President's Report

It is indeed a privilege to be President of the OKGA; a group of men who are dedicated to their old school, a group of men who in their own lives are extraordinarily busy but find the time to be involved with their alma mater and others in their group(s), a group of friends who find time for other people, organisations and causes, a group who are prepared to 'roll up their sleeves' for the benefit of others.

The privilege is particularly conspicuous at the present time with so much activity in all the areas which combine to form the rich fabric of the OKGA. The Strategic Planning process rolls towards a launch in early July; there has been a great deal of thought and detailed consideration of where the OKGA has come from and where we should be going.

The Past

The Annual General Meeting of 2010 took place on Monday 1 March. A copy of my full report is on the OKGA website (www.knox.nsw.edu.au/alumni/agm). It records a year full of activities and events with some fabulous successes but perhaps it doesn’t adequately capture the amount of work which has and continues to be done and the immense goodwill generated by members of the OKGA.

The OKGA history is fascinating and we are incredibly fortunate to have so many of the older members of the group still around and keen to be involved. The Senior Knoxonians continue to be a massive source of support and as you will read in other parts of this Thistle there is already work being started for the School’s Centenary in 2024. Tony Osman is working on the records of the OKGA, which he feels are only 70% complete. While the records of 100 years of the OKGA still have 20 years to play out before our OKGA Centenary in 2029, we have the goal that the records will be in pristine shape.

The service which has been and continues to be given by those educated at Knox Grammar School, across all areas of Australian life, both locally and worldwide, is massive and it is indeed awe inspiring!

Some work which has been started looking at what have been dubbed ‘Notable Knoxonians’ has already identified over 300 men who have travelled the extra yards (metres) in the service of others.

As you will read in a separate report, Lodge Knox is moving to a new stage of its history by combining with two other school Lodges; a significant step but one that has been carefully considered and skilfully consummated.

The Present

It is an exciting time with record numbers of players with both Football (soccer) and Rugby fielding seven teams in each of their competitions. This follows a Cricket season with two teams and many top performances.

There is a strong bond between the OKGA and the School. The OKGA is dedicated to serving the needs of the School in ways which have been developed over 80 years of close cooperation, we are now seeking means to enhance and expand OKGA support.

The Future

Prospect = Excitement but there will be much hard work. The Strategic Plan will include a number of revitalizing and innovative developments which we are confident will enhance the already carefully developed activities which are in place. One area being closely investigated is that linked with Information Technology and the possibilities of an enhanced Communications Policy (one of our Senior members lamented ‘pigeons have been more than adequate up until now’). However, social networking will provide stimulating, enlivening and challenging prospects by embracing today’s communication technology to more regularly communicate with all generational age groups.

Mr Michael Kelynack OKG 85
President
OLD KNOX GRAMMARIANS

OKGA Communications – A New Combination on Trial

In order to adequately record the rapidly expanding number and variety of achievements by OKGA members and to communicate with the increasing variation of needs and interests of OKGA members, from pre World War II to Generation Z and beyond (Class of 2009), it has become necessary to go beyond the five pages allocated to the OKGA in The Thistle.

The OKGA has decided to repeat the OKGA contents of The Thistle on the OKGA website with additional information. This move accords with some of the early findings in the recent survey of OKGA members and will be used in preparing an OKGA Communications Policy as part of the current Strategic Planning Processes.

Please see the Knox website, OKGA page then Thistle News, for the following articles:
- Sports Reports, including OKCC 60th Anniversary Match and Rugby Teams at the World Masters Games
- News of OKGA Members, including Notable Knoxonians, marriages, births, baptisms and deaths
- The Senior Knoxonians were addressed by Emeritus Professor Bruce Mansfield at their March gathering. Professor Mansfield’s address ‘Clementis’ Hat’ has been prepared as a podcast and can be accessed on the OKGA website.

OKGA Reunion Dinners 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS OF</th>
<th>REUNION</th>
<th>DATE AND VENUE</th>
<th>CONTACT/ORGANISERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>50 Years</td>
<td>Saturday 31 July, KG1</td>
<td>Jack Shute – 9440 8721, 0414 785 839, <a href="mailto:bob_shute@aapt.net.au">bob_shute@aapt.net.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rob Gray – 9498 3173, <a href="mailto:robandlgray@bigpond.com">robandlgray@bigpond.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John Turnbull – (03) 5342 4246 <a href="mailto:turnbull.johna@bigpond.com.au">turnbull.johna@bigpond.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>45 Years</td>
<td>Saturday 31 July, Warrawee Bowling Club</td>
<td>Bill Dockrill – 8969 8100, <a href="mailto:bidl@daydockrill.com.au">bidl@daydockrill.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>40 Years</td>
<td>Saturday 24 July, Warrawee Bowling Club</td>
<td>Peter Plasto – 9903 0461, <a href="mailto:PPlasto@laingorourke.com.au">PPlasto@laingorourke.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stan Shaw – 9907 7735, <a href="mailto:stan@chateautanunda.com">stan@chateautanunda.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>35 Years</td>
<td>Saturday 18 September, 6.30pm Arthouse Hotel, 275 Pitt Street, Sydney</td>
<td>Andrew Abbott – 0438 648 545, <a href="mailto:blueskym@bigpond.net.au">blueskym@bigpond.net.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Stutchbury – 0404 807 705, <a href="mailto:reddustrich@westnet.com.au">reddustrich@westnet.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rob MacDougall – 0438 411 985, <a href="mailto:rmd@leadershipfactor.com.au">rmd@leadershipfactor.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>30 Years</td>
<td>Saturday 30 October, Greengate Hotel, Killara</td>
<td>Ian Porter – 0438 672 732, <a href="mailto:ian@theporters.com.au">ian@theporters.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>25 Years</td>
<td>Monday 3 September, Commodore Hotel, North Sydney</td>
<td>Greg Gaupset – 0413 016 003, <a href="mailto:ggaupset@optusnet.com.au">ggaupset@optusnet.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tim Wedlock – <a href="mailto:robynyoung@bigpond.com">robynyoung@bigpond.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>20 Years</td>
<td>August or September, Venue TBA</td>
<td>Christian Brook – 0411 525 322, <a href="mailto:christian@boatbooks-aust.com.au">christian@boatbooks-aust.com.au</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Anthony Herbert – <a href="mailto:aherbert@bgcpartners.com">aherbert@bgcpartners.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>15 Years</td>
<td>Friday 12 November, Commodore Hotel, North Sydney</td>
<td>Bryn Robertson – 0409 566 037, <a href="mailto:brobertson@zilziewines.com">brobertson@zilziewines.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10 Years</td>
<td>September or October, Venue TBA</td>
<td>Sven Jones – 9282 1953, <a href="mailto:svenjones2000@gmail.com">svenjones2000@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Wells – <a href="mailto:peter.wells@afr.com.au">peter.wells@afr.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5 Years</td>
<td>Saturday 8 October, Wolloomooloo Bay Hotel</td>
<td>Ed Bangs – 0421 540 623, <a href="mailto:edbangs25@hotmail.com">edbangs25@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ed Martin – 0421 258 508, <a href="mailto:edwardmartin100@hotmail.com">edwardmartin100@hotmail.com</a></td>
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</table>
On 18 March 2010, the immediate past President of the OKGA, Ian MacPherson OKG 55 and Hamish McEwen OKG 08 presented fifty-five Most Improved Awards for summer sports and co-curricular activities. These awards were initiated in the early nineties, by Po Mar OKG 65, a former Treasurer of the OKGA, to recognise students who made a sustained and continual effort to improve in his chosen sport or activity; the trier. Speaking before the presentations, Ian MacPherson said, ‘The Old Knox Grammarians Association Committee, have for many years now, regarded these awards, and indeed this assembly, as a most important part of our relationship with the School.

Yesterday, many of you would have noticed a large number of older gentlemen walking through the School. They were attending a luncheon for Senior Knoxonians, the youngest fellows present left the School 50 years ago. It was very interesting to meet again with some of my old school mates, as well as other Old Boys younger and others certainly much older. The School has undergone many changes over the years, particularly in terms of the buildings, however, while students at school we were not all that much different to you.

A number of those present were high achievers at School and you knew that they would do well in their studies at university, or in their chosen sport and beyond. But it is always interesting to talk with others who did not play in the top teams or who did not do all that well in the class room, but who have gone on to achieve excellent positions in their chosen careers. The OKG sports clubs, while having a number of players who were in the top teams at school, are held together by young men who probably played most of their games in B and C teams.

Not everyone achieves in their early years, some take a little longer to get there, but by doing your best and not giving up trying, you will in the long run, be rewarded.

Some of you older fellows may remember me telling the story at one of these assemblies three or four years ago, of a young fellow dropped from the 13B rugby team to the 13Cs, who some years later played in our 1st XV and later went on to play for Australia. There was also a very good swimmer, who for most of his time at school was the runner-up in all his events, but who persisted with his training after leaving school and was later chosen to represent Australia at the Moscow Olympics. We can build upon foundations everywhere if they are well and truly laid.

As we were walking into the KG1, we were able to watch some of the events being replayed on the score board, of Knox swimmers competing last Thursday at the Associated Schools Swimming Carnival and I congratulate all members of the swimming team for a very good result.

John Butters who was Captain of the School and Captain of Athletics in 1945 encouraged all boys to get involved. While his comments at the time were primarily aimed at the involvement and training for athletics, it has the same relevance for all sports. He said, ‘Don’t think that because you will not win, you will not do anything worthwhile for the School. If you merely force the next fellow to strive harder, to run better times (or to swim better times), then by so doing you can share in his final victory. Remember, to try, and win, is to be a good sport. Both are worth your greatest endeavour.’

My sincere congratulations to all those teams and individuals, who have achieved excellent results in such a variety of activities, and in particular for each of these fellows we are recognising today who have made a significant improvement in their particular sport or activity.’
‘…and closed it is accordingly…’

The final words of every Lodge meeting had been slightly varied with the normal conclusion ‘until the first Wednesday of the ensuing month, emergencies excepted’, remaining unspoken. There followed silence and lament, interrupted by singing!

The members retired in the usual single file of seniority, but this time they all sang ‘Abide with me’ as they departed, and each shook the hand of an obviously saddened Outer Guard.

The procession continued, leaving the Lodge Treasurer and Director of Music, Very Worshipful Brother Peter Loxton, PDGDC (OKG 64), Organist, Worshipful Brother Roger Denne (OKG 52), the Founding Worshipful Master; Very Worshipful Brother Ron Stewart PDGDC (OKG 45) and the Final Worshipful Master, Very Worshipful Brother Chis Stirling (OKG 49).

They sang the final verse:

‘Hold thou thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
Heaven’s morning breaks, and earth’s vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.’

The South

By comparison the South was very obviously a celebration, festivity and expectation were the mood, celebration of a significant part of OKGA History; celebration of 53 years of hard work, common purpose, mateship and tradition. There is so much more in the future, this wasn’t a finish but a transition to something new, not the same certainly but something more viable in current times, the celebration of a ‘Rebirth’.

The Final Worshipful Master (Chis Stirling) called it a ‘Rebirth’, all were excited about the prospects of amalgamating with The Old Sydneians’ Lodge, which Lodge Knox and Lodge The Kings School are amalgamating with to form the Schools’ Lodge. A number of brethren from Lodge Falconian and Lodge Sydney High School had previously joined Sydneians when their Lodges handed in their Charters and therefore in a sense, they already had the nucleus of a Schools’ Lodge.

Speeches and Toasts followed, all with mixed sentiments. The response to the Toast to the Visitors was the pièce de résistance. Given by a member of Lodge Trinity, Knox Old Boy and a former Knox teacher, John Meikle OKG 50, this was the perfect finale.
The OKGA Honour Bob Thomas

The plaudits were many, highly complimentary and intensely genuine as most of those present spoke in honour of a highly respected Headmaster, exceptional educator and teacher, sportsman, a brilliant coach of young men, mentor, leader, colleague and great friend, always sympathetic to those around, especially those needing support or a little extra encouragement; in short a very special friend.

Bob's comment about the OKGA Dinner is his Honour, transmitted some time later was, 'a sensational night and greatly appreciated. It really ticked the last and very necessary box for me to thank those men who had made such an important impact on my life'.

Bob will be greatly missed but will be welcome at any OKGA functions he wishes to attend, especially the Reunion Dinners where it is certain he will be a popular guest.

The group of around 40 men, comprised of the OKGA Committee, most of whom had separate links with Bob in some way, together with a representative selection of Old Boys who were significant and important to Bob. There were few apologies to the proposed guest list, only those who were going to be overseas, interstate or with a long-standing commitment and each of those penned a note to Bob which were later incorporated into a Special Book. The book was also circulated for those present to add their own private farewells before it was presented to Bob at the end of the night. They came from Melbourne, the north coast and central west of NSW and all over Sydney to be present and honour Bob.

Dr Paterson recalled his first meeting with Bob following a glowing recommendation from Tony Gifford. Others mentioned his presence around the School and adjacent sporting fields during competitions, on hand to encourage boys and talk with parents and always at the pedestrian crossing on the way home! The broad thrust of the comments was that Knox had been extremely fortunate to have had Bob as part of its team. The particular ‘brand of life and living’ Bob espoused had continued the high standards of a long line of Knox Grammar Preparatory School Headmasters, yet Bob was unique in his place in establishing what many, including successive Chairmen of the Knox School Council, concluded; Knox Prep was ‘The best Preparatory School in the World’ under Bob’s leadership.

Bob’s reply to a toast in his honour was passionate yet very understated. It was his stories of students and their accomplishments or reactions which most enthralled the guests and best illustrated the nature and depths of this highly regarded friend and colleague. Scotty Ellsworth was mentioned and the exclusive, irreplaceable and exceptional place Scotty had in and on the lives of the Knox Prep Community was encouraged and strongly supported by Bob.

The story of Bob’s class assisting the St Lucy’s School for the Blind at a Sports Carnival exemplified the special nature of Bob’s influence. On return to their classroom the boys were invited to write an essay on their visit to St Lucy’s. One boy completed the task in an incredibly short time and sat back, arms folded in total satisfaction! Mr Thomas asked ‘Have you finished?’—‘Yes Sir!’ was the very polite reply. Bob suggested that ‘Perhaps you may like to share your thoughts with me and the class?’ The boy read his short sentence which said so much ‘Today has been the best day of my life’. What a reaction but, what a teacher to have been so inspirational and drawn so much depth from a student.