This Year’s President: Lee Gamble [2005-]

It is customary for the President of the Old Newportonian Society to write a few words about themselves. For those who know me well, you will realise this does not come particularly easily for me and so I hope you will find the following interesting and informative.

I arrived at Newport Free Grammar School in September 2005 as the newly appointed Head of Physical Education. I remember my first weeks well as the school was so relaxed and friendly. I think it is pertinent to let you know a little of my own upbringing, as it was certainly not in a school like Newport. I went to secondary school in Harlow. I was one of those students who came on their own and knew no one. I seem to remember a lot about playing sport (especially rugby) as I had many Welsh PE teachers. I did quite well for a Harlow lad and went on to get A-levels in English Literature, Maths and Physical Education. My university days were spent enthralled in a Sports and Exercise Science degree in Leeds and it wasn’t until I got to the end of my degree that a few of us decided to pursue a career in teaching. I certainly did not plan to become a teacher, but a PGCE in Physical Education seemed like a good idea in 1998.

It was in September 1999 that I first started teaching in Cheshunt. I thought I was going to a nice leafy lane school in the suburbs; how wrong I was. I spent the first 4 years of my career learning my trade (mainly trying to keep the students in the school and not wandering off to get a train into London) or wandering on to the adjoining mushroom farm. I remember well a telephone conversation in the winter of 2000. The deputy head called me to say that he had heard that a few PE students were off site. ‘No problem’ I told her, that will be my year 11 electives lesson where students were encouraged to use the local sporting facilities during a Wednesday afternoon. They only had to bring back a receipt in those days to prove they had attended. No safeguarding legislation back then! I then had to field a second phone call from the manager of the local squash club. He was not happy with me and I continued to tell him that our students were on an electives afternoon. He was annoyed that one or two of them were wearing incorrect shoes for a squash court. I could not see him but I can imagine he was red faced as he proceeded to tell me that there were two girls using the sauna at the squash club. (Not too bad I thought, quite brazen of them but nothing too bad). ‘No he said, they are using the sauna, fully clothed in their school uniform and on top of that they are both smoking cigarettes’. Ooops, I had better get over there to sort it out. We were not allowed to use the club again.

I then spent a short spell teaching in Bishop’s Stortford before the Head of PE became available at Newport Free Grammar School. During my first day at Newport I was teaching rugby on the playing fields to a group of year 9 students and the train went past (I am sure you all know the rugby pitch I am talking about). Well, it all came flooding
back to me. I had been here before, as a player when I was at school. I even remember the referee which I am sure was the late Kev Walker, and a few of my fellow Harlow players roughing up the Newport posh boys as we then thought.

I did not expect to be spending the next 15 years of my career in the same school, but things kept changing. Head Teachers came and went, and I had the opportunity to become Assistant Principal at the now Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport. I was fortunate to start teaching at Newport when there were some real characters in the staff body: Martin Peake – introduced me to lunch time running, something I still like to continue, Noel Berry – became the conversation in the staff room as well as trips to Twickenham, Rick Reynolds – he starting my interest in teaching maths, which I continue to this day, Ian Roper – I still remember his first comment to me: “when are you going to start helping with D of E?”. I soon saw the benefit of becoming a member of the Old Newportonian Society as I spent lots of time as Head of PE and later as Assistant Principal organising the ON sporting events for Keith. I have seen first-hand how the society has helped many individuals, groups of students and supported department areas to improve their provision. I am currently working on supporting a History department request to provide a plaque at Lochnagar Crater near the Somme. This is something that current and future Newport students will benefit from seeing and reflecting on during the annual history trip to the Somme.

I do not want to offend my dedicated fellow committee members, but the committee and the membership of the ONs are certainly ageing. In my year as President I think the committee needs to take decisive action to diversify the membership to ensure its longevity. If there is anyone reading this and thinks that they can now commit a few hours a year to support the ON society, we would love to hear from you. Contact Keith Huddlestone rather than me as we all know Keith is the life blood of the society. I look forward to spending a productive year in office as the President of the Old Newportonian Society.     Lee Gamble, President [2019/20]

FORTHCOMING EVENTS
1. Sunday 26th January 2020, 9.30am: Church Service at Newport Church to Commemorate the Founding of the School in 1588: As last year the Service will start at 9.30 am
This will be the eleventh such service to be held at St. Mary’s Church, Newport to commemorate the Founding. The previous services have been a great success and very well supported by Old Newportians. As usual the service will be part of the Newport Parish Church’s normal Sunday morning service. This service is being advertised to everyone connected with the Academy [Pupils, Parents, Staff, Governors as well as Members of the Society]. There will be some refreshments after the service. The Vicar of Newport, the Rev. Neil Macleod and the PCC are very much in favour of this service and of supporting links between the Academy and St. Mary’s Church so the committee hope that as many members of the Society who are able to attend will do so. As the time of the service is now 9.30 am it may well mean that some ONs who have attended in the past and travelled a considerable distance to do so will not be able to attend. This is perfectly understandable. However, the committee would urge as many members as possible to attend if they can possibly do so.

2. Friday 21st February 2020: 20.00 onwards; Gathering of ONs at the Coach and Horses, Newport
Please note that the date has been changed to that advertised in in the July newsletter. It is a week later. This event has always been held as near to Foundress Day as possible which is the 20th February hence the change of date. Although only a few ONs were able to attend this year it was still a thoroughly enjoyable occasion. It is extraordinary that every year someone turns up who has never been before. If you are in the Newport area on the evening of Friday 21st February 2020, please try to drop into the Coach and Horses if only for a short time.

As in previous years there will be two Hockey Matches. The Men’s Hockey Match will start at 9.15 am and the Women’s Hockey Match will start about 10.45 am. The Football Match will start at 11.00 am and the Cross Country Match is at 11.00 am. This occasion has now become a major event in the Society’s and the School’s calendar. Apart from the players many other ONs [as well as parents of students who are playing for the school] also come along and support the matches. Refreshments will be served in the Club House [next to the cricket pavilion] after the matches. Anyone wishing to take part in any of the matches please inform the Secretary of the Society by email [ckh1941@hotmail.com] or by contacting the Academy.

4. Sunday 28th June 2020: Annual Mixed Hockey, Netball and Cricket Matches against the Academy
The Mixed Hockey match will start at 10.45 am, the Netball Match at 12.00 noon and the Cricket Match at 2.00 pm. If you wish to take part in any of these matches please contact the ON Society secretary by email [ckh1941@hotmail.com] or by contacting the Academy. Please make a note of the two above dates and try to support the occasions either by taking part in one of the ON Society teams or by being a spectator. If you wish to take part in any of the above matches on either 25th April or 28th June please contact the Secretary by email [ckh1941@hotmail.com]. Alternatively telephone the Academy [01799 540237] and leave a message.

5. Saturday 3rd October 2020: AGM at 5.00pm: Annual Dinner at 6.00 for 6.30pm.
Please make a note in your 2020 diary of these two most important events. Further details will be given in the next newsletter which will be sent out in July 2020.
Reports

1. AGM: Saturday 5th October 2019 at 5.00pm
   This took place at the Academy. It was attended by 22 members of the Society. Minutes of the 2018 AGM and the
   secretary’s report for 2018/19 were distributed shortly before the meeting. A statement of the audited accounts
   for 2018/2019 was also distributed to all those present. The Treasurer, Ian Smith explained the salient points and informed
   the meeting that the statement of accounts clearly showed the Society’s finances to be in a very healthy position mainly
due to the continued success of the 100-Club.

The following elections were made for 2019/20:

President: Lee Gamble [2005-]; Treasurer Ian Smith [1959-66]; Secretary: Keith Huddleston [64-02] Assistant
Committee Members: Martin Szaj [1963-68]; John Dudley [61-68]; Martin Tomlinson [64-68]; Roger Bedford [1958-
65]; Alan Mills [50-55]; David Morris [1961-68]; Duncan Roberts [Principal 2013-]; Chris Szaj [64-70]
Auditor Richard King [70-77]. President Designate; Michael Wheelhouse [2009-16].

2. Annual Dinner: Saturday 5th October 2019:
   This was, as always, a thoroughly enjoyable occasion in spite of the fact the number attending was considerably lower
   than usual due quite a lot “regulars” being on holiday. The Academy has recently replaced having a Head Boy and Head
   Girl with a small group of Head Students all of whom attended the dinner. Seraphina Goodbody proposed the toast to
   Dame Joyce Frankland and Charlie Lutz Collier gave an excellent speech in proposing the toast to the ON Society. In
   replying to the toast to the Academy, the Principal, Duncan Roberts gave a very positive report on current very good
   progress the Academy is making. He highlighted the very good exam results at both A Level and GCSE Level as well
   as the increasing numbers attending the Academy.

3. The Old Newportonian Society 100-Club: As reported in the July newsletter, 190 membership tickets were sold
   for the year 2018/19. Although this is not quite as high a number of memberships as three or four years ago it is still a
   very good result. The committee are most grateful to all ONs who support the 100-Club which enables the Society to
   support the School in a number of different ways as well as ensuring that all the necessary administration costs are
   covered. Current membership of the 100-Club will end on 31st January 2020. The committee very much hope that
   all those who purchased tickets this year will renew their membership for 2020 and also that those who are currently not
   members will consider taking up membership. The cost of one ticket is £12 and there is no limit to the number of
   membership tickets anyone can purchase. If you wish to join as a new member then please complete the pro-forma on
   page 6 and send it with your cheque to the ON Society Secretary at the Academy. Please make cheques payable to the
   ON Society 100-Club. The closing date for entry into the first draw of the New Year is 29th February 2020. Those ONs
   who are already members of the 100-Club will, as usual receive a separate invitation by post to renew their existing
   membership.

Winners since the last Newsletter

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New Members since the last Newsletter:

The following have been elected to the Society:- Victoria Hill [11-18]; Charles Holloway [16-19]; Jasmin Parkin; Tara
Panesar; Merlin Owen; Regan Nicolaou; Bronwyn Evans [all 12-19]

Deaths: The following deaths have been reported to the secretary since the last newsletter:-
Edward Banks [37-43]; Ronald Page [35-42]; Charles Farr [41-43]; Peter Withers [41-49];
Bernard Chapman [47-52]; Jonathan Stapleton [64-71]

Edward Banks entered Newport in 1937 from Dunmow Primary School. He was a member of the school orchestra and
also the ATC. He left Newport in 1943 and joined the RAF where he became a wireless/radar engineer. On leaving the
RAF in 1948 he went to Loughborough College obtaining a Diploma in Electrical Engineering and then a Teaching
Certificate. In 1957 he became a lecturer in Electrical Engineering at Gloucester Technical College and then from 1974
at Guernsey College of Further Education in the Channel Islands. On retiring in 1986 he continued to live on Guernsey
until his death in April 2019. He was a long-time member of the ON Society and supported it for many years as a
member of the 100 Club.
Dr Ronald Page came to the school in 1935 from Great Sampford Primary School. From 1945 to 1948 he served as a Captain in the REME. In 1948 he went to Glasgow University where he graduated with a degree in Biochemistry subsequently being awarded a PhD in 1961. He was the Senior Chemistry Master at Gosport County Grammar School from 1952 to 1956 and then a Lecturer at the West of Scotland Agricultural College from 1956 to 1963. From 1963 until he retired he was a Researcher at the Agricultural Research Council’s Research Establishment at Wellesbourne in Warwickshire. He died on 15th February 2015.

Charles Farr entered Newport in 1941 from Broxbourne Primary School. From 1943 to 1947 he attended Ardingly College and then from 1951 to 1952 he was at Writtle Agricultural College. He became a farmer and farmed Latton Farm near Harlow. On retiring he moved to Thaxted. He died on 28th May 2019.

Peter Withers attended Newport Grammar School from 1941 to 1948 and became involved in all facets of School life. He played cricket for the school 1st Team for four years and captained the side in his last year. He also played football for the school 1st Team for three years again capturing the eleven in his last year. He was Head of School and won a place at Selwyn College, Cambridge where he studied Natural Sciences after he had completed his National Service. Whilst there, he fully embraced University life and remembered those days as the happiest of his life. He represented the Falcons at football and the Crusaders at cricket but his real claim to fame was dismissing Sir Ted Dexter [former England Cricket Captain] in the university trial. He went on to be elected to the Hawks Club, still one of the most illustrious sporting clubs in the country.

Peter followed his vocation to teach and taught at a number of Public Schools when he came down from Cambridge University including Leighton Park, Michaelhouse in Natal, South Africa, the Oratory and finally Brighton College, where he was not only a successful House Master, but also Director of Studies. He was an outstanding teacher of Biology with a patient, empathetic understanding of the young and those in his charge. He always got the best out of his pupils and was well liked and respected by pupils, parents and staff alike. He combined his assiduous teaching of Biology with the coaching of games, particularly rugby, football and cricket. Peter had made such a good impression on the school with pupils and parents alike during his career that he came out of retirement to cover for a former colleague to carry on his duties in the classroom, before finally retiring at the age of seventy-seven. He died on 16th April 2018. The Secretary is most grateful to Peter Wither’s son, Simon for much of the above information.

Bernard Chapman entered Newport in 1947 from St Christopher’s School, a private school in Broxbourne. He was not the first of his family to attend Newport. Two uncles also went to Newport, Thomas Chapman [1900-01] and Lionel Chapman [1916-1918] who was President of the ON Society in 1953/54. At School Bernard proved to be a very good sportsman. He was Junior and Senior Athletics Champion and a member of the 1st XI Football Team. In the 1960s and 70s he often played for the ON Football Team against the school. On leaving school in 1952 he joined his father’s horticultural and florist business in Roydon. Despite his father’s early death he and his brother worked hard and the business grew rapidly. Eventually he and his brother decided to split the business and go their separate ways. Both brothers continued to be highly successful. At one stage Bernard had six florist shops in various towns in Essex and Hertfordshire. Bernard loved his work so much so that he was still working up to the time he died on 31st August 2019. The Secretary is most grateful to Malcolm Lavis ON [1955-62] for the above information. Malcolm Lavis pointed out that Bernard Chapman’s links with Newport were strengthened in 1954 when his sister married Malcolm’s elder brother, Arthur Lavis ON [1934-41].

Jonathan Stapleton came to Newport in 1964 from Monckton School in Prestwick, South Ayrshire. As he was born and brought up in Scotland, at Newport he quickly became known as “Scottie” Stapleton. He was a member of the ATC and in his final year he was appointed Deputy Head Boy. He was a very good mathematician. On leaving school in 1971 he went to Newcastle University to study Maths, graduating in 1974. On leaving university he took a job with an International Removal Company and became its Operational Manager. In 1979 he joined a Shipping/Forwarding Company in Stuttgart where he had a very successful career. He lived most of the rest of his life in Germany where he married and had a family. He died on 20th August 2019 after bravely fighting an illness for some time. He was a very kind, caring and cheerful person. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends a number of whom were former students at Newport with whom he kept in touch.

Update of the School History: As reported in previous newsletters the updated school history, written by Malcolm White [1961-68] has now been published. Although a lot of copies have been sold there are still some available from the initial printing run of 300. If anyone would like to purchase a copy please contact the ON Society Secretary at the school either by email or letter [see contact details above]. The cost is £5.00 per copy or £7.50 to include postage and packaging. Cheques should be made payable to the “O.N. Society”

Prints of the Academy: In 1988 Martin Tomlinson [64-69] produced a limited number of copies of a pencil sketch of the Academy for the 400th Anniversary appeal. All of these were sold very quickly. At the instigation of the Committee Martin [who was President of the Society in 2013-14] agreed to produce another such sketch prints of which can still be purchased. The cost of a print is £19 to include postage and packaging. Please see the pro-forma on page 6.
Message from Charlie Read [1963-70]

Are You an Old Newportian Living in the Solent Area...?


They would like to know of others living in this neck of the woods. So if you fit this bill and would like to get in touch then please contact Charlie by email e_mread@hotmail.co.uk (please note that there is an 'underscore' between the c & m of the e mail address).
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE O.N. SOCIETY 100-CUB FOR 2020/21

[Those who are currently members of the 100-Club should receive a separate invitation to renew their membership. This pro-forma is for those who are not currently members of the 100-Club]

The cost of annual membership is £12.00. There are no restrictions on the number of tickets any member can hold. Cheques should be made payable to the O.N.Society 100-Club.

I wish to apply for [please print in words]___________________ticket[s] for membership of the O.N.Society 100-Club.

I enclose a cheque for £_____ Name [Block Capitals] ________________________________

Address [BlockCapitals] ___________________________________________________________

__________________________________________

Post Code______________________________________Tel. No.___________________________

Email Address____________________________________________________________________

Please return the completed form with your cheque to the Secretary of the ON Society at the school [Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport, Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex   CB11 3TR]

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PROFORMA FOR PURCHASING PRINTS

Please send me_______ print[s] [cost is £19 per print]

I enclose a cheque for ________ pounds made payable to the ON Society

Name [Block Capitals]____________________________________________________

Postal Address [Block Capitals]_____________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Email address____________________________________________________________

Please send this order to Martin Tomlinson, 21, Greenacres, Duxford, Cambridge CB22 4RB