

# Rock Runner

The magazine of the Rathkeale Old Boys' Association

Volume 23  
December 2018



# Editorial

GRANT HARPER (1967-71)

I was recently invited to speak at Hereworth School's Founders' Day. This rare honour came as something of a shock but, as always, it was a pleasure to return to Hawke's Bay and to one's roots.

Having spent four years as a boarder at Hereworth in the early sixties, prior to enrolling at Rathkeale in 1967, I found myself reliving the memories of those days. I also found myself pondering the significant impact both Hereworth and Rathkeale have had on my life and on the lives of thousands of other men up and down the country.

Hereworth occupies a magnificent site in Havelock North and at first glance from the main gates little appears to have changed over the half century that has passed since I joined the ranks of the Hereworth Old Boys. However, in reality, there have been huge changes in all facets of the School's life that ensure that Hereworth remains amongst the ranks of New Zealand's premier schools.

In the same way, Rathkeale continues to forge an impressive pathway into the future. We, as Old Boys, are justified in feeling proud of the advances, achievements and accolades currently being enjoyed by our Old School.

Certainly, change is a constant in our lives, and also in the life of Rathkeale. Perhaps the most

significant this year has been the departure of Mr. William Kersten after ten fine years as Principal and the subsequent arrival of Mr. Martin O'Grady as Rathkeale's eighth Head.

Once again there will be new developments and innovations as a new Head stamps his mark and as the College seeks to remain in the vanguard of New Zealand's leading Colleges.

We, as Old Boys, will be able to wistfully observe how things have changed since our time, but we will also be able to rest assured that the School continues to relentlessly pursue the very best for the young Rathkeale men of the present and of the future.

*Grant Harper*  
Editor

## ROCK RUNNER 2018

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Grant Harper and Chris Morrison survey the extent of the proposed Ruamahanga Restoration Trust.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editor thanks all those who contributed articles and images to the Rock Runner. We are always glad to receive relevant material for future magazines. This could include articles, names of likely contributors and obituaries. These should be sent to:

[oldboys@rathkealeoldboys.org.nz](mailto:oldboys@rathkealeoldboys.org.nz)

## ROBA Regional Committee Representatives

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# Rathkeale Old Boys' Association

GRANT HARPER (1967-71) - President



Some of the ROBA Committee, meeting in November for the AGM.

*"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their entrances and exits and one man in his time plays many parts."*

**W**ith the passing of every year the College welcomes a raft of new boys and staff whilst the Old Boys' Association happily adds another generation of school leavers to its data base. For new boys, the College is seen as old and established but for those of us who hark back to school days in the 60s and 70s, Rathkeale still seems young and the passage of years fleeting. We are left wondering how we arrived in the ranks of Old Age Pensioners so quickly!

The Old Boys' Association members now represent five decades and their memories,

experiences and attitudes are varied and wide. Therein lies a challenge for the Association: how best to communicate and engage with an increasingly varied membership. I would like to think that ROBA is enhancing its ability to do just that and I once again reflect on the year that has been with some satisfaction.

The national committee remains a strong and committed one who, despite

the challenges inherent in skype business conferences, have kept in regular and productive contact. There have been no changes within the group which is increasingly confident and conversant with our aims, objectives and processes. Once again, I thank them individually and collectively for the role that they continue to play. I particularly acknowledge Ed Cox, our Vice President/Secretary, for his tenacity in driving us towards our strategic goals, Treasurer Scott Andrew for his effective book keeping and Blair Ewington for his ongoing work with Facebook and the database. Stuart McKenzie and Richard Dunworth keep the home fires burning and are the energy behind after match functions, the Leavers' Dinner and the AGM function.

There have been changes at regional level. In Auckland, David Aitken worked in tandem with Terry Brailsford to organise

a well-supported function at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron in the middle of the year. With an increased head of steam and other volunteers another Auckland gathering is in the pipeline for the New Year.

James Treadwell continues to keep an eye on Hawke's Bay whilst Duncan Thomas has relinquished his role in Manawatu. Both are thanked for their willingness to help the Association.

In Wellington, Julius Capilitan is at the helm and continues to be enthusiastic regarding opportunities to get Old Boys together. A Wellington dinner was held in November.

Craig Galloway has stepped down from his role in Canterbury and we thank him for his efforts on our behalf. George Pottinger and Sam Johnson have put up their hands to coordinate Old Boys' activities in the South.

Overseas, Jonathan Austin, currently NZ High Commissioner, has expressed a willingness to host a gathering in Singapore while Philip Harcourt continues in his role in the UK.

Willy Kersten's departure from his role as Rathkeale Principal at the end of Term 1 was significant. Willy worked tirelessly for the College for



a decade and during that time was a staunch supporter of the Old Boys. He certainly was well deserving of his honorary membership of the Association.

Ed Cox who is not only an Old Boy and Secretary of the Association but also a current parent of Thomas in Year 13 was the speaker at this year's Founders' Day. Long serving staff members Graeme Anderson (15 years), Roger Boyce (10 years) and Shelley Hancox (10 years) were acknowledged along with honourable mention of many other long serving staff.

A significant Association highlight this year was the growing support of the Decades on Reunions. With welcome support from Derek Daniell (1968), Michael de Stacpoole (1978), Blair Ewington (1988) and Dean van Deventer and Mitch Scaife (2008) as facilitators the weekend was widely acclaimed as a great success by the large group of Old Boys who gathered from near and far. Excellent!

We now anticipate that the Decades On Reunions for those

cohorts who left School on a 9 year (i.e. 1969, 79, 89, 99 and 2009) which will take place at Queen's Birthday weekend 2019 will be no less successful.

In the meantime, girls and boys who left St Matthew's and Rathkeale in 1998 gathered in Masterton at Labour Weekend and enjoyed the opportunity to reestablish old acquaintances and to relive past memories. Thanks to the planning of Dwayne Smith and Richard Sexton (for the boys), the weekend was described as a 'real blast'!

Following on from last year, the Association once again hosted a successful Dinner for those boys leaving the College this year. The guest speaker, Major Alastair Plimmer (1978-82), captivated the 85 Old Boys and Leavers present.

We continue to reap the benefits of our investment in our database and are constantly improving the accuracy of our contact details. This will be complimented by a one-year trial of Notice Match, a system which will alert us when members of our wider Old Boy and College community, pass

away. In the meantime, we urge all Old Boys to advise us of new postal addresses, phone numbers and email addresses so that we can enhance our communication processes.

The dispatch of Gravel to known Old Boys email addresses continues to reap positive responses. Similarly, younger Old Boys remain well involved and interconnected via Facebook. The Rock Runner continues to act as our premier means of communication but is increasingly dependent on Old Boys sending through interesting stories or suggestions.

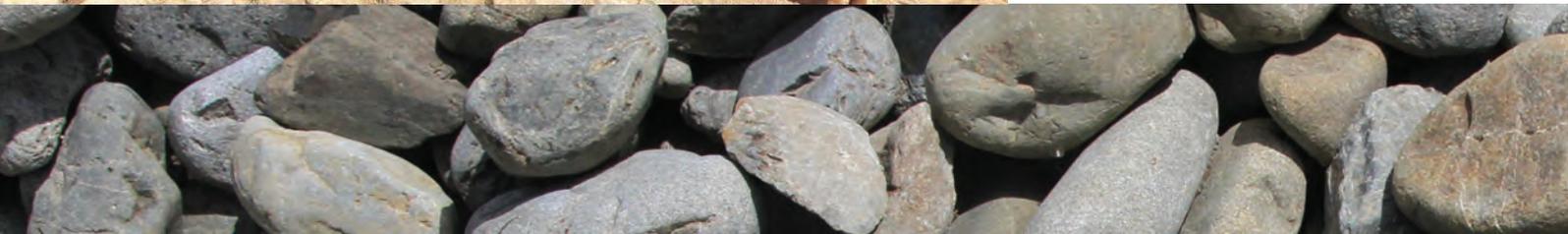
The Sports HQ Appeal is gaining momentum as 2018 draws to a close. Both the Association and individual Old Boys will have the opportunity to contribute to what will be a stunning new facility for the College. The Executive is philosophically committed to supporting the Appeal and already a number of Old Boys have indicated their willingness to support the Appeal personally. We remember "nil mortalibus ardui est".

Finally, our year will culminate with the 2018 AGM held at Masterton's Lonestar on November 14th. We have an early indication that current office holders will remain essentially the same but hopefully new faces will be most welcome as the Association seeks to better serve both Old Boys and the College.

*M G Harper*  
President

Old Boys celebrated Andy Dodd's (2004-2007) wedding in Rarotonga recently.

From left to right: Cliff Cleary, Nick McGovern, Brad Denniston, Sam Freeth, Jenny Dodd, Andy Dodd, Chris Adgo, Anton Ross, Matt Dalley, John Dodd



# Rathkeale Board of Trustees

Chairman of the Rathkeale College Board of Trustees George Murdoch reports on the Board's work in 2018.

2018 has been one of great significance for the College. At the end of Term One, we farewelled Willy and Ali Kersten from Rathkeale. Willy, with the unstinting support of Ali, has had a huge impact on Rathkeale and they can take great satisfaction from what they achieved in their ten-year tenure. Willy and Ali's legacy at Rathkeale began in 2008, when our role was at about 75% of capacity and declining, our reputation had slipped and our financial viability was very questionable. The Board, under new Chairman Andy Pottinger, knew changes were required and someone pretty special was needed to lead those changes. Willy was that person, and as he and Ali 'signed off' a decade later, Rathkeale has a reputation we can be proud of: academically we compare very favourably with schools of similar ilk, our cultural events are outstanding and we punch well above our weight on the sports field. We are financially sound and our role sits at 97% of our Integration cap of 310. Their farewell assembly on the 13th of April was a great occasion. Willy was appropriately awarded the E J Norman medal for his contribution to Rathkeale and the event concluded with a stirring whole school haka.

On the first day of Term Two, we welcomed our new Principal Martin O'Grady and his wife Sara to Rathkeale. Martin has most recently been Principal at Feilding High School, having previously been Principal at Karamu High School and having also gained experience of a State Integrated School while teaching at Lindisfarne College. Martin has made a great start in his new role and whilst the process of appointing a new Principal

is both intense and time consuming, it is also hugely rewarding to see the calibre of the people who applied for the role – to me this reflects the reputation of our School.

In my last piece for Rock Runner, I talked about our desire to build a new gymnasium at Rathkeale and the efforts of a tight group of promotors to make this a reality. Progress over the last twelve months has not been

as rapid as those involved would have liked, although having said that, Trinity Schools Trust Board has committed significant funding and the steering committee is now embarking on the crucial fundraising stage. We are hopeful of reporting significant progress in the next edition of Rock Runner.

While on the subject of buildings, the TSTB has adopted a very comprehensive capital program across all the schools. For Rathkeale, this will see the reroofing of School House and the refurbishment of Repton House over the next twelve months. It is important to acknowledge their commitment to improvements on the campus.

In August this year, we had the Education Review Office visit us for their three-yearly review. The purpose of ERO's external evaluation is to give parents, whanau and the wider school community assurance about the quality of education children and young people receive. Their draft report provided a strong endorsement of what Rathkeale is achieving and our future aspirations. One of their comments was that our campus was 'like an additional teacher' and when you see it in all its glory, it is hard to argue with that observation.

In signing off, I am confident that the College remains in great heart. For those of you who live nearby, I encourage you to become engaged with the College if you are not already; for those of you who live at a distance, if you are ever in the vicinity, you will always be welcome to visit your old school

*George Murdoch*  
Chairman, Rathkeale Board of Trustees



# Principal's Report

As 2018 draws to a close, MARTIN O'GRADY reflects on his first three terms as the new Principal of Rathkeale College.

**I**t is a pleasure to write my first report for the Rock Runner magazine after my first six months at Rathkeale College. My wife Sara and I moved in and started living at Rathkeale at the end of April. The warmth of the welcome into this community was heartening and this has continued over the past few months.

It has always struck me how unique the Rathkeale campus is, but this has become even more apparent as we have lived through the Wairarapa winter and are now enjoying the growth and colours of spring wherever we look. The work and forethought of our predecessors is never more apparent than when we wander through the grounds.

Within a few weeks I had the pleasure of attending my first ROBA event with the decades reunion on Queen's Birthday Weekend and I was also present at the Auckland ROBA evening. Immediately, it struck me how connected many Old Boys are to old friends and acquaintances. No matter how successful you are in life, it seems that the personal connection with others in your life and from the past still holds value above all else. ROBA activities, I believe, help to provide this personal connection. It is with a certain amount of interest that I note the most asked question from Old Boys is "do the boys still do rock running?"

I have attended a number of ROBA committee meetings. Because of the reach of those involved, Skype for Business is an essential participant and after a few initial glitches it is interesting for me to observe committee members from all over New Zealand meeting and discussing how they can

best serve the Old Boys of the school. Committee members are busy people and I cannot help but be impressed with their selflessness on behalf of Old Boys.

After a solid start to the year in Term One, the boys have continued to succeed across a range of activities during the year. First teams of all codes



have enjoyed a great deal of success and there are a number of highlights, including wins against traditional foes. Talent in the performing arts abounds everywhere and two personal highlights for me were observing Viva Camerata at the Big Sing Grand Finale and the House Music Competition.

When you start at a new school you instantly become aware of Old Boys in existing and new social circles. I soon discovered that my daughter flats with an Old Boy! Overwhelmingly, they take pride in their old school and appreciate the well-rounded education they received and the way that has shaped their lives.

I intend to continue that fine tradition into the future and see the ROBA as a key school supporter in that endeavour.

*Martin O'Grady*  
Principal



New principal, Mr Martin O'Grady, at the powhiri held to welcome him to Rathkeale.



# The Committee

We profile some of the men who serve you on the ROBA Committee.

## Ed Cox (1983-1987)

Vice President/Secretary

**A** litigation lawyer with the firm Gibson Sheat, Ed has enjoyed over 20 years practising law. Having merged the Wellington practice with a Masterton law firm, he finds himself increasingly involved in the Wairarapa again and is very much enjoying the change.

Living in Petone with wife Jane and four school-age boys, normal family arrangements of school, sport and community involvement seem to dominate nearly everything. He has enjoyed coaching rugby for the mighty Petone Rugby Football Club, but according to his sons, has reached his technical limit!

Outside of everyday family and work life, his main interest is sailing - an activity stemming from Rathkeale days. It was the late, Don Freeman (father of school mate John (1983-87) - now a commercial pilot in Edinburgh) who first got him hooked, making him helm his beloved Farr 1020 Slowhand dangerously close to the Beam Rock beacon on Auckland Harbour.

Ed and Jane have a Nolex 25 trailer sailer that he races at Lowry Bay in Wellington and cruises at Lake Rotoiti, which he describes as a kind of floating, camping, January paradise. 2017 delivered up the contrasts of crewing Sir Peter Blake's Steinlager II across a boisterous Hauraki Gulf and then taking a Bavaria 42 out of Split, Croatia for an amazing week of history, gin-clear water, open-air dining ashore and Med-style cruising on a very flat Adriatic.

More than 25 years passed between leaving Rathkeale in 1987 and driving through the gates again for another entrance interview for the next Cox generation with eldest son Thomas, now in his final year. The next brother, Matthew, starts in 2019.



Ed became involved in the Old Boys when then-President Andy Sutherland asked him to organise a drinks event in Wellington. That seemed achievable but after a couple of years, he was disappointed by the numbers attending. Improving Old Boys engagement is a key focus of the committee of the Rathkeale Old Boys' Association. The new website will be up soon, enabling Old Boys to read the plan for how they will achieve the aim of (re)building an energetic and sustainable association.

Ed has enjoyed re-establishing the connection with the college itself, although many of his closest friends have always been from Rathkeale. In that sense, they have always kept that connection as a group. Recent rewards for him have been getting to know his wider year group again, 30 years on. Consequently, the decade reunion in 2017 was hugely enjoyable.

With a great committee on the Old Boys, Ed finds meetings both fun and productive, with the bonus of renewing old acquaintances and making new ones while getting through the work. He looks forward to catching up with more Old Boys in the future.

**Blair Ewington (1984-1988;  
Staff 2003-present)**  
MOST/Facebook

**B**orn and raised Masterton, Blair attended Totara Drive and Hiona Intermediate Schools before starting at Rathkeale. Being zoned out of and dissatisfied with other local options led his parents to wander up the street for a chat with long time family friend Max Mabin. With a grin Max stated, "I can guarantee him a place at the entrance exam. However, he'll have to do the rest himself."

Currently enjoying family life in Masterton with his two children – Harry (13), Sophie (4) – and his partner Lisa, he has just completed his 16th year on the teaching staff at Rathkeale.

Youthful sporting interests – hockey, swimming, golf – continued into his tertiary years. During a GAP year, The Elms School in Herefordshire generously accommodated his season playing hockey for Upton Upon Severn 1st XI, in the local Men's A Grade competition. He credits attaining the Queen's Scout Award and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award with motivating him to pursue his initial career, upon his return from England. Further sporting involvement eventually gave way to his passion for the New Zealand backcountry. He considers climbing Mt. Hooker during a seven-day expedition in the Landsborough Wilderness Area to be his toughest outdoor challenge.

Blair graduated from Lincoln University with a Parks Recreation and Tourism Management Degree – the jack of all trades and master of tramping – which resulted in ten years of stunning work environments. Rising through the Conservation Officer ranks, with stints for the Department of Conservation on Great Barrier Island and Raoul Island, he returned to the Wairarapa Area Office as Programme Manager – Visitor Assets. Three further years as a Park Ranger for the Wellington Regional Council concluded when the opportunity arose to accept a teaching position in Japan.

Travel highlights include climbing Mt. Fuji at night, walking the Annapurna Circuit, safaris in



Kenya and Tanzania, visiting Gallipoli, winter travel in British Columbia, and a train trip from Athens to Luxembourg through former Yugoslavia. Closer to home, the burning desire has existed to visit all the huts in the Tararua Forest Park. Through work and leisure, he's ticked off 55 and has three left on the list. Once satiated locally, he's keen to walk the West Ireland Way, the West Highland Way and the Great Glen Way – most likely from pub to pub – before focusing on further adventures in the South Island.

A Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching at Massey University in 2002 – following a year teaching and travelling overseas – resulted in his complete change in career direction. Thankfully, the park-like environs of Rathkeale somewhat resemble his former workplaces. Significant contributions as a staff member include Head of Graphics, teacher of Social Sciences, Boarding Housemaster, rugby coach, hockey manager, golf manager, head of outdoor activities, and Old Boys' Committee member.

Meanwhile, he continues encouraging Old Boys to reconnect by organising their own reunions – large or small – which prove to be immensely valuable to the heart of the Rathkeale Old Boys' Association.

## Stuart McKenzie (1979-1982)

It would be fair to say Stuart McKenzie explored most of what was on offer, during his time at Rathkeale College. Initially, it was intended that he would follow in his fathers' footsteps and head to Nelson College. However, after spending his intermediate years boarding at Hadlow, he happily went on to attend Rathkeale.

Starting as a 3rd former in School House, he then moved across to Cranleigh for the remainder of his school days. His time was spent on the cricket pitch and rugby fields as well as in the Pipe Band under the guidance of Peter Quinn, playing the snare drum and earning his colours. The library, however, held little appeal.

Growing up over the Rangitumau Range from the school campus, he and friends once made the massive trek across the top to visit home one quiet Sunday afternoon. He also did his share of rock running and is proud of the part he played in the development of the school. His father John spent time serving on the Rathkeale Board of Governors.

Upon leaving school there was only one career path he wished to pursue and so he went farming. After shepherding locally, he set off for the South Island, spending time working on a cropping farm in mid-Canterbury before a brief stint at Lincoln University. Stuart then headed north, settling on the large expanses of the Taihape Gentle Annie country.

In 1990, he returned home to Te Rangi to run the farm, taking ownership and continuing to expand the business to the 2250ha it is today.

Married to Jane, they have 3 children. Daughters Harriet and Annabel both spent 7 years each at St Matthew's Collegiate, enjoying their boarding experiences before going on to Lincoln and Victoria Universities respectively.

In 2015, son John arrived at Rathkeale as a Year 9 student and is currently in Year 12 also residing in Cranleigh. This makes three generations of attendance in the Trinity Schools system which began with Stuart's mother Pauline at St Matthew's in 1952.

Stuart spends as much time as possible supporting on the side lines of the rugby field and cricket oval as well as assisting with the school farm from time to time. He also coached the St Matthew's 1st XI cricket team for



several years whilst his daughters played.

Stuart now serves on the ROBA committee and enjoys his involvement in this, reconnecting with the wider school community and also catching up with old friends around the country, reliving some of the more hilarious moments of their education.

The Big Weekend 50th year celebrations in 2014 were a highlight, with a very high attendance level from his cohort, something that will hopefully be repeated in 2023 with their next year group reunion.

## Scott Andrew (1989-1993)

Treasurer



Originally from Whareama east of Masterton, Scott enjoyed his time at Rathkeale from 1989 to 1993 initially as a border in Cranleigh House before shifting closer to town and becoming a dayboy.

After graduating from Canterbury University with a Bachelor of Forestry Science, he worked around the country in the Forest Industry before returning to the Wairarapa in 2010 with his young family. He is currently the Forest Development Manager for Juken NZ in Masterton. Together with wife Ailsa, who teaches Science at Rathkeale, Scott has three children - Max 10, Clara 9 and Elizabeth 7.

Over the years he has refereed rugby around the country and is currently keeping involved refereeing senior club rugby in the Wairarapa Bush Union.

He took the opportunity to get involved with the Old Boys a couple of years ago and is now the Treasurer for the association. He has found it a great experience touching base with Old Boys of his era and the opportunity to meet others throughout the years.

He looks forward to continuing his role within ROBA, building networks amongst the many Rathkeale Old Boys around the country and the world, and the school community.

## Richard (Rusty) Donworth (1982-1986)



Richard was a colourful and memorable member of Winchester House and rose to the role of Deputy Head of School before tutoring at Cheltenham School, England, in 1987.

After completing a Law degree and most of a BA in Political Science at Victoria University, he realized that a stellar legal career and involvement in national politics was not going to be realized. He had previously worked in hospitality, as have many successful Old Boys, and had found it too enjoyable to abandon. Certainly, many will remember his personable presence in Wellington's café scene for over a decade.

He moved to Greytown in 2006 and finds the Wairarapa a wonderful place both to live and work. He is very well known as Greytown's French Baker but also owns another café in Wellington.

He also has two sons, one of whom will begin at Rathkeale next year, ensuring that the Donworth presence at Rathkeale continues.

Rusty is enjoying being part of ROBA's committee and sees it as a chance to give something back to the school that gave him so much.

# Decades On Reunions

Reunion events and gatherings continue to take place at Rathkeale and abroad.

## 1968 - fifty years on



Left to Right: Derek Daniell, Richard Pitchforth, Colin Orchiston

**T**he boys who left the College in 1968 were often members of the founding student group, sometimes referred to as the Originals. For obvious reasons, they occupy a special place in the College's history and over the decades have kept in good contact, both as a group and with the school. They have regularly organised their own gatherings and because of this there was rather limited uptake of the Decades On Reunion, despite valiant efforts by Derek Daniell and a phone around by the ROBA committee. However, it was excellent to have the group represented by three stalwarts who appeared visibly happy to be back at the place where they spent their college years half a century ago and we thank them for their presence.

## 1978 - forty years on



Back Row: Jeremy Ramsden, Len French, John Battiston, Mark Justice, Raymond Moorhead, Robert Pacholek, Malcolm Groves  
Row 3: Campbell McLean, Chris Pearce, Steven Grant, Michael Birch, David Wilson, Robert Hirschberg, Stephen Brown, Robin McKeown  
Row 2: Michael Cox, Roger Watts, Terry Sheat, Bill Dickens, Philip Macalister, Simon Gibbs, Michael de Stacpoole, George Slim, Chris Wilson, Hamish Bamford  
Front row: Russell Potts, Stephen Treseder, Chris Morrison, David Sutherland, Chip McHardy, Stephen Newport, Tim McJorow, Kevin Cross, Innes Fisher, Lee Marshall



## 1978 - forty years on

**F**orty years have passed since the Class of '74 to '78 had its last term at Rathkeale. What is striking after returning to the school is the generational changes that have occurred since that time. It is evident in some of the lesser details such as the School Prayer ('Send down upon our school the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit' is now 'Send down upon our school the gifts of your Holy Spirit') and the renaming of the clubs ("Competition Houses") to give them a stronger New Zealand connection (Churchill, Hillary, Scott and Shackleton are now Blake, Halberg and Hillary).

One of the more visible changes can be seen if you visit during term time. The uniform of 1978 is totally a thing of the past. The demise of the yellow fifth year uniform, more elegantly described by BGH in his school history as the golden uniform, is a sad loss but not all Old Boy classmates share this view. Overall though, the impression is that the current students are much more smartly attired in their day-to-day uniform than their 1970s predecessors.

Perhaps the greatest change has been the retirement of a



KWW striding out

generation of teachers, many of whom had served in the Second World War or had grown up around that time. KWW (Citroen-DS-driving French master) was seriously wounded at the Battle of El Alamein; EJN (headmaster) received bomber crew training in Canada and the UK; JKW (art master) was a regular at the Soldiers' Club in Masterton; MBM (geography master) was often seen wearing an Armoured Corps beret; KRF (maths master) had served in the Home Guard; PTQ (Pipe Band and sports master) had been a paratrooper in Greece and a police officer in Nigeria. Having been brought up themselves in an era of discipline and service, the staff ran the school with what could fairly be described as military-style discipline. Marching to assembly, rifle range shooting, the Pipe Band, caning and rock running punishments and hair, shoe and bed inspections were part of everyday life in the '70s. Many of these elements, such as marching and the Pipe Band, have quietly faded away along with the staff who administered them.

Other noticeable changes are in the physical appearance of the school. The gymnasium, which used to be the hub of the school, has seen significant change due to the construction of a series of new buildings. Gone are the morning assemblies it used to host, the honours boards (relocated to the auditorium) and the chapel that was located at the far end behind wooden concertina doors (there is now a church located opposite School House).



The view from School House across to Cranleigh.

The boarding houses have seen similar change. In Repton, for example, the large common room has been subdivided into a series of rooms. With the demise of bunks in the lower dorms it is presumably no longer necessary for 3rd and 4th formers to do their prep upstairs (previously there were three people in a two-desk cubicle). Other changes are cubicle walls that are full-height, which means there is no more conversing with others across the length of the dormitory, and a vending machine now resides in the tuck box area. Boarding numbers in Repton are currently 57 compared to 111 in 1976.

School House has ceased to be a boarding house for first-years and the old common room is now used as a meeting room. Thankfully the house photos from times past are still displayed around the walls. Old Boys from F Dorm, which was downstairs adjacent to the common room, marvelled at the small size of their old dorm and how many boys it used to accommodate. If the boarding role has gone, presumably so has the concept of 'Sacred Turf' between the house and the swimming pool.





F Dormers from 1974 - Steven Grant, Malcolm Groves, John Battiston, Bill Dickens & Michael Cox (photo courtesy of Russell Potts)

One of the most dramatic changes is the cluster of buildings (an auditorium and classrooms) on what used to be the sports field by the three classroom blocks. In days past there was a clear line of sight from School House to Cranleigh. One Old Boy remarked that EJN, who lived with his family in School House, had seen lights on in Cranleigh near midnight and a particularly hardworking prefect was subsequently advised by LPO (Cranleigh housemaster) to cease his extended study after lights-out.

The Greek Theatre holds a special place for our generation. Many Old Boys can share stories about contributing to its construction and others will recall the end of year prize-giving ceremony being held under the blazing Wairarapa sun. One Old Boy

remarked during the school tour that he remembered the year that Hogsnot Rupert (of 'Aunty Alice' fame) held a concert there during which the band was admonished by the headmaster to turn down the noise! Physically and in other ways the school has changed but that is to be expected. As we found out, Old Boys from the same cohort (to use MGH's term) can have different recollections of past events or, in some cases, few recollections. The two constants though are a shared bond and an underlying camaraderie that probably surprised many who attended the reunion and who hadn't previously given it much thought. Thank you very much ROBA, MGH and Mr O'Grady for inviting us back to a Decades On Reunion. It was a most enjoyable occasion and it has provided many new happy memories for those who attended. To the current

generation of teachers and students at Rathkeale, best wishes from the Class of '74 to '78 for the remainder of the school year and for the years ahead.

*Michael de Stacpoole*



## 1988 - thirty years on



Back Row: Roger Trent, Giles Buckley, Alistair Jaspers  
Middle Row: Stephen Holt, Blair Ewington, Brodie Noon, Todd Bonner, Matthew Sweet, Andrew Bennett  
Front Row: Craig Viles, Simon Wilton, Rupert Hodson, James Twist, Matthew Leckie, Bruce Donald, Duncan McKenzie

## 1998 - twenty years on



Leavers from 1998 reunited on the steps of the Greek Theatre during a Queen's Birthday Weekend gathering.



## 1988 - thirty years on

**T**hirty years ago, in early December 1988, many of us bolted out of the Rathkeale gates as fast as we could. A handful journeyed overseas and a number pursued interests here in New Zealand. Reuniting at Queen's Birthday Weekend this year brought to light that many more of our 113 boys and 70 girls have ventured overseas, returned and then left again, in search of their spot in the world. Three quarters of us were boarders, so the concept of leaving home commenced well before the end of 7th Form. Significantly, I wonder if this go-getter attitude is what brought us all back – from all over the world – to our third significant reunion. Or maybe it's just because we all intrinsically value a good booze up – a strong Rathkeale tradition founded slightly East of the Bomb Shelter. Whatever people's reasons, massive efforts were made to return, and everyone enjoyed the weekend.

Drinks in the school Dining Hall on Friday night was the catalyst for an informal gathering at the Lone Star, where 30 attendees enjoyed their pre-match reminiscing. Tours of the school on Saturday morning proved popular with those travelling from afar. The Masterton Club was the perfect venue for our dinner and dance on Saturday night, with 73 attendees enjoying the evening. Our special guests, Gwen and Bruce Levick, Jim Whitfield, and Mike Eckford, all looked pretty much the same as they did when we left school. We look forward to seeing them at our 40-years-on party in 2028. One of the highlights was welcoming ten of our cohort that we hadn't seen since leaving school – long may this continue. Social media generated a swell of messages from our peers who couldn't attend, wishing they could be there, and wishing us well. Some of our other teachers - John Pinner, Jim Pine, John Taylor, Bruce Hamilton, Cliff Bouton and Rob Nethercote - all took the time to write us messages of best wishes.

In addition to many smaller gatherings, members from our very large year group have now enthusiastically supported three major, more traditional-style reunions – 2008 20 years-on, 2014 Jubilee, 2018 30 years-on – so maybe it's time for a change. There has been mention of jeans and homespun jerseys in a woolshed somewhere. Maybe we'll also venture further afield; surely someone knows someone who knows someone with a membership at The Hills in Queenstown! However, until then, efforts continue to maintain contact with our old acquaintances as the years march on.

*Blair Ewington (1984 – 1988)*



Andrew Bennett and Todd Bonner



Matthew Leckie, Alastair Jaspers, Roger Trent & Giles Buckley



Todd Bonner, Andrew Bennett, Matthew Sweet, Alistair Jaspers, Matthew Leckie, Blair Ewington



Bruce Donald, Simon Wilton, Mark McKenzie, Kirsty Cowie, Rupert Hodson, Caroline Abbis (Blundell), Andy Bailey Gibson



# Decades On Reunions

## 1998 - twenty years on

**A**t Queen's Birthday weekend the St Matthew's/Rathkeale Class of 1998 was welcomed back to Masterton, back to the vistas and back to the stunning weather! 1998 was the year *Titanic* won Best Picture, *Seinfeld* finished its run on TV but *Dawson's Creek* and *Sex and the City* premiered. Posh 'n Becks got engaged, google.com was registered as a domain name, and the *Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* debut album was released and won 5 Grammy awards. And we started our final year at High School.

Twenty years on and we were together again. The weekend was a great testament to the strong friendships we formed all those years ago. Wasn't it amazing how nobody had changed much or had we just reverted to our 17-year-old selves?

We had a number of school leavers who travelled from overseas, Australia and Fiji being the furthest. Our day started for the girls with morning tea and a tour of the school, organised by the Old Girls and Camille, while the boys attempted a claybird shoot, before we all met up in the Rathkeale Chapel. Grant Harper took us on a tour of Rathkeale where



Greek Theatre catch-up

memories resurfaced - the funny memories, the gross memories and of course those times when we almost got 'snapped' doing something we shouldn't be.

There was plenty of chat on the tour, catching up on what each other had been up to over the last 20 years, before a group photo at the Greek Theatre and then BBQ lunch in front of the Dining Hall.

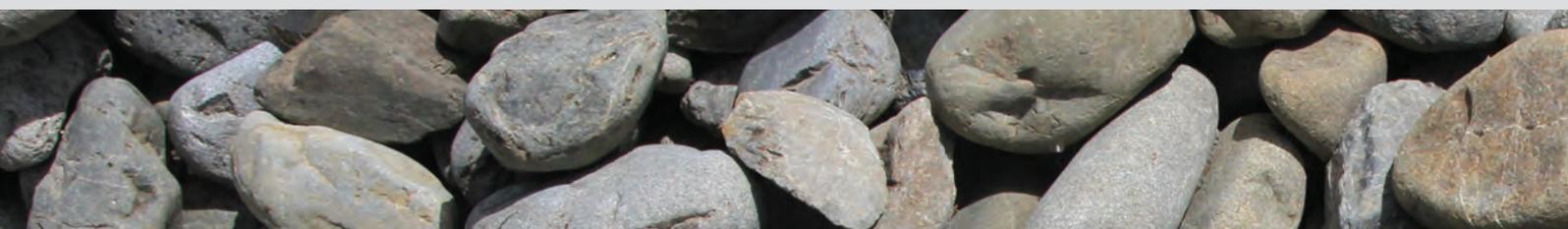
Saturday night we partied like it was 1998 at the Masterton Club. However, unfortunately we didn't bounce back on Sunday morning like the group of teenagers we thought we were the night before. It was

such a great event, and we thoroughly recommend it to anyone who is thinking of organising their own. We've already pencilled in a date for 2023!!

*Pia Bradshaw  
(nee McKay)*



Lunch outside the Dining Hall, twenty years on.



## 2008 - ten years on

Ten years have really flown by, as no one could believe we had already reached this point. The growth of social media made getting in touch with people a whole lot easier and we received plenty of responses for the event. There were a large number of replies from people now residing overseas expressing their apologies for not being able to make it. However, we managed to pull together 20 or so for what was a great day.

One of the main events of the day was the screening of 'Inglorious Boarders', a compilation movie edited by Thomas Turfrey that showed some of the antics in boarding and general school times. The video likely confirming some suspicions for Mr Grant Harper as he watched. Following the movie, an afternoon of ten pin bowling, dinner at Chans and a night on the town closed out what was a truly amazing experience seeing some people for the first time in many years.

Many of the group have gone down some interesting paths. Lance Cooper is growing into his role within the family business but in his spare time has taken up powerlifting, benching upwards of 150kgs. Sam Vollebregt completed his years at Canterbury University but due to his love of toast, has started his own honey and beekeeping business which is going full steam ahead in the South Wairarapa. Nicko McGregor is in the process

of getting into Police College but has dabbled in landscaping as well. In recent times, Mitch Scaife and Stewart Morrin completed the *Coast to Coast* as a pair, which is a superb effort. Many of us have spent time in the UK: Nic Ayres as an architect, me playing cricket and many others soaking up the European sun for their travels. Outside of the attendees, you will find Rathkeale men scattered around the world doing a number of interesting things. Head Boy Harry Bateman is currently playing professional golf on the *NZ Charles Tour*, *Australia PGA Tour* and the *Japanese Challenge Tour*. A smattering have relocated in Australia such as James McManaway (running a civil construction company), Robert Saywell, Paul Morris (Mining + drone photography) and Travis Edwards. Simon McKay is now a captain in the NZ Air Force, most recently completing missions off the Korean and Japanese coastlines.

It is really hard to explain to people the closeness that you develop with schoolmates during your time at Rathkeale. It is a school like none other and for many, it is a time we will never forget. We will always cherish the memories and opportunities our time at Rathkeale afforded us and will no doubt continue to stay in touch with those we met. Until next time...

*Déan Van Deventer*



Back Row: Lance Cooper, Dean van Deventer, Nick Pearson, Nick Ayres, Tom Atmore, Stuart Morrin, Richard Ponder  
Front Row: William Schofield, Patrick Jefferies, Nick McGregor, Thomas Brook, Thomas Turfrey, Mitchell Scaife, Sam Vollebregt, Matt Dixon, Zane Hopman



# The Regions - Auckland

Old Boys gathered for drinks at the Royal Yacht Squadron in Auckland.



Josh Byers, Doug Whitcombe, Pramod Nair



Michael Caulton, Paul Goodwin, Patrick O'Rourke



Auckland ROBA Rep Terry Brailsford with Pete Bamford



From left: Patron John Taylor, Richard Johnston, Richard James, Matt O'Rourke.  
Background: Blair Ewington, Gary Harwood



David Aitken is the one of the ROBA Regional Representative in Auckland.



Blair Ewington, Dwayne Smith



# The Regions - Hawke's Bay

A passion for the great outdoors and a keen interest in business have fueled a 30 year career in forestry for Old Boy James Treadwell (1983-1987). He heads the innovative forestry management and consultancy company, IFS Growth Ltd.

**M**anaging people is a big part of my job and I firmly believe that my time at Rathkeale in the 80s set me up well. Rathkeale was — and still is — a school that paved the way for many great opportunities, lifelong memories and friendships, as we all got along learning and living together.

I was reasonably academic and a classic “bit of everything” kid. I enjoyed trying different things, threw myself into sport — rugby, soccer, outdoor pursuits and swimming — debating, computers and choir. In hindsight, I was also quite a nuisance. Getting in trouble was the norm at Rathkeale, so I was frequently under the firm gaze of Cranleigh’s house-master, a young Mr Grant Harper. Grant’s approach to discipline was consistent, and rock running a regular outcome. On reflection, I appreciate that channeling our boundless energy was an effort to get us on the straight and narrow. Rock running actually established a “get on with it” and a “can-do” attitude in many boys. That’s stayed with me throughout life and business.

After Rathkeale, I headed off to study Commerce at Victoria. I discovered Jamie Belich and his views on New Zealand History, and ended up switching to an Arts course. I graduated, with a BA in History and Economics but no clear career path.

I threw my backpack on and headed off to see the world. Whilst working in a Scottish forest, I had my lightning bolt moment. I loved the outdoors, certainly did not want a nine to five office job and I had a curiosity for business. I decided there and then, to head back to New Zealand for further study at the School of Forestry at Canterbury University, a decision that I’ve never regretted.

The forestry industry is fantastic: my work’s taken me all over the globe. I’ve met a huge variety of interesting people, from HRH Prince Charles, the head of the Harvard University Pension Fund, Chinese communist party leaders, investors, farmers, environmentalists and government ministers. I’ve worked my way around the forest floor and the boardroom table, planted and



felled trees, explored profitability and sustainability, and much more.

These days I’m an old hand — I don’t feel it— and I’ve seen a lot of change. I think the “get on with it” approach I first discovered while rock running at Rathkeale is key to my job growing our business and helping people. Our company believes in supporting emerging talent into the industry. We are very proud to have recently introduced a series of scholarships at IFS Growth in support of new blood coming into the industry. I think the business of forestry’s got a really exciting future for New Zealand and New Zealanders, and I love seeing fresh ideas and talent coming through.

*James Treadwell*

ROBA Representative in Hawke's Bay



# The Regions - Wellington

Julius Capilitan (1996-2000) is the ROBA representative in the Capital.

**J**ulius, who presides over ROBA activities in Wellington, was at College between 1996-2000. During those years he was in Rugby House and he retains fond memories of a brotherhood of friends, plentiful tennis, and special times at the river. He also is proud of his Wairarapa javelin record and participation in National Athletics.

A year spent overseas proved pivotal to his future and he returned to Wellington to commence a BCom. Thereafter employment with ANZ, The Stock Exchange, AXA Investments and Kiwi Bank provided him with a wealth of experience.



These days, family life and parenting, mortgage broking, consultancy to developers and the cultivation of finance all ensure busy times in his current role as General Manager Financial Services New Zealand / Century 21 First Choice Reality. He and his fiancée own a hair studio, where she works as a stylist, and they live with their two young daughters in Evans Bay, Wellington.

Wellington Old Boys were joined by new Principal, Martin O'Grady, for an enjoyable night out at Courteney Place's Lulu Bar and Restaurant early in November. The evening attracted a range of Old Boys from all decades.



# The Regions - Canterbury

George Pottinger (1967-1971) has had a varied and interesting career in agriculture since leaving Rathkeale. He checks in from Canterbury.

I was born and bred in the Wairarapa, one of seven children on an isolated hill country property, so my introduction to Rathkeale in 1967 — yes the same year as Grant! — was a bit of a shock studying Latin and French with all these Prep School boys who had already had, mostly two years of it! I was one of only three in a class of thirty who had not had exposure to both!

After five years boarding at Rathkeale, which, looking back, were great years even though I was very homesick initially, I ended up with colours for Service and Shooting, a B Bursary, and Head Prefect of Repton.

I had a year's practical experience farming at Methven in 1972, then three years at Lincoln College doing a B Ag Com. While at Lincoln I edited the Capping Magazine, "Ram", and won the Individual Drinking Eights at a Varsity Tournament — as the photo suggests, a life skill! I left to get a real job—a career in farming and rural banking!

This took me to the Wairarapa, Waikato, South Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, during which time I worked for The Rural Banking and Finance Corp, (a Govt Dept) The Rural Bank, and The National Bank. This was interspersed with marriage to Janne — a Lincoln romance — a year's contract lecturing back at Lincoln, the birth of four children, and a period of eight years owning our own undeveloped farm in the Wairarapa.

I left the banking industry in 2000, and spent a year in Uruguay, South America with my family, managing an agribusiness company, before coming back to NZ — the company was broke! — and spending a year in the stock and station industry.

This was followed by my final career move as General Manager, and shareholder in an export business, manufacturing and selling large scale in vessel composters to New Zealand and the



world, involving much long-haul travel, and taking me to some very interesting places in the world!

I retired in 2011, and am now quite happy to give some time back to my old college.

*George Pottinger*

A ROBA Representative in Canterbury



# School News - Sports HQ

The College Gymnasium is overdue for replacement. We lay out the Sports HQ Business Proposal.

**T**he current College Gymnasium was provided through the generosity of the Friends of Rathkeale in 1965. Since then, it has been extended by 1/3 and had an extension Sanctuary (current Weights Room) added for Chapel services. More recently it has had interior recladding and earthquake strengthening completed.

Whilst of straight-forward basic design, it has done sterling service as a gym, assembly hall, social venue, theatre, chapel, examination centre and as a focal point of the College for most of the College's life. For Old Boys it will be linked with a host of memories, such as Peter Quinn's military-style Physical Education classes and the precision of inter House gymnastics, and that Scottish accent telling us that we couldn't be proud of our names until we were proud of our bodies! Others' thoughts will race to ballroom dancing lessons and to school dances – almost unbelievably the Headmaster turning the lights on full, telling boys and girls not to clinch and the band (was it the Calculated Risk?) to turn the volume down. Almost everyone prior to 2001 will have memories of School Chapel and School singing – hours that will have shaped our characters and influenced what we sing in the shower. And then there were other long hours spent at carefully regimented desks

squeezing information from dark recesses of our brains for the edification of the examiners.

Unfortunately, however, as a gymnasium, it has increasingly been seen as inadequate and substandard.

Shortcomings include a lack of court and spectator space, inadequate storage, a lack of changing and ablution facilities, uneven floor and low ceiling, a substandard weights room, no associated teaching spaces, poor staff/administration areas and limited access and parking facilities.

In essence, the current gymnasium is now significantly below par for that generally expected for a College such as Rathkeale. As a boys' school, physical wellbeing is of real importance and Physical Education increasingly popular. The demand for better facilities continues to grow. When the Auditorium project was proposed in 1999 it had to compete with calls for a new gymnasium. Those calls have grown in potency over the ensuing years.

With the upgrade of most College facilities including boarding, classrooms, dining hall/kitchen, staff accommodation, earthquake strengthening, sewage upgrade and the general campus, the inadequacies of the current gymnasium have become more glaringly obvious. Following the creation of the new STEM

Centre in Kowhai, the Sports HQ project has emerged as arguably the most pressing need for the campus. Several years ago, a group came together to lead the charge towards the creation of a new gymnasium/Sports HQ under the Chairmanship of Andy Pottinger (1968-72), former Chair of the College BOT. The group has had a feasibility study completed and IKON Architects and Apollo Projects employed to generate plans. Included in the complex is a large Sports Hall, four unisex changing rooms, a large weights room / person gym, foyer and two classrooms that will also combine as a functions area with catering capability, medical room, office space and storage.

The project enjoys the support of the Trinity Schools Trust Board and of the Friends of Rathkeale. Hopefully the support of charitable Trusts and of the wider community will bring the exciting and much needed project to fruition. The creation of Sports HQ will free up the current gymnasium for future development as part of the central Academic Hub of the College. This in itself is exciting and much anticipated.



# Staff Profile

Born into a Taranaki farming family, new Director of Sport, Gil Barnitt, was encouraged by his father to try something else rather than follow him into the family farming tradition. His passion for competitive sport has led him through a challenging and varied career in sports science.



**E**ducated at Waitara East Primary School and in Whanganui, sport before, during and after school was the norm. Gil played in both the 1st XV and XI at Wanganui Collegiate School, as well as being involved in Athletics, Cross Country and Swimming. He was fortunate to have been coached by the likes of Jim Wallace, Peter Irvine and Alec McNab who were well-respected nationally in the 1970s and beyond.

With his father's encouragement and an enduring interest in competitive sport, he headed to the University of Otago to study Physical Education, majoring in Exercise Physiology. This was followed by a year at Auckland Teachers' College, where he also ran his first marathon. The next decade was spent teaching in secondary schools in Wanganui and Canberra, in between time travelling to Perth where he lived for three years to study for a Master's Degree. His thesis topic – "The Effects of Strength Training on Anaerobic Performance" – was probably the catalyst for a career in strength and conditioning.

Returning from Canberra to manage the Health and Fitness arm of what would later become Sport Whanganui, he oversaw significant membership increase. Education beckoned again and he spent seven years teaching Sport Science and Practical Strength courses. At the same time, he took fitness sessions for club rugby in both Taranaki and Whanganui. His first year with the Whanganui rep side saw them promoted from 3rd to 2nd Division.

Taranaki was the first side outside the original five Super 12 sides to employ a full time Strength and

Conditioning coach. As a result of his Whanganui experience, Gil was employed by Colin Cooper and Taranaki rugby, having previously met Cooper when they both trained at a gym in a garage on the outskirts of Waitara. He thoroughly enjoyed his time at Taranaki experiencing the joys of making the semifinals twice in three years, and the hardship of a day's work on the Slater brothers' dairy farm.

After three successful years with Taranaki, Cooper got the Hurricanes job and Gil was lucky enough to become the Strength and Conditioning coach in Wellington. He worked with the likes of well-established players Tana Umaga, Jonah Lomu, Jerry Collins, Rodney So'alia, and emerging All Blacks Conrad Smith, Ma'a Nonu and Piri Weepu. In this role, he was responsible for all aspects of fitness and recovery as well as menus for players whilst in hotels.

After six years in rugby it was time for a change and he obtained the position as Head of Strength and Conditioning at the Western Australian Institution of Sport (WAIS) in Perth – his home for the next twelve and half years. He worked with a variety of Olympic Sports: Swimming, Athletics, Australian Men's Hockey, Rowing, Kayaking, Women's Football and Gymnastics and was predominantly involved in the writing and implementation of injury prevention and strength programmes. He was lucky enough to work with many elite athletes including the 2008 Beijing Olympics Pole Vault gold medalist and a world record holder in the 50m and 100m swimming events. Whilst in Perth, he worked with an ex-UK Head Cycling Coach and now Australia Cycling High Performance manager who encouraged him into cycling. As a result, Gil is a hopeless cycling addict.

As a result of many trips back to New Zealand for participation in the Round Taupo Ride and "pressure" from his English wife, they decided to return to New Zealand to live. Fortunately, the position of Director of Sport at Rathkeale was advertised and Gil arrived the week before Easter to start the job.

Gil is looking forward to adapting his many working experiences to benefit the sporting aspirations of Rathkeale students.



# Ruamahanga Restoration Trust

Anyone with any connection to Rathkeale knows that the natural environment is its beating heart. Now, with the support and drive of Old Boys, the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust is being established to help restore and maintain this unique taonga.

**A** number of Old Boys from the Class of '78 are setting up the Ruamahanga Restoration Trust for the purpose of promoting the restoration and protection of unique bio-diverse ecosystems within the Wairarapa, with a special focus on Rathkeale's Eco Trail and the surrounding environment. The aim is to advance educational awareness of conservation and environmental issues at the school level by helping to restore and protect indigenous ecosystems.

Founders Chris Morrison and Campbell McLean, with the help of local resident and classmate of '78 Michael Birch, have identified a number of objectives that

Rathkeale Old Boys, students, and teachers can rally behind with the goal of delivering measurable results, one step at a time.

Local law firm Gibson Sheat is the first official sponsor, with Old Boy Bruce Logan kindly offering his legal services *pro bono* for the establishment of the charitable trust. The new Trust will then appoint a number of trustees along with a working committee of volunteers and professional advisors. Michael Birch has also generously offered to help create a new website.

According to Campbell McLean, there are many Old Boys like himself who have gone out into the world without fully utilizing

the resources and camaraderie of the Old Boy network.

"The time has come to return and give something back to the School and the Wairarapa community at large. My first tramp into the mountains was during my third-form year at School House. I have lots of good memories exploring the outdoors during those formative school years."

According to Campbell, one way to give something back is to support the Rathkeale Eco Trail project and to "encourage future leaders to protect New Zealand's indigenous species and bio-diverse ecosystems."

An aerial view of Rathkeale reveals large pockets of native vegetation, including a parcel of bush located behind School House that the C78 Trust wants to see protected by a QEII land covenant.

The Trust plans to support the Rathkeale Eco Trail project providing services and materials for pathways, native seedlings, predator traps and signage, including the option to install predator-free fencing as a means to encourage the return of more native birdlife.

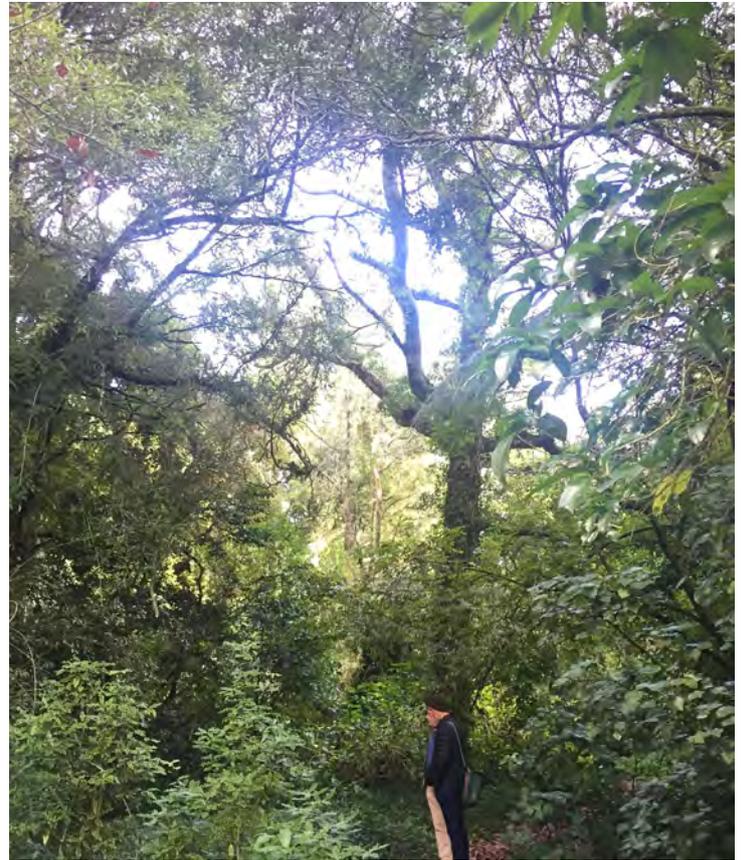


Left: Old Boys from the Class of '78 on the Eco Trails' redwood loop during their 40th Reunion Weekend.





Above: Eco Trail wetlands



Above: Regeneration in the College bush.

The Trust is also hoping for an opportunity to help protect the old 'School House Bush', currently located on private property, and to extend the existing Eco Trail project into the area. The site includes several kahikatea trees, which once dominated New Zealand's swampy lowland forests. One tree in particular is estimated to be at least 500 years old. There is also talk of trying to get areas of the school's forested areas listed under 'Queen's Canopy'.

A broader longer-term objective is to assist local landowners

within the Wairarapa to restore pockets of unused farmland, including riparian strips, into protected areas; providing funds and resources for fencing, native seedlings, traps and scientific research.

Chris Morrison, founder of Phoenix Organics, Karma Cola and the All Good Fairtrade banana business is the trust's first benefactor. According to Chris, the trust's first mission starts at the school, where he says, "students and teachers become storytellers with a message of good, tasked to inform and

encourage others in the firm belief that nothing is impossible when it comes to protecting and restoring the health and lifespan of our ecosystems."

The Trust is currently building a new website where you can sign up to express your interest in supporting this worthwhile initiative.

[www.RRTrust.org.nz](http://www.RRTrust.org.nz)



# School News - Viva Camerata

253 choirs. 24 selected. Finally, after a long journey, Viva Camerata made it to the Big Sing Finale.

**O**n the afternoon when the email came through, the excitement was shown in the shrieks that filled Room 8. Soon, the excitement was replaced with panic when realization set in of what lay ahead: fundraising that would reduce the huge cost, refining current repertoire AND learning two pieces in about five weeks.

This journey started in 2001, with Ollie Ormond. It was on the corner of Room 8 and the then staff room. He wanted to start a choir and would Mrs van Deventer help. He got a group of

boys together and Meryl Watson, Head of Music, also offered to help. And so, the Rathkeale Singers was born. For them, the joy of singing was paramount. In 2002, they took part in the Big Sing for the first time and made a video as a fundraiser. The choir definitely demonstrated inclusivity, as at one stage it had nine different nationalities in it!

During the King Lear production that year, combined singing by senior boys and girls was used to complement the singing. This made the students aware of the beauty of four-part singing and so, in the third term, the

Trinity Singers (or Senior College revived) was formed. On and off, over many years they performed at various functions.

In 2004, Mrs van Deventer took over Schola Cantorum at St Matthew's. In 2007, once again student-driven, the idea came to join Schola Cantorum and the Rathkeale Singers in order to get a fuller, more rounded sound. And so in 2007 Viva Camerata was born and took part in their first official Big Sing competition.

Initially, it was a great challenge to get boys to audition. Mr Adam Gordon's arrival at Rathkeale



Viva Camerata, Rathkeale and St Matthew's premier choir, perform at the Big Sing Finale



meant the revival of a boys' choir. In this, the focus is the enjoyment of singing. That, together with school singing, brought about a change in attitude. A consequence has been an increase in the number of boys auditioning.

Success is usually the result of hard work, persistence and getting a good team together. Mrs Eckford, former accompanist of the NZSSC, became the accompanist for Viva and Mrs Andrea Thomson became the vocal coach. In 2018, Viva consisted of 47 - the biggest ever.

And so back to 2018: The choir was selected: the parent machine set in motion and fundraising started. From selling raffle tickets, to sausage sizzles and a movie night, to our fundraising concert, it was a massive effort. Trust House must also be thanked for their generous donation and grant. It was also heart-warming that former pupils, Daniel Saunders (headboy 2002) and Ping Lim (2010) gave very generous donations. The students certainly appreciated everyone's support and efforts.

After hours of practice, the day finally came. Days were long and packed and listening to the other choirs opened eyes and ears to new possibilities. To hear not only the interesting and difficult repertoire tackled, but to hear the fantastic technique was definitely a learning curve. On Friday morning, they sang their first programme of *Te Deum* (Ruth Morris Gray), *Hushabye Mountain* (arranged Andy Beck) and *Le Masina E* (Steven Rapana). A standing ovation from Dilworth College was a highlight. On Saturday morning, they delivered



Community outreach is an important aspect of Viva Camerata, including the sharing of Christmas songs at Masterton Hospital.

their second programme *Sure on the Shining Night* (Jamey Ray) and *Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat* (Frank Loesser). On both occasions, the tension was palpable as they prepared but once out on stage, with the sounds bouncing off the Michael Fowler walls, all was well.

It is difficult to describe the atmosphere where there are 600 students from across the country, and they all share the love of singing. Ending the Gala concert with a combined item - *A te Tarakihi* - certainly created goose bumps for all! At the end of the night they were awarded a Bronze, but it was a pleasant surprise to learn later that they were only 2% off Silver! The adjudicators commented that "It was an enjoyable recital, with attractive and committed choral singing. Great contrast in your programme choice." They have learnt much for the future.

Mrs van Deventer has been very impressed this year with their hard work, dedication, commitment and sense of fun.

The students often refer to the Viva family and ultimately, that is what makes Viva special - the sense of belonging that they all feel to the group.

John Rutter, a famous British composer, once said:

*"Choral music is not one of life's frills. It's something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls. You express, when you sing, your soul in song. And when you get together with a group of other singers, it becomes more than the sum of the parts. All of those people are pouring out their hearts and souls in perfect harmony. Which is kind of an emblem for what we need in this world, when so much of the world is at odds with itself... And I always say that a church or a school without a choir is like a body without a soul. We have to have a soul in our lives!"*

*Kiewiet van Deventer*  
Choir Director



# Stories - The fall of a dictator

Gregor O'Gorman (1989-93), Deputy High Commissioner at the British High Commission in The Gambia, shares interesting tales from his time on the West Coast of Africa.

**T**he smallest mainland country on the African continent, The Gambia is completely surrounded by Senegal, apart from its Atlantic Ocean coast. It has a population of around two million people.

In December 2016, the presidential election ended the rule of a dictator who had been in power for 22 years after he took power as a 29-year-old army lieutenant through a bloodless coup in 1994. His full title was His Excellency Sheikh Professor Alhaji Doctor Yahya Abdul-Aziz Awal Jemus Junkung Jammeh Naasiru Deen Babili Mansa. For the purposes of this article, I will refer to him simply as Jammeh.

Jammeh was a ruthless dictator in every sense of the word. His résumé includes killings, forced disappearances, indefinite imprisonments and torture, witch-hunting campaigns, and suppression of the press. He was also convinced he had the ability to cure HIV/AIDS, high blood pressure and infertility in women – the latter being more of a ‘hands-on approach’. In 2000, 14 students and a journalist were killed during a student demonstration, which he reportedly authorised. Recently, Human Rights Watch have tied him to the 2005 executions of over 50 Ghanaian, Nigerian, and other West African migrants. In an interview, Jammeh said “If I have to rule this country for

one billion years, I will, if Allah says so.” He did not fear any critics, saying “I will not bow down before anybody, except the almighty Allah and if they don't like that, they can go to hell.”

When I joined the British High Commission in 2014 it was then called the British Embassy, due to Jammeh removing The Gambia from the Commonwealth in 2013. This was a unilateral decision, not the will of the people, and one that, in my opinion, was the tipping point: Gambians had finally had enough. When we first arrived, I was warned by the locals that I should never talk about politics in public and also be careful with whom I talked to privately. It has been reported that Jammeh used National Intelligent Agency (NIA) operatives as ‘plants’ around the whole country, located in every aspect of society, to gather information and also to report on those who did not toe the line. The result was that many government officials, business men, NGO workers, and religious leaders received threatening phone calls, visits from NIA agents or just disappeared. Jammeh’s death squads, known as the Junglers, are allegedly responsible for most of the killings and disappearances during his tenure. In 2012, after Jammeh ordered the execution of nine persons on death row, applying the death penalty for the first time in 30 years, some

Gambians started to speak more freely. The executions included prisoners who were sentenced after being tried on politically-motivated charges and who had been subjected to torture to force confessions. One prisoner reportedly suffered from a mental illness while two others were killed without legal appeals. These executions set the international community on fire and the spotlight really showed Gambians that their government’s actions were not acceptable. But Jammeh’s decision to leave the Commonwealth seemed to resonate negatively throughout the whole country. More and more people seemed disheartened by their leader’s actions and I now found myself discussing politics with anybody who wanted to rant.

There were many other highlights leading up to the 2016 presidential elections such as the botched coup attempt (one of five attempts during his time in power) at the end of 2014. The Gambia also withdrew from the Internal Criminal Court (ICC), declared the secular state an Islamic republic and forced female civil servants to wear head scarfs, rescinding the order three days later. Jammeh also threatened to “slit the throats” of any gay man in the country.

In April 2016, as the country geared up to presidential election at the end of the year, a small



number of United Democratic Party (UDP) members, the biggest opposition party, took to the streets to peacefully protest and demand electoral reform. The reaction from government security sectors was disproportionate and resulted in detentions, arrests and the death of one senior UDP member, Solo Sandeng. Protests led to the round up of executives of the UDP, including Darboe, who were subsequently detained until after the presidential elections.

With his biggest political rival now behind bars, it looked like Jammeh was assured another comfortable victory like he had achieved in all his other previous campaigns. UDP selected an unknown member as its leader, Adama Barrow, who was a businessman without any previous political experience. Where Darboe had failed previously to work with other opposition parties to form a coalition, Barrow's appointment cleaned the slate and allowed opposition parties to finally join forces. Barrow was elected as the leader of the coalition and their campaign was heavily supported by a well-resourced and large diaspora group. One key measure that the coalition and diaspora group adopted was the use of social media to get party messages out to the people in their communities. This allowed messages to be shared easily — everybody in Africa has a smartphone — and whole villages would meet under Baobab trees to listen to them. On 1 December 2016, the Coalition won with 43.3% to 39.6% and, surprisingly, Jammeh graciously conceded defeat.



Gregor O'Gorman with his wife, Jana Sillen, and son Nima, enjoying family time in Portugal.

This, however, was short-lived and eight days later Jammeh rejected the results and called for new elections. This began the political impasse which lasted until 21 January 2017, when international pressure and military forces of the Economic Community of West African States on the border between Senegal and The Gambia finally convinced Jammeh that his life as a dictator was over. During the political impasse, he managed to build on his already sizeable wealth by raiding the government's coffers, leaving the incoming government with an estimated one billion USD debit. Jammeh fled initially through Guinea Conakry but is now the guest of a like-minded leader and dictator, Teodoro Obiang, who has been president of Equatorial Guinea since 1979. Human Rights organisations support the current Gambian government's desire to bring Jammeh to justice. These things take a long time but with Jammeh being only 53 years old there is a belief amongst victims

and victims' families that they will see justice.

The 'New Gambia' has a lot of healing to do and is on the right track with changes to its legislation, institutions and infrastructures. Nobody is under any illusions that the task at hand will be easy — this is still Africa, and some people in positions of power still put their own interests ahead of those of their nation. But there is plenty of international support for the New Gambia. A recent donor conference in Brussels saw pledges amassing to €1.45 billion. There is real optimism that the country can get it right and it can really become a place that reflects their tourism slogan, *The Smiling Coast of West Africa*.



# Stories - Karma Cola

We hear from Chris Morrison (1974-1978) - co-founder of New Zealand's leading provider of organic drinks. Starting with Phoenix Juices, Chris shares some of his history in the industry and his ideas for how corporate social responsibility can work for any business.

Starting with the import of bananas from Samoa, Chris Morrison helped co-found the company, almost ten years ago, that eventually evolved into a fairtrade company called All Good Organics. Once they knew the fair trade game well, they got back into the beverage industry and Karma Cola was launched.

Working for the first year with very little capital and no prior knowledge of the banana industry, a re-evaluation was eventually necessary. With that, came a shift to importing bananas from Ecuador and becoming the first New Zealand importer to gain Fairtrade certification. Following a similar framework to learning from the banana industry in Ecuador,

partnerships were established for Karma Cola in Sierra Leone. Since this is where the cola nut was going to be sources, it was important to support the communities growing it, so that they could share in the growth of the business.

To Chris and his partners, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not just about giving money. It means understanding the true impact of supply chain, and building deep relationships with suppliers. Rather than simply going to a broker to buy cola nuts, they took the time to learn about their communities and to listen carefully to them. It was the opposite of being patronising or saying "here's the money, see you later." They asked what was needed to be

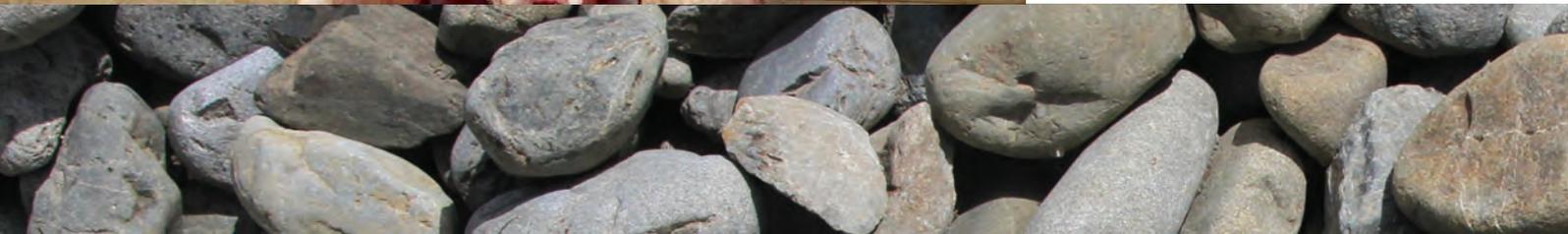
sustainable and how they could help achieve that.

Chris feels their primary motivation behind becoming an ethical business was pretty obvious.

*"I've grown up like this - buying organic, eating vegetarian, looking for ethically driven companies while shopping. The fruit business especially has been dominated for so long by big corporates, and it really has been so detrimental for growers. The margins are so tiny, and the industry is so focused on profit, so no one is really thinking about the impacts this culture will have for future generations. We were interested in whether or not we could reasonably do something to help change the industry as a smaller business in New Zealand."*

Choosing which causes or projects to align with was the result of careful consideration, including whether they worked overseas or in New Zealand.

*"There's a place for everybody, and New Zealand certainly needs a lot of help too," he says. "We always support local ethical businesses or charities with bananas and drinks where we can, but we wanted to work with Sierra Leone and Ecuador because they're facing the same problems we are, and we're in a good position to be able to help. Kiwis eat a lot of bananas and they drink a lot of cola, so it's on us to be a part of the solution too. These are global problems we're facing."*





As a result, he describes Karma Cola as an holistic business rather than simply a social enterprise or not for profit company. And he feels that, ultimately, there is nothing at all wrong with doing well and making a profit. A holistic business is certainly about sharing those rewards too.

There are other businesses to admire in the CSR space these days. Chris cites Patagonia as an amazing business that looks at the whole process from end to end, with a particular focus on the end of life process for their products. They help their customers to mend and repair their goods, rather than just throw them away. Closer to home, Green & Blacks chocolate, Nature Baby and Little Yellow Bird are all companies he really admires.

He also doesn't believe that CSR is dependent on the size of the company, saying,

*"Even a café like Kokako here are able to go over and meet their growers face to face. CSR should grow with a company."*

He does feel there is room for New Zealand to improve its CSR culture.

"We'd like to see all businesses be ethical. But to see that shift, other companies have to see the success of companies like ours first. It's really important that we celebrate the success of ethical businesses, so you can see that

it can be good business too. It's not just about giving, it's about doing well too."

He is aware that some critics were skeptical they would be able to charge an extra dollar per bunch of bananas and make a success of it. However, he is steadfast in his view that by paying more for goods like food, they can ensure that growers are being paid fairly, and that the premium is going back to help the communities determine what they want to develop next. He does believe that the culture in New Zealand is changing but there is still a way to go.

Chris believes that the main thing for companies thinking about developing community partnerships is that they have to be committed and passionate. Ethical businesses often have narrower margins because they're paying more for their raw goods, he says, and they're in competitive industries.

*"It's not always easy so if you're only half-interested – don't do it! It can be really rewarding though if you do have the staying power."*

He also stresses the importance of getting advice.

*"We're not experts in community development and we don't pretend to be, but we do have a great network*

*of advisors around us between the fairtrade groups, the NGO we work with on the ground in Sierra Leone, and different business advisors. New Zealand business people tend to be really generous with their time too – so ask for help and you're likely to get it."*

For now, Karma Cola is doing great work and is focused on continuing that. They work with eight communities and are focused on helping in the area of girl's education. Often boys get to go to school in Sierra Leone, but if money is tight then it's usually the girls that will miss out. They see it as the easiest way to create change at a large scale. For the foreseeable future, they will keep doing that and scaling their impact in this region.

*You can read more about Karma Cola and their work over at their website, [karmacola.co.nz](https://karmacola.co.nz), and you can also follow their story on Facebook or Instagram.*

Adapted and re-printed with permission from <https://stepchangers.org/smalltalk/karmacola>



# Stories - Rocket Man

As an up-and-coming engineer in the aerospace field, Matthew Furkert (2012-2016) has already made his mark through rocketry projects and competitions at the University of Canterbury.

**M**atthew has been building devices since his college days at Rathkeale, one of his favourites being a snow gun using compressed air and pressurised water. A degree in Mechanical Engineering was 'a natural fit' to further develop his knowledge and gain more engineering project opportunities.

Coming from the Wairarapa region, Matthew enrolled at UC with the Wairarapa Takahē UC Engineering Scholarship, which recognises promising Engineering students.

"As an internationally recognised University surrounded by stunning ski fields, mountains, and the ocean, it was not a hard choice," he says. "After attending the opening day and seeing brand new engineering and science facilities along with approachable academics, I knew that I would be well supported whilst learning in state-of-the-art facilities."

Staying at University Hall was a great way to get to know and settle into the student community for the first year.

"Every week there were social events which gave me the opportunity to meet new people from all over New Zealand. Many of these people were also studying Engineering so we could help each other out with our academic work."



Matthew Furkert is studying towards a Bachelor of Engineering with Honours in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Canterbury.

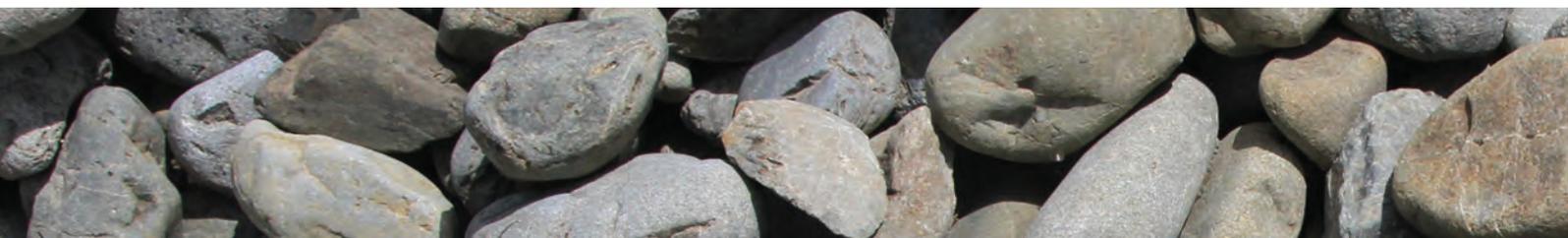
The practical focus of his studies was especially useful for connecting skills taught in lectures to the real world. Matthew recalls a series of field trips in his first year through UC's Electric Power Engineering Centre (EPECentre).

"This trip visited key power generation, distribution and consumption locations around the North Island. It was a worthwhile trip as I got an insight into what it takes to keep the lights running across the country, and the engineering feats that it took to build and maintain power stations such as Huntley."

Even during his first year, Matthew was able to take part in a project building a resistojet rocket motor alongside a postgraduate student.

He is also participating in the 2018 Warman Design and Build Competition, where, if successful, he will get to represent UC at the finals in Sydney, Australia. Each year students create a robot that can successfully carry out a scenario in a course stage.

"I have found that there is always help available for academic work and that staff are willing to give advice for extracurricular projects such as rocket design," he says. "I am attaining a better understanding of how machines in the world work and how to make them better. Also I am acquiring a foundation to solve problems that are not directly related to what we have been taught."



This idea inspired Matthew to become one of the founders for the University of Canterbury Rocketry Association (UCRA), and the current President. The club was created to give students the opportunity to take part in more aerospace activities on campus.

"As the leader of the club I organise events ranging from launch days to industry speeches and build-your-own-rocket challenges for over 70 members," he says.

Currently the club's exec team are working on an entry for the Australian Youth Aerospace Challenge for 2019. The challenge involves manufacturing a rocket that can carry a 4kg load up to 30,000 ft.

It's no surprise that Matthew's own career goals go beyond Earth's surface.

"After graduating from Canterbury I want to start up an aeronautical business which allows everyday people to send small objects and experiments into space. Eventually I would like to be one of the first colonists on Mars when people start travelling there!"

Matthew's also been largely involved with ENSOC events, entrée napkin challenges, and with UC Motorsport, turning their 2016 race car into a simulator for driver training.

"Getting involved with clubs will improve your leadership skills and doing extracurricular projects gives you the opportunity to use the skills you have learned during lectures," Matthew says. "If there is something that you are interested in and Canterbury doesn't currently offer it, start a club and chances are you will find many more like-minded people to develop your interest with."

His own interests outside of study involves as much tinkering and activity as possible.

"Most of my spare time is spent building rockets, fixing and racing cars and skiing over the winter months. Over the past few months I have been part of a team optimising a car for a 24 hour race at Hampton Downs."

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## Kersten Portrait Unveiling



Willy and Ali Kersten unveil the new portrait as Grant Harper (ROBA) and Stephen Allwood (artist) look on.

**W**airarapa artist Simon Payton's portrait of founding Headmaster, John Norman, commissioned by Mary and Dennis Griffin of Wellington, began a tradition at Rathkeale which continues through to the present day. At Rathkeale we are fortunate to be constantly watched by the discerning eyes of all six of the College's past Headmasters or Principals. They represent the work of three different artists and discreetly chronicle the history of the past 55 years. When the time came earlier this year to place Mr. Kersten's portrait on the wall alongside his predecessors, the Board commissioned another well-known artist to compliment the growing collection.

Stephen Allwood attended St Joseph's College, one of the predecessors to Chanel College. Soon after leaving school he received widespread acclaim for his stunning painted interior of the Greek Orthodox Church on Paierau Road. The church, along with much of his early work, was influenced by his Roman Catholic upbringing and often features saints and icons. Since completing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Ilam School of Art at Canterbury University, Mr Allwood has held numerous solo shows and features work in many public and private collections both in New Zealand and abroad. Now resident in Martinborough, he has turned his attention to everyday objects, people, animals and, as his recent Aratoi exhibition so magnificently illustrated, food and crystal.



# Obituaries

It is with sadness that we acknowledge the passing of the following Old Boys and staff this year.

## Max Mabin

*Staff 1966-1985*

Max Mabin, who joined Rathkeale staff in the College's formative years, was to become a legendary member of the College community. He was Housemaster of Cranleigh House from 1966-1974 and is credited with developing a warm, friendly and enduring atmosphere.



From 1966-1977 he coached the 1st XV and, despite being a small school at the time, the quality of the teams he coached over those years was to establish, in large part, the Rathkeale sporting tradition. Later, he turned his focus to other codes: he established

shooting, coached cricket, assisted with pentathlon and, significantly, remained Head of Rugby for many years.

He was HOD Geography, and many Old Boys will remember his anecdotes of cycling over the Swiss Alps with Olive or those interminable slides of the Australian Outback that come back from his term's sabbatical in Western Australia.

Other Old Boys will no doubt remember his puns or "Maxims" as termed by BGH.

"May I hold your Palmolive  
Not on you Lifebuoy  
Your lux out"

Max was at all times a loyal, reliable, supportive and gentlemanly staff member. Those qualities

continued following his retirement to Hawke's Bay and he and Olive were regular attendees at College events.

It was excellent that he was willing to unveil the plaque that records the renovation of Cranleigh House and that daughter Rachael was available to be a very obliging chauffeur when he needed to get back to school.

When MBM died earlier this year a range of Old Boys attended his service as a testimony to the high regard in which "Our Mate" was held.

## Nigel Boyes

*1973-1977*

We were saddened to learn of the death of Nigel Boyes on July 2, 2018. Nigel who was in Cranleigh House was remembered for his musical talent and was awarded Music Colours. His obituary mentions that at Rathkeale he was inspired by music mistress Faye Norman, joined in a wide range of musical activities - in the choir and as principle pianist with the College orchestra. In later life he was office manager at the Royal New Zealand Ballet and was described as a hugely competent arts administrator. He was also described by many as "best friend or at least, the most decent person they had ever met."



## Fred Lee

*Staff 1968-1994*

Fred, who died earlier this year, was both an early and long-serving member of the College staff.



Serving in the Middle East from 1948-1950, he then completed teacher training at Sheffield Training College. After marriage to Pat, followed four years at a co-educational boarding school in Swaziland before he returned to Hull, England, as HOD of Arts and Crafts.

He was a man with many skills, which were put to good use when he arrived at Rathkeale in Term 3, 1968. Not only was he TIC Technical Drawing but he also taught Maths, English, Remedial Reading, Social Studies, Science and Geography. He was also involved with soccer, swimming, lifesaving, book binding and detentions. His beyond school involvement included Masterton tennis, horses, model railways, home brewing and draughting and his family.

It was his draughting skill that was to the fore following retirement to Whangamata, where he set himself up in business drawing plans for extensions and garages.

Over the years, he and Pat, who served in the school library for many years, have been loyal supporters of the school. We extend our sympathy to Pat, their two daughters Janice and Margaret and to their extended family.

## Hugo Drummond

*HOD Music 2006-2008*

Sadly, Hugo died on 9th September 2018, aged just 41. He was at home in Raumati South, surrounded by his family.



Hugo studied Music in Wellington, and spent a number of years as a full time musician, before living in Japan and running an English language school. He was HOD Music at Kuranui, Greytown for two years. He was, for three years, an enthusiastic HOD Music at Rathkeale before heading to China, where for 10 years he worked as Principal of an International School. More recently, he returned to New Zealand and earlier this year became co-owner of the Raumati Social Club, a club with a strong music scene.

We have extended our sympathy to Hugo's extended family.

## Aidan Midgely

*1967-1971*

Aidan was one of three brothers who joined the College in its earliest days when a significant number of South Island boys followed E.J Norman north. Aidan was in Cranleigh and received colours for rugby, athletics and the pipe band.

After school he entered the Hotel and Hospitality Industry. Later he became a passionate cyclist and completed a number of cycling tours, which included La Bella Italia 2017.



He died in January this year in Busselton, Western Australia.



