



ST PIRAN'S

ST PIRAN'S ALUMNI

Newsletter for past pupils of St Piran's School

April 2021

Welcome to the latest news from St Piran's.



Charles Tippet
Chairman



Sebastian Sales
Headmaster

Looking forward

We hoped that by the time we reached this edition of our Alumni news, a year on from the start of the pandemic, that life would have returned to some normality. There looks to be light at the end of the tunnel, however, and we hope that by now many of you will have received your coronavirus vaccine and as we head into lighter evenings and longer days, there is optimism that we can soon return to seeing family and friends again, and some of our alumni events!

We hope you enjoy reading our updates and plans in this newsletter and look forward to opening our doors to past pupil visitors again very soon.

Forthcoming Events

◆
Past Pupil lunch at RAF Club
21st October

◆
Football and netball event
November 2021
Look out for details on social media

◆
Rounders event
Summer 2022



Please get in touch!

We would love to hear past pupils' news and update your details on our records.

Please send an email to pastpupil@stpirans.co.uk with your year of leaving St Piran's so we can stay in touch.

From the Headmaster's desk ...

The pandemic has not held us back from learning over the last few months and when the government announced school closures again at the start of January, we were ready to resume our programme of distance learning which had been so successful last year. While it is never ideal for the children to be remote learning, our amazing teachers have made the whole experience as fun as it can be via Zoom or Teams! We have had Book Week dress-up day, a daily 'Wake Up and Shake Up', a pet competition, baking projects, celebrated birthdays and even some celebrity appearances over the past few weeks. Nothing can quite compare to the sound of a school restored to its usual hustle and bustle, however, and now the children are back, we hope and pray that the worst of the pandemic and disruption is behind us.



Pupil Parliament members interview Theresa May, MP

The last year has given us the opportunity to focus on our communications via social media and I encourage all former pupils to take a look at our posts on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#) and [Instagram](#) — they provide a fantastic insight into our daily adventures at St Piran's; please do follow us!

St Piran's Day this year was Friday 5th March, unfortunately the last day before the children returned to school post-lockdown. So, our annual Millstone Race was a little less rowdy, with just our key worker pupils and Nursery children taking part. Despite this, it was hotly contested and can be viewed on our [YouTube channel](#)!

We have plenty to be positive about: plans for a new Upper School building are coming along. We have also renovated White Lodge—many past pupils of recent years will remember it as the home of Extended Day—now to be used for our growing Nursery Department which has started taking children from 2 years old. 'Private Side' has undergone a rapid transformation to create more office

spaces, a meeting room and a new Wellbeing Room for children and staff to use.

An extraordinary year, challenging for us all in so many ways, but we look ahead with enthusiasm, a will to keep motivated, to inspire and nurture each and every child and ensure the continued success of the St Piran's community. This comes with my best wishes to you and your families.

Sebastian Sales
Headmaster



Sunrise over St Piran's

Recent Events

Our annual sporting events for past pupils, such as the rounders for recent leavers, and RAF Club lunch have been postponed this year until guidelines allow us to gather once more. We look forward to reporting on these again in future newsletters!

Lockdown with St Piran's puzzles!

Andrew Perry, former Headmaster 1972-82, sent us this photo of his granddaughters (daughters of James Perry, former pupil 1980-85).



The St Piran's Society produced a jigsaw puzzle of the school before Christmas which has been enjoyed by many staff, families and former pupils during the lockdown!

Andrew's granddaughters said the sky was a killer!

Celebrating long service

The end of 2020 and start of 2021 marked a milestone for two of our members of staff.

Mrs Sandra Warman was acknowledged for 25 years' service to teaching at St Piran's in December. We celebrated her success with some gifts and champagne presented by Kate Taylor, our Chair of Governors.



Making learning fun for the children and working with many amazing teachers were some of the reasons she loves her job and is still inspired. Mrs Warman saw her own two children go through the school from Nursery to Year 6, and her husband had a role on the St Piran's Society, so her time here has been a full family experience!



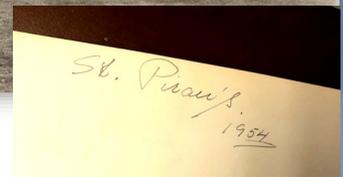
In January, we celebrated our longest serving member of staff, Mrs Carrie Rogers, who has given 30 years to working in our Finance Office. Mr Sales presented Carrie with a beautiful glass bowl and extended our gratitude for her three decades at St Piran's which have seen 3 headteachers, 4 bursars and many changes around the school.



St Piran's at Christmas

One of our very talented pupils designed 2020's Christmas card for Mr Sales. We are sure you'll agree it's a fantastic depiction of our wonderful school building!

1954 photo



We were contacted in January by a gentleman who had purchased some photos at auction and found one of St Piran's in 1954. He was kind enough to share this with us to add to our archive.

The photo is now on the gallery on our website [Alumni page](#) along with a link to some of the 1960s photos of the school collected by a former pupil of the time.

Brian Battye

We were saddened to hear of the death of Brian Battye, Head of Maths and Computing during the 1980s and 1990s. Married for 62 years with three children, Brian passed away on 22nd December after a long battle with ill health and Alzheimer's Disease.



He was a man who loved God and followed him faithfully all his life and after graduating from Cambridge, followed by some time teaching, he was called to the Belgian Congo as a missionary in the 1960s. After returning to the UK, Brian took a headship at Chinthurst School in Tadworth, Surrey before a move to Maidenhead where he taught maths at St Piran's until his retirement. St Mary's Church was his church home during that time. His son, Andrew, said "I know he loved his time at St Piran's and put heart and soul into his teaching and other activities at the school." Brian set up what was originally our Old Boys' Association database and was part of the Past Pupils' Committee (now our Alumni Association). Brian leaves his wife, three children, eight grandchildren and one great granddaughter. We know he will be remembered fondly by former pupils and colleagues.

30 years ago....

In mid-November 1990, with war looming in the Middle East, I was at my desk in the Ministry of Defence a little depressed, having just been told that my future role in the RAF was to be something that did not appeal. Working at the time at the centre of future military requirements for all three Armed Services, I was not looking forward to working on a very different tack. I had been told that my new job was at the special request of the Chief of Air Staff. My response was: "Well OK but if there was a role in the Middle East for me, I was ready to go!"

As luck would have it, just at that moment, in the Middle East HQ of British Forces, trouble was brewing and a



new Chief of Staff was being sought. By good fortune the senior RAF officer in theatre had been my boss over a number of years. So a few days later I found myself about to board a VC-10 at Brize Norton bound for Riyadh.

On arrival, it was clear that things had not been going too well and I had a job to do to try and draw matters together. Our headquarters at the time was on one floor of a 12-storey former Saudi office building. The other eleven floors were occupied as the US Marine Corps HQ! The Americans were there in grand style, as I was to quickly learn.

Our own small HQ was expanding rapidly with the Government committing a full armoured division to the theatre, let alone the build-up of the Royal Naval and RAF elements. It was clear that a new HQ was needed and my major initial task was to find a suitable building and set it all up whilst drawing the HQ into a cohesive team working alongside our Allies. The Coalition of forces was drawn from 35 nations many of whom had different ideas and doctrines from NATO. I had never before sat around a table alongside US, Saudi, French, Egyptian and other forces – a steep learning curve!

Besides the UK build-up, the major part was being played by the United States. One large US transport

aircraft was arriving in the Kingdom from the USA every 11 minutes, with sealift on an equally huge scale adding to it all. In the first 6 weeks of the build-up the air total tonnage per mile exceeded that of the entire Berlin Airlift, an operation that took ten times longer. On the ground, at its peak, a total of 22 miles of convoy left the main port of Al Jubayl every day.

On the air side, over 2,350 aircraft including over 300 air tankers, were ready by January 1991 to participate in the air campaign; the air assets included 6 US Aircraft Carriers each with 90 aircraft. The RAF contribution was 116 plus around 40 helicopters.

Dealing with our Saudi hosts required patience and diplomacy in finding a new HQ. Eventually, we were allocated another building where we could be on our own, but not until well into December. The first impression of the place was not good but in less than 10 days we were up and running - just a few days before war broke out.

On Day One of the war I got up at the end of the UK briefing and quoted from Shakespeare's Henry V, the St Crispin Day's speech. Look it up. It was most appropriate for the day and raised a huge cheer! The strategic plan was for an extensive air campaign before the ground phase, and so it worked out. 300 cruise missiles were launched against Iraq including B-52 bombers flying to and from the USA in a 35-hour mission. In addition, USAF stealth aircraft were



used for the first time to deadly effect using their 2,000lb precision guided bombs.

To run such a campaign of around 2,700 air sorties per day required complex planning. A computer programme helped to put it all together with every detail of each mission laid out. The problem was that, in those days, communication links were incompatible between nations and arms. Because of this, I used to get the plan sent by teleprinter -



around 750 pages of it each day!

My daily routine included attendance at national and international briefings along with extensive telephone calls to the UK, as well as running the Headquarters. We had some exiled Kuwaitis as translators for letters that were exchanged with our host nation.

After a six-week air campaign the ground war began and lasted only four days (often referred to as a 1000-hour air campaign followed by a 100-hour ground war) before the US called off further attacks to save unnecessary bloodshed. This was the first real war where people across the world could get live reporting direct from the theatre. Handling the PR aspects of such reporting was to become a crucial part of handling future warfare.

The First Gulf War was on a scale not seen since WW2. A total of 116,000 sorties were flown, delivering a greater tonnage of bombs than that of RAF Bomber Command at the peak of its effect in 1945. Total Coalition casualties to Iraqi action were 190 whereas Iraqi losses were estimated between 20,000 and 35,000. The war was a triumph of military planning and execution, with its success in large measure due to the shattering effect of the air campaign against Iraqi forces who were completely exhausted, lacked leadership, and demoralized.

When the conflict was over, I went on take over from General Sir Peter de La Billiere in command of all British Forces in the Gulf and to supervise the rundown of the 55,000 British forces in theatre. Tri-Service command comes to relatively few and I was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time. Over the following few months I had the privilege to land on and fly off an American aircraft carrier at sea, and work closely with the Army, Royal Navy and RAF. I think uniquely, as an RAF officer, I blew up a live sea mine that had been laid by the Iraqi Navy. But that is another story!

Ian Macfadyen (St Pirans 1950-55)

***Air Marshal Sir Ian Macfadyen**, KCVO, CB, OBE, FRAeS is an Royal Air Force officer, a former Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man (2000–05) and Constable and Governor of Windsor Castle (2009–14).*

Do you have a story to share?

We would love to hear about the lives of our past pupils since leaving St Piran's, particularly those with interested careers or life paths.

Please get in touch via email to pastpupil@stpirans.co.uk with your year of leaving St Piran's; we'd be delighted to hear from you!

Follow St Piran's on social media

Discover what we've been doing by visiting our school social media pages!



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[Facebook](#)



[Instagram](#)



[YouTube](#)

Our approach to using your data

Under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), St Piran's School will process your data for the Alumni for carefully considered purposes in which we have a vested interest, as it will enable us to enhance the services that we provide to you. You have a right to ask us to stop processing your personal data and we will do so. Please contact us on pastpupil@stpirans.co.uk

News of former pupils

Jonny P [left 2003/4]

I left St Piran's around '03 - '04 and Mr Blumer was my first Headmaster and then Mr Carroll. I had a fabulous time there with fond memories of music, swimming and the choir! I finished my education at Shiplake College and then went on to study music further at a college based in Coventry. Since then I worked in the motor trade staying around Reading area. I got married in 2016 and now have two wonderful sons. I moved our family up north to Sunderland where I originate from 2 years ago and have started my own business in selling prestige and performance cars. I'd love to hear from other staff and pupils from my time there.

Avigail, Michal and Nadav R [2011-13]

Myself, my sister Michal and brother Nadav all attended St Piran's from 2011-13. I think if you ask any of our teachers who were at the school at the time if they remember 'the Rahimi triplets', they probably do!

Even now after graduating from Sixth Form, our time at St Piran's will always be an unparalleled experience and is filled with many fond memories. Now that we are headed to university in the coming academic year, we are extremely keen to retain a connection to the school as well as both former and current staff and pupils.

David B [St Piran's 1947-1952]

After Pangbourne I went to Sandhurst as an Army Entrant in 1958. I was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1960 and served in BAOR, Hong Kong and UK, retiring as a Captain in 1968. I joined E.D. & F. Man, sugar brokers in the City of London and ran their Hong Kong Office 1977/78 also joining the main board. I was Honorary Steward at Westminster Abbey 1973-2011, a Volunteer with SSAFA 1990-2015 and Honorary Vice President of Gloucestershire Branch. My father, H.H.H. Boehm, was at St Piran's from 1919-1924. I look forward to next year's lunch and must visit the school some time!

Peter H [left 1965]

I am Peter (West Clan, school number 105!) and I left in 1965. The celebratory moment came in a 1st XI cricket match, at home, where the school was playing a fierce rival – Gayhurst. We were captained by Richard Brown, son of former and last amateur captain of England, Freddie Brown. Richard and I were and remain good friends. Gayhurst numbered among their team one Patrick Compton, son of Dennis Compton the "Brillcream Boy" Richard and Patrick went on to star for the Marlborough XI! Walter Robins joined Brown and

Compton for the afternoon, taking it in turns to umpire. Two moments stand out for me – firstly when batting, I received a rank long-hop outside the off stump. I laid into it, hit it in the middle of the bat only to look up, horrified that the drive was about to take silly-mid-off's head off. I needn't have worried, he put his hands up to protect his face and caught me with his elbows!

The magic moment came later. Gayhurst crushed us by either 9 or 10 wickets so the three luminaries had a knock-about (to extend the day to tea) while the two school teams all fielded. My magic moment came when I caught Dennis Compton at second slip off the bowling of Freddie Brown! Never to be forgotten.

(Our Chairman notes: "Is this when Charles Tippet's pet rabbit escaped and being very friendly came to visit the pitch during the game? The headmaster was not happy at all when this important game had to be stopped to catch the rabbit!")

James T [St Piran's 1953-58/9]

My brother HRD Talbot was there as well and my cousins Ian and Michael Macfadyen.

My mother's family, the Dafforns, had close connections with the school and Lowther Tippet before WW11. During our time there Major Harston was the deputy head, Baron Turing the history and Latin master, Price the music teacher etc etc. Happy days were they!

Brian M [St Piran's 1961-65]

I was very happy at St Piran's most of the time; it certainly set me up for public school life. I went on to have a career in business until I was 50 and then became a teacher in a prep school for 15 yrs. Tim's Newton's recollections [[link on the school website](#)] brought back memories.

Please get in touch!

If you have changed your email address or would like to update your details so we can stay in touch, please let us know.

We aim to send a newsletter twice-yearly and occasionally information about forthcoming events.

We also love to hear past pupils' news!

Please send an email to pastpupil@stpirans.co.uk with your year of leaving St Piran's so we can stay in touch.