# OLD CRYPTIANS CLUB

## Minutes of Meeting held at the School on Monday 12th January 2015

Present:- Richard Browning (President), Richard Briggs (Vice President and Minutes Secretary), Rich Brooks (Treasurer), Peter Hobbs, Steve Mace, Robert Timms, Duncan Miller, Eric Stephens, Paul James, John Mitchell, Mike Beard, Nino Pelopida.

### Apologies for absence:-

The Headmaster, Clive Thomas, Ivor Smith, John Hughes.

### Minutes of Meeting 13th October 2014

The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting.

### Matters arising

Richard Browning checked on the status of the actions listed in the minutes for the 13/10/2014 meeting.

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| **Action no.** | **Action summary** | **Actioner** | **Status** |
| 6.1 | Contact new Treasurer | Eric Stephens | Complete |
| 6.2 | Arrange handover | Matt Cass | Complete |
| 7.1 | Talk to Nino Pelopida | Mike Beard | Complete (Nino Pelopida welcomed to the Committee) |
| 8.1 | Produce scale of fees for discussion | Richard Briggs | Defer discussion until Item 8 |
| 9.1 | Suggest new items for website | Committee | Ongoing – discuss under Item 9 |
| 10.1 | Book Kingsholm for Reunion Dinner | Steve Mace | Further discussion under Item 11 |
| 11.1 | Approach Howard Allen re. Founders’ Day Supper | Richard Browning | Complete |
| 12.1 | Invite pupils (via parents) to Cenotaph March | Headmaster | Complete |
| 14.1 | Collate numbers for Remembrance at School | Richard Browning | Complete |

### President’s Business

Richard Browning reviewed the Crypt School functions that he had attended since the last meeting.

On 8th November he attended the London OCC Dinner held at the Olde Cheshire Cheese pub in Fleet Street. The streets of London were extremely wet in the incessant rain. Several members from the main Club attended, including Mike Nuth, John Hall and Richard Briggs. The attendance was slightly disappointing Professor John Morehen (1953-56) was the Guest Speaker.

By contrast the next morning was gloriously sunny for the Cenotaph Parade and March. Four boys from the School attended and they were proud to wear family medals. The Crypt School group was 11 in number, a worthwhile increase on last year. He found the experience both moving and spectacular. He thanked Richard Briggs for making the arrangements.

On 11th November the School Remembrance Service, conducted by the Rev. John Martin, was attended. This year Tony Pugh was unable to give the citation because of ill health. Thanks to Howard Allen and Mike Nuth for providing assistance.

On 27th November Richard Browning attended the School Music Hall performance – “Oh, what a lovely war” by Joan Littlewood. This satire on WWI was performed in Pierrot costumes and featured classic songs of the time against a harsh backdrop of images of war.

On 16th December the Crypt School’s Nine Lessons and Carols at St. Barnabas Church was attended. The fine performance of the choir and orchestra ensured an enjoyable evening. In the afternoon of the same day a small group of choristers and musicians made a surprise visit to Tony Pugh’s house to provide impromptu carols and music – a very kind gesture and much appreciated.

### Headmaster’s report

The Headmaster, Jonathan Standen, was unable to attend the meeting but presented a comprehensive report of activities at the School together with a review of progress and achievements during his time as Headmaster. The report can be found on page 6.

### Honorary Treasurer’s report

Richard Browning welcomed the new Treasurer, Richard Brooks to the meeting.

Richard Brooks reported that he and Matt Cass had managed to hold a handover meeting and ongoing responsibilities had been agreed. All cheques had been banked and all outstanding payments made. Importantly, Matt will continue to manage the sale of OCC memorabilia via the website shop.

The following points are an extract from Matt’s final report to the Committee.

* At 05/01/2015 the balance of funds in the Lloyds current account is £8048.75
* The payments to the web designer for maintenance/minor changes are up to date
* Bow ties are now available at £12 each
* Subscriptions during 2014 have boosted the Club’s funds by £2727. We still continue to receive odd amounts but the policy is only to despatch the Cryptian to those members paying the full £20.
* The printer of the 475th Anniversary book was supposed to reimburse the OCC with the cost of posting the books that were replaced because of the binding problem. An invoice for £87 has been sent and a reply is awaited.

In response to the report, the Treasurer was urged to attempt an outline budget for each event so that the profit/loss could more easily be determined.

Richard Browning wished to place on record sincere thanks from the Committee and the membership in general for Matt’s commitment and hard work during his time as Treasurer.

### Report on Centennial Bursary Fund

Richard Browning regretted that after many years as Chairman of the Bursary Fund, Clive Thomas feels unable to continue due to pressure of work. His huge contribution to the successful Bursary fund is here recorded. It is hoped that Clive is able to remain on the Committee.

Nino Pelopida has joined the Bursary Fund Committee as a trustee.

It is recognised that a meeting of the three trustees is now a matter of some urgency. The new Headmaster, Nick Dyer (from April) should be present at the meeting to discuss the strategy for allocating Bursary Funds.

After a short discussion it was mentioned that 16 candidates receiving in total £4000 represented bursaries for two years. In future the sub-committee, working with the Headmaster, should perhaps revert to a maximum of 8 candidates for financial assistance.

Peter Hobbs remarked that the Committee had to be realistic. Awards were coming from capital because the amount to be safely earned from the fund is very low at present.

ACTION 7.1: Richard Browning to arrange a meeting as soon as possible.

###  Membership Secretary Report

Richard Briggs, the Membership Secretary reported that membership was substantially unchanged at 296. There had been no joiners in the last three months but a member living in mid-Wales had resigned because he found that he could no longer travel easily to events in Gloucester or elsewhere. It is his intention however to continue to support the Bursary Fund.

Richard had distributed a paper setting out a new scale of fees for the Club. Ivor Smith had emailed with a number of comments but mainly to suggest that the proposed scale was too complicated. Clive Thomas had also emailed to suggest that many members would be irritated if asked to increase their standing orders by a small amount (£22 instead of £20 had been mooted).

These comments were echoed in the general discussion that followed. Further it was the Committee’s opinion that we should not penalise payment of subscriptions by cash or cheque.

It was agreed that one change be made. Rather than apply the strict age limit when moving people from a free subscription when under 21, the concession should be extended to cover “in full time education”. After that members in this category should be asked to pay the full £20.

ACTION 8.1: The Membership Secretary to write to all U21 members who may no longer be eligible for free membership.

### Club Website

Apart from minor posts to the front page, the website has not been updated since the last meeting. Richard Browning and Richard Briggs are co-operating on a new Home Page which will focus on the Discover DeCrypt Project.

### The Cryptian 2015

Duncan Miller reported on progress towards the OCC section of the Cryptian. Articles were beginning to reach him. He did not have a firm deadline for receipt of copy but was aiming to have most contributions by the end of April.

He thought that the size of the Old Cryptians section should be capped to be somewhat smaller than in 2014 since that was a special year for the School (475th anniversary). It is an expensive magazine to produce, thus expensive for the Club, despite the cost being shared with the School.

Peter Hobbs volunteered to encapsulate his work on the early history of the School in an article for the Cryptian.

Duncan reported that Charlie Hannaford was working on an article along the lines of “where are they now”.

He also said that Charlie was about to embark on a major work – a recent history of the Crypt School which would cover the years beyond the end date of the Charles Lepper history. This news sparked a discussion on editorial involvement by the OCC and the possible sensitivities in writing a recent history. It was concluded that the book was unlikely to prove in any way controversial but in the end the decision to publish must be between Charlie Hannaford and the publisher of the book.

Eric Stephens suggested that this year’s magazine should include a rugby report. Duncan agreed to progress this.

### AGM and Reunion Dinner

This topic received extensive coverage since it is the next major event on the OCC calendar.

Steve Mace, the Dinner organiser has booked Kingsholm for Saturday, 21st March 2015. Several rooms are available, allowing separate spaces for pre-dinner drinks, the AGM and the Ladies Dinner (Legends Lounge), apart from the main function room. We should easily manage 100 guests in total, thus avoiding a charge for the venue. (Last year there were 163 Old Cryptians and guests, excluding the Ladies.)

Steve pointed out that there will be a 6 Nations Rugby match on the day but this might not be a bad thing if keen Rugby fans realise that they can watch some of the action on a large screen TV.

After some discussion on the prices for the sample menus, it was decided to set the price at £30 (members), £32 (non-members) and £15 for sixth formers.

Although there was universal agreement that the food was below acceptable standard last year, our options appear limited at this ticket price. Steve Mace said that it would not be possible for members of the committee to dine at the restaurant and judge the quality of the food, an idea that had been suggested after the experience of last year. Richard Browning will select the menu for the evening.

Last year a rather special menu card had been produced. Steve Mace suggested that a more basic card would suffice because the cost last year was significant.

Richard Browning confirmed that, following tradition, the Ladies Dinner would be organised by his wife.

A raffle will be held to benefit the Bursary Fund. Steve said that it was important this year to find more volunteers to sell tickets and provide prizes. Steve Mace had again been offered Kingsholm tickets as raffle prizes.

ACTION 11.1: The OCC Committee

### Discover DeCrypt project

Richard Browning updated Committee members with information he had gathered from the October meeting of the Project Group.

The Project Group has identified a number of options to transform the Church and Schoolroom to make it fit for purpose and able to support wide ranging activities in serving the community.

Considerable time has been spent on defining the project scope and cost benefit attributes.

Costs for a project of this nature can easily escalate requiring attention to some budget adjustments. Potential savings are achievable by examining earlier plans for underfloor heating, toilets the type of lift and removal of the existing pews.

It seems unlikely that VAT can be recovered from the capital costs, though the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) may be able to recover a proportion and drive the delivery costs down.

The latest moves by the Project Group have been to provide the HLF with a draft business plan and budget. We had hoped to engage the local firm of Solicitors, Tayntons to do the legal work and handle constitutional matters including future governance.

Eventually Willans of Cheltenham have been contacted with a view to establishing a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

It is expected to soon have more details of the project status to post on the Old Cryptians website.

### Crypt School History

Peter Hobbs briefly updated Committee members on this project.

* He is much more likely to generate interest in a research programme by a PhD student (and his/her tutor) at Bristol University rather than at Gloucester
* If he is successful then the scholastic investigation (into the “pre history” of the School) will be under proper academic control.

Paul James mentioned that last year’s Mayor of Gloucester is a medieval historian and may be able to contribute in some way.

Related to the early days of the School, Paul James reported that the suggestions for the names, of the Linden Homes buildings, of D.G. Williams, Cooke, Moore and Invictus had been placed before Gloucester City Council.

### Requests for Crypt emblazoned blazer

Richard Browning informed the Committee that Greg Barton is willing to co-ordinate, with the Old Cryptians Rugby Club, an order for more OCC blazers. However the minimum order size is 20.

### Any other business

There was a short discussion on a leaving present for Jonathan Standen. Richard Browning offered to seek advice from Howard Allen and make a proposal to the Committee.

ACTION 15.1: Richard Browning

In view of the succession of Richard Briggs to the post of President – to be confirmed at the AGM on 21st March – it is necessary to find a “Home” Vice President for 2016-2017, also to be confirmed at the AGM.

ACTION 15.2: Richard Briggs

Bob Timms reminded the Committee that he was having increasing difficulty drumming up sufficient support for the annual golf competition. The OC’s v. School cricket match had been revived in 2014 (also played on Founders’ Day) and was also not particularly successful. However Bob did agree to organise the Founders’ Day 2015 Golf Match – possibly at Brickhampton. Its continuation in later years will be kept under review.

ACTION 15.3: Bob Timms

Richard Browning proposed that Sue Wales’s unswerving support for the Club should be recognised by appointing her as an honorary Associate Member. This topic will be raised at the 2015 AGM.

ACTION 15.4: Richard Browning

### Date of next meeting

After a brief discussion it was agreed to hold the next OCC Committee meeting on Tuesday 12th May 2015.

R.H. Briggs/21.01.2015

**Headmaster’s Report for Old Cryptians Committee Meeting, January 2015**

Dear OC’s

Please accept my apologies for absence tonight.

As you will no doubt be aware, Nick Dyer will become the 48th Master of The Crypt School in April, when I leave to take up my new post at Plymouth College. Nick has been busy putting his new senior leadership team into place ready for April. Phil Stanlake has been promoted to become Deputy Headmaster, and Charlotte Sturge has been confirmed as a permanent Assistant Headteacher, alongside existing Assistant Heads, Rob Biggs, Janet Waterston and Adrian Courtenay. Nick has made a change in the support staff structure as well which sees Jo Hitchings promoted to Bursar.

The next year will see changes to the curriculum due to new A levels and GCSEs, and further pressure placed upon school budgets. I have spent considerable time in the past few weeks working to support Nick’s vision for the future, drawing my team together to plan one last budget. I am pleased to say that the position for 2015-2016 looks sound, although as with all schools, things are getting much more difficult.

The new building works are progressing. The foundations are laid, and the modular building will arrive later this week, having been constructed in Northern Ireland. This fabulous new facility will add two physics labs, five Maths classrooms, and an Engineering classroom. Two temporary classrooms have been removed as part of the project, which amounts to £1.8m.

Other than this, things continue as normal as we work to deliver another set of excellent examination results. The external analyses of 2014 results have been received, and they confirm that these results were excellent, both in raw grade terms and also in value added. Both are better than the judgements in 2012 when we gained our outstanding status.

It has been a great privilege to lead the school over the past eight years. Leaving has not been an easy decision, and The Crypt School will always hold a very special place in my heart.

If we look at the past eight years, then I am most proud of the wonderful team that has supported me. We have improved educational standards significantly, by ensuring that all of our boys aspire to great things. Many come from solid working class backgrounds, where it would not be inappropriate to suggest that for many the limit of parental aspirations was to get their sons into a grammar school. By showing them where hard work can lead to we have inspired our boys and sixth form girls to raise their sights, and in so doing they have worked incredibly hard to achieve in public examinations. When I joined the school in 2007 just 25% gained five or more A\* and A grades in their GCSEs. Last summer 38% achieved 8 or more A\* and A grades, and 53% 5 or more A\* and A grades, all at a time when government changes are making it harder to improve results. At A level the percentage of A\*-B grades has increased from 38% to 60% in my time at the school. My excellent staff have embraced changes in classroom techniques to support these improvements. Whilst we have driven forward these academic changes, I am glad that we have maintained the heart and soul of the school. Our reputation for pastoral care remains, and we provide a warm and welcoming environment. Our students emerge as well rounded, delightful individuals, with all the soft skills that employers love. Enrichment and extra-curricular activities remain outstanding too. It is no surprise that the number on roll has increased with our burgeoning reputation. When I arrived there were 742 on roll including 173 in the sixth form. Today there are nearly 880 on roll with around 270 in the sixth form. We remain a middle sized school, able to know each individual well, but this increase in numbers has given us much needed financial muscle. The fabric of the school estate has also been improved markedly, with around £6m spent on buildings during this time.

I am pleased to be handing the school on in this healthy state. I am excited by the new challenges that lie ahead of me in Plymouth, and I feel certain that the time is right for a new Headmaster here at The Crypt to drive the school forward with renewed energy. Unquestionably Nick Dyer is the right man for the job.

I look forward to seeing you all at the annual dinner in March.

With my best wishes 

 J P Standen, Headmaster