



As I write this newsletter the death of HRH The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh has been announced and his funeral has taken place. Prince Philip has had a great influence on the school and on hundreds of members of the Alumni through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. As a gold

Standard awardee and former Award Officer in the school for many years as well as a recipient of the Prince Philip Prize for Science and Gold assessor I appreciate the tremendous contribution he made to the youth of the world.

My lasting memory was representing the school at Gold Award presentations both at St James' and Buckingham Palaces. I remember on one occasion I and Nick Owen, former Royal Correspondent for ITN were warming up the crowd at St James' Palace in preparation for The Duke's entrance when the room went very quiet. Undaunted by this we carried on until I saw sitting in front of me The Duke...oops. He was really nice about it even cracking a joke afterwards about booking us for the Palace Christmas Party.

We send our heartfelt condolences to Her Majesty the Queen and members of her family on the death of HRH The Prince Philip.

Dear Alumni member,

Welcome to the March/April newsletter. The March newsletter had to be delayed due to work commitments as this time of year is the start of the busy period; not helped by me breaking the University examination creation system. Due to the opening up of the World after the pandemic the publication of newsletters will be monthly apart from March, June and December.

Since starting this newsletter 15 months ago, as a way to keep in touch in the pandemic it has taken over a lot of my life. I begin writing the next edition as soon as the previous one is published. I have found out a great deal about the school and its founder. It started as one sheet of A4 and this issue could be 12 pages.

Over the past year a great deal had happened. In March last year the former pupils had just had their annual dinner and AGM and I was made president for 2020. Then the pandemic hit and the lockdowns – 2020 was written off as though it had never existed.

Stronger Together

A new name for this section but that is the only change. The Alumni is here to help and support you. Its members have many skills, expertise, and friends to give you advice and support if we can.

This section of the newsletter is therefore here to help especially at this strange time we are living in.

Contacts

Baines Alumni

Baines alumni email

Bainesalumni@btinternet.com

Facebook

Baines School 300

Baines Alumni website

<https://e-voice.org.uk/bainesalumni/>

Chairman Alumni

Muriel Ryding

Secretary Alumni

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Former Pupils Association 2021/22

President

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Baines School

Official school Facebook page

Baines School

It was around this time the school was preparing for the production of 'Return to the Forbidden Planet'. The pandemic stopped all this.

As we have a number of former pupils and members of the Alumni who are in the media both in front of house and backstage and these have been hit hard as theatres and concert venues have closed for the duration I thought it fitting to celebrate Baines-the musical years. Baines has a proud tradition of music and drama. We all need something positive at this time and therefore as school musicals seem to generate a great deal of interest I thought of a small reminiscence – and then this happened.

I would like to thank all those members of the Alumni that sent in their memories. A larger report from each of the contributors is on the Baines Alumni website.

Currently this newsletter is running to twelve pages now I have the task of reducing it down to a more manageable level. Therefore as with all great shows there has to be more than one Act so later in the year I will be writing about other musicals, plays and musical events associated with the school.

Let the show begin.
But first 'The Bob Richmond years. Curtains open...and we see several stage hands moving the props and set into position. The curtain closes again...

The heyday of the Baines School Musical. 1982-1996 – The Richmond years

The shows

Dracula Spectacula
Dazzle
The Boyfriend
The Wiz (1)
Grease
Guys and Dolls
Twistin' Time
Calamity Jane
Mikado
Pirates of `Penzance
Return to the Forbidden Planet
The Wiz (2)

Obituary **Professor Sir David Hull**



David and his brother Derek were old boys of the school. They were thought to be twins but in reality David's twin died at birth. His brother Derek (8th Oct 1931)

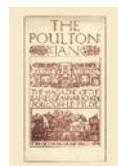
was born within a year of the birth of his brother and therefore were almost like twins. Both brothers were very strong athletes and mentioned in the late 40s and early 50s in The Poultonian.

David was born in Blackburn on 4 Aug 1932 and due to the school year his brother Derek would have been in the same academic year. He moved with his family to Poulton le Fylde and studied at Baines. David graduated from medical school in 1956 with a Honours in Physiology. He then moved to take up his medical research fellowship at Oxford Nuffield Inst for Medical Research.

During his research he discovered 'Brown fat' a substance found in the shoulder blades and kidney area of new born babies that is used for warmth. He became known as Brown Fat Hull.

David was knighted in 1993
David died on 13th March 2021 of Dementia. He leaves a wife of 61 years and three children.

Poultonian Requests



We have completed the 1950s with the weekly uploads. It is hoped to move back the 1940s with the copies but these may be trapped in school.

So for the next few weeks I am opening the weekly uploads up to requests. If you require copies from 1950s to 1970s then please let me know and I will upload them. Following this we will move back to the 1940s.

Each Monday the Poultonian are posted on the [Alumni website](#).

The Musical Director – Robert Richmond



First of all, let me warn you that my memories of these musical events may not be entirely reliable. I take no responsibility for any distortions that occur in my recall of events. Likewise, I apologise profusely in advance to anybody I may inadvertently overlook in this account, and who gave their all in contributing to any of these mammoth productions. They were great collaborations which culminated in some of the best performances you could wish to experience.

Staff contributions to these occasions were immense. Stages were erected, scenery was constructed and painted, budding singers, actors and dancers appeared out of the blue from within the teaching body. Sound effects were ingeniously manufactured, musical accompaniments were rehearsed and often recorded in the studio. Lighting, makeup, choreography and costumes were all taken care of as if by magic. Sue (Biggs) nee Nuttall and Tony Stuart gave direction to the shows year after year with endless creative talent. I should avoid naming names of the many stalwart contributors on the stage because I just know that people will be offended if I don't mention them, but how could I overlook the many appearances of Andy Darbourne, George Purves and Dave Astall? I had superb musical help from Kevin Matthews, Heather Harrison and Hughie Mett. There was a lot of fun to be had and a lot of us were happy to risk our image and reputations in order to partake in this fun.

Over the years over 500 pupils took part in the shows. How did the pupils provide professional sounding performances in their singing and the pit orchestra, and deliver such exhilarating musical accompaniments for the singers? How did the singers provide, unfailingly, such superb musical performances night after night, and for some year after year? I do remember the pupil's voices however and remember time after time being truly amazed at the emergence of some real talent that had never been hinted at in the classroom. It was a real honour to be associated with so many young people who gave their absolute all to the productions. I am delighted to hear of past pupils who have gone on to make careers in the music world. I am always delighted to see involvement in current musical performances from names I first encountered nearly 40 years ago.

I know many participants carry fond memories of these musicals. I certainly do!

Support

Looking for former colleagues

If you would like to make contact with former colleagues or staff then please get in touch and we will be happy to help, if we can.

What have you been doing?

Or if you would like to tell people what you have been up to in the intervening years from leaving school then please send in some script and I will endeavour to add it to the newsletter.

Show memories

With the archive trapped in school I am short of images and reports from past shows, plays etc. So if you have any to share or add to the archive then please send them and I will add them to further articles on the musicals/plays.

Advertising

We are living in strange times and the pandemic has hit people hard but if you would like to advertise your business then there is a section on the website to do this free of charge.

Get togethers

The School is still out of action for meetings of the Former Pupils and Alumni. As soon as it is safe to do so we will be moving the Archive back into the JB room and reinstating our Tuesday get togethers.

New on the website

There are some changes to the website this month including extra information about the shows in the school.

Our thoughts

We do try to be positive in the newsletter but there are times when I need to report on illness etc.

Also can we send thoughts to those in hospital, or ill and for those family and friends that you may have lost recently.

Reporting events

Due to the pandemic many events slip under the radar, but if you have things to report then please get in touch and I will include it in the newsletter.

The Artistic Director – Tony Stuart

I hope to have a report of Tony's memories of the Baines Musicals in a later edition. But I have managed to obtain a rare recording of Tony Stuart singing which is available on the Baines Alumni website. Click [here](#) to listen.



A member of staff Kevin Matthews

Kevin's first show was "Twistin' Time", where he helped a bit with musical preparation but his main contribution was backstage in the week of the show at Marine Hall. He says he was a bit out of his comfort zone shifting scenery and the like but remembers the excitement felt by everyone as we were at Marine Hall – a professional theatre. It was also a world premiere as the musical had been written by our very own Robert Richmond and Steven Spence.



The next show was 'The Wiz' in 1992. Kevin was in the orchestra for that and would frequently get lost in initial rehearsals because he wasn't used to playing from band parts where you couldn't follow whoever was singing! 'The Wiz' was full of good stuff and we had a cast of thousands

or so it seemed at the time. The show returned to the Marine Hall for its run.



Baines next tried their hand at Gilbert and Sullivan and we went to see the reformed D'Oyly Carte Opera doing The Mikado. A few doubts were raised after seeing it as to whether we could actually do

it but it was one of those productions which just gelled under the direction of Mr Stuart with Mr Richmond again at the helm musically, the orchestra made up mainly of Baines pupils. Kevin was called upon to sing Nanki Poo with Mr Purves also showing the staff's desire to get up onstage with everyone by playing the title role. All of the cast were top class, the pivotal role of Ko Ko being in the capable hands of Stephen Meehan.

Kevin left Baines in the summer of 1994 to go back to music college but was allowed to go back for another Gilbert and Sullivan in the September, namely The Pirates of Penzance. Cast and production team wise it was much the same. The singing isn't that easy but for the role of Mabel we had the afore mentioned Mr Thwaite's daughter, Claire soaring heavenwards.



Also if you would like articles posted in the newsletter please let me know and I will sort it out for you.

Alumni members

We feature in the newsletter Notable and Featured Alumni. Everyone in the Alumni matters, whatever job they do. If you want to let others know what you have been doing since leaving Baines then please let me know and I will add it to the newsletter and website.

Articles from the younger members

Many of the articles that are sent in are from the older members of the school community, but we also need to hear from the younger members of the Alumni. Any photographs or stories you have I am pleased to include them.

For those members that promised me information on what they are now doing, please send as I am running out of ideas.

Former Pupils Association

If you wish to join (£10 per year) please contact Paul Bamber (FPA Secretary) on fpa@baines.lancs.sch.uk.

School Archive

As mentioned previously in this newsletter the school archive is ever growing, both the physical archive and the electronic one. If you have anything to donate then please either send them to the Baines Alumni email address or drop them into school, telling the office staff they are for the Alumni.

Old Boy's Dinners

We are looking at creating a folder to commemorate the Old Boys Dinners. If you have an images or memories of the dinners from the past then please send them to the email address,

Baines Voices

We have recording equipment to record your stories at your time at Baines

However due to the continued pandemic you may like to record using your own computers on the computer's voice

Kevin turned professional three years after leaving Baines singing at Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Opera productions in the round at the Royal Albert Hall, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Welsh National Opera, Garsington Opera and last but certainly not least the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. But nothing as good as Baines Musicals though!

The best memories of Baines he has are the admittedly what feels like endless rehearsals at times leading up to concerts, choir performances, the orchestra playing carols at the local primary schools or being on a float during a gala at Great Eccleston Gala but most of all being actually WITH the pupils either backstage or onstage where just for a few magic hours he ceased to be Mr Matthews and was an equal part of a very talented ensemble.

The stage builder

When productions were held in the school hall the stage had to be extended, no mean feat. Enter Mr Thwaites, now sadly no longer with us, but it is no exaggeration to say that plays we put on would simply not have happened without his input. He even got time off his normal teaching to build it and let's just say it couldn't be done in an afternoon.

A former pupil – Kieran Lawton

The Wiz – think this was 1992

It told the story of the Wizard of Oz, who I think was played by Mr Stuart. I remember John Newman, Marc Lees and others being excellently cast in the roles of 'Winged Monkeys', who I'm sure everyone remembers as key to the story. My only real memory of that is them having to run around the Marine Hall amongst the audience trying to scare people.

I couldn't be a Winged Monkey as I was cast as 'The Messenger'. I had about three lines so made the most of them and I'm sure left the stage to rapturous applause.



the Tin Man. I can still hear him singing 'slide some oil to me', with his squeaky, voice-breaking tones that were wholly appropriate for the role.

However, anyone involved in that production would surely recall that the absolute highlight was Mr Purves singing 'Put your arms around me child, like when you

recorder (found in settings) and then submit it to the Alumni email address.

Circulation of the newsletter

This newsletter is emailed to all members of the Alumni and Former Pupils Association that have given us email addresses. It is posted on the closed group Baines School 300 Facebook page; LinkedIn as well as the Community pages on the School website.

Current School Newsletter and other messages

The headteacher's newsletter is available on the Alumni website and is sent with this newsletter. From time to time there may be other notices sent by the headteacher and these will be posted on the website. To read the newsletter on the website please click this link. [Newsletter](#)

Coming up in future editions

A tribute to John Barry Mason, songwriter Act 2 of the musicals/plays

Those in the business

Andrew Reed – stage Manager at Chichester Festival



It still amazes me that it's been 25 years since I left Baines - in my mind the school remains exactly the same as it was back then, but something tells me things have moved on somewhat.

I loved being involved with the drama clubs and shows while at Baines, but it always felt more of a hobby than anything I was seriously considering working in. After my A-Levels, I had my first taste of professional theatre, working at the North Pier, on a variety show with Lily Savage, just pushing pieces of set on or off, but there was just something about it that I adored.

I studied Science Communication at Sheffield Hallam University during which time I was working at the world famous Crucible Theatre (yes even working on the Snooker), and began to realise this environment was where I wanted to spend my life. I completed my degree then and then hot-footed it to Drama School in London to study Stage Management.

bumped your chin' to Dorothy early on in the piece. Delivered in his own inimitable style, with his deep, mellow, slightly nasal Scottish* tones, he was like a cross between Barry White and The Proclaimers, and that tune and how he delivered it has stayed with me ever since.

*I think he used to claim he was from Berwick but, let's face it, he sounded Scottish.

Pirates of Penzance – 1993

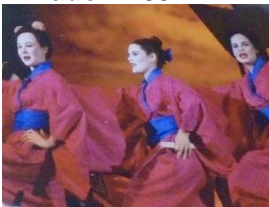
This and the Mikado were back to back I think so I may have got the order wrong. Someone must have discovered Gilbert & Sullivan and stuck with it.



Anyway, who doesn't like dressing up as a pirate? Us youngsters in the chorus had stripey blue tops and clip-on earrings and sung lines like 'let's vary piracy with a little burglary!' with gusto.

Paddy Meehan delivered another stellar performance – I think he was the Major General and was no doubt the very model of it.

Mikado – 1994



We all absolutely belted out: "If you want to know who we are, we are gentlemen of Japan". We weren't really, we were a bunch of scruffs with tights on our heads.

I don't remember much about this one other than Mr Purves using his accent to great effect yet again. One highlight was him, cast as a Japanese man, reading out an announcement to "the toon of Tittipu". He was like the Sean Connery of amateur dramatics.

I also remember a discussion with Mr Mett backstage at one school production where he said Oasis were rubbish. It must have been around this time as Definitely Maybe was released in '94. I suspect he ate his words a few years later when he was playing some of the Gallagher brothers' hits at weddings as part of Hawaiian-shirt-wearing beat combo 'Miami Beach'.

Calamity Jane – 1996

In my opinion this is, quite frankly, a terrible musical but I remember a lot of it. The school must have been short of talent as I landed the male lead role of Wild Bill Hickock even though I was as wooden as Mr Machel's mallet.

In the twenty years I have been working I am lucky to have worked in The West End and toured both the UK and Internationally. My passion is usually large-scale musical theatre, where the complex shows create real challenge, but have also done many busy plays including 'War Horse', and was heavily involved with creating the play 'Quiz' about the 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' cheating scandal which was later turned into a TV Drama in 2020.

As well as my brother, I'm always very aware that there are a huge number of people in the industry from the Blackpool area - there must have been something in the water! I'm certainly very grateful for all of the shows I was involved in at The Marine Hall, Fleetwood.

Tim Reed – General Manager

At the age of 15 and with the approval and support from Mrs. Gaskell I arranged my own work experience at the Opera House in Blackpool. It was an amazing time and led to the offer of summer work, I was hooked. From then I volunteered for all the school productions including 'Guys & Dolls', 'The Wiz', 'Billy Liar' and 'Who Killed Santa Clause'. I spent many hours after school and at the weekend in the school hall with Mr. Thwaites building the stage and taking on the role of 'stage manager'. It was at this point that I realized this was the career I wanted. I went on to study Performing Arts at Blackpool & Fylde College then on to Drama School in London to study Stage Management. I started work in the West End as Assistant Stage Manager for Paul Daniels at 18 which was followed by contracts on several large scale musical tours. I've been very lucky to have had a career doing something that I love. Over the past 25 years I have managed some amazing talent including SCLUB7, worked on some of the largest TV shows including 'Britain's Got Talent', 'The X Factor' and 'The Royal Variety Show'. I've also Produced and General Managed over twenty large scale shows all over the world including 'Chicago', 'Cats', 'Sunset Boulevard', 'Annie', 'The Bodyguard' and 'Magic Mike'. The best part is that I've had the chance to work with my brother a couple of times too! To this day I remain very proud of Blackpool and grateful for the

One big plus of me landing the role was that it gave me an excuse to retain my long hair, much to my Grandma's chagrin. As an aside, when I eventually got it cut off a few months later she walked to the hairdresser and gave her all the money in her purse as a tip to say thank you.

Anyway, I remember singing that my love was higher than a hawk and deeper than a well, and also that I spoke with an absolutely appalling American accent.



Paddy Meehan, by now already etched in the Baines archives as one of its greatest ever actors, again stole the show with a rather disconcerting cross-dressing performance singing about how he had a hive full of honey for the right kind of honey bee. I still shudder thinking about it.

Katy Cridland played Calamity Jane and was very good. We had to kiss (on the lips!!!) at the end and I remember us having a conversation about whether we should do a 'proper' kiss or just pretend. That secret will stay with us to the grave.

Finally, I still don't know what a sasperilly is. [It's a drink made from a root – sarsaparilla. Made famous by Mawson's of Oldham].

What a calamity



Baines was banned (initially) from staging Calamity Jane as the music publishers thought it would affect the success of a professional show 50 miles away in Liverpool. Eventually the publishers did a U turn and allowed the school production. The school had lost 2 weeks of rehearsal time in this mess up but Calamity Jane

was on, three successful nights in The Marine Hall followed.

And what about that professional company headed by Gemma Craven and Steve McGann – it was pulled before the end of its 3 month run. Perhaps they were right to be worried!!!

And finally...

I am not going to apologise for creating an 8 page newsletter as this one celebrates one of Baines's success stories, music and drama. In future editions we take the story onwards to the dramas and musicals produced by Mrs Joan Swan and others and hopefully I can report on the post covid shows. Thanks to all that contributed to the newsletter.

support and encouragement I received from my teachers at school especially Mr. Matthews who made me realise it was ok to like Theatre.

Some of the audience

Margaret McCann (Former Maths/IT teacher)

Yep, there is more to education for life over and above the academics. All this is enriching, life enhancing and lodges in the personality and memories sections of the brain.

Jordan Shuck

Having the option to choose drama and media as creative subjects at both GCSE and A-level at Baines sparked my interest in the media. Helping me discover the wider media landscape. I now work at ITV Studios in Factual Entertainment and it's great to know the spark for my passion started at Baines.

Michael Harmer

Your note reminds me of a Shakespeare play put on in my first or second year at Baines. It was produced by Lionel (Jack) Horner, DFC, former Spitfire and Wellington bomber pilot, and the lead character was played with appropriate dramatic expression, by Barry Mason, who went on to write Delilah and The Last Waltz for Tom Jones.

Barry Mason (1946 – 53)

Prior to starting this newsletter I wrote to ask Barry about his time at Baines. However, Barry died on 16th April 2021. There will be a fully report on his time at Baines in a future edition of the newsletter and on the website.



John Barry Mason MBE is a former pupil at Baines. He joined the school just after the war in 1946 and left in 1953. His claim to fame was that he was a songwriter. In fact a leader songwriter in the 1960s. He was born in Wigan before moving to this part of Lancashire and hence to attend the school. John who's professional name was Barry Mason wrote the lyrics for the songs written by Les Reed. He was prolific in his writing achieving many gold and platinum awards for his work including five Ivor

THE DRACULA SPECTACULA
A STORY BY JOEL JARVIS

IN THE SCHOOL CRYPTS: 10:15-12:00 MAY * 7:30..

THE DRACULA SPECTACULA
A STORY BY JOEL JARVIS

80¢ large & 50¢ small

Let's get their teeth into musical

EVEN if the cast contains no blood relation of whom you can enthuse ("Didn't hee he do well?") You will be highly entertained by "Dracula Spectacula," the rock musical at Baines School, Poultice.

You can't say more about a school show than that, though if you wanted to

REVIEW

compete with the punning style of the book, you could say that the young cast got their teeth into the production which, apart from a few first-night technical hitches, is as polished as a coffin lid.

The plot takes an American school trip from Pennsylvania to Transylvania with comic, murder, horror and musical diversions.

The production maintains a fast pace, the comic points being generally well-timed and the musical delivery punchy.

Comic scenes are particularly skilfully handled

A scene from "Dracula Spectacula," presented by Baines School, Poultice. From left: John Hood, Samantha Sweeten and Sally Spencer

and the scenery and lighting achieve their effects economically.

Solo roles are played by John Hood, Nigel Ansell, Sally Spencer, Robert Brathwaite, Samantha Sweeten, Darren Adkinsen,

Nicola Richardson, Ruth Gee, Fraser Karmahar, John Lewis, Gillian Jackson, S. Haddy, H. Larkins, L. Smith, J. Simpson, Samantha March-Brown, Aimee Ramee, Catherine Lidell and Clare Moss.

The musical director is R. Richmond and the property D. Nuttall and M. Chantrell.

The show finishes on Saturday night.

VERNON FRANKS

WINDSOR BOYS' CHOIR

Reading the comments on the Baines School 300 page on Facebook it has certainly generated a great deal of comment and memories.

David J Astall, President of Baines FPA
and Secretary of the Baines Alumni.