

# THE OLD CESTREFELDIANS' SOCIETY



## Ninety Third Annual Dinner and Reunion

The 93rd Annual Dinner and Reunion took place on May 17<sup>th</sup> 2024 at the SMH Group Stadium, home of Chesterfield F.C. The 65 attendees spent a very enjoyable evening in the company of old friends and colleagues.

Derrick Priestley, OCS Chairman, was again Master of Ceremonies (MoC) for the event. Ron Smith, the retiring President, started proceedings with the Loyal Toast to King Charles III and the Grace.

The list of apologies was read.

During the meal, further toasts were taken at the request of the President among them being with the oldest present, organisers of the Reunion, Past Presidents of the Society, those who started in decades from the 1930s to 1991, and the OC who had travelled the furthest to the Reunion.

Tony Hine, one of the trustees of the Old Cestrefeldians' Trust gave a summary of the activities of the Trust mentioning the supply of School documentation to the County Record Office, Matlock, the restoration of the memorial plaques and their relocation to the wall outside the former headmaster's study at Sheffield Road, the production new plaques in memory of former headmaster W. E. Glistler and long-time master and deputy headmaster, Russell Varley, the restoration of the lettering of the former School motto on the front of the Sheffield Road building and the commissioning of the History of Chesterfield Grammar School written by OC Philip Riden. He also mentioned the financial support given to current Chesterfield Schools including providing money to enable students to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme who would otherwise have found it beyond their means.

The MoC then invited Brell Ewart to join him for the announcement of the donation of a cup to Brookfield School, the cost being shared by Brell and the Society. This, "The Brookfield House Challenge Cup", is to be presented annually to the House gaining the highest number of credits in various spheres. It was suggested that an OC might wish to sponsor a shield for sports related activity at the school.

£300 from the raffle proceeds was donated to the Old Cestrefeldians' Trust.

A number of donors to the trust had sadly passed on. An appeal was made for new donors to come forward; donations from £10 per annum upwards would be very gratefully received. A form is available on the OCS website.

The accounts of the Old Cestrefeldian Society for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 were provided on each table.

The time-honoured formal process of toasts and speeches preparatory to the installation of the new President then began.

First Trevor Jackson was called upon to propose the toast to the Old School and the Old Cestrefeldian Society. Trevor was a pupil at the Brookside site during the reign of "Luigi" Price ("a marmite character") and Brian O'Kelly and described the excellent buildings and sports facilities. Those assembled heard of a number of interesting events from his time at School. Whilst not being the most academic he greatly valued many skills which he felt he had developed at School that had set him in good stead for later life.

Responding to the toast, the retiring President, Ron Smith, first proposed a toast to those no longer able to meet. This was observed seated in silence. Ron then entertained the meeting with a collection of one-liners and other amusing stories referring also to events taking place outside where the Walking Football World Championships were taking place. Who knew how important Chesterfield was in this sport?

Next Tom Roberts was called on to propose Stephen Pettett as President of the Society for the coming year. Stephen was a contemporary of Tom's brother, John (who was unable to be present), starting at Chesterfield School in November 1952 when the family moved up from Kent. Leaving from UVI Sc. In 1959, Stephen joined the Coalite company as an industrial chemist but later trained as a teacher at St. Luke's in Devon. He gained employment at a Hackenthorpe school eventually becoming Assistant Headteacher. He further became a magistrate in 1999 and taught graduates at Sheffield University on a part time basis. He was a school governor for 40 years, a Rotarian and chairman of the 41 Club. He had also played in the OCS Soccer

Team through the 1960s and 70s. Tom stated that Stephen personified the School motto, Non Quo Sed Quomodo, and was a top citizen and friend.

The outgoing President, then formally installed Stephen as his successor, placing the Presidential medallion around his neck and passing, on for safe keeping, the Old Cestrefeldian Society crest.

In response, Stephen, thanking Tom, modestly claimed not to recognise some of what had been said about him. He said he felt others were more worthy. He described his move to Newbold in November 1952 and the start of his enduring friendship with John and later Tom Roberts. He had much respect for his first form teacher, Bruce Andrew, describing him as firm but fair. Perhaps sport has had taken precedence over study at School and hence his first job. That however was followed by 31 years teaching and 10 year's part time lecturing as described.

Stephen promised to endeavour to support the Society whenever called to do so at the expected numerous events.

The formalities were completed by the competitive singing of the School Song, followed by a rather more sedate rendition of Jerusalem accompanied by a recording of the School Choir and Orchestra.

Next year's Reunion will take place on Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> 2025.



*Retiring President, Rev. Ron Smith, formally installs Stephen Pettett as his successor.*