



**REGISTER OF APOLOGIES/THOSE PRESENT AT SALESIAN SCHOOL,
PAST PUPILS & OLD BOY'S ANNUAL MEETING:**

30th August 2009 10.00 am to 10.30am

Apologies received from: Michael McKenna, Barney Grace (RIP), Alastair Bourne, Vincent Shaw, Charlie Calder, Norman Taylor, Peter Landsborough, Mike Turnbull, John Plevey, Pat O'Sullivan, Billy Udell, Sammy Hayes, Danny Hayes.

**ALLEN Roger - BRADY Anthony - DRUMMEY David
DUGGAN Liam - FERRY Alan - HOWE Wayne - JAY Martin
METCALFE David - METCALFE Pearl - NUTCHER Eric
CHARLES SPRINGETT - SMITH Nicola - STANTON Lawrence
WARD John - WHELEHAN Donald - YOUNG Pat
DRUMMOND Tony and 3 GUESTS
GUESTS, OLD BOYS, FAMILY & FRIENDS AT MASS, THE SALESIAN
GRAVE - ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD, LUNCH:**

**Parish Mass Celebrants: Father Aidan Murray SDB, Father Sean Murray SDB,
Deacon Jim Richards.**

Corinne Allen, Sylvia & Len Carter, Janice Richards, Tony & Wendy Wadsworth, Wayne, Matilda & Grace Howe, Pat Young Jnr., George Robb, Brother Joe Adams SDB, Chris Little & Andrew Little, Danny Hayes, Tony Drummond and 3 guests.

INITIAL REPORT BACK ON BLAISDON RE-UNION 2009

Saturday: Roger Allen, with whom and his wife Corinne I stayed in their Drybrook home, The Forest of Dean, visited George & Beryl Austin - mid-morning - in the nearby village of Yorkley. George was the Blaisdon Hall, landscape gardener from the 1940s-1970s. I am the godfather of their daughter Susan: Bidy Skeffington nee Keating is her Godmother. We moved on to Gloucester to visit the dying Bernard Grace. When we got to his house we spotted Charles Springett and Eric Nutcher leaving. I hailed them: Charlie Springett who I had never previously met but recognised from 'photos, agreed to meet up and talk later in Blaisdon.

While we were visiting Barney Grace, Father Sean Murray arrived. I had earlier apologised for failing to bring a promised 1978 Old Boy's Group photo including Barney. I echoed this disappointment to Father Sean who by good fortune had it in his car and produced it. He stayed on with the gathered family group and we left.

Roger and I then did a “Memory Lane” round the Barton Street area where he lodged during his years as an engineering apprentice.

Later we moved on to the Blaisdon village 2.00/4.00 pm for informal gathering. In the Old School House/Community Hall light refreshment - biscuits and tea/coffee were set by. Across the way, 10 were people sitting on The Red Hart Pub seats - 4 of whom turned out to be Old Boys. One of whom was Charles Springett. We joined the others who, it transpired, were related to the Old Boys.

Dave Drummey – Old Boy who lives in Bream near Chepstow - agreed to Chair the planned Sunday morning Meeting. Charles Springett was stressed but we explained that it would be easier for him on the day, and we wanted him to participate in rather than control the Meeting and stick to the Agenda, as time was limited to half an hour. Charles Springett said he had prepared a written Report and would table it.

I explained to Charles Springett that Blaisdon Old Boys’ Association official Meeting would be Minuted by me and on open record. We established the starting time of the proposed Sunday Meeting (10am) and Roger Allen and me offered to arrive early to set up the side room and arrange the main hall for the Mass. Charles Springett told us to be there at ten to ten. We then drove Eric Natcher to visit a farmer friend near Huntley - he has kept in touch with his friend Rees since the 1940s. Following that most pleasant visit we dropped Eric off by The Old Mill, Blaisdon, his B&B stop-over with Charles Springett.

Sunday: To his great credit, Dave Drummey started the Meeting dead on time. The early ten minutes were used to set a layout, according to John Ward, of the temporary chapel and various non-Old Boy arrivals, including parishioners, completed the seating arranging and everything required for the priest’s arrival. The Meeting’s business was completed and the WI’s advance catering party arrived to shoo us out of our side-room.

Most people then stood out in the yard for a breather while the parishioners arrived. Mass was then celebrated in the presence of about 150 souls by Fathers Sean, Aidan & Deacon Jim Richards. After Mass, 16 Old Boys walked up to and gathered round the Salesian plot in St. Michael’s churchyard and Fr. Sean Murray SDB completed his inimitable remembrances. He had not attended the earlier Blaisdon Old Boy’s Association Meeting. Other followers went down to The Red Hart for a pre-prandial or talked in groups al fresco. About 50 to sixty people dined. Speeches on the usual themes were made.

In my speech, I compared and contrasted the Blaisdon Old Boy’s Association, with the past and the present. The old informal approach relating to use of the Association’s funds no longer applied, particularly in the light of how the great top financial institutions had behaved and now the smallest constituted Associations must comply, with strict governance, on how income and expenditure are accounted for. This new approach was not an intended slight on our Association’s past practice but it is now the best time to place it on a Constitutional and Business footing. I said that my knowledge of the 1930s and 1940s Old Boy’s connection was slight, but evidence as readable in Eric Natcher’s new book and contributions to Blaisdon Re-Collections

- Norman Taylor, Mike McKenna - and by others of those generations, showed that Old Boys were helped by the Salesians in an ad hoc way.

What I was qualified to speak with authority on was the work of the greatly loved Father George Hilton SDB MBE RIP. Sometime in 1957, he came into the Blaisdon Hall Old Boy's/Gardens/Grounds/Farm-worker's Refectory and related how some Old Boys were experiencing financial hardship due to unemployment and family problems. He could not break confidences but proposed a "whip round." George Austin, Mike Turnbull, John Dunbar, Lawrence Stanton, Alan Ferry, Vincent (Faulkenbridge) Shaw, Roger Allen gave money. From then on a cash call was repeated by Fr. George whenever necessary. As time went on, visiting Old Boys using the hospitality of Blaisdon Hall contributed to the "Old Boy's Fund." The Blaisdon Old Boy's Association flourished.

Because of the trust and goodwill that marked that time, it would have been considered impertinent to question Fr. Hilton aka "The Bishop" about the Income & Expenditure of The Association at its yearly Re-Unions. Fr. George would briefly refer to welfare calls on The Fund and acknowledge donations, ending with the conclusion that all was sound for another year. There was never any charge for the Salesian hospitality provided in Blaisdon Hall: voluntary contribution was the norm. This was the custom and practice that continued virtually to recent times. The new Treasurer had during his inaugural year devised a new formula for accounting The Association's funds and this had been accepted and endorsed at a Meeting held that morning.

Turning to the need to acknowledge the past work of the retiring President, Charles Springett, I asked Len Carter to do the honours, knowing that he would convey the sincerest sentiments. This was accomplished by Len; in his customary style. It was then proposed by John Ward that a suitable retiring gift, to mark Charles Springett's many years of work for The Association, be purchased from funds and presented at a convenient time. This was agreed by all present.

Finally, I mentioned the need to clarify the role of Father Sean Murray SDB who, for whatever reasons, has been less involved in recent times. I asked that he become once again central to the Association's continuing existence. I related that I had within the past 24 hrs, witnessed his comforting role at the death-bed of one of our original members - Barney Grace - and a source of solace to Barney's wife and family. That was an example of the pastoral golden thread that unites our Salesian Association and binds it to Blaisdon. He should be, from now on, clearly defined as the Blaisdon Old Boy's Association official Chaplain and I was now asking that he accept that position. This was supported in acclamation from all present. Father Sean then spoke on his love for the past pupils and his long attachment to The Blaisdon Old Boy's Association, and that he was honoured to accept the designation. I welcomed this response and promised to work closely with him for the advancement of The Blaisdon Salesian School Old Boy's Association.

Tony Brady, Blaisdon President

President & Treasurer 04 September 2009

Edited Highlights from The Blaisdon Old Boys' Association's, Sunday Morning Meeting.

Key Votes:

1. President to consult with Members before spending funds - Unanimous
2. Lunch cost and Subs to be voluntary and not compulsory - Unanimous
3. Tony Brady for President - unopposed - elected 3 Year Term unanimously
4. There being no nominations for Treasurer, President agreed to combine both roles pro-tem - Unanimous
5. John Ward volunteered to be Acting Secretary - welcomed unanimously
6. A copy of The Association's Constitution to be sent to all those who attended the Meeting.

Any Other Business:

Pat Young tabled resignation of Terry O'Neill.

Liam Duggan proposed a Vote of Thanks for Terry. This was unanimously endorsed. Liam added that an acknowledgement of all Terry's work for the Association over many years be Minuted. Agreed unanimously.

Draft Minutes to follow.