



The Belmontian



CENTENARY VERSE

Here is Christian Arnold's additional verse to the School song, written especially for the Centenary and performed by him on Parents' Day.

On Belmont Parents' Day
We're here as one big family,
Each in our own way
Feeling pride amidst the cheers.
So ends our first
Centennial Anniversary -
Here's to our School
And the next one hundred years!

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Head's Report to the Old Belmontians March 2014

Our Centenary year ended last summer with a Garden Party on the Master's Lawn in a blaze of summer sunshine. Over one thousand parents, children and guests watched Mr Christian Arnold lower a time capsule into the ground where it will remain for at least 50 years. Mr Arnold who was a master at Belmont from 1984 to 2001 and wrote the School Song was our Guest of Honour at Parents' Day, held just prior to the Garden Party. He handed out prizes to the children and then gave an amusing talk to the assembled audience, concluding with a brand new verse to the song which you will find enclosed with this mailing.

After such an amazing year, you might think we would have felt rather flat returning to School in September 2013, but our spirits were lifted by the sight of the new building beginning to emerge from the large hole in the ground that was the old 'temporary huts'. Many OBs have followed the development of the building via a webcam sited on the back of the science block and Jubilee Building. Fortunately, the early start in March 2013 meant

the roof was on and the building weatherproof before the storms hit in December and January. The builders are now on target to complete the interior in time for the official opening on 4th July.

The building will be officially named 'The Michael Proctor Building' after the recent Chairman of the Court of Governors. Prof. Proctor is an eminent scientist in the field of astrophysics and, as the building will house two state of the art laboratories, his name will, I hope, inspire more Belmontians to consider the world of science as a possible career.

The building will be opened by another renowned scientist, Lord Robert Winston FMedSci FRSA FRCP FRCOG following Parents' Day at Mill Hill where he will present the prizes.

Many of you will know that the Foundation is to merge with The Mount School and we have been busy organizing for the girls to join us in September. We are accepting a large number into years 4, 6, 7 and 8 which will temporarily grow the School to over 460.



Two very long standing members of staff are retiring this year, Mr Pace and Mrs Ahmed. Mr Pace will have completed 25 years at Belmont, teaching history but also coaching Fives and basketball, running chess and history club and organizing and accompanying innumerable trips and visits both home and abroad. Mrs Ahmed completes 17 years' service this summer. She teaches French and Geography, accompanied the French Exchange trips to Rouen, runs the SATIPS General Knowledge Quiz and helped children get to grips with Italian and Knitting through the clubs. Both are dedicated and hard-working prep school teachers who will be sorely missed.

The children continue to perform well in all fields, an astonishing 32% of Year 8 having won awards to Mill Hill covering art, drama, music, DT, sports as well as two full academic scholarships and Exhibitions in Latin, Science, English and French. Hannah Beckett won a national design competition for 'a building inspired by nature'. She designed a potting shed inspired by a poppy pod using recycled materials with an aluminum frame (bottom right in the photo).

She won a fabulous 3D printer for the School and some pocket money for herself.

On the sporting front our U9 rugby team won through to the national Rugby Finals, finishing as runners-up in the Plate competition. The girls got through to the quarter finals of the County Netball Tournament, putting them as one of the top 8 schools in Middlesex. 63% of our hockey matches played in all age groups were won and the girls have a Hockey tour to Barcelona to enjoy during the Easter break.

In cross country five pupils have been selected to run for the Borough of Barnet.

Our charity events continue to remind the children how fortunate they are, with Year 8 organizing and running our Oti Day – over £1400 raised by them in one day.

House competitions last year were won largely by the Angles, so the other Houses have everything to play for this year. Competition is fun but keenly felt by the children especially in the number of commendations you need to be top in your House or in the School overall. The cups these days are going to holders of over 80 commendations in a term! You might think the children are working much harder – or perhaps the teachers are just too kind! 🐦

Editor's Letter

After resigning from this position last edition you may be surprised that due to circumstances I am still in the post. It is with some sadness that this Belmontian contains obituaries of two of our staunchest members, who are a sad loss to the Association and the whole community.

Belmont's Centenary year drew to a close in July 2013, culminating in an amazing garden party on Parents' Day and Centenary Ball. There are details of these and other events.

I am pleased to say a replacement has come forward to be the new Editor of "The Belmontian".



Bob Pace, (with whom I wrote the Belmont Centenary book), is retiring after being Head of History for twenty six years and has agreed to take on the role.

I am sure he would be very pleased to receive any articles or reminiscences. I wish him Good Luck in his new venture. 🐦

Lynda Mason

Bob Pace and Lynda Mason.

Obituaries

TRIBUTE TO TIM BUNYARD OLD BELMONTIAN

1955 – 1962



Tim Bunyard was born in 1949 and died on 4th January 2014. He arrived at Belmont in the summer term of 1955 following the break up of his parents' marriage. Tim came to love Belmont so much so that his only son, Simon, followed him there in 1987.

Tim often recounted that he first met Nigel Wray and Bob Rudd, who became lifelong friends, in the sandpit next to the air raid shelter, neither of which remains today. He also recounted times when he and the other boarders would roam the Belmont grounds for hours on end at weekends without any adult supervision. That certainly couldn't happen nowadays! Sunday evenings were spent in the headmaster's lounge happily playing chess.

Tim loved playing any kind of sport including rugby, football, cricket and tennis, to name but a few sports, whilst he was at Belmont. He was once told by a Belmont parent that he played football so well that he would end up playing for England! He also reached the boys' tennis final. Ironically the mother of his opponent had been asked to present the trophy as her son was expected to win but in typical Tim-fashion he managed to win the tournament to the embarrassment of the Belmont staff!

When his son, Simon, went to Belmont Tim spent many happy hours reliving his own days there and he loved nothing better than going along to rugby, football and cricket matches to encourage the

boys. On one occasion he joined the Belmont skiing trip and was a great help to some of the younger boys who were struggling. He also went to Jersey twice with the cricket and rugby teams which he enjoyed as much as the boys did! The boys loved his company although they didn't always understand what he was going on about.

In 1994 Belmont wanted to start the Old Belmontians' Club and Tim was asked to



chair this committee which he did for several years and was very heavily involved in its establishment and the early years.

After passing the Common Entrance exam Tim went on to Mill Hill School which he loved just as much as Belmont. Many of the friends he made at Belmont and Mill Hill remained friends until he died.

A memorial service was held in Mill Hill School Chapel, courtesy of Dr. Dominic Lockett, Headmaster of the Foundation, on Wednesday 15th January. The chapel was packed and Tim's family and many friends celebrated his life with a tribute from Nigel Wray, eulogy from Simon and readings by Oliver Bruh and David Holt with music from James Bond, Mamma Mia and The Sound of Music. A reception was held afterwards at Arkley Golf Club and it was a testimony to Tim's character that so many people attended to pay their respects and affection to such a popular Old Belmontian. 🐦

THOMAS JOHN WRIGHT 1921 - 2014

Belmont 1930 - 1934

John Wright was born in Mill Hill in 1921 and passed away on 9 January 2014, living in Mill Hill throughout for nearly 93 years.

He went to Belmont School in 1930, receiving a hand written letter from Rooker Roberts, the Headmaster, bidding him welcome. Starting in Belmont's Form II, his form master R. Chatterton introduced him to John Buchan, - starting with Prester John - after which he devoured all his novels very happily over the years. This clearly led to his life-long love of literature. Latin was with Bertie (H.E.) Ricks, who organised the Annual Roller Skating Carnival, the Chess Club and produced the School Play. Wilf (W.H.) Sobey, who taught him French in the early stages, was the England XV Scrum Half. Jock Air was his form-master of IVb and in charge of the Cricket. They played Soccer in the first two years, Rugger in the third and fourth years. For Soccer, he was in the school team and Captain at Centre Half in his second year; at Rugger, he was in the team at Full Back. He enjoyed Cricket best of all and was in 'the XI' for two years - Captain in his last year. There was much else to enjoy at Belmont - 'Five-stones' on the Chapel Wall, Bowls on the Lawn, Tennis to learn, Ping-Pong in the basement locker room - and then, in about 1933 - the Open Air Swimming Pool was built.

He had great respect for Rooker Roberts, "an idealist, - a natural leader, - artist, lover of animal life and all aspects of the natural world - plants, flowers and trees - especially the Cedars in the grounds - and the Hornbeams in the Belmont Woods".

John went on to Mill Hill School where again he thrived on many sports; he was thrilled to be awarded a House Tie for cricket in his first year and sang a treble solo in the choir at Christmas. Cricket, Rugger, Hockey, Tennis and Athletics were among the sports he loved. With other boys from the School, John joined Union Church, Mill Hill, in 1937. He also represented the School at the King's Camp in Balmoral. He was awarded a Choral Clerkship (or Scholarship) to Trinity College Cambridge, going up in October 1939. He sang frequently and joined various musical societies.

He joined the Royal Signals and became an officer; much of his service was related to the interception and de-coding of messages. By the end of his years of service in the UK, Italy and Austria he was a Major, commanding a Special Communications Unit, Italian detachment, receiving the 39-45 and Italy Stars. Immediately after the war, John completed his degree at Trinity College Cambridge.

In 1947 John joined his brother Billie and father Joe in the family business, at the same London premises, where his sons David and Stephen, nephew Robert and grandson William are still based today. He became a Liveryman of the Clockmakers Company in 1948.

In 1950 John married Mollie and made their home in Mill Hill. He was always so proud to show people around the garden, it gave him immense pleasure to work there, in all seasons.

As a Life Governor (now Guardian) of Mill Hill School, an Old Millhillian and an Old Belmontian, John was very attached to these schools all his life, actively involving himself in so many ways - very recently for example sharing his experiences with and answering questions from a group of Belmont pupils. His sons William, David and Stephen, and grandsons, all attended Belmont and Mill Hill School.

"The Church which grew from a School", is the title of a pamphlet he produced in 2007 detailing the historical links between Mill Hill School and Union Church, Mill Hill, now Trinity Church, where John worshipped all his life assuming many roles, most recently as Director of Music and choir leader, to his last days. He also took a keen interest in the history of the non-conformist churches, involving himself and developing a great knowledge.

John loved spending time with his family and so very many friends. He leaves behind a great example for us. Many people have commented on his warm personality and inspirational character; as one writer put it, "his decency, his intellect, his integrity and his gentleness always shone through". 🐦

William M. Wright, with contributions from other family members and John Wright's own personal memoirs.

Old Belmontians' Day 2013

Old Belmontians' Day is always very special, a chance for old school friends to meet and also to return to a place many remember with great affection. This year was no exception, especially as it was part of Belmont's significant celebrations for the Centenary.

After coffee and the AGM, members attended the Chapel service, conducted by the Foundation Chaplain, Rev Richard Warden. The School Chapel Choir



*Old Belmontians' Day: 2013
Inspecting bricks in the Centenary Garden.*



*Old Belmontians' Day 2013.
"That's me there!"*

performed to perfection and the singing of the hymns was up to the usual rousing Old Belmontians' standard with old favourites of "He Who Would Valiant Be", "Jerusalem" and the Belmont School Song

Lunch provided by the School's catering staff was also at its usual excellent standard and it was a chance to catch up with friends and their families, while watching a DVD of the School's Centenary Service at the Westminster Central Hall.



After lunch it was an opportunity to look at Belmont's grounds and to visit the Centennial Garden. Members were able to identify their bricks, which are now all in place and were also impressed at how the garden's plants have flourished over the year. It has proved a very peaceful haven in the School grounds, with the striking sun dial feature. 🐦

Mr Wright meeting an old friend on Old Belmontians' Day 2013

New Start At Belmont

My life in the Mill Hill Foundation began at a rather unconventional time, in Year 6, as a Belmontian. Having never experienced such an inclusive school system before, I was amazed at how quickly I was accepted and welcomed into such a close-knit community. The lessons were thorough, the range of extra-curricular activities seemingly endless and of course the food amazing! The highlight of the year would easily have been the production of *Bugsy Malone* put together by Mr Ince, Mrs Russo and Mr Clement. Unfortunately trying to organise a massive number of rowdy eleven year olds, so that the play came off without a hitch, proved to be a gargantuan task; the second performance turned out to be more of an episode of *Casualty* than a party in Fat Sam's Grand Slam, with a broken nose and a gash that required stitches. Luckily the show itself went well.

A huge influx of new pupils at the start of Year 7 allowed friendship groups to expand, as well as massively improving both the sporting and creative talent in the school. The year was predominantly filled with adapting to Key Stage 3 work, a somewhat difficult leap.

However the pinnacle of my time in Belmont was without a doubt Year 8. Being at the top of the school meant that we were all endowed with new responsibilities but I was awarded the roles of Head Girl, House Captain of Saxons (the best house of course!) and Prefect. This role taught me how to be a leader and increased my confidence. Whilst all of this was going on, everyone was also preparing for, and I quote Mrs Alford 'the most intense period of exams in our lives' aka the dreaded Common Entrance. I remember well lining up outside Mr Pace's classroom, only to be given blank paper, the indicator of a coming essay, and the last period on Thursdays, with Mr Russo, otherwise known as exam practice. When the time came to sit in the gym, the majority of us had been so well-drilled that we felt we could handle anything; it paid off with many of us achieving outstanding results.

Had it not been for the dedication of the teachers none of us would have been prepared for the trials and tribulations of life at Mill Hill. Instead, their perseverance meant that we all settled in comfortably and I look forward to what might happen in the future of my Mill Hill career. 🐦

Caitlin Donovan 2009-2012

French Exchange

This year Belmont celebrated thirty years of the French Exchange with our friends at Institution Jean-Paul II in Rouen, formerly the Institution Join-Lambert. No doubt many Old Belmontians took part either for a long weekend in what is now Year 6 or for a week in Years 7/8 and have retained memories of what was for many a first visit to a foreign country or even a first stay away from home.

We usually welcome our visitors in January and February, so the Belmont children have already had their partners to stay before their visit, which gives them an advantage.

This year Mrs Duncan travelled to Rouen during the Exchange and was welcomed along with other staff at a reception in the School and then an interesting visit to Fecamp to the Benedictine Abbey, followed by a celebratory meal.

The School gave Belmont a painted plate, in the unmistakable Rouen cracked glaze style to join our other souvenirs of Rouen, which are on permanent display in the Library.

This may have jogged some past Belmontians' memories of the Rouen Exchange and it would be good to hear of their experiences in the next newsletter. 🐦



Heads Lynn Duncan and Jean- Dominique Eude exchanging gifts at the French Exchange 30th Anniversary Reception



Mrs Margaret Thatcher attending a Parents' cricket match at Belmont when her son Mark was a pupil here.

John Wright

John Wright was a great supporter of Belmont and the Old Belmontians. One of his last visits to the School was a Question and Answer session with the History Club. They were fascinated by his recollections of life at Belmont in the 1930s.

In 1997 John Wright spoke at The Old Belmontians' Chapel Service on the theme of Thankfulness, some of which is printed below and is still relevant today.

THANKFULNESS

The common thread in the presence of each one of us here today can be summed up in one word- THANKFULNESS- thankfulness and thanksgiving to God.

We come back as visitors – and yet we feel that we belong – and we are made welcome.

Thankfulness wells up in us because we - or someone else close to us, - once received, through parents or guardians, - the key to the gates of Belmont, -

giving us a place among the community here in our time, for a few precious years.

To be an “Old Belmontian” – you can be in your early teens or your late 80s, - but whenever your span of years here fell, over these past eighty years or so, your memories of that time will still be vivid, and incidents during those years of boyhood will have influenced you deeply and fashioned your thought and actions in your subsequent lives. It will have been happening in the lives of the boys and girls here now.

So we share THANKFULNESS on many counts, but I want to touch on three aspects:

First- Thankfulness for the people who have guided this School – Thankfulness for the Natural Beauty of this place – and Thankfulness for people with VISION. 🐦



Mr John Wright with Belmont History Club

Belmont's Centenary

Celebrations for Belmont's centenary continued after the magnificent Centenary Service at the Westminster Hall. Year 6 produced a dramatic celebration of the past one hundred years. In the Year 7 House plays the Jutes engaged everyone with "The Long Lunch" telling the history of school lunches at Belmont over the last one hundred years. In Art every pupil immortalised themselves by making a clay tile self-portrait, which is now on show in the School.

In July the whole School was present at the planting of a commemorative red oak on the Master's lawn. Parents' Day was an important occasion when Lynn Duncan recalled all the many and varied activities of the past year. The Guest of Honour was Christian Arnold, a past Master of the School and composer of the School song. This was followed by a magnificent garden party, held on the Master's Lawn, to which the whole School and parents were invited. Guests

were entertained by a jazz band and after a delicious barbeque the Centenary Time Capsule was put into place in the Centenary Garden by Christian Arnold and David Short, Chairman of the Old Belmontians. Pupils of the School had suggested ideas for inclusion in the capsule, including letters to future Belmontians.

The final event of the Centenary was a Ball on the Master's Lawn. The organising committee worked very hard to contact many past parents of the School and it was a fitting ending to a very memorable year.

The Friends of Belmont, who have supported the School and local charities for many years have marked the Centenary with a special gift of a bench, to be installed in the playground, near the new building. 🐦



The Belmont Centenary Ball Committee.

Belmont's First Girls

I joined Belmont in Autumn 1995 with eleven other girls, the first such intake in the School's history. On the School website's history page there is a photo of the twelve of us sitting on the wall in front of the Chapel. While I do remember having to line up together and smile for this photo, (the boys had to stay inside the classroom and continue with their lesson), what I do not remember is whether we were aware at the time how significant this new chapter in the School's history was, or the change that we represented for Belmont. I, for one, was simply starting at a new school, albeit one with far fewer girls than my local primary school.

We had joined as part of an otherwise standard Year Three entry, were part of mixed classes, and had female teachers, so it didn't really seem that strange that there were only twelve of us. The year after, more girls joined the school in Year Three, and then an older entry at Year Seven so we were no longer the only female contingent in the school. In fact, it was probably the older (male) pupils in the school who found it most challenging when girls first arrived at Belmont. Clearly we were an exotic addition to school life, and might need looking after!

However, the boys soon got used to having us round. Swapping animal stickers, joining handball and marbles were popular break pastimes. The choir gained female voices; there was more potential variety, and indeed less drag, in school plays;

and, of course, girls' sport began at Belmont. It did, however, take a little while for the Games Department to finalise what sports we should actually play. I remember at least one games lesson in which Mr Selwood taught us all, boys and girls, how to bowl over-arm, so cricket was clearly on the shortlist. Eventually though, netball, hockey and rounders were decreed the main sports for girls, and given our successes in these thereafter, this decision was no doubt to the detriment of the boys' cricket teams. Although our squads were small, our teams were very well-practised: when there are not many of you, you all have to play!

A good number of us twelve who started at Belmont also went on to Mill Hill afterwards, and so are now Old Millhillians as well as Old Belmontians, proving that we were true Foundation girls. Some found lasting friendships, others met one another again at university, and we have gone on to lead diverse lives and careers. I read English Literature at degree level, and now work in the publishing industry, a career path that may well have been influenced by those rainy lunchtimes in Belmont's library. Nonetheless, whatever we twelve are doing now, it is fair to say that the pioneering spirit and inclusivity Belmont showed in admitting us set a positive example for us to follow in our lives. 🐦

Frances Winfield

1995-2001

The Pen Is Mightier Than The Sword

In my third form classroom, circa 1949, each desk had a small porcelain inkwell, which fitted into a hole in the desk, into which we dipped our pens.

The thing about ink is that you can't erase it. There was a classroom bottle of ink, with which to refill the inkwells, but I suspect the teacher kept it under tight control.

So then there was the matter of *nibs*. On Saturday afternoons we were set free to travel down to the Vill, as it was called, with a shilling to spend. A couple of pence went for the bus. A couple more for sweets. Maybe sixpence more for marbles, paper airplanes, and other essential equipment. And then a penny or two for nibs, of which a great variety was available.

The pen was also, like the rulers we needed for geometry, a weapon. It was deployed to launch small bits of paper, moistened into a ball, and for which we doubtless had a special name, now, sadly, unremembered. The ideal target was a nearby ear. The object was to launch the projectile without the teacher noticing, and to make the victim jump. Again, I am sorry to say that I cannot recall whether there was a specific attack protocol involved, or whether the missile was launched merely in virtue of the proximity of the ear. 🐦

Richard Stack




Centenary tour to the Lake District

As part of the Centenary celebrations in May 2013 a party of Year 7 and 8 pupils visited the Lake District. The aim was to visit some places where Belmont and Mill Hill were evacuated during the war. Arrangements had also been made to play rounders and cricket matches against local opposition and for the group of artists a chance to capture the ambience of the Lakes.

Unfortunately for the sporting teams pitches were either unfit for use or under water but alternative arrangements were made for indoor rounders. For the cricketers only one match was possible on astro turf and St Bees School were able to offer an indoor session.

The tourist visited St Helen's at Cockermouth, which was home to Belmont during the Second World War. It is now a caravan site and the house is the main



administration area and clubhouse. The party was given a warm welcome and Mr Pace was able to add background to the site. The family living at the Lodge, which had housed older boys, also met the party. At St Bees pupils were able to see the Old Millhillians' memorial window 



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