



## Dear Alumni member,

Well, we have reached the last month of the year. This newsletter was to have been written and sent in November to link into Armistice Day but work got in the way and therefore there was a slight delay.

Therefore, there are some elements that seem more akin to Armistice than to Christmas.



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I have managed to pull together the information to fill seven pages and some flashing lights too, a far cry from the first newsletter that ran to one side and featured the newly opened James Baines Room. Reflecting on the year I think the newsletter and the website are serving their purpose and keeping us all in touch with each other and you certainly seem to like them.

The winter has hit with cold dark nights and sunny but cold winter's days. This is what we have to look forward to over the next few weeks. Just think how cold it would be without global warming – it would be like the 60s and 70s again (my grandfather told me about those times).

On the positive side my health has improved since I collapsed on the way home from the Great Ecclestone Show this year with sepsis and the outside of me looks good but I hate to think what is going on below the surface. At least the fear of losing bits of me has subsided, for the time being at least!

David

## Forthcoming events

### Christmas Lunch – 11<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024

There will be a report on this next month

### AGM - 26<sup>th</sup> April 2025

The date is set for the AGM and Get together. Let's hope we can see some more younger members at both events next year. As in previous years the Get together will be a hot buffet. More details in January

## Community Section

### Communication links



To contact me about the newsletter or website or to contribute simply email:

[bainesalumnu@btinternet.com](mailto:bainesalumnu@btinternet.com)

**Former Pupils Association: email**  
[fpa@baines.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:fpa@baines.lancs.sch.uk)

### Social Media



Baines School 300



Baines School

### Baines Alumni website



This the general website for all Baines Alumni news.

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

If you wish access to the Alumni Members Area, then please contact me.

### Baines School Website



This is the link to the main school website

<https://baines.lancs.sch.uk/>

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### Interactivity

Click on the images/words shown to link to the websites/email. Over the next few months an interactive version of the newsletter will appear on the website.

### Finding former friends

If a name is not listed in the directory and you are trying to find former pupils/colleagues, then please contact me and I will see what we can do.

## Getting it right

I remember a friend of the family, the late great Eric Sykes telling me that he was the only living member of the Dead Poet's Society. The reason for this was that a newspaper had published his obituary having been told that he had died.

From time to time, I get emails and phone calls telling me that previous members of the school have passed, many are correct, but some are incorrect which can be very embarrassing and upsetting and I tend to be the one that gets the blame. This year there have been two such incidents, one the subject laughed it off and had sussed the reason for my email asking how she was, the other was very upsetting and could not be so easily dismissed. But thanks to Anthony Mycock at school for allaying my fears about the incident.

## Baines Wartime Project

Back in those dark days of Covid 19 I was reading one of the early copies of The Poultonian. The Headteacher, at the time, Thomas Whittington, was writing that a book should be written to commemorate all those members of the school that had died in The Great War, that comment was written over 100 years ago and nothing was done about it until now.

I thought it would be a good idea to produce an eBook about all the boys and masters that not only died in the war but all those that fought in it as well, giving their back story and some of their adventures. Looking back I think I must have been drunk to embark on such a task. The book runs to 163 pages (A4 size)!!! It lists every boy and master (as far as we know) that fought in the conflict, the bulk of those that were killed are listed on the school war memorial – 4 are missing which are included in the book. I also tagged into the listings one who fought in the Boer War.

This is to be the first of three books, one for the great War, one for the Second World War and one for the correspondence that were sent to the school from boys that were fighting or their parents if they had died.

Some of the tales that are told are fascinating and others are horrifying especially in WW2 but it gives us a glimpse of the past. Parts 2 and 3 will be completed next year.

The full version of the first book is published on the Baines Alumni Website; either visit the site or click here – [Baines Brief Lives](#).

One sad tale in the WW2 book was the incident that sparked the book and film Monsarrat's, The Cruel Sea (1951). The film (1963) gets an airing on BBC in December. On board was a naval doctor who is a Former pupil – like Monsarrat he survived.

## Baines Archive



The archive was nearly lost a few years ago by an over-zealous Headmaster.

Gradually we are rebuilding the archive and housing it within the school. But in order to preserve it for future generations we need to scan each item and store this electronically then the original remains intact.

Therefore, the plan is to create a digitised archive which will then be stored on the Alumni website. However, before this can take place we need a lot of help in scanning items for the archive.

We also have a lot of photographs where the pupils and staff are unknown. If anyone can help, please contact me.

## Stronger Together

As you can see from this newsletter Baines Alumni and FPA are here to help and support you. Its members have many skills, expertise, and friends to give you advice and support if we can.



We are also here to help the school and many members can use their skills to help the youngsters of the day.

Career development is very important, and some members already give support and advice to pupils looking for a career in certain fields. Why not join them !

## Drop in Sessions



The school has agreed that the James Baines Room will be made available, outside examination periods, to Alumni/FPA members every Tuesday during term time. If you wish to visit, please contact me.

The James Baines room is in the lower playground and used to be the Headmaster's office in Whittington's time, the tech office, and sixth form

## Meet the Alumni

I would like to apologise to Dr David Langford for publishing his name on the website obituary, as I had been told he had died.

To prove he is very much alive he is now in the '[Finding the Alumni](#)' section of the website.

## Col(ret) Dr David Paul Langford MBBS MSc FRCGP L/RAMC

David attended Baines Grammar School from 1968 - 75. On leaving school he went straight to medical school in London and qualified as a Doctor. Following this he travelled the world for a few years working as a doctor and eventually settled into the British Army for a full career as a military GP and medical educator. He achieved the rank of Colonel, and now lives in the New Forest. Not totally retired he still occasionally works in the local courts as a medical member in tribunals.

## Was to be the Swan Song...but

You may have been wondering why the first image of the newsletter is a fat lady singing. This newsletter was originally planned to be my swan song.

So why the last ever Bainesian? Basically, I was getting the blame for the content of this newsletter and the website. I do write the newsletter and the website, but I have to use evidence supplied by others, much of which is correct. I also write what is sent to me although sometimes this seems to generate complaints.

Following comments over the past few years I have revamped the website and the newsletter several times, taking on board what has been said to me and I feel that we now have developed a better product than the fledgling one page.

Healthy criticism is good and it helps to develop the newsletter. However, following the recent bout of unfavourable, hurtful and unhelpful comments I had considered ditching both the newsletter and the website and letting the bullies win. However, I looked at the original concept to keep us all informed about what had been going on and decided that both were still needed.

## President's BBQ

It seems such a long time since this happened. On Saturday 24th August the President's BBQ was held in Lytham St Annes at the home of Paul Bamber. As is traditional in August the day started with torrential rain but then as the BBQ was due to start the sun came out. There was a cool

study room depending on how old you are. In order to visit you will need to gain permission from the FPA/Alumni as the gate to this area is kept locked.

## Obituary

As the list is rather large it has been placed on the website in the Alumni Section. [Click here](#) for the link

## Alumni Snippets



For those of you that visit the website will notice the Alumni Snippets.

This is your way of letting others know what is going on with your links with the Alumni.

Click the link below to see the up-to-date Snippets.

[Alumni Snippets](#)

## Contacts

**Chairman: Alumni**  
Muriel Ryding

**Secretary: Alumni**  
David J Astall

## Announcements

If you have any announcements of birth, marriages or deaths please contact me and I will include them.

## Congratulations

Former pupil Adam Billington has a new job at the Old Town Hall in Poulton.

## Joining the Alumni

Everyone that has attended the school or worked at it is automatically a member of the Baines Alumni.

Membership is free and allows you to access the Alumni Members area of the website then simply visit the site and register.

## Being added to the mailing list

If you wish to join the mailing list and receive information and the newsletter simply email me at: [bainesalumni@btinternet.com](mailto:bainesalumni@btinternet.com) and send me your details.

breeze but that did not dampen the spirits of all those assembled, 17 in all.

I would like to thank all those members that attended, including the invited guests, for what was yet another excellent BBQ. Great company, great chat and great food. I would also like to thank Paul and Ailsa Bamber and their family for hosting the event and cooking the delicious food. A certain former headteacher loved the trifle so she told me after her 4<sup>th</sup> helping – I'm exaggerating.

The age range of those attending was: 12 - 89 years of age.

### Do you recognise the master in this picture?



This photograph was taken in May 1966 in the school. The form teacher is a young John Bradley.

### The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

As mentioned in the August edition of the Bainesian the FPA have decided to sponsor the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the school. It is hoped that in sponsoring the Award we can gain more members and the school get funds in order to keep the Award vibrant in the school.

The cost of running the Award gets higher every year with the rise in inflation therefore in order to reduce parental costs the FPA are helping out. The Award is very important, especially at this time, to help with the development and well-being of the young people.

I visited school in late September to talk to Karen Fisher, the Award's co-ordinator about the partnership and to explain what it would mean to the continued success of the award in School.

Awarding a sponsorship to the Award will not negate other monies awarded to the school.

### From the archive

I was listening to the wireless recently – Radio 3 (that's the Third programme). I heard the Policeman's song from Gilbert and Sullivan's, Pirates of Penzance. This got me thinking – that's dangerous I hear you cry.

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## Baines School Former Pupils' Association

### FPA News

The website also includes news for the FPA. If you wish to contribute to the news then please email me.

### Contacts

#### School contact

Anna Bailey

[aba@baines.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:aba@baines.lancs.sch.uk)

### Former Pupils Association 2024/25

#### President

David Astall

#### President Elect

Muriel Ryding

#### Secretary FPA

Paul Bamber

#### Treasurer FPA

Fred Vickers

### Joining the FPA

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

An [application form](#) is available on the Alumni website.

### New members

None this time

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## Baines Volunteers

Are you willing to volunteer to help with the Archive?

Jobs would include helping to catalogue it; or scanning the items so that they can be stored electronically. There are also a number of images that show 'unknown' pupils that need identifying. Any help will be most appreciated.

The nineties were certainly the heyday of the Baines musicals. Two of them were The Mikado (1993) and Pirates (1994). Thirsty years ago – time flies.

### **Battle rages in Fleetwood**

Last night saw another pitched battle in the Marine Hall area of Fleetwood, between the Police and the Pirates! Not civil unrest in Fleetwood but the school's production of the Pirates of Penzance.

Do you know its 30 years ago since the Sargeant of Police (me) and The Pirate King (George Purves) fought a pitched battle on the apron of the stage at the Marine Hall. Me with my squeaky truncheon and George with his sharp sword. I think that was a little one sided – although the occasional squeak stopped the dastardly Pirate King in his tracks and brought a smile to his face.

The show also coined the catch phrase from Andy Darbourne which I use a lot – Too late Nah!

### **Mikado – 1993**

The other performance preceded it – that of the Mikado. This was a modern version of the classic. The cast all absolutely belted out: "If you want to know who we are, we are gentlemen of Japan". They weren't really, they were a bunch of scruffs with tights on their heads, carrying brown umbrellas and yellow briefcases filled with Fleetwood sand.

### **Pirates of Penzance – 1994**

The pupils dressed up as pirates for this one in their 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 as the Major General and was no doubt the very model of it.

Both productions were under the Musical Directorship of Robert Richmond. The Artistic Director was Tony Stuart.

The impact of these fantastic performances were to lead many students into the world of Theatre, Music and Television.

More information on the musicals can be found on the Baines Alumni website or just click here - [Musicals](#)

### **John Bent's Music**

Some of the younger members of the Alumni will remember the partially sighted student John Bent. John tended to reside in my Computer Room (B1, Room 31) in the corner of the ground floor of the main building.

### **Extras for the archive**

We also need items for the archive so if you think you can help in any way then please do not hesitate to either contact me. Items can either be physical items or scanned and electronically saved.

### **Noticeboard**

As I receive notices from the Alumni they will be published on the Noticeboard section of the website.

### **Social Events**

As I receive information about any social events they will be published on the Events Calendar on the Alumni Website.

If you wish to publicise any Alumni events or add to the noticeboard, then please do so.

### **Forthcoming events**

**Christmas Lunch – 11<sup>th</sup> December**

### **Calling all younger members of the Alumni**

Why not share your progress after leaving school. Simply send the information to me and I will publish it on the newsletter and on the website.

### **Poultonian**

We have copies from 1908 to 1980 some as bound copies. Some of the copies have already been scanned but the plan is to scan all of them and make them available on the website.

If you would like to research copies then contact me and I will post them on the website or pop into one of the 'get togethers'.

### **Headteacher's Newsletter**

The headteacher's newsletter and any relevant correspondence is available on the Alumni website. To read these on the website please click this link.

[Newsletter](#)

John is now married and lives in the Midlands. I was recently sent a copy of his electric organ music – it is an excellent CD made even more remarkable as John is now completely blind.

### **Worthy causes in school**

The FPA is a fee paying organisation and monies raised by it are used to help the school and its pupils.

As mentioned previously the FPA are sponsoring the DofE Award in school. This does not mean that other projects will be forgotten about. We have an annual budget of £1000 to award to worthy causes in the school.

### **Harry Mercer**

I recently received an email about one of the current pupils at the school – Harry Mercer.

Harry is trying to follow in the footsteps of former pupils England cricketers Richard Gleeson and Carole Hughes as a cricketer. Harry is a year 8 pupil and he loves the school since moving there from Staining Primary. Harry is a great sportsman and plays football to a high standard locally and also represents the school at golf. Perhaps the FPA should invite him to play.

However, he particularly excels at cricket and plays junior and senior cricket at Blackpool Cricket Club where his father Steven coaches and runs the junior teams. At the age of 10 Harry was selected to play for Lancashire junior teams under 12s and under 13s.

Next April (2025) the lads in the under 13s team have the opportunity to visit Sri Lanka to play teams of a similar age group in 6 locations. Although the 2 Lancs coaches are going with the team, Lancs CC are not supporting the tour so the coaches and players have to finance this themselves to the tune of £2000 each.

The school has championed, over many years, pupils who want to follow their dream. This is a great opportunity for a young cricketer and therefore Harry, through his grandfather Peter has approached the FPA for funding.

The FPA have a meeting in January in order to discuss this. If anyone else knows of any ways of helping Harry please email me.

### **Obituary**

Further information is on the Baines Alumni website

### **The Buzz**

There will be a link to this new school magazine on the Baines Alumni website.

### **Meet the Alumni**

We need to hear from you and would like to contact me and tell us what you have been up to since leaving school.

### **Share your story**

As I produce the newsletter myself it helps if members can send information to me to include. I am always very proud to share stories from the Alumni Community.

As this newsletter and the website is for everyone that is part of the Baines Alumni then if you have any memories, events, tales you would like to share, then please get in touch and I will include them. These can be written or recorded (video or audio).

### **Call for golfers**

Any golfers who would like to be part of the Baines Golf Society please contact Sean Bullen at school. It's a good way of re-kindling old friendships.

### **Items for the Newsletter and Alumni News**

The newsletter and the Alumni News section of the website is very important to let other members of the Alumni know what is happening and as a way to keep in touch with each other.

If you have any items for the newsletter or Alumni News then please email me at [Bainesalumni@btinternet.com](mailto:Bainesalumni@btinternet.com) and I will endeavour to publish the information.

### **Tours of the school**

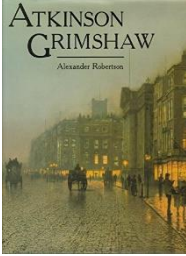
At the FPA Get together this year, the Headteacher Clare Docherty announced that if anyone would like a tour of the school then this could be arranged.

## Baz Ives

Baz was one of our 1949 intake, and one could say he was a "colourful character" and well remembered in the 6th form for arriving in a two tone red/cream Hillman Californian with white walled tyres or sometimes a BSA 150cc motor bike.

After leaving Baines, he went to Manchester College of Science and Technology but decided not to complete the course. One of the school caretaking staff is his nephew.

## Alex Robertson



Alex (1956-63) has recently passed away at St James's Hospital Leeds aged 79.

After leaving Baines Alex went to Bangor University to read History. After graduating he studied at the Courtauld Institute in London under Sir Anthony Blunt (famous spy, though Alex always assured me that none of his students knew).

From there he went to work at Leeds Art Gallery in the print room, eventually rising to be Keeper of Leeds City Art Gallery. He worked for Leeds Art Gallery for more than 30 years.

He became a distinguished art historian, specialising in Victorian painting and wrote a very well received book 'Atkinson Grimshaw', the first comprehensive study of this artist and was considered a world authority on the life and work of this artist. He was regularly called upon by the major auction houses to authenticate works attributed to Grimshaw and enjoyed his visits to London to do so. He was a regular at Christie's and Bonham's auction houses.

## Phil Ward (1934 – 2024)

Phil was born in 1934 and started teaching at Baines at 21 years old, his first teaching appointment, joining in September 1956. He taught at Baines until he retired in December 1987, a mere 32 years. He was a former Head of Biology.



Phil passed away peacefully on Wednesday 20th November, aged 90, at Blackpool Victoria hospital. Phil had been in very good health and even went for coffee with Ian Ridley (former teacher) two days earlier so Phil's sudden death was unexpected.

Elaine, his wife and Sue and Simon would like to inform you that his funeral will take place at Carlton Crematorium on Monday December 16th at 11am. No flowers please, donations gratefully received on the day for Trinity Hospice.

## Continued revamp of the website

As my work time diminishes over the winter I can spend more time on revamping the website, adding new pages and repairing some of the links. I am hoping to complete this by Christmas (notice no year given, just in case).

## The people you see about town

A few days ago I was walking around the supermarket when I was approached by a lady – it turned out to Diane Aston, former cook at Baines. She was looking really fit and well.

## Comedy of errors

If you find any spelling mistakes or grammatical errors then please send to [spilleng-mistakes@BinesAluni.con](mailto:spilleng-mistakes@BinesAluni.con). Any other errors please contact me, and I will endeavour to correct them.

## Newsletter compiled and written by:

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

## Some music for Christmas

Here is the School's Christmas Rap, sung by Tony Stuart and the School Choir – from 1984

Hugh Mett played the bass guitar on that session (doing his best Level 42 impersonation...slapping and popping on the chorus). It was recorded at Park Lane Studio in Preesall.

Click here to listen to it. [Christmas Rap](#)

## And finally



**I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2025**