

Oakhill Old Oaks

June 2011

Contents

Nostalgia	1
The 20 th Anniversary	2
Other founder pupils	3
The Teenage Oakhill	3
Drama	4
Art	5
What of the other "vintages"?	6
Tournaments	6
Oakhill on a new hill?	7
Will there be a new Oakhill?	7
28 February 2013	8
Moving & Shaking	8
Who survived their education?	9
Strutting through the ages	9
Past pupils feedback	10

Nostalgia

This time, twenty years ago, Oakhill was pregnant.

To be less cryptic, it was exactly twenty years ago, as I write, that Pam Muir (wife of the Optometrist Andy) and Celia Ruthven (wife of André Ruthven, then accountant for Barlows on Thesens Island) were pregnant with their second children (Robert and Jannah respectively), when they picnicked alongside the Knysna River. It was their conversation to create "**something unique**" that led the two ladies to initiate and fulfill the prospect of Oakhill School opening on 17th January 1992.

Chris Edwards was then Mayor of Knysna and his wife Anouk was one of the Founding Committee members. Chris had driven out to Rheenendal with Andre van Niekerk – who became the first Chairman of the Board – and came back determined to start a similar tiny school of 20 pupils with 2 teachers so as to spare their daughters (they each had two) the humiliation of going through the C.N.E. system that was legislation in those pre-Mandela days.

Then, too, in Plettenberg Bay, a number of families influenced by Athena Rodgers, had reached the point of despair in trying to create an English-speaking High School – albeit it private – in Plettenberg Bay.

These three forces came together, and at an August 1991 meeting, it was decided to "Go Ahead", initially with a primary school only, but once Alan Graham was appointed as Headmaster and he had a Standard 8 (Grade 10) daughter, though there was only one other Std 8 pupil, the "new school" became a "High & Primary School" and opened on 17th January 1992 – a year ahead of expectation.

Forgetting about the difficulties and the politics of the town, Oakhill opened at Woodmill Lane, and on 13th April 1992, it moved to its present site at Heuwelkruin, from where it has expanded to be a school of 463 pupils. But nothing is constant – as you will find if you read on.

What does all of this mean – to you and I?

*"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream."
– C. S. Lewis*



Scenes around present day Oakhill with Philip Stewart and sister, Barbie Leibbrandt

The 20th Anniversary



In December of 1994, eighteen matriculants wrote their final examinations.

These are the 1994 Matriculants, but they were also the FOUNDER Group. Their names are etched in memory as Wayne Craig, Rhian Berning, Anthony Deane, John Esmonde-White, Brent Gerhard, Reniera Graham, Linda Johnson, Bronwen Karow, Chantal Lewer-Allan, Leigh MacBeth, Ryan Matthews, Annebelle Moodien, Daniella Muller, Marc Taylor, Martinus Uys, Barry van Bergen, Steven Whiteman, Bronwyn Wilson.

Alan Graham wrote: *“All the future years of Matrics can only measure themselves against you. They can match you. They can do better than you, but they can’t ever be the first! Over the next 6 weeks as you face the exams, you and you alone have it in your hands to declare to the world whether or not Oakhill is a school of worth; and to set the standards against which future generations will match themselves. We know that we can trust you to bring honour on yourselves, your teachers and your school.”*

Now, my dear children, Reneira Graham, (now Mrs R. O’Donnell whose email address is : renieraodonnell@yahoo.co.uk) has suggested a 20th reunion.

Yes, yes, yes. We must make it happen.

Seeing that I am useless at buttons and Facebook, let’s take up Reneira’s suggestion and bring the 1994 Matriculants and their partners to Oakhill on 28th or 29th February of which year? Why the uncertain date?

The Dilemma

2012 is a Leap Year – the 6th in Oakhill’s history – the official birthday of the school. That was 20 years ago.

2013 is the 21st birthday of Oakhill.

2014 celebrates 20 years since the first matriculant class graduated.

“Three coins in the fountain... Which one will the fountain bless?”

The Suggestion

After long deliberation with Headmaster Shane Kidwell, considering other logistical pressures, the following agenda was proposed:

2012: A huge Assembly attended by past Chairmen of the Board and any Past Pupils – now called “Old Oaks” or snobbishly “Oakhillians” on 29th February – a Tuesday. In that week we hope to hold “20 km marathons in running &/or cycling”, “20 Prize Raffle – top prizes”, a “Day Off”, and a high class formal fundraising dinner – never yet seen in Knysna, etc. All

Oakhillians will be free to attend the Leap Year Focus” or to plan their own event – with the support of the School.

2013: The all-out celebrations, where every aspect of the School “CELEBRATES”. Music, Art, Drama, Hockey, Adventure, other sports, academic aspects, as well as a few surprises that take Oakhill towards its 50th Birthday in 2042. We intend inviting all ex-Headmasters on the 28th February. Each will unveil a dedication to themselves for the role that they played, as well as a photograph of themselves. It is up to the individual groups “Year XXXX” to contact the School after rounding up fellow pupils so that you too can CELEBRATE.

2014: The 1994 group and the 2004 group can celebrate their respective 20th and 10th anniversary at a date that they organise. After that we can build the tradition of celebrating each decade each year.

It was Alan Graham’s unique way of thinking that Oakhill’s birthday be celebrated on the 29th February. Thus officially Oakhill turns FIVE.

If you were a founder pupil or a founder matriculant, please communicate with Reneira or the school if you like the ideas above. The School will help set up a Dinner or a Dinner/Dance, and arrange two days at the school where you will meet the modern child who would not have been here had you and your parents not had the faith to choose the Oakhill Option.



Other Founder Pupils

The history of the School records the following FOUNDER pupils who sat through the Woodmill Lane days:

(# = Matriculated at Oakhill)

#Guy Jacobs; #Camilla Whitehead; #Sharon Monsen; #Janine Kleu; Alodie Orr; Kyla Orr ; Sarah Godfrey; #Lara van Niekerk; Andrea van Niekerk; Ingo Janssen; #Henry Deacon; Francis Misplon; #Stephen Whiteman; #Justin Poggenpoel; Michael Poggenpoel; #Cynthia Edwards; #Michael Hallick; #Jenee Hallick; #Vanessa Hallick; Nadeem Mohammed; Shu'id Mohammed; #Katherine Edwards; #Elizabeth Edwards; #Marc Rodgers; #Dax Holding; #Jacqui Cumberlege;

#Reniera Graham; #Diana Graham; #David Laing; #Rhian Berning; Aidan Lawrence; Olivia Lawrence; Jenna Pallent; David de Bruyn; #Brett Weinberg; Patrick Vorster; Malaika Joe; Georgina Coppin; Emil Bischoff; Janine Fearon; Susan McGee; Margaret McGee; Samantha Hartman; Sean Pallent; #Valerie Pappas; Luke Murray; Marcia Wilkinson; Inge Zinkfontein; Michelle Grundlingh; #Quinton Misplon; Leigh Opperman; #Jennifer Hofmeyr; Bradley Marais; James Mudge; Annebell Bartley; #Michelle Monsen; #Sherlee Taylor; #Ross Taylor (deceased in 2010); Andrea Bosenberg; Erin Bosenberg; Catherine Williams and Razeen Mohammed.

See Oakhill in 360 degrees!



<http://www.360cities.net/image/oakhill-school-knysna#2.34,1.46,70.0>

The Teenage Oakhill

You will be fascinated by the talent in the growing school. Forget the fact that our Boys' Hockey team (that plays in the SWD Men's League and fields 13 provincial players in a squad of 14, as the 14th is from a top club in Holland) beat the new private school (Glenwood) in George by fourteen goals to zero. Further, you should hear our children sing and play musical instruments.

You should see the Juniors practising rugby – ouch! You should see the standard of the Art. You should see the pool and the water polo successes. You should see the staff of 7 dedicated full time sports coaches who spend 6 hours

a day pressing computer buttons in just arranging the games of that week.

You will see the four buses that bring 100 pupils from Plettenberg Bay on a daily basis with many of these children coming from as far afield as the Craggs.

And then there is the Adventure Sport – where Oakhill is the reigning National School Champion in disciplines that involve swimming, mountain biking and running.

“Mirror, Mirror on the Wall” and all that, but Oakhill's success depended on You and You and You! The Class of



The Teenage Oakhill (Cntd.)

1992. The very ones who survived the Warts and All. The very ones who wore long hair, and free-flowing robes. The ones who did not even go on the first of 4 overseas hockey tours – or did you? Some of you went to the East on a Music / Drama tour but there is little record of that. Who will give a report?

May I suggest that Reneira co-ordinate

the 18 pupils of 1992, and then arrange with PeeBee, so that we can organise things on this side. If you guys prefer another date, then just say what you want. Please read the rest of this monologue.

It is your right to change the date, and the format of renewing acquaintances.

Snap!



Oakhill competes at the York Hockey Festival



Jaci de Villiers

Drama

We were thrilled to have, and are sad to have lost the services of Jaci de Villiers, who not only took her Drama pupils to Europe in Christmas of 2009, but fascinated them so much that 4 boys who could all have represented their country at rugger went off to Rhodes, to Cape Town and/or to Stellenbosch University to study (hide

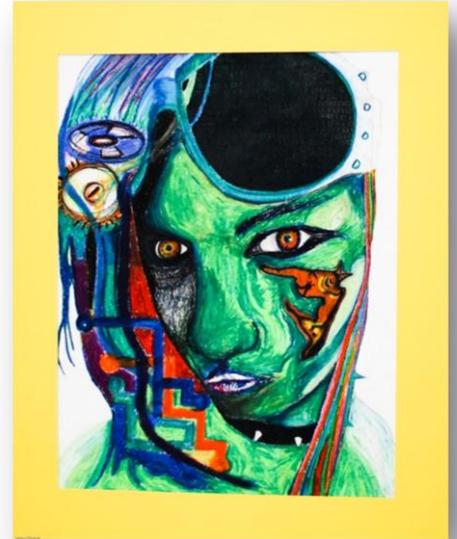
your face, Ingo) D-R-A-M-A. Such teachers are rare.

She was a person in a million. Which teacher – secure in their daily droll - would not be jealous of her? She took Drama to unattainable levels – so good luck to her successor.

Art

It was the first Grade 10 who designed the 3 leaves and 3 acorns that made the Oakhill badge. Your Art teacher was Guy Thesen, now a Board member, a parent of a Grade 11 and a Grade 8, a property magnate in the recession of Knysna, and a fellow who has finally developed a taste for good wines. He turned 50 on 25th June.

Present Art teacher is Amy Nuttall, who has obtained so many "A" symbols that those who weren't jealous of Jaci would have to be jealous of Amy. You cannot beat class.



2011 Matrics



Matric Class of 2011

What of the other “vintages”?

It is undeniable that the bond between the kids has been the strength of the school over the 20 years of existence. Whilst adults argued, the kids bonded. Obviously if there is a 10th or a 20th anniversary, you may wish to join in even if it was one or two years away from your own year, as these kids are your friends and they – as you are – Oakhillian. It is just and proper that we can focus on the TENS & the TWENTIES in any one year. Anyone can attend a formal 10th or 20th. This includes those like Carly Bell who did not matriculate at Oakhill but went to New Zealand, or like Lara Mare who went to York.

If your blood is blue, you are welcome.

And guess who visited?

Inge Hewitt and Justin Sherwood wrote their matriculation in 1998. Inge had been at D.S.G. where she befriended Kate Edwards. When Kate returned to Oakhill, Inge followed. She met Justin who had arrived from the concrete jungle of Johannesburg. What started as

a friendship led to romance and marriage. Inge and Justin are thus the first Oakhill married couple. They are living in London, and involved in the Information Technology game. Inge and Justin recently visited the school and were thrilled to see “that it survived” and that “it is growing so radically”.



Inge and Justin Sherwood

Tournaments

All of you guys who are lucky enough to know what buttons to push to get onto the Worldwide Web, or FaceBook or wherever you find this article, will know that Oakhill is Hockey and that Hockey is Oakhill.

Our current Headmaster, Shane Kidwell loves hockey. He initiated the Private Schools Hockey Tournament at St Alban's when he was more spritely.

In 2011, with the help of Action Man Dave Pryke (who bowled for Natal on the wrong foot), six co-ed private schools played in a tournament over 3 days at York Astro. Ignore the fact that our boys and our girls were unbeaten. What mattered is that Oakhill, Bridge House, St Peter's, Principia, Glenwood

and Elkanah met on astro and shook hands afterwards.

Our boys and girls were also undefeated at the 36th York Easter Tournament – the first inter-schools tournament in the country, first organised in 1975 by your very own PeeBee. Bow, Scrape, Worship. Thanks, kids. As Uriah Heep said: “It's being so humble that keeps me going.”

We are hoping to secure our next – our FIFTH overseas hockey tour – in 2012. The aim is to go to Spain – Barcelona (Messi); Madrid (Ronaldo) and Valencia (3rd in the league to Barcelona and Madrid). All that lies ahead. It will conjure up memories of our Holland trip in 2002, our Holland

trip in 2005; our Argentina trip in 2007, our Holland trip in 2010.



Holland Hockey Tour 2010

Oakhill on a new hill?



Now, guys, read this. Have you heard rumours of a new Oakhill on a different hill – as the campus might move so that we can, as in Eton and in Harrow, win the battles of life on the playing fields of Oakhill. For the less cryptic, the Duke of Wellington said: “The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.”

Just in case you think I am favouring elitism, you can recall – as all schoolboys do – the Harrow School song:

“Forty years on
And afar and asunder
Parted are those
Who are singing today
When we look back
And forgetfully wonder
What we were like in our work – in our play.”

Kids, once you played sport at school.

Now you play the game of life.

Will there be a new Oakhill?

In late April, the Board and the Headmaster had a meeting with the parents, proposing a scheme that Oakhill becomes pro-active in obtaining sporting facilities. In 2010, we were not allowed to use Loerie Park, because Knysna benefitted financially (at the expense of its kids) by letting the Denmark soccer team practise for 3 weeks on a newly grassed field. Even the unkempt cricket pitches were dug up.

We have just regained the right to use Loerie, but the grass is so slippery being a mixture of indigenous, of rye and of the kikuyu making a re-appearance that the kids slip and skid and the fields are not lined. We cannot hope to keep our top pupils if we rely on the adult world. We simply must be pro-active in the

interests of the children of Oakhill who one day might be your children.

At the moment of writing, the proposed new venue is a secret. The first phase is to lay down cricket fields and an Astro Turf. Progressively the necessary buildings can be built, to the stage where we say “Goodbye” to the campus at Heuvelkruin, drop a few tears to nostalgia, and then hope that the ongoing recession does not wipe out the dynamics of Knysna, but that time proves that there is wisdom in well-timed risk-taking.

So, where will it be, and when will it be?

Quicker than you think. I think.

Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending.

- Author Unknown

28 February 2013

We will be sending an invitation to each of the Past Headmasters of Oakhill so as to celebrate Oakhill's 21st Birthday – as stated earlier.

If you know any contact details of headmasters, teachers, 1992 pupils, 2002 pupils, **any** Oakhill pupils, please communicate and give details. Being useless at Facebook and Twitter and those button-dependent communication tools, I would prefer an email to peebee@oakhillschool.co.za or to Auntie Elna at e.brown@oakhillschool.co.za

However, should you correspond through Facebook on the Oakhill page your message will get to me.



Oakhill School



@Oakhill_CX



Elna Brown

Moving & shaking

There was a tiny earthquake in Knysna on Saturday 14th May, but let's make an even bigger one on the Hill (the old hill, or the new) in 2013.

We want to celebrate big time. All of you who ever graced our benches. Watch this space, but come up with suggested dates.

The 2003 Matriculants are listed as Oriole Bolus; Jacqueline Carstens; Kate Chauncey; Siro Colarossi; Archie Crain; Paul Cremer; Devin de Moyland; Cynthia Edwards; Jessica Ellis; Bryan Garth-Davis; Cheyne Hare; Jennifer Hofmeyr; Christopher Hutchings; Keegan Jansen; Mark Kramer; Frank Latter; Kirsty Lorge; Malte Meister; Katherine Meter; Katy Mills; Andrea Morris; Ceri Muller; Eva Murphy; Kerrin O'Hagan; Hannah Palmer; Carl Pasio; Michael Pasio; Andrew Robertson; Leah Ronaldo; James Rutherford; Samantha Scanlen; Lara Southcott; Salomon van Wyk; Deon Victor; Clinton Walker; Drew Watney; Camilla Whitehead; Keri Young.

When would you, as Past Pupils like to celebrate? There are dead seasons where accommodation is so 'dirt cheap', but there are also times where Knysna has festivals. Please don't choose the Pink Festival.

Who wants to take the lead in arranging the 1992, the 1993, the 1994, the 2002, the 2003 and the 2004 celebrations?

Snap!



Oakhill Golf Championships held at Pezula

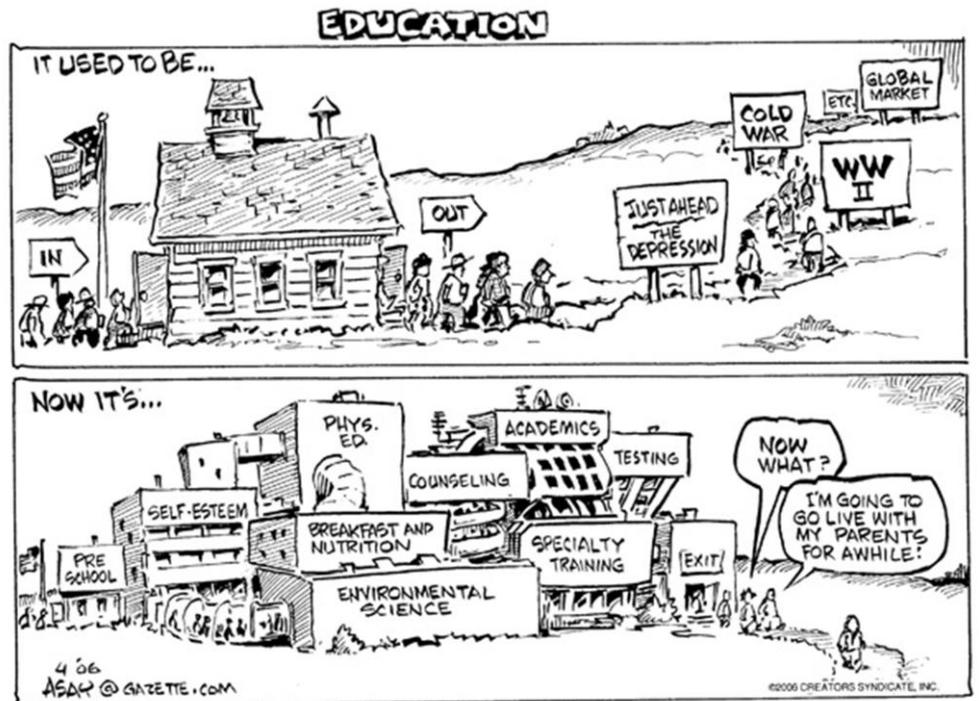
Who survived their education?

In an earlier communication, I wrote of how brilliantly Marc de Motta had sublimated his education. There are so many of you who acknowledge – in my opinion due to the influence of Tessa Edwards, Marti Watson, Amanda Barnard and ilk – that you prospered at University where others flopped. Oakhill HAD given you a momentum.

tell our current Grade 7's to Grade 12's. Last year we lost a number of pupils leaving Grade 7 to go to private schools in the Eastern Cape where they simply do not benefit from the decision. You may have your own opinion. Oakhill is NOT Utopia High nor Nirvana High.

Let's hear you spell it out so that we can

You are free to criticise, but let's hear you.



Strutting through the ages

For my sins, I am writing a "HISTORY OF OAKHILL". As I am not 'a man of few words and less sense', I am telling the whole story of Knysna, of George Rex, of education in Knysna, and of your Alma Mater.

It is not an easy task, as there are very few records. In some years, there was no Year Book, but I wanted to record those events and achievements that occurred in each particular year – and I need old photos – even if it is to show the paradox between the unkempt hairstyles on our 1998 tour to Cape Town as against the Sergeant Plod inspections of hair that take place every week in 2011.



The purpose of primary education is the development of your weak characteristics;

the purpose of university education, the development of your strong.

- Nevin Fenneman

Past Pupils' Feedback

At Auntie Elna's desk we have a book in which past pupils write what they think about Oakhill. This is what has been written in the past two months:

"Nice to be back to visit Oakhill! Miss it here. UCT is completely different, as is Cape Town (no surprises there). Will be back again! Hope Oakhill stays as fantastic as it was and is!" – **Matthew Segers**

"Gawain was here. Wow, the school has changed. But PB hasn't. All the best for future pupils. And NO they can't come stay with me in England! 😊" – **Gawain Bunnet**

"So, 10 years down the line...wow so much has changed and stayed the same! It's been good to come back, reflect on the old days, connect with a few familiar faces and see the positive changes that have taken place. Good luck and all the best Oakhill." – **Claudia Colarossi**

"13 years later! Things have changed so much and the school looks wonderful. It is quite strange being back with Justin Sherwood. We married in 2008 and live in the UK. We both matriculated in 1998. Good memories!" - **Inge (Hewitt) Sherwood**

"Walking across the campus 11 years later brings back such happy memories. Playing K-I-N-G and planting grass. Investigating eco-systems and writing poetry under the Oaks.

Nothing changed but so much has changed. The same happy shouts of children...yet in a modern expanded building....so proud to be counted as one of your pupils...continue inspiring dreams and building lives...all the best!" – **Lara Mare (Matric 2000)**



Oakhill School
Uitsig Street
Heuwelkruin
Knysna, 6571
South Africa

Phone:
+27 44 382-6506

Fax:
+27 44 382-5753

Old Oaks E-mail:
peebee@oakhillschool.co.za

www.oakhillschool.co.za



College soccer practice at Loerie Park

Please forward your news, snippets and images to
peebee@oakhillschool.co.za