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NICK HOLMAN

CHAIRMAN

The period since our last AGM can be described as more than a little interesting. At the time of that AGM the Board was in full knowledge of the pending sale of the School, but we were under a strict confidentiality restriction. With Galaxy Global requiring an unfettered title to the School property the surrender of our long term lease of the OPM Suite was necessary to enable the sale to proceed. It was agreed we would receive £630,000 for the surrender based on the buy-back provisions in the lease. We agreed to donate £80,000 to go towards bursaries and to waive the repayment of the £50,000 loans previously made to the School. So we had a net receipt of £550,000. As part of the deal we have been granted rights to continue our use of the Suite for Committee meetings and social events.

This created a new responsibility for the Board to ensure the capital is used for the benefit of OPMs and the School. Initially we spread the money over short term investments but have recently appointed OPM Simon Lake as our financial adviser with a view to securing longer term investments. We continue to hold our property investment in Saltash which is fully let and generating a gross income of around £18,000. While the final details of the investment strategy are being worked on, it is anticipated that we will keep a small proportion on easy-access accounts with the balance invested with the emphasis on income return rather than capital growth.

So what do we do with the income? We have financed the cost of the military memorial which was formally unveiled last year in the Garden by Reception, better known to many of us as the garden to the former Headmaster's House.

We continue to support the Development Office at £600 per month enabling us to work with Debbie Horner for our liaison with OPMs. The School is investing in a new database this summer and this will improve our communication with the members.

Next year we celebrate the School's 150th anniversary. As part of those

celebrations the Club has agreed to fund the production of a new book by our President Chris Robinson, covering the history of those 150 years.

We are also at the early stages of discussion with the School on the funding of bursaries specifically aimed at the children of OPMs. The details have still to be agreed and so I anticipate the scheme will be launched next year.

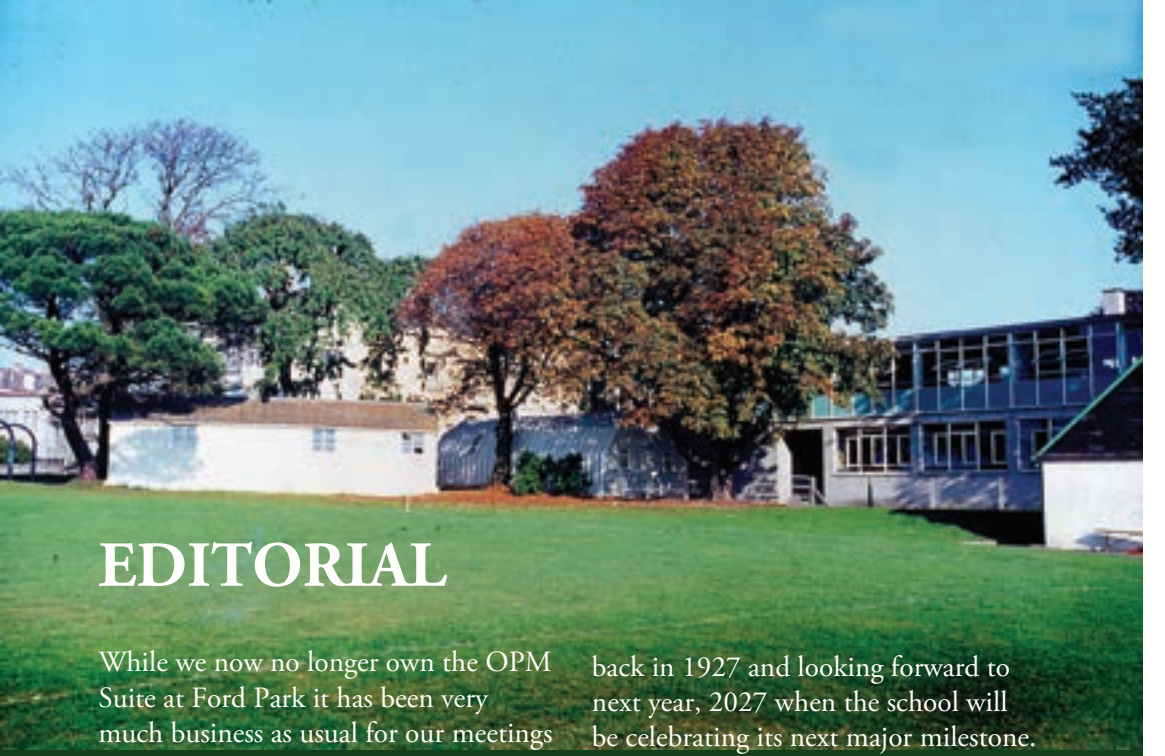
The Committee is ever mindful of the fact that the younger OPMs rarely return to Plymouth to live and work. Our Club Correspondent Jeremy Ford has done sterling work in resurrecting a social gathering in London. And together with the School, a similar event is being organised in Bristol. It is hoped these will become regular events and can be followed by events in other locations. The Club is willing to subsidise these gatherings to encourage local clusters of OPMs both to maintain friendships made at school and create new ones among the OPM community.

The Plymouth social events in the Suite have continued with good attendances rewarding Bob Foulkes for his hard work in drumming up support.

When I was asked to consider becoming Chairman back in 2018, it was against the backdrop of a somewhat fragmented relationship between the Club and the School. The incumbents at the School didn't really understand what the Club was about and had no interest in finding out. There was some pressure to remove the Club from the School premises all together. I am pleased to say that with the passage of time we have seen an improvement in the relationship first when Tim Williams took over as Bursar and now more recently since the arrival of Peter Watts as the new Head. Peter has made it clear he wants us to work together and for the OPMs to be more closely involved in activities at the School. It has been our pleasure to welcome Peter to the School and we look forward to the future with him and William Robertson the newly appointed Business Manager.

Having been in post since 2018 and reflecting how we navigated the School relationship, the covid period and where the Club now stands, I feel my original remit has been fulfilled. I am a firm believer that the Chair should rotate at fairly short intervals and accordingly now feel the time is right for me to stand down. I am delighted that Jason Sweby has agreed to be my successor. He is younger and has the added benefit of his children attending the School. He has the Club's interests very much to heart. I will remain as a director to provide continuity and succession and support Jason in whatever way I can.

Nothing now remains but to thank my fellow directors and Committee members over the past eight years for their support and determination to see the Club survive; to see it fulfil its obligations to OPMs and the School. I also thank the wider membership for extending to me the privilege of being Chair of our wonderful Club.



EDITORIAL

While we now no longer own the OPM Suite at Ford Park it has been very much business as usual for our meetings and official social functions at the facility and indeed we have more events booked up in the coming weeks and months.

The same is true of the School itself, in that while it is now under different ownership, it is still business as usual for those running and attending Plymouth College. Concerns have been raised but to date they are without foundation. OPMs and the School continue to prosper and to achieve great results in the sporting, entertainment and business world, in men's and women's rugby and now in football too! Who would have imagined that 50 years ago.

It is interesting to see that the Headmaster for his piece in this year's OPM Magazine has majored on a piece written 100 years ago when the school was celebrating its 50th anniversary, back in 1927 and looking forward to next year, 2027 when the school will be celebrating its next major milestone. Clearly, like a lot of organisations, there are often more than one single date to celebrate. This is undoubtedly the case here as, while Plymouth College is 150 years old next year, PMC itself, courtesy of the M element - Mannamead School - with whom the College merged in 1896, is now 173 years old and will celebrate 175 years in 2028.

It reminds me of some work I've done recently as part of the Royal William Yard 200 Celebrations. Although it is actually 200 years since work began on the massive Naval Victualling Office complex at Stonehouse, the Yard wasn't actually completed until 1835, which is why it's called the Royal William Yard and not the Royal George Yard, as it would have been had not George IV died half way through the construction process.

One of the ways that Plymouth College 150 is going to be celebrated is, as the Head points out, by the creation of a new Plymouth College skills' based diploma, one that reflects Plymouth's unique status as a leading marine based research and development area. It will add yet more emphasis to the strapline coined by late-marketing strategist and Plymouth College governor, Peter Jones: Plymouth truly is 'Britain's Ocean City.'

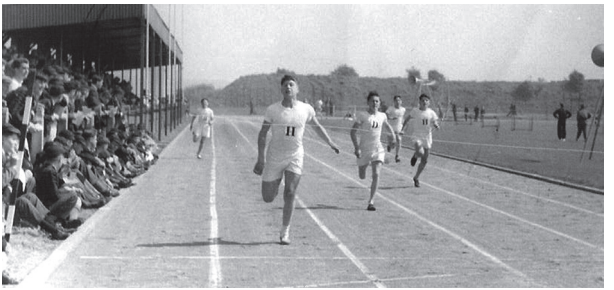
Some have argued that we actually sit on the edge of the English Channel rather than one of the world's great oceans, but the reality is that Plymouth has been at the heart of oceanography for thousands of years: from the Phoenicians coming here for tin from Dartmoor in the second century BC; Drake being the first seafaring captain to compete a voyage of circumnavigation in 1580; the Clovis being the first English ship to trade with Japan in 1614; the Pilgrims crossing the Atlantic in 1620; Cook setting sail on each of his journeys to the Pacific in the late eighteenth century; Darwin and Fitzroy heading off on their global adventure in 1832 and Shackleton's expedition to Antarctica in 1914 – each and everyone of them linking the city with different waterways of the world.

The history of this city is inextricably linked to so much of the history of the world while the history of this city has been hugely impacted by the history of Plymouth College over the last 150 years and hence another of the projects for the celebrations for 2027 will be a new history of the school.

The new volume will acknowledge the previous publication, *Plymouth College the First Hundred Years* and then bring the story right up to the present day. And this is where you might be able to help. Your editor is on the look out for any material that may help inform and/or illustrate a comprehensive history of the school. Particularly the second half of the twentieth century before photography as an everyday means of recording images became available to all courtesy of that almost universal tool of today – the mobile phone.

Already we have access to every school magazine (*Plymothian*), every *OPM Magazine* and other printed ephemera, however we're always on the lookout for personal photographs, not necessarily official whole school photos or team shots, but rather personal pictures that capture moments that the official channels may have missed.

So if you think you have something that might be of interest, please don't hesitate to get in touch:
chris.robinson@blueyonder.co.uk
or call 07954 193441



Personal pictures of school events, plays, sports days, open days whatever, welcome, as are images of the school site, foreign trips or college camping adventures.

PRESIDENT
Chris Robinson MBE

It's always a pleasure to talk to those who are about to leave the school and this year was no exception. Clearly leavers have a lot of things on their minds that day as they bid each other fond farewells.

Many, thanks to the magic of modern technology will keep in touch for years to come, some maybe for a lifetime, but for others it maybe the last time they ever see each other. It's always difficult to comprehend that that may be the case. Having shared so many learning, sporting and social occasions over a period of however many years with your particular peer group, the thought that you paths might never cross again is just odd.

Like the Headmaster in his address to OPMs this year, I too looked back on what life was like when I left the school. No mobile phones then, even landlines were comparatively novel in some homes. No home computers, only three TV channels to chose from and, legally, only four radio stations to listen to, all of them provided by the BBC. Newspapers were still a major source of news, especially locally and the *Western Evening Herald* had separate and distinct reporters covering local government, health, education, entertainment, environment, business, sport ... and all manner of other topics.

Today the paper has barely half a dozen full time scribes, no subeditors, no offices and no designated designers. Furthermore, 50 odd years ago encyclopedias were still the go to reference books, wikipedia was beyond the stuff of dreams and AI beyond comprehension and yet ...

As to where we'll be in another 50 years, goodness only knows. However I know I won't be there to witness it.

But hopefully many of the class of 2026 will. I wonder how many of them will have still have their OPM engraved glasses given to them by the Club?

Doubtless a good many of the cohort will come back to Plymouth at some point, one or two may never leave, one or two may never come back. One thing is certain, you're only young once and those adolescent experiences will live with you forever, wherever you end up. At the time youth can seem like it's eternal, but sadly it isn't!

One thing your President has tapped into in his working life however has been that very nostalgia for times past and, last September, Pen & Ink Publishing, the publishing company run by the ever patient Clare Robinson, celebrated 40 years of producing over 40 books on the local area, most, but not all by yours truly.

A special event was held at the Theatre Royal, Plymouth, where our first ever title *Plymouth As Time Draws On* was launched back in 1985. The 40 year celebration was particularly appropriate because the new book launched in 2025 was *Plymouth in the Eighties*.

Around 100 people braved some of the worst weather of the winter to attend the event and wallowed in the images of a decade that witnessed the building of the Theatre Royal, the Pedestrianisation of the City Centre, the arrival of Sainsbury's, the construction of Plymouth Parkway and the demise of so many city hospitals and the rise of Derriford.

The talk and the book were well received and *Plymouth in the Eighties* became Waterstones' best seller over Christmas – but only in Plymouth!

This year a publication on Central Park and a *Snapshot of the Sixties* are in the pipeline. Who said 'nostalgia was a thing of the past.'

Headmaster
PETER WATTS

Serendipity is a wonderful word, and one of my favourites, just saying it aloud makes me smile. It aptly captures a period earlier in the summer term where two unrelated events that saw me engaging with OPMs merged in my brain.

I was delighted, if somewhat hot, and post-Covid, to spend an evening with a good number of OPMs at the recent London drinks, brilliantly organised by Jeremy Ford (95) and the attendees from across the decades pummelled me with questions for an update on where the College is now, and shared their stories, both good and less so about times past … Two of these conversations had the same theme - wondering about the College of the past and the College of the future and whether they as OPMs would enjoy either. It reminded me of the story of Marty McFly in *Back to the Future*.

A few weeks before, also quite warm in the OPM suite (which seems to have only binary temperatures…), Chris Robinson passed me a scrapbook of press clippings at the end of one of our monthly OPM Committee meetings. It took me to the week of the London drinks to finally find the time to delve into its pages on the train up to Paddington. The scrapbook contained articles written about the College Speech Day from 1927 – on its 50th anniversary – where both the guest speaker and the Head at the time (FR Dale) had done just the same thing, imagining the future and what life would be like in 1977 or, perish the thought, 2027!

As we anticipate the celebrations next summer of the 150th anniversary of the College's recognised formation, and begin the planning for the inaugural OPM day, pencilled in for Saturday 10 July 2027, it seems right to reflect a little on the past, the present and the immediate future.

Back in 1927 at Speech Day, Lieut.-Col. WP Drury OM forecast the following for 1977:

'My interest in Plymouth College lies, perforce, in the opposite direction. When I was a boy it had no past at all. Even to-day it has only seen two-score years of history pass. I can imagine the spirit of my old school standing beside me in rough trunk hose whispering 'Why this pother about a paltry 50 year. I think only in centuries,' to which I reply: "It is not of the past but of the future that we are mainly thinking to-day."

Visualize Plymouth College 300 years hence—it almost paralyses the imagination. The world already seems to be racing on its top gear, what it will have attained when the milestones and progress of 50 years been passed seems almost impossible to conjecture.

I hear in my dreams the school bell ringing, and see the sky dark with hurrying boys. For the schoolboy of 1977 no longer crawls 'like a snail unwillingly to school.' He flies, unwillingly it may be, yet flies—not in an aeroplane, but with his own wings propelled by the last word in pocket motors fixed between his shoulders. I see the angelic host, a little grimy perhaps, alight before the now completed block of buildings: I watch them detach and park their wings in the aviary; assemble for prayers – selected from a Prayer-book revised out of recognition, and broadcast to all schools by the Archbishop of Canterbury – before dispersing to the classrooms. But I see no masters: they have discarded the old cap and gown for dungaree suits, and are concealed within fireproof iron boxes, from which they control the modern forces of education.

The kinema, the loud speaker, the microphone, the dictaphone, television, and a dozen other inventions of a mechanical age have rendered the presence of the form master unnecessary, and idlers are caned by an electric switch operated by an omniscient head master from his eyrie on the roof.'

'The schoolboy of 1977 no longer crawls 'like a snail unwillingly to school.' He flies

Lieut Col William Price Drury CBE RM, OPM President and, when the above portrait was painted in 1931, Mayor of Saltash. Dramatist and author, Drury's 1927 vision of life in 1977 is fascinating and to put it in perspective we need to remind ourselves; that the kinema was still silent when Drury made his speech; that the first-ever sound recordings had been made the same year that Plymouth College started, 50 years earlier, and that, in 1927, television was very much in its infancy having been demonstrated, by John Logie Baird, in London, for the first time, in January 1926.

What was also fascinating, was to see that even 50 years on there was still talk of completing the school building – by implication – in line with the original plans.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

• 14 current pupils or OPMs were selected for the Paris 2024 Olympics (the most of any single school in the UK and possibly the world)

I can assure you that there will be no electric caning in 2027, and that this Headmaster does not preside from an eyrie and nor does he profess to be omniscient, but rather better relies on highly trained and empowered colleagues to support 'idlers'.
Much as any of us would want, foretelling the future is almost inevitably doomed to failure, and whilst we might scoff at the Speech Day prediction from 1927 others too have been wrong.
'By the year 1965, half of all students will learn everything from automated teaching machines, and schools as we know them will begin to disappear.' *Popular Science* magazine (1961).
And how about a more celebrated source of future-proofing Thomas Edison (1913):
'Books will soon be obsolete in public schools. Scholars will soon be instructed through the eye (motion pictures).'

I do hope that as many OPMs as are able to do so will join us next summer to commemorate 150 years, so that we can embrace the past, celebrate the present and welcome the future. Clearly the College's social media channels and *The Mayflower* newsletter will tell you much of the present successes and ethos of the College. As to the future, which as always is at best uncertain, and, for some, worrying because of that – we have to build our College's success on the hope and aspiration that our amazing and inspirational children and young adults provide.
Change for the future is afoot for 2027 with a new curriculum project being piloted to reflect better the needs of society and our young people in our 150th year. Whilst sustaining academic qualifications at its core, *Curriculum 150* will enhance and, we hope, externally validate the amazing portfolio of life learning and career pathway qualifications already on offer into a new skills-based Plymouth College Diploma.
And as for the current state of affairs at the College, readers might like to know that of late we have celebrated:

- 14 current pupils or OPMs were selected for the Paris 2024 Olympics (the most of any single school in the UK and possibly the world)
- U16 Sisters in Sport National Netball Champions 2025
- U15 National Bowl Rugby Champions 2025

Although those moments are probably the three standout achievements of late I would also like to commend the Plymouth Argyle Academy formation, and an impending partnership for an academy link-up with Plymouth Albion with both due to take on girls programmes this September.

The College Jazz Band are through to the National School Finals for the second year in a row … with a chance to perform again at the Royal Albert Hall in the Autumn.

Our musical theatre is rapidly becoming a local and regional strength with an amazing production this year of *Beauty and the Beast*, following the successes of *Bugsy Malone*, *Shrek* and *Grease*

We were placed first in the Faraday Technology Challenge regional heat and placed in the top three nationally on points. Our pupils in Year 6 also won the aquarium OCT STEM competition from STEMfest where they designed sustainable products with one of our groups placing first. Their design is currently being developed for commercial manufacture.

The College has also posted the best DfE-evaluated 16-18 value-added score in the city, significantly higher than other local independent competition schools, and well above the average of all south-west independent schools at +0.2.

In 2025, A level results at A*A were +6% against national grades and +13% against 2024… 40% of students scored ABB or better and 86% achieved their firm university choice in 2025.

I offer my thanks to the OPM committee and the broader community for their continuing welcome and support, at the end of my second non-eyrie dwelling year as Head. This is a wonderful community to be part of, as the rest of this edition will surely confirm.

HONORARY TREASURER

Pete Webb

At the risk of repeating my opening comments from last year, I am pleased to present the accounts for the year to 31 August 2025. These accounts are not in the format required by the 2006 Companies Act, however, the latter give far less information when published at Companies House and I have therefore retained the detailed format as in previous years. I have a copy of the Companies Act format if anyone would care to see them.

When we met in early 2025, the school was in negotiation with Galaxy Global regarding its possible merger and although the committee was aware of the potential transaction, we were not at liberty to discuss matters. This year's accounts reflect the merger and the subsequent sale of the clubhouse to Galaxy Global with the resulting impact on our financial position.

The income and expenditure account shows total income for the year of £179,186 which includes the profit arising on the sale of the clubhouse of £153,702. This figure is broken down in the notes on the back page showing the gross disposal proceeds of £630,000 less the net book value of £476,298.

Other income is as shown and you will note the increase in interest earned due to larger sums being available for investment. I would add that it took some time to get the funds invested as many banks did not seem interested in companies limited by guarantee. However, since the year end, all surplus funds were placed in deposit accounts so interest will again increase in 2026. At the current time, the committee are considering a more long- term investment strategy with a proportion to be invested, with professional advice, in the stock market.

Total expenditure in the year was £146,035. The majority of this sum represents the writing off of the long-term loans to the school of £50,000 agreed as part of the sale. Subsequently, we agreed to make a donation to the school charity of £80,000 towards future bursaries.

There should be no charge to Corporation Tax on these results. Although the sale reflected a capital gain, the availability of indexation whereby costs were indexed by increase in the RPI (up to 2017) means that the sale of the clubhouse did not result in a taxable profit. The donation to the school charity should also qualify for CT relief thereby wiping out any remaining profit and giving a loss to carry forward.

Other expenses are as laid out and are broadly in line with 2024 except for our contribution to the alumni office salary where we completed our 12 month funding agreement.

The balance sheet reflects the financial position of the Club at 31 August. Our property at Saltash remains at a valuation of £185,000 which was reached some years ago. However, given difficulties in the high street, its value is not thought to be overly different and therefore we have continued to show it

at that value. Currently our tenants, both commercial and residential appear settled. The OPM Suite and loan to the school are no longer shown for the reasons mentioned above.

However, their absence is reflected in the substantial sums held in both current and deposit accounts at the year end at a combined total of £666,652. Currently, we have £44,647 in our current account with £628,020 held on deposit at various banks (we determined to invest no more

THE OLD PLYMOTHIAN AND MANNAMEADIAN CLUB
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

	2025		2024	
	£	£	£	£
Income				
Subscriptions receivable		3,815		5,633
Donations and sundry income		451		524
Surplus from OPM Suite		4,106		5,594
Investment Income				
Interest		4,540		2,091
Rent (net of expenses)		12,572		10,012
Surplus on disposal of OPM Suite		153,702		-
		179,186		23,854
Expenditure				
Donation to Plymouth College	80,000		-	
Loan to Plymouth College written off	50,000		-	
Printing, postage and stationery (including magazine)	5,256		5,187	
Legal and professional fees	2,486		2,134	
Contribution to alumni office salary	5,500		500	
Insurance	2,318		2,147	
Sundry expenses	75		189	
Sub Sections				
Hockey	50		220	
Rugby	350		-	
		146,035		10,377
		33,151		13,477
CORPORATION TAX				
Provided for year	-		1,894	
Overprovided in previous year	-		(197)	
		-		1,697
SURPLUS FOR YEAR		33,151		11,780

than £85,000 in any one bank and the investments were completed shortly before the threshold was raised!).
Stock on hand represents ties etc and debtors, amounts owing to the club, mainly by our managing agents for the Saltash property.
Creditors are amounts owing, mainly for the publication of the 2025 magazine, the rent deposit at Saltash and amounts due to the school for the alumni salary and social events.

Finally, last year I said I was planning to step down at this AGM. I have now been in post for well over 20 years and it is time someone else took the reins. Unfortunately, the committee has not been inundated with volunteers so it looks like you will be stuck with me for a while longer. However, should there be anyone interested in stepping up, please let the committee know as it will take a little while to hand over. At the risk of repeating myself again, I plan to step down next year.

THE OLD PLYMOTHIAN AND MANNAMEADIAN CLUB
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2025

	2025 £	2024 £
ASSETS		
Freehold investment property	185,000	185,000
OPM Suite	-	476,298
Loan to Plymouth College	-	50,000
Stock (at cost)	1,165	1,495
Debtors and prepayments	15,528	17,568
Cash at Bank		
Current account	320,699	22,926
Deposit accounts	345,953	75,000
	868,345	828,287
LIABILITIES		
Corporation tax provision	-	1,894
Creditors and accruals	14,661	5,860
TOTAL LIABILITIES	14,661	7,754
NET ASSETS	853,684	820,533
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
At 1 September 2024	820,533	808,753
Surplus for year	33,151	11,780
At 31 August 2025	853,684	820,533

The accounts were approved by the committee on 5 February 2026 and signed on its behalf by:

N J Holman (Chairman)

P M Webb (Treasurer)

OPM CLUB

Notes to the Accounts

THE OLD PLYMOTHIAN AND MANNAMEADIAN CLUB
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2025

1 ACCOUNTING POLICY

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

2 OPM SUITE

The profit on disposal of the OPM Suite is as follows:

	£	£
Gross disposal proceeds		630,000
Share of building costs	474,145	
Equipment b/fwd	2,153	476,298
Profit on sale		153,702

As part of the agreement with the school, the sum of £80,000 was gifted together with the long outstanding loan being written off.

3 INVESTMENT PROPERTY

The Club's investment property in Saltash was revalued in 2004 by Viner Fulfords at £185,000.

4 LOANS

As mentioned above, the loan of £50,000 to Plymouth College was written off on completion of the sale.

5 SURPLUS FROM OPM SUITE

	2025		2024	
	£	£	£	£
Suite hire and rents		4,126		6,733
Sale of bar stock		500		-
		4,626		6,733
Licencing	520		509	
Repairs and renewals	-		200	
Depreciation	-		430	
		520		1,139
Surplus for year		4,106		5,594

Cricket Lunch

The 2025 Cricket Lunch was another splendid affair, Rob Burford's school catering team once again supplying a wonderful summer spread. The cricket was perhaps less memorable but a good time was had by all.

Opposite page, top: Richard and Penny Atkinson, Peter Lowson, Club President Chris Robinson, Jim Griffen and Steve Woodward. Bottom: John Knowles, Frances and Bob Foulkes, Liz and John Herman, Gill and Pat Newnham.
This page: Willoughby Cocks, Mike Turpit, Dave Hardy, Christine Cocks, Colin Gale. Bottom: Robin Moiser, Keith Waters, Andy Seymour, Keith Johnson, Adrian Rundle, Rob and Jayne Logan.

LONDON

The Venue: The Admiralty pub, Trafalgar Square

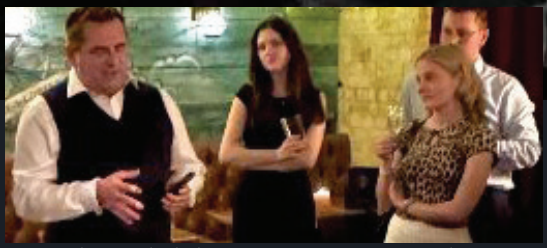
Tuesday 19 May witnessed a very happy gathering in the Admiralty pub in Trafalgar Square as the first OPM event to be held in London for a while took place.
Unfortunately although the planned tube strikes were cancelled during the day a number of folk didn't make the journey but those that did thoroughly enjoyed themselves.
Jeremy Ford, who put the event togeither said that the 'feedback was brilliant.

CALLING

‘The majority of attendees had never been to a OPM event and were keen to come again, bringing their peers. Quite few met old friends they hadn’t seen since school which was lovely. There were OPMs from 1950/60s to 2024!

‘All keen on another drinks night, maybe around Christmas time?

‘The Headmaster was great and really brought it all together with an inspiring speech, despite recovering from Covid!’



Attendees included Peter Watts, Jeremy Ford, Adam Crowle, Edward Bushell, Will Cocks, Liam Lawrence Smyth, Andrew Pring, Mike Benns, David Russell, Susannah Swan, Susannah Corbett, Ben Devonport, David Woodgate, Andre Milne, Alice Avens, Harry Avens, Joe Skinnard, Daniel Coles, Georgia Evietrathen, Penny Atkinson, Éanna O’Hara, David Wright, Aziz Tarafder, Crispin Holland, Mark Beesley, Charlie Sainsbury, Anshul Sharma, Oliver Demaine, Mark McDermott.

FESTIVE FUN IN THE FORTE

In these days of digital comms there are random groups of OPMs meeting up in all sorts of unlikely places but I suspect few such impromptu gatherings enjoy the sort of numbers attracted by the Christmas get together of the class of '78. Not so long ago a hard core of half a dozen or so would stage a December meet in the Dolphin, but more recently the venue of choice has become the Fortescue on Mutley Plain. Well known to most Plymouth College schoolboys long before they left school, the Forte was a popular pub amongst the staff many moons ago. Today its real ales and fine ciders attract a much more mixed crew.

A year or two ago the proposed hook up of the cohort looked like attracting a few more than usual and in the days running up to the event word spread via Whatsapp and whatever else and around 20 turned up. Last Christmas the word spread

even further and that number was easily surpassed.
Such was level of bonhommie that many carried on well into the night and an early morning breakfast in Goodbody's was soaked up before the sun rose!

Opposite page: L-R includes Andy McCheyne, Roger Kingdom, Jay Foster, John Williams, Robin Moiser, Jeremy Moore, Mike Searle, Chris Savery, Mark O'Hanlon, Peter Horton, Charlie Trevail, Roger White (former staff member), Frankie Abbott, Anthony Murray, Jon Wooding, Lloyd Martin, Ian Johnson.

Above: Messrs Murray, Moiser & Johnson
Below: Kingdom, Savery, Moore and Trrevail tuck in.

OPM Media Studies

Dawn French
Enough

Dawn French has confessed she's begun contemplating "stuff that is going to come" in a candid discussion about her own mortality. The comedian and actress made the remarks while opening up about her fifth novel, *Enough* — a story that explores death, admitting that, as she gets older, she wants to "tackle big stuff".

It follows her previous novels, *A Tiny Bit Marvellous*, *Oh Dear Silvia*, *According to Yes* and *Because of You*. She has also written about her real life in three other books, *Dear Fatty*, *Me You a Diary* and *Me You Not a Diary* and about her work with her comedy partner in *A Feast of French and Saunders*.

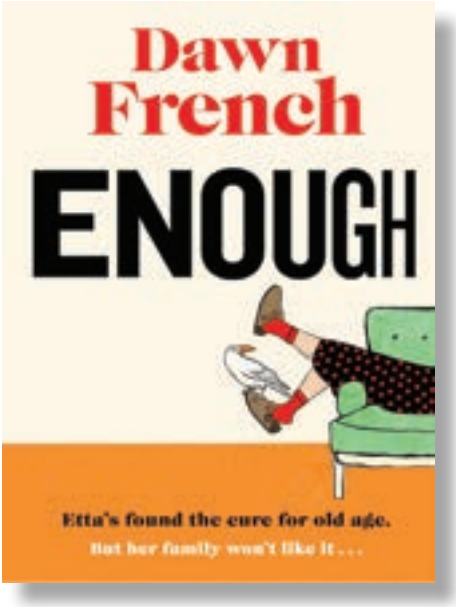
Dawn's newest book, released this year, is marketed on Amazon as a "joyfully human, darkly funny and unexpectedly life-affirming" tale, following 68-year-old Etta as she gathers her family for an "unforgettable weekend".

Also 68 herself, Dawn explained in a recent magazine interview that she wanted to delve into the "big, scary stuff". She also reflected on ageing more broadly, adding that she hopes to live into her hundreds.

"I am 68, but I am not at the end of my life. I just think at this age, you start to think about stuff that is going to come. It is important to write about things that you fear.

"I lost my mum at 77 and I watched my mates fall off the perch in their 70s. I would like to still be going at 107."

In additional remarks, reported by the BBC to coincide with the book's release, Dawn said she was "going to be unafraid to write about difficult



things". She said: "What's the point of being 68 if you can't say what you feel about things?"
Dawn has plenty of firsthand experiences to give feisty inspiration to her characters.
Previously speaking on The Graham Norton Show about a kiss with an A-list star, Dawn said: "I was in a restaurant with Jen (Saunders) and Terry Gilliam walked in with Brad Pitt. "I passed a note to Terry that said, 'Make Brad kiss me like he's in love with me'. I got on with lunch and forgot all about it and suddenly Brad was on my face, kissing me passionately and saying, 'I'll call you'. Well, Jen's chin hit the table! It was great."
Elsewhere, Dawn recalled a Comic Relief sketch in which she kissed Hugh Grant during Red Nose Day in 1995.
She told Best magazine: "I kissed a lot of people for Comic Relief. One day, I went on This Morning and told the story about me kissing Brad Pitt and Hugh Grant.
"Eamonn Holmes turned to me and said, 'You're a bit of a one, aren't you?' I went 'dream on'."
Dawn French's latest sit com, *Can You Keep a Secret*, is a mischievous comedy about a domineering granny who declares her husband dead by mistake and them hides him in the loft to await the life insurance pay out. The scheme shocks their highly-strung son Harold (Craig Roberts), whose wife, Neha (Mandip Gill), happens

SATURDAY extra

Family misfortunes

Dawn French stars in new sitcom Can You Keep a Secret?

to be a local police officer.
The series was a huge hit with fans, landing as the third biggest comedy on BBC iplayer since 2024, after only Ludwig and Amandaland, and so it's no surprise to find that it has been commissioned for another series.
For the second series, Dawn French will return as Debbie, alongside Mark Heap as her husband William.
Simon-Mayhew Archer, creator and writer, says: "Making this series was a joyous experience. Comedy is a team game, and Dawn, Mark, Craig, Mandip and the whole cast and crew are dream collaborators.
Dawn says: "I'm as chuffed as an actual chuff (chough?)to hear that we have a second series! More chance for Debbie to get her bossy boots on and create further havoc… hooray."

Michael Ball
Not so miserable now!

'The show must go on' is one of the oldest addages in the theatre business, so when Michael Ball was told he needed an urgent hip replacement, he ignored the advice and insisted on continuing with his production.
Now, a year on and showing he is nothing but a trouper, the West End star will be back on stage – with a brand-new left hip – for a UK tour to celebrate the release of his album, *Glow*.
Having suffered pain for three years, things came to a head during an eight-week tour of *Les Misérables* in Australia last year.
Michael says: "I went for physio and it wasn't getting any better. I had a cortisone injection, which helped, but after two days I was in agony and really limping."
The doctor advised Michael to fly back to England for surgery but he refused.
"I didn't want to let people down", he explains. "I decided I was just going to crack on with painkillers and try to get to the end of the tour. I had to have a crutch to get me to the side of the stage and I used the pain for my character. I just got my head down and ploughed through it, but it was soul-destroying, I couldn't enjoy anything really."
When the tour ended Michael returned home and had a full hip replacement.
"It was an utter game changer, you realise you've been in chronic pain for three years."
Michael, 63, who combines his singing and musical theatre career with hosting the popular *Love Songs* show on Radio 2, says that needing surgery has prompted an overhaul of his life.
"I'm going to the gym at least once a week, I do long walks with the dog and I'm eating more healthily."
He is about to release his 23rd studio album, his first of entirely self penned material.
The first single from it is *Vintage*, a catchy tribute to the joys of growing older. Another highlight track *Remember to Remember*, is a poignant tribute to his 91-year-old father Tony and his mum Ruth who died last year at the same age.
He says: "We've got to keep challenging ourselves, we've got to keep finding new things to be excited about. And we also need to know when to stop, when something has had its time, which happened this year."
He is referring to his decision to call an end to his 40-year association with the big hit Les Mis. After last year's Australia tour he turned down the opportunity to go to New York for a three-week run.
"So that's me and Les Mis finished. It's the end of an era, a pretty big decision but it feels right." (Quotes from *Daily Mirror*)

Tom Daley
Diving into ventures new

Tom: I wish I'd been a Traitor, not a Faithful

THAT'S JUST BEING IN CONTROL, SAYS OLYMPIC CHAMPION DIVER

Diving champion Tom Daley appeared on our screens recently in a couple of very different TV series that didn't require him to wear his speedos.

The 31-year-old Olympic Champion was amongst the famous faces participating in last year's celebrity version of the popular murder-mystery programme *Traitors*.

Unfortunately Tom was 'murdered' in the early stages of the series by Traitors Alan Carr, Jonathan Ross and Cat Burns who were on a mission to remove participants who might have 'figured it out'.

Tom acknowledged that he was initially frustrated at being a Faithful, and told *The Guardian*:

"'It's really intense, when I wasn't a traitor I was annoyed. You can think 'just play the game and have fun and see where we get'. But as an athlete I like to be in control."

It's no secret that Tom is a knitting fanatic, having taken it up as a hobby to relax between dives at competitions. Now probably the most famous knitter in the UK, he has gone on to create his own knitting brand selling yarns and pattern books, he has his own website, Made With Love, and does regular podcasts on the subject.

Around the same time as *Celebrity Traitors* aired, late last year, Tom appeared on Channel 4 with *Game of Wool*: Britain's Best Knitter in which 10 amateur participants vied to be declared the nation's finest knitter. Challenges were very varied, ranging one week with them reimagining the traditional Fair Isle pattern on a tank top to collaborating with other contestants to create a full scale sofa cover.

Channel 4 have announced a second series of *Game of Wool* with Tom presenting later this year.

Plymouth Herald Article by Stuart James 12 September 2025

Plymouth's Olympic medallist swimmer Ben Proud claims his decision to join the Enhanced Games could see him set for life financially.

When the 30-year-old, who won silver in the 50 metres freestyle in Paris last summer, announced his decision it was strongly condemned by Aquatics GB.

Proud said he understands the governing bodies' criticism, but argued that 'traditional sport' and the Enhanced Games are 'two very different formats' and he does not expect to return to traditional swimming.

'I'm 30 years old and retirement has been a topic of contention for quite a few years', Proud told BBC 5 Live.

'In reality, us athletes in the Olympic programme don't earn enough money to retire off the back of this and I am always seeking something that can see me through a bit longer.

'It would have taken me 13 years of winning a World Championship title in order to win what I could win in one race at this games. 'I love what I do, I love my sport and to continue it a little longer gives me that satisfaction.'

The Enhanced Games is planned to be an annual competition, initially comprising short-distance swimming, sprinting and weightlifting, with the inaugural event held in Las Vegas 21-14 May 2026.

The enhanced Games has been criticised for endangering athletes' health and undermining fair play, with the World anti-Doping Agency (WADA) describing it as 'dangerous and irresponsible project'.

Proud, who has previously supported UK Anti-Doping's (Ukad) Clean Sport Week, said he is 'not under any obligation to take anything' despite joining the event.
'In order to compete in these games, to be in a position to earn this prize money that you would never see in professional sport, I am forced to retire,' he said.
'There are many different doctors and healthcare specialists who will guide and inform me on decisions. If that was to become the case later on [that I would take performance-enhancing drugs], I would be in good hands to make the best informed decision.'
Proud has become the first British athlete to join the Enhanced Games but he does not believe the event undermines clean sport.
'I think [the Enhanced Games] opens up the potential avenue to excel in a very different way', he said.
'I think realistically I've achieved everything I can, and now the Enhanced is giving me a new opportunity. I definitely don't think that's undermining a clean sport.
'I respect the sport I've been part of and I would never step back in knowing I've done something which isn't in the rules.'
Proud's move to the Enhanced Games was met with a lot of criticism. In a statement on social media, Aquatics GB said it is 'immensely disappointed', while UK Sport said it was working with Aquatics GB' as a matter of urgency to determine Ben Proud's suitability to receive public funds'.
Meanwhile, Ukad chief executive Jane Rumble said: 'it is incredibly disappointing that any British athlete would consider competing in an event that flies in the face of the true spirit of sport'.
Proud said he 'fully understands' the negative reaction. I respect what UK Sport and Aquatics GB have said because if I were in their shoes I would agree fully.
'They need to protect themselves and the sport from this competition so I fully understand the reactions I have received from making this change.'
At the event Ben won the 50 metre Butterfly race, finishing 0.05 seconds off the world record. He also finished second in the only event to have produced a world record at the 2026 Enhanced Games – the 50m freestyle.
The Greek swimmer Kristian Gkolomeev won $250,000 plus a million dollar bonus promised to anyone who broke a world record, despite the fact that the achievement wouldn't be officially recognised. Ben meanwhile reputedly left with a few hundred thousand dollars of his own.
Only a few thousand invited guests witnessed the events in Las Vegas but organisers claim that around 250,000 watched on You Tube.

THE Herald

FREE BINGO

'VAT'S THE PROBLEM'

HOSPITALITY FIRMS CALL FOR TAX RATES TO BE SLASHED, OR MORE VENUES WILL SHUT DOWN PAGE 4

Award winning restaurateur Oz Harborth**,** who with his wife Sheena has two highly rated restaurants in Plymouth – Zephyr Burgers and Nora's – appeared on the front page of the *Plymouth Herald* recently.

He was pictured along with other members of the hospitality industry in a plea to the Government to slash VAT rates in the sector. Restaurateurs are being clobbered by rising costs, declining customer spend and hikes in National Insurance contributions which are putting some out of business.

They are calling for the Government to cut VAT to 10% to give them a 'fighting chance' otherwise they say other businesses will go to the wall as several already have in the past year.

The idea is to raise awareness of all this by backing the national VAT's the Problem campaign, spearheaded by celebrity chef Tom Kerridge which wants VAT cut in half.

Restaurant bosses are asking the public to sign the VAT's the Problem petition online at www.vatstheproblem.co.uk More than 231,00 have already put their names to the campaign.

Oz asks in the article: "What is hospitality to you? What does it mean? Is it grabbing a coffee from an independent cafe, going for a pint or a meal or getting a takeaway? Or is it your first job, giving you a foothold to build a career?

"We want to promote the industry as a cornerstone of the community."

He added: "As businesses, we try to make Plymouth a great place to live, adding vibrancy, culture and colour to the high street. We just want to create jobs and experiences for people – but we seem to be being punished by the Government."

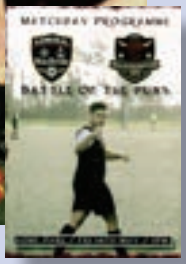
He said that the 2024 hike in employment National Insurance contributions meant businesses had to pay £1,500 per staff member each year and added: "It's massive and affects every business in the UK."

This comes on top of a 20% to 30% increase in the cost of goods and high energy bills too, with 91% of businesses saying they just cannot put their prices up any further.

Across the country 39% of businesses say their cash position is 'critical' with 54% saying they are one unexpected bill away from closures and just 25% describing their cash position as comfortable.

Overall 84% of independent businesses say they may not survive the next 12 months.

Oz'z Zephyr Burgers claimed the 2nd place trophy for his Charcoal Nduja Crunch burger at the 2026 UK Burger Championships



A Bond of Brothers

Billed as the Battle of the Pubs, this was one of those games that the Home Park officials sanction at the end of every Argyle season and a bunch of folk who enjoy their football get to run out on the hallowed turf and dream of Roy of the Rovers style deeds of derring-do.

Played out between the Admiral MacBride and the Walkhampton Inn, the Barbican hostelry is run by brothers Oliver and Steve Marshall, while the delightful edge-of-Dartmoor inn is in the hands of siblings Declan and Frazer Reed. At the heart of both teams were a core OPMs who have 'been kicking a ball around together since they were at school.'

The photograph above appeared in the programme with the following: 'From back garden kickabouts to competitive matches in their younger days, they've grown up together and every year, no matter where life has taken them they find the time to come back and play the game they love.

'At the heart of it are two sets of brothers – Declan and Frazer Reed and Joseph and Ollie Marshall – whose family ties mirror the deep friendships that unite the rest of the squad. Regular names on the teamsheet include the like of Mike Daniel, Jamie Johnson, Ed Allen, Charlie Attis, Henry Joce, Johnny Orme Williams, Ellery Jones, Matt Smith, John Mason and Tom Watkins – all mates who never let time or distance get in the way of a good game.

'Whether it's over Christmas, Easter, or for a special occasion, like today's match – especially one at a venue as iconic as Home Park – the group always finds a way to bring the boots out and relive the magic. It's a celebration of friendship football and the memories that keep them coming back for more.

'So while the legs might be a little slower these days (for some at least!) the passion is just as strong – and as ever it's all played in the right spirit.'

Spare a thought for Argyle Chairman, CLub Owner Simon Hallett who has already poured eight figure sums of his own money into both the football club and into the visionary development at Devonport, Foulston Park.

As the Season of Goodwill approached last December there was an outpouring of ill will as Argyle were in the drop zone and despite a few recent narrow 1-0 victories lost 4-1 to Reading on their first Boxing Day home game for years.

Fans were calling for change and chants were less than respectful.

But changes were afoot and in the wake of the appointment of Derek Adams a few weeks earlier and some new signings in the January transfer window Argyle's fortunes changed dramatically and the club narrowly missed out on a promotion play-off place on the last day of the season.

Simon and the Home Park team, players and managers were back in favour for the vast majority of fickle fans!

Like the running of every other club in the English football however it remains a massive commitment and continual drain on finances.

Hopefully Simon and his eternally patient partner Jane will be properly appreciated for their endeavours on behalf of the club and for a legacy that the multi-million pound sports, wellbeing and community hub that the Foulston Park facility will come to represent.

Foulston Park

Beth Hall

Congratulations to Beth Hall, OPM, who earlier this year was selected for the England Women's Under 18 Rugby squad, who were preparing for the Six Nations tournament.
Part of the Exeter PDG (Player Development Group), Beth was one of just five players selected from the South West. Her achievement was even more outstanding as she was then playing U-17s.
In the event Beth was selected to start for England in the first match of the U-18s Six Nations Festival at Wellington College.
Although England only managed a win against Italy, Beth came away with a handful of caps and some valuable experience in a Red Roses shirt!

Like the Duracell Bunny, Dudley Tolkein (64) goes on and on … and earlier this year he was rewarded for his enduring efforts at the Devon County Tennis awards. Nominated for the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Plymouth & District Clubs, Dudley saw off competition from two other worthy nominees in the category.
Dudley has been playing tennis since 1961 and was instrumental in setting up the P&D Junior League which he began running in 1971 and went on to run for more than 30 years.
Dudley has spent much of his playing time with Plymstock Tennis Club which he joined in 1967 and was involved with for over 50 years, serving as club chairman for 20.
Meanwhile he's been playing for the Winter League since its inception and has held just about every post on local committees, he's also done regional duty and referred many tournaments.

Dudley Tolkein

HUGH DENT

Extracts of diaries taken from Devon's Home Front Diaries 1937 – 1945 by Todd Gray

Leeds-born George Hugh Dent (1912-1966) was an English master at Plymouth College who lived in Chapel Road and then Fernleigh Road with his wife Lorna. A conscientious objector during WWII, he kept a diary from 1939 to 1940 and contributed replies to three directives including a passage early in the war in September 1940:

'Air raids changed life very little: a welcome break in afternoon school, a nuisance at other times. Make up bed in shelter at night: argue with wife as to whether it's better to be safe or cold (comparatively safe or certainly cold). Policy 50/50. Raids all night a damned nuisance as I'm a warden.
'Air warfare has made us group more, eg. play bridge many nights instead of staying at home reading or listening in. Do far less preparation for next day's work. This partly because I'm awaiting call-up. Practically no effect on general mental attitude. Have made a will.
'Meal times unaltered. Keep bed, cards, light and clothes in shelter basement. If we go we rush down at last moments in pyjamas, dress there and go to sleep sometimes. Few raids last more than an hour. Then come up.
'Many people left Plymouth in June when raids started, especially from wealthy area. Several trickling back.'

Dent's diaries began just as the situation in France deteriorated. That summer the first bombs fell on Plymouth.

1940

May 7: Wife is worried to hear that teachers from 25 to 30 [Dent is 29] won't be reserved after summer. Because I'm a conscientious objector she's troubled that even if the tribunal leaves me at my job, the governors may sack me and I won't get it back after the Armistice… I'm certain she would have no grounds to think that…
June 11: Met Peter E (23) back from Dunkirk. He said he was frightened to death for the first five hours under aircraft bombing, then felt alright…

Below: Leigham Street

June 17: Blackest day so far. A scarcely smiled all day and was longing for me to say something cheerful and when I did she simply argued it out. ARP lecture No 3 in evening pretty good. Trying on gas masks difficult, owing to spectacles.

June 25: Long discussions at the ARP post as to the extent that wardens should be out in raids, the most interesting feature of which was the obvious preference we all shared for being told what to do, rather than being left to use our judgement.

June 28: Our first raid alarm. Put all our clothes etc ready at night. We've had our windows gummed-papered for these days... Sound of a few planes buzz, less, buzz, less not rising and falling but on and off. I don't think either of us felt scared.

July 7: Afternoon raid 6.15 to 7.15... I heard a plane race across the sky... L & I went into the basement. Things quiet and boring for an hour, though I had a little fracas with L as to whether I should, as a warden, go out to see everything was okay... Suddenly there was a burst of AA above one's heads, quite close and we rattled down (into the basement) again. [One bomb went off] 500 yards from the gas works, which killed four people.

The first bombs fall on Swilly.

July 10: woken up at 6 by big bomb explosion: our 14th in 12 days. Quite three minutes late the Devonport sirens went and then the Plymouth one. Raids 15, 16, 17 at noon and 11.30pm. Bombs dropped in Exeter Street and St Jude's area. Demolishing several houses... also more bombs in Leigham Street and Hoe District. Dead and many injured.

Right: Devastation in Leigham Street on the Hoe

July 12: Raid at 9.20 saves me from having to teach first period. The six bombs last night had been dropped in a line near Milehouse: at least half a dozen of the boys were missed by less than 150 yards but none of them seemed scared.

July 14: Am thinking that it is thoroughly stupid now for people to go on the Hoe, crowded, exposed and shelter-less. SRL & his wife are in a flap about whether to move furniture out of Plymouth. The tobacconist has been telling them that half the parents will be taking their sons into the country and they are both het up at the possibilities of staff being cut – I've only heard of three moves so far.

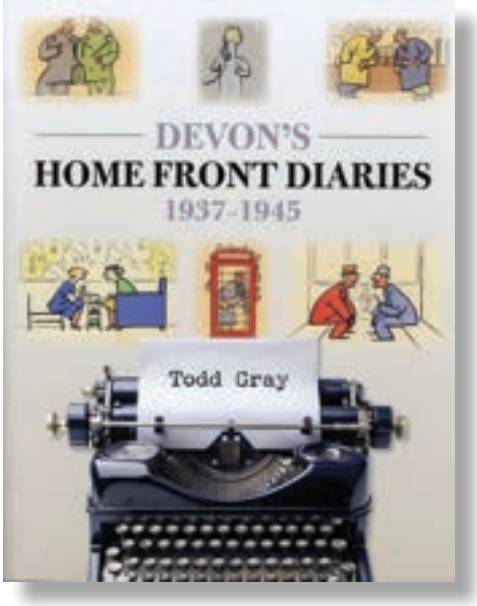
July 18: Raid at 11.30am cut into the exams. Boys no end cheered. I had to entertain 11-year-olds with games…

Mr Dent also summarised the effect of the war on Plymouth College in 27 points.
1 All carry gas masks at all times
2 Afternoon periods cut short during winter months.
3 Five members of staff already serving.
4 Two out of three servants serving: prefects take over some of their easier work.
5 ARP arrangements: all small boys in reinforced basement, seniors in lower corridor, glass protected by Blast-proof paste. Staff when possible continue teaching. Fire and sand buckets in porch.
6 One third of sports field occupied by barrage balloon encampment.
7 Four out of 15 staff ARP wardens, one boy a shelter guard.
8 Games supervision handicapped by absence in service of younger members of staff.
9 Relations of staff and boys more chatty than in peace.
10 Four boys lost their fathers on HMS *Corageous*.
11 15-year-old German Jewish refugee free at the school. Immensely popular: higher than half way up his class in all subjects.
12 School evening activities (plays, societies) stopped for the duration.
13 Scouts engaged largely in collecting waste paper, increase in first-aid work.
14 Boys living far out often late.
15 Marking and preparation by staff less thoroughly done, relaxation of the vital-to-push-on attitude.
16 Subjects of English essays, Latin sentences to naturally tend to the war.
17 Vague evacuation plans in air: parents and staff alike very much against having boys billeted out.
18 The school a wonderful centre for rumours and reports.
19 Go slow on stationary.
20 Lady substitutes tried in first term – replaced by men as slightly less efficient on the whole.
21 Not much obvious change in the amount of work done. Some seniors badly at a loose-end with no prospects before them. LDV guards often practically asleep next day.
22 Parents may send boys late after a disturbed night, at their discretion.
23 Head dishes out National Savings Certificates. Staff make collections of savings by forms. A typical weekly sum of £2 10s. Record of £135 in National Savings Week for whole school.
24 Headmaster and governors disagree on whether to sack two COs on staff. Judgement deferred until after tribunal.
25 Speculation on the effect of an air raid during the certificate exams.
26 Several parents worried by cost of school extras, eg. scout camp.
27 Big increase in OTC whose seniors are automatically in LDV and guard BBC at night.

An AI colourised version of the c.1944 photograph that can be seen in the OPM Suite

Hugh Dent, incidentally, continued to teach at Plymouth College after the war. He gave public lectures, including at Swarthmore in Mutley Plain, and served on the committee of the Plymouth Proprietary Library. He retired on health grounds in 1966 and died soon after, he was only 54.

The extracts above, and many others by different diarists, were drawn from the archive of Mass Observation, 'an inter-war project in which the British chronicled themselves. In 1937 and 1938 ordinary men and women wrote of life being progressively overtaken by the threat of European war, and then, during the following six years they described evacuation, rationing, the blackout, the fear of invasion and air raids. They also outlined their social lives, discussed race and pondered the roles of the sexes. In writing of ordinary life they offered a view of society which contrasted with those projected by vested interests in politics, the media and the church (From *Devon's Home Front Diaries* Todd Gray).'



Remembering Hugh Dent

Barry Carter

Many of us remember particular schoolteachers with regard, even affection, for the impact he or she made on us. I was reminded of one such, featured in Todd Gray's book *Home Front Diaries.*

This is G Hugh R Dent, always known as Hugh Dent, who arrived at Plymouth College with his BA Oxford straight from graduation in 1935. He was born in February 1912 of, I believe, the Dent publishing family whose inexpensive Everyman books brought classic texts to a much wider audience than hitherto. He was to teach English and, before his retirement for ill-health in 1966, he would hold the position of form master, head of English and housemaster. Chris Robinson's history *Plymouth College – The First Hundred Years* (2005) records him active at once in reorganising the school library, debating, writing, producing and acting in plays for both pupils and staff and giving a fillip to the playing of 'fives' for which outdoor courts provided break and lunchtime competition.

During my secondary education at the college between 1949 and 1957 he was teaching at all levels and was an inspirational teacher of English and form master when I first encountered him as a 12/13 year old. Struggling in several subjects I flourished under him, encouraged to give free rein to my imagination in free composition, and responding to his enthusiasm for poetry. Early on he took me aside and asked what fiction I was reading at home, then brusquely suggested I needed more challenging stories thus introducing me to PC Wren, GA Henty, Conan Doyle, RL Stephenson and others. Authors frowned upon today, no doubt, but rollicking good yarns for this eager reader. He also introduced the whole class (31 of us) to chess and took rugby sessions.

The following year I joined the school's scout troop rather than the combined cadet force. At several summer camps, Hugh Dent gave up eight or nine days of his holiday to assist his colleagues who had official scouting qualifications and duties. Not surprisingly, he brought imagination and energy to the 'wide games' and the campfire singing.

Then in the sixth form he took over the English set from a colleague having hospital treatment. To my initial chargrin, but ultimate benefit, he took to task my use of language and my style with a lot of red ink but constructive suggestions. Off I went to Keel University to read for joint honours in history and politics but retaining English for a year as a subsidiary.

(Barry, like Hugh, went on to spend his working life as a teacher)

Nick Bone has some hole-some fun

I started playing golf with my father at the age of 17. Due to work and study commitments I was only able to play as a casual golfer, no more than once or twice a week, so never really got any consistency in my play. I played at various clubs when I lived in London and then Nottingham, where I had a ten year break from the sport. When I moved back down to Devon, having retired, I played at various courses in the area. Today I played at my new club for the first time.

After an indifferent start my game improved in the second half. Then we arrived at the 15th hole. A downhill par 3 of around 100 yards. As the wind was behind us, I took a shorter club than I usually would. For you golfers, a wedge instead of a nine iron. My tee shot flew high into the wind, bounced twice on the green and in the hole for my first ever hole in one!

At the age of 71 it just shows, never give up

POSTER BOY

Reflecting on the closure of the OPM Suite at School after 20 years or so, reminded me of the closure of the old OPM Club at Efford which also ran for a little over 20 years and closed back in the mid-1980s. How very different the world was then, before the internet, before personal computers before social media.

Back in the early eighties the OPM Club hosted a wide variety of events there were regular Saturday night discos but over and above that there were quiz nights, cheese and wine evenings, car rallys, candlelit suppers, target golf days and a variety of themed evenings: Italian, Spanish,Sausage Sizzles etc.

The era was perfectly captured by the many posters that the club commissioned from OPM Rob Warren (71) who had gone to Plymouth College of Art and Design after school before going on to study graphic design at Stoke, where he met his future wife, Nita.

Operating in a world where everything was hand-drawn, Rob produced a wonderful succession of diverse images that were very much one offs and displayed on the club noticeboard at Efford.

The Christmas Event and New Year's Eve events were invariably rammed with non-OPMs queueing outside hoping to get in. The drink-driving regulations were a little different back than and part of the club's popularity was that it was one of the few venues in the city with a 2am licence.

The posters serve as a reminder of

all manner of events that appear to be consigned to the past, not least of which was the fact that Sunday lunchtime licensing hours were strictly 12-2pm.
It's hard too to imagine Car Rallies taking people on a treasure hunt around the city and its immediate neighbourhood, or the demand for the Annual Dinner being such that the club needed to book either the Duke of Cornwall or the New Continental to cope with the numbers.
In addition to his poster work Rob was well known as a genial figure who regularly helped out behind the bar at the club as, for the most part, the only times that the club paid bar staff was on a Friday and a Saturday, the rest of the nights were covered by volunteers, with Rob and Nita often taking over around midnight.

Pen&InK
PUBLISHING

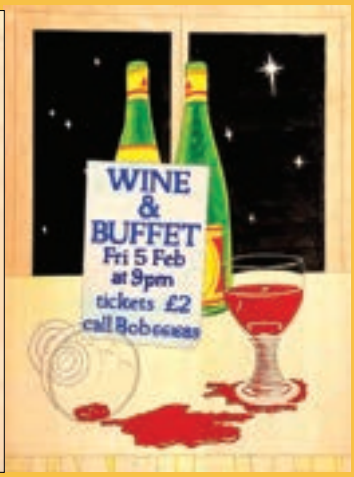
Below: A selection of early eighties Rob Warren posters designed for the OPM Club at Efford.
Above: 1980 poster for a Poly Main Hall gig and Rob's enduring Pen & Ink logo design from 1985.

Among the regular late-night arrivals were a regular group from the *Western Morning News*, who would finish work on the morning's paper around 11.30pm and pop up to the club for a drink or two.

Rob also did a bit of work for the *Western Morning News* and was for many years their stock car correspondent, back in the day when local papers had any number of correspondents, covering education, health, city council, parks and so on.

Rob was not only a regular at stock car meetings around the south west but he also provided the paper with an illustrated profile on the drivers that were on the circuit.

Opposite page: Rob with John Painter, who built a replica of the stock car his hero Johnny Marquand used to drive. Above Rob and Nita (celebrated then for her attractive range of soft toys) circa 1979 and below a recent pic of the couple in the same Barbican location. Below: A selection of early eighties Rob Warren posters designed for the OPM Club at Efford.



Qatar Lessons

Alex Thomas

What was supposed to be a one-year move to Qatar somehow turned into more than twelve years, a wife, two daughters, a dog and a career that has taken me from the London 2012 Olympic Games to the FIFA World Cup and, more recently, QatarEnergy. Looking back, I don't think anyone could have predicted where that first flight in January 2014 would eventually lead.

After London 2012, an opportunity came up to move to Qatar. Someone I'd worked with had relocated the previous year and mentioned there were roles available in the country's growing sports sector. I sent over my CV, interviewed just before Christmas and, a few weeks later, found myself boarding a plane to Doha.

At the time I'd only recently met Emma, who is now my wife, and fully expected to spend a year overseas before returning to the UK. Instead, Qatar became home.

The first few years were an exciting time to arrive. Qatar was investing heavily in sport and international events, and I found myself working across many of the country's major venues and competitions. Every project seemed bigger than the last, and there was always something new to learn.

As preparations for the FIFA World Cup gathered pace, I joined the organisation responsible for planning and delivering all the temporary infrastructure that would support the tournament. What began as a relatively small team eventually grew into an organisation of around 250 people responsible for hundreds of venues and facilities across the country.

For the tournament itself, I served as

It's remarkable how one opportunity, accepted with the expectation of spending just a year overseas, has turned into an entirely different life.

Deputy Director for Overlay and was assigned to Al Bayt Stadium, host venue for the Opening Ceremony and the tournament's first match.
Part of that meant designing and delivering the infrastructure needed to support the opening ceremony and match operations, with requirements evolving almost daily as planning became increasingly detailed. One of the most demanding elements was the design and construction of the VVIP viewing tribune for the Qatari Royal Family, FIFA leadership and international dignitaries. Every detail had to be perfect, and work continued literally until spectators were entering the stadium. It was one of those moments where years of preparation came together in a matter of hours.
Whilst it was one of the highlights of my career, the period was also one of the busiest and most emotional of my life. Our second daughter, Harlyn, was born just two weeks before the tournament began, which inevitably added another layer of complexity to what was already an incredibly demanding time. Then, just four days into the tournament, my father passed away. He and my

mum had planned to travel to Qatar for the England v Wales match, and I already had their tickets waiting. The tournament will always be remembered as both an extraordinary professional achievement and a deeply personal loss.
Following the World Cup, I continued working on major international events in Qatar, including the AFC Asian Cup and improvements to the Formula One facilities at Lusail International Circuit. One of the things I've always enjoyed about working in events is that no two projects are ever the same. Every event presents a different challenge, requiring new ideas, new teams and a different way of thinking.
Last year I was approached about joining QatarEnergy, representing a move away from sport and into the energy sector. Today I help plan and deliver major conferences, international exhibitions and official ceremonies for QatarEnergy. Recent projects have included the International Conference and Exhibition on Liquefied Natural Gas, international exhibitions in China and inaugurations for major new industrial facilities. While the subject matter is very different, many of the same skills still apply, bringing together large multidisciplinary teams and delivering complex projects that hopefully appear effortless to those attending.
Away from work, Qatar has become home in every sense. Emma moved out a year after I did, and we married in December 2015. Looking back, the moment we realised we probably weren't going back to the UK any time soon was when we adopted our dog, Gus, shortly after returning from our wedding. It felt like the first genuinely long-term commitment we made in Qatar.

Our daughters, Lowenna and Harlyn, were both born in Doha and now attend Kings College. Emma recently completed her degree in Childhood Studies and Child Psychology and will begin teaching at the school this September.

Although Qatar has given us an incredible life, Cornwall has never stopped feeling like home. We return whenever we can and are currently building our future home in South-East Cornwall, with the long-term aim of spending more time back in the UK while continuing to enjoy the opportunities that an international career provides.

Alongside my professional career, I've also started developing several business ventures focused on event infrastructure, property and the practical application of artificial intelligence, projects that allow me to explore ideas beyond my day-to-day role and perhaps lay the foundations for whatever comes next.

Looking back, it's remarkable how

one opportunity, accepted with the expectation of spending just a year overseas, has turned into an entirely different life. Along the way I've been fortunate enough to work on some extraordinary events, meet people from all over the world and watch Qatar develop into the global destination it is today. It's certainly been quite an adventure.

Miles Away

Colin Miles with his daughter Millicent

A chance meeting with Colin Miles at Ford Park revealed that Colin had come to Plymouth to pick up his daughter on her way back from Boardmasters during the school holidays. When he saw there was a cricket match going on on the school field and he decided to look in. I believe it was his first time back since 1980. Colin says that he joined school in the third year, in 1976.

'I boarded in Mannamead House under Mr Veale and played both cricket and rugby for the OPMs.'

A member of the OPM Lodge, he was an elected member of the City Council from 2000 to 2003 and in 2009 he moved to the East of England.

'I live just outside of Stamford, Lincolnshire. Not far from my prep school - St Hughs, Woodhall Spa.'

Colin got his whites back out in 2010 and for the next few years played cricket for Uffington CC.

He's currently working as an inhouse litigation lawyer for three local authorities, practising in crime and licensing.

Megan Hanfstingl (nee Palmer) celebrates Oktoberfest in Munich

I'm currently taking a break from work to focus on learning German. After living in Germany for six years, I finally decided it was time, I only wish I'd chosen German as an A-level!

I've really been enjoying the challenge and it's made everyday life in Munich much easier. Our youngest son turns two in July, so life is busy and full of mountain adventures. We're absolutely loving life in Munich and embracing everything Bavarian culture has to offer. Oktoberfest is such a special part of that, a celebration of Bavarian traditions, from wearing Tracht (Dirndl and Lederhosen), enjoying traditional food, beer (it's so strong!) and music, to coming together with friends and family in the famous 14 beer tents that are set up to hold 10,000 people each! Prost!

Finding His Way

Robin Pook left school in 1962 and remains eternally grateful for the all round education and experiences at Plymouth College – courtesy of the 1945 Education Act.

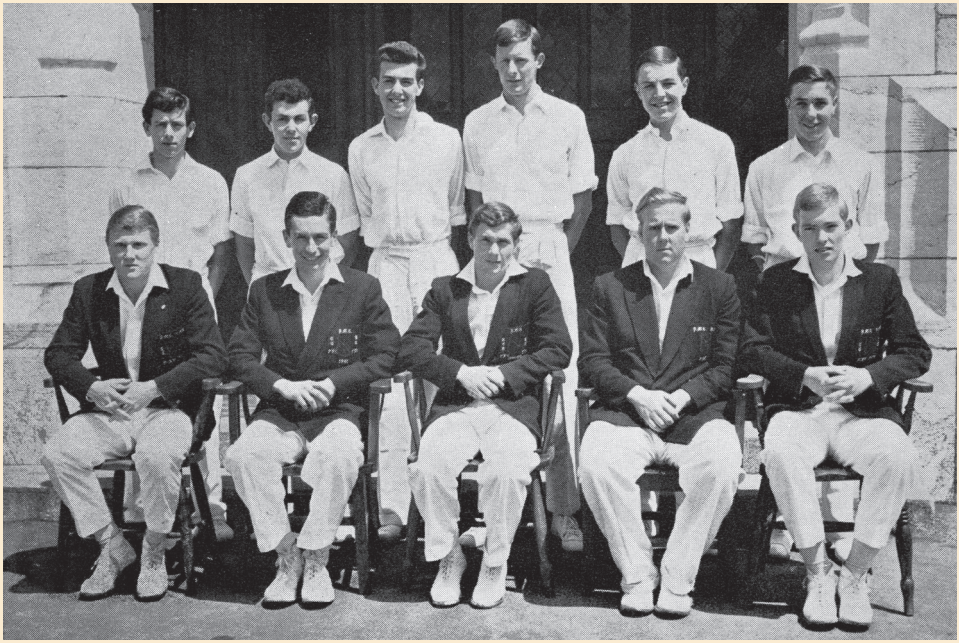
Robin says that he was 'A Jack of many trades and master of none. But a soldier I will always remain at heart.'

Born of a Royal Navy man who warned both Robin and his brother, Jerry, not to join the military, they both did, Robin went into the Army and his brother the RAF.

Robin picks up the story: 'After enjoying my time in the CCF, I applied for, and was awarded, an Army Scholarship before joining the 6th Form to study Double Maths and Physics.'

He was awarded Colours for 1st XI Cricket, 1st XI Hockey and 2nd XV Rugby, and served us a Junior Prefect under Peter Anthony.

'In September 1962, I joined RMA Sandhurst where I finished as a Junior Under Officer and was commissioned in September 1964 into 1st Battalion



Plymouth College Ist XI Back: GA Richardson, RL Napp, RG Cleverdon, RJ Pook, DP Clemas, JS Cooper Front JR Gabitass, PR Bowden, DR Anthony, DC Adams, RL Boot.

The Devonshire and Dorset Regiment. I then joined the Battalion in British Guiana where they were being deployed across the country dealing with inter-racial violence ahead of the Independence Elections in January 1965.

'I had passed the Cambridge Mechanical Sciences Qualifying Examination whilst at Sandhurst and in September 1965 matriculated at Selwyn College.

'At Regimental Duty, I served in Northern Ireland, West Germany, Berlin, South Wales, West Germany, Belfast, South Armagh and Wiltshire with overseas exercises and sporting expeditions to Cyprus, France, America, Norway, Slovakia, Switzerland, Austria, Canada and Denmark.'

In the late 1960s, Robin supported and played OPM Cricket and Rugby and the original OPM Club at Efford as well as the GX (Groin Exchange aka Plymouth Sailing School) on the Barbican.

Then in 1970 and 1971, he served as an Instructor at Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) Lympstone near Exeter as OC Senior Command Course.

'In between courses, I started my involvement with my two main sporting interests over the next 20 years as a competitor and official – Skiing and Orienteering.'

Success came quickly as Robin became the Royal Marines Orienteering Champion in 1971 and the BAOR Champion in 1972 and 1976. He

represented the Royal Marines in 1971 at Orienteering when they travelled to Quantico, Virginia, where they defeated the USMC in a two-day competition. Having passed the four Commando physical tests, Robin was awarded his Green Beret and Army Commando qualification. He attended the Army Staff College Division 2 in 1977 and 1978 and in 1984 and 1985, he was the Army Instructor at the RN Staff College, Greenwich as a Lieutenant Colonel.

From 1986 to 1988, Robin commanded 1st Battalion The Wessex Regiment which was one of four Infantry battalions in the NATO roled UK Mobile Force/1st Infantry Brigade which was assigned to support Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein. In 1989, he was awarded a Masters Degree in Defence Administration (MDA) by RMCS Shrivenham / Cranfield University. 'My final postings in Wiltshire (while we were establishing our home in Devizes) enabled me to qualify formally as a Project Manager, Facilities Manager and Risk Manager which enabled me to move seamlessly, in 1998, into civilian life as a full time consultant with Advantage, Fluor Global Services and then ATKINS. 'After retiring from the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1998, I then spent 10 years as a Technical Consultant, for the last few years with ATKINS Plc, the largest engineering consultancy in the UK. I finally retired in June 2009 as a Principal Consultant/ Certified Management Consultant.'

Robin and his wife Marjie have two daughters and one son who in turn have gifted them seven grandchildren. 'Retirement has resulted in a few knocks to both of us (and my brother) but we are still soldiering on !'

Robin adds that his younger brother Jerry – Squadron Leader (retired) JJ Pook MBE DFC – left in 1963 for an exciting career in the Royal Air Force and has written about their upbringing in Plymouth, school days and dangerous flying career in two books published by Pen & Sword publishers.

SAY CHEESE!

Steve Randall left school in 1973 and like so many of his cohort turned 70 recently. At a party to celebrate the moment he was joined by, amongst others, his brother-in-law Simon Murray, who married Sarah Crook, sister of Steve's wife Jessica and was also of the class of 73, and another sister-in-law, Rachel who joined the school in the sixth form and left in 1983.

A Home Park season ticket holder, Steve is a regular on the tennis court and a keen runner and in the last year has run the Torquay and the Exeter Half-Marathon, the Haldon Hill 5k, a trail run in Exeter and a 10.5 mile run around the Isles of Scilly.

What are the chances?

Dick Laishley (65-72) Crownhill village.

And so your OPM Editor is going through a vast collection of scanned images that originally came from the City Engineer's Department in Plymouth and I find a picture of Crownhill from the late sixties with someone walking towards the camera who looks remarkably like a classmate of mine from school, Richard 'Dick' Laishley.

Thanks to a school reunion (the Class of 1972) from a few years ago I have Dick's email address and I drop him a line and a copy of the image.

Richard confers with his brother: 'We agree that it could be me, I recognise the red tartan duffle bag that I used to take everywhere. The glasses and the hairstyle are mine. I was probably going to Pascoe's shop, having just bought some cigarettes for my mum from Isabell's shop on the corner. The garage on the other side of the road is where our dad bought the Fiat 500 which eventually became my first car. No synchromesh so I had to double-declutch it for the driving test. The examiner was so impressed that he passed me!'

Chris Robinson, Dick Laishley - School photo 1968

A Developing Situation

Out in Ivybridge last year I was giving a talk to the U3A there when I bumped into John Lassan (70-77) and he asked if I'd be interested in using a photo of the Meade King Hall taken during its construction.

Of course I said yes. John says the photograph was taken and developed by him at school, 'on 9 Oct 1973 as part of the DofE award scheme.'

He added that he never wanted to join the CCF as I couldn't stand the thought of someone bellowing at him two inches from his nose!

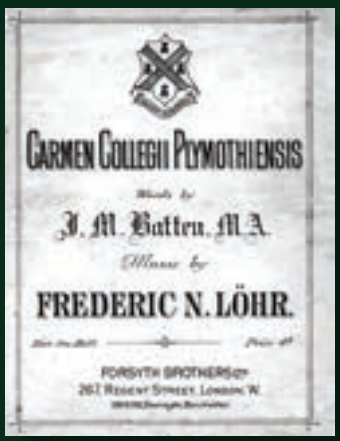
After leaving school John spent 24 years in the Civil Service (18 of them in Southampton) before taking a redundancy package at the end of 2001. He then returned to Ivybridge (where he still lives), and did a five year spell at Endsleigh followed by an eight year stint as sales manager with a local machine tool company. 'I had to retire early, at 55, due to life changing lung condition, which is now under control,' he says, adding, 'I'm now a Ring & Ride volunteer driver in addition to being active in the Ivybridge U3A.'

Meade King Hall under construction 9 October 1973

Logos, Crests & Badges

Towards a History for Plymouth College and the OPMs

The earliest record we have of a Plymouth College badge or crest is a version of the Plymouth crest or logo with a saltire, the four towers of the towns medieval castle with a leafy motif bordering the design. The wording captured the original name of the institution – Plymouth High School – and echoed that of neighbouring Plymouth High School for Girls that had been established a year or so earlier. In 1883 the name was changed to Plymouth College, although not without some complaints, and the following year the headmaster, James Batten, wrote the Plymouth College Carmen (song) with fellow staff member Frederick Lohr providing the music. An early version of this has the saltire and towers set in an heraldic device above the legend Collegium Plymothiense.



In 1896, following the difficulties Mannamead School found itself in, the two institutions merged and a picture showing the first eleven of the newly combined body showed the boys sporting a shirt with simplified version of that crest.

The first amalgamated School football team - Plymouth and Mannamead College 1896-1897: Back; DL Serpell (PC) goal, G Tucker (PC) Inside Rt Forward, P Anderson (MS) Rt Half, D Spearman (PC) Centre Forward, B Bird (PC) 12th Man, EC Pitt-Johnson (PC) Lft Half. Front; W Stanhope-Lovell (PC) Centre Half, HH Butcher, Captain (PC) Rt Back, AW Brock (MS) Lft Back, CV Hunt (MS) Outside Rt Forward, FG Powell (MS) Inside Lft Forward. Absent B Spooner (MS) Outside Lft Forwd.

THE

Plymothian.

Being the Magazine of the Plymouth and Mannamead College

No sooner had the two schools combined than suggestions were forthcoming that there should be a new school crest, however nothing was formally done about it until 'the necessity of framing a joint shooting trophy with Exeter and Kelly,' forced matters on in the summer of 1898. From then we read that 'a neat design has been decided on, representing a ship with lighthouse, surrounded by a joined band, with the dates of the formation of Plymouth College and Mannamead School together with that of the amalgamation.

The motto, 'L'Union fait la force,'[Union gives strength] had already long been decided.

'We hope,' said the editors of the 1898 edition of the *Plymothian* in which the new image appeared, 'all necessary arrangements will be completed, so that the crest may be used for stationery, &c., by all who wish.'

While not used as the school crest for sportswear the 1898 crest was used on the front cover of the Plymothian *throughout the 1920s up to 1929.*

It is, however, far from clear to know now what service the new artwork was put to as examples, if there are any, remain hidden to your humble scribe and a decade later (1909), when 'Apex' sent in a missive to the Plymothian it would appear that both were perhaps in use.

The author was suggesting that it was high time a satisfactory School cap was devised: 'The present ones are imitated all over the town, and some of the wearers of the imitations are likely to cause mistaken impressions as to the class of boy that attends the College. Also, the green of the North Town cap fades like the grass. Could we not have some design that could be registered and not imitated? Surely now, too, is the time to settle on a real School crest; the caps could then all have the crest, with some variation in the colours black, red, and green, to mark the different houses.'

Again it appears that no definite decision was taken and in a letter dated 21 January 1923 we find the following: 'I learn from your pages that most of the old grievances have been remedied, that the Pavilion is being taken in hand, and there is actually room in the Gymnasium on Speech Days for one's relatives. Surely, though, some grievances must be left? Is there always soap in the lavatory? Are the Fives-Courts all that they should be? Does not the School Crest need altering?'

The lack of an agreed design didn't just impact on school uniform and sports' wear though as there appeared to be a bit of a free for all operating in the

OPM ranks as well. In another letter to the Plymothian WJ Lang Cornelius OPM, noted 'that a large number of blazers are being worn this season with various badges of school, clubs, etc., several OPM's have asked, why does the OPM blazer lack a badge?'

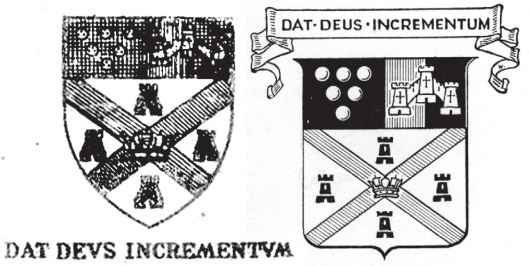
Blazers then, of course, were generally exactly what their name suggests – a blaze of colour, not simply dull, blue/black affairs but gaudily-striped garments, that, rather like the "old school tie", didn't always need a badge or crest to identify them.

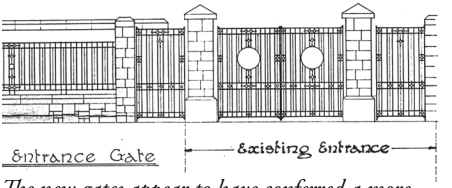
Nevertheless the query was a timely one for the OPM Club was rapidly getting itself into much better shape than it had ever been before the war. Once again however, there appears to have been no clear mission statement issued on the badge or crest front.

Seven years later, while nothing was to be cast in stone, there was something cast in metal as the Chairman of Governors, JP Brown, financed the production of a set of school gates for the entrance off Hyde Park Road, which at that time was the principal entrance to the site.

In pride of place was a new design courtesy of the newly appointed Art Master Ian (Jimmy) Edwards. It was undoubtedly his most enduring contribution to the school, although most past pupils that are still around will remember him more as a somewhat sadistic PE teacher.

The splendid new gates, still in situ today and sporting the new crest, were installed a week before a group of School Inspectors arrived to give the place their undivided attention. Doubtless they were impressed.





The new gates appear to have conferred a more balanced appearance on what was already there. Left: the earliest rendition of the Edwards crest, Right: a tidier version from an ex libris insert.

The official blazon (that is precise description allowing for accurate reproduction) for the school's coat of arms is: 'Argent [silver], a cross vert [green] between four towers sable [black]; a chief per pale [the top third], the dexter piece per pale gules and sable [the left piece of which has a red and black backgound] a castle of three towers argent [a silver castle in front], the sinister [left] piece sable [black] six bezants [solid gold circles] three two and one. The Edwards original design had the castle of three towers and the gold circles the other way around. He also had a crown in the middle of the cross or saltire, presumably a nod to the crest of Devonport. The gold circles incidentally are a reference to the arms of Cornwall - although the school arms only shows the bottom three rows, whereas there are 15 in the Cornish device. The castle set on red and black is a reference to the county town of Devon - Exeter. Thus adding these to the Plymouth crest, the new coat of arms acknowledged the three local administrative authorities that the school, at that time, looked to for its pupils. Dat Deus Incumentum - God Gives the Increase - is alo the motto of the much older, early fourteenth century, Westminster School.

motion was tabled at a special general meeting of the OPM Club by the old boy J Leighton Fouracre. The meeting followed a request, signed by 22 members and it was to address the proposal that 'like members of other Old Boys' clubs, the OPMs should incorporate in their colours those of the old school.'

In other words it was suggesting that the magenta, blue and brown of the OPMs be changed to green red and silver, making them more in line with the School colours.

The suggestion was seconded by the then headmaster, Herbert Ralph. Samples of the new colours were shown and there were amendments suggested for the crest as well.

The meeting was informed that the price of the new colours and crest would be about 4s/6d (22p). OPMs Nelson and Breeze opposed the changes and H Elliott said that if new rugby and hockey shirts were purchased it would involve a lot of expense. Fouracre, however, said he could see no reason why the two colours should not run concurrently for a while.

Nevertheless when the proposition was eventually put to the vote it was defeated by a large majority. Although a subsequent refinement, whereby the Club adopt the School Crest with the letters OPM, underneath was carried. Again Ralph supported the motion and nor was he finished there, for the final proposition of the day came from the Headmaster himself.

Essentially this concerned the tidying up of OPM subscriptions, there being an ongoing problem of people either missing payments or moving on and not providing forwarding addresses.

The proposal therefore was that "as an alternative to the annual subscription of 6 shillings (30p) members could make a prepayment of one guinea (£1.05) for four years, two guineas for ten years, or five guineas for life membership".

For those who had already been longstanding members the suggestion was that "an abatement of one guinea should be made for every ten years subscription previously paid".

From an administrative point of view the proposition made a lot of sense, but it wasn't simply a suggestion from the floor and in supporting the motion Mr Ralph read a report from a sub-committee which had been appointed to consider the matter.

Clearly, having made considerable progress with improvements to the fabric of the Main School and its staffing, and to the Prep School and its staffing, the energetic and capable Headmaster was now doing his best to sort out the OPM Club and, at the same time, certainly as far as the club colours were concerned, make it more obviously an extension of the Plymouth College experience.

Curiously what happened next was that the OPM Rugby Club Fixture list sported a version of the 1896 crest while the club shirts, which had been hooped and crestless before the 1936 decision, were hoopless and crested by the 1938-

1938/39 OPM Rugby XV; Back row, WH Trask, AWC Lyddon, RRC Kitchen. Middle, KH Ife, GL Spear, KD Eke, FW Blight, WA Culliford, N Trahair. Front, RV Hoare, HR Lawry, NE Elliott (Capt.), GL Wakeham (Pres.), DG Spear, GFN Snell, RF Fowles. Picture taken outside the then brand new pavilion at school implying that the OPMs were playing at Ford Park at that time.

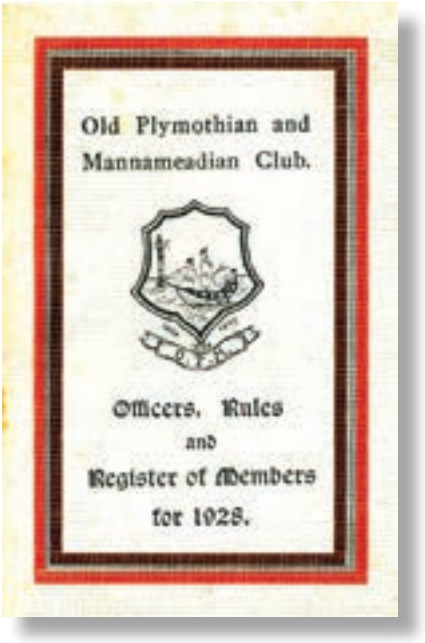


Image taken from the 1928 pocket-sized OPM Club rules and register. Early visual proof of the OPMs adapting the 1898 amalgamated school crest as their 'official' logo? We would appreciate any information about the school crest, badge, logo - call it what you will!

39 season, the crest in question being yet another version of the saltire and four towers. Once again OPM activities were curtailed with the outbreak of war and again the fallout impacted on the immediate post war sporting programme.

In 1951 the oval ball boys held a "highly successful" Rugger Ball at the Duke of Cornwall. Making strides forward on one hand the team, looking over its collective shoulder, was however still finding it difficult to "revert to the pre-war hoop shirts".

Nevertheless that winter a new set of shirts and badges did arrive and the team looked "well turned out". There was a good turnout too for the cricket team's Flannel Dance on the occasion of the Past v Present match that summer, and for the London Dinner, which Garnons Williams (1945-53), Ralph (1929-45) and Dale (1920-29) attended.

At the 1953 OPM dinner a photograph shows part of a very large framed version of the 1896 crest in front of a significantly larger banner (around five metres wide) sporting the standard school crest in the middle.

Certainly it would seem that the school generally and the OPMs mainly rolled with the old crest or logo, but on the cover of the January 1963 edition of the *Plymothian* the revised version of the Jimmy Edwards 1930 crest made its debut cover appearance. Oddly enough the *OPM Magazine*, which was produced as an offshoot of the Plymothian, and coincided with the acquisition of the clubhouse at Efford, was published for the first time the following year, and featured none of the crests, or indeed any graphic content other than the OPM initials, the year, and a magenta and a chocolate stripe on a sky blue background.

March 1953, the OPM Dinner in the Connaught Rooms. Garnons Williams is just to the right of the OPM Crest and CP Brown. Charlie Barnes, third from left, proposed the toast to the Club, nearest the camera, bottom right, is George Creber. Peter Vittle is sitting on the opposite side, level w th the top of George's head.

Left to right: The Jan 1963 Plymothian, the first ever OPM magazine, from 1964 and the 1996 edition.

The first *OPM Magazine* with the 1898 crest was the 1996 Centenary Year magazine, and I think on that occasion it was the initiative of one of the editorial team at that time, namely yours truly and it has graced the cover every year since.

Incidentally, by the time the OPM centenary rolled around, the OPM rugby team had been sporting the 1898 crest on their shirts for at least six seasons, indeed it would appear that it first made it onto the fabric in 1989. Perhaps someone out there knows how that came to pass. Certainly it was probably that eventuality that led to the club claiming the 1898 crest as its own.

It was around 20 years ago that the school benefitted from a revised version of the Jimmy Edwards design courtesy of Ewan McKnight who had just designed the jacket of the Plymouth College History that I produced in 2005. Ewan was a newly qualified graphic designer and I thought the 1930 motif deserved a tweak, which he duly supplied. The agreement was that if the school used the tweaked version they would pay for it. The bursar however wasn't interested in paying and said they wouldn't use Ewan's artwork. However about 18 months later they did start using the new version and there was an interesting stand off, over the situation. Eventually the school paid up and interestingly enough they are still using the tweaked version on blazer badges and certain publications and stationery.

The McKnight version simply tweaked the revised version of the school crest registered in 1956 (note it has dropped the Devonport crown) by darkening the green and giving the motif a couple of nudges to make it appear vaguely three dimensional: putting a light reflection on the cross and giving the gold circles a golden globe appearance rather than a flat disc.

Above: The new school logo c2007, an undated drawing of the 1898 crest, possibly from 1930s. An example of an OPM blazer badge, date unknown.

They are also employing a more recent, simplified manifestation of the crest produced courtesy of Peter Jones, a contemporary of mine at school who was a marketing strategist and on the Governing Board at the time. Designed to work on any scale and to be clean and simple to reproduce across all potential applications this too is in widespread use.

Meanwhile there was still the issue of the 1898 crest devised to commemorate the amalgamation of Plymouth College and Mannamead School which it would appear the school never fully embraced. As we have seen the OPM rugby club featured it on their fixture list in 1936, but continued to use the old Plymouth College badge, without the 1950s, Exeter and Cornwall references, on their rugby shirts well in to 1950s, although the photograph from the 1953 OPM dinner shows the amalgamation motif was still in club psyche.

1953-54 OPM Rugby. Rear row BNR Mahoney, RJ Williams, K Pring, JR Quick, JW Lethbridge, RE Southern, DG Smale, JL Beamish. Third row: GE Tucker, RK Pashley,C May, GR Pengelly, RJ Stafford, JR Hamley, AJ Goodenough, LM King, JW Reid. Second row: AR Harvey, FGP Westlake, AJ Squire, JA Northcott (Chairman) R Pratt (Captain), TJ Mutton, PD Vittle, NE Elliott, NV Blackler. Front row: PWJ Luddington, RC Scott.

OPM RFC c1990 Jason Mills, Gary Wesley, anon, anon, Kevin Penny, James Potts , Simon Crawford, M Coleman. Front: John Clark, Julian Eccles, Jamie Clynch, Ernie Bolster, Angus Calder, E O'Sullivan, J Harrison, Rob Colwell Right: Harry Pascoe sporting the new shirt and badge.

At some point in the late 1980s early 1990s the rugby club embraced a more recent version of the ship logo for their shirts, but curiously opted for an adaptation of the full 1898 device for their fixture cards, replacing the wording Plymouth and Mannamead College (PMC) with Old Plymothian and Mannameadian Club and with OPM RFC appearing where L' Union Fair La Force had been.

Then, a little over ten years ago, the OPM Rugby club commissioned a revamp of the logo embraced by the OPM club and seemingly long since abandoned by the school. Deploying an even greater degree of airbrush technique than the 2005 new school logo, it's very colourful and depicts the classic sailing vessel on a conspicuously calm sea. More of a fifty shades of grey than a black and white image when rendered as monochrome, it looks very fetching on the new 'retro' style hooped OPM rugby shirts.

Above: The new look, all colour fixture cards with the new logo. Bottom left a re-imagining of the crest by the OPM editor c2013; the reworded 1898 logo, right the c2015 OPM RFC logo.

MEMORIES OF A MANNAMEAD OLD BOY

Henry Woolmington Webber

Lieut Col HW Webber MD MS RAMC

A few years ago Tim Lyddon sent in a few selections from old copies of the Emmanuel Church magazine published around 1908-09 which featured reminiscences from old boys of Mannamead School (which merged with Plymouth College in 1896, hence OPMs – Old Plymothians and Mannameadians). Among them was a piece by Henry Woolmington Webber who was described at the time as being 'one of the leading surgeons in Plymouth.' Webber was a great nephew of Dr Holmes, the founder and first head of Mannamead School and had joined the school as a pupil in 1875. Webber writes:

"My father with some pride and much confidence entered me at the school in September of that year. I was the smallest and youngest boy in the school (eight years of age,) and partly on this account, partly from my relationship to the Doctor, was placed in the nursery, next to his bedroom in company with another boy of my own age, Jack Matthews, now of Ivybridge.

Mannamead School in those days was one of the best private schools in the country; Dr Holmes did not want to push its numbers for the sake of profits and limited them to ninety or thereabouts. It was, par excellence, a preparatory school for Sandhurst, Woolwich, HM Navy and the Civil Services, and as a result of this its Old Boys are now scattered far and wide.

" Hard knocks were given and taken frequently, and the physical condition of the boys engaged became of the highest order."

As a schoolboy, I was soon more interested in games than head-work, and a few words recalling this side of school life may be interesting. At football (Association) we particularly excelled. In those days the schools possessed no playing field. The whole of our practices took place in the playground, whose surface was of earth, beaten hard by the feet of the boys, and enclosed with rough stone walls, projecting from which at intervals were the trunks of large trees.

One can easily imagine the type of football such a training ground produced. Hard knocks were given and taken frequently, and the physical condition of the boys engaged became of the highest order. The school eleven soon was known all round Plymouth for the pace and 'vim' with which it played the game, and I remember that for a period of seven years it possessed an unbeaten record. The team then played eight forwards, two backs and a goalkeeper, and the uniform – a dark blue jersey with a white Maltese cross on the left breast, white knickers, and dark blue stockings – was very effective.

At cricket we were not so prominent, though the team generally gave a good account of itself, especially in the early eighties, when such useful masters as Mr Palmer and Mr RG Carpenter joined us occasionally, the former especially good with the bat, the latter with the ball. Soon after I joined the school, it became apparent, even to us boys, that Dr. Holmes' health was failing, his memory especially. For instance, he could not remember in the case of boys set 'lines' to learn whether the boy had said those particular lines before. In my own case, I always recited *The Battle of Waterloo*, from Collier's *English History*, and it is a fair testimony to the frequency with which it must have been said that I can repeat it word for word at the present day.

The closing scene I can well remember. The Doctor was taken suddenly ill at eight o'clock in the evening, and the late Mr Joseph Square summoned in all haste. My father, who had recently retired from medical practice, also hurried off to see him, but Dr Holmes became unconscious and died about nine o'clock.

An early group of wounded soldiers are ferried by the top brass from Friary Station to Webber's hospital in Salisbury Road.

Many old boys will recall the funeral at Pennycross, where the Doctor was formerly curate: the large crowd of all classes; the impressive reading of the Burial Service by Doctor (now the Ven. Archdeacon) Wilkinson, and the final interment. The mortal remains of the Doctor have long since mouldered away, but his boys, some here in Plymouth, many more scattered over the world, venerate his memory, and look back with affectionate pride to the days spent at Mannamead School.

The Mr Palmer referred to here is the Palmer of Palmer's House, for he it was who walked the boys down from Seymour Road in 1896 when the two schools came together.

As fate would have it, when the OPM Club was formed, later that same year, Francis Palmer would become the first club treasurer and Henry Webber the club's first honorary secretary.

Webber himself won an entrance scholarship at Guy's Hospital, London in 1885 and in addition to his practice in Plymouth we find him in 1914 in joint charge of the impromptu hospital in what had only recently been opened as Salisbury Road School. Set up at the beginning of the Great War the hospital had 22 sisters, 68 staff nurses and two masseuses. Nurse Tait McKay, who had also trained at Guy's Hospital, was Acting Matron

and Lieutenant-Colonel Webber ran the hospital with Major J Cheyne Wilson.

The hospital opened on 5 August 1914, the day that news that country was at war was announced in the press. The first batch of 102 wounded soldiers arrived from the front barely two weeks later.

Webber worked at Salisbury Road for three years, before being called away to do duty in the 56th General Hospital in France, where he was to have charge of a 100-bed facility.

'It is an open secret,' reported the hospital magazine, 'that he had applied for a transfer abroad some months ago, feeling that he would like to do more active work in the service of his country. The call came on August 8th and in a few hours he reported at Southampton and soon found himself on the shores of our great Ally.'

Married with one daughter and a servant, in later years Henry Webber moved to Oxfordshire where he died in 1950.

Lieutenant Colonel Webber and his team at work in the operating theatre set up in Salisbury Road School.

OPM RUGBY RFC
How it all began

For the first 20 years or so of existence Plymouth College was a school that played football and supplied the fledgling Plymouth Argyle with many of their players – 50 out of 500 for Argyle's early years (1886-1903) before the club became a professional concern. A number of Argyle stars came from the neighbouring Mannamead School, founded slightly earlier than Plymouth College in 1854.

In that context it's not surprising to learn that in Argyle's first full season they played 20 games, some seven of which were either against Plymouth College or Mannamead School. Argyle reserves played less than half that, nine games, of which four were against Plymouth College 2nd XI.

In that first season, the captain of the College eleven was Ernest Babb and Ernest it was who came to captain Argyle in their second season. In those days the most keenly contested game locally for Plymouth College was their fixture against Mannamead School and when the latter was struggling courtesy of personnel issues in 1895 their merger with the College meant the loss of a major sporting encounter. Football however had become a bit of a problem for the schoolboy game by this stage locally with many Services and other sides fielding non-commissioned officers and young men who were bigger, stronger and generally a little more physical in their approach to the game.

Given that most other schools that were playing winter sports in the area had opted for the oval shaped ball that only really left the Corporation Grammar School as 'fair' opposition and that fixture did "not have the aura of a great game."

As it happened the school had earlier hesitated "between the Rugby and Association game" but "a serious accident which happened whilst we were playing the former, decided us in favour of the latter." There was a feeling that a change might be afoot:

"We must look further afield to those schools which, though it may not always be recognised, are now our real rivals: and I am sure, that in Kelly, Newton, or Exeter, we shall find something which will take the place of the Mannamead match, and will bear the good fruits that that has borne in the past. But these schools play Rugby, and sooner or later we shall have to change"

So wrote R Nettel in the *Plymothian*, the school magazine. Just three years earlier Nettel had become the first pupil to win a scholarship to Oxford. He continued:

"At the 'Varsities a good Rugby player is thought more of than a correspondingly good 'soccer' man, and brings far more honour to his old school. With all due respect to the Old Boys' Club, a few good Rugby players at either of the Universities would do much more for the School than the Xmas tour of the O.P.'s."

Old Plymothians Football Club, 1891-92

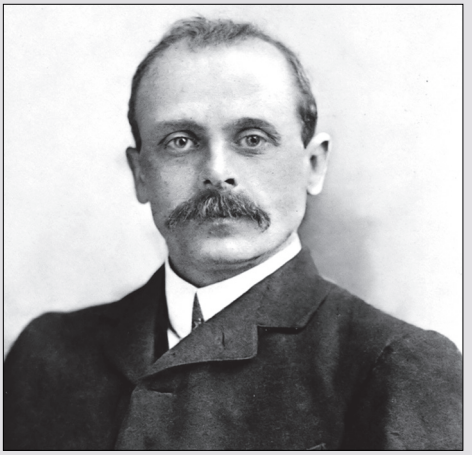
He then added: "It is a common mistake to suppose that if Rugby were instituted nobody would be able to play at odd moments. I have questioned men from the great public schools, and everywhere I find that boys practice without changing, just as we do now. Of course no one can play either game properly without tumbling into 'footer' clothes."

The reality was that the newly merged Plymouth and Mannamead College was now "the only first-class school in Devon that plays Association", and with an eye on the future, they played their first game of rugby on 28 March 1896, against the Royal Naval Engineering Students:

"In consideration of our inferiority in weight, the Students generously allowed us the advantage of the wind for both parts of the game" .... "the game ended with the score:- 1 goal 2 tries (11 points) to 1 goal (5 points), in favour of the Students" ... "Altogether the school is to be congratulated on its first attempt at Rugby Football."

Football continued to be the main game but "after the half-term, a few games of Rugby were played, which proved to be a very nice change from Association".

This ambivalent situation continued for a few years until 9 October 1903 when 35-year-old George Gwyther, a full-blooded rugger man who had come to the school from Oxford University and who had a master's degree from Cambridge, proposed



George Gwyther, 1868-1910.

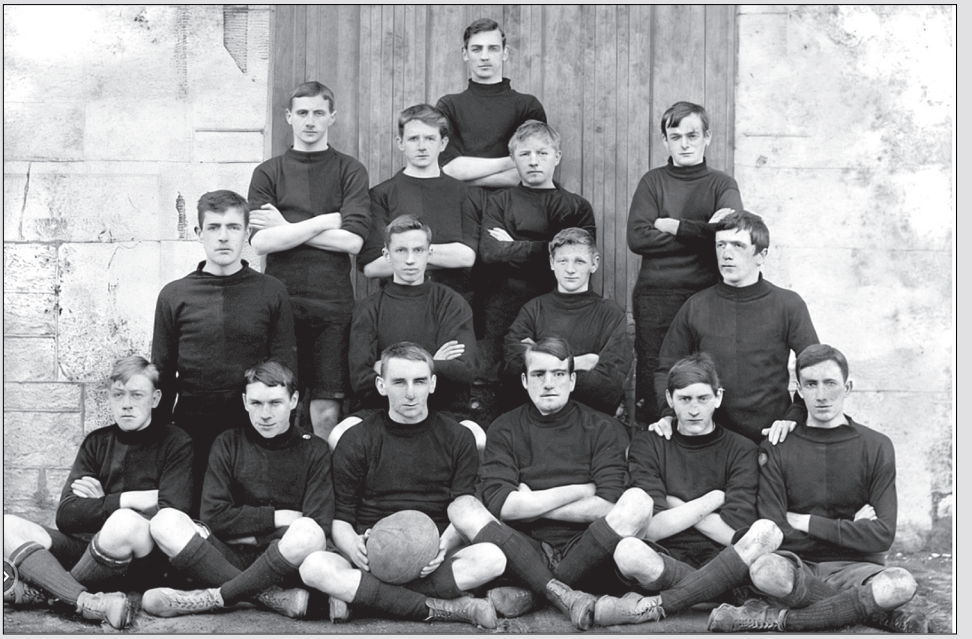
to the School Debating Society that "Rugby Football should be introduced into the School".

The motion was carried "with most unexpected unanimity, the minority consisting of one only".

The decisive vote in favour of playing rugby at Plymouth College was doubtless helped by the fact that just a few months earlier one old boy, JR Walkey, had won a full blue at Cambridge, the first past pupil so to do. Walkey had played a prominent part in those oval ball games that had been organised after the Amalgamation with Mannamead and would have been something of a local hero back at Ford Park. Whatever the reasons the change to the new discipline was swift.

On 5 March 1904 the School 1st XV played a practice game against Argaum Reserves.

Argaum fielded several of their first team players though and not only outmanoeuvred their younger opposition they also substantially outweighed them and scored an easy seven tries, two of which they converted, while the School failed to score.



The first 1st XV c1903: Back WU Broad. Third row; PD Butcher, H WInnicott, GS Maginness, GT Broad. Second row; RC Crews, J Brown, SL Heard, LN Brown. Front; JS Nias, CH Sansom, FG Cooper (the first boy at the school to score points for Plymouth College), HG Tennison, FH Lane.

There was an even greater tale of woe against "our future rivals," Kelly, on 16 March. Seen as being the footballing fixture that would replace the old bi-annual contest with Mannamead School, the first blood went convincingly to Kelly by "6 goals 8 tries to nil".

Small wonder therefore to read that punch-drunk members of the 1st XV wrote, in an unprecedented three page post-match appraisal "we have gratefully accepted the kind offer of the Argaum team to send up players regularly every Wednesday next Christmas term to play, not against us but among us and so raise the level of play generally".

Nor was it just the 1st XV that had been introduced to the game by this stage. Throughout February and March almost fifty boys – a third of the school – had been involved in a 12-a-side, inter-house, senior competition which was won, quite convincingly, by North Town House who together with Palmer's House had most of the 1st XV players.

In October "the opening match of the season set at rest any doubts we may have had before as to the great improvement of our team since last spring" and although the Arguam side that played that day was markedly weaker than the one faced that spring the fact "we only had one try scored against us, was very encouraging". Particularly, it must be said because Mr Pocock (who had himself originally joined the school in amalgamation year – 1896 and had completed his schooling the previous year), had scored for the School and that try had been converted giving the side their first rugby victory.

Later in the month a Wednesday game against the Border Regiment was a slightly different story "their arrival at our ground somewhat appalled us, as they averaged some two stone per man more than our team". Inevitably it was another heavy defeat for the inexperienced boys (46-0) but there were encouraging signs and there was an interesting footnote from the match reporters;

"Our heartiest thanks are due to the Officers of the Border Regiment for the interest they afterwards showed in our team."

The true test of the new sport however came on Saturday 22 October 1904 - "The first real match in football against a rival school that we have enjoyed since the last College v Mannamead match in November 1895, and was looked forward to with great anticipation. Our determination was to wipe off as many points as possible from the score which Kelly had run up against us in the friendly game they had given us last spring."

In the event a 51-0 deficit was reduced to a margin of 20-3. FG Cooper it was who became the first boy at the school to score for the 1st XV.

It was enough to inspire the editors of the first *Plymothian* of 1905 to wax thus;

"Whatever difficulty Editors of this Magazine may sometimes find in distinguishing any event of the year which they are reviewing as of unusual importance, there can be no doubt that on this occasion at least we do not err in so distinguishing the appearance of our first Rugby XV. It was during the year 1904 that we won our first Rugby victory, that we scored our first try against Kelly College, that we first afforded more than one Devonshire school a hard-fought game of football; and these facts will assuredly be remembered by the future historian of the school."

They then speculated about the prospect of beating a fellow Devonshire school in the coming season and followed it with a eulogy to the man most responsible for the change – George Gwyther;

"The really great advance made by the school in the knowledge of the Rugby game, is due, to an even larger extent than most of us realise, to the great interest shown by Mr Gwyther in our progress. His self-sacrifice in giving up his spare time, both to coaching the XV. And refereeing in the games, and to attending all our matches at home and away, must raise a feeling of gratitude, especially of course in the XV, but also in the whole school."

Again there was a note of optimism for the coming season and after years of sporting fixtures against Service sides it was a healthy move to see Kelly, Newton College, Allhallows' School and Exeter School among the forthcoming encounters, including a 2nd XV game against Kelly. Argaum were still on the list though and again they trounced the lighter boys (63-5), but come November 1905 Newton College became the first school scalp claimed by Plymouth College. They also beat the Three Towns Law Students, in very poor weather, "by 4 tries to 1 ... Owing to the heavy ball no tries were converted". Meanwhile the seconds beat Kelly 11-9.

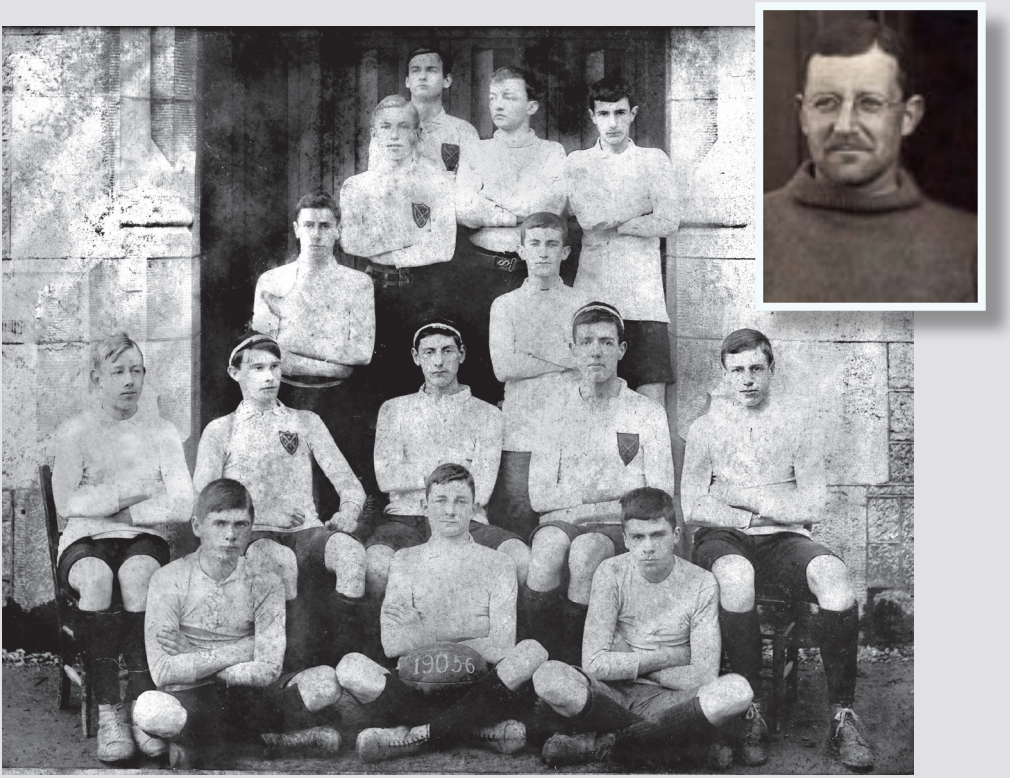
Kelly were undoubtedly the principal "enemy" – for the Cadet Corps in their regular moorland battles, for the fives teams (such as could be raised by the School), by the cricket XI and now, at last, by a rugby XV. In 1906 we find two pages given over to this fixture and clearly it had been well promoted around throughout the School; "This is the first time since the old College-Mannamead days that the school has turned up in such numbers to watch a football match, and we won; the moral is obvious". The scoreline was less so; 8-3, in favour of the School, but it was a notable victory and one that meant the encounter was destined to be a major fixture for many years to come.

Inevitably, but by no means instantly, the old boys, now Old Plymothians and Mannameadians, decided to follow suit. There had been no 'Past v Present' football encounter in the 1903/4 season and with another date being scratched there were only three round ball OPM matches played – Christmas Eve against the Border Regiment at Crownhill (lost 5-4), Boxing Day against St Austell (lost 2-1) and finally at Launceston (lost 3-1). One contemporary noted that there was "one redeeming feature in the above rather poor record, namely, we always turned out with a full team! That in itself almost constitutes a record."

He added: "Sooner or later Old Boys will have to consider the question of following the School's example and changing to Rugby, and the Secretary who undertakes to place 15 OPMs on the field will have my heartiest sympathies. Although the changes will be regrettable, it will be unavoidable. Even playing members of the Club are not endowed with perpetual youth, and one of our most regular players was referred to at the Club Dinner as an "hoary headed old man"! Unless new blood is infused into the team it cannot exist many years more."

It was no surprise therefore when at the Annual Meeting of the OPM Club, on 21 December 1906, it was decided to adopt "the Rugby instead of the Association game in consonance with the same change at the school."

The meeting was held at the Plymouth Law Chambers and the Headmaster, Francis Colson, presided. Mr EE Rogers was elected the first OPM Rugby captain, with ES Griggs, vice-captain and JA Brown, secretary. Officials of the OPM Cricket, Hockey, Tennis and Chess Clubs were also elected and it was reported that overall club membership had risen from 183 in 1905 to 203.



Plymouth College rugby team, 1905-1906 with 14 of the 15 outside what is now the entrance to the main school from the old gym. Top; GT Broad. Back row; RC Weeks, GS Maguinness, HP Hodge, AB Norman. Third, row; J I Stuttaford, HD Hodge. Second row, JS Nias, AC Hancock, HG Jennsion, RC Crews. Front; LE Morgan, AH Macklin, CC Langford. Alex Macklin (inset) incidentally was a talented athlete, cricketer, rugby player and academic. On leaving school he studied to be a doctor and in 1914 he sailed with Shackleton on the Endurance. After the Great War he sailed again with Shackleton to Antarctic. He won the Military Cross and the OBE for his wartime efforts and died in 1967 aged 77.

Financially the club was reasonably healthy with £29.6s.2d and a further £9.9s.0d in pre-paid subscriptions to be added, although it was also noted that there were 'many subscriptions in arrears.'

By the 1907-08 season the place of the new game was well and truly consolidated at Ford Park. The 1st XV won 11 of their 14 encounters, including a game against the newly-formed OPM XV.

Fixtures for the OPM XV however were still on an ad-hoc basis and by the time war broke out in 1914 there had been little progress towards forming a regular side with a full set of fixtures.

During the war there was no question of building up either a team or a fixture list and in the immediate aftermath of the war, with so many young lives lost, there appears to have been little appetite for any of the Old Boys activities, however as the twenties dawned so did fresh hope for all the sections of the OPM Club.

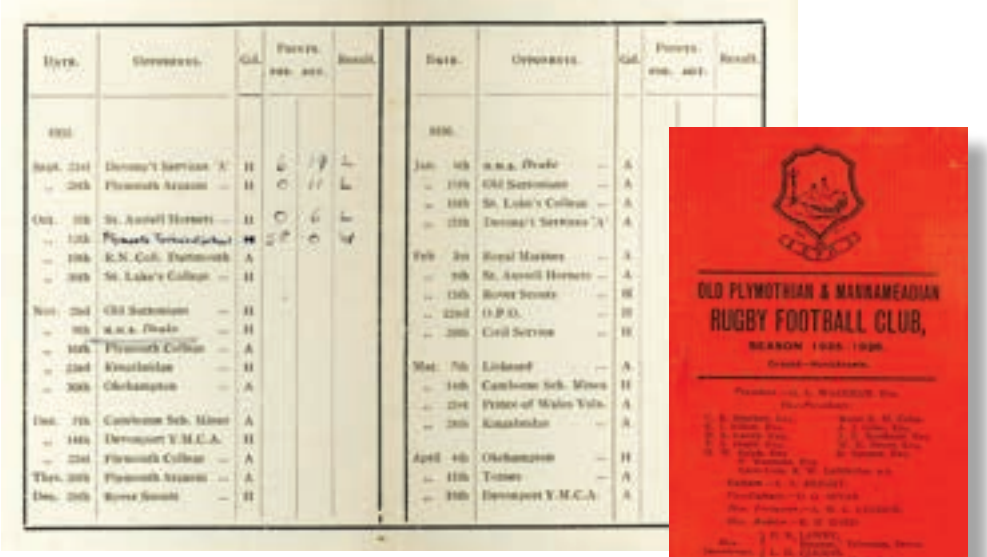
The earliest picture we have to date of an OPM rugby team, 1932, taken again in front of the door facing Hyde Park Road, which the following year would no longer be an outdoor door, but would lead into the new gymnasium. Back row: LE Williams, CE Bracken, TA Pearn, Arthur Lyddon, AR Northcott. 2nd row: FR Curtis, RT Wiltshire, AF Butchers, DG Spear, John Spear, AJ Giles. Sitting: Norman Elliott, CJ Phillips, George Wakeham, WHJ Priest, FGP Westlake, RD Smith, RG Parker. Front row: Henry Lawry, AFC Kitchen, AJ Northcott, FJB Briggs.

In the 1921-22 Season an OPM XV were held to a 3-3 draw by the School Team, but appeared to have had little in the way of other fixtures. The next season there was a similar fixture played, but games against 2nd Battalion and Kingsbridge were cancelled owing to the condition of the pitches. For the 1923-24 season three matches were played and yet more were pencilled in for the 1924-25 season, including fixtures against Plympton, Argaum, Newton Blues, Kingsbridge and the School.

At the Main Clubs' Annual Dinner in January 1925, P A Harris, the main club secretary said he would like to see an OPM Rugger Team running in Plymouth. The main difficulty appeared to be a ground.

In February 1926 26 members attended the inaugural General Meeting of the OPM Rugby Club and P A Harris was elected as Captain for the coming season. A ground near Crownhill was acquired for use on Saturdays and the club registered 30 playing members and several active non-playing members. The 1926-27 season was the first full season that an OPM Rugby Club played. Some 36 fixtures took place and although the OPMs only won 13 of

'One may feel as one sees the OPM tie about the street that College in Plymouth is in the midst of friends...'



The 1935-36 Fixture list includes games against the School, St Luke's College, Exeter, Old Suttonians, St Austell Hornets. Rover Scouts, Camborne School of Mines, Devonport YMCA and Plymouth Argaum.

them, the overall points deficit was only eight points (for 346 points, against 354), a number of the defeats had been by one or two points only. The 2nd XV played seven games and 68 players, 'all of whom were Old Boys' partook in the season's fixtures. On an individual level, founder member GL Wakeham was selected for the Plymouth and District XV to play against Albion Reserves and was heartily congratulated. Clearly the Club was back on its feet and the Head (Francis Dale) acknowledged the fact; "The OPM Club, broken through the war, was in great difficulties when I first came [in 1920]; but now, through the work of a devoted few – I must mention JC Bowering, PA Harris, DF Gibbs, NF Crawshaw – the Club has recovered a very effective vigour; the Cricket, the strong new Rugby Football Club, the Dinner, the Dance, all flourish now: and one may feel as one sees the OPM tie about the street that College in Plymouth is in the midst of friends."

OPM LODGE 6279

The last two years have been both interesting and challenging in many respects for the lodge.
Due to falling numbers and also due to the passing of several key members we needed to sit down and seriously consider the future of the lodge. Due to the fact that many people leaving the school move away from Plymouth we were not able to attract new members. The criteria to join stated that one should have attended the school or been closely involved in it such as teaching and coaching. We decided to change the criteria so that the fathers and siblings of former pupils could join but this only brought a small increase in numbers. We therefore decided to open the membership up generally but also ensure that we did not lower the standards we expect from potential members.

In September 2024 members invited a number of friends and work colleagues to join us for dinner after a lodge meeting and this resulted in six people deciding to join and they were admitted over the last 18 months. The change in criteria also resulted in several experienced members in other lodges to become members and they have assisted in looking after the new members. We still have several other people in the pipeline as potential new members.
We have been saddened by the loss of two key members recently. Our Charity Steward and Almoner John Smerdon passed away on 15 August 2025 after a long illness. Despite everything John continued to work tirelessly for the lodge and Freemasonry right up to a few days before his passing. We also lost Steve Welsh who had been lodge secretary for 23 years and a wonderful servant to the lodge. He had suffered a serious illness in January 2025 and sadly passed away on 4 January 2026. They will both be sadly missed.
Colin Gale (61) completed 60 years in Freemasonry in January 2026 having been initiated in Dundas Lodge No 1255, of which he is still a member, in 1966.
Currently the lodge is in good shape and the current Master is Michael White (87) who is the son of one of our late members JRG White who I am sure

many OPMs will remember. One of the noticeable things Michael did in his year in office was to come up with some very imaginative menus for the dinner after each meeting. He also organises a lunch for the lodge widows each Christmas which is also attended by members and their wives. Last Christmas it was held at St Elizabeth's House in Plympton.

Other senior officers of the lodge are Colin Gale (61) Acting Secretary, Nick Holman (73) Treasurer, Brendan Brookshaw (85) Membership Officer, Mark Williams (83) Almoner and Sam Betts, Charity Steward. Others include Lloyd Inwood (06) and Nigel Deacon.

The lodge continues to meet eight times a year at Manadon Masonic Hall Crownhill on the third Wednesday and if anyone would like further details on joining please contact Colin Gale the Acting Secretary at theopmlodge@gmail.com

Diane COLLINSON

13 June 1930 – 12 August 2025

1960s Colson House Mistress

Although never a member of staff at the school, Di Collinson was a significant influence on a generation of Colson House boys and A Level History students in the 1960s and early 1970s.

She attended Loughton County High School for Girls during the war where she excelled at music and all things academic – she liked to recall how she used to finish top in English just above her classmate Ruth Graseman, better known as the novelist Ruth Rendell. Whilst in the sixth form she was conductor of a joint choir with Bancrofts School where she met her future husband of 74 years, Dennis.

Di went on to the Royal Academy of Music where she won several prizes for composition before graduating. Marriage and the start of a family meant that a career in music was not to be, although she wrote and performed music throughout her life.

The Collinsons moved to Devon in 1955 when Dennis was appointed to teach history at Plymouth College. They lived initially in the South Hams before Dennis became the Housemaster for Colson House, a post he held until 1970. Boarders who had experienced both, considered the more enlightened and liberal Collinson regime vastly superior to its predecessor.

Di was also heavily involved in several Plymouth College entertainments and plays at the time as a producer, writer and musical impresario, authoring many humorous compositions, such as The Plymouth College song, *The Rain on Mutley Plain* and *The Delganey Song*.

It was at this time that Di and Dennis started hosting extra-curricular discussion sessions in their home, firstly in Colson House and then at their Durnford Street House, for A-level students (mostly historians) who were considering Oxbridge as an option. These are fondly remembered by participants for broadening horizons beyond the confines of the sixth-form curriculum and helping to develop an independent and liberal mindset Many of these students would

also attend Di's philosophy lectures at the Swarthmore Adult Education centre on Mutley Plain.
During the 1960s as well as her busy roles as mother of four children and the housemaster's wife, Di undertook an external degree with London University, gaining a First in Ethics, Aesthetics and the History of Philosophy, followed by a PhD at Exeter University. In 1970 she became one of the first members of academic staff appointed to the Open University becoming a Senior lecturer and Staff Tutor – she stayed with the OU until her retirement in 1995 and was the author of several academic textbooks on various aspects of philosophy.
In retirement Di and Dennis lived for many years at Ringmore in the South Hams where in addition to her music and writing Di carried on with her many other accomplishments as a talented homemaker, cook, gardener and smallholder as well as taking a full part in village life. In later years health issues necessitated a move back to Plymouth; Di died at the care home which she shared with Dennis for her last three years.
A Celebration of Life event for Di was held recently in Plymouth, attended by many OPMs, other friends and her large family (4 children, 10 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren).

Ruth, John, Ben and Sue Collinson.

Hazel L ABLEY

1932 - 2026

St Dunstan's Headmistress 1970-1991

Born in Bath in 1932 Hazel Abley was a talented young musician who served WRNS in her younger days, organising a fashion show in Portsmouth where, as Third Officer Abley she entertained an audience with a talk on the history of Wrens uniform – stockings were evidently 'officially recognised' in 1946.
After achieving a BA degree she taught at Andover County Girls School before becoming the Senior English Mistress at the Royal Naval School in Haslemere, Surrey.
In 1970 she was offered the post of Head at St Dunstan's and spent the remainder of her academic career there before eventually retiring in 1991.
Within a few years of her headship numbers had increased from around 200 to over 300 and by 1988 that number had increased to over 350.
Regarded as strict but always very fair she lived in the flat in the Gothic part of the school while it was still situated in North Road West.

Keith STANBURY

23 May 1951 - 29 September 2025

1965-70

Pete Isbell and Keith in the back garden of Pete's home in Plympton.

Keith Ronald Stanbury arrived at the College in 1965 as a 14-year-old boarder in Colson House under Dennis Collinson, after quite an odyssey. From his birthplace in Kenya, he travelled through the Middle East and Europe, eventually landing in Athens, from whence he was despatched to Plymouth to continue his education.

He was described by his teachers in Nairobi at the age of 11 as having 'plenty of ability if he directs in the right way. Intelligent.'

Keith settled into his new life with ease and made some lifelong friends. Mike Hatfield recalls 'We were great friends. Keith's mother was Kenyan and his dad from Plymouth. He and I were both good with languages. We had French with John Spear and sat together at the back of the class. We rarely got a test question wrong and if we did it was the same one. So, we were separated at test time, collusion being suspected. We still got the same results so we were allowed to sit together again. I spent all of one summer at their house in Gibraltar.'

The guitar was Keith's passion and along with Pete Isbell, Dave Charleston and Pete Robins he formed Dog End and played at few sixth form parties. Andy Westlake (another to have visited Keith's parents in Gibraltar) recalls that he always had a copy of the *NME* and *Melody Maker* – always friendly and full of fun.

Iggy Jones remembers sitting next to him in the often-bizarre French A level classes (courtesy of Harry Trevena and Bernie Samuels) with him forever tapping away on an imaginary drum-kit drawn on his folder. Keith enjoyed his time at school and made other life-long friends, notably Terry Darlington, Mark Thomas and John Lang with whom Keith developed his love of the guitar.

Mark recalled the time, just before A Levels, an incident up on Dartmoor involving a transit van and some roadworks warning lights. Keith, along with un-named participants, had neglected to turn the lights off and a police patrol spotted the flashing from inside the van, the end result being a sobering night in a police cell.

After leaving school in 1970, Keith stayed in Plymouth for a while, supporting himself by playing in bands and a series of manual jobs, including working in a bread factory and a bacon factory.

London eventually beckoned and Keith joined various bands throughout the late 70s and 80s, adopting the stage name of Keith Rosetti.

During this period, Keith was also working at DHSS headquarters. He spent ten invigorating years on the Organised Fraud Team there which, together with Special Branch and the Post Office Investigation Dept. thwarted the attempts of a certain Irish organisation to fund their activities via the UK benefits system. Looking for a quieter life, Keith then moved into IT, managing Government contracts in Whitehall for BT.

According to a story in his notebook – he always had one on the go where he scribbled lyrics, jokes, memories etc. – he would borrow a guitar from schoolmate Nigel Gent who was two years above (who became a vicar). There was also Ian Penrose in the year below who had a real electric guitar, a Rosetti Lucky 7. Keith mentions that he had already made friends with Pete Isbell, John Lang and Mike Behennah 'plus others of a musical bent.'

In the mid-70s he met a keyboard player called Mike Smith who also had a history with the Rosetti Lucky 7 and they called their band the Rosettis. The band eventually folded but the name stuck and it became how he was known in his music world.

In the 90s, he and his wife moved to Ripley in Surrey, the place where Eric Clapton was born. Needless to say he was chuffed with that!

Another memorable occasion, with one of the numerous bands Keith played in, was at the Chelsea Arts

Keith Stanbury at the Millbridge 2017

Club where the night ended with a long conversation, on a frosty pavement, with a very merry Melvyn Bragg who had enjoyed the band and admired Keith's guitar playing. John Lang recalls: 'Keith was a happy chappie, always smiling and always ready with a cheeky quip or joke. After he moved up to London, we kept in touch with calls, cards and the occasional visit. In 2017 I put together a band to play a one-off gig at the Millbridge Inn in Plymouth, with Pete Isbell on drums, Dave Pepper on keyboards, Keith and I on guitars, and a friend of mine on bass guitar. Of course, Keith came along with his ever-faithful Fender Stratocaster and we all had a night to remember.'

The following link gives a flavour of the evening https://youtu.be/xKXHPuIusVs.

The last occasion of playing together was at Raffles on Mutley Plain, the evening of the 2019 reunion. Although Keith did visit the school earlier in the day with his wife, he did not join in with the main event and so was missing from the Sgt Pepper's album cover memento! COVID hit and Keith's health issues began to creep up on him and he died from a heart attack at the end of September 2025. He married twice, first to a local girl in Tavistock and second in 1980 to Cynthia, who survives him along with their son Rob.

Steve WELSH

7 November 1949 - 4 January 2026

1961-68

Steve arrived into the world on 7 November 1949 in Plymouth to Eileen and Bill Welsh. He was educated at Plymouth College Preparatory School and later Plymouth College, where he was part of the Navy section of the Combined Cadet Force. From those early years came two skills that stayed with him for life: an impeccable ability to iron a shirt and polish a pair of shoes, and a deep respect for doing things properly.

His two younger sisters, Felicity and Jillian, remember a happy childhood, shaped by time in Plymouth, on Dartmoor, and in Cornwall, particularly Mevagissey. Felicity recalls being nervous on her first days at infant school, only to be reassured by Steve, who promised to meet her by the bins at playtime and look after her — which he did, even though it meant giving up time with his friends. It was a small moment, but one that said everything about the kind of brother he was.

There was humour too. Walking to Sunday School together, each with sixpence for the collection, Steve once teased Felicity by saying he'd lost his money, only to reveal he was joking — his pockets, he said, were 'holy'. He learned to play the trumpet, a process remembered as fairly agonising at home, though vindicated when he went on to win the senior brass category in the Plymouth College music competition.

He was particularly good with Jillian, carrying her on his shoulders on walks across Dartmoor, and later, memorably rescuing her from a locked toilet cubicle during a family trip to Northern Ireland in 1964. When staff were unwilling to help, Steve calmly devised a plan, climbed out of one window and in through another, and brought his four year old sister safely back. It was classic Steve: resourceful, brave, and utterly reliable.

Steve met Ann when he was about eighteen. At the time, he was a proud Mod, devoted to his Lambretta scooter, while Ann describes herself as a complete hippy. Somehow, those two worlds fitted perfectly together. They became engaged in 1972 and were married in 1974 at St Mary's Church in Tamerton Foliot, beginning a partnership that would last over fifty years.

Together they raised three children: Stuart, Jo, and Mark. Steve was a deeply involved and committed father,

happiest when sharing time, skills, and experiences. Family life was often outdoors. He introduced his children to Dartmoor through wild camping trips – pitching tents, cooking on camping stoves, washing up in streams, and dealing with the realities of midges, slugs, rain, and the occasional mishap.

Dartmoor was one of Steve's great loves. His knowledge of it was encyclopedic; you could put him anywhere and he would name every visible tor. He introduced countless people to letterboxing, planning walks that became treasure hunts, teaching map reading, compass skills, and a respect for the landscape along the way. Over his lifetime, Steve collected well over a thousand letterboxes, all while entertaining his family with the many legends and stories of the moor.

Cornwall held a similarly special place in his heart. Family holidays began with camping and later caravanning — a compromise that suited Steve's love of the outdoors and Ann's preference not to sleep under canvas. From Challaborough to Polzeath, Praa Sands to Trevedra, and eventually Kelynack. Steve and Stuart also walked the entire Cornish section of the South West Coast Path in the 1990s, a time Stu remembers with particular fondness. In later years, walking remained important to Steve, not just as exercise, but as time shared.

Professionally, Steve's life as a Chartered Surveyor spanned exactly fifty years to the day. After training and working with several local firms, he set up Stephen Welsh & Co, first in Bedford Park Road and later in Hyde Park.

In 1992, he chose to return to the corporate world, eventually working for Colleys, later part of Lloyds Bank. He was exceptionally well respected, widely known across Plymouth and beyond, and often described as a font of knowledge about the South West property market. Colleagues sought him out constantly for advice — and Steve always made time.

Freemasonry was another central part of his life. Steve was a Freemason for over forty years, joining when Jo was still a baby. It reflected his strong moral compass, his belief in integrity, service, and brotherhood, and his deep spiritual understanding of life.

At home, Steve loved DIY and was always the first to help his children with renovations, armed with every possible tool and piece of equipment. He had a tradition of touching up paintwork before Christmas, meaning the smell of emulsion will forever be linked with the festive season. Even in later years, he was still helping Stu redecorate, right up until shortly before he was admitted to hospital.

In January 2025, Steve was rushed to hospital with a perforated colon and severe sepsis. He survived emergency surgery against all expectations, spending time in ICU, Derriford, and Mount Gould. His recovery was described as miraculous. Though his life changed dramatically, Steve bore it with

courage and dignity. Gardening became his great joy, and watching him rescue worms and slugs for his compost bin is now a legacy his family continue in his honour. Steve passed away at Derriford Hospital on 4 January, surrounded by the love of the family he adored, and of his dearest friends John and Margaret. Steve was, by all accounts, a true gentleman. Kind, gentle, highly intelligent, and genuinely humble. He listened more than he spoke, and when he did speak, people paid attention. His humour, his cheekiness, and his wisdom will be deeply missed.

Geoffrey Fielden

10 January 1939 - 10 March 2026

1950-57

Geoff Fielden died at Derriford Hospital on 10 March 2026 following a short illness.
Father of OPMs James and Charles Fielden, Geoff was a well-known figure in the area, notably through his auction rooms on Mutley Plain and in Modbury. It was a career he went into straight after leaving school.

John SMERDON

15 May1954 - 15 August 2025

1960-66

John 'Jo-Jo' Smerdon, husband and best friend of Ange, was a good friend of the OPM Club. His sense of humour, sense of fun and kind and generous spirit enriched the lives of those he came into contact with.
He was a long time partner of the family stationary business, Sellicks, which he helped run with his bothers Peter and David, both OPMs (like their father before them) and both of whom survive him.
A keen golfer, John was also an active and enthusiastic freemason and is remembered by them and the OPM club as a great person and a great photographer.

Richard David LEWIS

17 August 1941 - 28 December 2024

1953-58

A Spacious Thought

They say that now the Age of Space is here
Man will lose every trace of jealous fear
Of other might nations; and they say
That when the slim steel rockets blast away
For other planets, war will be no more,
And peace will reign on earth as ne'er before.
Yes who would be a peaceful Man of Mars,
When Man starts speeding out towards the stars?
(R D Lewis for *The Plymothian* Sept 1958)

Malcolm Carroll, former Head of News at Plymouth Sound, was Dick Lewis's best friend for 66 years. They first met in the newsroom of *The Cornishman*, the weekly paper based in Penzance, where they'd both been taken on as trainee journalists within weeks of each other. They clicked instantly and for a while even shared the same digs… until the landlady's dog forced him to move out – Dick, it transpires, was allergic to dog fur!

They had two solid years working together in Penzance at the beginning of the 1960s. 'It was an exciting period in both our lives,' says Malcolm. 'I moved to Hong Kong for 12 months, but we quickly resumed contact when I returned to Penzance. We both moved on to new jobs in different places but kept our friendship alive. Luckily, we both ended up in Plymouth with our young families, and eventually worked together again on *The Western Morning News* (where Dick became Chief Sub Editor) and *The Evening Herald.*

'Our unwavering friendship was based on shared interests – news, politics, history, aviation and the arts. Dick was a great companion – clever, funny, interested and interesting and often insightful. He had a strong moral compass derived from his upbringing in the Methodist Church. His father was a prisoner of the Japanese in the Far East during the Second World War which left him with a legacy of poor health. He died when Dick was only 12. Dick had many positive memories of being at Plymouth College at a difficult time of his life. While at the College, Dick first revealed his journalistic ambitions by launching a satirical school magazine with a friend. By all accounts, it was

extremely popular especially the jokes at the expense of various members of staff!
'In later years, after we had both retired, we settled into a routine of long walks, cultural exploration and Friday lunchtime beers at The Hyde Park when we would put the world to rights.
'One of the highlights of recent years was a week-long pilgrimage to Liverpool. Our shared passion for The Beatles was indulged with a trip to The Cavern, a Magical Mystery Tour which took in Strawberry Fields and Penny Lane, and visits to the childhood homes of Paul McCartney and John Lennon.
'We really enjoyed the experience,' says Malcolm, 'and we were lucky enough to visit the impressive former offices of a Victorian insurance company where his grandfather worked, now a hotel. A chat with one of the staff resulted in us being given a personal guided tour of the building including the wood-panelled boardroom. Dick was thrilled at making the connection with his grandfather.
'When his health declined, Dick remained in good spirits – still taking a strong interest in world events and always optimistic. Even when faced with hospital food!
'He loved his four children very much and always talked with pride of them and their own children. They worked very hard to take care of him in his final months. They were a great credit to him.
'I'm very proud to have been his friend,' says Malcolm. 'I will always miss him.'

Eric Henry SAMBELL

2 December 1942 - 4 June 2026

1955 -1962

Eric Sambell was a proud OPM and was back in Plymouth from Chippenham, twice last year, for the unveiling of the new war memorial on 6 June and as a guest at the CCF Dinner on 29 November.
A war baby, born in Liskeard, Eric was at the school in the late-1950s, early 1960s.
In 1968 he married Kay Cornelius in Waltham Forest, who, along with their children Karen and Neil, survives him.
He became Officer Commanding 'H' Troop 13 of the Royal Corps of Signal Regiment and in the 1988 Birthday Honours Lieutenant Colonel Eric Henry Sambell was awarded the OBE.
A job as a programme manager in the Ministry of Defence followed and for a brief period at the end of the 1990s Eric set up his own tech company.
A keen Rotarian for over 20 years, Eric also served as President of the Royal British Legions Y Services branch Far East Campaign.

Richard MOYSE

September 1943 - 8 Jan 2026

1954-62

Richard was the Senior Partner of Boodle Hatfield (one of the country's oldest and most trusted law firms established in 1722) for five years, while at the same time maintaining his 'very enviable' private practice. He was also the President of the international Academy of Estate and Trust Law, a member of the Tax Committee and also the Capital Taxes Sub-committee of the Law Society and was a founding member of the Solicitors Tax and Revenue Group.

He travelled the world in different capacities, he visited Trust owned pineapple plantations in Hawaii, lectured in Tokyo on the intricacies of trust law to Japanese academics, argued over the ownership of a deceased rock star's ashes in Switzerland, tussled over Norman customary law and the laws of concubines in Jersey and sought to recover Liechtenstein bearer certificates demonstrating the ownership of a lovely villa in Cannes.

This is what STEP (Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners) said about him in 2011 for his Lifetime Achievement Award: 'Richard Moyse is an almost legendary figure who, over 40 years of practice, combined commitment to his clients and their individual demands with wise and balanced advice.'

The award was one of two lifetime achievement awards to have been conferred upon him.

Richard was also involved with the vast Hampshire-based Barker-Mill Estates, the Trusts and the Barker-Mill Foundation for a large part of his working life. He became a Trustee of the Barker-Mill No3 Settlement on 5 April 2000 and of the Barker-Mill Foundation on 10 July 2006.

However his involvement went back before that as he represented the family

and trusts interests as a legal adviser from the late 1970s onwards. For many years Richard was Chairman of the Trusts and the Foundation and he continued to work with interest and commitment right up to the end of 2025.

Music was a key part of his life and he sang in several choirs and was very involved with the London Handel Society. Laurence Cummings, music director of the Academy of Ancient Music, played at his funeral.

Richard read Law at St John's College, Oxford and qualified as a solicitor in 1970. In 1972 he married Elizabeth (Buffy) Willoughby, whose grandfather, James Willoughby, also went to Plymouth College. She, together with their four children, survive him.

Bob Foulkes, a life-long friend and former classmate says that Richard was a talented musician and loved poetry.

'In my era at School there was always a Christmas Entertainment. Richard and I performed in 1961 a party piece called "AnonymoyseFoulkesongs," which was entirely written by Richard.'

Looking back at the review in the following term's Plymothian, TAP (Pritchard) noted that the performance contained 'ill-concealed digs at "the system" and the staff. These madrigal-type songs provided a pleasing diversion from the more serious sides of school life.'

A prefect, Richard was also editor of the *Plymothian* for a spell, secretary of the Literary and Debating Society and appeared in Bernard Samuels' production of Jean-Paul Satre's Nekrassov.

In later life his many interests included family history, gardening, watching cricket and travel. Richard led a full life and one former colleague summed him up as 'a true professional and an absolute gentleman. His vast knowledge and intellect were accompanied by great humour and kindness and it was a pleasure and a privilege to work with him.'

DESPAIR TO REVELATION

Life - 'tis but a fallacy
Facade of pure sublimity
Cradle of immaturity,
Menacing senility,
Inevitable eternity.

Why idle with philosophy?
Thought cannot expiate the sea
Of strife and immorality.
And yet, what can the answer be
To life - sin, and depravity?

Communism or Democracy,
Dictator or autonomy;
But what of Christianity?
Deity - and Trinity -
Essence of all morality,
Faith, and hope, and charity,
And blissful immortality

(RM Moyse, *Plymothian* September 1960)

Reginald J BILLING

30 April 1940 - 6 June 2026

1951-57

Ted Mercer noted that 'Billing played a number of valuable innings and justified his selection for the Cornwall Colts XI.'

Reg aka John scored a fine 55 for the school against a weak *HMS Fisguard* team who were dismissed for 37 with TV Chapman taking an impressive 7-18.

John was one of the mainstays of the team that summer (1957) taking five catches in the field, the second highest tally after Chapman with six.

A Dale's boy, John left school and joined the local firm of accountants – Daw, Hawkin & Davey).

He died earlier this summer at Hartley Care Home, not far from his former abode in Venn Grove.

David WESTLAKE

c1943 - July 2025

1954-61

Something of an all-rounder at school, David was captain of athletics, junior prefect, sergeant in the CCF, captain of boxing, and a fine rugby player, playing at centre alongside John Gabitass.

In his last school sports day in the summer of 1961 he won the high jump, long jump, and the hop, step and jump.

On leaving school David went to work with the National Provincial Bank and forged a long career with them. He ended up in Christchurch, his father, George Westlake, a distinguished OPM in his own right, died in the late 1970s and David didn't come back to Plymouth too much after that.

Ray ROACH

3 November 1942 - 13 March 2026

1954-61

Ray Roach played first team rugby and cricket at school. In the 1961 *Plymothian* it was stated that his knock at West Buckland was described as 'invaluable.' Ray scored 39 of the school's 72 runs, John Gabitass then took 8 for 30 and the school won by two runs! A Dale's boy he also came second that summer in the sports day javelin event and was captain of the school squash team.

In his appraisal of the 1960 First XV Ted Mercer wrote: 'Roach at open-side wing forward did his best work in attack. He gathered the wet ball in the loose with rare skill and ran as though he enjoyed life. His left foot touch-kicking was effective.'

As it transpired Ray went on to play for the OPMs, Albion, and Argaum, Appointed as a junior prefect in his last term, on leaving school Ray's destination was given simply as 'Insurance.'

After his marriage to Pat in 1969 he moved to Overton Gardens (in 1972) where he became a neighbour of his former rugby coach and school maths master, Ted Mercer. 'Ted and his wife Lilian became good friends and many were the New Year's Eves we spent together.

'When our daughter was about to head off to Leeds University, Lilian gave Natalie her mini Metro as she had virtually stopped driving herself.'

The insurance job that Ray went into was with Legal & General, with whom he remained until 1974 by which time he was working as an inspector with the company. He left to take up a position in the family insurance, building and estate agency business, with his elder brother Cliff and stayed with the firm until he retired around 2007.

A regular at Staddon Heights Golf Club, Ray was made club captain there back in 1978 having been a member since he was 11 years old! In 2004 he was given an award for 50 years service with the club and became club president.

In later years Ray took on the role of the OPM golf secretary, He won the John Spear silver salver in 2014, hit the longest drive 2015, was nearest the pin 2016.

Described as a truly lovely man. Ray was always smiling and never missed the opportunity for a friendly chat. He will be fondly remembered and deeply missed. He is survived by Pat, Natalie, now in Australia, and son Dominic, in London.

Paul HAWKINS

1968 - 2025

1979-86

Back row, l-r, Geoff Warren, Richard Turner. Middle row, l-r, Paul Hawkins, Brookes, Angus Newton, Anthony Chapman, Steve Hyslop, Mark Smith, Rob Pryke, James Potts, Marc Bye. Front row, l-r, Nathan Gristie, Charlie Gay, Andrew Wilton, Graham Waldock, Mark Blake, Jason Hiscox, BIll Hatton.
The team was the under-13s, coached by Sammy Nelson and Tom Waldock.

Paul Hawkins was among the 1979 intake of first-years, a cohort which included Graham Waldock and Andrew Forsyth, the sons of two long-standing members of the teaching staff.

Paul settled in quickly and made friends easily. He played rugby at scrum-half in the junior teams and later on represented the school at hockey too.

He went on the action-packed summer 1981 school camping trip to Sorede in the shadow of the Pyrenees. I shared a tent with him, Toby Frears, Mark Raeburn and Jim Hoath. On the first night there was rain of biblical proportions and lots of boys were drenched when the old-style canvas tents failed to protect them from the downpour.

Paul and I were in the same set for A-level history. It's fair to say we weren't the most studious bunch and remained stubbornly impervious to cajoling from Mr Shorter and Mr Rose to do more background reading – any reading!

It was during his time in sixth-form that Paul's father died suddenly, which must have been a real blow to him.

After passing his driving test, Paul's pride and joy was his Ford Fiesta which

he would drive into school from the family home in Yelverton.

Paul was very sociable and was a regular at various house parties and Plymouth nightspots, starting off with Monroes under-18s disco.
After leaving school in 1986 I only caught up with Paul a handful of times but I believe he remained in the Plymouth area and was involved in conservation work on Dartmoor.
I was saddened to hear he had died, and at such a young age.
James Potts (1979-1986)

Chris LEWIS

1987-26 November 2025

1998-2005

Chris Lewis died, in his sleep, on 26 November 2025. He was just 38 years old.
He had only recently married Abbi in Falmouth (29 August 2025), with a large number of OPMs in attendance. The couple have a daughter, Daphne.
A tribute to Chris on the OPM Rugby website noted how he had 'joined OPM RFC as a very young man along with many other Plymouth College mates and provided a very direct approach to rugby. A proud Welshman he always gave his all.
'As an open side, his attitude was to put his head where others wouldn't, drive forward and he had a wicked sense of humour. He was a superb player in his time at OPMs.'
Tributes to to Chris poured in from all corners of the South West including Bideford, Exeter Saracens, Torquay,

Paignton, Argaum, Tavistock, Plympton Victoria and the Plymouth Rugby Referees Society.

Michael FRIEND

12 October 1941- 2 December 2025

1953-60

A Dale's boy, born in St Austell, Michael Friend was a distinguished member of the class of 1960: a prefect, senior Under Officer in the Naval Section, captain of rugby and member of the school cricket XI. At Sports Day he was second in the 100 yards and discus, and third in the 120 yards hurdles and shot put.

In his 1960 1st XV report Ted Mercer wrote: 'Friend, the captain, played at open side wing forward. He acquired a very sound tactical knowledge of the game and always played with force and intelligence. He never allowed gaps to appear in the defence when any of his backs were tackled in possession. He was always there when most needed and pulled down everything but the goalposts. Only three tries were scored against us.'

The First XV played 12 matches that season, they scored 208 points, conceded 20 and kept 6 clean sheets, they won every game bar one – a 3-3 draw with St Boniface at the start of the season. Michael also played in all three of the matches played that season by Devon Public & Grammar Schools XV. After school he headed off to Sandhurst and in 1962 joined the Devon & Dorset regiment of the Wessex division.

In August 1964 Lieut Michael Friend, at that time still a Plympton based man, flew back from British Guiana on a week's leave to Fortwilliam, Belfast to marry Gillian Girvan, whom he had met while stationed at Holywood with the D&Ds.

The couple later settled in Liphook in Hampshire. Sadly Gillian predeceased him in 2007. He is survived by his children Amanda and Justin, his grandchildren Amelia, Rory, Hamish, Oliver, Archie, Jemima and Freddie and great grandchildren Albion and Persephone.

Andrew ASHLEY

1950-2025

1960-67

A keen networker and leader in the world of local business and enterprise, Andrew moved to Weston-super-Mare after a stint as a mature student at City College ten years ago.
A regular member of the OPM Rugby side back in the late-sixties and seventies, he was a member of the infamous touring team that went to France in 1975.

The Club was also saddened to learn of the death of **William (Peter) Gobbit**.

Roger GAYTON

1946 - 2025

Head Porter

Although not a member of the academic staff, Roger Gayton, the school's Head Porter, had joined Plymouth College in June 2003 and gave a sterling 22 years' service to the College.
Always on hand, having made sure that everything that needed to be done in the background was done, his contribution to the smooth running of the College was something he took enormous pride in. If you needed help, or needed to know anything, the standard response was "just ask Roger!".
A kind, caring man who always had time for everyone, Roger embodied everything that our community represents and had the Plymouth College Principles running through him like a stick of rock. Roger will be sorely missed by his colleagues and pupils alike. His cheerful presence and cheeky smile were rarely missing and he will leave an indelible mark on all those who came into contact with him. PW

CRICKET

As noted in other recent *OPM Magazines*, there has not been a great deal of purely OPM cricket over the last goodness knows how many seasons. However Philanthropists CC which has more OPMs on its playing list than our other sporting sections, such as they are, have for the last few years had Ford Park as their home ground and have played against an ad hoc OPM side on the occasion of the annual OPM Cricket Lunch - traditionally the Friday of the last week of July (31st this year) at the end of what used to be OPM Cricket Week.

There is also a newish fixture between the School and a team of recent leavers which gets played on Speech Day (or Open Day).

And so there are openings for anyone who would like to revive a dedicated

OPM Cricket team with a set of fixtures, or for anyone looking to enjoy a little bit of social cricket without having to make a full on commitment to a club, by playing the occasional game for Philanthropists.

Typically they have around 40 games a season which includes midweeks and Sundays and it's generally not difficult to get a game. Most PCC teams include a few OPMs as do quite a few of the opposition teams – among them most regularly Wembury, Holbeton, Yealm, Ermington and Entertainers.

The club also run winter nets from mid-January through to the start of the season at the School Sports Hall. These usually take place on a Monday night between 8pm-10pm generally adjourning to the Fortescue for a pint afterwards – all very convivial!

Cricket nets in the School Sports Hall: note the giant, inspirational banner posters commemorating the achievements of Plymouth College sporting heroes, among them Henry Slade, Michael Cooper, Poppy Tank, Kerenza Bryson and Tom Daley.

Meanwhile the 2025 OPM v Philanthropists match saw an OPM XI, largely made up of Penningtons and Fearons, post a punishing score of 222-4 off 25 overs (Pennington B, Jefford, Atkinson, Watson C all retiring with scores of around 30). In reply Philanthropists managed a modest 127-7 in reply with S Reddy 51 not out at the close with Ben Smith taking an impressive 3-12 off six overs.

Another Philanthropist fixture which regularly sees a goodly number of OPMs participating is their annual Old v New encounter. Here two teams-worth of Philanthropists turn up and are split according to one simple guideline, the 11 who started playing for the club first take on an 11 whose pedigree is not as long.

In the early days of the club (est. 1981) this was probably the most keenly contested fixture of the year, these days it depends on how many of the senior figures generally want to get involved. Although the circumstances vary, it generally means a team of 60/70 somethings take on a much younger side with the odds inevitably stacked in favour of the younger 'newer' 11, which on occasion has included someone actually making their debut for the club. Needless to say, however, the boys in the white and white always win!

Philanthropists line up for their annual Old v New match. Six OPMs in there somewhere, all but one of them over 60. Right: George Atkinson retires early in the OPM v Philanthropists game.

Cricket's always the winner!

Worcester saw us!

This year's Philanthropists cricket tour took them to Worcester for the third time in 40 years. Playing four games in four days in near perfect weather made for an excellent few days. A couple of the games were simple 20/20 affairs which meant that there was ample opportunity to spend some time at the New Road ground and check out the Rothesay County Championship game between Worcestershire and Middlesex. There was added spice as the Worcester line up included OPM Jake Libby who was a contemporary of one of the Philanthropist tourists, Jon Hall. However Jon could not be persuaded to make contact with Jake even though they had played in the same school team It may have been a good thing for Jake however as it wasn't one of his more memorable matches.

Doubtless Jake would have been at least vaguely aware of the party from Plymouth however as most were sporting their bright yellow 2026 Worcester Tour polo shirts.

Certainly the match commentators were aware as the team were approached by Mel Jones at breakfast in the Diglis Hotel where she, and the Philanthropists were staying (as were the match umpires - it's an easy walk to the New Road ground).

When given a fixture card and some info on the team she promised to give Philanthropists a shout out on the BBC. Sadly however none of the touring party were able to tune in a check it out!

This page: Jake Libby wearing the No.2 shirt with his back to the camera. Right top: Philanthropists cut a colourful crew at the New Road. Bottom PCC/OPM tourists: Jon Hall, Charles Martin, George Atkinson, Paul Shepheard and Chirs Robinson.

CR

PLYMOUTH LIONS HOCKEY

Liam Jonas

Club Overall

The recently formed club has grown into a powerhouse for hockey within the city and wider region. We boast 270 active members, offering hockey for all ages with dedicated training and teams, competing at all levels of the sport. The continued growth of the club validates the merger decision; with thanks to the efforts of the committee, coaches and wider membership, we are attracting new players of all abilities to the club. The stability that comes with scale is manifested in positive on pitch results and with progressive success demonstrated by successes in league standings.

Final League Standings

Team	League (25/26)	25/26 Position	24/25 Position
Plymouth Lions M1	Men's Premier	5th	5th
Plymouth Lions W1	Women's Division 1 South	7th	8th
Plymouth Lions M2	Men's Division 2 South	3rd	5th
Plymouth Lions W2	Women's Petroc Division 1	1st	10th (relegated)
Plymouth Lions M3	Men's Piran Division 1	6th	9th
Plymouth Lions W3	Women's Trelawney Division 2	1st	11th (relegated)
Plymouth Lions M4	Men's Piran Division 2	5th	6th
Plymouth Lions W4	Women's Petroc Division 2	1st	7th
Plymouth Lions W5	Women's Petroc Division 2	6th	n/a

League standings can be found here: https://west.englandhockey.co.uk/competitions/

Juniors

There are a multitude of junior sides including under-8 mixed, U-10, U-12 and U-14 squads for boys and girls. The OPM name is retained with the OPM Puma's junior side which share coaching resources with the Lion's junior sides.

The club plays in regular Friday night hockey tournaments against other clubs from Southwest Devon, as well as taking part in regular competitive Devon Festivals and ultimately end of season tournaments for each gendered age group with the opportunity to progress to regional and ultimately national tournaments. The OPM Committee have kindly supported hockey development at Plymouth College Prep through funding a Lion's coach to deliver a programme of after school coaching sessions.

Awards and Achievements

The club's ongoing successes have been recognised, with Plymouth Lions Hockey Club winning West Area Club of the Year, and Jackie Daw has winning the Lifetime Achievement Award recognising her years of dedication as a player, coach and champion of hockey development. As area award winners, both Jackie and the Club made the national shortlist for the England Hockey Awards 2026 which took place on Saturday 6 June at the Athena in Leicester. https://west.englandhockey.co.uk/news/england-hockey-awards-west-winners

The club boasts county and regional players at junior level, there are even several players representing the club at masters, vets and grandmaster level regionally and internationally, with a player representing England at the 2025 European and 2026 Home Nations Masters Tournaments, winning both!

Social

The club is just as active off the pitch with regular social events, culminating in the End of Seasons Awards Evening which, as ever, was an enjoyable and memorable celebration. With so many teams there are always home games to watch, and we would be delighted should any of you wish to come along and support the teams. On any given Saturday during the season there will be four or five home games being played at our pitch at the University of St Mark and St John.

We are also on social media and would be very pleased if you would like to follow our sites to keep up to date with the club news and progress. I will be sure to have links to our websites, socials and league tables shared with you all.

- Website: https://www.plymouthlionshockey.club/
- Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/plymouthlionshc/
- Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PlymouthLionsHockeyClub

SENIOR AWARD WINNERS 2025/26

W1s - Maggie H
W2s - Olivia L
W3s - Charlotte S
W4s - Lily McKee
W5s - Izzy C

M1s - Ash H
M2s - Josh B
M3s - Jaga B
M4s - Jon S

Young Player - Amelia G & Jack L
Most Improved - James H & Tavy O
Club Offical - Reegan P
Club Member - Becky H
ADAGE Cup - James H

RUGBY

Martin Finlay

Rugby Club Representative to the Main OPM Committee

This year is the 100th Anniversary of the Rugby Club following the founding Annual General Meeting held in February 1926. The Club have held a number of events to celebrate this momentous year, although unfortunately the centenary dinner planned for March this year had to be cancelled at short notice due to the Duke of Cornwall Hotel having to close down for Health and Safety repairs. We are currently looking to hold the event

in September at Stonehouse Barracks. We have seen a new Centenary rugby kit unveiled, as close to colours and design of the original kit as we can make this; the junior section working on a time capsule and a centenary tree planted at King George V playing fields. We have also refurbished two of the OPM memorial benches retrieved from the School and these are now in regular use at KGV.

We are still trying to obtain the lease for the clubhouse and changing facilities at Elburton from Plymouth City Council with the proposed documents currently under scrutiny by Fields in Trust, the UK charity which protects the KGV legacy playing fields. In addition, the proposed project and grant for drainage improvements to the 1st Team pitch has now had final sign off, with the works due to take place over the summer.

The 1st Team have had a mixed season, maintaining our place in Counties 2 Level, Devon, with the highlight retaining the Devon Bowl against New Cross. The Jesters, the Club 2nd XV have struggled with fixtures, but, have played a number of enjoyable games during the Season. A good number of Jesters earned a place in the 1st XV as the season progressed, challenging regular starters week-in-week-out, highlighting the key role the Jesters play in the wider rugby ecosystem. We do need to work on retaining numbers of players post Covid, in order to retain regular fixtures for the Jesters A good number of Jesters earned a place in the 1st XV as the season progressed, challenging regular starters week-in-week-out, highlighting the key role the Jesters play in the wider rugby ecosystem. The season culminated in a senior player tour to Cyprus arranged by Shaun Grundy, with 30 players descending on Ayia Napa. Whilst the rugby may not have been of the finest quality, a good time was had by all.

Following the completion of this last season our coaching team have decided to step down. We thank head coach James 'Digger' Digweed and assistant coaches, Steve Coles and John Downey for the commitment they have shown to the Club this last season and wish them good luck for the future.

One of the successes of this season has been the Colts Team under their head coach, Luke Millard. This is the first season the Club have been able to field a full set of OPM Colts. After a difficult start in moving up to this age group, the team have developed in confidence during this season, with results improving accordingly. All of this team will stay as Colts next year at U18 level, with the future for the move to adult rugby looking good.

The junior sections continue to flourish under their new chair, Sarah Jarvis. Although we have lost one age group through lack of numbers the remaining age groups are well represented. Sarah reports: 'The Juniors have had a superb 25/26 season. The focus has been on

building strength and depth within teams and coaching squads. Ensuring there is a clear structure for team management and putting club culture and family atmosphere first.

We have celebrated the Club through our Christmas socials with 150 kids at Adrenalin, centenary sponsorship weekend and our end of season party with our 60 ft bouncy assault course! We collected over £1000 of sponsorship for our centenary event and hope to repeat this next year to work towards more lighting for the pitches.

We have worked hard to create pitch rotation structures throughout the club to ensure as much rugby could be played through the wet winter weather as possible. This resulted in us playing a lot more rugby as a junior section than many other Plymouth clubs. With a pitch down and more teams this upcoming season it presents us with a more challenging task in pitch management but we look forward to rising to that challenge.

As we move into 2026-27, we will grow to 10 age groups and almost 200 young players. I am very hopeful for the future of the junior section and look forward to more cracking rugby on a Sunday morning!'

The Club's girls' rugby section has continued to demonstrate excellent growth and development throughout the season. We now have players in U12, U14 and U16 age groups, providing a clear pathway for young female players to progress within the Club. A particularly significant achievement has been the formation of a full U16s team for the upcoming season, reflecting the sustained commitment of our players, coaches and parents. Thanks to Jasmine and Paul Decourcey for their hard work in developing this section of the Club.

We continue to successfully run the OPM Touch Rugby sessions through

Dee Heard, and Walking Rugby is now held twice weekly with ever increasing numbers. Thanks to Dave Glastonbury for his hard work.

During the last year we have unfortunately lost two of our former players, Chris Lewis and Paul Gregg. Chris Lewis was a proud Welshman and always gave his all. As an open side flanker, his attitude was to put his head where others wouldn't, he had a wicked sense of humour. Greggy was a wonderful 10 /15 and played many seasons at the Club for OPMs. A quiet and skilful person who always made an impact on and off the field. His passing came as a great shock to us all and he will be sadly missed.

We continue to receive great support, both financially and on the side line from our Vice Presidents, and we are much obliged to Mark Turner and Ash Smith for their work as the Vice President's representatives.

We are hoping to build on our relationship with the School through the OPM Club and provide and encourage better links for the Alumni to play rugby once they leave the School. We would also like to encourage the School to push the links for the students towards the Rugby Club.

The Rugby Club would not survive without the volunteers who give up their time for the Rugby Club. The Club would like to thank all of the volunteers, the OPM Club Committee for their help and support during this last season and a big thank you must also go to all of the Rugby Club committee under chairman Matt Glastonbury, Junior chair Sarah Jarvis, the coaching team, team captains and managers for their hard work.