

## History of the Old Cholmeleians

In the early 1890s a number of the School's old boys, known as 'Old Cholmeleians' after the School's founder, Sir Roger Cholmeley, began to campaign for the founding of a society. Cholmeleians had dined together since 1859; however they felt that something more formal was required. In the spring of 1893 they announced the founding of a Club; Franklyn Lushington (Master 1885-1930) became its secretary. The first General Meeting of the Club took place in a classroom at the School on 16th December 1893, shortly after the conclusion of the annual football match between the School and the OCs. Seventy of ninety-seven members attended. Rudolf Chambers Lehmann (pupil 1865-74) was elected President and a committee of eighteen was appointed.

The Annual Dinner has taken place every year since the Society was formed apart from the War years and in 2020 when it was cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has always been the principal social event in the Society's year and some of these dinners have been outstanding in terms of venues and numbers of OCs attending. Over 400 OCs attended the 400 year anniversary in 1965 and a similar number attended the 450 year celebrations in 2015 at Drapers' Hall, after a service of thanksgiving in St Paul's Cathedral."

The original objectives of the Club were two-fold: (i) to organise social and sporting activities between OCs, and (ii) to maintain the connection between the School and its past members. To pursue these objectives an Entertainments Committee was formed to hold dinners etc; football, cricket and fives would be organised under the auspices of the Club; a magazine, "*The Cholmeleian*", which had been started in 1873, was to be issued to all members in the hope that it would help to keep them in touch with events taking place at the School.

In 1903, the Football Club entered the newly-founded Arthur Dunn Cup. Over the ensuing 118 years the OCFC has maintained its annual campaign in the competition, reaching the final ten times and winning the Cup three times, and still participates in the Arthurian League which it helped to found in 1961.

In 1906 the Golf Society was started and a fixture list began in 1909. In 1924 the OCs became one of the founding six clubs of the Halford Hewitt Cup, which the OCs continue to contest annually at Royal St. George's and Royal Cinque Ports Golf Clubs.

In the 1950s, a great step forward was taken to secure our original social and sporting objectives: thanks to the magnificent efforts of many OCs, most prominent amongst whom being perhaps Ken Boustred and Doug Harvey, a long lease was taken from Barnet Council on seventeen and a half acres of land in Totteridge, North London. Four football pitches, a cricket square and a hockey pitch were laid out, and a clubhouse was built. This became, and remains to date, the home of the Old Cholmeleian Sports Club; over the years it has provided a social, sporting and, some might argue, educational centre for generations of OCs as sporting careers have been pursued and lifelong friendships forged.

In 1949 the Rifle Club was formed and in 1955 the Hockey Club was given official recognition. Shortly afterwards the Swimming and Water Polo Club was introduced, but not however at Totteridge as cynics might have expected, given the constant battle to improve the drainage of the ground.

In 1967 the Cricket Club competed for the Cricketer Cup, the first year it was held. Over fifty years on, the Cricket Club have yet to reach the final, but still compete every year.

In terms of domination of a sport, the OC Fives Club can have few equals. Finalists in the Alan Barber Cup in 33 of the 57 years of the tournament's history, we were winners 23 times, including a staggering 15 years in succession between 1977 and 1991.

Away from the sportsfield, the Professional and Occupations Section was formed in 1919 to assist OCs returning from the Great War to find employment. In 1921 this Section became known as the London Business Section to bring together, for business and social reasons, OCs working in London and to provide careers advice to OCs and School leavers. In 1949 Ambassadorial Tours were established to allow OCs to visit distant climes and thus strengthen links with overseas members. Over the last 100 years the Business Section has waxed and waned according to business and career needs of OCs. Several OCs have been particularly active in giving both time and money. The most notable of whom was Leslie Chamberlain who revitalised the Section in 1972. The OCBS, as it is called, is now made up of several groups representing different professions and industries that organise events which can be either live or on-line.

Today the Society continues to help Cholmeleians stay in touch with each other and with the School. It still organises, both directly and through its associated sports clubs, social, sporting and networking events; it still ensures, as in 1893, that every member receives a copy of *The Cholmeleian* with its news of OC and School activities.

Cricket, Fives, Football, Golf, Netball, Real Tennis and Fencing continue to flourish.