

# St Clare's Newsletter



No 5

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## *Changes at the top*

After 14 years at St Clare's, Principal Margaret Skarland retires at the end of this academic year. Margaret joined St Clare's as Vice-Principal in 1984 and became Principal a year later. Under her gentle, sensitive, but firm leadership, the College's reputation and standing have been steadily enhanced, particularly in the area of the International Baccalaureate. Margaret had extensive knowledge of the IB programme when she joined St Clare's, through her years as Head of English at Atlantic College. She served for the maximum period of six years on the IB School Heads Standing Committee, where her wise counsel was widely appreciated. Currently Margaret is chairman of the London International Schools Association.

Margaret's 13 years at the helm have seen considerable development and consolidation of the College, and she leaves us at a high point in our history. A generation of students and staff found her a warm and sympathetic counsellor and problem-solver. Margaret's interests will keep her more than fully occupied, and we know that she will enjoy having more time for theatre, reading, travelling, and may even turn her hand to penning the detective story she has been plotting for some time. We extend our grateful thanks for her service to St Clare's and warmest best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

### Inside . . .

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*Margaret Skarland and Boyd Roberts*

## IB Comes of Age

On May 23rd we will be celebrating 21 years of teaching the International Baccalaureate at St Clare's. As school number 41 of IB's 800 schools, we are a long-lived and substantial success, going from one of the pioneers to one of the established experts.

We have invited all IB alumni for a full day of events. As this is Open Day, they will have a chance to see how the College has changed as well as to see their old friends. During the day there will be music and drama performances and an art exhibition, including recent work by alumni. The evening will be a social occasion for alumni to meet and reminisce.

# *Changes at the top* *continued*

Margaret's successor as Principal is Boyd Roberts, the current Vice-Principal. Boyd's association with St Clare's dates back to 1976 when he joined the College as a part-time Biology tutor. With the introduction of IB in 1977, he joined the full-time staff, overseeing installation of science facilities. He was appointed as the College's first IB Coordinator and Director of the IB and A-level programmes in 1979, and was subsequently Director of Studies for all the College's academic programmes. In 1985 he left St Clare's to become founding Head of Senior School of the Amman Baccalaureate School in Jordan, where, after successfully establishing the

IB, he became overall Principal of the school. He returned to St Clare's in 1991 as Senior Administrator, becoming Vice-Principal in 1995. Since his return to St Clare's, he has worked very closely with Margaret Skarland on development of physical facilities and of new academic programmes and activities.

Boyd will be supported in his new role by two new Vice-Principals, who also take up post next academic year. Sean Kenny becomes Vice-Principal for Student Affairs, overseeing all aspects of student life beyond the academic. Sean is currently teaching at Sibford School, near Banbury, where he directs activities and is

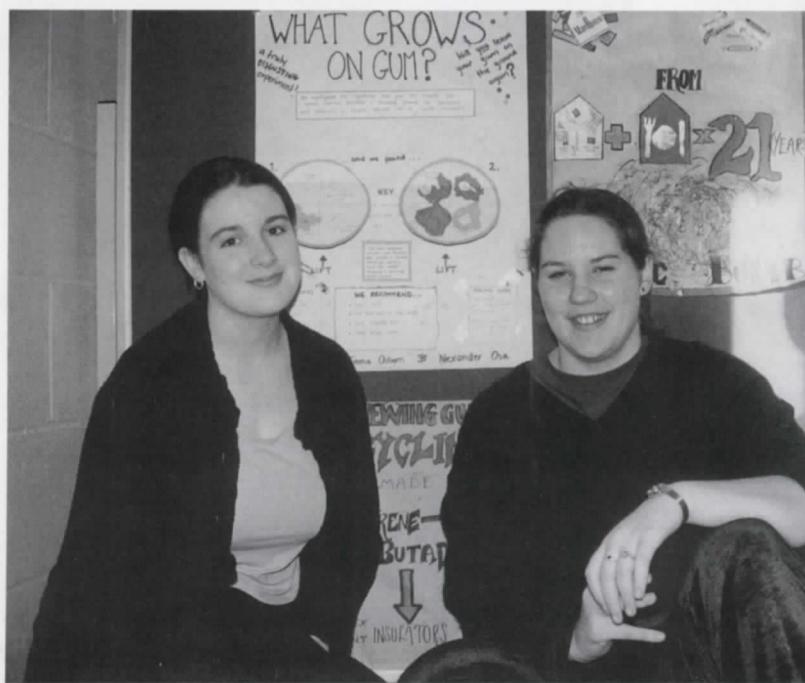
Head of English. A qualified counsellor, he brings varied and extensive experience to the post.

Keith Allen is the new academic Vice-Principal. Currently Keith is Head of the New International School of Thailand in Bangkok. His previous posts include the headship of St George's College North in Buenos Aires, and teaching posts at the United World College of South East Asia in Singapore and at Kingshurst City Technology College in Birmingham. Sean and Keith were selected from very strong and extensive fields of applicants for the posts and we look forward to welcoming them to St Clare's.

**The greening of St Clare's** was the theme of this year's IB science project. The task was to discover how best to promote environmentally sound principles and action at the college. Student-devised research

topics ranged from pollution caused by the dining hall and the minibuses, to issues around cigarettes and chewing gum. Intense groups of students armed with clipboards counted cigarette ends, analysed the food value of chewing gum and burned polystyrene cups. This was the vital data-collection part of the project.

Among the findings was the surprisingly large number of plastic spoons, bottles and cups used in the College dining hall. The information spurred us to reduce waste and promote recycling.



IB students Jessica Lamb and Emma Osborn

# Who wants a Global Village?

This was one of the questions keenly debated at this year's International Day. Over 300 staff and students from 42 countries came together to discuss aspects of globalisation, from cross cultural marriage and the power of multi-nationals to the arms trade. A programme of



*Brazilian Vinicius Lima exams a Turkish fiddle*  
outside speakers, videos and discussion in small groups ensured variety. Each group contained native and non-native English speakers; IB, Pre-IB and English Course students. "It was fun mixing with students from other courses. You get to know people that you've never spoken to before," said one Ugandan IB student.

For part of the day the group task was to debate a mock United Nations resolution on an issue such as population, international aid or global warming. With the help of an information pack and the guiding hand of a student leader, they had to thrash out the wording and debate their proposed resolution. Given the complexity of the issues and the short time for preparation, the final presentations at the plenary session were of a high standard. Students were able to put their subject specific knowledge and personal experience to good use.

Though some students found the serious issues heavy going and those with weak English were severely stretched, the student reaction was generally positive. "It was good to put aside normal classes for one day and focus on something wider," said a Colombian. "It made me feel that our generation has a lot to do in the future," said one 18 year old Belgian.

Going beyond the obvious messages of "be nice to people who are different" and "look after the planet", the day provoked some challenging discussion. Does living an international jet-setting lifestyle make people feel less sense of social responsibility? What, if anything, can be done about inequalities of income worldwide? Isn't it unfair that St Clare's students feel that they can criticise Britain freely, but have to be cautious in their negative remarks about other countries?

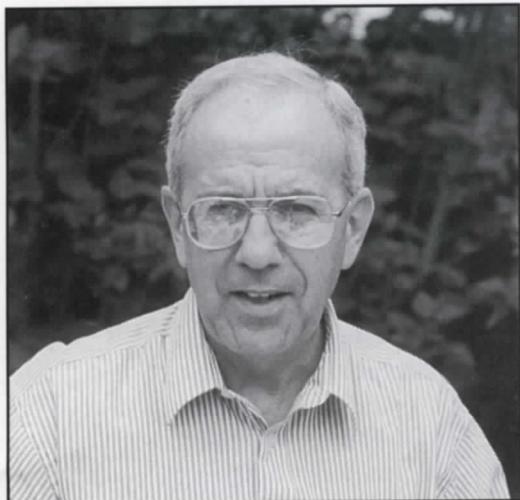
After such contentious debate, the evening programme offered a purely positive angle on internationalism. The kitchens produced a special meal of international food, which was followed by a concert. **Orbestra** (not a misprint), a multi-talented group of musicians with about five instruments apiece played music from around the world. They created magical effects by involving the audience in making rain forest noises and playing the simpler instruments.

## MORE SCHOLARSHIPS

**I**n February the IB programme welcomed the largest ever number of candidates for our Scholarship Day. Students and their parents flew in from Japan, India, Canada, France, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria. There were also the largest ever number of local applicants. During the day candidates sit several written papers and are interviewed by the Principal and a panel of staff. There were so many strong applicants this year that we are responding exceptionally by giving 19 awards. We are delighted to be able to enrol so many students of the highest calibre, thus raising the intellectual level of the College.

# Staff News

**Willie Dimech**, who had been at St Clare's for 23 years as head of the English course, warden and administrator, left us in August to become headmaster of St Edward's College in Malta. Willie



and his wife are originally from Malta. In fact Willie is returning to his old school and to the place of his first teaching post. By all accounts he is enjoying being the new broom at this very prestigious school.

**Chris Leftley**, librarian and warden since 1993, has moved to the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. USP has about 2,500 students on campus in Suva, and another 10,000 who are distance learners on the neighbouring islands. He is replaced by **Nga Ton**. Born in Vietnam, she came to Britain as a child and has a BA in English from Oxford University and a masters in librarianship from Sheffield University.



Chris Leftley with Nga Ton

**Julie Costello**, Alumni Assistant, wrote up several thousands of news items during her four years with us. She has left to concentrate on her career as a midwife and her new son. Niamh Moriarty, who is also Paul Saville's assistant, is the new Alumni Assistant.

**Caroline Crook** returned to St Clare's after a year in Eritrea where her husband was working as a hydrologist. She had a fascinating time learning about this new country and was particularly impressed by the people she met: their serious attitude to life, their charming manners and the way they made her feel welcome. Caroline did some voluntary work teaching English at a school for the blind, a link she hopes to continue by fund-raising now that she is back here.

**Rosa Wroth** was involved with an exciting project to transcribe an unfinished manuscript of an opera by Donizetti which received its première at a concert performance by the Royal Opera at the Festival Hall in London. Rosa and her husband Chris, who have been wardens at 133 since 1992 will be leaving at Easter for Rosa to spend more time completing her doctorate in music at Oxford University.

**Denise O'Kelly**, warden of 143, with a day job as an English don at Oxford University, has written the script for a film, *Married 2 Malcolm*, to be released in the autumn. It is a comedy about a bigamist, starring Mark Addy (of *The Full Monty*) and is said to be very funny.

**Mark Watts**, who replaced Alan Glanville as Head of Economics, became a father in February.



**Mark Stone**, teacher on the English course, had a baby daughter in June, 1997.

**Andrew Young** and his wife had their third child, a boy, in March.

## Ex staff

**Julia Everard** is working for a headhunter in Australia, which she finds a welcome change from a school. She enjoys the outdoor life, cycling, hockey, swimming and walking her dog.

**Kelvin and Anne Moon** are happy at the Moshi International School in Tanzania. They have adopted a second child, a baby boy, called Zak.

# Sporting success

Sport at St Clare's is thriving, despite our limited on-site facilities. The girls' football team has been reactivated and has challenged local teams with some success. The ever-growing mixed volleyball squad is looking strong with some impressive wins under its belt. The boys' football team has played matches far and wide. The mixed hockey team has had mixed success against strong teams from Rover Cars and Oxford Brookes University.

A recent visitor to St Clare's was American basketball star Eric Burks of the London Leopards. The former All-American from the University of Charlestown Southern agreed to

coach the boys' and girls' teams. The memories for the students will be treasured, particularly as Eric should be returning to the States at the end of the year to play NBA for the Phoenix Suns.

Congratulations go to the eight IB swimmers who made up two freestyle relay teams and managed to pick up two silver medals for their efforts in the Bazuka National Swimming Championships in Winchester.

Our teams were truly international with members from every continent in the world.  
**Jo Swannell and Dave Baldwin**  
**Student Activities and Sport - SAO**



*The successful swimming team*

## ALUMNA IN CONCERT

On May 30th there will be another chance to hear alumna Whitney Freeman in a violin concert at the Jacqueline Du Pré music room in Oxford. Whitney came to St Clare's from New York to do the second year of the IB course before going to Imperial College London to begin her degree in biochemistry. An outstanding violinist from an early age, Whitney impressed us all with her dedication to music while maintaining a high academic standard all round. While still a student at St Clare's last year, she gave a concert at the Holywell Music Room in which she played a Beethoven violin sonata and less well known romantic works by Chausson, Bloch and Franck. Her passionate virtuoso playing made a powerful impression on the audience, many of them from the College.

The Jacqueline Du Pré Hall is an even more prestigious venue: a recently built concert room in the grounds of St Hilda's which has near perfect acoustics. If any alumni would like to buy tickets, contact Philomena Solomon, Music Coordinator, St Clare's. The concert will include a Mozart and a Prokofiev violin sonata, Saint-Saens Introduction and Rondo caprice, Bartok Hungarian Dances and Gershwin preludes arranged for violin.



*Whitney Freeman, virtuoso violinist*

# Building and developing

Not able to contain all the initiatives we would like to take under the College umbrella, we established in 1997 a division of St Clare's called Educational Services, to run short courses, teacher training, examinations and off-site projects. Listed below right are some of the successful initiatives launched by Andrew Brown, who heads this division.



Andrew Brown during a teacher training session

**Which buildings should go** and which stay? What should existing buildings be used for? Where should new buildings go?

These are some of the questions that will be preoccupying us and our architects over the coming few months, as we work together to produce a master design for the central College site.

Just before Christmas a competition to select an architect to produce this design reached its conclusion. Rick Mather, whose work includes buildings for the University of East Anglia, Keble College, Oxford and the Zen restaurants in London and Hong Kong, has been appointed to oversee the formulation of an overall design for the College site. He will be collaborating with John Outram Associates, whose plans for a large multipurpose open space (a "can-do" hall) will be incorporated. John Outram has designed the Judge Institute of Management Studies in Cambridge, notable private houses, a stunning building for Rice University in Texas and a shopping mall currently under construction in The Hague.

The master design will take into account our projected needs for the future, and our sensitive position in a residential conservation area. It will involve considerable consultation with and input from students and staff. Only when the overall design is approved will we begin building. The design should be completed this year, and we hope the first stage of new building may be ready for the beginning of the new millennium.

## • Children's courses

For 10-16 year olds, this new 1997 English summer course proved very popular and will be repeated this year. We use a site in Headington which has its own sports fields and a swimming pool.

## • International Summer School

Two short courses offering intensive lessons in academic subjects for students who want to enrich their education. We hope to attract high school and A-level as well as IB students this summer.

## • Teacher training

Last year we had 60 Korean English teachers as well as many from elsewhere, coming to refresh their English and study some of the latest ideas in methodology. This year we offer training for the new DELTA EFL teachers' Diploma.

## • But vot is vector?

How do you teach a person Maths when they don't know much English? St Clare's IB teachers have plenty of experience of this difficulty and some of them have worked with English teachers to develop a course called Language through Learning.

The programme is aimed at teachers of subjects such as Biology, Maths and Geography who have classes of mixed ability in English: native and non-native. Launched in The Hague, so far we have run successful courses in Britain, Switzerland and Turkey and have had enquiries from as far afield as Krasnodar and Ghana.

# Where do you all go?

One of St Clare's strengths has always been its Careers and Higher Education counselling. We are well provided with a trained full-time member of staff, Chris Glover, and a part-timer, Jay Bosworth, who gives specialist advice on applying to American universities. They maintain an excellent and up-to-date library of university prospectuses, videos and computer databases. Alumni who remember seeing Chris and Jay in the converted garage will be impressed to see the warm and comfortable accommodation of the present office.

Higher education guidance is available to all students, though particularly exploited by students on the University Foundation and International Baccalaureate courses. On arrival the typical IB student is unsure about future career or further study, but may have a vague fantasy about becoming a brain surgeon, spy, actress or president. A year later, after hearing visiting speakers (including alumni) from universities, doing an aptitude test, having several individual consultations with Chris or Jay and going to a few university open days, they are much better informed about what courses are available, where they would like to study and what grades they will need to get in.

The vast majority of IB students (over 80%) go on to British universities where they find that the IB Diploma is highly valued as a pre-university qualification that prepares students particularly well for interdisciplinary and independent study. We continue to have good success in placing students in the most prestigious universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Warwick, LSE and Imperial College. In the past decade the number of British universities has increased from 45 to 180 so there is now a wider variety of courses available of different standards. The expansion of the European Union to take in Spain, Portugal, Austria, Sweden and Finland means that more of our students can take advantage of the low fees charged to EU citizens on an equivalent basis with British students. They are less likely to face obstacles on their return as educational qualifications are now more widely recognised between EU countries.

American universities do not seem to be as popular as they were, perhaps because fewer of our IB students come from the States at the moment. However, for some, the broader four-

year courses and luxurious campuses have a strong appeal. In the past 12 years we have sent students to MIT, Harvard, Yale, Princeton and other Ivy League colleges. A number of non-British students go back to university in their own country, particularly those from Holland, Japan and Poland. Others decide to delay their decision by taking a year off to travel or work. Some may be required to do military service. Art schools and foundation courses have always been popular with St Clare's students, but do not attract as many students as they did. Finally there are those who decide to start work straight away.

In the 20 years that Chris has been working at St Clare's she has noticed many changes. As she says, "One of the exciting things about the student body at St Clare's is that it is a microcosm of the changes going on in the wider world. The biggest change in the last ten years is the large number of students from Eastern Europe and the countries of the former USSR." The fashion has changed too in what people study. While in the 80s the most popular courses were in international relations and the arts, recent IB students are much more likely to go on to take business and professional degrees. Chris Glover explains, "Business, management and economics are often the choice of students from Eastern Europe and Russia where it is important to have a vocationally relevant degree." Reading the Alumni Notes it is apparent how many go on to do further degrees. The trend is clearly towards more ambitious career goals.

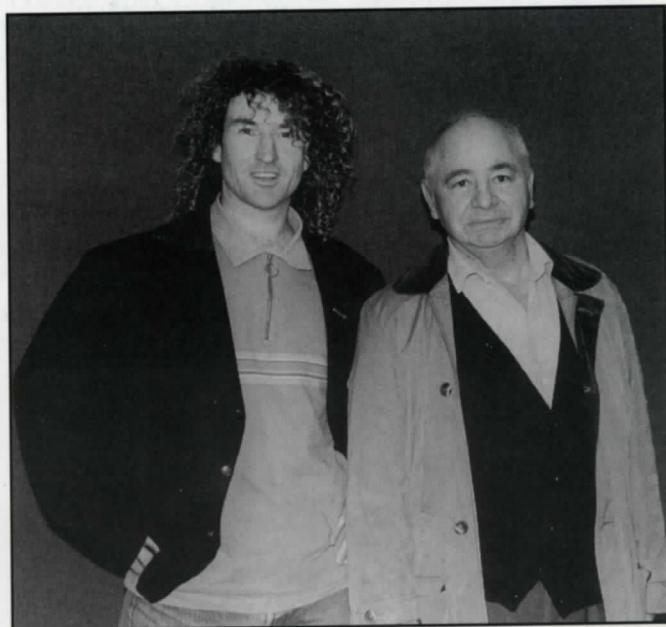


Chris Glover counselling a student

# *Oxford lectures: creator of Morse*

Colin Dexter, author of the Inspector Morse stories about an Oxford detective, addressed St Clare's students in March. His talk was part of the Oxford Lecture Series, organised by Conrad Keating designed to inform Liberal Arts and advanced English students about local issues. Instead of the familiar approach of slide-show and quaint university anecdote, the aim of the series was to involve students with actual concerns of Oxford people.

Former mayor, John Power, gave a stirring account of the rise and fall of the car works and the related labour movements. Joe Human, from Oxfam, the largest employer in Summertown, spoke about the organisation's 50 years of fighting poverty. Other speakers were a human rights lawyer, an architect and Conrad himself, a local historian.



Conrad Keating with Colin Dexter



The cast of *Five Kinds of Silence*, a play put on by Liberal Arts students studying British theatre. In this innovative adaption of Louise Stevenson's radio play each part was played by two actors, allowing the conflict between outer behaviour and inner emotion to become apparent. The play was produced and directed by Robert Osborn, whose daughter Mary, aged 8, appears on the left.

**A new teaching base for Social Studies and Theatre Arts** opened in February. History, Economics, Business and Organisation, Geography, Psychology and Philosophy teaching now take place at 2 Staverton Road, a smartly refurbished house just around the corner from other College buildings.

The centre includes five classrooms for Social Studies and a teaching/rehearsal room for Theatre Arts, taught on both IB and Liberal Arts programmes. On the second floor four students will live in considerable comfort in en suite single rooms—a useful addition to our expanding accommodation stock. Acquired on a long lease, the new teaching rooms at Staverton Road free up additional space elsewhere for computing, English language and Educational Services.

## **St Clare's Newsletter**

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