



UNITED KINGDOM
BRANCH

CHAIRMAN'S NEW YEAR LETTER – 2020

Published on 13th January 2020

A Happy New Year (and New Decade) to all Branch Members and your families! This year, rather than an opening narrative, I thought I would remain silent and share a collage of the year in pictures.



The Year Passed (2019)

The United Kingdom Branch has had a splendid year! Since our reorganisation in 2014, we continue to be governed by our Branch Constitution which takes its lead from the Club Constitution. Our four objects have been and remain:

- **Object 1:** The promotion of interaction among Old Boys of Michaelhouse
- **Object 2:** The promotion of social and sporting contacts with other associations
- **Object 3:** The raising of funds for the purpose of implementing the objects contained herein
- **Object 4:** The furtherance of the interests of Michaelhouse and the Michaelhouse Community

The highlight of the year has been the big step forward in communication – of particular note has been the centralising of the Old Boys database in Balgowan; access to the School's graphics team for production of invitations and reminders; direct support from the Club in deploying communications and announcements; and the launch of the Old Boys app. All of these combined have allowed us to substantially optimise / professionalise how we communicate and deliver the same number of events with excellent turnout and much less effort which had



UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH

allowed thinking and actions to begin on other things. Special thanks must go to Robyn Gruijters for consistently going above and beyond the call of duty to help and organise us.

In 2019, we arranged **SEVEN successful events**. One in Edinburgh, five in London, and one just outside London. Of these, three were joint events with the Old Hiltonian UK Branch.

The seven events in 2019 were:

- **HC/MHS SPRING DRINKS** held at the Old Bank of England Pub in London in March. This was an arrive-on-the-night event. We hoped for 60 and 50 arrived.
- **The SUMMER LUNCHEON** was held at the Royal Air Force Club in London in May. Richard Cussons (Tatham '76) was the guest speaker. His talk was "A journey to the Heart of Darkness – mission to the DR Congo". We hoped for 15 and 16 attended.
- **The HC/HMS LIVE SCREENING** event (in June) was the brainchild of the UK Branch and we have enjoyed four excellent years of 50-100 OMs attending. The excellent production quality of late has been a marvel, but sadly with it now being available free on YouTube, numbers dwindled to about 20 this year despite good weather and the excellent surrounds of the Charles Holden pub in Colliers Wood, London. We have therefore taken the decision to retire this event.
- **The HC/MHS GOLF DAY** at Silvermere outside London in July has been a long-standing fixture of the UK Branch. After a lull in recent years it came back last year and has continued with fortitude this year. Organised by Hilton, we hoped for 16 and 13 attended. A was a wonderfully sunny day enjoyed by all those who attended. With the scores tied at the end of day, Hilton retained the prized winners' putter!
- **The EDINBURGH DRINKS** in November went into its second year and was held at the magnificent (and hidden) New Club on Prince's Street overlooking Edinburgh Castle. While only 12 attended, many were attending their first Old Boy event since leaving school 30 years ago. We are considering a dinner at the same venue in 2020.
- **The WINTER LUNCHEON** in November, the penultimate event of the year was a sumptuous one held at the RAF Club and attended by the Rector and the OM Club President. This event is in its sixth year and is as popular as ever. We encourage OMs of all ages to attend. As with the Summer Luncheon, we hoped for 15 and 17 attended.
- For the year's finale we returned to the RAF Club one last time for **the AGM DINNER** the day after the Winter Luncheon. The Chairman [reported on the year's events and announced the Committee for 2020](#). The Rector and the OM Club President also attended and updated those present on the School and the Club. More than 50 attendees are always seen as a win. This year we had 80 with leavers ranging from 1954-2017. We put this success down to the fantastic communication plan led by the Club!

We would like to extend thanks to John Dickson (Founders '54) who remains our most regular Keshla and loyal supporter. He attends almost all the events. He is one of the first to arrive and the last to leave. We look forward to many more luncheons, dinners and drinks evenings in John's company.

While we have regulars like John, we have also been **delighted by the number of OMs who have attended events this year who are not UK Branch members**, but have been passing through on business. Some examples were:

- Wilem Landman (East '90) attended the Edinburgh drinks while in the UK on business. He lives in New Zealand.
- Andrew Kramer (Tatham '81) flew in from Kloof to attend the AGM dinner.



UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH

Other activities outside of events have included:

- The Elder Statesman of the UK Branch, **Air Commodore Rick Peacock-Edwards CBE**, travelled to **South Africa in March** to give his famed *'From Balgowan to the Skies'* talk to the School. It is the fascinating story beginning as a schoolboy in Balgowan before going on to fly some of the most formidable fighter jets in world as an Officer in the Royal Air Force. Rick's talk was met with much interest and a standing ovation from the boys. He is putting the finishing touches on his autobiography *'Rate of Climb'* which captures his impressive life. It hits the shelves in 2020.
- We met on two occasions with Nicky Bicket and Alex Price, Chairman and Committee Member respectively of the **Old Diocesan (Bishops) UK Branch** to discuss joint events for 2020. We intend to invite Bishops to our Spring Drinks with Hilton while focussing on a HC/MHS/Bishop's golf day next summer.
- With much help from Michelle Huntley, we commissioned a wreath to be laid at the Service of Remembrance at Michaelhouse (Sunday 10 November) on behalf the UK Branch Members and carrying the emblem of the combined services of the British Armed Forces. It was laid by two newly elected Heads of House for 2020 and carried the following inscription: *"In everlasting gratitude to all those Old Boys who served in or with the British Armed Forces and who paid the ultimate price in defiance of tyranny so that we could be free. Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori. Laid on behalf of all Old Boys of the United Kingdom Branch of the Michaelhouse Old Boys' Club."*

The Year to Come (2020)

As we enter the '20s, there is much to look forward to for the Branch, the Club and the School. Technology is allowing us to much more effectively and accurately engage with you and before too long allow you to engage with each other. Next year we celebrate 125 years of Michaelhouse and in between all of that we'll continue to come together as OMs in ever more meaningful and worthwhile ways.

We'll continue to be governed by our Constitution available on the Michaelhouse website and the Old Boys' app. These four objectives once again form the basis of our plans for 2020:

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

We are **planning on SIX events this year**. One less than last year – with the retiring of the live screening event. All events are open to All Branch Members – including the Summer and Winter Luncheons – and we will look to offer early bird ticket prices for certain events to make them more affordable and accessible to all. Most events will be in London with one in Edinburgh. All events and key diary dates are listed in Annex A and a little elaborating as follows:

- HC, MHS, OD (Bishops) evening drinks on Thursday 19th March.** After two highly successful HC & MHS drinks evenings over the past two years, we are delighted to welcome Bishops this year likely to be held at the Old Bank of England Pub. With strong numbers (50-60) over the past two years, we hope to have strong representation from all three UK Branches as we continue to grow affiliations (see Object 2).
- The Summer Luncheon on Friday 15th May** will be held in a private dining room at the Royal Air Force Club in London and limited to 25 attendees. We have moved this event to a Friday and encourage OMs of all ages to attend. It is an intimate affair filled with rich conversation and usually has a part two as evening approaches in the Running Horse Tavern – the RAF's private pub. The Chairman will give a short update on the School and this year's guest speaker is Philip Sykes (Pascoe '86), the founder of the [British School of Etiquette](#) which has recently appeared in the [Sunday Times Newspaper](#).



UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH

- c. **The HC vs MHS vs OD Golf Day in June** is new to the calendar and an expansion of our traditional HV vs MHS golf day. We're forming an ever-closer relationship with the OD UK Branch who have a number of golf events each year and we feel that doing a tripartite even will be an exciting progression from our current event. Silvermere outside London is earmarked for the event, but we will confirm details in consultation with HC and OD before the spring.
- d. **Edinburgh Evening Drinks/Dinner on Friday 6th November** is a continuation of the very successful drink evening we had at the sumptuous New Club – a private members club in Edinburgh overlooking the Castle. We may well have a private dinner similar to our Luncheons at the RAF Club. More to follow in early summer.
- e. **The Winter Luncheon will take place on Thursday 12th November**, a day before the AGM. An extremely popular event open to all OMs. As with the Summer Luncheon, it will be held in a private dining room at the RAF Club and limited to 25 attendees. We anticipate the President of the Old Boys' Club and/or Rector to attend. This event most definitely extends into the Running Horse Tavern where Rick introduces us to the great and the good of the RAF community.
- f. **The AGM Dinner will be on Friday 13th November**, in the Sovereign's Room at the RAF Club and we hope to have between 80-100 attendees. This is a long-standing event and a 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. We will again be having this event on a Friday to allow those outside London to be able to attend without having to take the following day off work/study.

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

This year we welcome Nicky Bicket (Chairman of the OD UK Branch), his Committee and Branch Members. Bishops has a large presence in the UK of over 1500 ODs. Andrew Richmond (HC UK Branch Chairman) and his Committee are equally excited about the two events we have planned between our three UK Branches. We will also try and meet a few times a year and communicate regularly via our HC/MHS/OD Committee WhatsApp group.

In my capacity as Chairman of the UK Branch, I remain a Trustee of the Michaelhouse UK Trust. The Trust continues to provide bursaries for underprivileged boys to attend Michaelhouse and is able to do so because of the enduring generosity of Old Boys in the UK. 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.

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

We continue to ask for a voluntary £10 annual levy to assist the UK Committee deliver on its objectives. At the AGM, Ryan Maree, 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 this month regarding levies for 2020 and how we intend to use them.

4. **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:



UNITED KINGDOM BRANCH

'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. Robyn Gruijters, the Heritage Centre and Old Boys' Club Coordinator now owns the centralised database of all OMs. She is also the coordinator for the excellent and increasingly effective Old Boys' App which can be downloaded [here](#) for iPhones and [here](#) for Android devices. All our communications with will published on the App and [Facebook](#). Most will go out via email to the UK Branch mailing list. Some will be posted in the Old Boys' section of the [Michaelhouse website](#)

5. Committee for 2020

The newly elected Branch Committee for 2020 was elected at the Annual Election Meeting held prior to the AGM in London in November. They will carry out the objectives on behalf of the Branch Members. They are:

- **Chairman** - Sean Lumley (Baines, 1994)
- **Secretary** - Rory McKenna (West, 2002)
- **Treasurer** - Ryan Maree (West, 2002)
- **Elder Statesmen** - Rick Peacock-Edwards (Pascoe, 1961)
- **Committee Member** - Dave Hudson Bennett (Farfield, 1997)
- **Committee Member for Scotland** - Nicholas Llewellyn Palmer (Founders, 2016)

The Committee remain at the service of the School, the Club and our Branch Members. They are all returning members and give of their time freely for which I am profoundly grateful.

Role profiles and biographies of Committee Members are in Annex C.

6. In Closing

On a personal note, I would like to, with great sincerity, thank you our magnificent Branch Members for your sincere interest, generous words, kind hearts and unwavering support for the Michaelhouse community in the UK.

I have - and continue to believe - that the Michaelhouse community has a depth of meaning, love and fortitude that will last the ages. There remains so much untapped potential for the Michaelhouse community in the United Kingdom and I look forward to realising it. So please be in touch with thoughts, feedback or just to have a drink.

Hearing from and spending time with fellow OMs does never not make my day!

All my hopes for 2020.



UNITED KINGDOM
BRANCH

Very sincerely,

Sean Lumley
Chairman

Annexes:

- a. 2020 Calendar
- b. Report on Branch's Financial Affairs (as at 31 Oct 2020)
- c. Committee Role Profiles & Biographies 2020

Copied to:

- Chairman of the Board of Governors
- Rector
- UK Trust Chairman
- Old Boys' Club President
- Old Boys' Club Secretary
- UK Branch Committee
- Chairman UK Branch of the Old Hiltonian Club
- Chairman UK Branch of the Old Diocesan Club



UNITED KINGDOM
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Annex A - UK Branch Calendar – 2020

last updated 11th January 2020

● January

Monday 13th January - Publish Chairman's New Year's Letter

Monday 20th January - Publish Annual Levy Letter

● February

● March

EVENT: Thursday 19th March – Hilton, Michaelhouse & Bishops Evening Drinks - London

● April

Saturday 18th April - Old Boys' Day – Balgowan

● May

EVENT: Friday 15th May - Summer Luncheon (All OMs welcome!) - London

● June

EVENT: (date tbc) Hilton vs Michaelhouse vs Bishops Golf Day – Silvermere (tbc)

● July

● August

3rd August - Publish Secretary's Summer Letter

● September

● October

● November

EVENT: Friday 6 November: Dinner and/or Drinks Evening – Edinburgh (New Club)

EVENT: Thursday 12th November: Winter Luncheon (All OMs welcome!) - London

EVENT: Friday 13th November: AEM and AGM - London

Submission of Annual Branch Report for The Chronicle

● December



UNITED KINGDOM
BRANCH

Annex B: Report on Branch's Financial Affairs

(as at 31 Oct 2019)

Prepared by Ryan Maree (Branch Treasurer)

2019 (as at 31 Oct 2019)

Income

Levies received £973 (c. 10% of Members)

Expenditure

Committee meeting and travel £90
Events costs £110
Bank/PayPal Charges £256

Year-end cash balance: £2,815

2018 (as at 31 Oct 2018)

Income

Levies received £800 (c. 9% of Members)

Expenditure

Committee meeting and travel £0
Events costs £132
Bank / PayPal Charges £146

Year-end cash balance: £2,024

2017 (as at 31 Oct 2017)

Income

Levies received £1,240 (c. 13% of Members)

Expenditure

Committee meeting and travel £80
Events costs £400
Bank / PayPal Charges £238

Year-end cash balance: £1,502



UNITED KINGDOM
BRANCH

Annex C: Committee Role Profiles & Biographies 2020

(as at 18 Nov 2019)

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 2020.

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 manage 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 and Visiting 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.



UNITED KINGDOM
BRANCH

UK Branch Committee Biographies – 2020

Chairman - Sean Lumley (Baines, 1994)



Sean has been the Chairman of the UK Branch Committee since November 2014 and has lived in the UK since 1998. After Michaelhouse, he went on to study a Bachelor of Arts at Rhodes University. He then attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and served as an Officer in the British Army (Royal Signals) from 1999-2006. After leaving the Army, he worked in Kuwait and London for global security companies before starting his own counter threat business (*Torchlight*) in 2011. He now sits as a Non-Executive on the *Torchlight* Board and is the Chief Operating Officer of *CybSafe* - a Cyber Security Software as a Service business based in Canary Wharf. He lives in Cotswolds in South West England, is married to Julie & has two boys, George (11) & Edmund (7). As well as being Chairman of the UK Branch, Sean is also a member of the Central Committee of the Old Boys' Club and a Trustee of the Michaelhouse UK Trust.

Secretary - Rory McKenna (West, 2002)



Rory been a member of the Secretary of the UK Branch Committee since 2010. After completing Sixth Form at Michaelhouse, Rory attended Rhodes University to study Economics. Embarking on his career in finance during the midst of the Financial Crisis, he joined *Dresdner Kleinwort* investment Bank, moving to an Asset Manager, *M&G*, in 2010. He currently works as a Risk Analyst within the organisation. Rory lives in South West London.

Treasurer - Ryan Maree (West, 2002)



Ryan has been the Treasurer of the UK Branch since 2015. After Michaelhouse, he studied BComm Accounting at the University of the Witwatersrand and UNISA. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant and Chartered Financial Analyst and has worked for a number of financial institutions in Johannesburg and London including *FirstRand*, *HSBC* and *Barclays*. He is based in London and currently works for *Royal Bank of Canada* in finance. He has recently completed his MBA at Cass Business School. Ryan has lived in Putney for the last eight years. Ryan also works with the Michaelhouse UK Trust.

Elder Statesmen – Rick Peacock-Edwards CBE, AFC (Pascoe, 1961)



Rick has been a member of the UK Branch Committee for many years. He attended the University of the Witwatersrand, after matriculating from Michaelhouse. He then joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a fighter pilot and was a Commander in the first Gulf War. A career Air Force Officer, he held various positions within the RAF, including introducing the Tornado Fighter into service and culminating as Director of the RAF Eurofighter programme at the MoD. Rick is currently the Chief Operating Officer of *inCommand*, a leadership development consultancy. He also holds the positions of Chairman of the Duxford Imperial War Museum Flying Control and Flight Safety Committees as well as sitting on various Air Show Flying Control Committees. He lives in Berkshire with his wife Tina.

Committee Member - Dave Hudson Bennett (Farfield, 1997)



Dave returns as a Committee Member for 2020 after joining at the end of 2018. After finishing at Michaelhouse in 1997, Dave went on to study at Varsity College in Pietermaritzburg before moving to Johannesburg to study Hotel Management. He then spent a couple of years travelling and working in the US, Israel and London. In 2009, he moved to the UK with his wife Aoife and currently works for *Deloitte* in London heading up technology hiring within Consulting. Dave, his wife and two children - Orlaith (7) and Eoghan (5) - live in South Croydon.

Member for Scotland - Nicholas Llewellyn Palmer (Founders, 2016)



Having joined in 2018 as a Visiting Member, Nick now becomes a full member of the UK Branch. He has presided over two successful OM events in Scotland, the most recent being at the New Club in Edinburgh, November 2018. Nick matriculated in 2016 and is a third generation Michaelhouse Old Boy and the grandson of Old Boy Basil Hersov. He is British by Birth and moved back to the UK in 2017 to read finance with business at the University of Edinburgh. He currently plays rugby for the university.