

FROM THE PORCH

The termly newsletter from the Deputy Headmaster (Boarding) at Maritzburg College



Dear good people of the College BE

We are now entering week 4 of the final term, and we as the BE staff are doing our utmost to ensure that your boys are all best prepared for their upcoming **examinations**, with the Sixth Formers about to start their NSC exams on Wednesday and the rest of the school on (next) Monday.

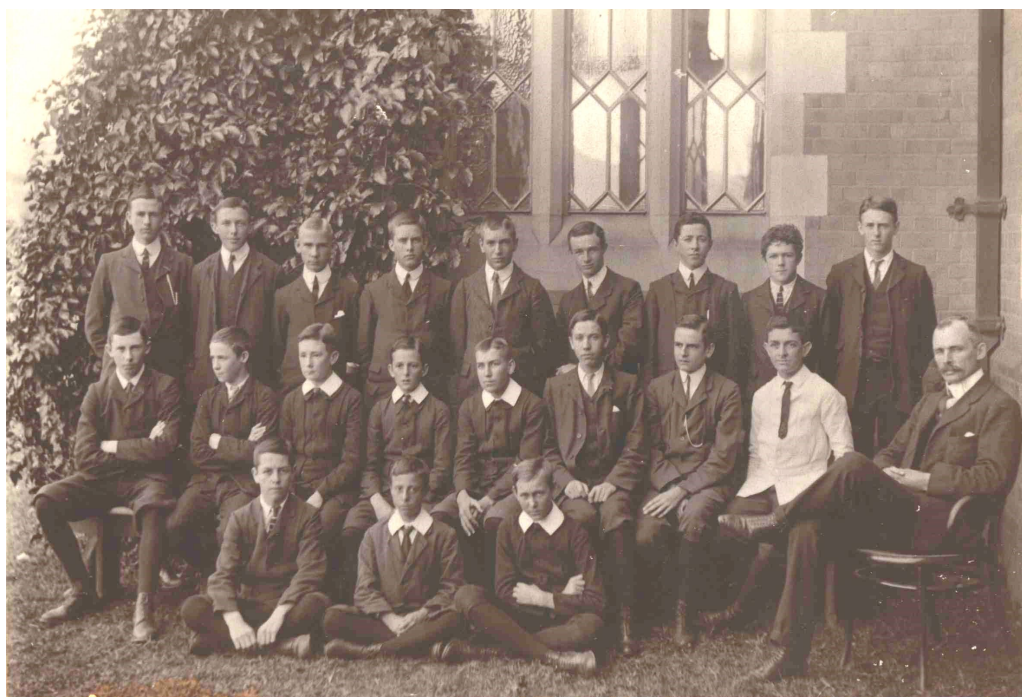
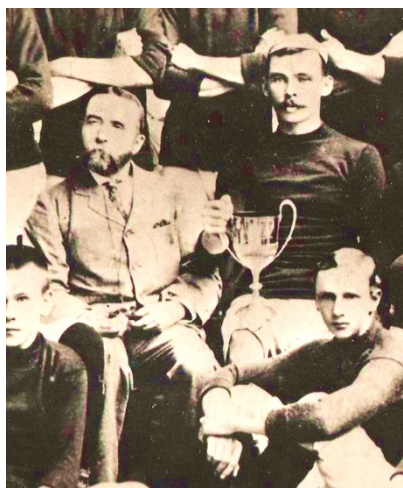
Please do try and attend the **parents' AGM** on Friday afternoon in the Paton Hall, starting at 14h00. In doing so, you will earn your son a rather scarce extra Optional – rather handy, given that there is only one regular Optional allocated to the boys this term. Do please also join us down at Elliott's immediately thereafter for the 10-minute opening of the **new A.S. Langley Wing** of Elliott House. Below simply FYI are pics of Mr "Madevu" Langley – one with Mr RD Clark in the 1897 First XV photo and the other with the senior boarders in about 1908. When he arrived at the school in 1897, "Madevu" immediately changed the school from a soccer school (he abhorred the sport) to a rugby-playing one. A savage wielder of the birch, he certainly was quite a fellow!

I wish you and your sons a happy and productive fourth term.

Matthew Marwick

IMPORTANT DATES FOR TERM 4

- **Wednesday, 23 October:**
NSC exams begin (Form 6)
- **Friday 25 October:**
Passing of the Drum Ceremony (07h55)
BPC meeting (13h00)
Parents' AGM (14h00)
Opening of the "AS Langley Wing"
- **Weekend #4 (26 October):**
Summer sport vs St Charles
- **Monday, 28 October:**
Examinations for Forms 2 to 5 begin
- **Weekend #5 (2 November):**
Limited summer sport vs Clifton
- **Monday, 18 November:**
Examinations for Forms 2-5 end
- **Friday, 22 November:**
NSC exams end (Form 6)
Break-up day!



A tribute to the departing Sixth Formers

The bulk of my newsletter this term is made up of my address delivered 10 days ago at the Form 6 Farewell Dinner, when the staff and I joined the boarders in Forms 4 and 4 to bid farewell to the Sixth Formers.

Good evening, gentlemen

It is my pleasure tonight to lead us into battle, as we bid farewell to these grizzled, grey-bearded, faithful old warriors of Maritzburg College.

Tonight really is the “beginning of the end” for these *madoda* of College, and the beginning of the end of their (in most cases) five-year journey at College.

And they have done very well.



Above: The shirt-signing on the Forder Oval, an hour before Speech Day.

Below: The final Jimeloyo-Ji, moments before the start of Speech Day.



The Victoria Cross lives on

And speaking of “done very well”, I think I simply must spend a few moments dwelling on the Victoria Cross or

“VC”, which in 2018 was a source of huge stress for me and no doubt for Mr Fraser.

In 2018, we were faced with a group of about 90 boys who refused to stick to what we had beforehand agreed to, which meant that this large group of rowdy, naked young men roamed the streets of Pietermaritzburg in the wee hours of Speech Day morning, terrorising boozed hobos and delighting passing motorists.

For a whole year, I had nightmares of College boarders having their dangling bits skewered on a palisade fence like a sosatie or thrashed with a *sjambok* like we had five years ago.

I was very worried that, because of this very poor behaviour last year, the much-loved VC, which has been a source of mischief and pride for College boarders for over 70 years, simply could not continue.

It was with these heavy-hearted views in mind that I commenced this term, knowing full well that the 2019 class would want to do its own VC very shortly.

So, amongst all their accolades earned over the last while, I’d like to pay special tribute to the gentlemen in front of me who did the VC last week without fuss.

I must also single out Mr Luman, who took full responsibility for this year’s VC and negotiated in person with Girls High, when, having been traumatised last year, I indicated my own unwillingness to be the person who stuck his proverbial neck on the line.

A detour down memory lane

I was also relieved to hear that this year all the boys returned unscathed, unlike in 1985 when one of the boys, Ströth, was bitten by a police dog on his backside, as he hung from a tree, or in 2013, when one of our star rugby players fell from the top of a fence and broke his leg.

Rites of passage at College

Rites of passage like the VC are important at a school like Maritzburg College, because we recognise that robust young men – in which the College BE specialises in producing – need to overcome obstacles, and most especially experience times of stress or danger together, not just to prove themselves as young men, but to encourage the forging of terrific bonds – a “brotherhood”, in fact.

Not for nothing do men who have played in great sports teams, or who have fought together in the

trenches, or have served “time” in jail together, form unbreakable, lifelong relationships with each other – and the same stands for the Sixth Formers of the College BE.

When you were juniors, there were probably times when you questioned why we made you watch cricket on hot Saturday afternoons, or do games-room early on frosty mornings, or did team-testing but only in a blue pen, or compelled you to play sport, or had you soldier on through “Vietnam” (below).



The makings of a College man

The reality is that we as a school generally and a BE specifically deliberately added these regular obstacles in your path, in the hope that, having overcome these small challenges as a young man, you will be better prepared for some of the bigger and more imposing challenges that will soon face you as a young adult.

For me, personally, College’s greatest attribute is COURAGE – not because I am a courageous person, but because of College’s underlying emphasis on commitment, sacrifice and effort.

To me, COURAGE is at the very soul of our school, and I suggest that it is one of the great unspoken aims of College to produce courageous, capable and robust young men, each marked with a stamp that proclaims, “***I am a College man***”.

A sad digression

But if I may return briefly to the idea of brotherhood.

On Saturday, I attended a funeral of a quite legendary Old Boy called Matthew Oats, who had been a hard-living, splendidly roguish Sixth Former, when I was in Second Form all the way back in 1984.

I decided to go to Mr Oats’ funeral, not just because I had met him a few times as an adult, or because he was

such a memorable bloke from long ago, but because – as an Old Collegian – it simply seemed the right thing to do.

After all, if we are going to be a real brotherhood, let us be brothers not just in life but in death too.

I have to say I got into a lot of trouble with my wife, because the funeral started at 11h00 and I returned home shall we say a bit later.

“Look after our precious school”

But, as I said to my dear wife, as she muttered and fumed, “You just don’t understand.”

Dozens of Old Boys from long ago gathered at the funeral – as I had – to salute the memory of their old comrade, and all of them asked eagerly about their old school.

In fact, as I walked off to my *bakkie*, one of them shouted out to me, “Look after our precious school!”

I liked that.

After all, College is indeed “our precious school”.

A noble and honourable place

For me, in my 31 years as an Old Boy, Maritzburg College, for all its wonderful memories and friendships, stands for something very special: it is something proud and noble and honourable.

In closing, then –

- Be grateful that you have attended such a school as College.
- Over the next few weeks, reflect on the times that you have enjoyed and endured at this school.
- Enjoy your final days and weeks as boarders at “our precious school”.
- Go out there and work hard and do your best.
- Be proud to be “Men of College”.

And, as you contemplate life as a young adult, do not be afraid.

You have served College well, and we who remain salute you, we wish you well, and, as you go out into the big world, we say “MAKE.US.PROUD”!

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