

# FULLER NEWS

The Alumni Newsletter of Watford Grammar School for Boys  
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## A time of farewells and new beginnings

As we head into the holiday period we can reflect upon another busy and successful year, with many causes for celebration. We look forward to receiving the latest set of GCSE and A Level results, and wish all our leavers the best of luck with their future studies.

As well as looking back over the past year, we can also take this opportunity to look ahead to the year to come.

In September, we will be joined by a new cohort of boys, with an additional form in Year 7 – 7R, for Rée. We are now well prepared for this expansion, with many projects completed over the course of this year: the STEM centre, new playground facilities, refurbished art rooms and remodeled 6<sup>th</sup> form centre have all been developed with this in mind.

Additionally, we have been successful in securing government grants and planning permission to redevelop our sports hall changing facilities as well as an extension to our astroturf pitch on the main school site.

This will provide more changing space for PE and games lessons as well creating more tennis courts and space to run competitive hockey fixtures at

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the school site. The first phase of development for the sports hall will be completed during the summer holidays.

At the end of this term, we thank Dr Gunton who is retiring after having made an invaluable contribution to the school over more than 30 years. We also wish a fond farewell to the following members of our:

Teaching staff – Mr Cartwright, Mr Jelski, Mrs Hartley, Mr Newman, Ms Patel, Mr Pegler, Ms Shah, Mrs Shah and Mrs Short.

Support staff - Miss Abrahams, Mrs Elgey, Mr Ferguson, Mrs Jakobsen, Mrs Lyons, and Mrs Parks

We thank them for their service to the school and wish them every success in the future.



## Staff and Old Boy news

### Paul Shearring

Paul Shearring is leaving the governing body of Watford Boys after an extremely successful decade in post as Chair of Governors. Whilst treasuring and sustaining core values and traditional practices, he has led the school through a period of significant change in the educational landscape. Most importantly, Paul's lifelong passion for the school has underpinned his approach to governance throughout – a passion rivalled only by his love for family and Watford FC.



Paul is a former pupil of Watford Boys, distinguishing himself in many areas, but most notably on the cricket field, serving as 1<sup>st</sup> XI captain. During a successful career in advertising, Paul retained strong links with the school, both as a parent of two WBGS boys and as a leading figure in the Old Fullerian Association. As a parent, Old Fullerian and Chair of Governors, Paul has attended and supported countless concerts, plays, sport fixtures and other school events.

Whilst his capacity to reminisce and glory in the history of the school is undoubted, Paul has always been keen to recognise scope for improvements or opportunities to exploit as we adapt to a changing world. He has a rare talent for providing support and challenge in equal measure, saving Headteachers from themselves when required and providing faith and confident assurances as we embark on new adventures. Thankfully, Paul will still retain a link with the school as a trustee of the Watford Fuller Foundation, but he should have plenty more time to devote to his Marathon Walks for charity and his beloved Watford FC.

*Headmasters: Martin Post (2000-2014) & Ian Cooksey (2015 – present)*

### Dr Gaye Gunton

After 30 years of service in which she has created, expanded and led the Learning Support Department, we are sad to say farewell to **Dr Gunton**. The tributes that have poured in from old boys are a true testament to the difference she has made to the boys of this school. As former Headmaster John Holman put it:

“Gaye Gunton came to Watford Grammar School for Boys at a time when attending to special needs was regarded with some scepticism. She persevered, quietly working within the traditions of this venerable school. By the time I became Headmaster in 1994, she had won respect and was transforming the way SEND was regarded.

“And so she has continued. Caring but pragmatic, Gaye is much more than a SENCO alone: she has become the humane heart of this great school.”

A former LSA wrote:

“Gaye is an exceptional person, leader and mentor. With her genuine care, as well as her deep understanding of people and what drives them forward, she was always going to revolutionise the provision for SEN students. She has always recognised and utilised the staff fully so they have been able to develop and hone their skills in their own unique ways to add to the wellbeing and education of the students.

“I feel honoured to have been part of such a special team and have no doubt that she helped so many individuals with so many different things, most importantly the children. I was always amazed at how she could talk to a distraught student and have them leaving the room fine again, and you could tell how much that meant to them to have that safe space.”

We wish her all the best for a well deserved retirement – what a fantastic legacy she is leaving behind.

## Staff and Old Boy news

### Andy Pegler

Andy joined Watford Boys as a new teacher in 2003 and has ensured that Classics is a success story at Watford Boys, through being a tireless promoter of the subject. He has taken hundreds upon hundreds of our boys to see the sights, and very often given them the benefit of his own guided tour.

His sense of humour and quirky style has seen him deliver amazing and memorable assemblies ranging from the delights of New Zealand to the bravery of past and present pupils who have served in various conflicts.

We wish Andy and his family the very best as they move to Germany.

### Philippa Parks

Philippa is one of those members of staff you think will always be there. Working in various parts of the school over her considerable years of service she has proved to be adaptable and multi-skilled. After 14 years she has decided to retire.

The Learning Support Department was her base for many years and colleagues from that area speak of the care with which she carried out her role and the support she offered to pupils with complex needs. She has led multiple successful Sail France trips allowing many boys from this school as well as girls from WGGs to learn new skills and to shine in this area.

We wish Philippa a happy retirement.

### Helen Hartley

Helen joined the Maths Department in September 2002 and very quickly established herself as a high calibre teacher. Her teaching is marked by an impressive concern for her students' development as mathematicians. The "outstanding" lesson she delivered during an Ofsted Maths Inspection in 2010 also made her the toast of her colleagues as it played a significant role in ensuring the Department received the same grading. Helen will be greatly missed by us all, for all the fun, dedication and expertise she has brought to the Department, and we wish her all the very best for her future endeavours.

### Dave and Karon Carley

Dave and Karon Carley joined the school in July 1999 as site manager and housekeeper respectively. The site grew enormously in their time at the school, with the addition of the Clarendon Muse, Sports Hall extension, STEM Centre, and numerous other building developments. The new site manager's house 'New Pastures' provided Dave and Karon with a much needed sanctuary during this time. Dave and Karon brought their own brand of Scouse humour and hospitality to Watford, and were the life and soul of many a staff party.

Dave and Karon were the 'Mr & Mrs' of Watford Grammar for nearly twenty years, living and breathing the school. We wish them well in their semi-retirement in Wales; a step closer to returning to the promised land up North.

### Old Boy News

**Eoin Finnegan** (2007-2014) is completing a 4-year Masters degree in Engineering at Oxford and has secured funding for a PhD at Oxford to develop medical monitoring software.

**Alex Lozowski** (2004-2011) was part of the Saracens RFC team who beat Exeter Chiefs 27-10 at Twickenham this year in the Premiership Cup Final to be crowned champions.

Veteran foreign correspondent, **Fred Bridgland** (1953-60) is the author of the forthcoming book "Lies and Alibis: Was Winnie Mandela Above The Law", set to be published in October 2018.

**Robin Attfield** (1952-1960) is now a Professor Emeritus of Cardiff University, where he lectured in Philosophy from 1968, with interludes in Nigeria and Kenya. Oxford University Press are due to publish his 'Environmental Ethics: A Very Short Introduction' in 2018.

**Jonathan Daube's** recently published book, Educator Most Extraordinary, covers the life and work of former Headmaster Harry Rée (1951-1962). It is available on [Amazon](#).

**To submit Old Boy news for the next issue please email [alumni@watfordboys.org](mailto:alumni@watfordboys.org)**

# Harry Rée reunion lunch, 24 March 2018

*By an attendee of the event*

Nearly 60 Rée-era (1951-62) former students attended this unique event where Harry Rée was celebrated as a highly influential and fondly remembered Headmaster of Watford Boys Grammar School. During the course of the afternoon, just how deep the level of affection and high esteem in which this often complex character was held by his former pupils became obvious.



*Harry Rée*

On arrival we were met by the current Headmaster, Ian Cooksey. The warm welcome helped set the tone of informality of which Harry would have approved. So many friendships were re-established with surprising ease, many following a lapse of five decades or more. Tables were arranged in the years participants joined the school. Thus, social interaction was encouraged with one table being made up of students nearly all of whom started their academic careers in 3Cl. This placement proved fortuitous, as they all seemed to have pursued a variety of successful and rewarding careers which include the armed forces, local government and both primary and secondary headships.

During lunch, friendships were renewed, memories recalled and personalities reviewed with the wisdom of hindsight. One could almost imagine Peter Mayes entering the room to collect our sixth form dinner tickets. After lunch, Ian Cooksey introduced the three guest speakers while recognising that the establishment of Rée House some fifty five years since he left was a timely event.



*The attendees including the Rée family*

The Head then described correspondence that had been unearthed in the archives which related to the paucity of funding provided by Hertfordshire for books in the library. A hapless education officer had been at the receiving end of an excoriating letter from Harry defending the school's position. Harry did not tolerate fools gladly and enjoyed getting the bit between his teeth when an apparent injustice had been done.

Bill Bailey (1957-64) was the next to speak, and Bill gave a number of entertaining anecdotes about his time at the school. Inspired by his early experiences with Harry Rée, which grew into a lifelong friendship, Bill has worked in education all his life culminating in a 17-year headship at a 12 form entry school in Leeds.

Bill then introduced Fred Bridgland (1952-60), a distinguished Old Boy who was persuaded by Harry to become the first student to join the VSO. He spent a year teaching in the interior of Borneo where, as Harry predicted, "the best years of your life are just beginning."



*Fred Bridgland*

In an entertaining tribute, Fred recounted his Road to Damascus moment when in his O Level year he was leading a riot during a physics lesson. Harry entered, read the riot act, turned to Fred and called him a fool. From that time on, Fred decided to begin behaving well, to work hard and to grow into a serious human being.

Harry's son, Jonathan, was introduced as the next and final speaker. He ended by remarking how impressed he had been by the amount of genuine respect and appreciation expressed for his father's positive impact on those present on the day.



*The attendees after lunch*

Attendees had the opportunity to view the archives further and have tours of the school. Senior students acted as guides during tours which included the new STEM Centre, laboratories, music department and library. There was the valuable opportunity to engage in discussion with these young people who were self-assured, polite and 'on the ball'.

Everyone enjoyed the afternoon and valued the opportunity to reflect on this complex man. He was not only ahead of, but led many educational developments at Watford and subsequently. He reflected the changing mood of the times in the run-up to the Swinging Sixties. Young people would not always accept being told what to do, how to behave, how to dress and what to like. Harry was a visionary on the right side of what was about to happen. At school, he encouraged us to be free thinkers and taught that in life, if you work hard you will achieve your ambitions.

*Emile*

*Photos of the event © Eric Albone*

## Memories of Harry Rée

### **Chris Gunnell, 1952-1959**

"(Rée) bore no resemblance to the Headmaster of a school in the 1950s that I had imagined or read about in schoolboy novels of the time. Relaxed, seemingly laid back, but clearly with great energy and dynamism as well."

### **John Gimson, 1950-1955**

"In 1950, when I started at WBGs, the country was still recovering from WW2. There was an area near Parkgate Road School where bomb damage was still visible. The levels of deference and respect were markedly different. Percy Bolton was Headmaster. Even though I'm now much older than Percy Bolton was when his portrait was painted, he still looks older than I feel.

"When Harry Rée arrived, the contrast could not have been sharper. For every schoolboy it was a dream come true, to meet a real, live, decorated war hero – and a spy to boot."

### **Dr Eric Albone MBE 1951-1959**

Totally out of character, I put my name down for the lorry trip to Naples in the summer of 1959. This was all outside my usual comfort zone. These trips were the inspiration of Harry. A bunch of sixth formers, in our case led by a couple of undergraduate Old Fullarians, were launched across Europe in a lorry leant by Ford Motor Company, camping by the roadside if camping sites were not available and visiting a wealth of places, meeting many new people as we travelled on through France, Italy and back through Switzerland and Germany calling in particularly at Watford's linked printing town of Mainz. It was a real team experience- we learnt so much, we each had a job to do, and it opened ourselves to a much wider world. This education through experience of the world is something which placed Harry way ahead of his contemporaries and I am forever grateful to him.

## Sport

### Cricket

Following a fantastic season, Watford Grammar School for Boys has been judged to be one of the top 100 cricket schools in the country.

We will appear in The Cricketer's Top 100 Schools Guide and the prestigious supplement of The Cricketer 'The Playing Fields Of England: A Guide To The Summer Game's Top 100 Schools 2019'.

The press release announcing the Top 100 Schools for 2019 will be published in November. This is a well deserved tribute to the cricket staff and teams at this school.



Congratulations to the Staff Cricket Team who won the Watford Observer Final for the fourth time in seven years.

## School Leavers vs Old Boys Rugby, 31 August

This year's School Leavers Vs Old Boys rugby match will take place on Friday 31st August, 4.30pm KO.

The match will be a casual affair held on the main school site and will be 30 minutes each way. This year's departing school captain Craig Beeston led his side to the final of the county cup where WBGs were runners up to Haileybury in an outstanding performance.

We hope you will be able to book the afternoon off work or sneak an early finish to join us for the game as we say goodbye to another excellent year group and welcome in the new rugby season at Watford Grammar School. There's no need to sign up to watch, just come along.



## OFA Golf Society

The OFA Autumn Meeting will be held at **West Herts Golf Course** on **Thursday 13th September 2018**. The tee-off time will be **13.00**.

The competition will be an individual Stableford and we will be competing for the *Lister Cup*. We will also be competing for the *Dave Price Team Trophy*, so please aim to organise a four ball of friends for the meeting.

A two course meal will be served in the clubhouse in the evening post the 18 holes golf, at a cost of **£55.00 per head**. This is a subsidised price as we are aiming to encourage new OF golfers to our events.

The Captain, **Bill Colquhoun**, looks forward to welcoming you to this meeting. Please email [russelld@srtechnical.com](mailto:russelld@srtechnical.com) to express your interest in the OFA Golf Society.

## Careers Day 2018

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> July saw the school welcome over 40 mentors, the vast majority of whom were old boys of the school, to the fifth annual Lower Sixth Careers Day in conjunction with the Old Fullerians' Association.

This year, the day involved a series of focused morning sessions. The boys heard talks from Russell Deane, Phil Hall and Matthew Sharkey on the importance of building a personal network and producing a CV that will get you in front of an employer. Derek Walker, a careers and recruitment specialist who has worked for major firms and universities, ran an excellent interactive session which showed boys how to introduce themselves to prospective contacts. The last morning sessions were taken by Samir Patel, Head Boy 2016-2017, on the transition from school to university, and from human resource specialist Ian Ashcroft on making yourself attractive to employers. The morning sessions helped prepare and inspire the boys for what would come in the afternoon.



After lunch for the mentors, the boys were split into groups of four, and each mentor saw five groups for 20 minutes each. The mentors came from an enormous range of backgrounds; from medical professionals, to successful lawyers and bankers, research scientists, journalists and engineers. Boys were matched with their current interests to a degree, but the day also exists to broaden boys' minds and to show them options they may never have considered before. We also welcomed a representative from the National Apprenticeship Service to give information about Degree Apprenticeships, an increasingly popular and credible choice for further study.

It was wonderful to see so many new faces coming to offer their support as mentors, as well as those who have attended for several years. The feedback from the boys on the day was very positive with many praising the morning sessions for showing them the possible benefits of participating as fully as possible, and for the calibre of the mentors overall. It has opened many of their eyes to the range of careers that are available which can combine their interests and strengths with their academic record and the advantages that having Watford Grammar School for Boys on your CV affords. Similarly, many of the mentors were impressed by the thoughtful questions from the boys and the enthusiasm even at the end of an intense day.

Careers Day is just one part of what the school offers to students. The aim is to continue to integrate information and advice about the working world throughout the boys' education so they leave us well equipped with an idea of their future direction.

### Would you like to offer help to the school's Careers Programme?

If you would like to volunteer for Careers Day or a careers talk to boys in the next academic year, or if you or your company could offer work experience, please email [alumni@watfordboys.org](mailto:alumni@watfordboys.org).

# Help us to reach more Old Boys

'Fuller News' is distributed twice a year by Watford Grammar School for Boys and is designed to help forge greater links with our thousands of Old Boys across the country and around the world.

The school is always interested in hearing from former students, and would particularly like to hear from anyone who would be willing to contribute their time or resources to help current pupils. To express interest, please contact our alumni team on [alumni@watfordboys.org](mailto:alumni@watfordboys.org) or 01923 208900 ext 272.

To get in touch by post, please contact: Hollie Rendall, Development Director, Watford Grammar School for Boys, Rickmansworth Road, Herts WD18 7JF.

## Tell your friends about Fuller News

This is the third issue of the revamped Fuller News. We are delighted to be communicating with so many of you but our database has a lot of gaps.

We know that many of our Old Boys stay in close contact with their friends from school for the rest of their lives. If you enjoy receiving Fuller News, please pass it on and ask your friends to sign up to receive future issues too.

We also welcome news from (or about) Old Boys. Send any news to the alumni team via [alumni@watfordboys.org](mailto:alumni@watfordboys.org)

You can also stay in contact with Watford Grammar School for Boys through our social media channels.

Follow the school on Twitter at @wbgsexcellence and on Instagram at @watfordgrammarboys

Search for 'Watford Grammar School for Boys Alumni' on Facebook to join our group and 'like' our page.



## Could you help the school with its archives?

We are looking for a part-time (2-3 hours a week, term time only) volunteer to help organise the school archives, respond to requests and log new materials into the archives. Some help in the library may also be involved if it's of interest. The role would suit someone local who works part-time or is retired, and has an interest in the school's history.

To volunteer, please email [rendallh@watfordboys.org](mailto:rendallh@watfordboys.org)