A Happy New Year to you all! While I spent a chilly Christmas and New Year in South West England with my family, I managed ten days in South Africa in early December. I didn’t make it to Balgowan; I did, however, manage to spend a little time in Grahamstown. I visited my alma mater, Rhodes University, and was a little saddened by the noticeable fraying of the edges – a larger debate for another day – but then I walked across the road and swam for an hour in DSG’s 12-lane indoor heated swimming pool. By the time I was finished I was reminded just how magnificent educational institutions in South Africa still are and will continue to be. This caused me to reflect on my other alma mater: my school.

Over the last two years I have had a privileged insight into Michaelhouse and its vision. And it is no accident that Michaelhouse looks, sounds, acts and, without doubt, delivers a supreme life experience for those who walk its red-bricked halls.

There is much work to be done to put South Africa’s collective education experience where it needs to be. Michaelhouse acknowledges – as it has always done – that by producing boys who simply just care about the betterment of themselves, their communities, their country and the planet; no problem is insurmountable.

If you have a moment, I encourage you to read the School’s latest strategic plan, published in 2016: Michaelhouse@125 an available on the Michaelhouse website.

I am delighted to report that, through the dedicated work of the UK Branch Committee, the backing of the School and the Old Boys’ Club in far off Balgowan as well as the brilliant support of you - the Michaelhouse Old Boys Community in the United Kingdom - the Branch is in excellent shape.

1. The Year Passed (2016)

During the past twelve months, we held seven official events. These included: Summer and Winter Luncheons, a much-improved live screening of the HC vs MHS rugby match, a moving pilgrimage to Northern France to remember our Fallen at the centennial commemorations of the Battle of the Somme, two evening drinks events in London and the Annual General Meeting Dinner at the Royal Air Force Club. Every event has been memorable, with new faces sharing their interesting lives and indulging in the nostalgia of our school days.

We continued to grow personal and professional relationships with the School and the Old Boys’ Club. I managed to attend the Central Committee Meeting of the Old Boys’ Club, on Old Boys’ Day, in April. Both Rory McKenna (Branch Secretary) and Ryan Maree (Branch Treasurer) visited the school in official capacities during the year.

As ever, much thanks must go to the President of the Old Boys’ Club (Mark Lynn), the Rector (Greg Theron) and their respective teams (Fred, Michelle, Robyn, Murray and Cathy to name a few) who have been so supportive of our ideas and initiatives.

The Committee continues to place a high importance in the governance of the Branch and conducting our activities in line with the Branch Constitution. It is steadily becoming a living document which is reviewed
annually by the Committee in consultation with Branch Members and the Old Boys’ Club. I must apologise for not having published the review of the Constitution prior to the AGM. This was a failing on our part; it will be rectified in January 2017.

The Branch Committee for 2017 was elected at the Annual Election Meeting and reported to those present at the AGM Dinner on 10 November 2016.

The Committee numbers five:

a. Chairman, Sean Lumley (Baines, 1994).
b. Secretary, Rory McKenna (West, 2002).
c. Treasurer, Ryan Maree (West, 2002).
d. Committee Member, Calvin Freese (Farfield, 2008).

The profiles of each role are detailed in Annex C.

Changes from the 2016 Committee: Calvin Freese has become a permanent member of the Committee and Michael Leuner has reluctantly surrendered his position as the Committee Member. I would like to thank Mike for his devotion to the Committee, Branch and wider Michaelhouse Community over the last two years.

2. **The Next Three Years (2017-19)**

I will continue to emphasise to the Committee that family and professional lives come first. Therefore the increased activity – particularly the events – and the effort necessary to arrange and host them must be sustainable in the long term. Therefore, my approach for the coming three years remains:

> ‘Be sustainable, avoid becoming stale and adapt what we do and how we do it to meet the collective needs of the Branch Members while furthering the interests of the Michaelhouse Old Boys’ Community’.

Beyond sustainability and keeping things interesting, we have also taken a view to more deliberately facilitate the fund-raising initiatives of the UK Trust and the Old Boys Club while maintaining the following position on fundraising: we believe that raising funds is essential to support Michaelhouse’s growth and prosperity, but we feel that the overriding purpose of the UK Branch is to deliver the first object in our Constitution:

> “The promotion of interaction among old boys of Michaelhouse.”

My letter published on 27th September 2016 – available on the Michaelhouse Website – provides more detail.
3. **The Year to Come (2017)**

   I would like to take this opportunity to share with you our plans for 2016, as we continue to strive to meet the objects of our Branch Constitution:

4. **Object 1: The promotion of interaction among Old Boys of Michaelhouse**

   We will continue to hold seven to nine events per annum, designed to appeal to both young and senior Old Boys. Our events calendar has been drafted on this basis, with most events centred in London. All events and key diary dates are listed in Annex A, but I would like to elaborate on a few:

   a. We have no flagship event as such planned for 2017. We do, however, hope to in some small way repay the decades of service Rick Peacock-Edwards has made to the UK Branch by supporting the launch of his biography chronicling his notable service to the Royal Air Force as a fast jet pilot and latterly Air Commodore (a one star general) ushering in a new generation of jet fighter: the Eurofighter. There is a book launch planned for early Summer and we will share the details as they become available.

   b. **The Summer Old Boys’ Luncheon on 12 May** will be held in a private dining room at the Royal Air Force Club in London and limited to 25 attendees (leavers up until 1995). The Chairman will give an update on the School and also plan to have a prominent guest speaker.

   c. After a fantastic event last year, the **live streaming of the return match of the Hilton vs Michaelhouse rugby match** will take place again on 17 June. The event will take place in Central London and possibly in Edinburgh. This year we will make the invitations open to the families of Old Boys. We will be working with the UK Branch of the Hilton Old Boys’ club to make this another memorable day.

   d. **The Winter Senior Old Boys’ Luncheon will take place on 16 November**, a day before the AGM. An extremely popular event now in its third year. As with the Summer Luncheon, it will be held in a private dining room at the RAF Club and limited to 25 attendees (leavers up until 1975). We anticipate the President of the Old Boys’ Club and/or Rector to attend.

   e. **The AGM Dinner will be on 17 November**, again at the RAF Club and we hope to have between 80-100 attendees. This is long standing event and fine conclusion to the year. The Branch Committee Members will report on the year passed and the Rector and/or Club President will also provide their respective updates on the School and the wider Old Boys Community.

   f. Finally, there will also be a series of **informal drinks throughout the year**, beginning with an evening event in London in early February. Details to follow later this month.

5. **Object 2: The promotion of social and sporting contacts with other associations**

   Our relationship with the UK Branch of the Hilton Old Boys’ Club remains. We meet annually for dinner and maintain open invitations to each other’s events. We have a longer-term view to grow relationships with other organisations, similar to our own, in the UK.

   In my capacity as Chairman of the UK Branch, I have been invited to be a Trustee of the Michaelhouse UK Trust and, as alluded to in Section 2, hope to facilitate their objectives over the coming few years of ensuring that their extremely worthy cause of funding underprivileged boys to attend Michaelhouse
continues. Should you wish to know any more about the UK Trust, please do get in touch or contact the Trust’s Chairman, Seamus Smyth, directly. His contact details are: SeamusSmyth@cartercamerons.com.

6. **Object 3: The raising of funds for the purpose of implementing the objects**

2015 saw the introduction of an annual £10 levy to assist the UK Committee deliver on its objectives. At the AGM, I reported on behalf of the Branch Treasurer, the amount received and how it was used (see annex B for a summary). Can I say that without your generous support the success and growth of the Branch would not have been possible – my sincere thanks. We would be very grateful if you would support us again this year. Ryan will be writing to you early next week regarding levies for 2017.

7. **Object 4: The furtherance of the interests of Michaelhouse and the Michaelhouse Community**

You may recall the following paragraph from my letter last year, but I feel it is worthy of repeating as it captures why we, the United Kingdom Branch, exist:

There is a cycle: Boys go to Michaelhouse and have core values and ethics instilled in them. They then go out into the world, find success in their chosen fields, begin giving back to society and then, perhaps, have children of their own who may help perpetuate the cycle by attending Michaelhouse themselves. We see our role as a Branch to help accelerate the journey to success by bringing Old Boys together for mutual benefit which may well lead to the benefit of Michaelhouse.

Keeping an up to date database has always been critical to achieving this. Calvin Freese (Farfield, 2008) has done a good job in reconciling our database. With Robyn Gruijters – the School’s Archivist – joining the Old Boys’ Club Team in Balgowan, a more deliberate approach to working on the global Old Boys’ database has begun. We look forward to supporting when we can.

8. **In Closing**

I hope this note has been of interest and that you are able to attend some of the events over the coming year. I continue to be blessed with an extremely capable and supportive Committee; we look forward to the year to come and the possibilities for the future of the Branch.

All my hopes for 2017.

Very sincerely,

Sean Lumley
Chairman

Copied to: Old Boys’ Club President, Old Boys’ Club Secretary, Rector, UK Branch Committee, UK Trust Secretary, Chairman UK Branch Hilton Old Boys’ Club
Annex A: 2017 Calendar

January
13 January - Publish Chairman’s New Year’s Letter
16 January - Publish Annual Levy Letter

February
3 February – Informal Drinks - London

March
March – Informal Drinks – Edinburgh - tbc

April
April – Informal Drinks – Book Launch - London
29 April - Old Boys’ Day – Balgowan

May
12 May - Summer Luncheon (OMs 1995 and earlier)- London

June
17 June - Hilton vs Michaelhouse Live Screening – London & Edinburgh

July
24 July - Publish Secretary’s Summer Letter
HC vs MHS Golf Day - tbc

August
11 August – Informal Drinks – London

September
-

October
-

November
16 November - Winter Luncheon (OMs 1975 and earlier) - London
17 November - AEM and AGM - London
21 November - Submission of Annual Branch Report for The Chronicle

December
-

**2016 (as at 31 Oct 2016)**

**Income**
- Levies received: £1,090 (c. 14% of Members)

**Expenditure**
- Committee meeting and travel: £90
- Guests costs: £272
- Events costs: £332

Year-end cash balance: £980

**2015 (as at 31 Oct 2015)**

**Income**
- Levies received: £1,280 (c. 15% of Members)

**Expenditure**
- Committee meeting and travel: £130
- Guests costs: £410
- Events costs: £156

Year-end cash balance: £584
Annex C: Committee Role Profiles

**Chairman**
The Chairman's primary role is to ensure that the Committee is effective in its tasks of setting and implementing the UK Branch’s Objects (as laid out in the UK Branch Constitution) as well as the one and three-year strategy. He is the UK Branch's leading representative and should retain good and regular interaction with the Committee, Branch Members, the President of the Old Boys' Club, the Rector, the UK Trust, and other stakeholders.

Elections for the position of Chairman occur every two years. Next election is Nov 2017.

**Secretary**
The role of the Secretary is to support the Chairman in ensuring the smooth functioning of the UK Branch. The Secretary is responsible for ensuring meetings are effectively organised and minuted, maintaining effective records and administration as well as communication and correspondence with Branch members. The Secretary acts as an information and reference point for the Chairman and other committee members to clarify past practice and decisions, confirm legal requirements and retrieve relevant documentation.

Elections for the position of Secretary occur annually.

**Treasurer**
The role of the Treasurer is to managing the financial aspects of the UK Branch, including maintaining up to date records of financial transactions, protecting the branch against fraud and theft and ensuring the UK Committee understand its financial obligations and responsibilities. Specifically, the treasurer will receive funds for annual levies and events, record these receipts and ensure prompt payment of invoices. The Treasurer has a duty to produce a financial report to the members of the UK Branch at the AGM.

Elections for the position of Treasurer occur annually.

**Elder Statesman**
The role of the Elder Statesman is to provide the Chairman and Committee with advice and guidance relating to the running of the UK Branch. Trustees usually comprise of past chairmen or experienced members of the Committee who do not hold the position of Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer.

Elections for the position(s) of Trustee occur annually.

**Committee Member**
Committee Members assist the Chairman with the smooth running of the UK Branch. Their role may include, but is not limited to, the organisation of social events, the AGM and sporting competitions.

Elections for the position(s) of General Committee Member occur annually.