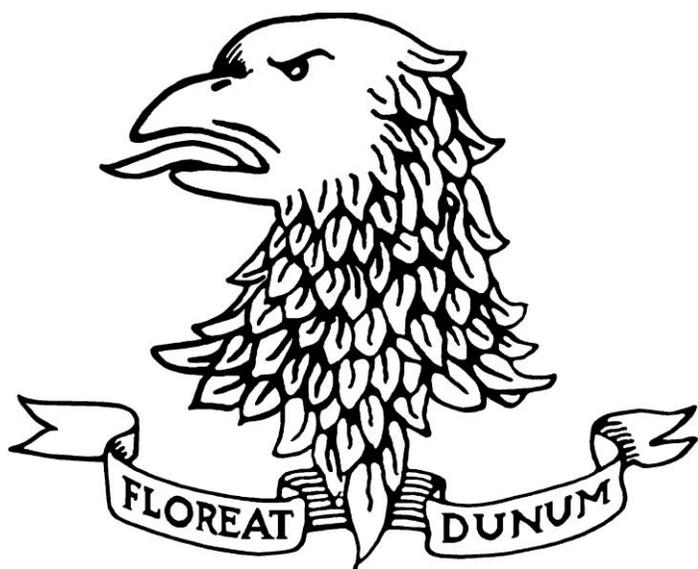


OLD DUNUMIANS ASSOCIATION

2015 BULLETIN



Patron	Paul Logan
President	Nancy Willis
Chairman	Dougie Marr
Vice Chairman	Hazel Lynas
Hon Secretary	Edwina Marr
Hon Treasurer	Paul Johnston
Golf Rep	Ken McCammon
Bulletin Editors	Hilary McGuire Edwina Marr

Committee:	
Judith Gibson	Gladys Taylor
Jim Gregg	Carol Telford
Milby Gregg	Cecil Newell
Ian Crossett	Fiona Ross
Anne Liggett	Elizabeth Croskery
Hilary McGuire	Norman Watt Doreen Watt

SCHOOL NEWS

The school has enjoyed a number of very fine successes during the last year. It was again a delight to see our pupils achieve great success in their GCSE, AS and A-Level examinations. Rachel Nelson's 5A* grades at A-Level was particularly outstanding as were the 10A* GCSE grades apiece achieved by Sophie Blaney and Lindsay Heenan. The vast majority of students got into their first choice university courses. It is also pleasing to report that three pupils have received conditional offers from Oxbridge colleges for 2015. Our expanded Sixth Form has been a great success, and the introduction of BTEC courses in conjunction with the South Eastern Regional College has allowed many existing and new pupils to access their university courses with a string of excellent results.

The year ended with a fond farewell to our Head of Music and Senior Teacher, Mr Bertie Coffey. Few can have passed through the ranks over the past thirty-one years without having been inspired by Bertie's teaching, led expertly by his conducting or counselled by his wisdom. In short, Bertie represented everything that Down High School is about and we wish him and his wife Ella every happiness for the future.

Sporting success continues to be a hallmark of the school, with pupils representing Ulster and Ireland schools in rugby, girls' golf, equestrian sport, football, table tennis and squash. Our traditional winter sports of hockey and rugby are thriving, with seasons marked by extended cup runs in many age categories. Our girls are again the Northern Ireland football champions and Sarah Connolly in Year 12 is a full NI Women's international, playing soccer alongside women considerably older than her. In tennis, our girls won the Ulster Junior Tennis Plate after a thrilling run in the competition.

In other aspects of school life, a team of chemists (Thomas Johnston, Ben Ford and Rachel Nelson) won the Northern Ireland Chemistry Young Analysts' Competition and were narrowly beaten into second place in the UK final. The school production of "The Wizard of Oz" was a great success and the return of competitive public speaking and the Senior Debating Society as part of our extra-curricular menu will be of interest for many Old Dunumians.

I am also happy to report that Down High is now an Eco-Schools green flag holder, meaning that the "Green High" epithet is well and truly appropriate!

Trips and other educational opportunities saw Down High pupils travelling far and wide; from Paris, Rome and London to Canada, the USA and India the pupils gained so much culturally, socially and educationally.

We have had a number of very positive and encouraging meetings regarding the new build and are very hopeful that positive news will be forthcoming over the coming months so that the pupils and staff will soon be accommodated in the state of the art facilities they, and our community, deserve.

In short, the last twelve months have been entirely satisfying and I hope this short account of some of the highlights has allowed you to see that everything is progressing well in your alma mater.

The ODA wishes to thank Mr Paul Logan and his Staff for this contribution to the Bulletin and for his ongoing support to the Association.

It was with sadness that everyone learned of the closure of the Preparatory Department at Down High School. It will officially close on August 31, 2015. The co-educational fee paying Primary was established in 1937 and considered an integral part of Down High School for those years. Mr Logan expressed his gratitude to the teachers and classroom assistants who have maintained both academic standards and the happiness of the pupils over the years.

GOLF OUTING 8 MAY 2014

The Golf Society held their annual outing at the Annesley Links in Newcastle on the 8th May 2014. Changeable weather throughout the day seemed to discourage a number who had planned to play but 28 members and guests braved the elements and found the course in excellent condition. Scoring was good and special mention should be made of Philip Gregg's round--a gross score of 68 playing off 8.

Winners were as follows Lady Visitor 1. Angela Bradley 33pts Lady Member 1. Kathleen Calvert 33pts 2. Nancy Bailie 32pts 3. Gillian Speedy 29pts. Men's Visitor 1. Brian Flanagan 41pts 2. Thomas Johnston 38pts 3. Joe Hamilton 38pts. Men's Member 1. Philip Gregg 42pts 2. Aaron Ferris 39pts 3. Paul Johnston 38pts 4. Ken McCammon 36pts.

Thanks to those who provided prizes and to Mourne Golf Club for the use of their premises and for providing excellent catering.

Very special thanks must go to Ken McCammon and Derek Bailie for organising the event and for providing this report.

As most golfers know the IRISH OPEN Championship is being held at Royal County Down (28th-31st May). To facilitate changes to the Annesley Links holes 9 and 10 are already closed.

Early in May holes 1, 2, 3 and 4 and possibly 18 will be closed to allow construction of a 'tented village', media centre and a driving range. These holes could be out of action until the middle of June.

For these reasons it has been decided NOT to hold our Annual Outing in 2015.

Hopefully everything will be back to normal and our competition will be possible in 2016.

SAPHARA VISIT TO INDIA

On the 10th July 2014 seven students from Down High (George Smyth, Patrick Preston, Conor Maynes, Matthew Lennon, Jenny Robinson, Erin McLoughlin and Emma Telford) had the privilege of travelling to India with the charity Saphara, along with students from Assumption Grammar School and St Patricks Grammar. It's safe to say before we went out we had no idea what to expect, despite our months of preparation and very successful fundraising! The trip exceeded our expectations in every way possible, especially with regard to the teaching and the amazing people that we met.

Our journey began in Belfast and took us through Dublin and Dubai until we finally arrived in the bustling commotion that was Delhi. One thing that immediately stunned us were the Indian streets, which were full of people in packed cars, tuk-tuks and motorbikes swerving between imagined lanes with horns blaring making for guaranteed interesting journeys. After buying our Indian clothes and a day trip to Agra to visit the beautiful Taj Mahal, we took the train to the city of Dehradun and the province of Uttarakhand. After a short taxi journey up the winding mountain roads we arrived at our hotel in Mussoorie to prepare for the teaching we would be doing in our first school.

The first school we were teaching in was Kaplani High School, which had around 80 students of secondary school age. The team was split up into four teaching groups, and we taught our classes a variety of different lessons such as Music, PE, Science and Personal Development all of which had a core focus on teaching English. Though all of us were initially nervous going into our first classes despite our lesson preparation and all of the fantastic learning materials we had brought, these nerves were quickly swept away as soon as we got

to start teaching. Despite only being with the kids for a short time everyone made a very strong personal connection with each of their classes, and it was impossible not to. Their desire to learn, enthusiasm and general positivity and bright smiling faces made it a joy to teach them, and our relationships were deepened at lunch time when the girls would teach us dancing and the boys would play cricket. Lunch time in Kaplani also gave us the opportunity to see the midday meals that are funded and supplied by Saphara, and seeing the pupils tucking in to a massive plate of what might be their only hot meal of the day was a real privilege. After a fantastic four days of teaching, we had to say a fond farewell to Kaplani but not before we gave some small gifts to every child in the school and had a cultural exchange, which apart from traditional Indian dancing and a vibrant rendition of "In The Jungle" featured the debut performance of the 'KapSaph Choir'. After some emotional goodbyes, we stayed for a few more days in Mussoorie as part of our Global Awareness weekend. This involved arduous trekking to the remote primary school Donk to teach adorable children in a school fully supported by Saphara, as well as talking to the inspirational Surrender Singh, co-ordinator of the NGO MGVS who Saphara work closely with, along with some exploration of the town of Mussoorie with its amazing mountain views.

We then made the descent back into Dehradun where we would spend the next week teaching in SNEHA School, which not even Kaplani could have prepared us for! The hustle and bustle of the city was a stark contrast to the relative calm of the mountains, and the classrooms we taught in were similarly a lot livelier! We were primarily teaching kids from P1-P3 age, with classes being more than twice as large as those in Kaplani which brought with it a whole range of new challenges for us to face in our teaching. Despite the SNEHA classes being more rowdy and a bit cheekier, the children were equally great to teach and their energy and enthusiasm inspired us to put even more work into our planning and our teaching in the classroom, as we taught our classes about animals, telling the time, food and their daily routine as we tried to make our lessons as interactive and educational as we could.

In the afternoons, we also got the opportunity to take conversation classes with some of the older students in the school who were around our own age, and this was a great opportunity to help them sharpen their conversational skills, as well as make new friends and discover new things about each other's cultures. This often involved swapping dance moves as we learned traditional Indian dances and taught our students the Macarena! Saphara and SNEHA had run a course teaching young women from the community how to do henna tattoos, and during one of our conversation classes we had the privilege of getting a beautiful tattoo, with the girls getting incredibly intricate designs on their hands and the boys getting their names in Hindi on their forearms.

When we were at SNEHA, we also got the opportunity to visit the marginalised community (or slum) where a lot of the children who we taught come from, and seeing the poverty which these happy, bright children live in was hard to take in. We got to talk to Dr Rita Rao who founded and runs SNEHA School, and her example and dedication to the children and the school was really amazing. Hearing her story about the school's humble beginnings and seeing where it had come to now, was incredibly inspiring. Another inspirational character who we met at SNEHA was the English teacher Nadesh, whose passion for his subject and his students as well as his humour made him a real role model for all of us in our teaching.

After a late night return train journey to Delhi, we spent our final day in India visiting the stunning Lotus Temple and doing some shopping in the Cottage Emporium, where we were able to buy a whole host of Indian treasures as presents for people back home. We returned to Belfast and said our goodbyes to each other and to our Indian adventure, as it all felt like it was over too soon. We came back as changed people, with strong friendships formed and memories that will last a lifetime, but most importantly the mark the children left on our lives and the mark we left on theirs. Our team would like to thank all who supported us, whether through helping to organise fundraising, donating or any small contribution to our cause, as it was all so infinitely worth it.

MEMORY LANE:

There are still some copies available of the anniversary edition of "The Dunumian", which was produced in 2014, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the school's opening. It costs £5.00 if you collect from School and £6.00 if you need it posted within the UK; call the School Office, Telephone No. 028 4461 2103.

SPEAKERS' EVENING

Professor Rosalind Smyth gave an extremely interesting talk on Thursday 27 May 2014.

Rosalind attended Down High School from 1970 – 1977. She graduated in medicine from Clare College, Cambridge and University of London and also trained in paediatrics in London, Cambridge and Liverpool.

Until September 2012, she was Professor of Paediatric Medicine at the University of Liverpool and Honorary Consultant Paediatrician at Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust. She was Director of the NIHR Medicines for Children Research Network, which supports all clinical research with children in England and as Executive Director she led the establishment of Liverpool Health Partners.

Currently she is Director of The Institute of Child Health at University College London and Honorary Consultant Respiratory Paediatrician at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Until December 2013 she was a member of the Commission on Human Medicine and chair of its Paediatric Expert Advisory Group. She is a Fellow and recent Council member of the Academy of Medical Sciences (UK). She is a panel member for the Research Excellence Framework, which is currently assessing the quality of research in UK universities.

Her current research interests include clinical studies of viral/host interactions in RSV bronchiolitis, clinical trials and systematic reviews of treatments for childhood respiratory disease.

Professor Smyth was the Guest of Honour at the School Prize Day held on Friday 24 October 2014.

Rosalind has since been awarded a CBE in the Queen's New Year Honours in recognition of her services to drug regulation for children. Following the award, the Professor said she was pleased to have played a "small part" in the huge progress made in the development of safe new medicines for children over the past decade.

QUIZ AND SOCIAL EVENING

A quiz was held at the Lakeside Inn in Ballydugan on Friday 10 October and raised £338 for Association funds. The Quizmaster was Paul Acheson and despite fewer teams on the evening a good time was had by all.

The **ANNUAL CAROL SERVICE 2014** was held in Down Cathedral on Monday 15 December. The School Choir, under the direction of the new Head of Music, Teresa Clarke, performed to their usual high standard to a packed Cathedral.

After the Service the ODA Committee served tea and biscuits in the school library and everyone had the opportunity to "catch up" and chat.

The Choir will be performing in their annual Spring Concert in the Great Hall of the Downshire Estate on Thursday and Friday, March 5-6, starting at 7.30pm each evening. If you are not receiving regular invitations to the Speakers' Evenings and would like to be on our mailing list for these events please contact the Hon Secretary on 028 4483 1503 or by e-mail: emtmar@hotmail.co.uk.

PAST PUPILS HONOURED

Rosalind Smyth CBE
Eleanor Baha MBE
Chris Hagan BEM

REUNION

There is to be a reunion of the class of 1995 on 26 September. For further information please contact **Richard Watt email: firstracing@btinternet.com**

NEWS ITEMS

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: emtmar@hotmail.co.uk

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!

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:

Dr Gordon Squier	Birmingham	Mrs Jill Schofield	Strangford
Ms Kathryn Wilson	Kilkeel	Mrs Meriel Linley	Downpatrick
Miss R McAllister	Carryduff	Mr Ian Watts	Newcastle
Mr Geoffrey Bell	Ballynahinch	Mr Maurice Irvine	Downpatrick
Mrs Irene Dickie	Saintfield	Mr Charles Dickinson	Belfast
Ms Anna Marie McGivern	Ballykinlar	Mrs Alison Dunn	Comber

2015 DIARY DATES

12 March	Speaker's Evening with Gregory Stewart: see below for details
27 March	Old Dunumians Sporting Patrons Presentation Dinner, Downpatrick Cricket Club, contact Kathleen Calvert at Down High School Careers Library ccalvert@c2kni.net for tickets.
30 April	Old Dunumians Association AGM (it would be wonderful to see "new faces") 7.00pm School Library
13 October	Speaker's Evening with Eleanor Baha (nee Cleland) 8.00pm in School Library
14 November	Quiz Evening at Lakeside Pub, Ballydugan, Downpatrick 8.00pm
14 December	School Carol Service: Down Cathedral 8.00pm



SPEAKERS EVENING

Down High History Trip to Berlin and Krakow June 2014

Gregory Stewart is a year 13 (lower sixth student) at Down High School. He studies History, Government and Politics, Further Mathematics and Physics at A Level. Gregory is regularly involved in the Debating Society and in the Current Affairs Society. He also enjoys playing cricket.

Last June, the History Department took a group of students to Berlin and Krakow and the tour included The Jewish Museum, Checkpoint Charlie, the Wannsee Conference Museum (where the "Final Solution") was agreed and a day tour of Auschwitz - Birkenau.

This trip had a profound effect on many of the students, so much so, that a group of them ably headed by Gregory gave a presentation to their year group.

The lasting memories were shared and this is an opportunity to hear about this particular experience and find out about some of the other experiences our current senior pupils at Down High are having.

The group are looking forward to taking you on this journey and during the 70th year commemorations of the liberation of Auschwitz, what a good an opportunity to hear about it.

We look forward to seeing you there in the school Library on **Thursday 12 March** starting at 8.00pm.

For further information please contact Edwina Marr, Hon Secretary 028 4483 1503 emtarr@hotmail.co.uk