

Alumni Update - Summer 2022



Dear Friends

As we approach the end of the summer term and another school year, the first emotion that comes to mind is one of relief that we have had a relatively normal year for all members of our school community. Despite the continuing uncertainties and disruption of Covid for a large part of this academic year, we have endeavoured to offer a full and comprehensive academic and extra-curricular programme and provided a place of learning, fun and sanctuary for all our pupils. I am indebted to all our staff for their continued diligence and dedication to our pupils and also am especially proud of the pupils themselves, who adapted to the various practical mitigations that were in place to reduce the impact of Covid and coped so well with school life, including those who sat formal examinations in May and June for the first time in two years.

I also take great pride in our academic and sporting successes, achievements in music and drama, and the many activities undertaken by Academy pupils in the Summer Term – the sheer variety of endeavour from pupils never ceases to delight. I am sure that events such as sports day, house competitions, examinations and end of term celebrations will take you on a trip back down memory lane, remembering your time as an Academy pupil.

This term has also seen us embark on a programme of Alumni Reunion lunch events in School, celebrating 50, 40 and 30 year anniversaries. These proved to be highly successful and thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, many of whom had not set foot in the

Crombie or School grounds since they left thirty, forty or even fifty years ago! We plan to continue these reunions next year and look forward to welcoming many more of you back to meet up with former classmates and teachers, and take time to enjoy a tour of the School and take in all the changes since you last visited, and remember everything that is exactly as it was all those years ago.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has signed up as a member of our new **1785 Foundation**, and with over 70 members to date, funds from this hugely worthwhile annual fund are already contributing to a range of initiatives within school. We are always extremely grateful for such gestures of support for the School and money from this fund will go towards helping make a significant difference to the lives of current and future pupils, helping to enhance their educational, sporting and cultural experiences. At a time when funding for schools is presenting real challenges, we unfortunately are relying more than ever on the support of voluntary donations to help match government funding and additionally fundraise to make improvements to our facilities, purchase new educational resources and equipment and provide pastoral support to pupils in need.

I wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable summer on behalf of everyone at Belfast Royal Academy and look forward to welcoming you back in person on your next visit to the Cliftonville Road.

Kind regards

Hilary Woods
Principal

Alumni Reunions – 50, 40 and 30 year Anniversary Lunches

We were delighted to recently host a series of four Alumni Anniversary Reunions for the Classes of 1971, 1972, 1982 and 1992. It was wonderful to welcome so many former pupils back to the Academy to join us for a celebratory lunch and tour of the School. Former classmates and friends were thrilled to be reunited back at BRA, with even some of their favourite former teachers in attendance! We were so pleased that so many people made the effort to join us at these Reunion events, many of whom had travelled far to be able to attend. Following on from the success of these, we do plan to host similar events for the classes of 1973, 1983 and 1993 next year – dates will be confirmed in due course.



BRA Class of 1971 - 50 Year Reunion
at Belfast Royal Academy Library - 13/May/2022



BRA Class of 1972 - 50 Year Reunion
at Belfast Royal Academy Library - 20/May/2022



BRA Class of 1982 - 40 Year Reunion
Lunch in the BRA Library - 27/May/2022



BRA Class of 1992 - 30 Year Reunion
Lunch in the BRA Jackson Suite - 10/June/2022

Alumni Business Breakfast

The Alumni Association hosted a Business Networking Breakfast in early June, giving Alumni and former staff the perfect opportunity to meet up with colleagues and friends, whilst enjoying breakfast and networking before short talks from fellow Academy Alumni **Steven Johnston** – Managing Director, Adhaus Media and **Claire Colvin** – Director and Co-Founder, SimpleScaling. There was a good attendance from Alumni and all who attended agreed it was a great success. We look forward to hosting another event in November with details to be confirmed in the Autumn term.



BRA Business Breakfast - 10 Square Hotel - 8-June-2022

Steven Johnston
MD ADHAUS

Louise Brogan
Alumnae
Class of '92

Claire Colvin
Co-Founder
SimpleScaling

Joanne Harvey
Communications
& Dev't Manager

Michael McDowell
Breakfast MC

1785 Foundation

Our **1785 Foundation** continues to grow and is the ideal opportunity for Alumni to reconnect with the Academy and to share some of the pride and ambition that we have for our pupils. As you are aware, BRA was founded to provide an exceptional education for young people from all walks of life. The School has always demonstrated a strong social purpose and an ethos of caring for pupils from diverse backgrounds. While we strive to provide a secure and supportive environment for all pupils, we recognise that, from time to time, some pupils need additional care and support, and we are most grateful to Foundation members for their ongoing support to enable us to do this.

For further information on the 1785 Foundation and details of how to join please click here to visit the [Support Us](#) section of our website.

Unveiling of Alf Chapman Cricket Plaque at Castle Grounds

The Annual Old Boys' vs the School XI Cricket Match took place last week at the Castle Grounds site at Ben Madigan. This year's match included a special ceremony to unveil the Alf Chapman Plaque at the Cricket Pavilion by former pupil and School Cricket and rugby legend, Mr Ken Houston. Guests also enjoyed a special screening of a new BRA Cricket video during the break for tea.

Match report - the Old Boys' batted first and scored a healthy 144 by tea. After tea the school were in deep trouble at times, but in the way cricket can, there were a nerve-jangling final few overs as they held out for a draw. All enjoyed the afternoon and look forward to next year. Special thanks to Umpires Brian Boyd, Chris Harte and Cricket Master, Michel Harte. Thanks to all who supported the event on what proved to be a great afternoon.



Ken and Jean Houston visit to BRA, hosted by Hilary Woods (Principal), after which, Ken unveiled the plaque to Alf Chapman at the Castle Grounds. (24th June 2022)

Belfast Royal Academy Alumni - Keep in touch

We are incredibly proud of all our former pupils and what they have gone on to achieve in their lives after leaving the Academy. In the Development Office we now have a growing network of over 8500 alumni on our database made up of former pupils and staff connected with BRA, which enables alumni to enjoy the benefits of their ongoing association with the School and each other; socially, professionally and commercially. Additionally, our vibrant and dynamic Alumni Association plays a vital role in providing an invaluable resource back to the pupils and the school - volunteering their time, advice, services and philanthropic support in a myriad of different ways. We are all so very grateful of the continued support shown by the wider BRA community over these past two testing years in our history, including the assistance the School has received in many forms from Alumni, friends and current parents. Without this ongoing wider network, Belfast Royal Academy would not be the vibrant and progressive school we are today.

We are always delighted to hear from former pupils, so if you have any news or achievements you wish to share or would like to discuss ways to engage with the School, please contact the Belfast Royal Academy Alumni Department at alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net

Forthcoming Events

Old Girls' Afternoon Tea - Saturday 8th October - The Hilton, Templepatrick, from 2-5pm - £27.50 per guest, including a glass of bubbles! Email braoldgirls@outlook.com to reserve your place.

Old Boys' Annual Belfast Dinner - Saturday 26th November - The Europa Hotel, Belfast, from 7-11pm.

Former Pupils London Alumni Dinner - Friday 10th March 2023, The Royal Air Force Club, Picadilly, London, from 6-11pm. All former pupils are welcome to attend.

For further information or reservations contact the Alumni office alumni@belfastroyalacademy.net