to have received its deserved appreciation;



Sports Day action back in 1974 (from left): Jim Driscoll, Jack Murphy, Alan Abraham, Jack Dalzell and Tony Ragg



Gordon Thomson, for many years Headmaster of Connor House



Ray Mowat on Sports Day duty in 1974

• My friend and former colleague Ray Mowat and his wife Ann who are directly responsible for the life of retirement I now live in Spain. Happily we meet when they are here and enjoy reminiscing together.

As news of my impending departure from BGS slowly spread, I came into the Department one day to find two Second Formers waiting to go into a flute lesson. One asked if it was true I was leaving and I said it was. He wanted to know what I was going to do in retirement. I enquired what he meant and he asked if I was going to “take up old people’s hobbies”.

“Like what?” I asked, and he replied, “Golf”. Happily that young boy, now a successful 28-year-old History graduate of Aberdeen University, is one of the many former pupils who number amongst my Facebook friends. The answer to his question? No, I haven’t taken up golf and the only old person’s hobby in which I indulge is to become an increasingly grumpy old man.

To hand I have a long list of former colleagues I haven’t mentioned and of course I remember all my Music Department teaching colleagues and instrumental tutors. Of the latter I daren’t mention individual

memories or anecdotes in case of a reciprocal article and I fear they may have more material about me than I have of them.

In truth, there were so many characters amongst the members of the staff, pillars of the school and giants in education, people who made teaching in Bangor Grammar School their life’s work and not just another step on a pre-determined career ladder. I salute them all wherever they may be.



Ian Hunter today



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'He liked to put three pennies on the stumps as a challenge to the bowlers'

Ray Elliott



Hello fellow BGS Old Boys! My name is Ray Elliott and I attended Bangor Grammar School between 1947 and 1951. My teachers during that time included Miss Addy (Art), Miss Tipping (History), Mr Hawtin (English), Mr Johnson (Arithmetic), Mr Shanks (Algebra), Mr Heuston (for Geography), Mr Cole-Baker (Science) and Miss McPherson (French).

Amazingly, I remember them all like it was yesterday (perhaps because they managed to make more of an impression on me, than I probably did on them!). I really enjoyed my years at school, but I was more into sports than studies. I think I just worked hard enough to earn a pass each year. I played rugby and cricket, but never well enough to make the teams as my main sport was swimming.

I did make that school team, which, if I remember correctly, consisted entirely of swimmers who belonged to the Bangor Amateur Swimming Club. We competed against Methody, Inst., Campbell, etc., and did reasonably well. I got my swimming colours and at the school's annual gala in 1950 became the first holder of the Sir Walter Smiles Cup. At that time it was awarded for a 100-yard race (three lengths of Pickie Pool).

A memory from schooldays involved caretaker Fred Conway, when he was removing a shed that stood outside the school's back entrance. It had a sloped roof and Fred had dismantled three sides, leaving the tallest one standing. He was picking up something from the floor, when a gust of wind toppled the side towards him. I had been sitting on the fence watching the demolition and yelled "Look out!" Fred jumped clear just in time but he was quite shaken up and told everyone I had saved his life. I couldn't do anything wrong in his eyes after that.

Two other memories involved Mr. Johnson. First, he would come to the cricket pitch at lunch and bat to whomever was bowling. He liked to put three pennies on the stumps as a challenge to the bowlers, who got to keep any pennies they knocked down. I managed a slow-breaking spinner, down went the pennies and I was told to show up for cricket team practice after school. Unfortunately, my bowling skills failed to reach the same levels that afternoon and I was not invited again!

My other memory of Mr. Johnson was when the swimming team was having its picture taken. We changed in the cloakroom inside the school front door and the picture was to be taken on the front steps. Another boy and I had a little incident and as I retaliated, Mr. J came in to usher us outside. Bad timing, I got a clip on the head and was told to smarten up. Now, that wasn't the first clip on the head I'd received from a teacher, but it was the first from him and he was my favourite teacher. I was mortified and of course was teased by the rest of the team, which accounts for my pout when the picture was taken. Too bad we were not in the digital age then, when the picture could have been viewed right away.

Should you want, for some reason, to identify the culprit who caused me to retaliate, study the picture and see the one who looks so pleased with himself... Never fear, I got my revenge, I beat him to the Sir Walter Smiles Cup!

I left BGS in 1951 and served an apprenticeship in the lumber trade with Lytle and Pollock in Belfast until 1956. Then my brother David and I emigrated to Canada to seek our fortunes. My eldest brother, Vincent, stayed at home. Sadly, David passed away in 2005; happily, Vincent still lives in Bangor.

We worked in Toronto for a while, then in Northern Ontario at Elliot Lake where uranium mines were being built. In 1958 we moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba, where David had friends and then we went to Northern Manitoba where a large nickel mine was under construction. In late 1959 we returned to Winnipeg, with David going on to Calgary, Alberta, and then to Vancouver, British Columbia.

I stayed in Winnipeg and got a job with Hudson Bay House, where I met the girl of my dreams and future wife Lillian.



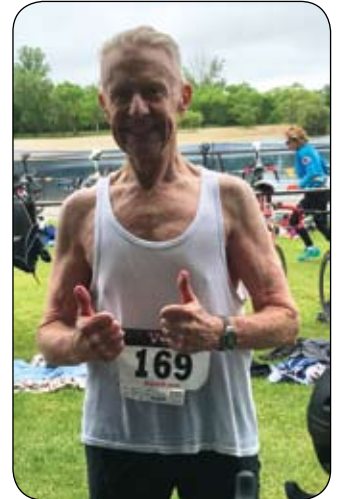
The School Swimming Team in 1950 with teacher Mr Johnson and Headmaster Mr Ricketts. From left: Ray Elliott, Teddy McKeen, Graham Wallace, Kevin Carter, Alan Reid and Bertie Styles.

In 1960 I took a job with a large insurance company, Great West Life, and Lillian and I were married the following year. We now have three children and four grand-children. I attended university at night and obtained an accounting degree in 1968. I retired after 31 years in 1991.

On the sporting side, these days I play some golf, but I did a lot of running in the late Seventies and all of the Eighties, completing 10 marathons between 1980 and 1989. About four years ago I returned to swimming and started cycling. I did the aqua-bike parts of a Sprint Triathlon in 2016 and hope to do another one or two this year, I would really love to complete a full one, but can't because of Achilles tendonitis – too much marathon running I'm afraid!

When Grammarian editor Terence Bowman asked me to write this and to mention my school teachers, I joked that mine had managed to educate me in spite of myself. I realise that was all too true and the older I have become, the more I appreciate them for all their efforts. Recently I have enrolled in a computer French course – Miss McPherson would be proud. Considering French was my weakest subject, she'd probably also be very surprised.

Well that's it from me. Cheers and good health to all BGS past pupils, especially to any who may remember me.



Ray still competes in triathlons (aqua-bike parts)

Boxing Day hockey a great success

The traditional Boxing Day hockey fixtures proved a great success with a good number of players participating (as pictured) in two matches at the school's Gransha Road pitch. Plans are in hand for a change to the format this coming 26 December to allow more players to take part, given the high level of interest.





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Peter Weir (1980-87) was the only former pupil of Bangor Grammar School to seek – and win – a seat in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections of 2 March 2017. The former Education Minister had previously served as a North Down representative but transferred to Strangford following the reduction in seats per constituency from six to five. He received 3,543 first preference votes.

Pickie Bowling Club, featuring Bangor Grammarians' own **Norman Irwin** (1960-72), completed the indoor double for the first time in 2017, securing both the Jackson Cup and the Bangor Indoor Bowling League. During the season the team lost just three times across all competitions.

Award-winning author **Colin Bateman** (1973-78) joined the stars – in his own right – at the Venice Film Festival on 7 September 2016. It was the venue for the world premiere of *The Journey* (written by Colin and directed by Belfastman Nick Hamm), a fictionalised account of what previously implacable enemies Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness might have said to each other during their first one-to-one encounter, before going on to change the course of Northern Ireland's history in their respective roles as DUP First Minister and Sinn Féin Deputy First Minister (aka 'The Chuckle Brothers').

Ian Paisley is portrayed in the film by Timothy Spall, perhaps best known for a recurring role in the Harry Potter films, while Colm Meaney, who plays the part of Martin McGuinness, appeared as Miles O'Brien in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Meaney subsequently won the Best Actor award at the Irish Film and Television Awards for his role. Following the film's UK and Irish premiere at the Movie House in Belfast on 4 May (2017), it went on general release.

There was a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the 2017 New Year Honours List for **Raymond Orr** (1953-57). The retired police officer devotes his time and efforts to a number of charities, including the Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Foundation and the Craigavad and Helen's Bay branch of the Royal British Legion's poppy appeal.

Retired accountant **Sam Goldblatt** (1961-68) was awarded the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2017 New Year Honours List for services to business and the community. Founder of Goldblatt McGuigan Accountants in 1978, Sam is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and is a past chairman of the Ulster Society of Chartered Accountants.

He also serves on the board of Giving Northern Ireland, which describes its mission as 'to champion philanthropy/giving in Northern Ireland, focusing on high net worth individuals and corporates and to build a strong independent voice for giving by working in collaboration, co-operation and partnership with sister organisations.'

The work of 27-year-old former pupil Private **Stephen Murphy**, a dog handler with the First Military Working Dogs Regiment (based in Germany with the Royal Army Veterinary Corps), was highlighted in November 2016 as part of a special series in the County Down Spectator about local soldiers training in Belize.

Stephen had joined the Royal Irish Regiment when doing his A-Levels but after learning about the Veterinary Corps he followed his passion for animals and decided to become a dog handler instead. Dogs were used extensively in Afghanistan to detect explosive devices and were able to save many lives.

Recent past pupils **Daniel** and **Matthew Peacock** and **Lee Puckrin** committed themselves to spending two years serving, at their own expense, as missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The young men were required to learn a new language, as well as the local culture, as they were assigned to foreign-speaking missions.

Daniel recently returned home from Hong Kong and is now fluent in Cantonese, while Matthew is serving in South Korea. Lee learned Greek and is serving in Greece.

Paul Watson (1986-93) had the honour of being appointed by the International Cycling Union (UCI) to serve as a member of the five-strong Commissionaires' Panel for the track competitions at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.

During 2016 alone he worked in a similar capacity at a number of prestigious events, including the UCI Track Cycling World Championships in London, the UCI Paracycling World Championships in Italy and some half-dozen international road races in Europe.

There was success at the 67th annual Berlin International Film Festival for *Butterfly Kisses*, which was produced by London-based Blue Shadow Films, a company co-founded by former Bangor Grammar School pupil **Greer Ellison** (1996-2010). It received the Crystal Bear for best film in the Generation category.

Greer, who graduated with a First Class Honours degree in writing from the University of Buckingham, set up the successful London-based development and production company with business partner Merlin Merton. He is now head of development, as well as being an award-winning writer (*Butterfly Kisses* being an example).

While still at school he appeared in the film *Cherrybomb* along with James Nesbitt and Rupert Grint (of Harry Potter fame), but subsequently decided to make the move into writing, saying in an interview: "I had a bit of a flair for it, and also one of my teachers told me I would not be able to do it."

And finally... It didn't go unnoticed in the local Press that past pupil **Jim Dornan** (1955-67) had a cameo role as

a Policing Board member in the final series of BBC drama *The Fall*, which starred his own actor son Jamie – a past pupil of Methodist College, Belfast, but we'll not go there!

However, suggestions that this was Jim's acting debut – following an auspicious career as one of Northern Ireland's best known gynaecologists – fall well short of the mark. In fact, as confirmed by our own school historian Trevor Gray, one of Jim's BGS contemporaries, he appeared in a number of School productions, most notably playing Lady Macbeth (!) in *Macbeth* and Falstaff in *Henry IV, Part One*, as well

as a character in Moliere's *The Miser*.

No word as yet on whether Jim will have a role in any of his son's future film adaptations!



*Jim Dornan (on the right) appears in *The Fall* as a Policing Board member*

In a line or two...

The new District Governor of Rotary in Ireland is Garth Arnold (1965-77), a member of Donaghadee Rotary Club. Meanwhile, James O'Fee (1957-67) takes over from Gavin Walker (1969-74) as president of Bangor Rotary Club.

Lifelong fan Nicky Davidson (1960-72) heads the new board of Bangor Football Club, taking over from long-serving chairman Trevor Best (1970-75)

Dr Peter Hamill (1978-85) has been appointed to the management board of the Controlled Schools Support Council, the advocacy body for the government-controlled sector of Northern Ireland's education system

Saracens head coach Mark McCall (1979-86) had further cause for celebration after the team won the European Rugby Champions Cup for the second year running, beating Clermont Auvergne 28-17 at Murrayfield on 13 May

Royal Ulster Yacht Club member Nigel Hamilton (1963-71) travelled to Bermuda in early June to participate in the handing over of the Sir Thomas Lipton Cup to the yacht club which won the Challenger Series and thus earned the right to compete in the America's Cup

Ex-Northern Ireland international Keith Gillespie (1986-91) has started an agency with former Ards midfielder Brian Adair called OneTwo, their aim being to represent footballers all over the United Kingdom and beyond

Raymond Parker (1964-71), representing Bangor Hockey Club, received a Lifetime Service Recognition Award from Mayor Deborah Girvan at the 2016 Ards and North Down Sports Awards, held at the Aurora Complex in March 2017

Assistant minister Marty Gray (1997-2004) drew on the experience he'd gained in School productions to 'star' in the one-man play *Heaven, How I Got Here* at Easter (7 and 8 April) in Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church

Chris Cargo (1990-2004), whose exploits with the Ireland hockey team at the 2016 Olympic Games were recounted in the 2016 edition of *The Grammarian*, has been back in the headlines. He helped Ireland to secure a place at the 2018 World Cup in India, thanks to a 1-0 victory over New Zealand in a World League 3 play-off on 22 July. Earlier in the competition, Chris scored the winning strike in the vital 4-3 shoot-out win that followed a 1-1 draw with France.



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