

THE OLD CESTREFELDIANS' SOCIETY



Ninety Fifth Annual Dinner and Reunion

The 95th Annual Dinner and Reunion took place on May 15th 2025 at the SMH Group Stadium, home of Chesterfield F.C. Fifty OCs spent a very enjoyable evening in the company of old friends and colleagues.

Derrick Priestley, OCS Chairman, opened proceedings handing over to Society Secretary, Nigel Moss, to act as Master of Ceremonies for the event. Prior to dinner, the Grace was led by Derrick.

It was particularly fitting that retiring President, Brell Ewart, should propose the loyal toast in his other role of Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire.

During the dinner, the retiring President asked to take wine with those present especially those whose interests had coincided with his own, first by decade of attendance, the oldest being John Heath who started in 1938 and the youngest, Chris Street who was there at the end in 1991. Others included Past Presidents, DoE and CCF participants, the organising committee. No one else admitted to being a Sheffield Wednesday supporter.

The list of apologies was displayed on the screen as was a list of members who passed on during the year. This included three past presidents, David Allsop, Stephen Pettitt and John Roberts. The toast to Absent Old Cestrefeldians was proposed by Derrick Priestley.

Rob Wadd gave a eulogy in memory of John Roberts who had been a leading light in the Society and one of the group which rejuvenated it in 1985. His academic achievements were mentioned and his lifelong involvement with tennis as a player, supporter and organiser. Rob also mentioned his love of the outdoors and the great walks they had shared.

Tony Hine, one of the trustees of the Old Cestrefeldians' Trust gave a summary of the activities of the Trust over the last year. He reminded the members of its twin objectives of a) maintaining the legacy of Chesterfield School and b) encouraging current students by the granting of awards.

On Remembrance Day last year, a plaque had been unveiled at Brookfield Community School in memory of E. G. Price who was headmaster for almost the entire time that Chesterfield School was at Brookside. A cabinet containing items relating to the Old School has been installed there. More relics are always welcome. It is intended that the contents of the cabinet will be periodically refreshed. Awards, now normally £400, are granted to secondary schools in the borough, some relating to projects but mainly to individuals. Grants to Chesterfield College students were given after the Remembrance Service.

Grants can only be given thanks to the generous donations of members. New donors would be welcomed. Donations can be as low as £10 and can benefit from gift aid. An application / donation form can be found on the OCS website.

Help is sought from anyone with experience of posting tax returns using commercial software as this will be required for the Trust next year.

The toast to "The Old School, The OC's Society and the OC's Trust was proposed by Derrick Priestley with Brell Ewart responding.

Brell took the opportunity to elaborate on the events of his year as Society President. The first was the laying of the wreath below the commemorative plaques on behalf of the Society and the King at Sheffield Road. A third generation OC, Brell said his father and grandfather both left School to fight in world wars, fortunately both surviving and hence his being available to serve. His father had produced a diary / compendium of useful school and other information from his time at school (1936 to 1942) which he offered to the OCT for safe keeping.

The second event was the unveiling of the plaque at Brookfield School (Brookside) in memory of E. G. Price, Chesterfield School's longtime and last full headmaster, by his daughters. Brell opined that he was probably the pupil who spent the shortest time at Brookside having returned after exams only to accept a job the following week.

He was grateful for the opportunity to promote the memory of the School in his role as Deputy Lieutenant of Derbyshire. He mentioned that for the Citizenship Ceremonies, he was provided with material for a speech by the Cabinet Office to which

were appended famous Derbyshire people, one of which was Erasmus Darwin. Brell had taken great pleasure in being able to mention that Erasmus was but one famous old boy of Chesterfield Grammar School.

Brell said that in all that he had achieved, so much was thanks to the seven years that he had spent at the School and he felt truly humble to have followed in the footsteps of so many greats.

Neil Rowbotham was then called on to propose Ian Christison as our President for the coming year.

From School, Ian had gone to Staveley Iron and Chemicals as a cost clerk, while he had gone into teacher training and been appointed to his first job at Chesterfield School to teach chemistry. They had been brought together as a result of their wives' friendship having gravitated to Leicestershire. Ian had progressed rapidly and took an M.Sc. course at De Montfort University, Leicester leading to a post at Leicester Business School and involvement in CMA. He hadn't previously travelled greatly but went on to represent CMA and government bodies around the world. Ian has demonstrated that he believes in service and Neil is sure that he will work for the good of the Old Cestrefeldian Society.

In response, Ian said that he had started at Sheffield Road in 1953, on the same day and in the same class, that of Bruce Andrews, as John Roberts. "Bruiser" may have appeared intimidating but his bark was very much worse than his bite. Ian mentioned that the school crest at the time was a simpler CGS lettering but this had been changed by Bill Glister to the more familiar one. Similarly the School motto had been changed to "Non Quo Sed Quomodo", "Not what but how" from "Ingredere ut proficias" as carved on the bell tower, "Enter so that you may progress". Ian said he preferred the latter.

Ian started at Sheepbridge and later qualified as a Cost and Works accountant. The accountancy body morphed over the years through Cost and Management Accountants to CMA, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. Over the years, the steel industry has also changed hugely from when there were 3 blast furnaces around Chesterfield, one at Sheepbridge and two at Staveley to British Steel having a single blast furnace nationally.

Ian has been a member of the CMA's 50 strong global council. He has attended royal events as its president and has represented it globally including in Canada and Australia. He also recounted when in 2006 he was involved in opening of new national offices in Sri Lanka alongside their Prime Minister which included an unusual milk boiling ceremony.

Ian was formally installed as OCS President by Brell when he received the Presidential Medallion of office and the Society's crest for safe keeping.

The formal part of the evening drew to a close with the School Song, this year sung by the assembled company together, followed by Jerusalem, the latter accompanied by a recording of the School Choir and Orchestra.

Next year's Reunion will take place on Friday, May 14th 2026.

In a final word from our new President, he proposed that, Derrick Priestley should be nominated as his successor in 2027 in recognition of all that he has done for the Society in recent years. This proposition was greeted by warm applause.



From left to right:

Neil Rowbotham – Proposer
Ian Christison – New OCS President
Brell Ewart – Outgoing OCS President
Nigel Moss – Master of Ceremonies &
Society Secretary