



Old Oswestrian Society AGM Minutes  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2011  
Wynnstay Hotel, Oswestry

Meeting commenced at 6.15 p.m.

1. Welcome from the Chairman, remarking that it was especially pleasing to see many new faces!
2. Present: Douglas Robb, Phil Bowd, James Bain, Andrew Rogers, Gill Thomas, Liz Hindmarch, Jenny Stevenson, Sian Boffey, Clare Bebbington, Rebecca Evans, George Paspaspyridis, Ian Shepherd, Dave Sides, Paul George, Hazel Yates, Katherine Yates, Tony Furnival, Robin Parker, Alan Stratford, Andrew Leggatt, Linda Bailey, Roger Ward, Graham Arthan, Robin Clayton, Michael Longshaw, Alasdair Wilson, Peter Edwards, Roger Morgan, Douglas Jones, Ken Stephens, John Parslew, Bev Croft, Eddie Chapman, Colin Smith, Alston Kennerley, Peter Wilcox-Jones, Bruce Morgan, Stephen Hodge, Martyn Jones, John Evans and Tim Turner  
  
40 attendees
3. Apologies: Colin & Ann Chapman, Syd & Brenda Bailey and Ian Wilson
4. Deaths:  
Sigi Faith  
Bernard Martin  
Martin Thorpe  
George Fulcher  
John Jones  
Mike Higgins  
Fiona Gittins  
Philip Kyffin Richards  
Nick Newman Carter  
Peter Vasey
5. Minutes of Previous Meeting  
Proposed: Peter Edwards Seconded: Peter Wilcox-Jones.
6. Matters Arising  
Tax Status of Society: Short discussion with led by Peter Wilcox-Jones, Andrew Rogers, is the OOS there to support & assist the Charitable status of the School, is it a fellowship?
7. Chairman's Report: thanks for all the committee for their hard work, support, in particular Treasurer Martyn Jones for his dedicated service, Tim Turner Secretary and Mike Longshaw our President. Mike organised an OO London dinner at The Caledonian Club and hopefully a springboard to re launch a regular London event. Thanks to Hazel Yates, for hard work on behalf of The Society and The School and Douglas Robb for

their support. Thanks to Sian Boffey and Darren Hollingsworth for organising the sporting Events and Zak Manhire for running this year's football elevens. Thanks to Rob Willcox for organising the annual golf day, about 50 players played at Oswestry Golf Club. Stuart Williams' team won Men's and Barbara Warner's Ladies event.

Headmaster's vision re organization / administration of OO Society  
Society has thus far relied on Volunteers, now the School is in much better financial position it is able to provide a full-time administrator for the OOS. A new OO coordinator has been appointed, able to function with modern media, coordinate events, sport etc. A positive move forward. The £50-00 joining fee was briefly discussed.

8. Treasurer's Report: £10,500 balance, moves to find an account with better interest. Last year's dinner a great success. Golf Tournament a great success, a profit of £347-00. Merchandise: 8 dozen crates of Scholars Ale remain; 10 ties. London Dinner: a small sponsorship of £150-00 received making a small profit for the occasion. Short discussion about last year's ticket prices, followed by a proposal by Alasdair Wilson that the dinner be moved to the Peter Humphreys Centre: better engagement with the school, the use of the abundance of local produce, a more profitable idea? A show of hands was asked for and a positive response received.
9. Election of President: Alasdair Wilson proposed as new President; proposed by Stephen Hodge seconded by Martyn Jones.
10. Future OO Events  
Scheduling and format: A lively discussion regarding the moving of Founders Day, The OO annual Dinner, Sporting Events was held. Firstly the Chairman gave a brief introduction and background to what the situation is:  
This is the main business of the evening and within the last couple of months I have been approached by several OOs who are not happy about this and feel that moving the date is riding rough shod over tradition. Also they feel annoyed that they have not had any consultation during the process.

Before this is opened to the floor I would like to give a little background and perhaps explain how we have got to the current situation.

I think this matter has rumbled on the backburner for a number of years and probably the success of the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary events in the summer of 2007 perhaps showed many people how well a summer event could possibly be supported. This set against perhaps dwindling support for events at the traditional November date might have been a catalyst for change.

In 2009 there was a proposal from the floor at the AGM to explore the possibility of moving to another time of year. I consulted with Paul Stockdale, the then headmaster and he, did not wish to move. The committee felt that it was important to support the school and to fit in with its wishes.

I must stress that whilst we are all Old Oswestrians that in many ways The Founder's Day Service and various OO sporting fixtures against Oswestry School are events that are for use of a better word 'owned' by the school...and we as OO's are in attendance as guests of the school. The Dinner is an OO Event but it seems rather silly to separate them. We can perhaps request and suggest but we have no business organising the school calendar.

When Douglas Robb took over as head the society reiterated its position that it would support The School wishes regarding Founder's Day and associated events and at last year's AGM it was decided to move events to late September...as this was the wish of

the school and the principle had been agreed at the 2009 AGM. This was not possible as dates / hotels etc were booked for 2011 so any change could not happen until 2012.

This is very much where we are now.

I have done a little research into OO Events which will perhaps give a little historical background.

The time of the year that Founder's Day is celebrated is to coincide with the dedication of the school chapel on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1863 (by that time both famous OOs Spooner and Burnaby had left the school).

1st March 1882, St David's Day, that the first Old Oswestrian Dinner was held at Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street. (There are mentions of several other London dinners at similar times of year...but of nothing similar in Oswestry)

1930's The OO Dinner became an annual event held at The Wynnstay Hotel at the end of The Christmas term with a dance held the night afterwards at The Victoria Rooms. A London dinner was held on the Saturday after Easter

Finally the School Hymn which many of us will be singing later this evening .....it was composed by Rev L J T Darwall in 1896!

A school as old as Oswestry has undergone huge changes in its history. Recent significant changes or breaks with tradition would include girls admitted for the first time in the early 1970's, no longer lessons on Saturdays, Greek no longer taught or children beaten. Most / all of these changes have broken significantly with established tradition however reflect the need for the school to adapt for the current times and circumstances. Yes we must be mindful of tradition but we certainly should not be hamstrung by tradition...

Peter Wilcox-Jones was the first to speak, pointing out the dwindling dinner attendees. James Bain offered a general perspective of many of the younger generation, that traditionally Founders Day is a marker in the sand, OOs come and meet other OOs The Dinner is irrelevant. A change of the style was mentioned to attract the huge untapped OO network. Andy Rogers felt the dinner could happen anytime, not necessarily on OO weekend/Founders Day. Stephen Hodge spoke of previous attempts, notably by Joy Griffiths organising a dinner at the Walls, hoping to attract the younger generation with gigs and pop music as part of the weekend, but it had not been very successful.

Gill Thomas who has started a Facebook page opposing the moving of Founders Day stated the move had stirred up a new dialogue, the move be detrimental to OOs who would be busy at this time of year, such as harvesting farmers etc; recent leavers would have little news for each other. It was inappropriate that the AGM should be held prior to the Dinner, this should change. The dinner should not be a benchmark for the success of the OO weekend. We come to meet old friends. Linda Bailey commented, it's the 3<sup>rd</sup> time she had attended the Dinner, always great fun, but not enough ladies, and more needs to be done for the 2012 event, celebrating 40 years of female pupils at Oswestry School.

Bruce Morgan restated how the proposed change had come into fruition; it was an idea first aired in 2008, proposed last year, it has had a year for people to debate. He finished by stating that it is worth giving it a try.

Sian Boffey voiced her concern over the difficulty of raising ladies sports sides for the OOs November weekend however she felt strongly that Founders day should stay in November.

James Bain summed up, move the date of the dinner, no objection, leave sports & church service as before. George Papaspyridis why have a dinner in London. Stephen Hodge historically the dinner was held in Manchester, also the Wirral. He finished by stating the older members need to be working to appeal to the younger members. Andy Rogers agreed that the process needed taking forward.

11 Any other business  
NONE

AGM finished by 7.09p.m.