



Old Leicestrian Newsletter



John Higginbotham 28.2.33 – 16.1.07

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Autumn

2007

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From The Editor

PETER HANDFORD

My first OL's Newsletter comes after a year when, like Janus, we old timers have been obliged to look in two directions at once, both to the past and the future.

It was with great sadness in January, that we learned of the death of John Higginbotham. His vision and personality, as Founder Headmaster, had an enormous influence on the character of the School, the benefits of which we still feel and enjoy today. The School Choir sang at the Requiem Mass in St Mary de Castro, and after the Service, the mourners attended a Reception in Great Hall.

A sign of a past era left us, at the same time as we are very much looking forward to the future and the exciting prospect of moving in to a brand new School in Great Glen. The move is to be marked by a special OLs' event in June, details of which may be found later in this Newsletter.

I would like to mention Andrew Harrop here. The pressure and workload of Examinations' Officer meant that he no longer has sufficient time to continue being School Liaison Officer for the OLs. I am happy to take on his mantle, and in doing so, would like to thank him for the work he has done to foster and promote the association. Thanks are also due to Katie England. Her contribution to the running of the OLs is probably bigger than anyone else's, not least in keeping records and contact details up to date.

Whilst the move represents a great change and step forward in our history, we really hope this will not affect the relationship between the School and its former pupils. You are always welcome to come back, and we look forward to your support at the events which will continue to run.

Forthcoming Events

OLs' Carol Service

The Annual Old Leicestrians' Carol Service will take place as usual this year. It will be held in the Cathedral, at 7.30pm on Tuesday 18th December. Following the Service, we will adjourn to the Great Hall for the (brief) AGM and then a Reception with Mince Pies and refreshments.

All OLs and their partners/families are most warmly invited to this. Over recent years, the event has really been gathering momentum, and the attendance last year was better than ever. Most pleasingly, there was a very wide spread of ages, including former students who left more than 15 years ago. This will be the last Christmas Reception in Great Hall, so don't miss the

opportunity!! Further details will be posted in due course, so please check your details are correct on Old Leicestrians online, or email changes to oldleicestrians@leicestergrammar.org.uk.

Farewell to Peacock Lane

Prior to the move to the new site, all OLs are invited to come and say farewell to the old school. On Saturday 21st June 2008, the School will be open to tour around from 2 – 4pm. Following this, there will be Cricket and Rounders Matches at the Greyfriars Ground (Aylestone Road), starting at 5pm. There will also be a Barbecue/Hogroast and the bar will be open. We are hoping this event will attract a large number of people, particularly those who haven't perhaps been back to visit since they left.

Headmaster's Letter

C P M KING

It is difficult for me to imagine there is a single OL who is not now aware of the development of a new, purpose built, Leicester Grammar School at our site near Great Glen. You may well have visited our web site and viewed the pictures posted there under the 'Relocation' heading. If you have not, I would urge you to do so, in order to gain a better understanding of the magnificent new facilities future pupils will enjoy. I am aware that there is many an OL who thinks the relocation will mean things will not be the same as they were and that the School will change. I would contend that evolution and change has always been integral to the development of this School. There are some vital constants, however, which are far more important than the buildings, be they Victorian in age or brand new. The ethos of the School will

not change, the stability of the teaching staff will not change and the welcome you as an OL will receive at the new School will be as warm as I believe it is now.

On 21st June 2008 OLs will be able to take a 'nostalgia tour' of the current buildings before they fall into new ownership. You are always welcome as an individual to visit us for 'one last look' but I hope all OLs will join me in looking forward to what is just the next stage in the development of Leicester Grammar School.



Old Leicestrians' Archive

Due to the move to the new site there is much clearing and sorting of papers relating to the school's history. As such, the OL cupboard in the basement is undergoing a transformation with the help of Richard Longson, who could be considered to be the fount of all LGS knowledge! Many different things from photos, to House Music programmes to certificates are being gathered together to hopefully give a comprehensive picture of the school for future generations to come. If anyone has anything tucked away at the

bottom of a drawer or back of a cupboard, whether it be school play photos/programmes, sports tour brochures, newspaper cuttings, old school ties etc then we would be delighted to add them to the growing archive collection. Anything that is named or dated is even better. If you think you have something that may be of interest please make contact with Katie England on 0116 222 0400 or englandk@leicestergrammar.org.uk to see about adding your bit of LGS history to our growing collection.

Old Leicestrian

To mark the move to the new School, the Leicestrian editor, Fred Clayton, would like to include material from OLs in the

2008 Edition. If you have stories or pictures of memorable events, please send them to him at magazine@leicestergrammar.org.uk.

In Memoriam John Higginbotham

b 28 February 1933 d 16 January 2007

THE VERY REVEREND ALAN WARREN
– Provost of Leicester Cathedral (1978 – 1992)

The remarkable success story of Leicester Grammar School, which started in September 1981 with fewer than 100 pupils and a dozen staff, and then, was accepted as a Headmaster's Conference school just 12 years later, owes much to the hard work, vision, and committed Christian faith of John Higginbotham, who was Head Master there from 1981 to 1989. *The Daily Telegraph* once went so far as to describe this story as an 'educational miracle'.

Born in 1933, John was the son of a Yorkshire mill-owner, and attended Bradford Grammar School – his Yorkshire stubbornness stayed with him – from where he became a Classics scholar and prize winning graduate at Cambridge. After two years of National Service, during which he became a Russian translator with the RAF, he joined the staff at Lancing College. He remained at Lancing for 24 years, and made notable contributions to the life of the school, not only in the Classics department, but also as a memorable (if somewhat unorthodox) housemaster.

In 1981, to the surprise of many of his friends and colleagues, John took the career risk of coming to the centre of Leicester as the first Head Master of the new Grammar School. His aim and motivation was clear from the first assembly: 'This is a school of high academic standards, built upon a firm Christian foundation, where boys and girls of all religions or none will be welcome, but where everyone here – pupils and staff – accepts this Christian ethos in their behaviour, in their moral standards, and in their care for each other.'

His constant and intense drive to raise money for able pupils unable to afford the fees was noted and praised by the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher.

John led from the front in all things, perhaps in a rather old fashioned way, and he quickly established an especially warm relationship of friendship and prayers

with Leicester Cathedral, next door. In the early months of the Grammar School, when the pupils were daily in the cathedral, and the cathedral-chapter members were regularly having lunch in the school hall, I remember feeling that I had to put the brakes on this and similar activities, and told him that I could not let him turn our cathedral into the Grammar School chapel, shades of Lancing Chapel!

He was a calm and scholarly person, precise and methodical in his ways; but underneath that donnish exterior there was a warm and caring heart and a lively sense of humour. He was a member of the General Synod from 1995, and his witty Synod reports to other church groups became famous throughout the Leicester diocese. It took some nerve, in welcoming the Duke of Edinburgh, to proclaim that his visit was a real 'Philip' to the School.

John's personal faith was essentially practical and down-to-earth: qualities such as reliability and good manners counted for much. But this aspect was allied with a love of reverence and of mystery in worship which made him truly a high churchman. Proud to be called Anglo-Catholic, he was hurt by the damage that he felt the ordination of women as priests had caused to the cause of reunion with the Roman Catholic Church, and was committed to such agents of renewal and reconciliation as Forward in Faith and Christians Aware. He expressed these concerns thoughtfully as a Synod member in his retirement.

In all of that, his wife Clarissa gave John her love and support in her own enthusiastic and special way. The historic church of St Mary de Castro, where he worshipped regularly, was filled to capacity for his requiem mass on 30th January. All those present with many besides, not least some hundreds of former pupils of Lancing College and Leicester [Grammar School], will have echoed St Paul's words to Philemon: 'We thank God for every remembrance of you.'

Margaret Float: LGS 1981-1992

R I LONGSON

It is with great sadness that we were informed that Margaret Float passed away suddenly on 25th May 2007. There was a service of remembrance in St Peter's Church, Oadby.

Margaret was a founder member of staff. She was appointed to teach geography, but in the first year of the school also taught Domestic Science. Her class room was in what is now Lab 1 at the foot of the Ellis Wing staircase in the St Nicholas Building before moving the department to its present location. She taught geography at all levels in the school and was renowned for getting good results from her pupils in her own inimitable style. As the school grew she decided to remain part-time and relinquish the leadership of the subject, but continued as a loyal member of the department, when Ron Berry was appointed Head of Geography. Part time is a bit of a misnomer, it never felt like that, such was her commitment and involvement in school life; always supporting the activities of staff and students alike. She devoted much time to helping establish and build up the Old Leicestrians; giving up countless evenings to attend committee meetings and to helping run a variety of events. This all continued long after she had retired from teaching. Over the many years that she served on the OL Committee, she held office, first as Treasurer and then as registrar. She was a founder Trustee of the Old Leicestrians.



Margaret Float receiving a presentation from Ron Berry in the Junior Library

She was an enthusiastic member of the Common Room and served as President following the retirement of Colin Duckworth, until she herself retired at the end of the Trinity Term in 1992. Prior to coming to Leicester Grammar School, she had taught at Collegiate School in Leicester and was a graduate of Keele University.

We have lost a good and true friend. We extend our sympathy to her husband Richard and to the rest of her family.

Class of '96 Reunion

On the afternoon of the 2007 Open Day (10th November), we were delighted to welcome back about 2 dozen former students, some with partners and families, who left in 1996. Richard Turnell had taken the initiative and organised the event. We began with a presentation from Chris King

about the new School at Great Glen. There then followed a trip down memory lane, revisiting some old haunts in the St Nicholas and St Martins' buildings. To complete the day, they adjourned to the OL owned (Aatin Anadkat) 'Maiyango' restaurant in the centre of Leicester.

OLs' Travel Grants

Operation Raleigh in Namibia

WILL THOMAS

In March 2006, I boarded a plane bound for Windhoek, Namibia, along with 60 other young people, many of whom I'd never met before. Thus began my incredible experience on Raleigh International expedition 06D which formed part of my GAP year plans, before going to Nottingham University to read History. My expedition of choice was to Namibia, in South West Africa. As each volunteer had to raise up to £2500 towards the expedition, I was very grateful, after writing to the OL committee, to be granted the generous sum of £300 to go towards my fundraising total. This helped in enabling me to part take in a truly great trip, for which I am still grateful for today.

After boarding the plane, I quickly met a group of outgoing and chatty likeminded people who made me feel quite at ease. Twelve and a half hours later we arrived at our destination; the Raleigh field base ten miles outside the country's capital, Windhoek. In a matter of minutes, I was introduced to my accommodation and facilities for the next three months; a small

two man tent, cold bucket showers and an open fire for a kitchen stove. Not being the most experienced camper, I had to adjust quickly to this new way of living before being sent out on my first phase of the expedition. Following two days of initiation and briefing, I was put into my first group of twelve before being sent out on the three week environmental phase of the expedition. We travelled nine hours North Eastward to the bush land bordering the Kalahari Desert, where we finished the construction of a vulture hide, (for the endangered Cape Griffin vulture) started in a previous expedition along with starting the construction of a new visitors centre. The work involved lots of bush clearing, digging and concrete laying in the hot sun, whilst being watched over by a family of baboons which lived on a nearby rock formation. The environmental phase wasn't always easy, although by the end the team had worked well together and enjoyed a collective sense of achievement in hopefully creating awareness about the endangered, yet magnificent Cape Griffin vulture.



Will Thomas enjoying village life in Namibia

Following the first phase, I returned to the field base before being mixed into a different group of people and heading out of phase 2; the endurance phase. This involved emptying half of our belongings at field base to lighten our load and then embarking on a 243km trek through the Namib Desert accompanied by a local armed ranger. Unlike the first environmental phase, my three weeks trekking exceeded all the expectations I had ever had of the expedition. 3am starts, 40 degree heat, Lions, Rhinos, red ant bites, mosquito bites, pain, aches, dehydration and mirages combined with some of the most spectacular and beautiful scenery I had ever seen, made it an unforgettable seventeen days. By the end of it, a third of our group had already been picked up by the supporting Raleigh International Land Rover due to illness and I had lost a stone in weight. However, without a doubt it was worth every second as when we reached the South Atlantic Ocean, everyone felt an even greater sense of accomplishment. At the end of the phase I enjoyed my first proper shower and shave in over six weeks along with a tender Gembok steak... absolute bliss!

Once back at field base for the penultimate time, I was debriefed from the trekking phase and put into a new group for my last phase- the community phase. Over the last six weeks other groups had been involved in the main project of the expedition- the building of a three classroom school building in the north of the country near the Angolan border. We were to put in the doors and windows (assisted by a local builder), plaster the building inside and out, and paint the entire building ready for the grand opening ceremony in the village

in three weeks time. It would hopefully make a difference to the lives of over a hundred children of primary school age in the village on Onakasino. When we arrived at the school site, the task at hand once again exceeded my expectations. Whilst working on the building we lived amongst the local community and their goats and donkeys. Whether, participating in traditional dancing with the elders or trying to understand their language, it was a really enriching experience. Being able to contribute to this totally different world was even more amazing. Inspired by our surroundings, the group worked well together and ensured that the last phase of my expedition was an absolute success. The school opened on time, to the satisfaction of the team and the community.

To show their gratification, the head man of the village even sacrificed an Ox in our presence!

It is always hard to contain so many experiences and individual events in a single newsletter article; however I hope I've been able to shed a little light on my experiences in 2006, experiences that would not have been possible without the support of my OL travel bursary. My Raleigh expedition was not by any stretch of the imagination easy but like most things in life you get out of it what you put in to it. In such a stimulating environment as Namibia, it was not hard to find great motivation. I would therefore always recommend taking a real break, getting out of the country and getting involved in such a worthwhile and productive project.

Thank you

Romania – Stay away if you dare.....!

FABIENNE ROSE

In 2001 Alex and Sandu Micu opened up a centre in Slatina, Romania called Casa Luminii. It allowed the disadvantaged and disabled children to be taken out of the orphanage and into a safe, friendly and educationally beneficial environment every morning. There are now 3 projects in Romania: the original Casa Luminii Centre; Government Family Houses;

Government Orphanage. You have to be 16 years old to come on the Casa Luminii and Government Family Homes projects, to come to the Orphanage you must be over 18 years old. I have done a trip on each of these projects but have become heavily involved with the Balfl Orphanage and I am now the project co-ordinator. I have spent 5 months of the past year in



Fabienne and Anna (8)

Romania and am about to go out for another year, all voluntarily.

There is something about going into Bals orphanage and spending time with the children that I just cannot explain to people. When I try, they can usually understand by the look in my eyes – unfortunately you don't get to see the chemistry! There are 111 children and young adults living at the orphanage, they all have different abilities and 10 of them have HIV. I went on the very first trip to Bals at Easter 2007 when there were only 5 of us and we had no idea what we were doing! We were very much out of our depth as nobody knew any of the children, so we were launched into this foreign, generally disgusting, environment with 111 children and off we went. We worked our way around, assessing the children and seeing who needed us the most and then spreading ourselves as thinly as we possibly could in order to help as many as we could. This trip made us all go a little bit mad – however it was a turning point for all of us – I know at least 3 of us will always return to Bals!

Since that first trip there is a lot more planning that goes into the day to day running of the trip – everybody gets at least half an hour indoors to interact one-on-one with a child, which never happened at Easter. We also have a lot more toys available to us; we even tried our hand at painting t-shirts over the summer, messy! Slowly my Romanian is improving which means I can understand the children more and they can understand me also (sometimes!) – This has highlighted the children who respond to verbal communication and allows us to

work more specifically with them. It is hard to comprehend that these children live the lives that they do. We leave at the end of the day and we are relieved to be getting out of the environment of the orphanage (not away from the children) but they have to endure it day in, day out without any view of what 'normal' family life should be like.

At Casa Luminii the change in the children since the centre opened in 2001 is massive. Sometimes they change for the worst and it'll last for a few weeks and sometimes they improve in leaps and bounds and surprise us all. The sense of satisfaction working with the children is something I cannot explain to anybody who hasn't been on one of these trips and experienced what the children can give. They have had harder lives than many of us will ever be able to imagine in a lifetime and that is why it is so important that we go out and help them. The charity also helps the carers, in order to improve their levels of care to the children, as we understand that the most long-term way of improving the children's lives is to educate their carers.

You can all be a part of this and make a difference in these children's lives. All the volunteers come to the end of the trip and can't believe that they have managed to get so attached to so many children and young adults. We are always looking for volunteers to come out and work with our children. We also have many specialists who visit to try and help, Doctors, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists to name but a few. Whether you are a student or a specialist please go to www.cast-uk.com and find out more about the charity and the ways that you can help us continue our work in Romania.

Please visit the Facebook group OFP Volunteers for more information on an upcoming Open Day on November 17th in Manchester.

My email address is ffabrose@aol.com for any queries or further information regarding the Balfl Orphanage Project.

Fabienne Rose

Balfl Orphanage Team Leader

Balfl Orphanage Project Co-ordinator

– CAST Committee

Genetics in Montreal

SAM DUFFIELD

Two months holiday as part of my medical degree.....awesome! These were my first thoughts when I was told I had the opportunity to go anywhere in the world, and do anything, medical, I wanted for my elective. My first instinct was to find a hospital on a beach and get a tan. This could be chance to go and do something I'm interested in and get experience in something we don't really cover as part of our normal degree programme. I started looking around and came up with genetics. It is something that has interested me since school : fuelled by Dr Fearon being a dyed in the wool Geneticist and teaching me lots during A-level Biology! I managed to get in contact with Human Genome Project in Canada, in particular the Pharmacogenomics group in Montreal. Pharmacogenomics is the study of how genetic variations influence a patient's reaction to their medication (be it toxic side effects, or not having any effect at all). Plans finally achieved fruition, and here I am in Montreal.

My project is looking into a class of anti-depressants known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Prozac is one example of these class of drugs. They are used to treat several disorders, such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, anxiety and most often depression, yet are only

effective in around 60% of cases. I have spent much of my time compiling a list of genes and mutations involved in the response to, and side effects of SSRIs. This is the first step in designing a 'panel', the main tool used in clinical practice. The panel is used when screening a patient's DNA for multiple genetic mutations. The ultimate goal of the project is to produce a panel of genetic variations which can be used in clinical practice to evaluate the most suitable treatment for individual patients. This concept of "Personalised Medicine" is the driving force behind pharmacogenomics as a speciality, and it has applications in all walks of medicine.

It is an incredible opportunity to study and work with the pharmacogenomics group. This is a cutting edge research facility, with ground breaking research interests working through Genome Quebec to further the research and understanding of the Human Genome Project.

I would like to thank the OLs for their very generous bursary, which has enabled me to come to Canada and take advantage of this opportunity. I am sure the knowledge and insights gained during my elective will help me to become a better doctor in the future and for that I am extremely grateful.

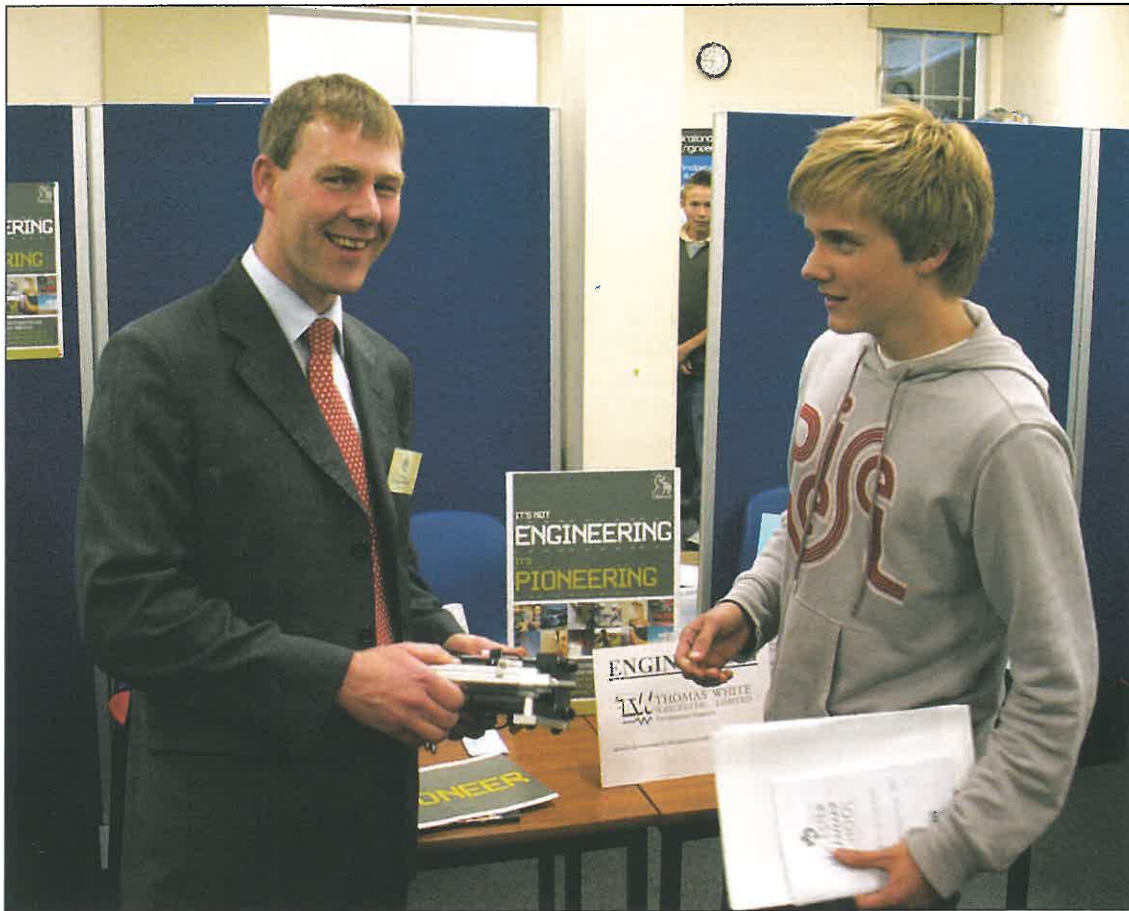
LGS Careers Convention

KATIE ENGLAND

This year saw the bi-annual Careers Convention take place on Tuesday 25th September. Open to Years 9 – 13, the Convention forms an integral part of the Work Related Learning programme here at school. Over 60 companies, institutions and universities joined us for the evening providing information and ideas for all who attended. Many thanks to all OL's who supported the event and passed on valuable information about gap years and careers. We are very grateful for their input to the event, and the time and care that they showed over the course of the

evening in helping students with their career development. There was a buzz in the school the next day with students discussing what they had seen and those who had not attended wishing that they had.

If anyone would be interested in being involved with this event in two years time, either for your own company or on behalf of your employer, please feel free to get in contact with Richard Longson or me and we'd be happy to make sure you are put on the convention mailing list.



Ed White tells Sam Harvey about careers in engineering

Vital Organ

DAVID WHITTLE

Once the move to the new school was confirmed the OL's were asked if they would like to make a contribution to some part of the new build. At our current site we have Bishops court, designed by Jenny Gilbert [OL '98] and dedicated on Foundation Day 1999, funded from donations by OL's in memory of Bishop John Mort. Unfortunately we cannot take this with us. After much thought it was agreed that the OL's would sponsor and fund the renovation and removal of the organ that stands in Great Hall to the new site.

The organ was originally installed in June 1926 in memory of James Wallace Muston, Headmaster of Alderman Newton's from 1891 to 1923. It was built by the Leicester company S. Taylor and Sons Ltd., whose

greatest instrument is the organ in the De Montfort Hall. When Alderman Newton's moved to Glenfield, the organ went as well. Some years ago, we were contacted by former pupils of Alderman Newton's who, concerned that the instrument was being misused and falling into ruin, asked if LGS was interested in having the organ back in its old location. We were enthusiastic, and the well-known organ builders Peter Collins Ltd moved the organ and gave it an overhaul. One new stop was added, one revoiced, and a new pedal board was constructed. The organ could not be reinstalled in Great Hall until dry rot, found when making sure that the hall floor could still take the weight of the organ, was treated. The organ was dedicated following the Foundation Service in 1993.

The Taylor company ceased organ building many years ago, and so this instrument is both a connection with Leicester's past and with the first site of the school and will provide a much-used and very visible symbol of the Old Leicestrians' continuing involvement with the School.

The specification of the organ is:

Swell

Principal 4'

Trumpet 8'

Open Diapason 8'

Viol 8'

Lieblich Bourdon 16'

Great

Fifteenth 2' *

Principal 4' **

Claribel 8'

Open Diapason 8'

Pedal

Bourdon 16'

Soft Bass 16'

Couplers

• Swell to Great

Swell Octave to Great

Swell to Pedal

Great to Pedal

Balanced Swell box.

* New stop

** Revoiced stop (originally Dulciana 8')



The Taylor Organ in Great Hall



Old Leicestrians Online

The **Old Leicestrians Online** database was launched in October 2003 for all Old Leicestrians to communicate with each other and keep in touch with LGS after they leave the school. Over the following weeks it is undergoing a re-vamp with a new look and feel, more news items, photos and much more.

Over 600 Old Leicestrians have registered with us now, but if you haven't joined we would like you to register too so that we can keep in touch with you wherever you are in the world.

Old Leicestrians Online allows you to:

- ***Build your own 'Who's Who'***
- ***Receive your unique webmail address***
- ***Read news about the school***
- ***Find out about planned events and reunions***

Join us by going to www.leicestergrammar.org.uk and head for the OL pages. Select '**Old Leicestrians Online**' and then '**Old Leicestrians Online – register now!**' Once you are registered you'll receive a username and password and then you are ready to go. It couldn't be simpler!

Remember you can contact us anytime at
oldleicestrians@leicestergrammar.org.uk
with your news, any ideas or just to say hello.