

THE OLD CESTREFELDIANS' SOCIETY



*Non quo sed quomodo
1594 to 1994*

Ninetieth Annual Dinner and Reunion

The 90th Annual Dinner and Reunion took place on April 26th 2019 at the Casa Hotel. The 72 attendees including three former masters of the Old School spent a very enjoyable evening in the company of old friends and colleagues.

During the meal, Frank Gorman, acting as Master of Ceremonies, actioned the outgoing President's many requests to take wine with groups and individual members including, Past Presidents, Former Masters, oldest, youngest, most distant, those starting at school in the same year, etc., no-one was excluded. It was a pleasure to have the three ex masters with us, Peter Miles, Roy Parkin and Steve Poulton, the final headmaster before transition to Brookfield School.

Official business followed the loyal toast and the toast, in silence, to those no longer able to meet.

The toast to the Old School and the Old Cestrefeldians' Society was proposed by Past President, Professor Derrick Willmot. In his speech he drew on Philip Riden's "History of Chesterfield Grammar School" starting by checking how many of those present were aware that the School was probably founded in 1598 rather than the commonly believed 1594.

He mentioned a number of the much admired former masters and their impact on those present, highlighting how many had fairly ordinary backgrounds but had thrived as a result of their grammar school educations.

Retiring President, Andrew Elliott, responded to the toast. He spoke for the members in saying how pleased he was that Mike Hadfield was much recovered and present at the Reunion. Andrew had not been overtaxed by activities during the year, having unfortunately had to miss his one duty as a result of a previous commitment. What had taxed him most was the regalia of office, specifically the size of the cap relative to the size of his head. He made a plea to any member who had not disposed of his cap in the back of a lorry to offer it to the society.

Andrew also praised the qualities of the former masters in shaping his character, not least Bill Glister and Roy Parkin.

In finishing, Andrew pointed out that the existing officers of the society would be very receptive to offers from younger members to take over the reins.

Roy Parkin was next to take the podium, to propose that David Allsop be our new President. While others may have gained the limelight, David's qualities of persistence and involvement in all activities had enabled him to achieve in areas that others could not match. How many have moved a pit village across a main road. David had been involved in promoting industrial development, the enhancement of Cresswell Craggs and had been on the governing body of the Technical College. In that role, he had been instrumental in the protection of key features of the Old School following its transfer, not least in the retention of the fives courts. Roy was sure that David had the right qualities for the post of President and asked members to welcome him.



At this point in the proceedings, the outgoing president installed the new president by handing on the official regalia. Responding, David said that he was honoured to take on the position even though, at 86, he must be mad to do so. David in typically modest manner, elaborated on the problems of being the younger sibling of an outstanding brother who excelled at everything. David deliberately dropped out of the CCF to avoid comparison. He was known as Allsop minor and referred to as such by Bruiser Andrews many years later. David was also a great fan of Bill Glister suggesting he was ahead of his time in encouraging all to achieve their full potential. He had been supported by many dedicated staff.

He referred to his time involved with "that other place", the Technical College and was delighted how the Old School had been dusted down, first floor facilities improved but he regretted that it could not be put to use as a museum. Having taken WEA history courses in Hurst House, in less interesting moments, he mused on who had sat where when it was UVI Arts form room.

Next Frank Gorman presented the accounts on behalf of the Treasurer. While a small loss had been made this was adequately covered by reserves. They were accepted by the assembly.

Frank provided an update on the activities of the Old Cestrefeldians Trust. Fifty had attended the centenary Armistice Day service led by Rev Ron Smith. In December the original Latin motto had been restored at a cost of £3000. A tour of the historic houses of the founders was being organised for July. Twenty four places would be available, priority being given to OCT members. A plaque to the memory of Bill Glister was being organised. An exhibition of memorabilia was planned in the Old School from Nov 11th to Dec 13th provisionally called "The boys are back in school". This year's remembrance service will be led by Bishop Bill Godfrey.

The proceedings were rounded off with John Roberts leading the competitive singing of the School Song followed by Jerusalem.

A list of those present at the Reunion is available to attendees on request.



Above two photographs courtesy of John Little