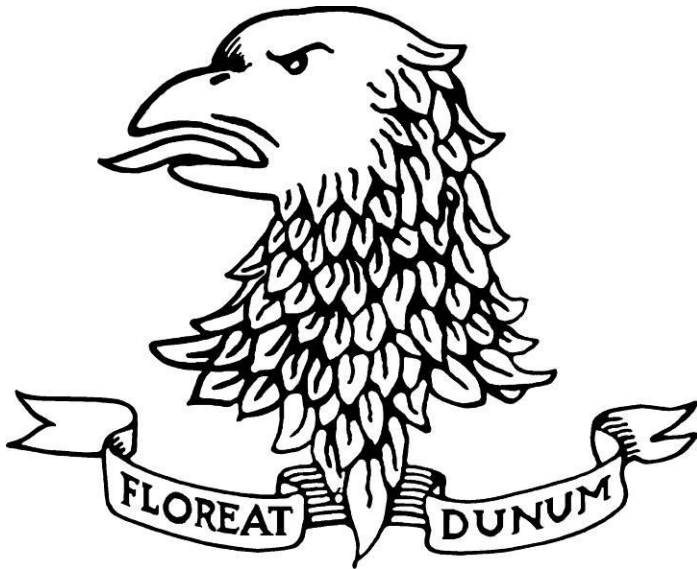


OLD DUNUMIANS ASSOCIATION 2017 BULLETIN



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This Year's Bulletin opens with a welcome and introduction from the school's new Principal, Mrs Maud Perry.



"It is hard to believe that we are already half way through my first year as Principal of Down High.

Taking up my appointment in a school steeped in such a long history of success is a great privilege and I feel very much part of a thriving community.

The governors and staff are deeply committed to ensuring that the quality of education delivered in Down High School is world class. I have joined a highly effective team and would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Paul Logan for working closely with me to ensure a smooth transition. It is evident that Down High is a vibrant school, established in its strong position through the exceptional leadership of Mr Logan and his predecessors.

Following twenty-six years' experience of education based in Surrey (the last thirteen as a senior leader in George Abbot School, Guildford), relocating to Northern Ireland, with my husband and our two daughters felt like coming home. We are settling well into the Downpatrick area and relishing the outdoor lifestyle that this beautiful area offers; reminiscent of happy times I spent in Enniskillen and Omagh as a child. Over the last six months I have enjoyed getting to know staff, pupils, parents and governors both as Principal and as a parent, since my elder daughter is flourishing in Year 8.

This school is a bustling hive of activity; a happy place, where lifelong learning skills are developed and lifelong friendships are built. The strong sense of community amongst old Dunumians whom I meet, not just at grand affairs such as the Christmas Carol Service or the Spring Concert, but in all walks in life, is remarkable. Having this opportunity to serve the Down High community and use my experience of school leadership to guide the school through its next phase of exciting development, including the move to a new site, is an immense honour. Floreat Dunum".

SCHOOL NEWS

Down High continued to enjoy successes over the academic year. At the school prize day in October 2016, when special guest Madam Justice Denise McBride, past pupil and one of the first ever female High Court judges in Northern Ireland, presented the prizes, Mrs Perry said that the summer exam results again confirmed Down High's position amongst the top grammar schools in Northern Ireland.

At GCSE level 17 pupils gained 10 A* or A grades with two students, Anna Rea and Victoria Clarke gaining 10 A*s. Victoria achieved joint first across the province in her French and Charlotte Martin joint second in French. A fourth student, William Browne, achieved joint third in Physics. At A-level, the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C was above the Northern Ireland average with 14 pupils attaining three A*s, A or distinction star grades.

Three-quarters of all BTEC grades were Distinction or Distinction Star level, allowing many students to access the high-level university course of their choice.

Mrs Perry went on to comment on the individual successes of two young female students, Nicola Bain and Rebekah Flynn, who had worked throughout the summer with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, evaluating the success of European agricultural incentive schemes on the biodiversity of local invertebrates. They both presented their findings at a ceremony in Whitehall and were successful in their applications for Green Crest.

Three further students, Hannah Nelson, Michael Harper and Daniel Molloy, were highly commended at the UK final of the Royal Society of Chemistry Schools' Analysts Competition after taking first place in the Northern Ireland heat.

Yet another student, Adam Morrison, was crowned the All-Ireland 2016 Rotary Young Chef of the year before going on to represent Ireland in the UK and Ireland National Final in Lincoln.

Success was also gained in Home Economics and Geography with the first ever award in the history of the school going to a pupil in Technology and Design.

Mrs Perry also praised the success on the sport's field with hockey, athletics, netball and rugby players gaining trophies and awards. A host of strong swimmers enabled Down High to reach no less than 8 finals at the recent Swim Ulster Schools Gala.

The Principal was full of praise for the staff at the school who she said set high expectations and ignite a passion for learning that arms pupils with the confidence they need to make these results possible. "Through the hard work and commitment of staff, our pupils access a world class education enriched by an extensive range of activities".

OXBRIDGE OFFERS

Two young students have been offered places at Oxbridge. Katie Brown is holding an offer from St Hughes College, Oxford, to read biochemistry. Michael Harper is hoping to study medicine at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

FORMER DOWN HIGH PUPILS get together for 50th REUNION.

In June 2016 twenty-six former pupils, who left school in 1965 or 1966, held a reunion at the Ramada Plaza in Belfast. They were joined by three former teachers, Ronnie Roulston (Biology), Derek Hannah (French) and Carol Hannah (Geography)

Cecil Lowry, who organised the event said, "It was important for me to try and get as many of us together to celebrate the half century since we walked out of the school gates and down English Street for the last time in June 1996".

Everyone enjoyed reminiscing about their years at the school and about the former Principal, Mr Arthur Fowweather.

The evening was hosted by Norman Watt who rang the "bell" to start the evening and took the "register".

Rev Donald Watts, former Clerk of the Presbyterian General Assembly, said Grace to start the meal.

The evening was dismissed with a toast to those former pupils who were no longer "with us".

Some of the names who attended the evening - Valerie Adams, Raymond Crea, Maureen Carsewell, Hilary Barnes (nee Ginn), Moyra Hughson (nee Stewart), Catriona Mitchell (nee Rogers), Sheila Garvin, Mary Hearn (nee Brown), Doreen Watt (nee Gibson), Meta Warrin (nee Armstrong), Anne Gauld Clark (nee Porter), Robert Thompson, Ian Cochrane, Eddie Ginn, John Mitchell, Cecil Lowry, Donald watts, Griff Morrow, Norman Watt and Horace Reid

SPEAKERS' EVENINGS

Marcus Crichton, from the Down Recorder gave a very informative talk in March 2016. He attended Down High from 1968 until 1983. When he left school, he went straight to the Belfast Collage of Business Studies where he completed a course on journalism. Marcus is the fourth generation of the Crichton who has owned Down Recorder since 1894. The paper was first published as The Down Recorder on 31st December 1835.

This month Chris Hagan BEM MA PGD gave his talk in the school library. Chris attended Down High from 1972 until 1979. He was a former Deputy Head Boy. Chris holds an MA in Political Communication and PGD in Journalism from the University of Ulster. He has worked as Editor of the Down Recorder and now Editor of News in UTV. During this time, he has led his team to many national awards including the first two Royal Television Society Awards for news in Northern Ireland.

Chris was awarded the BEM in the 2015 New Year Honours list in recognition of his services to the community in Killyleagh, Co Down, where he was born.

PAST PUPILS HONOURED

Mr John McCann, managing director of Willowbrook Foods Ltd, Killinchy, was "over the moon" at getting his MBE.

He left Down High in the late 1960's and went on to gain a Business Studies degree and said he was fortunate that his decision to develop the vegetable crop on his family's 200-year-old farm coincided with a growing demand for convenience food. It was in 1978 that John secured his first major contract with Supermac. Now employing around 250 people, Willowbrook Foods is the largest producer of lettuce bags and salads in Ireland with a high-profile customer base including Tesco, Iceland, Lidl, Aldi, Spar, Subway, KFC, Dominos and McDonalds. John said his recognition on the New Year's Honour list was "significant for all of my staff".

MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

A big thank you to those members who continue to give their email addresses to the Hon Secretary. Please inform the Secretary of any changes to your contact details. Try to encourage your former school peers to join the Association as well!

NEW DOWN HIGH to open in THREE YEARS TIME

Down High School has confirmed it will move to the new multi-million-pound campus by the summer of 2020. According to the Principal, Mrs Perry, the design of the new Strangford Road building is currently being finalised. It has been four years since the plans were first given the "green light" and Mrs Perry has said she is both "delighted" and "enthusiastic" with the progress so far. The final quote from the Principal says:

"We can visualise our new accommodation and start to anticipate the impact of these fantastic facilities. However, we are already a school that is well resourced, in a strong financial position and with a track record of excellent examination results". She added that senior staff meet regularly with the Education Authority to ensure that the new state-of-the-art facilities match the school's "first rate curriculum offer".

SPRING CONCERT

Down High pupils thrilled audiences at their annual Spring Concert in Downshire Hospital's Great Hall in March 2016. Miss Teresa Clarke, Director of Music, assisted by Miss Donna McCracken thrilled capacity crowds. The performances included orchestral, ensemble and solo pieces performed to an extremely high and impressive standard.

QUIZ AND SOCIAL EVENING

A quiz was held at the Lakeside Inn in Ballydugan on Friday 18 November 2016 and raised just over £400 for Association funds. The Quizmaster was once again Jackie Hughes and a fun night was had by all. It is hoped to make this a regular November date so please try to support and meet up with some old friends.

The **ANNUAL CAROL SERVICE 2016** was held in Down Cathedral on Monday 19 December. The School Choir, under the direction of Head of Music, Teresa Clarke, performed to their usual high standard to a packed Cathedral. It is a wonderful opportunity to enter into the Christmas spirit and to listen to the multi-talented students. After the Service the ODA Committee served tea and biscuits in the school library and once again everyone had the opportunity to "catch up" and chat.

NEWS ITEMS

If you know of any former pupil who has been honoured in whatever way and would like to share the news please let me know and I will try my best to put something in future Bulletins, depending on space. The Committee don't always hear about those people who have been honoured so we depend on readers letting us know. Apologies to any other past pupil whose name we inadvertently missed.

Again, the Editors would be delighted to receive items of general interest for the Bulletin – please phone the Hon Secretary on 028 4483 1503 or by e-mail: emtmarr@hotmail.co.uk

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Here are some names of members who are no longer at the last address we have for them. Can anyone let the committee know where they may be living now? Their last known location is recorded beside their name:

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|--------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| Mrs Isobel Wade | Saintfield | Mr M Dickson | Crossgar |
| Miss J Henderson | Ballynahinch | Mrs A McCullough | Ballymartin |
| Mr B Nixon | Newcastle | Mr and Mrs D Rea | Killinchy |
| Miss H Fitzpatrick | Downpatrick | Dr T Adams | New York |
| Mrs A Semple | Limavady | | |

GOLF OUTING 4 MAY 2017

Ken McCammon is pleased to say that the Annual Outing for 2017 has been arranged for Thursday 4th May on the RCD Annesley Course at Royal Co Down. The Tee is available from 3.30pm to 4.30pm but as usual members of Royal Co Down Ladies, Royal County Down and Mourne Golf Clubs could play earlier in the day if they wished. Over the years this has become a very popular annual event but there is always an invitation to increase the number of players on the day. Please consult your diaries and support this fun day. The Clubhouse offers hot food for after play and it is a great opportunity to catch up with fellow golfers. Women are usually fewer in numbers on the day so all you female golfers do come along and support Ken.

2017 DIARY DATES

27 April Old Dunumians Association AGM (it would be wonderful to see “new faces”) 7.00pm in the School Library.

4 May ODA Golf Outing at Royal County Down Golf Club.

10 November Quiz at Lakeside Pub, Ballydugan, Downpatrick.

18 December School Carol Service: Down Cathedral 8.00pm.

2018 DIARY DATE

Down High will be celebrating 85 years on Friday 11th May 2018 with an evening of celebration in school. This will be the last major event for the ODA to host on the Mount Pleasant site.