

There has not been a 'Pikey's Progress' for some considerable time, since the 400<sup>th</sup> celebrations of the founding of the school, in fact, which may be a blessing in disguise, but all good things must come to an end so I'm back again in the first month of the New Year.

So what has happened to the OWs in the last few months?

December saw our Annual General Meeting, where Doug Forbes was crowned as our new President in succession to Bill Hartley

Doug is one of an increasing number of Old Wilsonians who made an appearance at the Club long before he was born – his two brothers and sister also come into that category - whilst his association with the school also started well before he went there for, as a youngster, he spent holidays at Tallybont with the likes of the McAlister and Adams families

He played 1<sup>st</sup> XI football for the OWs and, indeed, still turns out for the OWFC to this very day – albeit in the lower sides - but his greatest forte is cricket, where he has spent virtually his entire career in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI, and continues to keep his place in that side, taking a total of over 1,300 wickets in all games, more than anyone else in the Club's history, his best figures being 9 for 11, again a Club record, which he claims should have been 9 for 3 as there were 2 edges through the slips.

He has also scored 100s for both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and Sunday XIs and although nowadays a 'natural' No 11, he did open the batting for the 1<sup>st</sup> XI for an entire season, and during one of their promotion years at that!

He was the Sunday Cricket skipper for a while and on one memorable occasion, when playing over the fence at Ex-Blues, declared when Steve Baldwin, correctly if not affectionately known as 'Psycho' was on 99 – what they said to each other during the tea interval, or subsequently, is not something you would like to hear

He was Chairman of the Cricket Club when the installation of our Cricket Nets was accomplished and handled the meetings with Bromley Council and the local residents with aplomb, thereby securing the planning permission we needed to erect both the Nets and the Children's playground

Doug currently leads the OW Tigers, our cricket section which helps those with disabilities

He has always played all of his sports in the true Corinthian spirit but has a subtle way of showing his displeasure when he feels that opposing players are not doing the same, his dry sense of humour helping considerably in this regard

He is not the best person to follow when travelling in a convoy to away games as he has a habit of driving through Westerham, whatever the destination, and is certainly not to be trusted with a satellite navigation system – for more details ask Stephen Millward

Doug is a very laid back character to the extent that you sometimes wonder if he is asleep, but he has the knack of accomplishing everything he sets out to do, which he will certainly need as our President

Whilst welcoming Doug, wishing him well and offering him support, we say a massive 'Thank you' to Bill for his guidance and leadership over his two year tenure, which has seen all sections of the Club grow, flourish and increase in reputation

Bill has also had to deal with the unexpected - e.g. a tree falling on, and destroying, the shed which contains all of Colin's equipment but, and thanks to our immediate past President's tenacity, this was replaced at considerably less cost than might have been thanks to Bill's acquisition of grants.

His tenure has also seen the opening of the Tennis pavilion, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the school – although this was a numerical occasion and Bill cannot take full credit for that – the Football Club winning the AFA Cup, twice, and the Cricket Club gaining promotion to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the Kent League.

“Just like England have only won the World Cup under a Labour government, so the OWs have only one the AFA Cup under a Hartley Presidency”, boasts our William and, sadly, this has been illustrated by the fact that Old Owens ended our interest in this competition soon after Bill relinquished the office, although this does mean we can stage the final at Hayes this season.

The first ‘OWLS’ of the year took place on January 5<sup>th</sup> with Terry Adams and yours truly doing our usual double act on the Bar, with Bill Hartley – not him again! – in charge of the kitchen, making this very much a ‘Class of ‘56’ occasion

As ever the rules dictate that you do not pay for your food nor drinks until the end of the event and that no money is taken over the Bar, although this is as much to do with the fact that the till at the Club replicates that used in ‘Open All Hours’ as much as the fact that Terry and I have difficulty in remembering the price of the drinks and adding up, whilst it is also a rule of the occasion that you cannot buy anyone else a drink, although there is a very simple remedy to this which attendees seem reluctant to comprehend

January 22<sup>nd</sup> saw the annual Presidents’ lunch, when all of those who have held that honour get together at ‘The Chateau’ in Croydon

As the day dawns

On a cold and grey January morn

A collection of past Presidents meet

No longer steady on their feet

In the Chateau

This event always necessitates a trip to the Bank to cover the cost and after asking for enough to, hopefully, meet this I thought I heard the cashier say:

“Are your dentures alright” but, in reality, what she actually said was

“Are you alright with 20s” - your hearing tends to go, as well as your feet, as time goes by

We had virtually a full house, although Steve Wisson had to drop out at the last minute and, sadly, Ted Knevet is now in a home - see more later

Clive Peckover asked if we could have a jug of water, which he promptly turned into wine, and Malcolm Taylor, who had driven all the way from Devon in order to be in attendance, proudly announced that he will be retiring in ten weeks time, although, and as he works for Network Rail, this will probably be delayed

Les Wilks and Bryan Watts had celebrated birthdays during the week, another cause for rejoicing, and when someone described Bob Bevan as enigmatic he had no idea what it meant.

“If you knew what it meant you would not be enigmatic”, explained Clive

Our new President, that’s Doug Forbes – and please do keep up – led a discussion on the future of the Club and at one point Mick Pilgrim agreed with Mike Harris, and the rest of us immediately disagreed, purely on a matter of principle rather than in relation to his point of view!

This was the first time this event had been attended by three Forbes – Ian and Alex as well as Doug – which must be some kind of hat-trick, whilst our new President at one point explained that he had, in effect, been brought up by many of us sitting round the table, which might be considered by many to be deprivation and bad practice but, thankfully, he has always had Jill to keep him on the right path

There seemed to be little evidence of a ‘dry January’ on display and Lou Barry had even gone to the trouble of booking an overnight stay nearby in order to stay in the bar until midnight although, and come to think of it, he does that every year.

As already mentioned Ted Knevet was not able to attend and we wish him well, and will never forget his enormous contribution to the OWs but, and saddest of all, Richard ‘Mac’ McAlister has passed away since our last get together and we all miss him

The Football Club have agreed that their annual Vice Presidents’ Day will now be named in his honour, and this year’s event will be held on February 20<sup>th</sup> when a plaque will

be unveiled in the Memorial garden in his memory and some of his ashes will be scattered by Pat and other members of the McAlister family, and we hope as many Old Wilsonians as possible will be in attendance to remember one of our greatest members