

## **Minutes of the 109<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Marlburian Club held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2005 at 10.15 am in the Ellis Theatre**

The President, Sir Michael Latham, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. He promised to keep matters brief because of the very important ceremony that was to follow.

### 1. To approve the Minutes of the AGM held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2004.

Minutes of the previous AGM had been circulated and had also been published in the 2005 edition of the Club Magazine.

The President asked that these be approved by Members and they were accordingly signed as being a correct record.

### 2. To Adopt the Accounts.

The President apologised on behalf of Quintin Heaney who was not able to be present and that James Abell would present the accounts on behalf of the Treasurer.

James Abell said that he hoped that everyone had seen a copy of the Accounts in the Club Magazine which members should have received by now.

He stated that as at 31 March 2005 the cash balance of the Club stood at £22,500 and net assets were currently valued at £76,000. In 2002 an increase in subscriptions had been approved which took four years to feed through in full, however, expenditure had been well controlled and the Club now had an operating surplus of £5000. Investments had shown a 16% return and advertising revenue from this year's magazine was expected to be in the region of £10,000.

Sir Michael asked that the Accounts be adopted. This was proposed by John Manser and seconded by Frederick Hicks.

The Treasurer of the Charitable Funds went on to say that in the year ended 31 March 2005 Income from the Fund amounted to £140,000 whilst Expenditure was £22,000 with Grants made, mainly in the form of Bursaries, totalling £63,000. The Charitable Funds surplus for the year of £53,000 had been retained as planned.

Assets stood at £4.4 million and the investment portfolio had shown a 14.1% return. Since 31 March the Fund had made a grant of £500,000 to the new Art School half of which would be charged to the Income Account and half to the Capital Account.

In answer to a question from the floor, James Abell stated that the funds used to be managed by Robert Fleming who had since been

acquired by J P Morgan Private Bank, who now performed that function.

Sir Michael asked that the accounts be adopted which was proposed by Richard Ford and seconded by Alan Gillett.

3. To re-elect the Treasurer.

Quintin Heaney being prepared to stand again was proposed by Sir Michael Latham and seconded by Nigel Grieve.

4. To appoint the Auditors.

James Abell proposed that the Auditors, Hays Macintyre, be reappointed and this was seconded by David Farr and unanimously approved.

5. President's Report.

Sir Michael began his report with profuse thanks to both Martin Evans for being the driving force of the Club and to Penny Redman for her support and admin skills.

He went on to also thank the Committee for their contribution and devotion with particular mention of Nick Maurice, the President Elect, and Susanna Spicer, immediate Past President. The Editor, and the team who produce the excellent Club Magazine, were praised and received a round of applause from the floor.

Club Members, too, were thanked for their support of the various functions which had been held throughout the year, many of which Sir Michael had been delighted, and privileged, to attend.

However the President appreciated that the main reason for Members being present at the AGM was not to listen to him speak but to pledge their loyalty and support to the College. On this particular occasion it was also in order to honour those heroic OMs for their bravery and sacrifice. Lt Col Eric Wilson, the sole surviving VC holder, would be unveiling the Memorial Plaque.

6. To elect the President.

The President then proposed that Dr Nicholas Maurice (C3 1956-61) be elected as the next President of the Club. This was duly seconded by Anthony Thorpe.

Nick Maurice thanked the President for his kind introduction and asserted that it was a great privilege to be here. He then continued with a misquote from that other OM, John Betjeman, concerning 'particularly nasty weather' by saying that 'you could have knocked me

down with a feather' when he was contacted by the Club Secretary and asked whether he would be prepared to stand as Club President. He had been very nervous about accepting the offer and quite lost his appetite for his breakfast which he had been eating at the time. The first question he asked himself was "why me"? It was not likely to be because he was famous - after all he was 'just a retired GP'. But then he thought "why not"? After all he could always blame his schooling if it all went wrong!

He had also felt some anxiety that he would be unable to live up to his predecessors and, at that point, a tribute was made to all the work of Sir Michael Latham and Susanna Spicer. However, despite those doubts he felt that he would like to continue the process of development that had been taking place over the years.

The President Elect pointed out that the objectives of the Club were to 'promote friendly relations between OMs' and he stated that he had spent several happy evenings attending dinners and late night suppers, in pubs with young OMs and that he looked forward to many more.

The Club also existed to organise games, sports and various gatherings. This had demonstrably been fulfilled over the last year with many different types of event being held and he vowed to continue pestering Susanna Spicer until he got the promised gathering of OM singers!

The objective that particularly struck, however, was the one which reads 'the furtherance of the interest and prosperity of Marlborough College, its past and present members and to do all possible to ensure the continued existence of Marlborough College'.

The President Elect stated that he had always had a keen interest in international development and the causes and solutions to poverty that exist in both this country and the third world. He was particularly proud to have been a Trustee of Oxfam when the decision had been taken to start a poverty alleviation programme in the UK. He went on that whilst it was right and proper that the success of our alumni was celebrated he couldn't but help wonder what had become of some of our ex-pupils who had fallen by the wayside. He had been struck at a recent Marlburian Dinner that the Master had expressed concern that a large proportion of Marlburians have no experience of 'the Darkness'.

He felt that to 'further the interest and prosperity' of our members should include their social and spiritual prosperity also and should not be confined to their material prosperity. To that end the President Elect felt that the interface between the Club and the College should be enhanced. This could be achieved, with the aid of the Careers Department, by introducing Marlburians to the real world of work, not just in those areas traditionally associated with College leavers, but

also those where OMs are involved in the field of social work, aid agencies, civil societies etc.

The President Elect continued that one of the reasons for his initial discomfort at accepting the position of 'President' was that friends had felt that it was not a mantle that would sit easily on his shoulders. However, he felt that it was an opportunity that he could use to demonstrate that this group of people, whilst very privileged, could be at the forefront of social responsibility rather than just interested in furthering their own ends.

There are already OMs engaged in such work and they should be used to further educate Marlburians by drawing their attention to those less fortunate than themselves. Things were already happening with plans for a link with a school in Kenya being discussed.

Nick Maurice hoped that everyone present at the AGM could be part of a wider debate and invited their views and ideas.

Tribute was paid to the Master and Nick Sampson was congratulated on his handling of recent events which had demonstrated that the College was in safe hands under the Master's leadership.

Fulsome praise was then made of the Club Secretary, Martin Evans, and the President Elect, who had known Martin for some 30 years, looked forward to working with him. The opportunity was also taken to congratulate the team responsible for producing the highly readable Club Magazine which was a first-rate showcase for the many extraordinary people who had shared five years of a unique education at the school.

7. To Nominate the President Elect.

Sir Michael Latham thanked Nick Maurice for his speech and moved on to nominate Air Marshal Ian Macfadyen (C2 1955-60) as the President Elect for the forthcoming year. The President gave brief biographical details about Ian Macfadyen and also listed some of his interests which include gliding, photography, shooting and sailing. Ian Macfadyen had had a most distinguished career in the RAF and had only recently retired as Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man.

The Proposal, having been made by Sir Michael, was seconded by Nick Maurice.

There was a sustained round of applause from the floor.

8. To Elect three new Members to the Committee.

The President thanked the Members of the Committee who were due to retire by rotation they being Anthony Thorpe, for his hard work on the Website Committee, James Garner and Paul Sheldon.

It was proposed that three new members be elected to the Committee to replace them.

Steven Bishop (PR 1969-73)  
Proposed by: Alexandra Jackson  
Seconded: Rupert Atkin

Katherine Green (PR 1981-83)  
Proposed by: Susanna Spicer  
Seconded: Nick Maurice

Henrietta Hurst-Bannister (MM 1994-99)  
Proposed by: Edward Tollemache  
Seconded: Annabel Cochrane

All three were duly elected.

9. The Master's Report.

The Master began his speech by welcoming everyone back to Marlborough and by commenting on the diversity of College alumni and what great supporters of the College they were. He remarked on the generosity of the Club President in allowing Club Day this year to be amalgamated with the very important celebrations honouring the Victoria and George Cross and Albert Medal holders. The Master proceeded to say what a cerebral supporter of the school Sir Michael Latham had been during his term of office and how much he had enjoyed working with him. He then extended thanks to the successful and flamboyant Club Secretary, Martin Evans, and thanked him and the Editorial team for the excellence of the Club Magazine.

The Master then moved on to the academic achievements of the last year with A levels and GCSE grades better than ever, even allowing for grade inflation and political ineptitude. Twenty-four pupils had gone on to Oxbridge and one pupil had been awarded a Morshead Scholarship.

Flora Noble, a violinist, had attended Prize Day this year in full academic dress having been made a Licentiate of the Royal College of Music, whilst Alexander Kingham had been selected for the national U16 Rugby team.

He then reiterated his belief that it was right to stress traditional values, to foster a love of learning and much more: that pupils should be prepared for the next step to university and that they should be inculcated with a set of core (values) including a certain flexibility and

an ability to care with which to centre their lives around. He remarked that whilst College pupils would be doing this from a position of privilege that they were well aware of their duties. This spirit was demonstrated most notably by pupils' reactions to the tsunami disaster last year when they connected with an OM working for a charity in the area involved. It was felt that they wanted to continue to give their support long after this natural disaster had disappeared from world headlines.

The School had suffered from various unwelcome interruptions during the last year, particularly the fire in Barton Hill and the recent Court case. However, the Master was extremely proud of the way that staff and pupils had coped with the shock of the fire during the night and in the middle of exam time, and singled out the Housemaster, Dr Mike Ponsford, for praise. The fire had broken out at approximately 1.00 am but the rapid response by the emergency services had ensured that all was under control and the news had appeared on various websites by 3.00 am. Exhausted firemen had been given breakfast in the Norwood Hall along with members of the media who were accompanying the service in order to report on their work. The Master was relieved and grateful that no-one had been hurt and felt that the community had been strengthened by the experience.

The Master was not keen to dwell on the particular and individual details of the family involved in the recent Court case but commented on the extraordinary circumstances behind the matter. He stated that the school was right to stand by the values it holds dear - a view which had been endorsed by the presiding judge who also praised the quality of the staff who had appeared in Court, particularly Bob Pick and Niall Hamilton who had both survived legal analysis well. The Master wryly observed that whilst the case had been an enriching experience it was not one that he wished to repeat! Nevertheless, the judgement was good for the independent sector, and hopefully for the state sector too. Parents must support their child's school and things were very out of kilter indeed when this was not always the case.

There were also some difficulties on the academic side and the Lower School curriculum was to be reviewed as this had become too compartmentalised. The Master felt that there was a need to instil in younger pupils a sense of 'belonging' to the area and to this end they had recently completed a walk from Avebury to Marlborough which would encourage them to 'look' at Wiltshire more closely. An interest in local history and literature would also be fostered and that they should be encouraged to be themselves and to stand up for what they believe in.

The International Baccalaureate was being considered as an option for the Upper School, whilst, with the school being oversubscribed, admissions procedures were under review. The Master felt that the school should not be an academic hothouse - that there are other

facets to education which should be given space too. Members were asked to consider and, hopefully, look over the splendid new Art School and he also drew attention to the fact that a new organ was being built in Germany. Common Room are to move out of their existing rooms into the old art school.

Proposals for the future included a link with a City Academy in Swindon. Whilst this was a controversial move the Master felt that this provided a unique opportunity to serve and work in Swindon. He had visited the proposed school several times and reported upon the desperate situation he had found with the school under-resourced and starved of hope. He reassured Members that the plans would not affect fee income and went on to comment that pupils were only too willing to take a GAP year to help the deprived overseas - there was a certain fashionable aspect to this type of project - whilst working with, and for, the deprived in this country was decidedly unglamorous. From a pragmatic viewpoint he hoped that the voice of the school would, subsequently, be given more weight when discussing integrated education policies with the government. There were also proposals to form an International Board of Boarding Schools.

Six houses, an unparalleled number, had experienced a change in housemaster/housemistress this year but the new staff were doing very well. The role of the Housemaster was vital to the development of the pupils and was a vocation which required real dedication. David Whiting, Head of Modern Languages, had retired after thirty years at the school as had Dr Rosemary Groves who had proved such a superb advocate and spokeswoman for the school. They would both be very much missed.

The Master concluded by saying how delighted and privileged he had been to meet so many OMs at various events throughout the last year and he felt that the school had a bright future. He urged OMs to pick up the baton, not to be apologetic about their education, and to stand up in defence of excellence. By doing so they would help to defeat the stereotypical image, held by so many, of those educated in the independent sector.

The Master was accorded a prolonged round of applause from Members in support of his views.

The President then invited a very brief Question and Answer session.

A member asked why the Master had not mentioned the superb Summer School which was held every year. The Master had concurred that the Summer School was, indeed, first-rate and that his wife and two daughters had fully utilised its facilities last year!

Another member enquired what exactly a 'chit' was that he had heard so much about during the reporting of the court case. The Master explained that

this was paper documentation of a minor infraction of school rules and was an excellent way of recording misdemeanours. The Judge had fully understood that reprimands and discipline were quite often delivered verbally but, nevertheless, it was vital to have such issues well recorded.

The President warmly thanked the Master for his leadership and then handed the meeting over to the Club Secretary so that he could make a few administrative announcements concerning the imminent unveiling of the Memorial Plaque and events for the rest of the day.  
The Meeting closed at 11.10 am.

Martin Evans  
Club Secretary