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ASSOCIATION

# THE OLD RATCLIFFIAN

2021



EDITION XXIV

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### WHY? BECAUSE COMMUNITY MATTERS

The Ratcliffian Association's key aim is to maintain the sense of belonging that played a pivotal role in your time at the College. As an Old Ratcliffian, staying connected with Ratcliffe and your peers means not only having a community to call upon for friendship, advice, and support, but it also enables you to 'give back', maintaining this legacy for future generations.

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INTRODUCTION

## THE OLD RATCLIFFIAN MAGAZINE: YOUR FEEDBACK

We love to hear your comments about the *Old Ratcliffian* magazine, which we continually strive to improve. If you have any feedback, or a story you'd like to share in the next edition, please email us at [alumni@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffcollege.com). Here are some examples of the wonderful feedback that we received last year:

"I've just read your beautiful and lively magazine with great interest, rejoicing at how many interesting lives Ratcliffians lead and have led. Your texts and photos stirred many wonderful memories of Ratcliffe, which I really haven't thought much about over all these years. This mail is sent to congratulate you all on giving this reader at least four or five hours of fun, reading and reviewing those years and lives at the school, as well as finding out more about the Ratcliffe of today, which integrates the old school into modern life."

**Bill Tierney (63)**

"Having studied the last three editions of the *Old Ratcliffian* magazine, I am overwhelmingly sure that the spirit of Ratcliffe is still the same as it ever was. The smiles on everyone's faces in the photos, and even the text within, shine through, proving that the Ratcliffe spirit lives on."

**Philip Barry (62)**



## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Dear Old Ratcliffians,

I hope that you and your families are well and continuing to cope with all that COVID has thrown at us. It seems like only a moment since I last wrote to you, at the end of what had been an extraordinary year; in many ways, 2021 has been just as challenging, if not more so. However, there are many reasons for optimism, certainly as far as the Association is concerned.

As soon as they were able, Sarah Gretton and Katherine Lang set about organising Association events and filling our wonderful OR Bar with people, music, and laughter once more. We're hoping to do many more 'reunion-lite' events in the Bar, so if you want to meet up with friends for a good, old-fashioned Bar Night, then please get in touch. In fact, as I write this, we're planning our social calendar for the next 12 months, and we're already talking about something spectacular for next summer, so watch this space.

It seems to me that, as we emerge from such a long time of not being able to meet up with friends and family as and when we've wanted to, social events have adopted a more important role in our lives. We shouldn't take them for granted any more; we should grasp them at every opportunity - after all, socialising is one of the great joys of life. And it's something that we'll do everything we can to make happen. See you at the next event!

Finally, in my message in last year's magazine, I mentioned how proud I was that the Ratcliffian spirit was so clear and evident in the response to COVID, both in and out of school. This has continued unabated ever since. I'll give you an example. My sister, Louise, and I lost our beloved father back in June. It was a huge shock, and we miss him enormously. Four days after he died, I came to the Sixth Form Leavers' Mass, on the students' last day at school before they joined us all as Old Ratcliffians. I spoke briefly and mentioned what had happened to Dad, and how much he'd loved the school, both as a father and, later, as a grandfather. After the event, several of the young people present came up to me to express their condolences and to thank me for coming. It's that gentle, thoughtful decency and kindness that sets Ratcliffe apart. It proves that the Ratcliffe spirit is still strong. The school is in good hands.

And so, have a joyful and peaceful Christmas, and remember, if there is ever anything we can do to help you, you only have to call. We're always here.

**Ben Jackson (88)**

President of the Ratcliffian Association



## THE EDITOR'S COLUMN

A whole year on from writing my last update, there is a sense of déjà vu when I reflect on the past 12 months and the continued effect that the pandemic has had on the Association.

Having been able to host only one event during the 2020 Autumn Term, we were excited about the Spring and Summer Terms of 2021, being determined to provide a full and varied events calendar for our Old Ratcliffian community. Sadly, it was not meant to be, and the continuing restrictions that we faced as a nation forced us, again, to cancel all but two of our Association events. So, when we were joined by 15 ORs for our annual Reynard Trophy competition, it was a real joy to feel some small sense of normality once again, and a wonderful afternoon was relished by all. You can read more about the competition later in this magazine.

When all restrictions were lifted on June 21st, we grasped the opportunity to play the Grand Match, which has been a tradition for the Association and the school for so many years. Another fantastic sporting afternoon prevailed, rounding off the Summer Term and leaving us hopeful about the fate of the next term's events.

We kicked off the Autumn Term with a very different version of our annual OR Reunion, scaling this down to a simple Bar Night. The evening was a great success, and we were delighted to be joined by around 50 ORs - they made the most of our fantastic OR Bar, which has sat dormant for so very long! A full report is published in the Events section of this magazine.

We were also delighted to be able to support two school events this year: the Open Morning and the Careers Convention; for the latter, we were joined by a number of Old Ratcliffians who offered their time and expertise to inspire students in Years 9 to 13.

Now, as I write, we are just hours away from the Class of 2015 and 2016's reunion, and we look forward to hosting the Class of 1971's 50th anniversary event, as well as the annual dinner for the Past Presidents of the Association, to finish the year.

All in all, we feel very lucky to have experienced some normality in 2021, in what has felt like another turbulent year. We pray for a return to life as we know it in 2022 - a prayer which, I'm sure, is shared by the whole Ratcliffe community as we continue to navigate the aftermath of the pandemic. There is certainly light on the horizon...

**Sarah Gretton**

Ratcliffian Association Manager



## THE HEADMASTER'S INTRODUCTION

*"But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you." - Isaiah 43:1-2*

### REFLECT WITH GRATITUDE, LOOK FORWARD WITH HOPE

Dear Old Ratcliffians and friends of Ratcliffe College,

I wonder if, like me, you have been indulging in a bit of looking back to the way things used to be before COVID-19? The days when we could shake hands without feeling uncomfortable or asking first, travel abroad without fear of restrictions, quarantine, or testing on our return, or simply drop in on our friends and family with no notice, and not have to think about face coverings, social distancing, or the result of your most recent lateral flow test!

We all look back at times and, perhaps, we might have been reflecting more often and more deeply over the past few months, because of the pandemic. After the easing of lockdown rules in March 2021, the College was able to return to face-to-face lessons. However, restrictions in schools meant that the community still had to operate in year group bubbles, and with social distancing, with no large gatherings, such as assemblies or Masses. We all had to wear face coverings, too. Despite the restrictive routines, simply being back in school proved to be incredibly helpful to students and staff alike, particularly for our mental health, as we were able to socialise with one another and share our experiences of COVID-19 and our learning in a way that a computer screen could never replicate. Invariably, conversations at school among the students and teachers led to some reminiscing about the immediate past, pre-COVID-19. Indeed,

looking back at the way things were gave people an opportunity to consider what they missed most during those lonely lockdown days. What quickly became apparent was people's deep affinity for their school, the routines of the day, the week, the term, special events, and the wide array of opportunities that they once took for granted. Ultimately, what became apparent was people's gratitude for their friends, their teachers, and their lives at Ratcliffe.

It seems that our predisposition to look back and reminisce has been one thing that we have all adopted to help us cope with the solitude of lockdown and the inevitable isolation that many of us felt when we could not go to school or work. As always, some of the stories about school life and lockdown raised a laugh or two - happy memories of special occasions, such as the much-missed Immac celebrations, as well as Sports Days, and the Sixth Form Ball that was unable to happen! I'm sure that the idea of opportunities or experiences lost to COVID-19 will strike a chord with many of you, and your family experiences, too.

We can, so often, focus on the past, wishing that things hadn't changed, and looking back through rose-tinted spectacles. But, if we spend too much time looking back, we cannot see where we are, and then we stop going forward. I know that there have been many times over the past 18 months when it has not been easy for us to think of the future - such were the challenges of the here and now. However, as Christians, we can be reminded who we have with us on our journey in life. The verses on the previous page, from Isaiah 43, may provide us with comfort as we face the future.

God uses the words 'waters' or 'rivers' as a visual insight into the troubles we face. Not only does he promise to go through our hard times with us, but he also promises that we will be victorious after going through these challenges; we will come out on the other side with victory and strength.

The past 18 months have been, for most of us here at Ratcliffe, the most challenging experience of our lives so far. We have all had to be resilient, all had to adapt, and all required strength to help us cope with the trials that we have had to face: lockdown loneliness, face coverings, social distancing, working in bubbles, lack of socialisation, returning to school, assessments, teacher-assessed grades, and making sense of the 'new normal', whatever that means to us.

As the 2020-2021 academic year ends, may we all have the strength to look back and reflect with gladness and be thankful for the challenges that we have faced. Just as importantly, may we all have the strength to continue walking forward in faith for a hopeful, brighter future, especially if this is a daunting thought for many of us.

**Jon Reddin**  
Headmaster



## VALETE - CLASS OF 2021 CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S LEAVERS

Name	Destination	Course
Humzah Ali	University of Oxford	French
Lucy Antill	University of Edinburgh	Religious Studies and English Literature
Rosie Bartlett	Durham University	Computer Science
Jonathan Bellamy	University of Leeds	Computer Science with High-Performance Graphics and Games Engineering
Toby Blackmore	Leeds Beckett University	Business and Management
Elin Bowler Thorpe	University of Nottingham	Management (with Placement Year)
Kristian Brocksopp	Degree Apprenticeship with BBC	
Lauren Brown	University of Nottingham	Sport Rehabilitation
Sophie Brown	University of Leeds	Computer Science (Digital and Technology Solutions)
Julia Cai	UCL (University College London)	Education Studies
Molly Cai	UCL (University College London)	Media
Jeff Chan	University of Nottingham	Electronic and Computer Engineering
Max Chapman	University of Warwick	Chemistry with Medicinal Chemistry
Stan Chell	University of Bristol	Mechanical and Electrical Engineering
Ben Chilton	University of Kent	Forensic Science (with Professional Placement)
Aimee Cleminson	University of Southampton	Politics
Jenson Curtis	Nottingham Trent University	Professional Policing
Harry Cusack	University of Sheffield	History and Modern Languages and Cultures
William Daly	University of Plymouth	Zoology
Rebecca Davies	University of Exeter	Zoology
Alex Davison	Degree Apprenticeship with Cummins (Engineering)	
Josh Davison	Applying in 2022	
Ella de Caestecker	Sheffield Hallam University	Digital Marketing
Rishi Desai	University of Bristol	Economics
Scarlett Duckett	Newcastle University	Food Business Management and Marketing
Jordan Fok	UCL (University College London)	Urban Planning and Real Estate
Abigale Griffin	Sheffield Hallam University	Education Studies
Archie Heaney	University of Bristol	Civil Engineering
Daniella Hendry	University of Edinburgh	History
Eva Hluchan	University for the Creative Arts	Fashion Atelier
Sophie Holehouse	Direct Employment	
Finley Hollington	University of Nottingham	Health Sciences (with Foundation Year)
Hadia Hussain	Applying in 2022	Law
Krishnan Jivanji	Durham University	Accounting and Finance
Miya Khan	Liverpool John Moores University	Events Management
Aled King	Applying in 2022	
Xihe Lai	University of Surrey	International Business Management
Rebecca Lindley	Newcastle University	Marketing and Management
Maddy Lindop	Nottingham Trent University	Law
Yasmina Lock	University of Lincoln	Biomedical Science
Eryn Lowe	University of Nottingham	Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience
Angie Lui	Royal Agricultural University	Bloodstock and Performance Horse Management (with Placement Year)
Guy Mills	Nottingham Trent University	Real Estate
Annabel Mills	University of Nottingham	Economics
Kiki Ng	University of Hong Kong	Architecture Studies
Ihuoma Osuji	University of Southampton	Medicine
Tom Page	Cardiff Metropolitan University	Sport Coaching
Jayden Patel	London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London	Actuarial Science
Eisha Patel	Newcastle University	Economics and Business Management
Dhruvil Rajpara	UCL (University College London)	Engineering (Mechanical)
Nikhil Rajpra	University of Nottingham	Chemical Engineering (with Industrial Year)
Anuj Savani	University of Nottingham	Sport and Exercise Science
Samuel Seidu	University of Manchester	Pharmacy
Samantha Seidu	Newcastle University	Journalism, Media and Culture
Eleanor Shaw	University of Bath	Sport and Exercise Science (with Placement)
Joseph Stamp	University of Liverpool	Geography
Lily Stevenson Ward	University of Exeter	Marine Biology
Emma Turner	Nottingham Trent University	Forensic Science
James Turner	Nottingham Trent University	Interior Architecture and Design
Alexander Tysza	University of Leeds	Mechanical Engineering
John Wells	Nottingham Trent University	Business Management and Entrepreneurship
Emily Wetton	University of Warwick	Biochemistry
Isabella Whalley	University of Bristol	Social Policy
Molly Whitaker	Nottingham Trent University	Business Management and Entrepreneurship
James Wilson	University of Southampton	Aeronautics and Astronautics (with Industrial Placement Year)
Joshua Wong	Nottingham Trent University	Business
Megan Wright	University of Exeter	Business and Management (with Year Abroad)
Tina Zhang	University of Leeds	Business Management



## CLASS OF 2021: A LEVEL RESULTS

In the face of the disruption caused by the pandemic, Ratcliffe College students have reaped the rewards of their collective resilience, achieving excellent A Level results. Although their examinations were cancelled this year, almost all students have successfully achieved their first-choice offers on coveted courses at top-ranking universities.

Headmaster Jon Reddin commented: "These students have shown incredible character over the past two years, and they fully deserve their success. They have always been a tight-knit group, and we are especially proud of the way in which they have supported one another during lockdown and remained true to our mission as a Catholic school."

"Year 13 were deprived of so many opportunities that their predecessors would have taken for granted. However, they have remained positive throughout the COVID-19 crisis, channelling their energy into their academic studies, and living out the Christian ethos of our school by helping one another through difficult moments. We are immensely proud of them all."

"It is our hope that the Class of 2021 will not be defined by the impact of the pandemic, but, instead, by the values that they have embraced at Ratcliffe. We wish them every success as they move on to higher education and successful careers in the future. Thank you, Year 13, for being such superb role models for our younger students."

A number of students achieved straight A\* grades, and they deserve praise for gaining places on some of the most sought-after undergraduate courses. Humzah Ali, a Sir Thomas White scholar, will read French at Oxford. Max Chapman will read Chemistry at the University of Warwick. Rishi Desai will attend the University of Bristol to read Economics, while Dani Hendry will read History at the University of Edinburgh. We congratulate Ihuoma Osuji, who has attained a place at the University of Southampton to read Medicine, and Hadia Hussain, who has gained a place at the University of Nottingham to read Law. Dhruvil Rajpara will read Mechanical Engineering at UCL, whilst Nikhil Rajpra will read Chemical Engineering at the University of Nottingham. Congratulations, also, to Eleanor Shaw, who will read Sport and Exercise Science at Bath University.

Many other students achieved an impressive combination of A\* and A grades. These include Head Girl Sophie Brown, who has been accepted onto a Flying Start Degree Apprenticeship with PwC, which she will complete in conjunction with her undergraduate degree in Computer Science at the University of Leeds. Meanwhile, Head Boy Archie Heaney has won a QUEST Scholarship for a Civil Engineering degree at the University of Bristol.

Sophie told us: "I'm so pleased with my results, and I would like to thank the staff for everything. My time at Ratcliffe has been unforgettable."

Archie added: "Civil Engineering is something that I have had my sights set on for a long time now, so to get these results and go to Bristol is such an achievement. I will miss Ratcliffe, though!"

On Results Day, we celebrated some of the amazing things that our young people will be going on to do. Encouraging 'big ideas' is a significant part of what we do at Ratcliffe; you can read more about this on page 26 of this magazine.



## GCSE RESULTS

Ratcliffe College students certainly lived up to the school's mission of *Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel*, achieving excellent GCSE results. These reflect their unstinting dedication to their courses and the hard work of their inspirational teachers during two turbulent, COVID-affected years of study.

The College is delighted with this year's overall pass rate, with 97% of all grades being 4s or above, and 48% of all grades being 7s or above. These grades mirror the GCSE results in previous years and are testament to the consistency of Ratcliffe's outstanding academic provision.

Headmaster Jon Reddin commented: "These are excellent results. I am so proud of our students' achievements. Following the government's announcement to cancel public examinations this year, this cohort worked exceptionally hard to ensure that they achieved their potential. The students have had to cope with so much uncertainty regarding their GCSE grades in recent months, and these results are proof of their resilience.

"On behalf of the students, I would also like to thank their teachers, who adapted swiftly and professionally to the changes enforced upon schools, to ensure that this GCSE cohort achieved the grades that they deserve. We are very excited to be welcoming this group of students into our fantastic Sixth Form in September, and we look forward to their continued success as they begin their A Levels."

A special mention goes to Holly Clark, Eleni Malhan, Danai Masiyakurima, Ethan Starley, and Victoria Wheatley, who all achieved grade 9s or grade 8s in their subjects.

Holly said: "The support that I've received from staff during the past year or so has been fantastic, especially considering that everything has been a bit weird!"

Ethan added: "It all feels a bit surreal, but I'm really pleased with my results, and I can't wait to come back to the Sixth Form in September."

Victoria said: "I feel a lot closer to the staff and students at Ratcliffe, especially with all of the challenges we've faced. We've all pulled together much more, and this is such a happy day for us - I can't wait to celebrate!"



## CLASS OF 2021: LEAVERS' DAY



It has certainly been an unusual year for our Sixth Form students, and, in many ways, a frustrating one, as they have been denied many of the usual events and rites of passage that mark the school year. However, this has not stopped them from making the best out of a difficult situation, finding innovative and original ways to maximise opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom.

Our Year 13 leavers demonstrated extraordinary focus and determination in managing the demands of their internal assessments, which contributed to the teacher-assessed grades, and they were rewarded with outstanding A Level results. 90% of the students who applied to university were successful in gaining a place at their first-choice destination, while two students will go on to study degree apprenticeships.

Leavers' Day was a significant milestone for our Year 13 students, and they enjoyed spending time with each other throughout the day and reflecting on their years at Ratcliffe, with activities including inflatables, the Leavers' Awards, videos, and a barbecue lunch.

The day culminated in a poignant and moving Mass in the College Chapel, followed by the presentation of gifts to the Class of 2021 by Ratcliffian Association President **Ben Jackson (88)** - a tradition honoured each year to welcome the next generation of Old Ratcliffians to the Association. Ben

said: "After being unable to formally welcome the Class of 2020 to the Association last year, including my own son, **Kit (20)**, this year's Leavers' Mass felt particularly special. It was wonderful to see the Chapel filled, once again, with smiling faces, and that heady mix of joy, relief, nostalgia, and excitement for what lies ahead. I'm sure we all remember it well."

He added: "Not only does the ceremony give us an opportunity to present the leavers with gifts to commemorate their time at Ratcliffe, but equally importantly, it enables us to remind them why the Association exists, and to highlight the benefits of staying connected to their Ratcliffe family."

We wish the Class of 2021 the very best of luck, and we hope to see them back at Ratcliffe - whether it be for OR events or as part of our INSPIRE programme - in the not-too-distant future.

**Ben Harrison**

Assistant Head & Head of Sixth Form





## RATCLIFFE'S BOARDING COMMUNITY

It has been yet another busy year in the Boarding House, despite the pandemic curtailing some of our plans. We managed to adapt to the lockdown on site and felt fortunate that we have superb facilities here at Ratcliffe to entertain us.

We have said goodbye to some amazing Year 13 boarders this year, some of whom have been with us for seven years. They were a fun group who embodied everything that boarding was about; we feel so privileged to have been part of their journey, and we watch with excitement as they take their next steps at university.

Over the course of the pandemic, it was a lot quieter in boarding, as many of our community learned from different parts of the world. We got really quite good at our Sunday brunch Zoom calls; some were eating breakfast and some were eating supper, but ultimately, we all ate together. Although boarding was quieter, we did get really quite good at entertaining ourselves - with drone flying, pizza making, snowman building, fireworks, remote control car Grand Prix, Airfix modelling, and bonfires, there was always something fun to do on site. We can also safely say that the new subscriptions to Netflix, Prime, and Disney Plus were well and truly appreciated! The Advent Meal was a delight this year, with the boarders playing live music, and the launch of the End-of-Term Awards. With gold statues to rival the Oscars, the boarders were awarded prizes for various in-house shenanigans and contributions to the community.

Nothing could beat the feeling of the world opening up again during the Summer Term, when we enjoyed dinner parties, trips

to Alton Towers, Go Ape, and the launch of the 'selfie check-in' - all of which helped us to finish the year venturing out into the world again.

Throughout lockdown, we were fortunate to be able to continue with Night Prayer twice a week. This is such a special time for us, when we think about our community, celebrate Boarders of the Week, and our students lead music, prayer, and reflections. It has become a wonderful, calm, and united moment in our busy lives.

In the Summer Term, we were in a very privileged position, as we were able to host all of the day students from Year 7 in boarding. Facilitating our Year 7 students in making memories together through zorbing, cinema nights, and pottery painting was a delightful way to end the year.

We have welcomed some wonderful boarders this September, too - it's so exciting to have the rooms filled with noise, chatter, and a real determination to enjoy every moment. The weekend trips have never had so many students signing up, as all of our boarders are embracing the freedoms of life after lockdown. We are so happy to be reunited as a community, where we laugh together, cry together, play together, and love together. Boarding is a close-knit community where we thrive on being together and making memories.

**Alison Da Costa**  
Head of Boarding



## CAREERS

Despite the challenges that they have faced, our students have remained undeterred in seeking their unique career pathways, striving for success. The Careers Office remains impressed by, and grateful for, all the support that Old Ratcliffians provide for our current students.

Our INSPIRE programme for Years 10 to 13 ran in hybrid form throughout the year; it allowed us to continue to connect inspiring individuals and career sectors with our students, regardless of whether they were in school or learning remotely. Whilst the programme has now returned to in-person delivery, we hope to continue some sessions in this way, so that we can still utilise those with expertise who are less able to visit in person.

We have also been lucky enough to utilise our database of OR mentors over the past 12 months. In November 2020, **Sophie Riley (15)** returned to the Sixth Form Centre for a virtual mentoring session with our Medicine applicants. She presented an informative overview of her experience studying Medicine thus far. She is now a fourth-year medic studying at Manchester University and intercalating in Pre-Hospital Medicine at Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry. The students involved were grateful for her insights into course content and teaching methods, career pathways and specialities, the NHS, and student wellbeing. This was the first of our recently relaunched alumni mentor scheme sessions, and it proved to be a real success - so much so that Sophie returned to Ratcliffe in May 2021 to mentor the newest intake of potential Medicine applicants.

**Daniel Bastock (19)** also returned to Ratcliffe to deliver a talk on Medicine to the Sixth Form students in September this year. This provided useful insight to those students who were still considering their options, as well as giving Daniel valuable feedback for his course portfolio.

Both National Apprenticeship Week and National Careers Week were celebrated, despite falling during the period of lockdown. We were able to hold apprenticeship workshops for both parents and students, and during National Careers Week, the Careers Office also held a series of workshops which focused on CV-writing, interview skills, and employability, whilst providing access to a virtual Careers Fair and signposting a wide variety of external content.

The younger year groups continued to consider their own strengths, ambitions, and potential careers in the context of the pandemic. Year 7 entered some amazing work as part of the national 'Step into the NHS' competition; this allowed them to express their gratitude for the care that the NHS has offered during this period whilst considering the variety of roles that it encompasses.



In September 2021, we were delighted to be able to host the biennial Careers Fair. This event was a welcome return for in-person advice for our students, and with the support of the Ratcliffian Association, current parents, and local businesses, we were able to host over 45 delegates from a variety of industry sectors. The event was highly successful, with students, parents, and delegates contacting the Careers Office to praise the truly inspiring nature of the event.

Alumni support for the school's Careers programme is always very gratefully received, and we hope to call upon our current database of OR speakers and mentors further in the coming months.

**Kate Grace**  
Head of Careers



# CHAPLAINCY & CHARITY: 2020-2021

Blessed Antonio Rosmini desired that students in the schools that he founded would become seekers of the truth, and it is upon this that the mission of Ratcliffe is based. The role of Chaplaincy is, therefore, to build within the school community a culture of service to all, to help inspire the students through an exploration of the Gospel values, and to celebrate the faith of our community in prayer and acts of worship.

## CALLED TO SERVE OTHERS

*"Perfect charity, in which consists the perfection of all, brings the whole person into union with the Creator." - Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

Our school motto, *Love is the Fulfilment of the Law*, is a daily reminder that loving service of others is an integral part of the Christian identity. Christ has given us clear instructions that a "Christian life is for service", and Pope Francis reminds us that, while Christ instructs everyone to give freely that which has been given freely, it is meant especially for us "shepherds of the church".

With this in mind, money is raised each year to support the various charities chosen by the school community. This year, our Harvest Festival was the most successful one that we have ever had at

Ratcliffe. As a school community, we joined together to support the Leicester South Foodbank, donating as many items as we could to help them during the difficult months of COVID.



## CALLED TO A LIFE OF PRAYER

*"Prayer is powerful because it attracts the power of God, and God's power always gives life, always." - Pope Francis*

At the heart of Ratcliffe College is our Christian identity, and at the heart of Christian identity is the desire to be close to the will of God. Because of this, there is a clear dedication to finding moments each day for prayer. Spending time in quiet reflection, where both student and staff bodies can come to know who God is, is central to the life of the College.

Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, we were unable to join together as a community for any moments of collective worship. However, with the creative ability of both the Music and Drama Departments, we managed to film or live-stream all of the important aspects of our spiritual and liturgical calendar.



Each week, we live-streamed our assemblies from the Old Library to the tutor bases; although this worked well, it definitely did not replace the power of in-person collective worship. One of the highlights of the year was inviting the Eco-Committee to speak about Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. A huge thank you to those who were involved in this assembly.

We also chose to live-stream our Remembrance Service from the Lockhart Garden this year, and it was a privilege to honour those who fell during the wars in the midst of a pandemic.

A special thank you goes to those in the Music and Drama Departments for all their hard work with both our Christmas Carol Service and our Easter Service. Although it was enjoyable to watch the videos that we created for these events, I'm sure that everyone will agree that being able to celebrate them in person next year will be a blessing.

We were thrilled to welcome Bishop Patrick Joseph McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham, to the Confirmation service that was held at Ratcliffe on June 13th 2021 (main photo, below).



## A FINAL THANK YOU

Particular thanks must go to **Fr Philip Sainter (69)** for all the work that he has put into Chaplaincy this year. During a time of such upset and disorder, it has been a privilege to work alongside someone who is so steadfast in their faith and so determined to share the love of Christ with all those he meets.

**Emma Hall**  
Lay Chaplain



## FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS

During remote learning and lockdown, the PE and Games Departments launched a weekly sports podcast interview series, Friday Night Lights. Over the course of two terms, Old Ratcliffians, Olympians, World Cup winners, champions, professionals, and students were interviewed. These interviews gave an insight into the highs and lows, experiences, and unique journeys of some truly inspiring athletes. Listeners were able to hear, first-hand, about the daily routines, rituals, and sacrifices that these interviewees felt were needed to be successful. Comparing and contrasting many of them, as well as hearing their goals and top tips, enabled listeners to reflect upon, and perhaps even try to emulate, their successes. The listeners were then given an opportunity to ask any questions, which many jumped at. Finally, each guest was tasked with the Ratcliffe *Question of Sport* Challenge, where they had 60 seconds to try and act out as many sports as they could think of! These interviews are available to enjoy on the Ratcliffe College Sport YouTube channel, where you can access them all.



## RATCLIFFE TO TOKYO STRAVA CHALLENGE

Having reverted, once again, to remote learning, we were unable to come together on the school site. So that the importance of physical activity, social interaction, and individual or team competition was not forgotten, we launched the Ratcliffe College Strava Club. Here, pupils, parents, Old Ratcliffians, and members of staff joined to record and challenge themselves by walking, running, cycling, swimming, or doing any other physical activity they liked! We set weekly Strava challenges – some for the whole community, and others for Houses and specific year groups. We had a collective and total challenge – Ratcliffe to Tokyo (5800 miles!) – which the College and community reached in just six weeks!



## RATCLIFFE COLLEGE & LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET PARTNERSHIP

Our partnership with Leicestershire County Cricket Club (LCCC) goes from strength to strength, and this season, we have welcomed the Academy players and coaches back to Ratcliffe to train and play fixtures. As only LCCC's professional squads were allowed to use the training facilities at the Uptonsteel County Ground (following ECB COVID-19 guidelines), we became a base for the Academy squads, and we were proud to continue to support them in their cricket.



As part of the partnership, we have been able to award tickets to Ratcliffe students to attend Vitality Blast matches at the Uptonsteel County Ground and cheer on the Foxes. These tickets have been awarded to students who have been recognised by Mr Woodcock, Head of Cricket, and our Sports Department for playing particularly well in school fixtures. Imogen Jones (Year 7) was nominated, and she attended the Foxes match against the Northants Steelbacks with two of her teammates (above), where they all had a great time.

Ratcliffe students have continued to be selected for the Leicestershire squads this year. Congratulations to John Bowden, Flora Davies, Sam Davies, Sam Daynes, Ernie Hoggard, Hari Jobanputra, Ben Macleod-Smith, Jayde Patterson, Khrish Tailor, and Ollie Thomas for their achievements.

On Friday 14th May, Alastair (Ali) Maiden, Head of Academy at LCCC, was interviewed for one of Ratcliffe's Friday Night Lights

sessions. This was hosted by Mr Cole, Ratcliffe's Acting Director of Sport, and in it, Ali explained how he made his transition from playing cricket in Durham to coaching the women's England squad, and how he is now supporting the development of players in Leicestershire.

We were also invited to the end-of-season awards evening at the Uptonsteel County Ground, where we were proud to present the Young Player of the Year Award to Harry Swindells. Harry is a wicketkeeper/batsman who came through the Leicestershire Pathway, and he now plays professionally for LCCC.

By the end of the cricket season, we had hosted over 60 training sessions and fixtures, and welcomed players, coaches, and families from Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, London Schools, Northamptonshire, and Yorkshire. We thank Chris Moody, Ratcliffe's Head of Grounds, and his team for the excellent wickets, and for all their dedication to promoting the sport of cricket.

LCCC are delighted to announce that they will be resuming their winter coaching programme. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on indoor sport over the last 18 months, and during this time, LCCC have completely reviewed all of their coaching programmes. This one will now be called the Running Foxes Winter Coaching Programme, and, as part of the club's new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, girls will take part in it for the first time. The programme is designed to offer boys and girls across the county coaching opportunities to help fulfil their individual potential, with a winter programme for Under 11, Under 13, Under 15, and Under 19 cricketers which complements their school and club cricket. Ratcliffe students have been invited to take part in this invaluable programme.

We are very much looking forward to next season. If you would like any information about our partnership with LCCC or cricket at Ratcliffe College, please do not hesitate to contact me, either on **01509 817013** or at **tnightingale@ratcliffecollege.com**.

**Tracey Nightingale**  
 Cricket Partnership Manager



## NEWS FROM THE PREPARATORY SCHOOL

As I write this review for the Old Ratcliffians, we have just ended another year like no other, and begun another busy Autumn Term like no other! Nevertheless, the Prep School is in very good heart, with a fourth Year 6 class! We have recently been looking at the Gospel value of serving our community, and as part of Pope Francis' wish for us to celebrate the Season of Creation, we have held some beautiful class Masses, focusing on the start of the new school year, St Francis (patron saint of animals), and a very generous charity collection of foods to celebrate Harvest and support our local Leicester food bank. We were also delighted by the large number of awards that Year 6 achieved in their 11+ entrance assessments, with nearly all students choosing to move on to our Senior School again this year. They celebrated the end of the year with a very fitting open-air Mass, with moving speeches from the Head Boy and Head Girl, recounting all that has been special to them since joining us at three years old in Cygnets.

### CHAPLAINCY NEWS

Until the second lockdown in the Spring Term, the Prep School had spent many joyous times together, celebrating the Harvest Festival, Nativity, Christingle, and preparing for Easter, using live streams and recordings to share the occasions with parents. The children worked in small groups to plan and lead class liturgies, using a piece of scripture as their focus. Children as young as Year 1 led thoughtful prayer times with their classmates and teachers. Despite the restrictions, our Chaplaincy Team managed to boost the previous year's fundraising for Mary's Meals with a few modest, COVID-safe events, created a new cycle of prayer, and helped to lead assemblies via Google Meet. Sadly, we were not able to have a celebration of First Holy Communion this year.

### SPORTS NEWS

How do you review a sporting year without any sport? Now, that is the question! What did we do without tournaments to contest and trophies to vie for? How did we cope without the emotional

rollercoaster, the tension, the elation, and the disappointment? The answer is that there is always sport to report on at Ratcliffe, we enjoyed new sports and diverse opportunities, and very well, thank you very much.

It may have been a year like no other in the Prep School, especially from a sporting perspective, but it was still a year full of sporting enthusiasm, enjoyment, experience, and endeavour. The children got the opportunity to learn new sports that they might not have encountered. The Summer Term saw them celebrate their athletic prowess in their own year group Sports Days, which were more intimate than in normal times. Although they lacked the usual atmosphere of excitement and cheering crowds, they had, instead, a supportive, collaborative, and Corinthian spirit which allowed every child to shine. It also gave us the opportunity to literally teach the children in their own homes, with fun living-room workouts, Wednesday 'Wake Up' workouts, home Olympic challenges, and the Nursery's interactive story time with Mr Faulconbridge.



All in all, this sporting year was not the same as it normally is, but that doesn't mean it wasn't as good. Life is what you make it, and this year, we made it a sporting year full of fun, interactivity

through the internet, and memories that will last a lifetime. To be honest, in time, you may forget the try or goal you scored that clinched the match when you were 10 years old, but you probably won't ever forget the time Mr Faulconbridge dressed up as Sonic the Hedgehog, Super Mario, and a downhill skier to wake you up on a Wednesday morning!

### MUSIC NEWS

It has certainly been a different year in the life of Prep School Music this year! COVID-19 restrictions meant that we were unable to begin the year in our traditional, musical way. Co-curricular groups, Chapel celebrations, and concerts were all put on hold, which was frustrating, to say the least. For Prep School musicians, that is our reason for being - performing music together for others to enjoy and celebrate.

By Christmas, however, we were able to record Nativities in our bubbles. This meant that, for the first time, Cygnets, Swans, and Years 1 and 2 performed their own Nativity musicals separately. This was a real treat, with Cygnets performing *Our First Nativity* in the stable in their own classroom, and Swans and Years 1 and 2 recording their Nativities in the Newman Hall with a 'real' film crew - the tension and joy on filming day was electric!



We also saw some fantastic music made as part of the children's curriculum projects. Year 3 created a metal band as part of 'Mighty Metals' and performed 'Sleigh Ride', while Year 5 created soundtracks on GarageBand as part of their 'Alchemy Island' project. A Google Meet version of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', with each class singing a different verse, was something to behold. This may be best forgotten in terms of musical excellence, but it was a fun way to end the term, nonetheless!

And then another lockdown hit! Ironically, this helped Music in the Prep School, as we returned to co-curricular groups remotely. Most children joined from home, while key worker children found a space



with a trusty Chromebook, to enable our 'silent' rehearsals to commence. Once back in school, we tentatively put our maximum of 15 children, socially distanced (a crazy way to perform music!), together. Indeed, our muted rehearsals had paid off - String Stars were able to perform 'Haydn Rocks', Wind and Brass had learnt 'The Skye Boat Song', and the Newman Orchestra played Vivaldi's 'Winter'! We keep our fingers firmly crossed that, next year, a real audience will hear this beautiful music.

Thankfully, the weather held as we celebrated Easter with an outside service, where the music created a reflective time. This was incredibly special, as it was the first time that the Prep School had been 'together' during this academic year.

And then, the most exciting part of the year! Having launched an appeal to enable the Music Department to purchase a new grand piano for the Newman Hall, we reached an amazing £19,757, with parents and Old Ratcliffians coming forward to support the appeal. Music staff and Easher Austin (a Year 5 pupil) visited Clement Pianos in Nottingham, and we are now the proud owners of a Kawai concert grand piano. The piano arrived, and we were immediately able to host ABRSM exams for the first time in the Prep School. A very sincere thank you to all parents, friends, and families who donated to make this dream a reality for our Ratcliffe musicians.



The year ended with frustratingly few live musical performances. We managed a remote version of the Prep School Music Competition, and we hope that this is a live event in 2022. Against all the odds, Year 6 managed to record their musical production of *Olivia* (most of the year were isolating until the day before we recorded it). As they say, the show must go on, and it did (just!) - not only for this event, but also for the whole of Prep School Music.

**Fr Christopher Cann**  
Preparatory School Headmaster



## THE SPITFIRE CLUB

After the move from the Art Department to the CCF hangar, the Ratcliffe Spitfire is now settled in its new build location. There are some limitations, as the hangar is cold and, in its current form, probably not suitable for students during the depths of winter. However, the plan is to concentrate on smaller items, such as the stand-alone cockpit build, and perhaps purchase some heaters to enable work to carry on over the winter. In all other respects, the hangar is an ideal location, because space is plentiful, and it neatly solves the problem caused by packing away at the end of every session.

The long-term aim will be to involve the Radio-Controlled Model Flying Club in the construction of a 1:6 scale model of the original Spitfire, as flown by our former student **Paul Baillon (32)**, and then going on to fly it.

In addition, the flight simulator project, which has taken much effort to bring to an operational level, has been incorporated into the Spitfire project. A great deal of progress has been made, thanks to William Pearce and Quinn Capsticks (Year 11 students). It fits neatly into the Spitfire build by giving students a chance to fly the Spitfire by simulation. The current format could potentially allow the stand-alone cockpit section to be used as part of the flight simulator, and, together with the three-screen layout, it should provide a truly immersive experience.

At the moment, all three parts are separate and in different locations, but I would see them coming together over the medium and long-term, as the workshop develops and is brought to specification for the build.

A lot of historical interest has been paid to the Spitfire build and airfield. We recently hosted visits from Becky Aikman, an author interested in the history of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) on the site, and a former RAF officer interested in the infrastructure of the airfield. Both visitors paid particular attention to the Spitfire build.

**Paul Walters**  
CCF Contingent Commander



## MOTHERS' PRAYERS

The Mothers' Prayers group at Ratcliffe continues to grow in strength and numbers, with new additions being welcomed weekly. Having continued to meet up virtually via Zoom throughout the 2020 lockdowns, the group are now delighted to be able to meet again in real life, at their new venue, Hutton Hall, at the Rosmini Centre.

Led by former Ratcliffe teacher and current governor Teresa Gamble, the group have had to find innovative ways to meet, in order to maintain their weekly contact and pray for their children and the needs of one another. Once restrictions began to lift, the group met up outside, taking in the Rosary Walk, and also taking advantage of the beautiful grounds at Ratcliffe by walking the Stations of the Cross together at Easter time.

The group is always open to new members, to those with faith or without, and they meet in person at 8am (or straight after school

drop-off) at Hutton Hall at the Rosmini Centre. Prayers start at 8.30am, and everyone is invited to stay for a coffee and a chat afterwards if they are able to.

Jo Monkhouse, a current Ratcliffe parent, has been a member of the group for four years. She said: "Every Wednesday, we meet for about 30 to 45 minutes. It's very informal, and I have made some lifelong friends through this group. We laugh, we cry, we share, and we support each other. It's not just about prayer, but about helping each other to deal with life's curveballs. Whatever your faith is, we are just a group of mums who want to support each other and our children as best we can. For me, Mothers' Prayers is a time to reflect on how we cope with everything."



**RATCLIFFE COLLEGE** SIXTH FORM BURSARIES & SCHOLARSHIPS  
UP TO 50% GRANTS AVAILABLE

If, as an Old Ratcliffian, you would like to send your child to Ratcliffe College for the Sixth Form, but have previously considered that the cost may prove prohibitive, then the College's Bursary Scheme, supporting Gifted and Talented students, may be of interest to you.

The College welcomes applications from Old Ratcliffians and those in sympathy with the Catholic ethos of the School. All bursaries are subject to meeting the School's entry requirements and (parental) means-tested assessments, which may be reviewed annually.

The College would like to recognise the support of the Ratcliffian Association and Cunningham Fund, and the Peter Daley Foundation, which regularly contribute to student bursaries at Ratcliffe. In exceptional cases, the Sir Thomas White Charity may provide a 100% bursary (day fee) for one strong academic student joining Ratcliffe from the state sector and living in Leicestershire.

We also offer Academic, Sports and Creative (Music, Drama or Art and Design) Scholarships, worth up to 50% of the school fee.

For further details, please contact the Admissions Manager on 01509 817072, email [admissions@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:admissions@ratcliffcollege.com), or visit the Admissions section of the School's website.

[www.ratcliffcollege.com](http://www.ratcliffcollege.com)



## NEWS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

## COVID RELIEF FUNDING IN THE COMMUNITY

Thanks to the Helping Hands Fund (our COVID relief appeal during the early stages of the pandemic in 2020), we were blessed with £2,000 of donations to distribute to projects in need of support as a consequence of COVID. To ensure that the distribution was fair, members of the Old Ratcliffian community were invited to nominate people or places which might benefit from a grant. We then enlisted the help of our Sixth Form Ambassadors to select from the nominations. They chose the following charities to receive funding:

**The Centre for Fun and Families  
Dreams and Wishes  
HCPT Lourdes  
The E2 Cooke e-Learning Foundation  
Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support  
St Marie's Church, Rugby – Parish Work in East African Missions  
Marriage Care  
The Captain Tom Foundation**

The Dreams and Wishes charity was nominated by **Mark Hobbs (73)**, who said: "I felt compelled to nominate Dreams and Wishes because it is a very unique, award-winning charity that is dedicated to helping seriously ill children by making their dreams and wishes come true. Since they began in 2011, they have been working closely with families and medical specialists across the UK, providing vital support throughout each child's illness, as well as helping to build happy memories by granting lifelong wishes. I am delighted that the Ambassadors selected this charity, as it is run entirely by unpaid volunteers, and all of the funds raised, with no deductions whatsoever, go directly to the cause. This donation is extremely important during the COVID pandemic, because the charity has granted a record number of wishes, and it has also supported frontline workers."



**Adrian Toothe (71)**, who nominated Marriage Care, was delighted. He told us: "I've been a volunteer in Marriage Care for 30 years. It is a remarkably successful, but little-known, charity which is focused on helping people to achieve lasting relationships and supporting those suffering from relationship difficulties. It was founded by, and still maintains close links with, the Catholic Church. It has been struggling financially, and COVID restrictions resulted in it having to cease offering face-to-face counselling and courses for engaged couples, which were sources of income. The decision was taken to offer online services, but the cost of setting these up has not been small, hence my appeal to the Helping Hands Fund. The grant has helped to establish the charity's online services and to train volunteers in this new way of working. The transformation has been so successful that Marriage Care intends to continue to offer online services alongside face-to-face counselling and courses. Please take a look at [www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk) to find out more. It may even tempt you to become a volunteer for one of its many rewarding roles! Thank you."

A full report on the Helping Hands Fund and the successful charities can be found in the News section of the Ratcliffian Association website.

## NEW KILN FOR THE ART AND DESIGN DEPARTMENT

The Art Department has purchased a new kiln, thanks to a donation from Old Ratcliffian **Peter Tams (56)**. Peter's connection with Ratcliffe goes back a number of years, with both his father and grandfather having attended the College. Given the Tams family's significant connection to the pottery industry, a donation to provide a kiln for the College was a natural choice for Peter, who was inspired to donate following an earlier visit to Ratcliffe, accompanied by his son.

Mrs Richardson, Head of Art and Design, said: "I am so delighted that we have a brand-new kiln. The students have literally been getting their hands dirty making all kinds of exotic creations in their lessons. We are truly grateful and feel so lucky to have benefitted in this way."



## NEW GRAND PIANO FOR THE MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The Grand Piano Appeal was launched in the autumn of 2020, with a target of £10,000 to help the Music Department fund a new piano. We are thrilled to report that the appeal raised a fantastic **£19,757**.

It was with absolute delight that Mrs Markham, Head of Preparatory School Music, took Mrs Donegan, Director of Music, and a Ratcliffe pupil along to test out some pianos in Nottingham just before the May half-term break. The new Kawai GX2 grand piano was delivered upon returning from their holidays a week later!

The children are already enjoying practising on this fabulous new instrument, and they are looking forward to performing a concert. Mrs Markham enthused: "I was overwhelmed by the support we received towards this appeal, especially during this last, very difficult year. I would like to thank everyone who has donated. Our new piano is a game changer for us; it will allow us to enjoy concerts and recitals, and invite professional musicians in for masterclasses, which is something I cannot wait to do!"

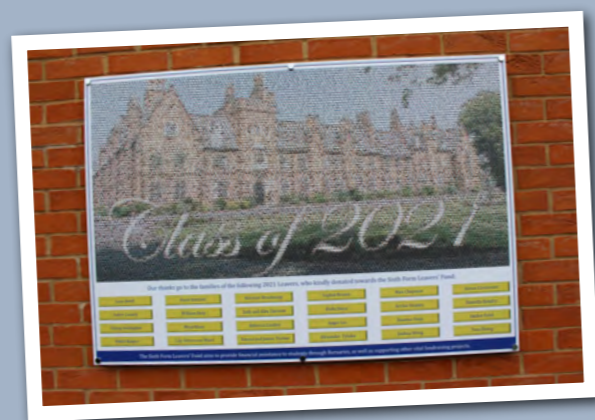
## RATCLIFFE GOLF DAY

On Thursday 16th September, the fourth annual Ratcliffe Golf Day took place at Rothley Park Golf Club. We were, once again, blessed with lovely weather and a course which was in fantastic condition. Over 40 golfers took part, and the winning team comprised of Ian Bridgwood (parent), **Freddie Bridgwood (19)**, and guests Ryan Dawson and Himmat Rai; they scored 93 points, and each of them won a case of Laurent-Perrier Champagne. Thanks to some very generous gifts from Ratcliffe parents and sponsors, over £1,800 was raised towards the Ratcliffe Bursary Fund. A big thank you to all of those involved.



CLASS OF 2021 - SUPPORTING FUTURE RATCLIFFIANS

This year, to celebrate the Class of 2021, all of the Year 13 students' school photos were compiled to form a mosaic, which is displayed outside the Sixth Form Centre. Families from the Class of 2021 generously supported the Sixth Form Leavers' Fund to the value of £6,215, providing funding towards student bursaries. Those families are recognised underneath the mosaic on a special donor board.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

This last year in the Development Office has been challenging in many ways, but what we've noticed is that, when Old Ratcliffians are asked, they will certainly help where they can. Not only was there an amazing OR response to the Helping Hands Appeal, but also, generous ORs increased their gifts to support the urgent COVID-related bursary needs, and parents and ORs provided incredible support to raise money for a new grand piano. It is heart-warming to know that our community is genuinely supportive of the College. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has donated in the past year, with special thanks to our loyal donors who give on a regular basis.



THE RATCLIFFE COLLEGE FOUNDATION - THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNDRAISING

For schools like Ratcliffe, which don't have large historical endowments, fundraising can make a huge difference to the educational experience of our students. Firstly, it allows us to go over and above what we would normally be able to provide within the teaching environment. It also helps to supplement our fee income, so that we can make future improvements to the fabric of the school that will benefit the overall learning journey for students whilst at Ratcliffe.

As we start this new academic year, the Ratcliffe College Foundation plans to launch a new phase of fundraising. This aims to support smaller projects, selected from various departments, to provide equipment, programmes, external speakers, and other items which would not ordinarily be funded through fee income alone.

Our aim is to encourage support from members of the Ratcliffe community, parents, Old Ratcliffians, former staff, and friends, seeking contributions in the form of regular donations. Once aggregated, these will form a generous pot from which to distribute to specific, highlighted needs throughout the College each year.

If you would like to set up a regular gift to the College, we would be very grateful. Please contact us at [foundation@ratcliffecollege.com](mailto:foundation@ratcliffecollege.com), telephone us on 01509 817091, or visit our website, [www.ratcliffecollegefoundation.com](http://www.ratcliffecollegefoundation.com), to download a standing order form.

Andrew Yell (82)  
Development Director

THERE IS NO GREATER GIFT...



...THAN THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH BURSARIES

Ratcliffe College has been helping to shape the lives of its students since 1847, and it has always provided a great sense of community. We believe that, where possible, we should help and support those who are less fortunate than ourselves. Bursaries can be transformational, and that is why we are asking for your support. By giving a little each month, together with other Old Ratcliffians, you can support students who demonstrate immense potential, but whose financial circumstances mean that they would not otherwise be able to attend Ratcliffe.

LEAVING A LEGACY

We appreciate that not everyone has the ability to give now, and some may prefer to demonstrate their support by giving a gift to the College in their will. Leaving a legacy is a great way to support school bursaries, and it can genuinely change young people's lives, both whilst they are at Ratcliffe, and beyond.

If you have already made a provision for Ratcliffe in your will, then please do let us know, as we would very much like the opportunity to express our gratitude now for your future gift.

For more information, please contact Mr Andrew Yell on +44(0)1509 817000, by email at [ayell@ratcliffecollege.com](mailto:ayell@ratcliffecollege.com), or visit [www.ratcliffecollegefoundation.com](http://www.ratcliffecollegefoundation.com).



## MARKETING UPDATE: ENCOURAGING BIG IDEAS

Here at Ratcliffe College, the notion of encouraging 'big ideas' is something that goes right back to our Rosminian heritage, and it sits firmly at the heart of our school today. Our latest inspirational film brings this all to life, because we believe that, when you encourage a young person to 'think big', you encourage them to be their very best, both inside and outside the classroom.

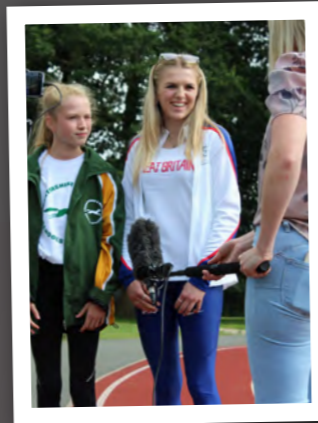
The Encouraging Big Ideas film was launched at the start of the 2020-21 academic year, and it forms the basis of a multi-channel campaign which will reposition the College as a centre of excellence, and a place where big ideas are formed. The film was created by Affixius, a company founded by two Old Ratcliffians, **Miles Latham (03)** and **Tim Cabrelli (03)**, who had their own 'big idea' of creating a film-making business in the Media classrooms at Ratcliffe as youngsters. Now a highly successful, award-winning agency, it seems very fitting that they have helped to spearhead this campaign. You can watch the film on the Ratcliffe College website, as well as on our YouTube channel.

In the months following the initial launch of Encouraging Big Ideas, we saw a number of pupils thinking big, following their dreams, and achieving some amazing things. Here are just a handful of examples:

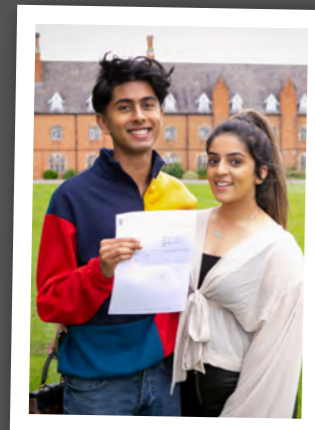
### RATCLIFFE SUPER SISTERS SHARE OLYMPIC DREAMS

Ratcliffe College track stars Indienne and Shaikira King talked to the BBC recently about how they hope to support each other through their athletics journeys in the coming years, and maybe one day race on the same track for Olympic gold!

Indienne and Shaikira were both recently crowned English Schools National Champions on the same day, shortly after one another, making it a very special day for the family! Shaikira ran the fastest 1500m in Britain for her age and became the Under 15 Champion, whilst only being 13. Her older sister, Indienne, who is 17, currently represents the Team GB Under 20 squad, with an invite to Olympic Trials as the youngest athlete there; hopes for a shot at Paris 2024 are only three years away! The whole school community is well and truly behind both the sisters in their push for future Olympic dreams.



### STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS



Year 13 student and Sir Thomas White scholar Humzah Ali will take up a place to study French at Christ Church College, Oxford, in October, after achieving a full set of A\* grades in his French, English Literature, and History A Levels!

Humzah is the second Sir Thomas White scholar from Ratcliffe to gain a place at Oxbridge, following in the footsteps of former student Hebe Jackson, who studies Modern and Medieval Languages at King's College, Cambridge, having left Ratcliffe in 2019.

As a Catholic school, our aim is to help children who, under normal circumstances, would not be able to benefit from a Ratcliffe education. It's great to see them doing so well.

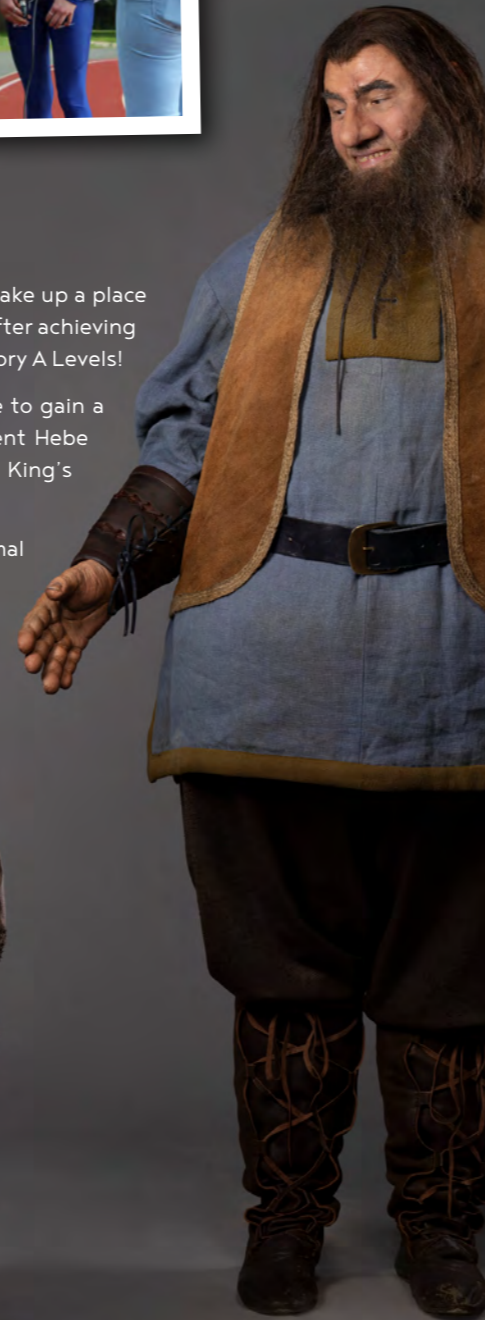
Our thanks also go to all those Old Ratcliffians who shared their 'big ideas' and career journeys since leaving Ratcliffe, as part of the campaign.

### EDDIE'S CHRISTMAS TV DEBUT

Ratcliffe student Eddie Karanja appeared alongside David Walliams and Sheridan Smith in *Jack and the Beanstalk: After Ever After* on Sky One over the Christmas holidays.

Eddie took the lead role as Jack in this original tale, which is told in the style of Walliams' best-selling children's books and deals with the events following the 'happily ever after' ending of the original story.

Eddie is no stranger to the spotlight, as he has recently been cast as Michael Darling in the Leicester De Montfort Hall production of *Peter Pan*, as well as Kurt von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* at the Little Theatre. We will certainly be watching his career unfold with anticipation!



# RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

## NEWS FROM THE ASSOCIATION OFFICE

### THE RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION SOCIAL COMMITTEE

At the beginning of October, we held our first Ratcliffian Association Social Committee meeting, with the main topic of discussion being the 2022 events calendar. After a turbulent couple of years, the committee are keen to plan and deliver a variety of events that appeal to ORs across the generations, and so we will be taking some time over the coming months to draw on our learning from previous years' events, in order to determine a calendar that is both relevant and engaging. As a result, we have taken the decision not to print a full events calendar in the magazine this year. Instead, we ask you to look out for event notifications in the Association's bi-monthly e-newsletter. You can also view and register for all events on the Association website, [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk/events](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk/events). The dates of those events that are already confirmed can be found on the inside back cover of this magazine. A final thank you goes to our Social Committee for their continued support of the Association: **Elisabeth Carley-Leonard (10)**, **Alison Court (née Mason) (98)**, **Steve Clark (79)**, **Keith Edgar (03)**, **Richard Gamble (64)**, **Ben Jackson (88)**, and **Sam Spillane (née Murphy) (91)**. If you have an idea for an OR event that you would like to put forward to the Social Committee, or if you would like to be added to our mailing list, please email us at [alumni@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffcollege.com).

### TWO NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

At the 2021 Ratcliffian Association AGM, we welcomed on board our new vice president, **Dan Amies (10)**. Dan has been a council member since 2016, representing those who left the College less than 10 years ago. During that time, he has played an active role in supporting the Association, and he can always be relied upon to offer new ideas for strengthening the Association's engagement with its members. Dan was delighted to be approached for the vice president's role.

**Annabel Wright (16)** has taken the vacant year group representative position, becoming our second voice on the council for those who left the school less than 10 years ago. Annabel is also our very first overseas council member, currently living in New Zealand, and she is thrilled to be able to share her ideas on engaging with international ORs.

Finally, we are delighted to report that we have now recruited our presidency and vice presidency positions for the next four years, ensuring that the Association will be in good hands for the foreseeable future. Candidates will be voted in formally at the relevant AGMs and announced thereafter.



### NEW RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION AMBASSADORS

This term, we were delighted to welcome on board our new Ratcliffian Association Ambassadors for 2021-2022. Amelia Chapman, Jamie Hollis, Mia Lowe, and Jess Watkins have become the latest Year 13 students to represent the Sixth Form, supporting the work of the Association and its engagement with students.

With our current focus on Careers, these Ambassadors will play a vital role in identifying new ways in which the Association can support the school's Careers programme. This will start with a brand-new initiative: to create a library of interviews which put Old Ratcliffian careers under the spotlight, the aim of which is to inspire students when considering their own futures. We look forward to working with our new Ambassadors.



# CAREERS & MENTORING

## RATCLIFFE CONNECT

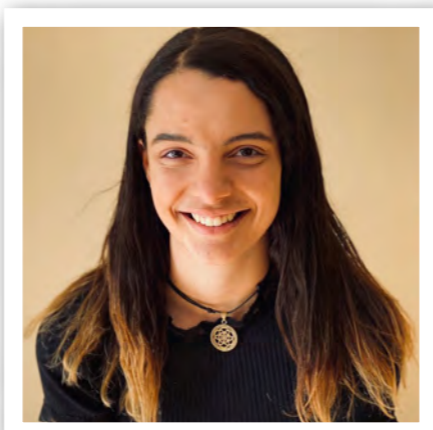


This year, we launched our new Careers newsletter, *Ratcliffe Connect*, which aims to keep ORs up to date with the latest initiatives, events, and other activities relating to our Careers and Mentoring Programme. We are pleased with the feedback and engagement that we have received so far, and we thank those ORs who have offered their ideas, or stepped forward to answer pleas for support, both for current students and Old Ratcliffians.

On page 13 of this magazine, Ratcliffe's Head of Careers, Kate Grace, talks about the many ways in which ORs have supported the school this year, and we would like to extend our gratitude to those mentioned below.

## STUDENT MENTORING

**Sophie Riley (15)** and **Daniel Bastock (19)** both returned to the College this year to offer invaluable advice and guidance to our Sixth Form Medicine applicants. At such a pivotal time in their education, when important decisions are made which will inform their future career paths, the students involved were extremely grateful to Sophie and Daniel for taking time out of their very busy schedules to offer a first-hand view of applying for, studying, and working in Medicine.



## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

This term, we also launched Professional Networks - a brand-new initiative designed to support the OR community as part of our developing Careers programme.

These networks exist to enable Old Ratcliffians to interact, socialise, and share their knowledge and experiences with like-minded individuals from within their industry sectors.

We are currently trialling three sectors - property, tech, and finance - with a view to further investing in these areas in the not-too-distant future, should they prove successful. We would encourage anyone working within one of these sectors to join us via the Association website, [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk) (select 'Careers' and 'Professional Networks'). Additionally, if you have a specific suggestion or request for an industry network, please get in touch with us via [alumni@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffcollege.com).

## CAREERS CONVENTION

**Lara Addison (18)**, **Dan Amies (10)**, **Ella Delargy (13)**, **Nick Gill (99)**, **Dominic Higham (10)**, **Louise Jackson (91)**, **Tom Mascari (01)**, **Debbie Molyneux (96)**, and **Sam Spillane (née Murphy) (91)** all answered a call-out for volunteers to represent their industries at Ratcliffe's biennial Careers Fair, held in September, where they were inundated with students from Years 9 to 13 who were looking for ideas and advice on particular career paths. It was an extremely busy and successful event, and it would not have been possible without the support of our wonderful ORs, so we would like to thank them, once again, for giving their time and expertise. After the event, Sam Spillane commented: "It was great to meet so many students and parents. We were made to feel very welcome by the teaching and Careers staff. Well done, all - a lovely event!"



## CAREERS DEVELOPMENT COMPETITION

This summer, Year 12 were, again, invited to pitch for a share of £1,000 as part of the Careers Development Competition. This initiative was kindly sponsored by Unique Window Systems, courtesy of Old Ratcliffian **Mir Patel (14)**.

The prize was shared between five students (pictured above, left to right): Elise Atkinson, Daata Apiafi, Mia Lowe, Eloka Chukwuma, and Jamie Hollis. Once again, it demonstrated the variety of desired pathways amongst our students, from media production, dentistry, and football coaching to medicine and investment banking. All of the students agreed that the opportunities the fund helped to pay for supported their current applications and future ambitions.

Jamie Hollis described his experience of the Careers Fund, which allowed him to download an online content library, Motion Array, to support his work within the sports media industry. He said: "Since then, I have taken advantage of what Motion Array has to offer, by downloading dozens of their templates, overlays, and audio files, which have all helped to elevate my work to the next level. Through supplying non-copyright music, the site has allowed me to uplift my content to a professional standard, including using the music in vlogs which I film and create for a famous American Superbike influencer, Brandon Paasch. I would like to express my gratitude to Mir Patel, who so generously sponsored the Careers Fund, as he has allowed me to make an impact on the sports content creation industry."

A further Careers Fund was launched for rising Year 11 students and those new to the Sixth Form for September 2021, recognising that they, too, had missed out on many opportunities and were keen to research work experience and super-curricular options earlier in the academic year, given the period of restrictions that they had endured.

This time, the fund was kindly sponsored by the Russell Property Group and OR **Dominic Russell (78)**. The fund has recently been awarded to three current Year 12 students and, again, the scope of aspirations is varied. Kitty Ye has received funding to support her volunteering programme and her medicine-related work experience; Vyashti Rajpara (pictured, right) will undertake a two-day Young Lawyer programme at UCL; and Shreya Mistry's (pictured, right) funding will be put towards hosting Ratcliffe's first charity fashion show, which will support her aspirations to enter the fashion marketing industry whilst allowing her to take responsibility for related aspects.



Thanks again to our OR sponsors for giving Ratcliffe students these valuable opportunities.

If you are interested in supporting the 2022 Careers Development Competition, please contact the Association Office or **Andrew Yell (82)**, Development Director, on **01509 817000** or [ayell@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:ayell@ratcliffcollege.com).



# COUNCIL MEMBERS 2021-2022

# YEAR GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

COUNCIL

COUNCIL



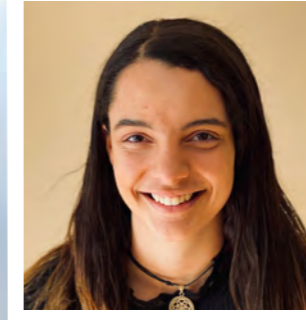
**PRESIDENT:**  
**BEN JACKSON (88)**



**VICE PRESIDENT:**  
**JON REDDIN (HEADMASTER)**



**VICE PRESIDENT:**  
**DAN AMIES (10)**



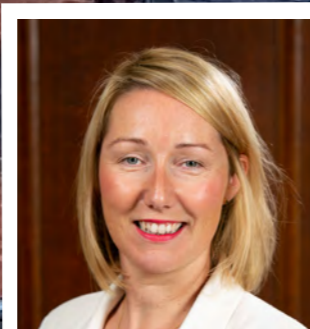
**10 YEARS OR LESS:**  
**SOPHIE RILEY (15)**



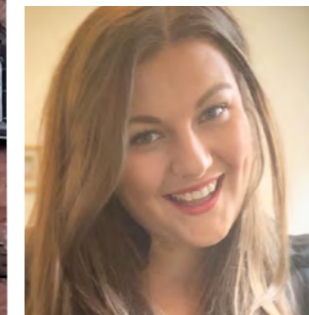
**10 YEARS OR LESS:**  
**ANNABEL WRIGHT (16)**



**ASSOCIATION MANAGER:**  
**SARAH GRETTON**



**ASSOCIATION SECRETARY  
& MEMBERSHIP OFFICER:**  
**KATHERINE LANG**



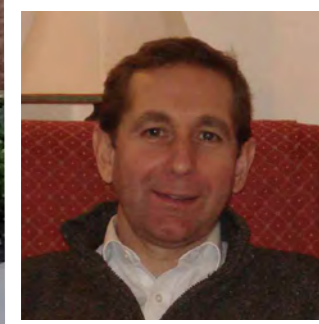
**10 - 20 YEARS:**  
**ELISABETH  
CARLEY-LEONARD (10)**



**30 - 40 YEARS:**  
**BENEDICT HEATH (87)**



**40 - 50 YEARS:**  
**STEVE CLARK (79)**



**HONORARY TREASURER:**  
**SIMON BURNS (83)**



**RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION  
CHAPLAIN:**  
**FR PHILIP SAINTER (69)**



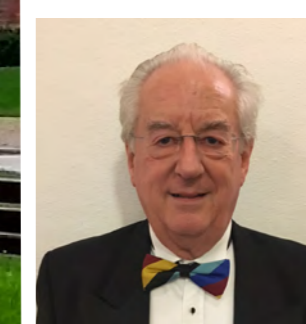
**DIRECTOR OF FINANCE  
& OPERATIONS:**  
**CHRIS BELLAMY**



**40 - 50 YEARS:**  
**MARK GAMBLE (71)**



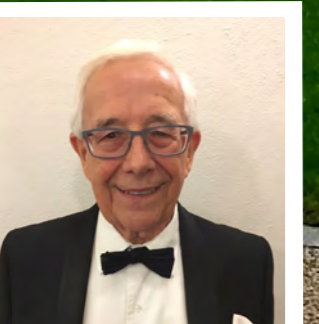
**40 - 50 YEARS:**  
**PETER ASTILL (71)**



**50 - 60 YEARS:**  
**RICHARD GAMBLE (64)**



**60 - 70 YEARS:**  
**DICK CUNNINGHAM (59)**



**PAST PRESIDENTS'  
DINNER COORDINATOR:**  
**MICHAEL HEATH (56)**



**SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER:**  
**BEN HARRISON**



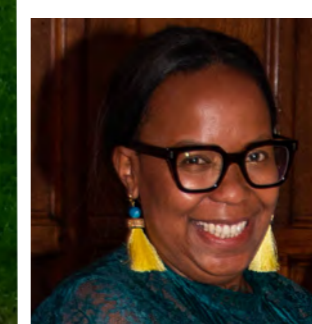
**DEVELOPMENT OFFICER:**  
**ANDREW YELL (82)**



**RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION &  
CUNNINGHAM FUND TRUSTEE:**  
**RICHARD ARMITAGE (71)**



**60 - 70 YEARS:**  
**MICHAEL COKER (52)**



**PAST PRESIDENT:**  
**SEBAKO SIAME (91)**



**PAST PRESIDENT:**  
**EMMA WRIGHT (94)**

# RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION ACCOUNTS

## YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2020

COUNCIL

<b>PROFIT &amp; LOSS</b>	2020 £	2019 £
<b>Revenue</b>		
Subscriptions		
School	41,252	44,604
Direct	4,722	4,907
	<b>45,974</b>	<b>49,511</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Old Ratcliffian - Advertising & Donations	975	546
Old Ratcliffian - School Contribution	2,000	2,000
Events Profit/(Loss)	4	74
Merchandise Profit	57	105
	<b>3,036</b>	<b>2,725</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>49,010</b>	<b>52,236</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Secretarial & Temp Labour	(23,636)	(29,176)
Old Ratcliffian - Printing	(7,830)	(8,165)
Old Ratcliffian - Post & Packing	(3,341)	(2,498)
Maintenance & Bar	(4,054)	(948)
Website & Computer	(2,462)	(2,249)
Leavers' Presentation Gifts	(1,929)	(1,948)
Postage, Stationery & Phone	(814)	(636)
Professional Fees	(625)	(938)
Donations	(550)	(775)
Subscriptions	(385)	(593)
Bank & Miscellaneous Charges	(242)	(428)
Miscellaneous Expenses	(152)	0
Travel & Subsistence	(91)	(656)
Gifts & Trophies	(21)	(358)
Event Clothing	0	(253)
Advertising	0	(22)
Printing & Copying	0	(288)
Depreciation	(272)	(271)
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(46,404)</b>	<b>(50,202)</b>
<b>Profit for Year</b>	<b>2,606</b>	<b>2,034</b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	2020 £	2019 £
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Computer Equipment (Undepreciated)	0	272
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Bank Balance	48,505	42,029
Merchandise Stock	5,152	1,968
Debtors & Prepayments	1,084	5,721
Bar Stock	99	99
Cash	254	1,045
	<b>55,094</b>	<b>50,862</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>55,094</b>	<b>51,134</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accruals	(10,724)	(1,693)
Creditors & Prepaid Income	(38)	(7,715)
	<b>(10,762)</b>	<b>(9,408)</b>
<b>Net Assets/Worth</b>	<b>44,332</b>	<b>41,726</b>
<b>Accumulated Fund of the Ratcliffian Association</b>		
Balance Brought Forward	41,726	39,692
Profit For Year	2,606	2,034
<b>Increased Balance Carried Forward</b>	<b>44,332</b>	<b>41,726</b>

## DID YOU KNOW... THE OLD RATCLIFFIAN MAGAZINE IS DISTRIBUTED TO OVER 2,500 ORs WORLDWIDE?

That's over 2,500 potential customers, or new business contacts, across the globe!  
WE WELCOME OLD RATCLIFFIAN BUSINESS OWNERS TO REACH OUT TO THIS FANTASTIC  
COMMUNITY, AND TO SUPPORT THE PRODUCTION OF THIS MUCH-LOVED MAGAZINE AT  
THE SAME TIME, BY ADVERTISING WITH US!

For more details, get in touch at [alumni@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffcollege.com) or call us on 01509 817054

# THANK YOU!

...to all those Old  
Ratcliffians who have  
contributed to this year's  
magazine. Your input is vital,  
and it's what makes this  
magazine so special!

### IT'S TIME TO GET IN TOUCH!

The Old Ratcliffian magazine is all about connecting ORs and keeping the spirit of Ratcliffe alive, and that's why we need you!

Work has already begun on the 2022 edition, so if you have some news to share, a story to tell, or an idea for a feature you'd like to see on these pages next year, we'd love to hear from you!

Get in touch at:  
[alumni@ratcliffcollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffcollege.com)  
or on 01509 817054



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# RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION EVENTS

## THE CLASS OF 1971: 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION THURSDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2021

The Class of 1971 gathered at Ratcliffe in October for their 50th anniversary reunion. It was a splendid occasion, starting with a welcome in the Old Library, to allow old acquaintances to be renewed. Remarkably, almost everyone recognised almost everyone else. A tour of the school followed, led by Louise Liston, Katherine Lang, Sarah Gretton, and **Andrew Yell (82)**, incorporating visits to parts of the school that were familiar to us, but also to the many additional and excellent facilities that have enabled the school to develop and progress over the years. **Bishop John Arnold (71)**, one of our own, said Mass and preached for us in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Appetites for dinner were whetted by pre-dinner drinks in the Old Ratcliffian Bar, where the first barrel of local ale, Charnwood Vixen, disappeared in record time. The Old Library is an elegant setting for a dinner, and it had been beautifully arranged. There, we enjoyed an excellent dinner, fine wines, and a noble speech by **Bill Hurrell (71)**; he congratulated **John McGlashan (71)** on having made the longest journey, from South Africa, and he gave special mention to **Tim Palmer (71)**, who also had a journey to travel - in his case, 3.1 miles. It would be fair to observe that the catering standards at Ratcliffe have evidently improved in 50 years. We were treated to a menu of poached salmon, fillet of beef, and pear tart, followed by cheese, and it was excellent fare. There was then time to reminisce further in the OR Bar after dinner, before retiring to our salubrious local hotels.

Ratcliffe in the years 1966 to 1971 was rather different from today. The pupils totalled around 300, all of whom were boarders, and all boys. Of the 65 or so in the year, 10 have since sadly died, and they were duly remembered at Mass. The fact that 25 managed to attend this reunion, 50 years after leaving, notwithstanding COVID factors that prevented several who now live overseas from joining us, was a testament to the spirit of this year group that has now reconvened on three occasions, at 25, 40, and 50 years.

Everyone enjoyed the occasion, and the Ratcliffian Association did us proud. No effort was spared by Sarah Gretton, assisted by Katherine Lang, in making the arrangements, stocking the bar, finalising the menu, laying out the Old Library, and generally ensuring that the event ran smoothly. Special thanks also go to Bill Hurrell, who trawled endlessly through contacts and social media to locate and get in touch with everyone in the year group to invite and encourage them to attend, and to **Richard Armitage (71)**, who liaised with Sarah to arrange menus, wines, and beers. A splendid effort. Who's arranging the next one?!

**Charles Dewhurst (71)**



## REUNION FOR THE CLASSES OF 2015 & 2016 SATURDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2021

In October, the Classes of 2015 and 2016 gathered at Ratcliffe for their respective six-year and five-year reunions. The 2015 reunion was originally meant to be held in 2020, but, like so many other events, it was postponed as a result of the pandemic. Therefore, a decision was made to combine the two year groups for a long-overdue celebration.

The evening started with a tour of the school, led by Mr Sharpe and Mr Sleath, allowing us to revisit some of the places where we had spent many years, in addition to seeing some of the changes that had occurred since we left school. These included the new Fitness Suite, the Lockhart Garden, and an extension to the Refectory. The occasion also allowed us to enjoy the refurbishment of the Old Ratcliffian Bar, which was the venue for the evening.

A welcome of cocktails and canapés greeted us on arrival, with the Long Island iced tea being established as a favourite from early on in the evening. We were able to enjoy some fantastic live music, followed by an impromptu performance from **Omar Khan (15)** and **Joey Higham (16)**. It was such a pleasure to see some of our former teachers, catch up with classmates, and have the opportunity to return to Ratcliffe. The evening concluded with a prearranged Ausden Clark bus transporting us to Loughborough for a return to an old favourite - Revs!

Thank you to Sarah Gretton and Katherine Lang for organising such a fantastic and memorable evening. Hopefully we won't leave it so long before we all meet again!

**Sophie Riley (15)**



## REUNION BAR NIGHT SATURDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER 2021

In September, we hosted our long-awaited Old Ratcliffian Reunion, which, this year, took the form of a Bar Night, utilising the wonderful OR Bar facility situated within the Fitness Suite.

Having been unable to host the Association's traditional Summer Reunion due to COVID restrictions, we were delighted to welcome almost 50 guests for a more informal evening in the OR Bar, where they enjoyed catching up over drinks, music, and a delicious curry, catered for by a local restaurant.

A range of year groups were represented on the evening, from 1959 right up to 2020 leavers; we were delighted to be able to present the latter with gifts to welcome them to the Association, following the cancellation of their traditional Leavers' Ceremony in May 2020. Notably, we also had large groups in attendance from the Class of 1991 and the Class of 2013, which really added to the occasion.

We were so glad to be able to host our very first OR social after a turbulent start to the year, and we received some wonderful feedback after the event:

**Hattie Lawrie (20):** "After having my final year of school interrupted by the pandemic, it was so lovely to be able to go back to Ratcliffe for the reunion. It was amazing to see such a range of different classes of leavers all coming together to celebrate the school. The evening was really well organised, and it gave me the opportunity to meet new people and catch up with friends from my own year that I haven't seen since leaving. I'm already really looking forward to the next event, whenever that may be!"

**Louise Jackson (91):** "Thank you for such a wonderful evening on Saturday. It was great to catch up with old friends and share happy memories about our time together at Ratcliffe."

**Sam Spillane (née Murphy) (91):** "Well done and thank you for a really fun night on Saturday! Everything was perfect, and our group had a fabulous time!"

**Nicola Williams (11):** "Thank you for a wonderful evening at the Reunion Bar Night on Saturday. I very much enjoyed returning to Ratcliffe to see my classmates, and also to meet new people. I had a fabulous time and would love to return to Ratcliffe again in the future!"

**Charlie Dolan (13):** "I had a great evening, and it was really good to talk to so many other ORs. I can't wait for the next one!"

**Dominic Marshall (90):** "It was very emotional to walk around the grounds after over 30 years, stopping to reminisce about times gone by. It was an amazing feeling. I thoroughly enjoyed the evening, seeing my brothers and sisters, as I call them, after so many years. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to see them. We were up until 5am talking about old times. That is what Ratcliffe College creates - friends for life."



## THE PAST PRESIDENTS' DINNER FRIDAY 29TH OCTOBER 2021

After a lockdown break in 2020, the Past Presidents celebrated with relish an October return to the College for the annual Mass and Dinner. Mass in the Chapel was celebrated by **Bishop John Arnold (71)**, assisted by **Fr Simon Giles (60)** and **Fr David Tobin (59)**. During the thought-provoking service, we contemplated on past pupils no longer with us, messages from those absent this year, and the importance of prayer for present and future leaders influencing wider global events.

We were delighted to welcome Jackie Bennett to the reception. She had called in to meet up with many with whom she had worked as Ratcliffian Association Secretary and Executive Manager until her retirement. **Ben Jackson (88)** then presided at a superb meal prepared by the College's catering team, and his short speech reflected on thoughtfulness and kindness - both essential parts of the ethos and spirit of Ratcliffe.

Ratcliffe Headmaster Jon Reddin was unable to join us, due to important family commitments, but nevertheless, he appeared via video link, suitably attired in black tie, to update us on the events and successes of the College during an exceptionally difficult period. He finished with a toast to the Ratcliffian Association and its former presidents.

As always at this event, the important links between past and present were firmly maintained.

Those present were: **Ben Jackson (88)** (President), **Dan Amies (10)** (Vice President), **Fr David Tobin (59)** (Former Father President), Sarah Gretton (Association Manager), Katherine Lang (Association Secretary), and Past Presidents **Michael Coker (52)**, **Michael Heath (56)**, **Sir Anthony Holland (56)**, **Dick Cunningham (59)**, **Fr Simon Giles (60)**, **Paul Carter (60)**, **Fr Ted Mullen (60)**, **Paul Rudd (60)**, **Richard Gamble (64)**, **Bishop John Arnold (71)**, and **Abe Mee (92)**.

**Michael Heath (56)**



# RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION SPORTS EVENTS



## THE REYNARD TROPHY SATURDAY 5TH JUNE 2021

This year's Reynard Trophy competition saw the highest attendance in recent years, with a mixture of established players alongside some very welcome fresh faces.

It was almost perfect weather for golf; a still, sunny June day and playing from the back tees at Rothley Park Golf Club made for a positive start to the day. The custom of the defending champion teeing off first saw **Bernard Murphy (67)** find the fairway with his drive, and the groups were away.

**Jack Hancock (16)** hit a fabulous approach on the uphill par 3 7th hole to win the 'Nearest the Pin' prize. **Sean Kelly (81)** set up an excellent round with a solid approach on the par 3 4th hole, taking the second 'Nearest the Pin' prize, followed by a booming drive on the 16th hole to also claim the 'Longest Drive'. However, despite all the quality that Sean's round possessed, it was not quite enough to beat **Will Harkness' (16)** score of 37, making Will the 2021 custodian of the Reynard Trophy.

Sean Kelly remarked: "The 'youngsters' should be ashamed to be out-driven on the longest drive by a fat old man who's nearly 60! If that happens again next year, they should face a humiliating penalty!"

**Alison Court (née Mason) (98)** said: "I loved playing. It's a really well-organised event, we were blessed with gorgeous sunshine, and the course was in excellent condition. It's great to play with others that I don't usually play with, and being Old Ratcliffians, we already have a common interest. There is no stuffiness, just a nice, relaxed, fun round with a bit of friendly competition."

**Dominic Russell (78)** added: "It's such a welcoming place to play golf, and for many, it holds happy memories."

2021 players: **Alison Court (née Mason) (98)**, **Keith Edgar (03)** (golf captain), **Ed Gamble (95)**, **Jack Hancock (16)**, **Will Harkness (16)**, **John Kay (81)**, **Sean Kelly (81)**, **Paul Morris (06)**, **Tom Mulligan (11)**, **Bernard Murphy (67)**, **Dominic Russell (78)**, **Ben Pole (16)**, **Sam Tyler (16)**, **Jim West (77)**, and **Max Wheeler (16)**.

**Keith Edgar (03)**  
Golf Captain



## THE CENTENARY SALVER FRIDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2021

Ratcliffe's team of six ORs found their way to the Luffenham Heath Golf Club on a windy day with unexpected bouts of sunshine in late September.

The course was in wonderful condition, with challenging, fast, unforgiving greens – a real test for any golfer. Therefore, when the second of the three Ratcliffe pairs submitted their cards, the ORs were the clubhouse leaders!

The father-and-son pairing of **Sean Kelly (81)** and Angus Kelly posted a solid 35 points, followed by previous Reynard Trophy winners **Abe Mee (92)** and **Keith Edgar (03)**, who matched the Kellys' total. As the other teams concluded their rounds, the

ORs were hoping for a big score from **Andy Yell (82)** and **Chris Merriman (83)**. They duly obliged, and as they stood on the 17th tee, the pair were on a score of 39 points with two holes to play. Unfortunately, they also finished on 39 points, giving the Ratcliffe team a total of 74 points, and finishing a respectable fourth after last year's second place.

This excellent event, hosted at an elite golf course, was enjoyed by all who took part.

**Keith Edgar (03)**  
Golf Captain



## THE GRAND MATCH SUNDAY 27TH JUNE 2021

After COVID enforced the lay-off of the 2020 Grand Match, the Old Ratcliffians returned in June in search of the trophy, which has been in the College's hands for a number of years.

The ORs batted first, and **Ollie Welch (20)** with 33 and **Jamie Gilbertson (20)** with 76 helped them towards a good total of 207, after the early fall of key wicket **Toby Snell (19)**. The College steadily accumulated runs in response, built around 76 from their captain, Aled King, and strong hitting from Cam Mulvihill. The game came down to the final over, with Cam hitting the winning runs with only two balls to spare and two wickets in hand.

It was fantastic to get back to playing, and this was one of the most keenly contested and entertaining games for many years. It was, as always, played in great spirits, and captained well by **Ed Gamble (95)**. He said: "The school played solid cricket with yet another fantastic run chase, right down to the last over. It's fair to say that the Old Boys ran out of puff!"

**Ed Woodcock**  
Head of Cricket





**Fin Back (19):** "Since leaving Ratcliffe, I've been playing football professionally at Nottingham Forest. Having been in their academy since the age of eight, it has always been a dream of mine to play for the football club, and I recently achieved this when I made my professional debut in August, playing as a right-back. I started in a 2-0 win over Bradford City in the first round of the League Cup, and I have gone on to make four appearances this season, including my first league start in the Championship against Stoke City. I feel honoured and proud to have played in front of a packed-out City Ground, and it has shown me that hard work, sacrifice, and dedication really do pay off. I must thank all my family for their support, and also the College itself for helping me to manage my education and football throughout my 13 years there as a student. As a just-turned-19-year-old, I am now more determined than ever to train hard every day, as I have experienced what opportunities can arise from this. A particularly memorable moment for me was walking out of the tunnel to the Forest fans singing the infamous 'Mull of Kintyre' when making my first team debut. As a fan of the club myself, this is a special tradition before each game, so having the opportunity to walk out and experience that is something that I will never forget. My long-term goal within football is to make as many appearances as I can and play at the highest level possible, both domestically and internationally."



**Annabel Wright (16):** "I've finally settled into a new life 11,500 miles away from Leicestershire, in Auckland, New Zealand, and it's been a whirlwind of a year! COVID-19 was starting to erupt during my last month of travelling around Australia, back in January 2020, but I carried on, completely naive to how big this eruption was going to be. Moving to a city of 53 volcanic centres, they were far from the concern that COVID-19 was becoming! However, the New Zealand government

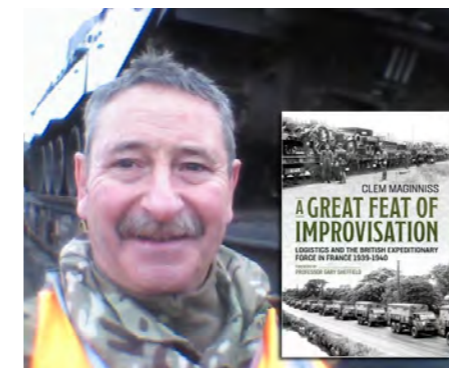
**Darrell Abeysondera (96):** "I've been really busy working in orthopaedics. I'm a plaster technician at Leicester Royal Infirmary, working in busy clinics and applying casts on patients - I'm glad we've not seen many Ratcliffe students. Keep safe, everyone."

made moves, and a strict two-month lockdown allowed my first year living here to be largely COVID-19-free. Around my working life, I've managed to explore this incredibly beautiful country alongside my Kiwi catch, Nick, and his 'whanau' (Maori for 'family'), making life here as comfortable as home. My first Christmas in 30-degree heat was an experience; watching New Zealand beat Pakistan in the Boxing Day five-day Cricket Test meant that I could finally learn the rules of cricket and top up my tan at the same time! I now have a more permanent working visa, and I fully believe that New Zealand is my new home for life, but it would be lovely for the borders to open, so that we can visit my family and friends soon."



**Clem Maginniss (74)** was delighted to have his second book, *A Great Feat of Improvisation*, published by Helion and Company this year. He said: "History has always been in my DNA, but at Ratcliffe, I had the good fortune to be mentored by the legendary and never-to-be-forgotten Doc Orton, whose skills in bringing history to life were absolutely remarkable. Having failed to obtain a place at medical school, I took a degree in Modern European History and International Relations at the University of Warwick before becoming a soldier, and the rest is history! I wrote this book because not only had the incredible story of the logistics of the British Expeditionary

Force in 1939 to 1940 been hidden for 80 years, but also three close members of the family had served in its ranks in France, one of whom, **Hugh Maginniss (35)**, was one of my father's (**Clem Maginniss' (45)**) brothers. Bringing the past to the present is a fascinating activity; however, we must take care not to view the past through the lenses of the present, and, instead, analyse people and events within their cultural space, time, experience, and knowledge. As historians, we are privileged to look back, but with the care that creates fair balance and incisive observations to help craft the future. In this respect, I trust that the courage of the military and civilian logisticians that supported the BEF have been brought to life."

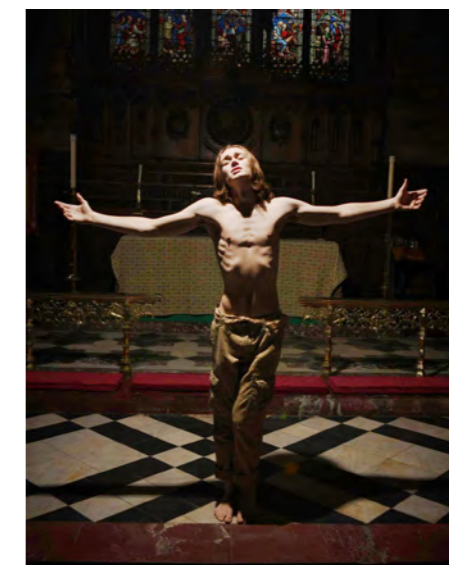


**Alan Oakey (69):** "I write with sadness to say that my wife, Joan (aged 68), died on September 4th 2021, after a long fight with Alzheimer's disease. We have known each other for over 50 years and been married for 48 years. Happily, Joan and I were able to visit Ratcliffe a number of times together after our marriage. Joan had suffered from early-onset Alzheimer's for many years, and when she was first diagnosed with the condition, our specialist advised us to take any overseas trips sooner rather than later. We took him up on his advice and travelled to places that we had never dreamed of going to previously, including Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Malaysia, and Singapore (well, we had been to Singapore, a city we both loved, a few times!), of which a highlight was our trip up the Mekong River. These journeys did present challenges (including a trip through Saigon in an ambulance - and yes, the locals still called the city Saigon), but we would not have missed them for the world. Joan died on September 4th, so we were able to celebrate her 68th birthday on July 31st, and our 48th wedding anniversary on August 18th. It is one of those sad aspects of life that Joan's father died less than two months before her; sadly, we were unable to attend his funeral in Brisbane due to Joan's final illness. This

photo of myself and Joan was taken in a little town called Boorowa in Yass Valley Shire in the Southern Tablelands district of New South Wales."



**Edward Smellie (20)** led the cast in Sky Theatre's production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, where he played the title role. He was accompanied on stage by current Ratcliffe students, Maisie Ashford-Clark (Year 12), Hattie Ashford-Clark (Year 10), and Maddy Dunstan (Year 11), who contributed powerful singing and expressive dance performances to the piece. The setting, in St Mary's Church in Melton Mowbray, created a beautiful atmosphere for this high-energy, brilliantly executed performance. Edward said: "It has been a joy and a pleasure. Performing the lead role of Jesus was an absolute dream come true. The cast was unbelievably talented, and the production was incredibly professional, directed with respect and true creative vision. It is, and will always be, a stand-out moment in my career, especially being able to work alongside fellow Ratcliffians and the fabulous Claudette Caven-Henrys. I am currently, and will forever be, filled with pride and joy when I think about this show; it was a blessing to share it with all those who came to see it." Congratulations to all involved.



**Simon Gray (12):** "After going through an extreme physical transformation, I recently followed my lifelong dream of joining the military. This year, I have joined the RAF and been successful in my application to be a Weapon Systems Operator. I graduated from basic training in July and received the top two most coveted awards that an RAF recruit can receive: the Rothschild Trophy, awarded to the recruit who achieves the highest overall standard in Initial Force Protection Training (IFPT), and the Lord Trenchard Trophy, awarded to the most outstanding recruit. I have just completed my DE SNCO Course at RAF Halton, where I have achieved the rank of Sergeant prior to the start of my trade, training as a Weapon Systems Operator."



**Marcus Mills (89):** "I was unable to celebrate my 50th as planned (cycling from London to Paris), but I managed a few laps of the Lake District instead and raised a bit of money for my local Rowans Hospice. I met up with **Andy Dorrett (89)** a few weeks ago to chew the fat after a 'blip' - it turned out to be 10 years ago that we last caught up! My eldest has just graduated after completing a four-year Business and Spanish degree and has landed herself a job in the Smoke, and my youngest is now in his second year at university and the live-in landlord, so the nest has been emptied. I don't mind the fridge being full and no shoes in the hallway, though!"



**Adrian Fidler (98):** "Once again, **Sam Bird (98)** organised our annual sailing event. In previous years, we have had more ORs attending. This year, **Andrew Espinasse (98)**, Sam, and I attended, along with Ben Court (husband of **Alison Court (née Mason) (98)**), Carl Pastars (husband of **Maria Pastars (née De Rienzo) (96)**), and Phil, a friend of Sam's. We set off from Hamble and tried to sail around the Isle of Wight! It's always a pleasure seeing old friends, and it's a good way to relax and keep in touch." Pictured, below, are Adrian, Carl, and Sam.



**George Mount (99):** "2021 at Roots has not been the year we imagined, but there is still time to turn it around - whatever the new normal is, we will be in full swing of it by Christmas (all being well). We decided we all needed a little pick-me-up on the farm, so we asked our girls if they would help us choose a new farm pet. Knowing that Daddy had always been a fan of wallabies, that is exactly what they decided on, and so our adventure with these beautiful animals began. Our four boys arrived at the farm in March; they love their neighbours, the alpacas, they have made friends with our shop visitors, and they are looking forward to seeing Santa at the farm, because we all deserve a treat this year. The farm and shop are keeping me busy, and in a crazy world, sometimes you just need a bit of time with these bouncing boys to keep you smiling."



**Georgia Holt (16):** "I was on trial with the Great Britain Cycling Team (GBCT) from October to January this year, and I had targets to hit. I hit those targets, and I was absolutely over the moon with my performance in January. I had hoped that my performances would bag me a spot on the squad, but unfortunately, the selection panel thought otherwise. That was a total heartbreaker, and if I remember rightly, I did an interview as part of Ratcliffe's Friday Night Lights series literally 24 hours after finding out about my non-selection. January to March was rough, to say the least. I'm really happy to say, though, that I've recently been transferred onto the tandem, to pilot it for one of the visually impaired female athletes. My partner is Matt Rotherham, and he piloted Neil Fachie in the Men's B 1000m time trial at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, where they won gold! I'm so excited to get started. I've also graduated with a first-class degree in Biomedical Sciences!"



On August 4th 2021, **Alasdair Macmillan (58)**, Sue and **Peter Casartelli (56)**, and Gill and **Jonty Myles (57)** met for a much-delayed post-COVID lunch at the Peacock Inn in Piltdown, Sussex. The meeting gave them a great opportunity to catch up after so long, whilst trying to avoid the subjects of age, health, COVID, and politics! Any other ORs in Sussex would be welcome to join them next time.



**Austin Baxter (49)** has informed us that his wife, Mildred Baxter (née Cunningham), died peacefully, aged 88, on Tuesday 5th October in hospital in Nottingham, from pneumonia. Mildred was mother to **Judith (80)**, **Rachel (82)**, **Sarah (83)**, and **William (87)**, who all attended Ratcliffe. Friends in the Ratcliffe community will remember Austin and Mildred's welcoming hospitality at Dovedale Road, and for many years, they hosted the annual Ratcliffian Nottingham Dinner.



**Paul Holmes (74)**, an Oxford German scholar, has kindly donated two copies of his first book, *Versuch einer Wahrheitsmetaphysik*, to Ratcliffe, with one for the Emery Library and one for the Sixth Form Centre. He has also kindly offered his skills to the Head of Modern Foreign Languages at the school, having received inspirational teaching during his time there as a student. Paul said: "I left Ratcliffe, having passed my Oxford entrance examination, and, following the wonderful advice of Herbert Orton and the help and support (in the Upper Sixth) of John Satterthwaite, I went on to study Philosophy and German in a combined school's degree." Paul said that he wrote his book in German, as he is able to "think much more freely in German than in English". He added: "Maybe this could inspire other Ratcliffians to maintain their endeavours in learning the language - it is so worth it!"



**John Willcox (54):** "My wife and I have been living happily in retirement in Easingwold for the last 20 years or so. We have five children and 15 grandchildren, most of whom are now in their late teens (one is only six!), and either at university or college. I worked for 40 years teaching French at Ampleforth, and I was Games Master for 25 years before becoming a Housemaster for the last 10. Three of our children live in Durham, Whitley Bay, and Boroughbridge, so they are within striking distance. One lives in Worcester, so it is not as easy to see him. Our eldest son lives in Edmonds, 15 miles north of Seattle, and we have had enormous pleasure in flying over there 10 times. Sadly, I doubt whether we will do it again, even if COVID allows us! The Pacific Northwest must be one of the most

beautiful places on earth. I have also been playing a lot of golf in the last 25 years, and I still manage to get round once a week. The trouble is, it takes me a good 48 hours to recover - probably because not only is it a long walk, but I also seem to take more shots than anybody else! Some years ago, I had a call from **Brian (Benjamin) Eshekwu (55)**, who was at school with me; he was visiting his daughter, who was at university in Liverpool, but I could not arrange to see him on the day he wanted. I wrote to him later, but received no reply. The school told me that he had changed his name, and they were no longer in touch with him. It may be that an OR who reads this might know where I could contact him! It would be good to talk to and hear from him."



**Sally Rigby (née Croysdale) (15)** left Ratcliffe with four A Levels in Maths, Further Maths, Physics, and Chemistry. A love of maths, particularly the more applied Mechanics modules, sparked an interest in engineering, and so she pursued an integrated Master's degree in Engineering Science at the University of Oxford. She now combines this technical knowledge with project management skills in the engineering sector, currently acting as a project engineer for a nuclear enrichment company. She is proud to be improving diversity in male-dominated industries. **William Rigby (14)** also studied Maths, Further Maths, and Physics at Ratcliffe, with A Level Music completing the quartet. Similarly, he took his interest in maths and physics to the University of Durham, completing a Masters in General Engineering. This logical, mathematical mindset lends itself to coding, and now he uses these skills as a technical business

analyst in the insurance industry. Having met at Ratcliffe in the Senior Orchestra, William and Sally married in Oxford in 2021, and they now live together in London, combining their interests in engineering and music! You can read more about their wedding on page 54.



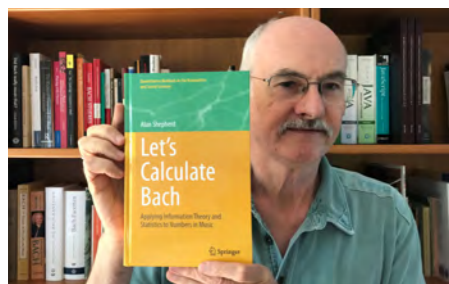
**John Astin (61)** is delighted to announce the publication of his first book, *Measuring EU Inflation: The Foundations of the HICP*. When asked about how he came to write the book, he said: "I worked throughout the 1990s for Eurostat - the EU statistics office in Luxembourg - where I was in charge of the unit responsible for developing a new index of inflation, so that all member states could calculate their inflation rate in the same way and would, thus, be directly comparable. This was a necessary prelude to the establishment of the euro area. The book is the result of my years in Eurostat developing the HICP, which was launched in early 1997. It was a fascinating part of my professional life, involving countless international meetings and visits, and so I was delighted when the publishers, Palgrave Macmillan, jumped at the chance of publishing it."

**Philip Barry (62)** wrote a touching message to the editor of the *Old Ratcliffian*. He said: "The spirit of Ratcliffe is a living, vibrant, giving spirit. It must be so, as I still experience it as real, even after all these years! I have found that it helps me to meet the many challenges of life that we all face, and to stay on the right track, especially in this rapidly changing world. The spirit and all-pervading influence of the College have been with me all my life, ever since I left - often without me being aware of them, but nevertheless still there! The teachers, both lay and religious, were inspirational, and the Rosminian ethos, put into practice by **Fr Claude Leetham (1915)** and so many others, of service to others and of taking responsibility for oneself and one's actions, has never left me. My time at Ratcliffe was a happy, fulfilling one. I have much to be thankful for, and I am delighted to see, on every page of the *Old Ratcliffian*, so many smiling faces; that says everything to me about the spirit of Ratcliffe."

The Association would like to thank **Rory Coonan (72)** for his wonderful contribution to the Remembering Grace Dieu article on page 72. Rory is the director of Coral Living Ltd, former director of Circle Healthcare, and creator of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) 1994-1997. He was previously Head of Architecture at the Arts Council of Great Britain, and he is an honorary fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. After Ratcliffe, where he was Head Boy, he was a prize-winning undergraduate at Oxford University (Wadham College). He then completed postgraduate studies at the Royal College of Art. He has been a correspondent for the *Financial Times* and *Observer*. The National Portrait Gallery has collected his photographs, and his publications include *American Painting* (1982).



**Alan Shepherd (71)** is delighted to announce that his first book, *Let's Calculate Bach: Applying Information Theory and Statistics to Numbers in Music*, was published by Springer Nature this year. Alan said: "My interest in music started at Ratcliffe, strumming chords on the guitar like many other Fifth Formers. Not being able to sing, though, this seemed rather pointless, so I moved on to classical guitar, and then to piano in the Lower Sixth, and to the organ in the Upper Sixth (and received a Progress Prize!). My taste soon gravitated towards baroque music, and to J S Bach in particular. I built a clavichord during my student days and owned a harpsichord for some years, but music very much took second place to my career in IT and my family (the first of our two daughters, **Theresa (02)**, attended the Sixth Form at Ratcliffe). Since the



origins of this book can be traced back to Ratcliffe. I would like to donate a copy to the school." Katherine Lang, the Ratcliffian Association Secretary, recently presented the book to Ratcliffe's Music Director, Mrs Katy Donegan, and Music teacher **Mr Rory Finn (11)**, who were delighted to accept the book on behalf of the College. It was gratefully received, and it will be a welcome addition to the resources used to teach A Level Music.



**George Hamlyn Williams (01):** "After taking a year out before completing an additional A Level at college, I studied Dietetics and Nutrition at the University of Surrey, graduating in 2008. I have since specialised in bariatric surgery and now manage a service for a private provider, as well as looking after my own cohort of patients. I love helping people to develop a healthier, more balanced relationship with food, after what has been, for many, several years of disordered eating. Despite having been an exercise-hating child, I took up running about 10 years ago, after gaining a couple of stone at uni. It has since turned into a passion, and I recently completed my first official marathon in 3 hours, 29 minutes, and 31 seconds! I officially have the 'bug' now, and I feel sure that it won't be my last..."



**Victoria Jordan (17):** "I should have been married in February 2021, but due to the pandemic, we moved the date to August 6th 2022. I'm really hoping to be able to share a wedding photograph with you all in next year's magazine! It's been a hard year financially for myself and my partner, and trying to organise our wedding on top of all that is so stressful. I know absolutely nothing about planning one, let alone my own! I'm just praying that everything runs smoothly for us. We also have a new addition - a puppy called Betty. She is a King Charles-cocker spaniel cross. I got her when she was four months old, as I was finding it really hard during the pandemic. She will be two in November - time with her has flown by! She is so playful, and a real bundle of fun."



**Holly Blount (17):** "After three years of studying English at the University of Exeter, I'm proud to have graduated in 2021 with a first-class degree and a Dean's Commendation award. Despite finishing during a very strange academic year, I'm incredibly grateful to have attended a university where I was still able to get out to the beach to swim on most weekends, even in the winter! Next, I'm thrilled to be trading in the sea for snow, as I'll be working as a chalet host in Méribel, France, for the 2021-2022 winter season. The future is open and exciting, and after my ski season, I'm hoping to explore the television, film, and entertainment industry as a potential career path. I will particularly be looking to gain experience in documentary research."

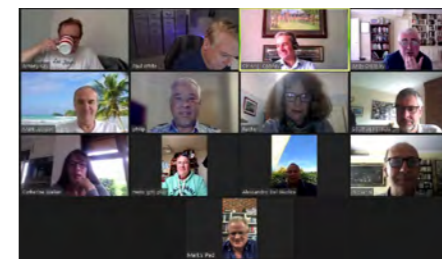


**John Castell (59):** "**Pat De Burca (60)** and I had recently re-established contact by email, and as Pat lives in Colchester, and I in Bury St Edmunds, we agreed to meet in Sudbury, which is about 18 miles from each of us. We had lunch together and compared our reminiscences during our time at Ratcliffe, when we were both athletes. We also caught up on our respective 'doings' since we left. Pat recounted his time in the RAF as a navigator on Canberra bombers, and his time in Berlin when 'the Wall' came down. I worked in the import and export of agricultural products worldwide, particularly the former Soviet countries. We caught up on our respective family histories, and Pat even brought a photo album. The time flew by, and we will definitely do it again." John (pictured below) added that the most amusing part was when he, convinced that Pat would cycle to their meeting, decided to cycle the 18 miles to Sudbury as well. His wife, Moira, thought he was mad, and urged him to catch the bus instead. On arriving, John stopped to ask a smartly dressed man if he was in the right place, only to find that it was Pat! Not only did John fail to recognise him without all his cycling gear on, but even worse, Pat had come on the bus! John said: "I spent the ride home working out how to explain the situation to Moira without losing too much face!"



**Paul White (81)**, now living in Thailand, hosted a virtual reunion for the Class of '81 on Saturday 26th June via Zoom. All attendees had the chance to share their stories from the past, reminisce about old photographs, and hear from their classmates about their experiences over the past 40 years. Paul said: "I was delighted with the attendance of 17 ORs on the Saturday, and then five ORs met up virtually on the Sunday, too. The smaller group led to a much more animated discussion. It was great to catch up and hear everybody's news, but the best thing

was hearing all the memories of Ratcliffe, as there is so much that we had all forgotten. Everybody said that we shouldn't leave it 40 years next time!" This was the first virtual reunion that the Association had helped to arrange, with Paul taking the lead on the arrangements and hosting the event. He added that he'd be very happy to help with any year group that wanted to host a virtual meet-up in the future.



**Anthony Cutler (73):** "I retired on July 30th, after 48 years on PAYE. I'm looking to spend more time with my cars at circuits around the UK and on the continent, and also with my four grandchildren. I wish all my fellow classmates from '73 a long and happy retirement."



**Richard Palmer (83)** completed the London Marathon on Sunday 3rd October, raising more than £3,500 for Brain Tumour Research. Richard undertook the challenge in memory of his school friend, **Andrew Ramen (83)**, who passed away in January 2019 from a brain tumour. He said: "My dear friend Andrew was astonishingly intelligent and a wonderful conversationalist, particularly on subjects that interested him, such as world history, politics, literature, and travel. He was an incredibly interesting guy - inquisitive, adventurous, but always humble. He lived life to the full and had many close friends who all miss him terribly. It was a real shock when he was diagnosed with an incurable brain tumour in October 2008. The following month, he had surgery to debulk the tumour at Charing Cross Hospital in London, followed by radiotherapy and chemotherapy. His tumour was a glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), the most

common type of primary malignant brain tumour in adults. The average survival time for GBM patients is devastatingly short - just 12 to 18 months. Amazingly, Andrew lived for 10 years after his diagnosis, losing his life on January 16th 2019." Richard added: "I've done a few big running events over the years. Last year, I completed the Virtual London Marathon, when the physical event was cancelled due to the pandemic. I started training for the October London Marathon in June and managed to stick to my training plan, which has included lots of yoga, as well as running. All of that helped me to get around the course on the day, along with the crowds of supporters, who were just incredible. The run was tough - especially after the 20-mile point - but doing it in Andrew's memory was an honour, and it was a very emotional experience."



The photo below shows Myrna and **Nigel Jewell (58)**, Sue and **Mike Waldron (58)**, and Gill and **Jonty Myles (57)** (still showing some after-effects of an eye operation) meeting for lunch at a halfway pub near Wisley in Surrey. The ORs found it difficult to believe that they had known each other for some 71 years! Long may their friendship continue.



**Francois Grosjean (64)** recently had his latest book, *Life as a Bilingual*, published by Cambridge University Press. It is based on his successful Psychology Today blog, which has received 2.2 million visitors. He also told us of a funny exchange that he had with his eight-year-old grandson. Francois said: "He has started to read *Harry Potter* in German, as he lives in Zurich and goes to school in Germany. When I told him that my boarding school resembled Hogwarts in many ways (houses, uniforms, refectory, common rooms, dormitories, etc.), he was amazed. 'So, you also learned Witchcraft and Wizardry?' he asked. There, I had to answer in the negative, but now he thinks I was a bit like Harry Potter in my youth, especially as I showed him a photo of me in my Ratcliffe uniform at that time!"



**Simon Fox (72)** would like to invite the Class of 1972 to attend this summer's annual reunion event at Ratcliffe College, to join him in celebrating 50 years since leaving. The Class of 1972 was last together at the 2012 reunion, and they would like to celebrate in style again in 2022. Keep an eye on the Association website, where the reunion date will soon be confirmed. Pictured, below (from left to right), are **Marcus Langer (72)**, **Charlie Weidner (72)**, **Mike Ogilvie (72)**, **Charlie Tetlow (73)**, **Matthew Lindley (72)**, **John Bradley (72)**, and **Ashley Harrington (72)** at the 2012 reunion.



**Robert Ippaso (73)**: "I am still splitting my months between Naples, Florida, and Philadelphia, navigating the requirements of a busy work life and an all-consuming pandemic which has hit the USA hard. Below are a few brief words to bring a smile and elicit a thought from all Old Ratcliffians, particularly those who share a quiet belief in their religion which they so lived and practised during their years at Ratcliffe, and beyond."



**Travelling with God**

A colleague asked, "Are you a Christian?"  
 Implying if I practise my religion every day.  
 What a topic, subtly graphic,  
 How to answer, what to say?

A moral trap to utter "Yes",  
 "Thou shalt not lie" jumping instantly to mind,  
 Should I now smile, force him to guess,  
 Not showing I'm so clearly in a bind?

If I say "No", what will he think?  
 I'm not the man he'd hoped I'd be?  
 My brain a jumble, options sink,  
 My instinct to quickly turn and flee.

At this point, you may well ask  
 Whatever did you choose to do?  
 I swallowed hard, reviewed the task  
 Began to think the problem through.

Do I believe? Yes, in my way,  
 But maybe not according to "The Book",  
 Others' held views never did sway,  
 Most caring little how they feel, just how they look.

With that all said, I held his stare,  
 And uttered this one simple phrase:  
 There's but one God which we all share  
 With Him I'll travel life's strange maze.

**Mark Fisher (92)** has lived in Singapore since 2002, and he has worked for Richard Branson since the late 1990s, currently as Chief Operating Officer of Virgin Radio International (pictured, below, with Chris Evans). He is a passionate long-course triathlete, having completed 12 IRONMAN triathlons (consisting of a 3.8km swim, a 180km bike ride, and a 42km run), and he recently earned a place at the IRONMAN World Championships in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. In August 2021, he became the proud dad of Felix, born in Singapore, and he is excited for the adventures ahead.



**Mark Cleary (73)** has begun researching the history of Ratcliffe, focusing particularly on the ways in which the growth, activity, and structure of the College have changed as the religious and social environments in which it operates have altered. He is also examining what the history of the College tells us about the wider context of Catholic education and society. The Ratcliffian Association has digital copies of every edition of the *Old Ratcliffian* (formerly known as the *Ratcliffian*) since 1850. Mark said: "My thanks to the Association for providing such a valuable historic archive!"



**James Gillick (88)** is currently exhibiting his latest works of art at the Jonathan Cooper Gallery in Chelsea. An article published in the *Independent Catholic News*, written by Amanda C Dickie, explains how James makes all his own paints using 17th-century techniques. She writes: "Going back to basics, he has developed his distinctive style through researching the methods

used by Dutch and Spanish masters of the 17th and 18th centuries." Gallery owner Jonathan Cooper, who has known James Gillick for over 20 years, added: "I know of no other artist who paints still life objects so beautifully", saying that he is one of the finest painters of the genre living in Britain today. (Photo courtesy of Amanda C Dickie.)



**Roderick O'Donnell (70)** has written 'From Whitehall Palace to Wigan Pier, English Catholic Places of Worship 1689-1829'. It features as a chapter in Paul Barnwell and Mark Smith's book of edited lectures, *Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland 1689-1829, Rewley House Studies in the Historic Environment*, published by Shaun Tyas in 2021.



**Walter Yell (13)**: "On September 26th, I completed the IRONMAN 70.3 Bolton. The triathlon challenge was held in the North West, with the open-water swim at Pennington Flash, and an impressive finish line right in the town centre. I managed to complete it, although not in the time I had hoped, due to having a heavy crash on the bike segment. I was just happy to get to the finish line! After leaving Ratcliffe, I lived in Australia for 12 months with my then girlfriend (now fiancée), Rachel. We've since settled down

and got ourselves a place and a dog. I'm now running small new-build construction sites and using my position to try and link up with Old Ratcliffians in the industry to contract work to. My classmate **Will Watts (13)** has done a great job of setting up and organising fortnightly social five-a-side football for a group of 15 or so guys from our year, which is a great place to catch up with people. I also attended my sister **Laura's (11)** wedding back in June. She married her partner, **Amy Clayfield (11)**, in North Cornwall, and it was an amazing, family day."



**Chris Della Porta (79)** was proud to lead the cycle-past for Johnny Johnson MBE DFM, 'the last Dambuster', on Saturday 17th May. The event was organised as a commemoration to the very day, 78 years ago, when a then 22-year-old Johnny was a gunner in an RAF Lancaster bomber - one of 19 which attacked dams in the Ruhr Valley, Nazi Germany's industrial heartland. The cyclists each rode 19 miles - a mile for each of the planes that took off - to Mr Johnson's sheltered accommodation in Bristol. The near-centurion was delighted with the pedal-past, with him instantly recognising Chris and giving him a friendly wave as he cycled by, followed by other members of his team. Chris was very pleased with how the event went, considering the difficulties in planning it, due to the restrictions in place during the pandemic.



In addition to this, over 1,000 cyclists took part in the Dambusters Ride 2021 in Lincolnshire, and virtually around the world, on Saturday 3rd July. Together, they raised £200,000 for the RAF Benevolent Fund. They cycled either 100 miles or 56 miles, with the latter representing the number of lives that were lost on May

17th 1943 (53 killed in action, 3 prisoners of war). Chris said: "I met up with Johnny Johnson in Bristol on Wednesday 15th September - Battle of Britain Day. Johnny said: 'I'm extremely thankful for the tremendous effort that people made to remember all those we lost, by taking part in the Dambusters Ride this year, and I'd like to say good luck to those taking part next year.'" Johnny will be 100 on Thursday 25th November this year.

The RAF Benevolent Fund is proud and privileged to be the official guardian of the Bomber Command Memorial, which stands as a fitting tribute to the 55,573 Bomber Command airmen who lost their lives in the Second World War. The fund maintains the memorial for future generations, so that the noble sacrifice of those who lost their lives will always be remembered.





## WELCOME TO HOTEL QUARANTINE

*The Times* featured an article written by **Michael Shipster (68)** about his recent journey back from South Africa, where he experienced a quarantine hotel at Heathrow Airport and many other travel frustrations before he could be reunited with his family and his much-loved dog, Solo.

On day eight of my stay at the hotel, there's a knock at my door. Three masked security guards in high-vis jackets hand me a coronavirus test kit. This is my second. Only when I receive negative results for two tests within a ten-day period am I allowed to leave. At this point, it's more about freedom than cost, but the bills do mount up: on top of the £1,750 I've already paid, if I test positive, there will be a further charge of £150 a day.

As they leave, I notice a bag by my door labelled "Stay Happy". Inside are some Love Hearts and a message from the management: "A little treat from us to you." I offer the packet to the guards, but they say it'll have to be destroyed because I've now touched it.



I'm here because, six weeks ago, I travelled to South Africa (on the UK's "red list") to see my brother-in-law, Chris. His sister, Jackie, my wife, died of cancer in England last summer, but, because of the pandemic, Chris had not been able to attend her funeral, and he was deeply affected by her death. Now he was dying of cancer. I had to be with him.

Chris died a week after I arrived. We had a few precious days when he was lucid, but then he went downhill rapidly. At his funeral in Grahamstown Cathedral, I spoke about my "old friend, who, from our first meeting at Oxford University 50 years ago, quite simply changed my life. But for him, I wouldn't have gone to work in Africa, and I wouldn't have met Jackie."

Before flying home, I learnt more about the quarantine regime waiting for me. It sounded grim, but I knew I could cope: boarding school and a lifetime in diplomatic service had prepared me for this moment. Still, there were some surprises. I was going back via Qatar (all direct flights were cancelled), but at the airport, I wasn't allowed to board. Qatar was now on the "red list". My booking agency had notified me, but their email had gone straight to junk mail. The check-in staff were sympathetic, but they told me I could not fly to Qatar without a confirmed onward flight. To book that, I'd need a negative coronavirus test result...issued in Qatar. Was this Zugzwang or Catch-22? It didn't matter: Qatar was history.

Booking a new ticket would take time, and by the following afternoon, the 72-hour validity of the COVID-19 test I had taken would expire. I'd need to take a new test before I could travel, and test results typically take 24 hours. This meant that the booking I had made, through the UK government website, of my quarantine hotel, and also the "Public Health Passenger Locator Form" issued by the UK Immigration Service (without which I would not be allowed to fly) would be invalid, so I'd need to renew them.

I was staying with friends in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, where we had lived in the early 1990s when I was posted to the British consulate-general. The security situation was now so bad that every house had electric fences and a link to a rapid-response armed security company. Despite the glories of the lush garden and swimming pool, I was anxious to leave.

My host insisted on driving me to wherever I wanted to go. Every time he edged out of his barricaded fortress in his car, with his Walther PPK – "James Bond's weapon of choice, did you know?" (I did) – he truly believed that he was risking his life for me. As he drove me to various travel agencies, I considered the rival merits and drawbacks of travelling home via Istanbul, Addis Ababa, Frankfurt or Paris, and I began to pin my hopes on a Swiss Air flight via Zurich leaving that evening.

I found it impossible to contact the agency given sole responsibility by the British government for quarantine hotels. "Your call will be answered as soon as one of our operatives becomes available," I was repeatedly informed for 90 minutes, before I hung up.

Fate then interceded to make life more interesting. My UK bank suddenly cancelled my credit cards because I seemed to be spending wildly in South Africa, and my UK phone provider put a block on my calls. I couldn't solve the former without solving the latter, but my phone company is delphically uncontactable at the best of times. Eventually, using my friend's phone and credit card, I solved my Herculean riddle.

My next challenge was to get another negative coronavirus test certificate in time to board the plane. First, I had to take the risk of buying another, possibly non-refundable, airline ticket in order to secure my reservation. Soon after dawn, I presented myself at the test centre to find a queue snaking round the building. Only by throwing myself at the mercy of the centre manager was I able to leapfrog the line and arrange for the sample and results to be couriered to and from the laboratory. I made the Swiss Air flight.

In Zurich, the 14 of us transiting from South Africa to London are segregated on arrival. We miss our connecting flight by 10 minutes, so spend 12 hours in an empty transit lounge, being scrutinised by security officials armed with Heckler & Koch 416 assault rifles.

Most of us are travelling for family emergencies. One woman tells me how she had travelled to be with her fiancé after he fell ill with coronavirus and was put on a ventilator. She wasn't allowed to see him and, just before he died, she discovered that he already had a wife and family in South Africa. "You've had a lucky escape," I say, while privately wondering whether he was really dead.

Our jam-packed flight is one of the last into Heathrow. There are some distressing scenes. One lady in a burka, with weeping children in tow, demands to know why she must be quarantined when she has just spent two weeks in quarantine. Eventually, she exclaims, "This is worse than a police state; it's worse than my own country!"

We are dropped off at identical hotels around the Heathrow perimeter. On arrival, I am instructed to complete a 10-day menu order, 30 meals in all. After being escorted to my room, I look at the options on my phone and commit my first act of defiance. I snap the phone shut, have a shower, and go to bed.

In the morning, I take stock. My room overlooks a rooftop littered with what look like sausage baps, being squabbled over by pigeons. The air conditioning doesn't seem to work, and I can only open the window a crack. There's a knock at the door. Outside is a paper bag on the floor. Inside it are two hash browns and plastic pots of muesli and fruit. I slip the hash browns through the gap in the window for the pigeons.

Reception calls to say that I haven't filled in my menu choices, so I have another look on my phone. It's tricky making all 30 choices at once. In a sprint to the finish, I bulk order several "Chicken Tikka Masalas (Halal)" and



"Salmon, Pea, and Beetroot Wraps" and hope for the best.

In a leaflet titled *Managed Guidance – What to Expect*, I discover that I am allowed one laundry order of up to seven items. It must be placed inside an "Ozocab...a fully certificated machine that will kill all known viruses that may be left on your garments." The section on exercise states: "You will not as a matter of course be allowed outside to exercise during your stay...you may be able to leave your room for brief periods."

Because I've been travelling light, I arrange for my son to bring me some essentials: socks, a laptop, my favourite guitar, a bottle of Jura malt whisky, and a dressing-gown. Robert calls when he's outside the hotel, but reception forbids me to go down and see him. I ask if I may take a walk in the exercise yard, and this is granted.

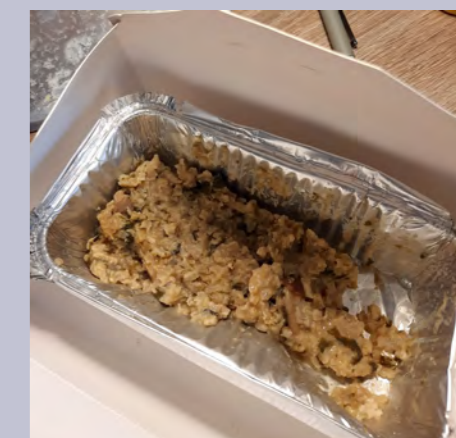
In the foyer, I see Robert with our husky cross, Solo. When he sees me, he lets out a wolfish howl (Solo, that is), which alarms the guards (there is a whole paragraph in the *What to Expect* leaflet dealing with animals; basically, they are not at all allowed). Robert restrains Solo from breaking through the security cordon. A lucky escape. He might have triggered a bio-hazard emergency and had to be placed in the Ozocab.

The exercise yard is the size of a helipad. Accompanied by my guard, Sunil, a student from Goa, we walk through the underground car park, avoiding splashes of pigeon guano. Three other guests are exercising, and we walk anti-clockwise, taking care not to come too close. 10 minutes later, I'm ordered back to my room.

Half an hour later, I ask to go for another walk. My escort now is Saurabh, from Himachal Pradesh. When he tells me the name of his home town, I mention that my wife and I went there 45 years ago on our honeymoon on our motorcycle. He tells another guard nearby what I've said. He's Ahmed, from Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. They quiz me about my travels, and I show off the little Hindi I remember from my

posting to Delhi in the 1980s. I mention visiting Kargil. "That's a few miles from my village," says Ahmed. "It used to be ours, but the Indians took it." They ask me if I still like motorcycles. I tell them I still ride the same bike. "With your wife, sir?" "No, she died last year." "Awfully sorry, sir."

Lunch arrives: the salmon wrap looks, and feels, like a beached sea creature. I am reluctant to put any part of it in my mouth, so I offer it to the pigeons, who have no such qualms. Later, I receive some Amazon deliveries from family and friends – a box of exotic cheeses, expensive shower gel, a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, and a whisky tumbler for the malt – which lifts my spirits. On the internet, I find a short video featuring a nuclear submarine commander offering tips for surviving isolation: keep to a routine, stay clean, get regular downtime, avoid conflict, and communicate.



On day two, I get my first coronavirus self-test kit. I'm quite good at cryptic crosswords and assembling Ikea cupboards, but constructing the cardboard box for the completed swab stumps me; after sealing it, I discover that I've not noted the unique code to register my test online, which is inside the box. When a security guard arrives with a second kit, I lock myself out of my room. He's not allowed to leave me alone to get a replacement key, but I can't go with him, because I don't have my mask with me. I promise not to move while he's gone.

Another guard comes along. "Get back into your room!" he shouts. I tell him about the key and say that his colleague will be back soon. "He's forbidden to do that," he says. "Well, we'll just have to stay here forever," I reply. When the first guard returns, the second guard delivers what seems to be a stinging reprimand to the first in Urdu. Something inside me snaps. "You!" I shout. "You! Do not ever talk to me like that again! You're here to provide

a service, not run a prison!" I have broken one of the submarine commander's five commandments.

On the third day, the air conditioning becomes freezing and I can't adjust it, so I register a complaint. I ask whether I can change rooms. I'm told I can't. Can you send an engineer? No. And so on. After a further day of this, I'm invited to move rooms.

In 1986, Brian Keenan, an Irish teacher in Beirut, was kidnapped and held in solitary confinement for several months. One day, emaciated, dirty, and unkempt, he was led to a new cell, where he saw John McCarthy, a journalist who had been kidnapped while reporting on Keenan. The two men stared at one another in utter amazement.

When I arrive at my new room, I don't find John McCarthy handcuffed to a radiator, but I do have a panoramic view of the main runway. A Room With a View. The air conditioning doesn't work, but I don't complain. Reception offers me a bar heater; for cooling, I merely open the window. This reminds me of our flat in Moscow during

the Soviet era. It was stifling, even when it was minus 20 outside.

I get the feeling that fraternisation is not encouraged, but over a few days, I discover that the 45 or so guards work for a security company experienced in managing privatised prisons. Apart from my one altercation, I find them polite and helpful. It might seem a waste of time and money, but we get on with it, and we seem to get on with one another.

One of my chief delights whilst being here has been my guitar. It's not hard to guess my favourite song, about a hotel not so different from this one, immortalised by the Eagles, with an equally unorthodox check-out policy.

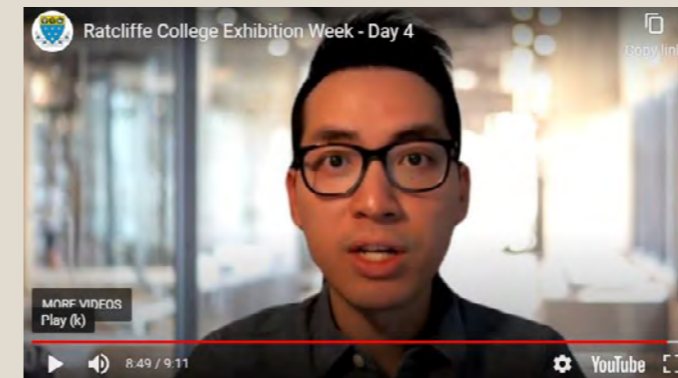
My second test has just come back negative, so it seems that I will be able to check out the day after tomorrow. But, more importantly, will they ever let me leave?

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It's now 10 days on, and I'm back at home. On my final morning at Hotel Quarantine, the guards gathered at the entrance. "Bad luck, Ahmed," I said as we bumped elbows. "You've got to stay here!" "Good luck, Mr Michael," he replied. "We'll miss you."

Miraculously, I'd been transformed from pestilent prisoner to honoured departing guest. As for my family, they soon ceased to worry about my mental health; they were more concerned about whether any of the pigeons would survive their unhealthy diet of baps and fritters.



**Dr Chu Lun Alex Leung (06)**, a former boarder from Ratcliffe, is now a chartered engineer, a chartered scientist, and a lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at University College London (UCL). Alex was the Guest of Honour at Ratcliffe's virtual Exhibition Week, which saw a series of videos posted online for students to watch, celebrating success in different ways at the College. In his short video, Alex shared his story, hoping to encourage students to reach their full potential and achieve excellence in their chosen fields. He finished with this piece of advice: "Enrich your life experience with passions and hobbies. You should always aim for a star and hit it! If I can do it, you can do the same!"

## OLD RATCLIFFIANS & THEIR BIG IDEAS

Throughout the year, several Old Ratcliffians have been involved with the College's newest marketing campaign, Big Ideas. This campaign focuses on Ratcliffe's ability to nurture big ideas in its students during their time at school and, by extension, helping Old Ratcliffians to become what they are today.

One such story that illustrates this is that of Old Ratcliffian **Louise Jackson (91)** (pictured, below, with her daughter Jemima and Art teacher Ms Wright). Louise's story shows how the inspirational teaching that she received at Ratcliffe, especially in the Art Department, has helped her to carve out her successful career as an interior designer.

Other Old Ratcliffians that have been involved include **Bo Henderson (20)** (below), who talks about her first job as a French teacher, and **Zoe Duffin (18)** (right), whose blog about a duck named Long Boi has appeared on BBC and ITV News. You can read their full stories on the Ratcliffian Association website, [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk).

We'd also like to extend our thanks to those ORs that have been forthcoming with their involvement in the Friday Night Lights series of sports interviews, which were designed to inspire current pupils.



## OLD RATCLIFFIANS: GIVING BACK TO THE SCHOOL

**John Tams (55)** attended Ratcliffe from 1949 to 1955, and he was a lifelong supporter of the College. Sadly, he passed away on February 16th 2021. He was particularly proud of his sporting achievements during his time at the school, and he treasured his Colours cap and blazer for many years; in fact, only recently, he was photographed wearing them with pride. After his death, his family donated these items to the Association. They have now been framed, and they will be displayed in the Old Ratcliffian Bar. May he rest in peace and always be with us in spirit.



The Ratcliffian Association also gratefully received a donation of items sent in by the daughter of the late **Gerard Peter McSweeney (44)**. These items will now be displayed in the Old Ratcliffian Bar. They include a Ratcliffe College cap; a school plaque; *The History of Napoleon Buonaparte* by John Gibson Lockhart; *The Catholic Church and the Destitute* by John O'Grady; *The Catholic Church and Confession* by Geddes and Thurston; *The Catholic Church and the Citizen* by John A Ryan; *Ratcliffe College 1847 - 1947* by The Very Reverend C R Leatham; and two photographs of pupils dressed for a school play, dated 1939.



## RATCLIFFE REVISITED

**Francis Tindall (66)**, his brother, **Chris (75)**, and their wives dropped in at Ratcliffe in August, on their way back home to Yorkshire. Francis said: "We were returning home from the Silverstone Classic, where we had a very enjoyable (if rather wet) weekend. As we were passing our old school on our way home, we thought that it would be a good opportunity to pop in. Development Director **Andrew Yell (82)** was most welcoming, and he showed us around. Much of the school remains from our days there, but so much more is there now, too. We were extremely impressed with what we saw - the buildings and grounds all look to be in top condition, and it was great to see a cricket match in progress. It was sad, though, to hear that Grace Dieu is up for sale."



**Kate Squire (née Wright) (95)** visited Ratcliffe on Friday 27th August with her husband, James, and their three children, Christopher, Peter, and Christiana. Kate was a boarder at Ratcliffe from 1991 to 1995, and she was a member of Leatham house. Her brother, **Christopher Wright (90)**, also attended the school and was Head Boy in 1989. Kate and her family came to Ratcliffe following a trip to see her parents in Gloucester, after which they were going on to visit friends in Suffolk, before returning home to London. Kate has fond memories of Ratcliffe, and she was particularly pleased to see the Ref again, commenting that it was exactly the same as she remembered it! She also marvelled at the new Fitness Suite and its stark contrast to the Sports Hall, which she said had not changed a bit since her school days! She was also able to spot herself and her brother in the whole-school photographs displayed in the Deputy Headmaster's corridor, much to the delight of her children.



**Helena Green (née Lynch) (00)** and her husband had their daughter, Sienna Meabh Joy Lynch Green, christened on Sunday 3rd October in the Ratcliffe Chapel, celebrated by **Fr Philip Sainter (69)**. Helena said: "We were panicking beforehand, as it had rained for almost the whole week leading up to the christening, but it turned out to be such a beautiful day, with blue skies, and even a double rainbow appearing in the late afternoon. It reminded us how blessed we are, and how special Sienna is. I don't think Fr Sainter has ever done a wedding or christening when it's rained - he should be in the *Guinness Book of Records*! We wanted Sienna to be christened at Ratcliffe, as we were married in the Side Chapel there, and we hope to send Sienna to school there in a few years. Old Ratcliffians that joined us included **Corinne Sparing (00)**, **Sukhdeep Chaggar (99)**, **Tom Best (00)**, **Rupert Lawson (00)**, **Emily Waez (03)**, **Gemma Lord (02)**, **Patrick Lynch (96)** and **Michael Lynch (96)**. **Richard Draycott (90)** is also Sienna's godfather."



**Matthew Brunton (12)** and his classmates, **Tom Smith (12)** and **Ben Keyworth (12)**, dropped in at Ratcliffe on Friday 9th July, just days before Matthew was to marry his fiancée, Andreea Savu. Development Director **Andrew Yell (82)** took time out of his day to show the trio the new developments at the school, including the new Fitness Suite and Old Ratcliffian Bar, which they all enjoyed.



Members of the Class of 2001 were reunited at Ratcliffe on Saturday 18th September to celebrate their 20-year anniversary of leaving the school. The reunion was organised by **Gemma Thomas (née Rumbold) (01)**, with them first enjoying a tour of Ratcliffe, followed by a meal and drinks at her pub, The White Horse Inn in Seagrave. **Nicola Walsh (01)**, **Alex Hackett (01)**, **Gemma Tysoe (01)**, **George Hamlyn Williams (01)**, and **Jiten Nandha (01)** joined Gemma and Ratcliffian Association Secretary Katherine Lang to take a tour of the school. They shared memories as they viewed the Old Library and the Chapel, followed by the Lockhart Garden; in their day, this was simply a square of tarmac where football was played, so to see it today, with the beautiful central fountain, was very impressive. The Ref also held lots of memories for them, with the group recalling the smells, sounds, and the infamous teachers' table, which they all rushed to sit at! They then made a quick trip to the Newman building, which used to be the Year 7 and 8 classrooms, supervised by Mr and Mrs Friendship. Gemma recalled that Mr Friendship had a list of topics for students to write 40 lines ("forties") about as a punishment, including "the inside of a ping pong ball"! One of the last places they visited was the Sixth Form Centre, which they all said was a vast improvement on the Union building that they had in their day! After the tour,

Nicola said: "It was fantastic to be back at Ratcliffe. Much of the school has been updated, but it still has the same Ratcliffe feel to it - in places like the Ref and Music Hall, even the smells were exactly the same as when I had last stepped foot in there over 20 years ago. It was also interesting to look around the school with a different perspective and realise how fortunate I was to have been a boarder at Ratcliffe." The group enjoyed their reunion so much that they have organised another get-together in January 2022 with many more of their classmates.



**Nick Gill (99)** returned to Ratcliffe on Friday 22nd October with his wife, Moni, and his son, Ruhaan, for a nostalgic tour of the school, having left 22 years ago. Nick was kind enough to support Ratcliffe's Careers Convention in September, where he very much enjoyed being back at the school and talking to current students about his career in cybersecurity. That visit spurred him on to return with his family for a full tour, taking in all the areas of the College that he remembered so well from his time there in the Sixth Form. He is now keen to come back again for Association events in 2022. Nick said: "It was a magical day for me, going back more than 22 years. Having the opportunity to revisit memorable moments with my family alongside me was certainly special. The day really brought out the amazing opportunities that we had, and how lucky students are to be part of the College."

# MARRIAGES



**Jenny Monks (née Daley) (08):** "I married Jacob Monks on Saturday 24th July 2021 in Long Clawson - the village where he and I actually both grew up. We didn't go to school together, but we've known of each other for many years. We've been together for over nine years and are now living in West Bridgford in Nottingham, having recently moved back north from London. Our wedding was quite unique, as I walked from my parents' house (literally around the corner from the church), and Jacob walked from the other end of the village with his groomsmen, while all the villagers

were outside, wishing us luck. After the church service, we led the wedding guests to the village hall, which was a two-minute walk away, and then we had a really good party! It was long overdue, as our original wedding date was in May 2020. Moving it to Saturday 24th July made it very much an end-of-lockdown party as well. We had an amazing day - it was just great!" The wedding guests included a number of Old Ratcliffians: **Jo Bell (08), Connie Frost (née Clark) (08), Natasha Punia (08), Suzi Lloyd (née Rankine) (08), Sam Shergill (08), and Lizzi Hewitt (08).**

**Sally Rigby (née Croysdale) (15) and William Rigby (14)** were married on Saturday 17th July 2021 at Exeter College Chapel in the University of Oxford. It was a lovely family affair: Sally's mother made the wedding cake, and William's mother (former Head of Ratcliffe's Junior School), Caroline Rigby, grew and arranged all the flowers. Music was also a highlight of the day, with three organists, two trumpeters, and a choir of 17 friends to sing as Sally walked up the aisle! The couple met at Ratcliffe in 2007 as the two youngest members in the Senior Orchestra. From there, they both pursued Engineering at university: Sally studied at Oxford and William at Durham. The 200 miles didn't dampen their relationship, and they are now reunited in North London, continuing to combine their love of music with work in STEM - both interests that were sparked and nurtured at Ratcliffe.



**Roxanna Farthing (née Hayes) (09):** "After three attempts, I became Mrs Mark Farthing on August 28th 2021. We had a wedding worth waiting for, with 125 of our closest friends and family. We got married in the church where we live in Wysall, followed by a fabulous reception in a marquee in my parents' back garden, on a beautiful sunny day. Being a big fan of musicals, it was only right to bring the West End to the wedding. Elphaba from *Wicked* and another West-End actor came to perform some of our favourite musical numbers, and, of course, a spot of Disney! The whole day was magical from start to finish. We then jetted off to Antigua for 10 days for an unforgettable honeymoon. The day we landed, we found out that we were expecting another little Farthing in May 2022. It has certainly been a whirlwind few months! We are looking forward to the next chapter of babies and chaos!"



**Matthew Brunton (12) and Andreea Savu** tied the knot at Langar Hall in Nottinghamshire on July 17th 2021. Despite all of the restrictions, they had an intimate ceremony with close friends and family who were able to travel to the UK. Andreea and Matthew are due to have an authentic wedding next summer in Romania, where they hope to celebrate properly.

**Laura Clayfield (née Yell) (11):** "Amy Clayfield (11) and I had an amazing wedding day in Cornwall. There were lots of Old Ratcliffians present, including **Andy Yell (82), Andy Bullock (83), Philippa Gee (06), Kate Castell (11), Toby Howard (11), Katie**

**Taylor (née Gerighty) (11), Gee Thorne (11), Emily Clayfield (07), Pat Clayfield and Dan Clayfield (both teachers), Gus Kelly (10), Sophie Yell (10), Walter Yell (13), Alice Foulds (11), Sophie King (11), and Francesca Gamble (04)."**



**Suzi Lloyd (née Rankine) (08):** "On September 4th, my fiancé, Jack, and I got married. We were very relieved that our wedding was able to go ahead as planned, after a year (plus!) of uncertainty! It was worth the wait, as it was the perfect day. We were married at St Andrew's Church in Burton Overy, where my parents live, and we had our reception at Kelmarsh Hall. My mum (Mrs Rankine) was a stunning Mother of the Bride, and she spent weeks planning the flower arrangements for the day - it all looked amazing. Lots of Old Ratcliffians joined us for the celebrations, including my brother and Master of Ceremonies, **Alex Rankine (11)**, my cousin, **Ben Gray (05)**, his fiancée, **Hannah Merrion (05)**, and my close friends, **Jenny Monks (née Daley) (08)**, **Jo Bell (08)**, **Sam Shergill (08)**, **Connie Frost (née Clark) (08)**, **Natasha Punia (08)**, and **Lizzi Hewitt (08)**. Our Guest of Honour was our gorgeous little girl, Annie, who was bridesmaid alongside her four best friends; they definitely stole the show, and they were all beautifully behaved, despite all being under three years old! (Kept in line by my mum's child-whispering skills, no doubt!) The last few years made us feel even more grateful to be able to celebrate our special day with our families and friends, and to see faces that we hadn't been able to see in a really long time. Jack and I are currently living in Welham, Market Harborough, after 10 years in London. We are loving the calmness of the countryside and all the help and support that we have from our families. We'd really like to keep in touch with any ORs nearby, and we've enjoyed reuniting with some old friends since moving back to the area."



**Katie Taylor (née Gerighty) (11)** married Joshua Taylor on Saturday 16th October 2021, and they celebrated their wedding at Ratcliffe College. Katie said: "We had a wonderful day. The Old Ratcliffians that attended included **Gee Thorne (11)** (bridesmaid), **Sophie King (11)** (bridesmaid), **Laura Clayfield (née Yell) (11)** and **Amy Clayfield**

**(11)** (who did the offertory), **Tom Mulligan (11)**, **Kaz Bhojani (11)**, Mr Walsh, and some more in the evening. **Fr Sainter (69)** celebrated the Mass, which was a fantastic service, and we had such a great day. Alisha, Graham, and the catering team did a great job at making the day run smoothly, too. It was everything we'd hoped it would be."

# BIRTHS



**Amy Lang (10):** "Our daughter, Olivia Edie Shaw, was born on March 16th 2021, three days after moving house! She was a tiny, premature dot, weighing 5lbs, but she's now growing so fast! I recently received a promotion at work, and I'm now responsible for managing over 70 End-Point Assessors for the new apprenticeships with City & Guilds, which is really rewarding. Ed also proposed to me in May 2021, and we've set a date to be married in July 2022, in the vineyard where I grew up. There's so much to look forward to - what a year it's been!"



**Laura Hunt (née Birtwistle) (09):** "Aurelia Grace Hunt was born on March 18th 2021, weighing exactly 7lbs. Justin and I are totally in love with her."



**Gemma Thomas (née Rumbold) (01):** "Charlotte Rose Thomas was born on April 3rd 2021, weighing 6lbs 9ozs. She's an absolute bundle of joy, and we couldn't be happier that she's here."



**Helena Green (née Lynch) (00)** and her husband, Richie, were delighted to welcome their baby girl, Sienna, into the world last autumn. Helena said: "Sienna was born in September 2020, and she will hopefully be going to Ratcliffe herself one day."



**Nicola Walsh (01):** "My daughter, Lily, was born in October 2020, and her big brother, Theodore, was born in July 2017. I'm currently living with my fiancé and two children in South Yorkshire. I'm approaching the end of a year off work on maternity leave, and I'll soon be going back to my full-time job at BT as their Account Director for National Healthcare."

## IN MEMORIAM

Notifications of the deaths of the following Old Ratcliffians and associates have been received since the last edition of *The Old Ratcliffian*:

**Trevor Alexander (Picozzi) (58)**

**John Tams (55)**

**Edward (Ted) Hugo (55)**

**Nicholas Purgly (81)**

**Adrian Walker (69)**

**Patrick Curran (66)**

**David Reynolds (53)**

**Julian Shingler (57)**

**Glyn Mitchelson (99)**

**Michael Withers (50)**

**John Brosch (48)**

**Michael Walsh (63)**

**Peter Hurrell (67)**

**Anthony Ginns (65)**

**James Mulcahy (83)**

**Gerard Hurrell (74)**

**Jeremy Pennell (01)**

**Cyprian Chabrel (58)**

**Peter Whittam (46)**

**John (Nick) Chabrel (61)**

**John Curran (58)**

**Paul Coffey (70)**

**Joseph Taylor (18)**

**Peter Anwyl (Former Teacher)**

**Peter Banks (Former Teacher)**

## REQUIESCANT IN PACE

Friends and relatives are invited to write an obituary for the next edition of this magazine if it is not included in this one.

## CYPRIAN MICHAEL CHABREL

MAY 23RD 1940 - JUNE 10TH 2021  
OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1953 - 1958



Cyprian Michael Chabrel, known as Mike, was at Ratcliffe College from 1953 until 1958, where he was Deputy Head Boy during his final year. He was a particularly enthusiastic and talented sportsman, captaining the rugby team for a year, as well as being a keen tennis player and athlete. When learning of Mike's passing, a school friend of his recalled that he was the 'fastest quarter-miler in school'.

After Ratcliffe, Mike went to Queens' College, Cambridge to study Medicine, and he completed his medical studies at St Mary's in Paddington, London. He then joined the army as part of the Royal Army Medical Corps, and he progressed through the ranks to become a lieutenant colonel, before retiring in 1981, when he emigrated to Australia with his wife, Sheila.

Mike first met Sheila Munt, a ward sister, at St Mary's, and they married at St Etheldreda's, Ely Place, in 1965. Soon after, they left for their first overseas posting, which was to Yemen (known then as Aden). They lived in Singapore in the early 1970s, before Mike was seconded to Washington DC on a medical placement with the US Army for two years in the mid-70s. Their final move of the decade brought them back to Europe, to a posting in Münster, Germany. After that, they returned to London, and Mike worked at the Royal Army Medical College in Millbank. It was during that time that he qualified as a pathologist, developing a specialism in forensic pathology.

Mike and Sheila migrated to Australia in 1981, having seen an advert for a

pathologist position in Launceston. They both loved to travel and explore, and in Australia, there was plenty of exploring to be done. On one particular road trip in South Australia, they were surprised to spot a sign saying 'Chabrel Road', and it wasn't long before they met the most senior member of the Australian Chabrel family. Many more connections followed that enriched the next 40 years of their lives in Australia - so much so that they retired from Tasmania to the Adelaide Hills to live closer to their family.

Mike took on various posts as a locum doctor in hospitals, until his work was curtailed by a stroke in 1998. Through much effort and determination, he recovered his ability to walk and to talk. His speech pathologist told the story of the

first time that she asked Mike to try and say something about himself, after all these infuriating exercises, and he articulated, 'I have the most wonderful wife'. Sheila died suddenly in 2017, and this was a sadness that he never really recovered from.

Mike had been previously diagnosed with dementia, and after Sheila passed away, his health began to decline. It soon became clear that he needed more regular nursing attention, and he lived the last four years of his life at St Paul's, a nursing home in the Adelaide Hills, which was established by the Lutheran Church. A lifelong Catholic, Mike had an ecumenical approach to his faith, reading widely on spiritual issues and engaging in personal and political matters with a strong moral compass. It was fitting that he should end

his days in an establishment guided by these Christian values.

**Fran McGovern and Mary Chabrel**  
Nieces



## JOHN NICHOLAS CHABREL

FEBRUARY 20TH 1944 - NOVEMBER 26TH 2013  
OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1957 - 1961



John Nicholas Chabrel, known as Nick, was born in Cardiff in 1944. He grew up in Ealing, where he attended St Benedict's. He later joined his older brother, **Mike (58)**, at Ratcliffe College, where his father, known as **Cyp (22)**, had also been at school. Being at Ratcliffe was part of the family's connection to the Rosminian Order. Nick had a great interest in the writings of Antonio Rosmini later in his life - an enthusiasm that he had inherited from his father. Nick's parents had returned to Cardiff from London for his birth in February 1944, so he was born a

Welshman in their home city and baptised in the Rosminian parish of St Peter's.

Nick served Mass daily in the school Chapel at Ratcliffe, where he was generous with the incense from the thurible. He continued to be a thurifer for 50 years, serving until such a task became a hazard due to his ill health, and he retired shortly after being presented with a gold medal from the Guild of St Stephen. During his years of service, he also trained young people to be altar servers at St Bernadette's in Hillingdon, the parish he attended with his family, and, later in life, at Northampton Cathedral.

After Ratcliffe, Nick returned to Ealing to study at the School of Hotel and Catering, and he went to work in the kitchens of hotels, hospitals, and head offices in London. He later continued his work in kitchens as an Environmental Health Officer - a role with hours that were more suited to family life.

Nick met his wife, Julia, in 1970 at the Challoner Club in London, and they married at St Etheldreda's, Ely Place, in 1972. They brought up their two girls, Mary and Frances, in Hillingdon, West London. Due to ill health, Nick took early retirement, and he then took over the childcare and home responsibilities. The challenges of his mental health would later lead to his separation from Julia, and this resulted in a move from London back to the Midlands.

There, Nick took on an active role in the cathedral parish of Northampton, as Minister of Reading and the Eucharist, which included visiting members of the parish who were sick and housebound.

Nick enjoyed supporting rugby, and he switched allegiances from Wasps to Northampton Saints when he moved, watching them play at home as much as possible. He was also fascinated by the local history of the area, and his daughters would accompany him on visits to local sites of interest. Stopping to have a 'quick look' in a church whilst on holiday or en route somewhere was a frequent occurrence. Nick was interested in architectural design and, in particular, the work of Pugin; he once commented that, when he was in the cathedral in Northampton, he could imagine that he was back in the school Chapel at Ratcliffe. He also enjoyed returning to Ratcliffe to annual retreats, and, years before, he attended the summer cricket events with his then young family.

Nick passed away peacefully in hospital on November 26th 2013, aged 69. His mobility and kidney function had been slowly deteriorating during the last few years of his life. He was a supportive and loving father to Mary and Frances, and a doting grandpa to Matthew.

**Fran McGovern and Mary Chabrel**  
Daughters

## DAVID JOHN REYNOLDS

JANUARY 24TH 1936 - DECEMBER 22ND 2020  
 OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1949 - 1953

David was the younger of two sons born to Alfred and Florence Reynolds, who lived in Boston, Lincolnshire. He and his brother, **Peter (51)**, attended Ratcliffe after Grace Dieu, representing their schools at rugby, rowing, and cricket. David went on to play rugby for Boston after he left Ratcliffe, and he continued to enjoy watching the game for many years.

After leaving Ratcliffe, David completed his National Service in the RAF. During the Suez Crisis, he was stationed in Cyprus and Malta as a navigation technician on Canberras. On his return to civilian life, David went back to Boston, which he made his home for the remainder of his life.

With his first and second wives, Janet and Jennifer, he raised two daughters, Jackie and Joanna; four sons, Timothy, Adrian, Kevin, and Edward; and two stepchildren, Alex and Christopher. His youngest son, **Edward (88)**, attended Ratcliffe from 1983 until 1988.

David's professional life started in Boston, later moving to Mayfair in London, where he was managing director of an exports company. He spent many long months away from his family, working in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Whilst keeping his primary home in Boston, David retired young and moved to Spain to play golf - a game that he thoroughly enjoyed. He played frequently, and he had memberships at both Boston and Villamartin Golf Clubs. He hit a good ball well into his seventies, was long off the tee, and was a good putter.

After the early passing of his second wife, Jennifer, David married Polly; this year would have marked their 25th wedding anniversary. He and Polly continued to spend time in Spain, but more time was spent in Boston as the years progressed.

David passed away at home on December 22nd 2020 after a short illness. He was 83 years of age. May he rest in peace.

**Edward Reynolds (88)**  
 Son



## NICHOLAS PURGLY

AUGUST 20TH 1964 - SEPTEMBER 15TH 2015  
 OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1978 - 1981

After leaving Ratcliffe in 1981, Nicholas returned to Brazil, where he studied in a local college to obtain his university entrance qualifications. He then started a four-year course at the University of Alfenas in the state of Minas Gerais, obtaining a degree in Agriculture Sciences, with a further year specialising in Irrigation and Mechanisation.

Nicholas immediately started working for large sugar and alcohol mills, always on the field side, devoting his efforts to mechanical harvesting and irrigation. He then joined a subsidiary of John Deere, manufacturing harvesters. He spent quite a lot of time in the US and neighbouring South American countries. It was a time of great activity in mechanising the harvesting of sugar cane.

The time soon came for Nicholas to travel less and settle down in a more permanent

home. He opened a firm specialising in irrigation, with both large, self-propelled units and drip irrigation for a variety of uses. Some years later, I helped him to purchase a small property close to our town, planted with several thousand lemons of the Tahiti variety. He immediately improved the drip irrigation, in order to catch the off-season market for his fruit. It was a great success until, unfortunately, some years later, a virus with no cure slowly killed his rootstock. This was then, sadly, the end of the plantation. Nicholas continued with the irrigation company until his very sudden passing at the age of 51.

His widow and teenage children live in São José do Rio Preto, in São Paulo. It is now over five years since Nicholas departed, and we miss him very much.

**Joseph Purgly**  
 Father



## TREVOR ALEXANDER (PICOZZI)

MARCH 2ND 1942 - OCTOBER 3RD 2020  
 OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1954 - 1958

I met Trevor in the 1970s and eventually became his third wife in 1987. Always full of life and so fun to be with, he had many friends and acquaintances.

His great love was sport, with rugby coming out on top, and he did have a spell playing for Wasps. Horse racing was not far behind, and he belonged to a syndicate that owned two racehorses during the 1970s. Then, of course, there was golf, squash, and even hockey.

Trevor trained as a chartered surveyor, but he preferred a more commercial world, running his own businesses, which included haulage, steel stockholding, and a nightclub in Spain.

He had a quadruple heart bypass in 2000, and from then on, he always had health problems, which he tended to push to one side. A defibrillator was fitted about six years ago, which helped him, but he had to go into a nursing home more recently. He was looked after very well there, but sadly, he died in October of pneumonia.

Trevor was always very proud of his education, and we have the lovely painting by Colin Carr, *Back to School - Ratcliffe College - Pugin's Front 1847*, hanging in our sitting room. He also thoroughly enjoyed reading the annual *Old Ratcliffian* magazine. May he rest in peace.

**Liz Alexander**  
 Wife

Trevor and I were at Grace Dieu at the same time, and we followed each other through to Ratcliffe. He would remind me, at a much later date, that at Grace Dieu, we were paired up for a three-legged race. He and I were also in the Scout troop at Ratcliffe, and I remember a summer camp near Derry's Wood, Guildford, when he decided to ignore advice and pitch his tent where he wanted, in a shallow dip in the sandy ground. He was very determined. We experienced a very heavy overnight storm, and where Trevor had pitched his tent, the ground became a pond of rainwater!

**Dick Cunningham (59)**  
 Friend



## JOHN D CURRAN

JUNE 30TH 1942 - JUNE 18TH 2021  
 OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1954 - 1958

John joined Ratcliffe in 1954, following in the footsteps of his older brother, **Denis (58)**. His younger brother, **Patrick (66)**, also attended the school. (Sadly, both Denis and Patrick have predeceased their brother in recent years.) For reasons particularly unique to John, he decided to leave Ratcliffe after completing his O Levels in 1958. At the time, his father was unwell, and he was determined to find a job to help with the family finances. John initially went to work for the Prudential. After other career avenues were explored and, one by one, rejected, he settled on insurance broking and related activities as a career. This was an area in which he was highly skilled and, ultimately, extremely successful. He was still working on his own account right up to his untimely death.

John was always the life and soul of any party. He greatly enjoyed life, his family and friends, good company, and good music.

His library of infamous stories of family, friends, uniquely personal experiences, and anecdotes were both legendary, often lengthy, and always calculated to leave his audience in fits of laughter.

Not only a talented raconteur, John was also an accomplished chorister, pianist, and bon viveur. His friendship, loyalty, concern, and empathy for all those with whom he came into contact exemplified the truly outstanding individual he was. He leaves an enormous hole in the lives of all who knew him. His wit and repartee will be sadly missed.

John is survived by his wife, Dorothy, his son, Dominic, and his daughter-in-law, Louise, together with his grandchildren. John's sisters, Deirdre and Sarah, also survive him.

**Jonathan Hine (84)**  
 Nephew



## HIS HONOUR JUDGE PATRICK DAVID CURRAN QC

MARCH 2ND 1948 – MARCH 16TH 2021  
OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1961 – 1966



Patrick was a larger-than-life character in so many ways. With a loud, infectious laugh and the broadest of smiles, his sheer joie de vivre was immensely attractive to all who met him. Generous to a fault and highly sociable, the camaraderie of the Bar was Patrick's natural habitat. He had an endless fund of amusing anecdotes for every occasion and could recite swathes of Shakespeare and poetry faultlessly. Patrick was an avid reader with an encyclopaedic knowledge of a wide range of subjects. With an endearing sense of old-fashioned courtesy and chivalry, he was scrupulously polite and rarely spoke ill of anyone. He lived by a very clear moral code and could not abide any form of injustice, always speaking up for anyone he considered to have been treated unfairly. Patrick could be tough when required, but he also had immense compassion.

Patrick David Curran was born on March 2nd 1948, the fourth of five children of David Alban Curran and Noreen Curran (née Cliffe). David Curran was a director of Edward Curran Engineering – a large engineering company which, during the war, employed thousands of people, including a young Shirley Bassey.

In 1975, Patrick met Anne (née Pathy) at court when she was an articled clerk. They married eight months later in the heat of the summer of 1976, and they would have celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary this year.

Patrick was educated by the Rosminian Order at De La Salle School, Cardiff, and then at Grace Dieu Manor and Ratcliffe College in Leicestershire, where he was

Captain of Boats and Head Prefect in his final year in 1966. Patrick maintained his connection with the school via the Ratcliffian Association and by visiting his second cousin, Fr William Curran, who taught him History and is currently living in Surrey with other members of the Order well known to and admired by Patrick.

Patrick became a member of the National Youth Theatre, under the directorship of Michael Croft, from 1965 to 1969, and he appeared in several productions with notable alumni, such as Helen Mirren, Timothy Dalton, John Nightingale, John Shrapnel, Richard Hampton, and many others.

Patrick went up to The Queen's College, Oxford, in 1967 to read Law. He maintained a close association with Queen's via the alumni association and attended numerous events with Anne, including trips to Madrid and Rome. He loved to visit Oxford with his family and friends, celebrating key milestones at Queen's, including his 60th birthday and 40th wedding anniversary.

Patrick was called to the Bar in 1972 and joined Gray's Inn, becoming a Bencher in 2005. He had great affection for the Inn and attended meetings and social events whenever he was able. He was then admitted to the Bar of Ireland in 1993. Patrick finished where he had started when he accepted a door tenancy at Farrar's Building at the invitation of the Head of Chambers, his close friend Patrick Harrington QC.

Having taken Silk in 1995, Patrick left Cardiff and joined the chambers of the late Edmund Lawson QC at 9-12 Bell Yard,

London. He prosecuted and defended many high-profile murder and corruption cases, but, more importantly, he embraced life at chambers and made a new set of friends whose company he enjoyed, particularly when cases settled early.

In 1993-4, Patrick began working on a book for personal injury practitioners entitled *Personal Injury Pleadings*, the first edition of which was published by Sweet & Maxwell in 1995. It proved to be successful, and the publication of the sixth edition in 2019 was celebrated by a party at Gray's Inn, generously hosted by Patrick Harrington QC and Farrar's.

Patrick had a deep commitment to his Roman Catholic faith. A week before his death, he was truly honoured to receive the Last Sacrament from George Stack, Archbishop of Cardiff, whom Patrick had known from his time as Administrator of Westminster Cathedral, and whom he regarded as a friend.

Patrick took the greatest delight and pride in his children's achievements. His eldest daughter, Rachel (41), is a marketing consultant and founder of HospoDemo; Edmund (39) is Brand Lead at England Rugby; Benedict (32) is Head of Streaming and International Strategy at Decca Records; and Kate (29) is an equestrian area sales manager.

Patrick's last year was blighted by his diagnosis of cancer and the consequences of COVID-19, the worst of which being his inability to see his adored children and four grandchildren. Despite some dark days, he remained a stoic to the end, and he never lost his sense of humour. In his last moments, Patrick was surrounded by his family and the closing bars of Westminster Cathedral Choir singing Stanford's Magnificat under the direction of his dear friend, James O'Donnell.

We have lost a wonderful, dear man and, although a bright light has been extinguished in our lives, his influence runs deeply through each of us. May he rest in peace.

**Anne Curran**  
Wife

*Patrick's tribute can be read in full on the Association website, [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk).*

## PETER BANKS

MAY 19TH 1943 – JULY 15TH 2021  
TEACHER AT RATCLIFFE 1975 – 2008

Peter was born and grew up in Liverpool, attending St Edward's College. He married Jennifer on December 30th 1967 and went on to have two children, Julian and Kate. After studying English at Lancaster University, he moved to Loughborough to take his PGCE, enjoying the sports facilities available there. In 1975, Peter began teaching English and coaching rugby, hockey, and athletics at Ratcliffe, where he continued to work for the next 33 years. He loved rugby and, in the late 1970s, he developed Loughborough Mini Rugby Club, recruiting players from local schools and watching it grow into the thriving club that it is today (where his grandson, Daniel, still plays).

Peter was a colourful character and much-loved teacher at Ratcliffe. During English lessons, he kept students entertained with stories from his youth. He inspired many with his love of literature and poetry, and he had a real talent for getting the best from his pupils. 'Mr B', as he was known by many, rarely shied away from a challenge, and he was never happier than when he had won over a reluctant learner, getting them fired up to produce good work and achieve the results they deserved. On the sports field, he coached many a successful rugby and hockey side, and he enjoyed taking the teams on legendary tours abroad, celebrating their wins along the way.

Peter had always loved film, but he found his calling at Ratcliffe when he set up a film club for students and began teaching Media Studies. His enthusiasm was boundless, and the club was hugely successful, winning many awards. From then on, he was never to be seen without



a camera in his hand. Retiring from teaching in 2008, he went on to spend much of his time producing films and photo montages of his grandchildren – Alice, Daniel, Ella, and Max – and later, of his beloved dog, Sunny.

In the years leading up to his death, Peter's health suffered. During this time, he continued to receive phone calls,

messages, and visits from former Ratcliffe students, which brought him great pleasure. The 'kids' kept arriving, often bringing their own children to meet their inspirational teacher. They were once his pupils, but he was now proud to call them his friends.

**Kate Banks (90)**  
Daughter



## MICHAEL WALSH

AUGUST 5TH 1945 - APRIL 9TH 2021  
 OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1958 - 1963

Michael Walsh was born in Allestree, near Derby, on August 5th 1945. He went to Stanley House School in Derby and Bishton Hall near Stafford, before going to Ratcliffe in 1958. As a small boy, Michael loved brass band music; he would cry if someone inadvertently turned it off on the BBC 'wireless'. This love remained with him all his life, particularly as he made his journey northwards to more homes of brass bands.

Born into a golfing family, Michael soon took up the game, using small clubs that our father fashioned for his height, playing like his parents at Kedleston Park Golf Club, and swiftly playing off a single-figure handicap in his teens.

After school, Michael settled for a while in Birmingham to study accountancy, where he qualified, and he then moved to Shrewsbury to join Rolls-Royce. There, he met and married Marilyn Davies from Oswestry. They had a son, Paul, and a daughter, Helen, and moved to the small Shropshire village of Cockshutt. Michael then moved to Rolls-Royce in Crewe. They loved village life. Around this time, Michael borrowed a Rolls-Royce and turned up at our parents' house near Derby as a surprise! Our father had worked at Rolls-Royce in Derby, so the tour around the Derbyshire Dales was greatly enjoyed!

Later, Michael and his family moved further north, towards brass-band country. They lived in a lovely converted barn with several acres of land, surrounded by wonderful views of the Lancashire countryside between Longridge and the picturesque



Roman village of Ribchester on the Ribble. Both Michael and Marilyn were greatly involved in village life, and their children attended the local primary schools and made lifelong friends there. Drama, sports and photography were enjoyed by all age groups. At one stage, Michael had worked for Clive Sinclair, so they became owners of an iconic Sinclair 'vehicle' - the C5. There was great fun in the village when the family took it for an outing!

Michael also loved having a family dog - or a Michael dog! A Labrador type - big! To the delight of this large family member, they were great walkers, and they covered much of the hills and dales in Lancashire,

including the most splendid bluebell woods near their home. Michael's local golf club in Longridge boasts 'the last hill of the Pennines'!

After Marilyn died, Michael moved into the heart of Ribchester village, to a house called 'Th' Owd Joiner's Shop' on Water Street. Still involved in local activities, he recently played the part of The Highwayman in the Ribchester Field Day! From an accountant to a highwayman might suggest continuity! His was a life well lived to the splendid music of his beloved brass bands!

**Margaret Martin**  
 Sister

## DR ANTHONY GINNS

JANUARY 27TH 1949 - APRIL 14TH 2021  
 OLD RATCLIFFIAN 1961 - 1965

Born in Kanpur, India, Tony Ginns was the only child of **George Reginald (26)** and Ethel Lillian Ginns. Whilst his father remained in India with his work, Tony moved to England with his mother at the age of five to attend school; however, he spent his summer holidays back in India chasing monkeys in his father's garden.

His mother died when he was 10 years old, which led to him being sent to Ratcliffe College as a boarder. He was brought up by his aunt, but he still travelled to India every summer to stay with his father.

Tony demonstrated a great thirst for knowledge, and this never left him

throughout his life. He sat his A Levels a year early, and at the age of 17, he won a scholarship to Oxford University, where he studied Animal Physiology at Lincoln College. He then went on to train as a doctor at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, followed by the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading. With his gentle and

caring bedside manner, he was well suited to general practice. He took training for this in Reading, before joining Dr Frank Heron and Dr Robin Ward as a GP partner in Richmond in 1976. Prior to their move to Quakers Lane Surgery, he practised from an extension to Dr Heron's home, around the corner on Wellington Place.

With a special interest in psychiatry, in addition to his work in general practice, Tony treated mental health patients at the Friarage Hospital in Northallerton. His caring nature made him particularly suited to helping treat patients with a wide range of mental health problems. Within general practice, he was loved by his patients and staff alike, always taking an interest in those he met. He was noted to have a sharp, incisive mind which was able to cut through complex problems with clarity.

In his spare time, Tony had a keen interest in playing the recorder with his

wife, Jennifer, particularly playing early music written for the instrument. He was devoted to his family and very much enjoyed travelling, especially to the Arctic Circle and other less-travelled parts of the world. He never possessed a television, preferring to read and listen to music. The family home in Richmond, which lay on the Coast-to-Coast walk, was unusual in having a sauna in its garden, which sometimes led to some unexpected sights for the walkers passing by.

Tony worked at Quakers Lane Surgery for the rest of his career, with the latter years seeing him become senior partner of the practice, until his retirement in 2008. After retiring, he and Jennifer moved to Cumbria, where they enjoyed exploring their new area and renovating their house and garden together.

Tony leaves behind his wife, Jennifer, his children, Malcolm and Laura, and his



grandchildren, Aubury, Tristan, Lukas, Edward, and Isobel.

**Dr Tim Mawer**  
 Friend and Colleague

## IN MEMORIAM

Full obituaries for the following Old Ratcliffians will be printed in next year's magazine, where requested. They will also be available to read on the Ratcliffian Association website, [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk).

**John Tams (55)** passed away peacefully on February 16th 2021. He was a lifelong supporter of the Ratcliffian Association and a huge fan of the school. He is pictured here in November 2020 wearing his Colours cap and blazer proudly. These items have since been donated to the Association and are now on display in the Old Ratcliffian Bar.



**Peter Hurrell (67)** died on October 2nd 2021 in Northampton General Hospital, following a cardiac arrest. He leaves behind his wife, Elizabeth, three children, and lots of grandchildren. Sadly, his brother, **Gerard Hurrell (74)**, also died this year, on May 15th 2021. He is survived by his wife, six children, 11 grandchildren, his brother, **William (71)**, and his sisters, Angela and Helen. He had a very successful career and did much good throughout his life.

**Edward Hugo (55)**, usually known as Ted, passed away on May 21st 2020 at the Kerckhoff Clinic near Bad Nauheim in Germany. His widow, Andrea, informed the Ratcliffian Association. He suffered with heart problems and diabetes.

**Peter Whittam (46)** died peacefully on Friday 25th June 2021. His son, Chris, said that it was very sudden, but happily without pain. Peter was about seven weeks short of his 90th birthday. He attended Ratcliffe between 1943 and 1946, and he was very proud of being an Old Ratcliffian.

**Joseph Taylor (18)** attended Ratcliffe College from 2011 until 2018. He passed away on Sunday 25th July 2021.

**Peter Anwyl**, a former teacher at Ratcliffe, passed away on September 23rd 2021, after suffering from cancer for quite some time. Peter taught at Ratcliffe from 1970 until 1978. He was a Fifth Form Common Room Master and also taught English during his time at the school. His sons, **Johnny (79)** and **Mark (80)**, also attended Ratcliffe, and many will remember his daughter, Louise, and wife, Carolyn, as the whole family lived in one of the houses at the bottom of the main drive.



## REMEMBERING PETER HILDRETH: BRITISH OLYMPIC HURDLER & ATHLETICS WRITER

**Peter Hildreth (46)** was born in Bedford on July 8th 1928, and he spent his formative years in India, where his father worked. In 1945, he came to Ratcliffe, and he soon established himself as a gifted athlete. At that year's school Sports Day, which Peter called "the most important day of the year", he won the hurdles and broke the school high jump record with a height of 5ft 4in (162.56cm). He went on to win hurdles races during his time studying History at Downing College, Cambridge, and even during his National Service in the RAF in the years that followed.

Peter's sporting breakthrough came at the age of 22, when he competed in the 1950 European Athletics Championships at Brussels' Heysel Stadium. Hildreth recalled: "It was a smaller affair than these days, where it is now a global industry. It was amateur, and so soon after the war. There was austerity and food rationing." Hildreth was put at a distinct disadvantage when he drew Lane 1 on the track, which was not covered by the stadium roof, like most of the other lanes. There had been several downpours in the previous days, and he was forced to run on a sodden, puddle-strewn track. Despite this, he went on to win the bronze medal. From this point, Hildreth said that he was hooked: "I went on, year after year, as hard as I could."

This determination brought him great success as a hurdler, winning countless national and international races in the 1950s. He equalled the British record for the 110 metre hurdles (set by his hero, Donald Finlay), with a time of 14.3 seconds, on five occasions. He represented Britain in the Olympics three times - in Helsinki in 1952, Melbourne in 1956, and Rome in 1960. Another highlight of Peter's career came in May 1954, when he won two races at Iffley Road, Oxford, immediately before Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile record on the very same track. Peter was also one of the last links back to the *Chariots of Fire* era of British athletics, as his father, Wilfred 'Will' Hildreth, competed at the 1924 Paris Olympics, alongside famous names Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell.

After his retirement from athletics in 1960, Hildreth became a sports journalist, working as an athletics correspondent for the *Sunday Telegraph* from its launch in 1961 until 1994. He was a fervent opposer of drugs in athletics and a lifelong campaigner against their use, dedicating countless articles to the topic. He also wrote a number of books on the sport and commentated on events for BBC Radio in the 1960s and 70s.

In July 2008, shortly before his 80th birthday, Hildreth appeared in the *Daily Mail*, when he was 'banned' from a Guildford department store for running up the down escalator. He explained that he was simply seeking to repeat a training feat of his youth, when he would run up the escalators on the London Underground. He added: "I got on the bus and went to try it. I went up it straight away, then turned around and caught the same bus home. I had been so quick that it was still waiting there!"

Peter Hildreth died on February 25th 2011 at the age of 82, after a long and successful career. He is survived by two children from his first marriage, five grandchildren, and his second wife, Carol.



## MEMORIES OF THE 1964 TOKYO OLYMPICS

It was an extraordinary time: a time of many firsts. It was the first time that the Olympics were held in Asia. The carrier of the flame, Yoshinori Sakai, was chosen because he was born on August 6th 1945 - the day the atomic bomb exploded in Hiroshima - in recognition of the victims, and to symbolise world peace. It was also the first time that the Olympics were telecast live internationally, and in colour.

Judo was the Japanese national sport making its debut in the Olympics, and among the new sports venues specially built to host the judo competition was the Nippon Budokan, which stands in the grounds of the Imperial Palace. It is still a global centre for judo.

Although many of my contemporaries had been lucky enough to train in Japan, it was my first visit to the home of judo. I had never travelled that far before, and the flight was a lengthy one via Southeast Asia, involving an overnight stay in Hong Kong. It is now also hard to believe that, after the exciting build-up, at that time, the route to our accommodation in Hong Kong was via a muddy path!

By contrast, when we were settled in Japan, travelling for training was not easy, because of the massive recent development works for the Olympics, the crowds, and the traffic congestion. But once inside the Budokan for the days of competition, all this was forgotten, and our hosts provided a brilliant experience. I remember that the atmosphere was electric, especially when the Dutch competitor, Geesink, beat his Japanese opponent to take the gold medal in the final of the open weight category.

The best thing about being part of Team GB at judo was, firstly, the enormous privilege of being chosen to represent our country, and then also the feeling of being among a group of the very first people to start to challenge the Japanese supremacy in their national sport. It was daunting, but exciting. At the same time, it was a marvellous time of forging relationships and friendships which have lasted for life.

The photo, below, shows the British Judo Team about to depart for Tokyo at the BOAC terminal in London (from left to right: Brian Jacks, Sydney Hoare, Tony Sweeney, Alan Petherbridge, and John Newman, the team manager).

**Tony Sweeney (56)**



Photo copyright: PA Images



## RESOURCE MANAGER SHAUN WALKER RETIRES AFTER 42 YEARS AT RATCLIFFE



After 42 years of unstinting service to Ratcliffe College, Resource Manager Shaun Walker left the building for the final time at the end of term to begin his well-earned retirement.

In a hilarious speech given by Science Technician and long-term colleague Mick O'Hara, jokes and stories were told about Shaun's time at Ratcliffe at the staff leaving event, held in the Lockhart Garden on the last day of term.

Gifts were awarded to Shaun from the Parents' Association, the Ratcliffe College staff, and also the Ratcliffian Association, with all of them stating just how precious and valuable an asset Shaun has been over the past 42 years.

Following this, a staff social event was held outside the Old Ratcliffian Bar, which created another opportunity for everyone to hear further stories from Shaun, including flagpole blunders, wedding wars, and kitchen catastrophes!

Shaun would like to thank all of the Old Ratcliffians who have wished him well in his retirement. He says: "Thank you all for supporting me at the end of term, and for all the kind words and gifts. I'd also like to thank the Parents' Association for thinking of me and for their gift. On a personal note, it has been a privilege to work with you all over the years; nothing we have done together has been too much trouble. Everything we did, we did for the College, and Ratcliffe was better for it."

We are sure that Shaun will be deeply missed by all staff, students, and parents at Ratcliffe, but we know that some rest and relaxation in retirement are what he needs now.

When it was announced that Shaun was to retire, a story was posted on the Ratcliffian Association Instagram and Facebook accounts. Below are just some of the comments posted by Old Ratcliffians in response:

**Matt Isbell (07):** "An absolute Ratcliffe legend. Congratulations, Shaun!"

**James Taylor (04):** "Enjoy your retirement, Shaun. A fantastic stint and always willing to go the extra mile. I worked closely with Shaun when running Activate camps, and also during my time as a pupil and a member of staff. There was always a smiling face and a hearty welcome whenever you saw him in the corridors."

**Olly Stabler (12):** "I have fond memories of Shaun's Tuck Shop when at school and, more recently, how friendly he was when I photographed a wedding at Ratcliffe. I'm sure he did so much behind the scenes that we never saw. Shaun, you're a gentleman. Enjoy your retirement."

**Matt Simon (92):** "Shaun's a lovely guy. Very down to earth, which was a breath of fresh air when I was at Ratcliffe. Best of luck in your well-deserved retirement."

**Sam Stabler (10):** "Happy retirement, Shaun. Thank you for taking the time to talk, both whilst and after I was a student. Ratcliffe won't be the same without you."

**Gareth Masters (97):** "Top man! Shaun was invaluable helping us with the planning for our wedding drinks reception in the Old Library back in 2014! All the best for your retirement, Shaun!"

**Krishna Naidu (99):** "Wow! Enjoy your retirement, Shaun! I'll always remember you as friendly and smiling whenever we crossed paths at Ratcliffe. You always seemed to be taking something somewhere and using a trusty stainless-steel trolley to get it to wherever you were headed. I always remember the sound of those trembling trolley wheels in the corridor or across the tarmac outside the College!"

**Kelly Eaton (00):** "I always remember Shaun, suited and booted, darting around the school, here, there and everywhere! Wishing him a super happy retirement."

## VIDEO TRIBUTES TO MR SLEATH ON HIS RETIREMENT

Mike Sleath retired from Ratcliffe this summer, having worked at the College for 34 years. Jamie Hollis, a current Year 12 pupil, wrote to the Ratcliffian Association asking for contributions from Old Ratcliffians to include in a short film that he made for Mike. Below are a few excerpts from the film:

Jon Reddin (Headmaster): "Mike, you've been a fantastic colleague and member of staff in the Maths Department, and we'll always be indebted to you for all of your hard work over the many, many years. I know that you've really enjoyed your time here at Ratcliffe, and 34 years later, no-one deserves retirement more than you do! Enjoy it - and congratulations!"



Susie Clarke (Maths teacher): "Well done, Mike - you've survived four headmasters, four hernias, and a pandemic! Now it's time to hang up your calculator, put on an elasticated waistband, and enjoy your retirement!"

Connor Doherty (Maths teacher): "Although I've spent a short time working with you, I've just worked out that you started at the school long before I was born! Thanks for all your help and support in the short time that I've been here."

Gary Higham (Maths teacher): "I could burst into tears and cry, saying that you're irreplaceable, but you're not, as I'm replacing you next year in the Maths Department!" Gary wished Mike well in swapping Ratcliffe for snacks, Sky Sports, Amazon Prime, and Netflix! He added: "I'm really going to miss you, and I was grateful to you, as in the early days, you balanced out the men and the women in the Maths Department!"

Steve Jones (Maths teacher) reflected on Mike's love of American football, cricket, and '80s power ballads! He added: "You've been an absolutely great colleague, such a lovely guy. It's been brilliant working with

you - you're a true professional, and you're great with the students, who all love you. I wish you a very long and happy retirement."

Jonathan Cantrill (History teacher): "We will all miss you, Mr Sleath, or 'Slugger'!" He said that he would particularly miss watching American football with Mike, and chatting about the games with him. He added: "I'll miss seeing you around school, and I'll miss all of your support and all of your humour. You will be very badly missed. All the very best, and have a great retirement."



Nick Walsh (Religious Studies teacher): "It's been great working with you, Slugger, over so many years. We will all miss you. I have many great memories from boarding, and I look forward to seeing you in the future for more pub quizzes."

Mike Lambert (Geography teacher): "I would like to wish you a long and happy retirement. I can recall our great conversations about how to best balance work and being a father to my sons. You've given me some great advice over the years."

Emily Hollis (15): "I want to wish you the best retirement ever, because you really deserve it, after all these years of teaching all of us students. You were one of the best teachers at Ratcliffe, and I will always have memories from your lessons, mainly of asking you too many questions!"

Nicola Williams (11): "I wish you all the best for your retirement - thank you for making Maths a lot more interesting! Thank you for your support."

Christopher Curnick (16): "Thank you for being such a great teacher and such a great man. I remember that we had lots of good times in Maths lessons. Thank you for all the fun that you brought to boarding, and good luck in your retirement."



Mr Sleath's farewell film can be viewed on the Ratcliffian Association website, [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk).

## PETER BANKS & THE RATCLIFFE COLLEGE FILM CLUB

I was very lucky to be a founding member of the Ratcliffe College Film Club in 1990 - an opportunity that truly changed my life.

The previous year, Peter Banks - an English teacher with an obsession for cinema - had encouraged a group of students to make a film called *A Rose for Reggie*. At this time of remembrance, we must also think about **Gareth Bristow (89)**, a key member of that team who passed away shortly afterwards.

The first official Film Club production was *In Bello Vici*, filmed and edited on VHS. We were very proud to win the inaugural Panasonic Young Filmmakers Award, the prize for which was a trip to Japan, during which I filmed a short documentary for BBC kids' TV.

Over the next two decades, numerous competitions were won, to the point where more than half of the trophy cabinet next to the Bursar's Office was filled with filmmaking trophies. A particular favourite of Mr B's was a Red Nose Award, where Ratcliffe came second only to a young Edgar Wright.

In 1997, Mr Banks set up a Media Studies Department, teaching GCSE and, later, A Level. This was, in no small part, due to his desire to have a budget to keep the Film Club's equipment up to date.

Over the years, the productions became more and more ambitious. The first thought wasn't whether we could (or should) do something, just how we could do it. Shoots included using horses, motorcycles, road trips across the country, filming from helicopters, location shoots in Paris, Prague, and even Peru, and so much other craziness.

Not satisfied with conquering the world of moving pictures, the Film Club also expanded into radio in 1998. A licence was obtained to broadcast 24 hours a day for a week to the whole of the East Midlands. Radio Ratcliffe was also repeated, to great success, a few years later.

Filmmaking is a very complex endeavour, success at which involves a group of people collectively excelling creatively, technically, organisationally, and socially. These are all skills that members of the Film Club will be sure to have used in their later lives, even if they didn't ultimately end up working within media, which many of us have.

The Film Club started as I entered the Lower Sixth Form, and, until that point, I had been a bit adrift in the world. But I, like many who followed afterwards, suddenly found a home - a place to obsessively pursue our dreams, where experimentation and pushing boundaries were the norm, and where mistakes were inevitable and embraced as learning. It is only with hindsight that we have realised how incredibly special and unique the Film Club actually was, and how privileged we were to have had such an opportunity.

Of course, the only common thread through all of the success, all of the ambition, was Pete Banks.

Rest in peace, Mr B. Thank you for everything - you made the world a more exciting place for so many of us.

**Ben Jacobson (92)**



## THE HISTORY OF THE CCF AT RATCLIFFE

Paul Walters, the CCF's Contingent Commander (SSI), Mark Edwards, has started researching the history of the CCF at Ratcliffe College, and the outcome so far has been fascinating. If there are any Old Ratcliffians out there with memories of the CCF contingent and stories to tell, we would love to hear from them as we build up a picture of our heritage. We would also like to gauge how popular a dinner for former CCF members and veterans would be. The idea would be to organise a regimental-style dinner with as many OR former CCF cadets and staff as we can muster, along with other OR veterans. Please contact the Association if you would be interested in such an event, or if you have any anecdotes to pass on."

Mark Edwards, SSI of the CCF, added: "I decided to run an event for charity each year, focusing on something that involved the College, both in the past and present. I began researching those ORs who fell during the two World Wars, trying to find out who they were, where and how they fell, and which units they served with. By reading through all of the *Old Ratcliffian* magazines that were published during both wars, as well as using some other online resources, I managed to find out quite a lot of detail. The idea now is to plot where they fell on a world map and then work out the distance from Ratcliffe College to each location and back again. Once a total distance is ascertained, the plan is for members of staff, students, and potentially ORs to cover the distance virtually (on exercise bikes, running machines, rowers, etc.) over a period of time. This would be done in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund, the RAF Benevolent Fund, and the Royal British Legion. The research is on a living document, and I would love any input that anyone might have, as I still have some missing information on certain former students, as well as the potential that some information may be incorrect." Here are some of the research highlights so far:

**1910:** Sgt Maj Parker becomes the new drill master. He was in the South African War and endured the siege of Ladysmith.

**1918:** On October 24th, Eric Emery arrives for a week to give musketry instruction to the Cadet Corps.

**1941:** In October, a unit of the Air Training Corps is formed at Ratcliffe. Its initial strength is 25 cadets.

**1954:** In January, the Combined Cadet Force is established. The Commanding Officer (CO) is Maj Radford, MC. Other officers commissioned include Mr Callaghan and Mr Guinee. The resident Warrant Officer (WO) is RSM Simpson, late Coldstream Guards and Royal Leicestershire Regiment. Equipment is also issued. The aerodrome provides all that is wanted - space and a concrete parade ground, drill hall, armoury, stores, and range.

**1956:** CO Maj Radford, MC, retires on health grounds. The new CO is Lt Col Wain of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment (TA).

**1959:** On June 2nd, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent visits Ratcliffe (above), and the CCF provide the honour guard.

**1961:** In June, the RAF section is formed, and the General's inspection of the CCF takes place. For the first time, some of the boys take and pass the RAF proficiency test, as the Air section has been established. They begin with nine cadets. Sgt Beeton is Officer Commanding (OC) of the section.

**1967:** In September, WO2 Wright takes over from SSI Simpson and becomes the College's second ever SSI.

**1973:** In February, OC of the Army section is Capt Orton, BA. OC of the RAF section is FO Mullen. The former SSI, RSM Simpson, passes away at his home in Wigston.

**1976:** WO1 (RSM) Walker takes over as SSI.

**1983:** The established strength of the Army section is 3 officers and 80 cadets. The RAF section is 2 officers and 55 cadets.

**1984:** Contingent Commander Lt Col Robinson, Flt Lt Mullen OC RAF, Pilot Officer Badham, and Lt Castille all retire from the CCF.

**1985:** Maj Friendship becomes Contingent Commander.

**1996:** Lt Col Friendship retires as Contingent Commander, succeeded by Sqn Ldr Bolton - the first RAF officer to take on this role.

**1998:** Capt Balmbra becomes Contingent Commander.

**2017:** WO1 McIntyre leaves, and SSgt Edwards takes over as SSI.

For more information about the charity event above (planned for March 2022), or to see the full list of pupils from Ratcliffe who fell in the two World Wars, visit [www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffianassociation.co.uk) or email Mark Edwards at [medwards@ratcliffecollege.com](mailto:medwards@ratcliffecollege.com).





## REMEMBERING GRACE DIEU

Grace Dieu Manor School was founded in May 1933 by the Rosminian Order as a preparatory school for Ratcliffe College. It occupied the 19th-century, Grade II-listed Grace Dieu Manor, which sits in approximately 120 acres of grounds near Thringstone in Leicestershire. Some 500 yards away stand the ruins of Grace Dieu Priory, founded in 1240 by Roesia de Verdun, from which the manor takes its name. After opening its doors with little more than 20 students, Grace Dieu Preparatory School thrived for many years, swelling to a capacity of over 300 students between the ages of 3 and 13. More recently, a day nursery was added, caring for children from as young as 11 weeks old. Sadly, after an amazing journey, educating pupils for 87 years, Grace Dieu closed its doors for the final time on Friday 3rd July 2020, following a period of financial difficulty. We invited former pupils and teachers of the school to share their memories of Grace Dieu across the ages.



## GRACE DIEU IN THE 1960S

Most of us who attended Grace Dieu from 1963 to 1966 look back on the experience with considerable affection. Grace Dieu (or GD, as it was commonly known) was a school of around 100 boys, aged 10 to 13, with two classes in each year group. Almost everyone went on to Ratcliffe at age 13, representing about half of the Ratcliffe intake.



It was a tough beginning. Although boys were generally allowed to go out on Sundays with their parents (from after morning Mass until Benediction at 6.30pm), there was no such allowance for the first half-term. This was on the reasoning, logical or otherwise, that it helped the boys to settle in and avoid homesickness. And half-term lasted only from Saturday morning until Sunday evening.

Nevertheless, it was a happy ship. Interest in sport certainly gave boys an advantage. There were no lessons on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday early afternoons, which were devoted to sport, with fixtures against other schools on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Rugby took pride of place in the winter, and cricket in the summer, but tennis, athletics, swimming, football, and judo all had their place as well. Oh, the unheated outdoor swimming pool, in which most boys took their swimming medals, was cold! Sport wasn't confined to official games times either, with breaks throughout the day seeing impromptu football and cricket dominating the playground.

Lessons ran throughout the mornings, Mondays to Saturdays, on

## A MEMOIR OF GRACE DIEU

I wouldn't have missed Grace Dieu for the world, even though, 50 years ago, the world ignored Grace Dieu. Time appeared to have stopped when I arrived in 1965 at the early Victorian 'pocket' manor house, designed by Augustus Pugin and others, in deepest

two afternoons, and in the early evenings. Time was allocated on one evening a week to write a letter home to parents.

The Tuck Shop opened every day for us to spend whatever modest allowance of pocket money we had been given. The usual half-term allowance at the outset was about 10 shillings!

We had to suffer not only the swimming pool, but also the food! It certainly wasn't GD's strong point. And we weren't allowed to leave food without the say so of Br Mark Walker or Mr Brian Galway. One boy, on asking if he could leave some lettuce that had a caterpillar on it on his plate, was advised to eat the lettuce, but leave the caterpillar!

Of course, we were all boarders, in dormitories such as Little Green, Little Brown and Little Pink. A small number were also housed in 'the cottage', necessitating a nightly promenade in pyjamas and dressing gowns to the nearby building in the woods. Apple-pie beds were the order of the day when feeling naughty.

GD encouraged a great sense of camaraderie amongst us all. We were fit, exercised, well taught, and generally well looked after. Many of this group remain in contact with each other to this day, nearly 60 years after we all met - a testament to the spirit that GD engendered.

**Charles Dewhurst (71)**  
Former Grace Dieu student

Leicestershire. Expropriation of Grace Dieu Priory land under Henry VIII led, through family succession, to the present building and chapel. It seemed that little of note happened there between the dissolution of the monasteries and the construction of the M1

(1968)! The years 1965 to 1968 marked the high point of modernity in post-war Britain, but there was no trace of this at Grace Dieu. The fashion designer Mary Quant launched hotpants; the Lotus Super Seven sports car had bug-eye headlights; the first Action Man toy appeared; Prime Minister Harold Wilson welcomed the Beatles. From grim events elsewhere, the school was inoculated. A fire on the launch pad in January 1967 killed the first Apollo astronauts; 475,000 US soldiers were in Vietnam. *The Prisoner* was first broadcast on television. The cult series starred the actor, writer, and Old Ratcliffian **Patrick McGoohan (44)**. His character declared, famously: 'I am not a number: I'm a free man.'

Boys (there were no girls) who arrived at Grace Dieu at that time were happy to be numbers. (I was 'GD 88' - I never met the boy called Number 6, the character played by McGoohan himself.) It is impossible to describe adequately how isolated we were. Months would elapse before any visitors appeared. The winter of 1963 had been the coldest for 200 years. Personal communication devices and computers did not exist. The new transistor radios were forbidden. Teaching was by chalk on a blackboard. Certain masters threw wooden dusters at little heads. Grace Dieu's Headmaster, Fr Robert Bell, practised corporal punishment. This was permitted at the time. There were few books. Little boys who missed their mothers were consoled by friendly women in the Linen Room. Crisp sheets stacked on shelves seemed like warm breaths of home.

The sole means of contacting parents (mine did not possess a car) was to attend a wooden phone box that resembled the

## TEACHING AT GRACE DIEU

The first time I met the Grace Dieu staff, over Pimm's on the Headmaster's Lawn in 2004, it really set the scene for me. The lawn had the most glorious outlook of the main cricket fields and beautiful woods. Little did I know that this would become home for 16 years. For six years, I worked alongside Anne Jenks as a Swans teacher. We were based in the mobile buildings - our own Early Years haven. In 2009, we moved into the new pre-prep building with Years 1 and 2, and this formed a stronger connection to the main school. In 2010, I was appointed as the Head of Pre-Prep. I embraced my new role, working on the Senior Management Team with Charles Foulds (Head), Tony Borrington (Deputy Head), and Pete Matthews (Deputy Head).

The department was home to 120 children ranging from 3 to 7 years old, and it was always filled with laughter. The team were an exceptionally special group of people, and we prided ourselves on the relationships and care that we provided. We enjoyed every opportunity to dress up and celebrate. Key occasions that jump into my memory are *Harry Potter Day*, the European Day of Languages, and the street party that we held for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The department would literally buzz with excitement! I was also privileged to accompany students on residential skiing and French trips to Austria and France, and sports tours to Jersey.

As a school, the key events in the calendar had to be Sports Day and Prize Day. Preparations would take weeks, marked by the arrival of the marquee, and the celebrations would begin with

TARDIS in *Doctor Who* (1963). It was an analogue world; you had to press button A or button B on the phone to make it work. For the homesick, tears fell as pennies dropped and time ran out.

It became apparent to me that everything that was good about Grace Dieu had little to do with what it taught. The freedoms that we enjoyed seem unimaginable today. They included night walks along unlit country roads; roaming through Charnwood Forest for hours, without the slightest adult supervision; viewing by invitation the corpse, laid out on a bed in an attic room, of a lay brother. Such was the valuable, informal education that I received at Grace Dieu. Thankfully, it had nothing at all to do with 'the curriculum' (the phrase was then unknown).

By the end of 1967, as the Kinks' elegiac 'Waterloo Sunset' made Number 2 in the charts, I was ready to leave for Ratcliffe. Times they were a-changing, even at Grace Dieu. In a fit of post-Vatican II modernising zeal, Rosminian clergy had taken down Pugin's exquisite rood screen in the Chapel and turned the altar back to front. The Kinks were kept from the top spot that year by Sandie Shaw's Eurovision-winning song, 'Puppet on a String'. I recalled the last words of Number 93 in *The Prisoner*: 'Listen to me. Tell them all that I got out...be seeing you.'

**Rory Coonan (72)**  
Former Grace Dieu student

You can read more about Rory's career since leaving Ratcliffe in the *OR News* section.

the famous GDPA Summer Ball and conclude with Prize Day, the Summer Serenade, family picnics, and the funfair. One of my favourite events, though, had to be our candlelit Christingle service in our beautiful Chapel.

A part of my heart will always remain at GD; it was such a shame that we never got to raise one last glass of Pimm's. One particular photo will always make me smile; it is of the children in Africa wearing the uniform donated from the School Shop when it closed (below). The spirit of GD indeed lives on!

**Mrs Dexter (previously Miss Speight)**  
Former Grace Dieu teacher



## THE ROSMINIAN ORDER & ROSMINI CENTRE: AN UPDATE

Until recently, the basic community at the Rosmini Centre at Ratcliffe consisted of myself as rector, **Fr Ted Mullen (60)**, **Fr David Tobin (59)**, **Fr Philip Sainter (69)**, and Fr Tony Furlong. Fr Ted lived at the Centre and had responsibility for the local parish in Birstall, but after some health issues, which he has come through successfully, he no longer has that responsibility.

I was novice master to Br William Rees, who completed his two-year novitiate; this included spending nearly four months in Italy at Monte Calvario, our Italian novitiate, and six weeks in St Peter's in Cardiff, living with our Father Provincial, Chris Fuse, and the community there. He was then posted to Rome and, despite his great love for our Institute, and especially for the works of our founder, Blessed Antonio Rosmini, he came to the conclusion that he would be better leaving us and joining the Oratorians, founded by St Philip Neri. I hear from him regularly and wish him well.

Also in our community are Fr Denis Labartette and **Br Nigel Cave (72)**, who live in two residences near to the Fosse at the College. Fr Denis was chaplain at Grace Dieu until it closed a year ago. He is now living with us and spending quality time with his aged parents in Bergerac (his father is 96 and his mother is 88). He also helps locally in the parish there. Br Nigel continues to author and co-author books on the First World War battlefields; however, his visits to France have been curtailed because of COVID.

We celebrated Mass on July 1st, the Feast of Blessed Antonio Rosmini, and had our first open gathering since lockdown. At this Mass, we received two new ascribed members into the Institute of Charity: Carolyn Saddington and Adeleine Sheehan. You can read more about this joyful event on the Association website, [www.ratcliffanassociation.co.uk](http://www.ratcliffanassociation.co.uk).

In September, I left England for Rome, as I am the Vicar General and needed to be on hand for the preparations for our General Chapter in October, at which we will elect a new Father General. At 75, Fr Vito Nardin, the present Father General, offered his resignation, and it is now my responsibility, for a second time, to see to preparations for another election. I will spend two weeks in our foundation house at Monte Calvario, in Domodossola, then return to Rome for the final preparations for the election, which will take place in the last week of October in Domodossola. I will then finish my duties and return to enjoy life at the Rosmini Centre at Ratcliffe. *(Editor's note: since this article was submitted, Fr Marco Tanghetti has been elected as the new Father General of the Rosminian Order.)*

In other news, Fr Tom Thomas from Kerala is parish priest in Birstall; for a time, he was joined by Fr Benny, a newly ordained priest from Kerala, who is now studying at St Mary's in Twickenham. Meanwhile, **Fr Simon Giles (60)** assists in the parish at St Mary's in Loughborough, though recently, he has had health issues, including a spell in hospital.

Fr David Tobin left the Rosmini Centre early in September, and he is now in residence at St Marie's in Rugby with our community there. He is joined by **Fr Charles Sormany (48)**, who is now over 90 and reasonably well, and **Fr John Bland (53)**, who is living with great determination and interest in his brethren, not only in England, but elsewhere, too. Br Joseph Gardner also resides there in the community.

At St Etheldreda's in Ely Place, Fr Tom Deidun continues as rector and is a well-known preacher. In St Mary's, Derryswood, Fr Bill Curran is sailing through his 90s and getting near to scoring a century. Although he no longer walks, he has a full-time carer, and he is very happy and content. **Fr Barry Farmer (48)** continues to live peacefully and prayerfully in the community, as does Fr Robin Paulson, who, despite his ailments, still produces a very tasty meal on Sundays which would be expensive in any hotel. Fr Bill Jackson, who once taught at Ratcliffe, is also there in residence, and he is very active around the grounds, as well as in the house.

Down in South Wales, in Newport, Fr Brian Cuddihy is parish priest, and Fr Eric Willett is his assistant. In Cardiff, Fr Chris Fuse is provincial and rector of St Peter's. Fr Philip Scanlan is retired and assisting in St Joseph's, where Fr Justus Okibo, a Rosminian from the East African Province, is the parish priest.

Finally, let us not forget our two Old Ratcliffian Rosminians in Dunedin, New Zealand: **Fr Aidan Cunningham (58)** and **Fr Michael Hill (49)**. Michael is now over 90 and still writing interesting books on the early Rosminian missionaries in England.

**Fr Anthony Meredith (57)**



# DIARY DATES 2022

The Ratcliffian Association Social Committee is busy planning a diary of events that will appeal to ORs across the generations. Those for which we already have details are printed below. However, to stay fully up to date with all events in 2022, please look out for notifications in the Association's regular e-newsletters. You can also view and register for all events on the Association website, [www.ratcliffanassociation.co.uk/events](http://www.ratcliffanassociation.co.uk/events).

FEBRUARY 25TH

THE LONDON DINNER  
THE CRYPT, ST ETHELDREDA'S  
MASS 6.50PM, CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION 7.15PM, DINNER 8PM

MARCH 13TH

RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING  
RATCLIFFE COLLEGE, 10.30AM

APRIL 22ND

THE CENTENARY SALVER  
LUFFENHAM HEATH GOLF CLUB

MAY 14TH

OLD RATCLIFFIANS' GOLF  
LUFFENHAM HEATH GOLF CLUB  
ARRIVAL 12.30PM, LUNCH 1PM, GOLF 2PM

JULY 15TH - 22ND

THE HCPT LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

SEPTEMBER 15TH

THE RATCLIFFE GOLF DAY & DINNER  
ROTHLEY PARK GOLF CLUB, 1.30PM

OCTOBER 28TH

THE PAST PRESIDENTS' DINNER  
THE OLD LIBRARY, RATCLIFFE COLLEGE, 7PM

NOVEMBER 20TH

RATCLIFFIAN ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEETING  
RATCLIFFE COLLEGE, 10.30AM

DECEMBER 24TH

FAMILY CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL MASS  
RATCLIFFE COLLEGE, 5PM

THE RATCLIFFE RETREAT  
MAY 2022

Led by Fr Philip Sainter (69), the 2022 Ratcliffe Retreat invites the whole Ratcliffe community to deepen their knowledge and strengthen their faith through shared prayers and friendship.

Held over a weekend, the programme will include time dedicated to praying the Rosary, the beautiful Stations of the Cross walk, and workshops such as Mothers' and Fathers' Prayers.

Limited on-site accommodation will be available. Those local to Ratcliffe can attend as day guests, choosing those parts of the Retreat that are most suitable for them.

Look out for more information on the Association website. To register your interest in advance, email [alumni@ratcliffecollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffecollege.com).

THE RATCLIFFE SUMMER BALL  
JUNE 2022

Next year marks the 175th anniversary of Ratcliffe College. To celebrate this momentous occasion, the Ratcliffian Association, Parents' Association, and school are, together, planning a Summer Ball, to be held in June 2022 (date TBC).

We invite all Old Ratcliffians to join us for this event, which will combine our annual OR Reunion with the school's anniversary celebrations.

Look out for more information on the Association website. To register your interest in advance, email [alumni@ratcliffecollege.com](mailto:alumni@ratcliffecollege.com).

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