



# Matric Dance

## ANNUAL EVENTS

After many years of patient waiting, months of preparation and days of excitement, August the 12<sup>th</sup> finally arrived. The air in Pretoria was positively sizzling with excitement as three hundred odd Boys High boys and their partners awaited the highlight of the matric calendar, the Matric Dance. After all the effort of finding a date, a suit and a before-party venue, we were finally ready.

The entrance was jaw-dropping. The façade of the school was magnificently lit up by hundreds of candles, creating a surreal, electric atmosphere. This atmosphere was added to by the fire dancers who amazed us with their dazzling skills. Flashy, expensive cars were the order of the day as couples arrived in anything ranging from limousines to lamborghinis.

Once inside, the couples milled around the hall meeting friends and their respective partners, and marvelling at the glamorous décor. A short while later, the dance was officially opened with the waltz – a very daunting activity for the boys. Partners' toes were trodden upon, dresses were snagged and many a couple bumped into another. Nevertheless, as the music faded, it was accompanied by smiles and laughs by all.

Now that the dance had officially begun, everyone was free to do what they wished. Some danced non-stop to the fantastic music while others preferred to sit at their tables and chat to their partners.



A highlight for many was the sight of 'Chalkie' Sommerville 'breaking it down' on the dance floor and the traditional Greek dance performed by Kimon Georgiou and Alexis Planets. Another favourite activity was the group photographs. The professional photographer was busy the entire evening taking picture after picture of boys sporting 'Blue Steel' and other zany poses. Needless to say, an awesome time was had by all and it will never be forgotten.

As the saying goes, 'Time flies when you are having fun' and before anyone knew it, the dance had come to an end. However, smiles soon appeared on everyone's faces when they realised that the end of the dance marked the beginning of the next chapter in the book of their weekend – the 'after-party'. Enough said.

Organising such an event is an extremely onerous and time-consuming task. A heartfelt word of thanks must be extended to Mrs Ferreira and her group of waiters who organised the event that will never be forgotten by the matric group of 2006 and their partners. Everyone had a real 'ball'. Thank you.

*Shaun Fickling*



## Founder's Day address by Mr Mike Fennel, headmaster of King Edward VII School



**M**r Schroder, staff and young men of Pretoria Boys' High School. It really is a great honour for me to have been invited to address you at your Founder's assembly.

Let me touch on the relationship between our two schools and share with you some interesting facts.

- Both schools have schools colours of red, white and green.
- Both Mr Roy Corbett and Mr Bruce McMurray, previous Headmasters at King Edward, sent their sons to Pretoria Boys.
- Lord Milner was instrumental in starting both schools, Pretoria Boys in 1901 and King Edward in 1902, soon after the Anglo-Boer war.
- Mr Abernethy, Headmaster at Boys High from 1956–1973 spent his teaching career at King Edward VII School before taking up the post of headmaster.
- Mr Peter Digby, a King Edward Old Hoy who was instrumental in starting the Pipe Band at Boys High, was also the bandmaster at King Edward.
- Mr Armstrong, Headmaster at Boys High from 1974–1989 was also a Deputy Headmaster at King Edward.
- Of the eighty-four 1<sup>st</sup> XV rugby matches played, Pretoria Boys have won on forty-six occasions and King Edwards on thirty-one with seven draws. This is probably due to the fact that King Edward is an academic school. The last time King Edward beat Boys High was in 1998. And what's more, over the years, Pretoria Boys High School is the only school to have scored over 1 000 points against King Edward.

Yes, gentlemen, we do have a very healthy respect for you on the sports field.

How do the King Edward boys perceive Boys High. This from my Grade 11 Mathematics class.

- Our main rivals
- They always put up a great fight
- They never give up
- They are always ready for a challenge
- We know we are playing against the best
- A school of excellence
- They are just like us
- We enjoy the unique competition
- Our greatest all round challenge
- We are proud of the mutual respect
- A school with great traditions

How do I, a King Edward Old Boy, and now Headmaster, perceive Boys High? Firstly, I need to tell you that I am a very strong supporter of the Public School system, more particularly the

Public Boys' Schools. I believe that schools like Pretoria Boys High, King Edward, Jeppe, Rondebosch, Selborne, Grey High School are the backbone of education in our country.

But let me talk about Boys High more specifically – sometimes you don't appreciate what you have until someone from outside tells you.

- You have an estate second to none. There is not another school in the country, public and private, that has facilities and a campus like yours.
- You have passionate support from your Old Boys, and gentlemen, schools like ours will only survive if this support continues.
- You have outstanding teachers, teachers who believe in this school, and believe in you.
- You have a Headmaster with huge experience, and he believes, quite rightfully so, that Boys High is the best school in the country. He often tells me that King Edward is close, but only second best.
- And then gentlemen, you, you boys are what sets this school apart from other schools.

Do not succumb to external pressure – and possibly you will only understand this when you return as Old Boys one day. Gentlemen, protect what is so very special about this school: respect, manners, discipline, pride and passion.

Finally, I thank you again for inviting me to be a part of your Founder's Day. Please go easy on the King Edward boys tomorrow, and I leave you with a brief message from the Head Prefect of King Edward VII.

*'Pretoria Boys High School has always been known and revered as one of King Edward's traditional rivals on the sports field.'*

*It comes as no surprise that the two schools, King Edward and Pretoria Boys High have such a long and healthy affiliation and a relationship with each other spanning more than eighty years. This can be attributed to the style and nature of both these fine institutions, rich in tradition and heritage, schools where invaluable life lessons of the values of brotherhood, passion and legacy are the foundation and breeding tools for fine young men.*

*King Edward has always enjoyed a healthy competitive relationship with Boys High – sports fixtures are always well supported and closely contested (though the latest rugby scores might beg to differ). Tensions are always high and preparation is vigorous ahead of the annual traditional rugby clashes. However, on the day, only the highest level of sportsmanship and gentlemanly behaviour that have come to be expected from King Edward and Boys' High are show cased, both on and off the field.*



# Old Boys Reunion

## Address by Mr Mark Gleeson at the 25-year-on Friday Assembly for the class of 1981

I have to admit first that I left this august school with a standard grade pass in Maths but I think I'm right in saying that if each year there are at least three reunions. If each time a representative from these respective leaving classes is asked to address you, then during your time here at school who will probably have to listen to at least fifteen old guys like me up here on the stage. For some of you it might be eighteen and even twenty-one, but that's another matter.

I have been asked to talk to you briefly on behalf of our 1981 leaving class because I am the biggest. It's a close call because I have a contemporary called Dave Newman, who is up top there today and has come all the way from London, who I have just shaded for the task.

On the first day of matric the boss called both Dave and me to his office. The Pretoria News were looking for a front page picture of the tallest and shortest boy at school to mark the new term and Dave and I had to stretch back to back to see who was tallest. He won by an inch or two and got to have his mug on the front page of the paper but within weeks I had shot right past but without any reward. Finally my time has arrived!

All those who have spoken here before me I am sure have told you what the school has meant to them, the life-long friendships, the camaraderie, the confidence and most importantly the fine values that are instilled in these corridors.

It is a bond that has drawn more than eighty of us back this weekend from around the world. We have old boys here from Bermuda, Britain, from Canada, Israel and Australia who have made the long journey to be with us this weekend and, although, I fancy, the prospect of cheap golf and a bit of sun shine is a major attraction, their primary call is from these buildings, sports fields and facilities where they were moulded as men. It goes without saying, but I'm going to say it anyway, there is another fine turn out from Solomon House.

I want to tell you a little about our leaving class of 1981, whose form and achievements over the years I think are replicated by the hundred-odd other leaving classes that have departed this school.

We have a disproportionately large number of doctors; there are lawyers, scientists, farmers, entrepreneurs (anybody looking for a loft apartment speak to Ricky Polack), bankers, artists and the maker of one of the country's finest, and most expensive, wines. We have teachers, too, two of whom had the great privilege of coming back here to be masters at Boys High.



Our head boy, Damon Galgut, became a world renowned author and had one of his books nominated for the Booker Prize and our top sportsman, Roy Wegerle, went on to play for Chelsea and in two World Cups in 1994 and 1998 for the USA. He is now on the US golf tour.

To be honest though, it threatened to be a complete disaster. I have here with me a copy of the old school paper, the Boys' Highlights, from the second term of 1977 when we were in Form 1, where the headline says: Worst rugby in school's history – what went wrong?

I'm pleased to say it got better. We beat Affies once in the five years we were here, in 1979. So, like you, we have experienced the unbridled joy of beating them.

But, sadly we never beat KES, although I hear these days that is one of the easier fixtures on the calendar.

The school was declared a national monument during our time and the education minister of the day, Piet Koornhof, gave us half a day off to our great delight. The reason was his admiration for a school that could count among its old boys both Albert Hertzog, the founder of the far right Herstigte Nasionale Party and Peter Hain, who was a leading light in the anti-apartheid movement overseas and is now a member of Tony Blair's cabinet.

The late 70s and 80s were a time of much political awareness and the headmaster, Malcolm Armstrong, got into some trouble for allowing the opposition to hold a few election meetings in this hall.

We had a boy who threw a petrol bomb into a police station and when we were in matric the first black pupil came to a government school in this

country, setting Boys High way ahead of its time in the transformation of this country.

It was also a fairly innocent time. Internet then, was when you scored in hockey, a cell was something you learnt about in Biology and if you used the term iPod it probably had something to do with the Pipe Band.

A hamburger and Coke cost 25 cents at the tuckshop and it was fetched for you by a Form 1 boy. The preferred meal was a piece of polony on a roll with a little mayonnaise that they called a salad roll.

'Chalkie' Sommerville had already been here for sixteen years when we walked out of these doors.

Our crowning glory: I didn't know it at the time but looking in the Pretorian for that year I see we even won the provincial cup for a second year in a row for selling the most Christmas stamps.

Twenty-five years on, and we are getting closer to our 70<sup>th</sup> birthdays than from the day we left school; yet the pull of this place is still strong.

And, for the next forty-eight hours we get the rare privilege of nostalgically reflecting back on our formative years and looking, I fancy, with some jealousy on you who have such an exciting future

ahead, much of it inspired by the fine grounding that Boys High provides.

School, I know from bitter experience, can be at drag at times, but you will quickly realise once you leave what this place means to you and I would encourage you all to try and draw as much as you can from the five (or in some cases six) years that you will spend here.

Michael Capra, who has come all the way from Canada for the weekend, gave the Valedictory Ceremony address in 1981 on our behalf and I would to steal an extract from what he said on this stage twenty-five years ago.

'Headmaster and staff of Pretoria Boys High, I speak on behalf of all the matrics in saying a sincere thank you for moulding us into what we are and for giving us the confidence and experience to conquer the future. I personally believe that you cannot progress into life without having a strong foundation. Here our foundation is impregnable. It is with a feeling of deep regret but also with a feeling of great excitement for what the future holds for us, that we, the matric group of 1981, bid farewell.'

Twenty-five years on, I'd like to add: it's great to be back.

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# Remembrance Day

## Assembly conducted by Mr Illsley prior to the annual Remembrance Day service

*(The Remembrance Day service was conducted by Father Tim Lowes on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November)*

On Friday, the school will hold its annual Remembrance Day ceremony to commemorate those old boys and past masters of the school who died in the two World Wars and in conflicts since then.

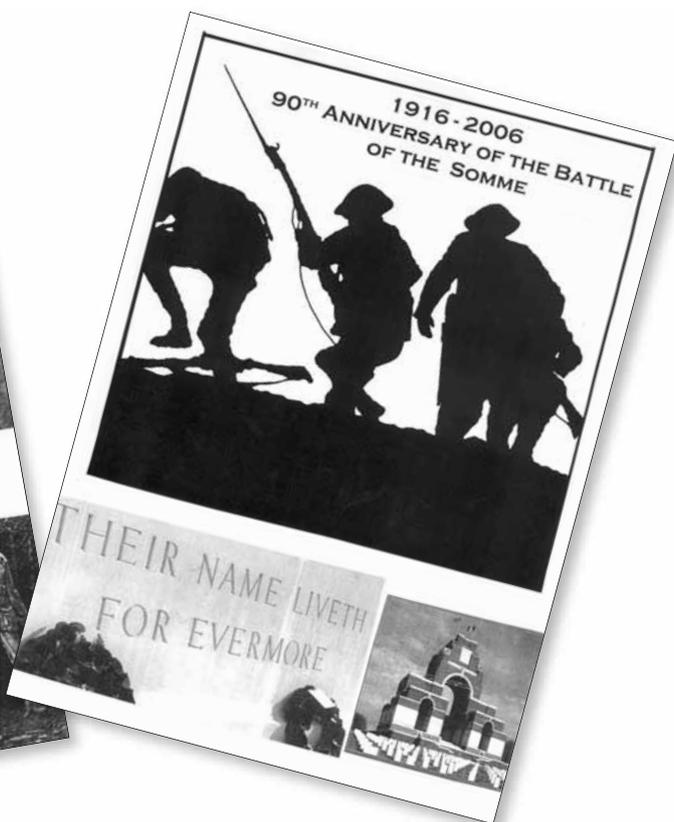
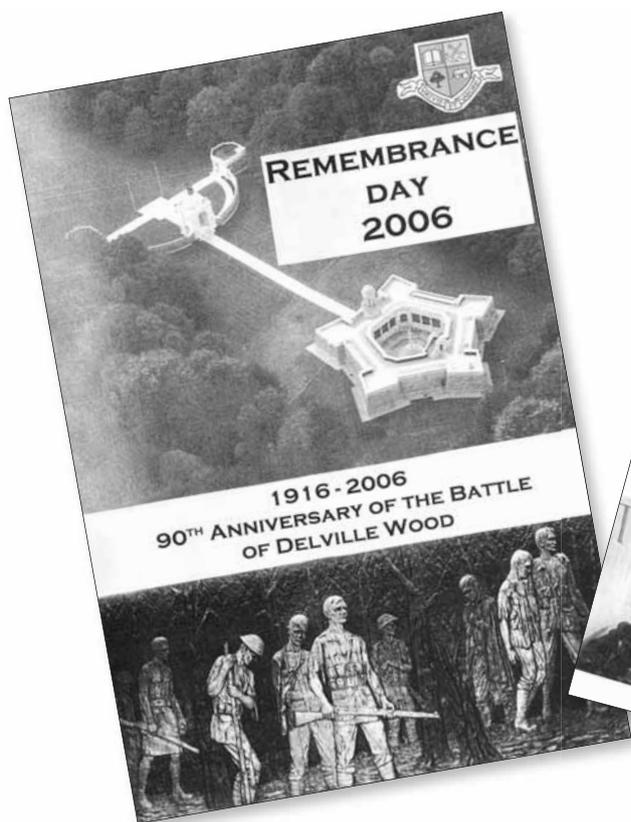
As those events recede further into the past, it perhaps becomes more difficult for you to understand why we hold this sombre ceremony each year.

I want to take a few minutes this morning to share with you how the staff and boys on the recent History tour to Europe paid homage to all South Africans and also to four old boys who died in the First World War on the Western Front at three places we visited hope that by showing you some of the Boys High connections, that Remembrance Day may have greater significance.

The first place where we paid tribute to an old boy of this school was in the Belgian town of Ypres. An ancient settlement, almost completely destroyed by the Great War, it has at one of the original medieval portals, a memorial known as the Menin Gate. This commemorates the 55 000 men who died in the Ypres Salient and who have no know graves. During a brief talk on the town ramparts alongside this memorial, I told of how twenty-year old Eric Herbert Johnson had died in battle a few months

after writing to his old housemaster at Rissik House, Mr Thomas, relating details of the Christmas truce of December 1914 when thousands of men had met in 'no mans land' during an unofficial cease fire.

Later in the tour we visited the Somme region of France and the scene in 1916, of the bloodiest carnage of British and Empire armies in the First World War. One small part of the battle was the Battle of Delville Wood which was captured by the South African Brigade and held for a few days against vicious German counter-attacks and artillery bombardment. Of the 3150 who entered the wood, only 143 emerged from what was dubbed 'Devils Wood'. Today nature has restored the scars of war making this a picturesque spot, although the South African trenches and hundreds of shell holes are still discernible between the trees. Today the Wood is owned by South Africa. Because this year is the ninetieth anniversary of the battle we carried out a wreath-laying ceremony at the South African monument. The boys all wore ties and were great ambassadors for the school and the country because of their dignified participation. Afterwards we looked around the impressive South African museum commemorating the country's contribution to the World Wars and in Korea.



Later the same day we visited the massive Thiepval memorial, the largest British and Empire war memorial of its kind in the world. It bears the names of 73 000 men who died in the Somme battles and who have no known final resting place. Among the South African names that cover one entire pillar, are three old boys of the school. Although not accompanied by any type of ceremony, we laid three crosses of remembrance beneath the panel that carries their names as our tribute.

The fact that all of these young men (none was older than 24) had all been part of Boys High (and its predecessor school, the Pretoria College) brought home to all those on the tour the cost of war and

that ultimately it is ordinary men and women who are caught up in conflicts. This added greatly to the significance of visiting these places on the History tour.

Let us pray

*Lord,*

*In this week where we remember those who paid the ultimate price in times of war, allow us to not take their sacrifice for granted.*

*Grant us the wisdom to learn from the folly of war and to strive for a world in which harmony and understanding replace hatred and violence.*

*We ask that the young men of South Africa may never again have to go to war in the service of their country.*

*We pray that you bring relief to those who are suffering in wars currently being fought and ask that peace return to these lands.*

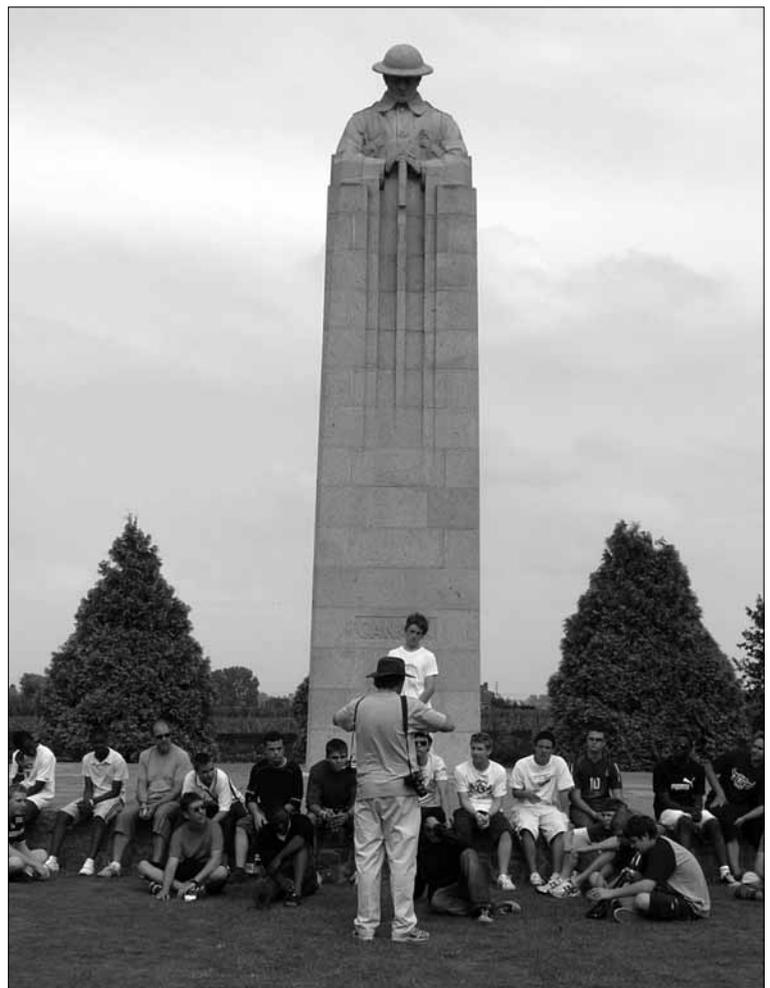
*Amen*



*At the Menin Gate in Ypres: finding the name of Herbert Johnston, an old boy of PBHS*



*Delville Wood: the Boys High Memorial service*



*The 'Brooding Soldier' memorial outside Ypres, site of the first gas attack in World War One*



# Remembrance Day

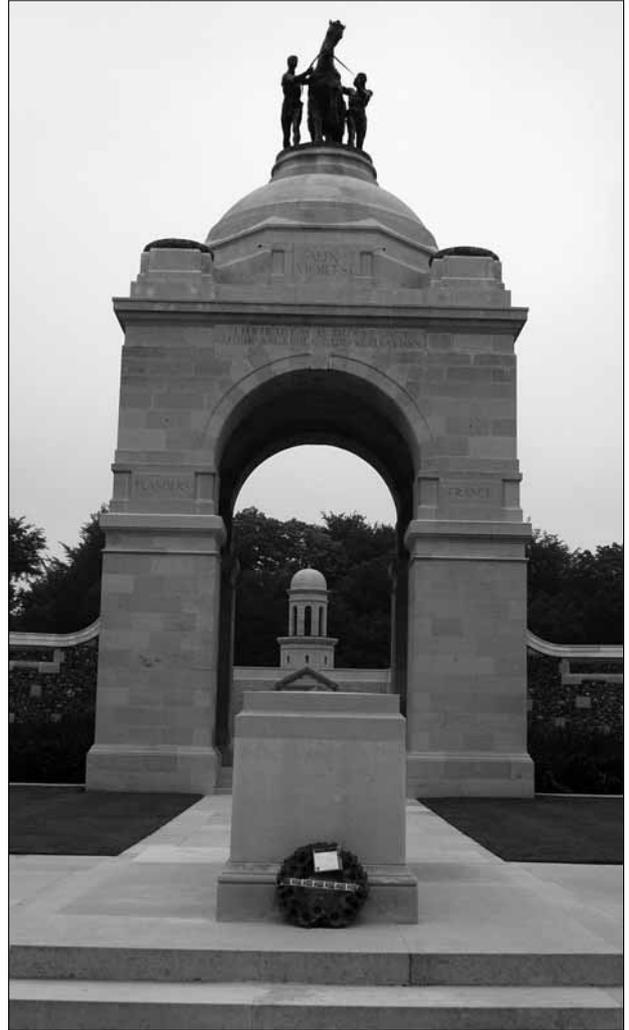
## ANNUAL EVENTS



*Delville Wood: Kyall Patterson lays the Boys High wreath*



*The SA memorial museum in Delville Wood, based on the design of the Castle in Cape Town*



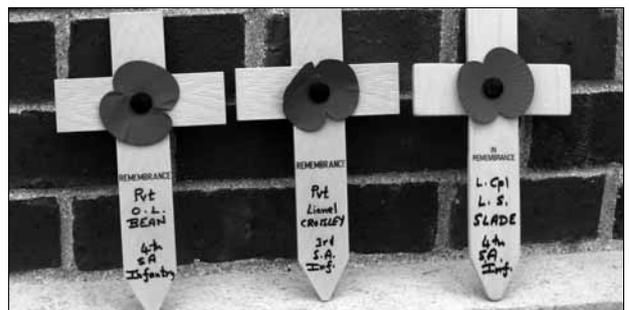
*The South African memorial at Delville Wood in the Somme*



*The Thiepval Memorial in the Somme*



*Michael Toweel contemplates the price of war (this was a week after the official 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the Battle of the Somme)*



*Crosses of Remembrance for three old boys commemorated at Thiepval*