



THE WELLENSIAN ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report on the past year to the Annual General Meeting on 22nd June 2019

The Committee

Your Committee has been this year:

President	Alwyn Gillen
Chairman	George Bunting
Vice Chairman & Secretary	Lizzie Crumlish
Treasurer	Julian Philpott
Sports Organiser	Mike Murton
Secretary, WCCA	Chris Seaton
Lead, Wellensian Connections	Suki Adams
Hong Kong Representative	Wallace Yip
London Events Organiser	Hannah Wheeler
Wells Events Organiser	Dan Gosden
Social Media Organiser	(Vacancy)

We have also warmly welcomed, ex officio:

Head	Mr. Alastair Tighe
Alumni Officer	Rebecca Roberts
Head of Sixth Form	Mrs. Sally Rowley
Head Boy (or representative)	Tom Taunton
Head Girl (or representative)	Maddie Perring

We have met in September 2018 and March & June 2019 to review progress.

Achievements

1. People

We were very pleased to welcome to the Committee;

- Mike Murton (OW 2013) as *Sports Organiser*. Mike has organised hockey, netball and (with George Laing) cricket vs the School and
- Hannah Wheeler (OW 1988) as *London Events Organiser*. Hannah will be reviewing our February event. This has been held successfully at the RAF Club in London for twenty years but costs have now risen and it is worth considering if it is time for a change.

and;

- Suki Adams (existing Committee Member) has moved from *Social Media Organiser* to *Lead, Wellensian Connections*. Suki did a great job with our Facebook Group (now 2,075 members) and is keen (as a female pilot working in an overwhelming male profession) to work with the School to provide support and mentoring for current students.

There have also been changes to School staff;

- We were delighted to welcome the new Head Master, Mr. Alastair Tighe to his first meeting

of the Association in September 2018.

- Mrs. Alexandra Hemming (Head of Development) left in December 2018
- Rebecca Roberts (OW & Foundation Finance Officer) was on maternity leave from January to June 2019. We are pleased to see her return.
- Mrs Laura Williams (Foundation Associate) has been the part time alumni point of contact during Rebecca's absence.

We remembered an OW from the Great War on the centenary of his death:

- Evan Harte Davies (OW 1912) 12th Bn., Gloucestershire Regiment, died 14 October 1918, aged 24.

2. AROPS

The Chairman has continued to serve on the committee of the Association of Representatives of Old Pupils' Societies (AROPS). This provides valuable comparative insights into different ways to re-engage alumni/ae.

3. Communications and Social Networking

Database and Website

We share a database with the Foundation on the InTouch platform. During the year various options to replatform this and the Association's website were considered but all alternatives would have involved a significant increase in cost. The Association's main objectives for any change are;

- A single platform for both the back end (database) and front end (website).
- Greater privacy options for published news of OWs.
- Opportunity to add new functionality to the website.

InTouch offered to provide a new website which met much of this need free of charge and so this option has been taken. The new Association website will go live on 2nd July 2019.

Mailouts

We are grateful to Becks Roberts and Laura Williams for the professional way in which they have consulted with the Association about content, design and sending out of bimonthly emails to OWs. This remains our primary channel for communicating with members even though our reach is very incomplete.

We have an active email address for 2,992 (58%) of our 5,116 members on the database (a small reduction from last year, possibly due to publicity surrounding GDPR). We do all we can to persuade OWs to allow us to retain their details and to augment and update email addresses.

Facebook

We now have 2,075 members in our Facebook Group and very active posting. Many of the 2018 leavers have joined though increasingly Facebook is not a social network used by young people.

Website

We have continued a weekly blog post about an OW, this has now run for 390 weeks without exception and from 2nd July 2019 will be readable (including previous postings) only with a password or within our closed Facebook Group. We encourage OWs to send news of themselves for this blog.

Linked In

A trickle of OWs continue to join our group (now with 474 members) but it has not proved

possible to sustain a dialog of posts.

4. Sports

The annual OWs vs School Cricket match remains our highlight feature and we played Mens' hockey (3-3 draw) and Ladies' hockey (1-0 win to OWs) vs the School in March.

5. Wellensian Connections

We continue to offer assistance in careers contacts and we are pleased to hear that this is planned to receive an increased focus at Wells next year.

6. London events

Our 2019 London dinner was held as usual at the RAF club at the kind invitation of Your President, Alwyn Gillen and attended by 60 OWs and guests, with a good turnout from the 2014 yeargroup, thanks to Yeargroup Ambassadors Jake Spooner and Kaiya Kim-Saville. Sadly some guests from Wells were unable to reach London because of Mendip snow.

Pub socials were held in December, March and June in London at *The Citie of Yorke* in conjunction with The Wells Foundation and were attended by staff from School who generously made the trip from Somerset to London. Attendance by OWs was variable but always better when favourite staff were known to be attending.

7. West of England events

In December 2018, Christmas drinks were held at Wells in association with a concert by the Wellensian Consort in St Cuthbert's Church which was much enjoyed.

At our Wells Dinner on 22nd June 2018 we are expecting 102 OWs, guests and staff with representation from 1949 to 2009 and with a good attendance from most of the decennial groups. There is also a full weekend of events for OWs including;

- Wells Cathedral High Parts Tours
- Tour of School
- Cricket OWs vs School 1st XI
- Hot Fuzz Tour of Wells
- Parents' Association Jazz Picnic on Cedars Lawn
- Piano Gala in Cedars Hall

We will be holding a 2019 'Welcome Reception for new Wellensians' at the end of Trinity term.

8. The Wellensian Association *Living Archive*

Our *Living Archive* records the shared experience that is the entire point of your Association.

We have continued to collect material as best we can from across the School for the benefit of future generations of our members and add this to your Association's indexed *Living Archive*. To date this contains over 33,000 pages of documents dating back to 1549.

We continue to think it a great shortcoming that Wells does not have a systematic retention policy for recording the life of the School. We have proposed and offered to fund a review by an experienced archive consultant to put such a policy in place at minimum inconvenience to staff. We hope that this review will proceed in Michaelmas term 2019.

We have been asked by the School for access to our archive but have declined to provide this until progress is achieved in systematically recording today's Wells story.

9. Other

- We have again funded the Y13 Yearbook which was well managed by editor Alanna Tibbs.
- We are pleased to maintain contact with OWs in Hong Kong, thanks to Wallace Yip.

- We are developing, in conjunction with SDS Group, an app called *WhoZatFace*. We expect this to be used by schools around the world (and eventually many other organisations and individuals) to securely crowdsource names in group photographs.

I am always pleased to hear from any member with thoughts or suggestions for how we can improve the value of the Association. Please email to chairman@oldws.org.uk.

George Bunting