

Old Victorians Association

For supporters of Queen Victoria School, Dunblane



Message From President

Another year done and another one upon us but the association faces a positive future. In the last 6 months Stephen MacKinnon has started preparing a match to prove who was the ultimate rugby team of all time, it promises to be the best thing that has happened to the association for a very long time – thank you Stephen. So, Saturday March 10th 2012 is D-day, four teams of Old Victorians will face each other and have the opportunity to win the Gordon Pritchard Trophy for the winning team, and the Nicholas Kerr Man of the Match Trophy.

This obviously brings me on to very sad news. Nicholas Kerr sadly passed in October, and his death has understandably been difficult for his family and many friends. It is tribute to his good character that so many people held him in very high regard. He was a cheeky, loyal, good-natured human being who put others first, and represented all that was good about Queen Victoria School and the values that it stands for. Many ex-pupils attended his funeral and although a sad time it was a celebration of a life honestly lived; with great integrity, and as part of the OVA Weekend (Saturday 10th March 2012) Nicky's family will attend and scatter his ashes. Nick was very excited about the Rugby Match and it seems that it will be a fitting tribute to a man who many will always hold in high esteem. Our love and prayers go out to those suffering from the loss.

For many years Stephen Hill has looked after the website for the association but time commitments means he has had to resign this position. Thankfully his brother Stuart has taken up the role and we now have a new website which will be developed as the years go on. Please do visit us at www.oldvictorians.org.uk to keep yourself up to date. Not only that, we have a new facebook group, youtube site with video updates and a twitter site as well. These can all be joined and accessed via the main website. Get online and make sure you keep in contact with us.

Last but not least, **OLD VICTORIANS WEEKEND** does not end on Saturday, the school is putting on a parade service on Sunday, and the salute will be taken by Colonel Murray MacDonald, a former pupil of the school. It will also be an opportunity to meet the new Chaplain and to show your family where you spent many years of your life. I am sure they will love it. There has been some special hotel deals sorted out and you can see the details in Stephen MacKinnons article below.

On the website you will also notice some proposed changes to the OVA constitution, I have also started the application to achieve charitable status for the association. I hope that some of you can help us out over the next year. We need an editor for the newsletter, we need a dedicated secretary, fundraiser and database manager. I hope that some of you consider taking up the roles to make us more successful.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your loved ones.

Leigh Bissett – Acting President

Leigh Bissett and Miss. Jean Kean (Former Matron)



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Old Victorians Rugby Challenge for Help for Heroes 2012!

So how did this all come about? Well for several years there has been a debate brewing between siblings of different generations as to who had the best QVS 1st XV in recent school history. Arguably the most successful teams in recent times is the Scottish Cup final team of 1995, who boasted 13 games undefeated, losing only the cup final and the final game of the season against an outstanding Dundee High School FP XV, or the Australian touring team of 2000 who had a very successful tour and who had several Midlands Schools representatives in their ranks.

Having decided to finally get this much anticipated game off the ground, other generations have staked their claim and decided to join the tournament. So on 10th March 2012, 4 teams of different QVS generations will compete in a league style tournament to determine the winners of the inaugural Gordon Pritchard Memorial Trophy and more importantly, the bragging rights for the different sets of brothers competing against each other.

The response from the OVA family has been unbelievable with over 200 Help for Heroes rugby jerseys already been sold. The school and Wendy Bellars, the Head, are giving their support to ensure the Old Victorians Weekend in 2012 is a fantastic success for the School, the OVA and Help for Heroes.

The provisional itinerary for the day is:

- 10:00 - Player registration and Jersey collection
- 10:00 - Watch School 1st XV team in action
- 11:00 – Photographs & Team Organisation
- 12.00 – Green v Yellow
- 12.40 – Red v Blue
- 13.30 – Red v Yellow
- 14.10 – Blue v Green
- 15.00 – Yellow v Blue
- 15.40 – Red v Green
- 16:15 - Prize Giving
- 17:00 - Scotland 6 Nations Match v Ireland
- Half time – Vote of OVA President & Committee
- After final whistle of Scotland Game – Raffle and Silent auction winners
- Final word and thanks
- Coaches into Stirling

It's still not too late to be part of the event. Go to the OVA website, www.oldvictorians.org.uk for information that will be updated frequently. It will be a family day with Bouncy Castle, BBQ, Drinks stalls and other fun activities as well as the rugby.

We have secured discounted rooms at the Highland Hotel in Stirling, simply quote 'OVA for Help for Heroes' for the discount. Rooms are available from £75 for two people sharing and includes breakfast.

There are a limited number of rooms available, so book early to avoid disappointment. The number to call is:

01786 272727

Also get your friends and family to donate by visiting the following site:
www.bmycharity.com\ovarugby,

I will look forward to seeing you all on 10th March 2012, OVA Weekend.

Best Regards Steve MacKinnon



A Message from The Head – Mrs Wendy Bellars

It is a pleasure to be asked once again to write for the OVA Newsletter. I value greatly the connections with the School that Old Victorians preserve, and am pleased to see the stirrings of a revived Old Victorians' Association under Leigh Bissett's leadership. The plans that he and Stephen Mackinnon have for an OV Rugby Tournament on Saturday March 10th 2012 are very promising, and it seems likely to be well supported. The Church Parade the following morning will have an eminent Old Victorian as its Reviewing Officer, and I hope that that too will attract many OVs to return to the School for a very special occasion.

I was saddened to hear of the death of Nicholas Kerr, OV, and was moved by the recollections of those staff still here who knew him when he was a pupil. He was spoken of with warmth and affection, and our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

The School sees some changes of personnel this term, with Margaret Roy and Sandy Stockman from Stores having retired recently, and Bert Tomkins (Drum Major), Eileen Macdonald (Highland Dancing Instructor and Housemistress of Wavell), David Garden (Principal Teacher of Science) and Helen Heslop (Housekeeper) all due to retire at the end of 2011. We shall miss them all, and wish them a long and happy retirement. As with Old Victorians, they will always be welcome to return to visit us.

Long-serving members of staff still here include Steve Laing, Tom Shannon, Graeme Beattie and Graham Carroll, whom I am sure many of you will want to meet again if you return during the course of this year.

We are gearing up for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo in 2012, at which our Band and Dancers have been asked to perform. With the changeover in drumming and dancing staff it will not be an easy task, but work is already well underway, and with Mr Ross's guidance as Pipe Major I am confident that QVS will put on an excellent show once again. Piping, drumming, dancing and the ceremonial aspects of the School are areas in which we achieve excellence, and it is important to encourage and to "showcase" these wherever we can do so.

Two members of staff and twelve pupils undertook an expedition to Morocco during the recent half-term break. It was an unforgettable experience for all of them, for many good reasons. I am grateful to staff who are willing to take on these extra commitments, as they are very valuable additions to the pupils' School curriculum.

Rugby and hockey, as well as football, continue to thrive at QVS, and those of you attending on 10th March should be able to see the 1st XV at home against St Columba's that morning.

The CCF underwent a successful Biennial Inspection early in October. We are fortunate to have three sections in our CCF, and given the School's membership of the UK Armed Forces "family" it is right that we should have a strong CCF. Again, the time of staff who volunteer to undertake the extra duties involved in the CCF is much appreciated.

Academic results continue to be well above the Scottish National Averages at both Standard Grade and Higher. Pupils go on from QVS to university, to College, to GAP years and into employment. If you would be prepared to come and talk with current pupils about your own career path from QVS to your current position, I should be delighted to arrange for you to do so. It is tremendously helpful to current pupils to hear from those who have been "in their shoes" about what that led on to for them.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as can make it to the OV reunion on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th March 2012.

With best wishes to you all.

Kindly written by Wendy Bellars.



Mrs Wendy Bellars & Remembrance Sunday Inspecting Officer

WELL RESPECTED SOLDIER AND OLD VICTORIAN – GOODBYE MY FRIEND

Corporal Nicholas Francis Kerr, a.k.a. Nicky, 30, residing at Jellalabad Barracks, Tidworth departed us on the evening of Tuesday 25th October 2011 while involved in a single car incident in Hurstbourne Priors, Hampshire. He was born on 1st May 1981 in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire.

Nicky endured a stereotypical military child's upbringing during his childhood before finding a more settled approach to life while attending Queen Victoria School (Q.V.S) during his adolescence. He would then develop into the well respected man that he was while serving as a Royal Electrical Mechanical Engineer (R.E.M.E) in the British Army.

During his time at Q.V.S. Nicky preferred to spend as little time as possible in the classroom, with academic stardom ranking relatively low on his list of priorities. Instead, he embraced a variety of extracurricular activities including: Athletics, Pipe Band Drumming, Rugby and Skiing. Nicky excelled in all that he participated in with some highlights including being a member of the 1st XV (or equivalent) rugby team during each of his school years, winning most 100m / 200m races that he entered, and being a member of the Pipe Band Drum Major trio that provided pre-match entertainment at Murrayfield. The list would go on...

"The beauty of being in the R.E.M.E is that you are moved around a lot and have the opportunity to meet so many different people." During his time in the R.E.M.E. Nicky was involved in operational tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan while also spending a considerable amount of time in Canada and Cyprus on exercise. He was promoted to Corporal in October 2009. While in Canada Nicky endured the Winter Rehabilitation Program where he was 2nd in charge of a very demanding Warrior Armored Vehicle Repair Line in which he excelled at. While in Cyprus Nicky was Section Commander for an Infantry based exercise called Lion Sun, which was also very demanding and again he excelled above his peers. Nicky was loved and well respected by so many people. He was one of the few people that everyone made an effort to stay in contact with. He has left a hole in the heart of everyone that had the pleasure to work with him. He has left a hole in the R.E.M.E.

There was time for one last swansong prior to his departure, which can be thought of as the 3-Peak Challenge "with a twist". In addition to climbing the 3 highest peaks in the UK, Nicky and his team members decided to add the "small" matter of cycling between mountains clocking up an impressive 450 miles. Nicky was very proud of this accomplishment and became incredibly overwhelmed after completing the final descent.

Nicky's personality was infectious. He was the life and soul of every party. He wore his heart on his sleeve and accepted slander like water off a duck's back. He served his country with pride and was one of life's great guys. Although he was in the prime of his adulthood, Nicky would have made a great husband and fantastic father. It's a real shame that he was unable to experience either. Nicky leaves behind a loving family, which continues to grow. I know they are very proud of the person that he has turned out to be

Nicky is survived by his father Frank, mother Sheila and sister Stacey. Other family members that will share in this tragic loss include: Grandfather Herschall, Brother-in-law Paul, Auntie Ann, Uncle John, Auntie Ellen, Uncle Graeme, Auntie Isobel, Uncle Scott and Cousins Alex, Ashleigh, Graeme, John, Justine, Kelly, Lauren and Leann. Nicky is predeceased by his Grandmother Maureen, Grandfather Alexander and Grandmother Annie.

Nicky's farewell took place on Thursday 3rd November 2011 at the St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church, Possil Park and Maryhill Crematorium, Glasgow. This was followed by a celebration of his life at the local Territorial Army Centre during which Nicky's past and present lives were united as one.

People often say that you'll never have friends like the friends that you meet at University. Every officer, soldier and old Victorian would agree that you don't spend the best part of 10 years living in each other's pockets and not feel like family members. Nicky had an amazing heart and nobody will ever take that away from him.

"If we're lucky, an obituary will inspire the living to be good to their neighbours, strive for success and keep hope alive." Should you wish to make a memorial donation, Nicky's charitable recipients were 'Andover Young Carers' And 'Help For Heroes'. Alternatively, buy a friend a flower, fill out an organ donation card, or do a good deed.

Kindly written by Iain Murray



Russell Flemming, Nicholas Kerr, James MacFarlane



Nicky on Recent 450 mile challenge



Claire Harris, Andrew Kintrea, Gary Cornelius, Nicholas Kerr, Ryan Bennett



Absent Friends

Remember those not here today
And those unwell or far away
And those who never lived to see
The end of war and Victory
And every friend who've lost our way
Remembered of as of yesterday
It's absent friends we miss the most
To Nicky, let's drink a loving toast

Career Focus

Editor: In every newsletter I hope to hear from somebody about where they have gone and what they are doing. I was very keen to get Vicki Harris (a keen OVA supporter & former Senior Monitor) to write a little about where she has ended since leaving the school and as one of the first to enter military service. Thanks for your time Vicki.

Vicki Harris - From Senior Monitor to life with the Senior Service

So, when Leigh asked me to write something for this newsletter I said "no problem" assuming I could throw a few words together in no time and that hopefully they would be funny or at least strike a chord with some people, however it's been so much more difficult than I had thought.

Since leaving QV I took the tried and tested route of university before joining the RAF as a Weapons Systems Officer (Navigator). I graduated from Initial Officer Training 6 years ago and had my first front line job on the Nimrod MR2 carrying out the obligatory tours in the desert as well as getting some slightly more enjoyable ones in the Caribbean!! As with all good things they must come to an end and mine came to a crashing halt with the Strategic Defence Review, and I now find myself working with the Senior Service apparently providing 'Naval intelligence' - yes I agree, an oxymoron if ever I heard one - which has been an eye opening experience of 'spinning dits', 'making wets' and 'going ashore' despite the nearest bit of sea being over one hundred miles away!! I am hoping to get back to the RAF and to the family nature of Sqn. life again, which in so many ways is what we all had at QV and i am certain that it is partly due to my experiences whilst at school that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far in the Armed Forces.

It's been almost 12 years since I left QV and sometimes it feels like it was just yesterday. As many others have commented on in the past when you become an OV you become part of a family and whether you see them every day or just once in a blue moon you will immediately fall back into the usual routine of 'friendly banter' - although to some people that may seem like some form of cruel and unusual torture! It is also true to say that as with all families the times in which we can all get together are few and far between. The turnout for Steve MacKinnon's Help for Heroes Rugby event on the 10 March is going to be the biggest we have seen for many years and will hopefully be a fantastic opportunity for old friends to reminisce about the good old days, it will also be a time for us to remember those who can't be with us...to that end it would be remiss of me not to mention the sad news of Nick Kerr's death and to say that my thoughts are with his family.

Well there it is, my very brief canter through my life post QVS and what it means to me to have been part of it. Not quite the riveting read I was hoping for but now's your chance to do better - trust me I've not set the bar high! So until next time, I wish you all, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and I hope to see as many of you as is possible at the rugby.



Kindly written by Vicki Harris (4534)

Announcements

Supporting David Mcelhoney

You may not know but one of our OV's is a Foster Carer and is raising funds for the Fostering Network, During 2008 he raised £4,710 (Inca Trail Peru) and in 2010 he raised £6,125 (Great Wall China) - totaling £10,835 for the UK's leading charity working to improve standards of care for fostered children - some of which are forces children. David lives near the Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire.

David says that the plan is for him to complete the Nepal Challenge during May 2012, by taking part in a thrilling 10-day trek and community project, against the magnificent backdrop of the Himalayas.

Those taking part will trek through mountain villages and thick rhododendron forests, see the peaks and glaciers of the Himalayas up close and be part of a community project for local children.

Before the group even starts up the first mountain the major challenge will be here at home, during these credit crunch times, trying to raise sponsorship from near and far. During times like this charities like the Fostering Network struggle just when more funds are actually needed to help make a difference to vulnerable children and young people.

There are 51,000 fostered children living with 43,000 foster families on any one day in the UK. The Fostering Network estimates there is a shortage of at least 10,000 foster families.

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading charity for all those involved in fostering, and exists to ensure that fostered children receive the highest standards of care. It has offices in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow and London.

To make a donation or to find out more about the trek please visit:

<http://www.justgiving.com/davidtmcelhoney>

Well Done to Katrina Watson

Recently graduated from The Robert Gordon university with a B.A in Law and Management. She is currently pursuing a Masters of International Business at Hult International Business school in San Francisco, and will graduate in August 2012.

If you have an announcement to make – a birth, a degree or whether you want to let others know about your business or going on, please do email us on oldvictorians@hotmail.com

Log on to keep up to date:
www.oldvictorians.org.uk

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