

# NETHERHALL NEWS



## I. EDITOR'S NOTES

Of late, there has been an observable trend among British broadsheet newspapers to opt for changed formats. The slightly unwieldy rags of old are slowly giving way to newer, more compact and user-friendly papers.

Perhaps coincidentally, in the last month, we have received several suggestions, most commonly that we should use a 'PDF format'. Until very recently, I had always been a member of that shady sect known only as the 'computer *illiterati*'. But now that someone has explained the basics of PDF to me, I couldn't agree more. Thanks to Kevin Gouder's hard work, the newsletter is in a more accessible form and is posted on a new, updated website.

Even for what aspires to be a regular 'publication', the format will hardly leave the British press stranded in the wake of an aesthetic storm. But that is not the aim.

Instead, the newsletter will, one hopes, grow in steps (both in terms of style and substance). As well as tweaking the layout further, another short-term aim is to start including photographs.

Slowly but surely we want to incorporate more articles – articles that are relevant to the House but which also have a wider scope. If you are interested in contributing – whether reviews or comment pieces, fact or fiction - please contact me at the following address: [zubin\\_mistry\\_100@hotmail](mailto:zubin_mistry_100@hotmail.com). (Current residents should know where to find me...)

All news from former residents is always greatly appreciated ([alumni@nh.netherhall.org.uk](mailto:alumni@nh.netherhall.org.uk)).

Best wishes,

Zubin Mistry

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## II. DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

October is a unique month in Netherhall. It is the start of an annual cycle that takes pretty much the same form every year. New residents arrive and unless they have had some contact with centres like Netherhall in their own countries they can be unsure about the set-up here. It's different to other halls. People talk to each other!

By the end of the month, after dining together every day, attending guest speakers, get-togethers and concerts and playing football weekly on Primrose Hill they have settled in and by Christmas most

are long familiar with the other 90 people living here.

How quickly residents have settled in can often be gauged from the daily get-togethers at 7.30pm after dinner. At the start of the year it is difficult to generate much conversation even on the most controversial subjects. By Christmas pretty much any subject can give rise to a full blown "discussion". Come June when people start heading off and leaving notes of their contact details on the front table it's clear that they have become quite attached to the House and their fellow residents. And then October comes.

As I said at the end of the Formal Dinner to welcome the new residents on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October, I hope everyone settles in quickly and gets the most from their time both at college and in Netherhall. The first term always seems to pass so quickly. Residents seem only to have just arrived when its time for the House Christmas Dinner (Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>

December) and the annual Carols and Punch evening on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Regards,

Peter Brown  
Director

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### III. NETHERHALL DIARY

#### A VISION OF EUROPE

“I’ll put all my cards on the table: I am a convinced pro-European type,” **Sir Stephen Wall** announced, giving Netherhall residents more than just a hint of what the evening held in store for them.

On 20<sup>th</sup> October, Sir Stephen spent the evening engaging the Hall’s residents in a lively discussion about the European Union, a subject he is uniquely positioned to speak about considering his vast experience as Britain’s permanent representative to the EU.

Sir Stephen was Britain’s ambassador to the EU from 1995 to 2000. More recently he served as Tony Blair’s principal adviser on Europe and headed the European Secretariat in the Cabinet Office for four years before taking over as adviser to Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor.

Taking his audience to the origins of the EU, Sir Stephen explained that it grew out of fears that history would repeat itself as it did

with the First and Second World Wars. He commented, “The EU is unique because of the appalling circumstances that gave rise to it. The idea was to bind economic interests so that it would be unimaginable for the countries to go to war against each other.”

“The EU’s more than a bureaucracy. It has the sole right to initiate legislation. In order to grant democratic legitimacy, the decisions of the legislators have to be agreed on by the governments of the member states,” Sir Stephen added.

Admitting that the EU is constantly facing fresh challenges, he said, “Over time the EU will grow and take in more countries and that does create new issues.”

Sir Stephen outlined some questions being faced by the EU: “Can you have the same integrity of interests for 25 (countries) that you had in the original days? Do we not already have organisations like the World Trade Organisation as alternate means of settling trade disputes?”

Replying to queries about the current controversy over

plans to bring Turkey into the EU fold, Sir Stephen said, “The EU, in the 60s agreed to regard Turkey as a European country. There was no democratic consultation. I think that it is the EU’s intent to see a stable democracy strengthened wherever possible.”

“Huge changes in Turkey would not have happened without the aspiration to join the EU. I do think that a democratic Turkey ought to make it easier to handle difficult relationships between the West and the Arab world,” he added.

Speaking about the EU’s global position, Sir Stephen said, “The EU is not a perfect organisation. We have our own self-interests. The EU does have a series of formal trade and aid relationships developed to establish better relationships with other countries. The EU has placed development high on its agenda.”

[Reuven Proenca]

## A TALE OF TWO CHARITIES

Has increased government funding and the professionalisation of the voluntary sector actually created problems for British charities? Speaking at Netherhall on 10<sup>th</sup> October, a leading charity executive pointed out that such beneficial developments come at a price.

**Paul Ramsbottom**, Deputy Director of the Wolfson Foundation, acknowledged that the professionalisation of the sector is “a necessary and perhaps inevitable part of its evolution”. But, he also highlighted an ingrained public tendency to “expect charities to exist on a shoestring or to see all administrative costs as being somehow wasteful”.

Likewise, although the doubling of government funding for charities over the last decade is undoubtedly a welcome advance, it can also risk compromising the sector’s much-valued “independence of action”: in worst-case scenarios, charities can become “outsourced outposts of government”. Along with Mr. Ramsbottom, several residents expressed concern at ongoing debates over the definition of ‘public benefit’ as demonstrated by discussion of the Charities Bill in parliament.

Mr. Ramsbottom drew from his experience across the spectrum of British charities. The Wolfson Institute raises around £35

million each year and finances academic, commercial and governmental pursuits. On the other hand, Mr. Ramsbottom is also a trustee of the Savannah Trust, a comparatively tiny charity that funds education for some of the world’s poorest children along the border between Burkina Faso and Ghana. The range of his experiences, he suggested, is an illustration of the sector’s diversity.

At the same time, Mr. Ramsbottom was keen to stress the vibrancy of British charity work, pointing in particular to the hospice movement. Early pioneers, such as the late Cicely Saunders, established radically new approaches to caring for the terminally ill. Their success was borne out, he argued, through a mixture of “burning passion” and downright toughness. Today, he added, there are over 200 hospices all over Britain. For all the challenges ahead, Mr. Ramsbottom concluded on a positive note: “British society can...be very proud of the state of the sector”.

[ZM]

## CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

How easily can the “patriotic church” co-exist alongside the “underground church” in China, a country whose relationship with Christianity has always been mixed? On 17<sup>th</sup> October, the frank answer offered by **The**

**Most Rev. M. Couve de Murville**, Archbishop Emeritus of Birmingham, was “with difficulty”.

The Archbishop began his talk by outlining the main historical periods of Christian activity in Chinese history, ranging from the entry of Syrian Nestorians into China under the favourable Tang dynasty, as demonstrated by the famous Xi’an monument (781), all the way to the underground movement that sprang up in reaction to Mao’s Cultural Revolution.

To demonstrate the various tensions that have existed in China, the Archbishop highlighted as an example debates over ‘ancestor worship’: when some Christians condemned it, this provoked several official expulsions by imperial Chinese authorities from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Sometimes there were tensions among Christians themselves: the Jesuit Ludovico Buglio’s 17<sup>th</sup> century production of a Missal and Breviary in Chinese failed to catch on because of poor support from back home in Europe.

And, although he did not go into detail, the Archbishop also placed growing Chinese hostility to Christians and other foreigners from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards within the context of intermittent aggression by the European imperialist powers.

The Archbishop went on to stress the significance of suppression in the early days of Communist rule in

creating the delicate balance at present. From 1966, the church had to “go underground”, operating in secret and risking repressive state measures. A decade later, the establishment of a “Patriotic Church” – under strict monitoring and restriction from Beijing – was permitted. Consequently, “Patriotic” and “Underground” churches exist within each Christian denomination in China today.

A good recent example of the problems, the Archbishop suggested, was the ordination of Joseph Xing Wenzhi as an auxiliary bishop of Shanghai earlier this year. The “Patriotic Church” had to liaise with both Beijing and Rome in discussions protracted over

months in order to authorise the ordination. When this was finally agreed, the ordination took place (on 28<sup>th</sup> June this year). No public mention, however, of Rome’s approval could be made during the ceremony and, moreover, several “Underground” bishops who had wanted to attend were unable to do so.

Nonetheless, the Archbishop maintained a cautious optimism, concluding his talk by showing a recent photograph of several “Patriotic Church” bishops publicly offering prayers for ancestors with approval from the Vatican. Historically, the issue of “ancestor worship” has been a thorny one for Chinese-Christian relations. Perhaps, the Archbishop suggested,

such pictures demonstrate that bridges are slowly being mended.

[ZM]

## FORTHCOMING GUEST SPEAKERS

Monday 7<sup>th</sup>:

**Michael Buchanan**  
Presenter, BBC Radio

Monday 14<sup>th</sup>

**Dr. V.E. Hartley Booth**  
Special Advisor to Prime Minister and member 10 Downing Street Policy Unit, 1984-88

Monday 21<sup>st</sup>:

**Scott Norvell**  
London Correspondent, Fox News.

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## UP & COMING

Tuesday 8th

**British Malaysian Society**  
Evening with the **Malaysian High Commissioner.**

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup>

**Recital by** The Olivier Ensemble

## MUSIC @ NETHERHALL

Despite our strong musical connections, it is not every week that Netherhall plays host to a burst of music that can only be described as ‘post-rock funk’. But, for a change, on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October, Netherhall was treated to **L’Skam**.

Warming up for the headliners was an off the cuff performance from an unnamed, in-house band. Comprised of music maestro **Yoichi Miyazaki** - in what was his last performance before leaving Netherhall - on guitars/vocals, with Dennis McCarthy (drums), Zubin Mistry (bass) and Pearson Madara (making a cameo on rap vocals), they played a mixed set including a Louis Armstrong cover.

From the moment **L’Skam** hit the stage, the audience was enthralled. They combined an almost organic cohesion with enough breathing room for improvisational frills.

Over Steve Ramshaw’s solid drums and Kenny Burns’ chunky bass, percussionist Lascelles Gordon peppered some exciting rhythms while singer/guitarist Al Beck swayed, sweated and soloed the set away. After rapturous applause and a breather, **L’Skam** took to the stage again, ending with an instrumental number that left an appreciative audience dazzled by a downright funky evening.

And on 15<sup>th</sup> October, the **Fidelio Piano Quartet** impressed Netherhall with Mozart’s Piano Quartet in E Flat K493 and Brahms’ Piano Quartet No. 3 in C Minor.

## IV. FORMER RESIDENTS

A number of former residents have passed by Netherhall in the last month.

Early in the month, **Olivier Coste** (1996-1997, 2002-2003) stayed at Netherhall for a few days, before returning to Belgium. Olivier works in Brussels as an administrator at the European Commission. His

work focuses on promoting development and assistance to African countries.

**Professor Francis Anthonie** (1973) stopped by at Netherhall on a trip to London. Francis was recently appointed Director of the University of Witwatersrand, Africa's leading school of

Governance, based in Johannesburg, South Africa.

And, **Viri Siripurapu** was also in London this month, to visit his brother Siri. Viri now practises surgery in the USA.

[ZM]

We have recently heard from the following former residents:

**Raymond McIntyre** (1951-1953) was a resident while **Michael Richards** was director and graduated with a BSc (EE) in '53. Upon graduating, he moved to Manchester and entered professional life for Metropolitan Vickers (1953-1959). During that time he married **Anne** (1956). Thereafter, he worked in Surrey until 1965, when he moved to Palo Alto, California. Since 1965, he has graduated with a Master's degree from Stanford University and has occupied various Engineering Management positions for Varian Medical Systems. He and his wife have seven children and are blessed with sixteen grandchildren. December will mark their Golden anniversary.

**Ray** writes:

"I was a resident at Netherhall from '51 to '53, while a student at the University of London. During that time **Michael Richards** was the Director. One of the priests I recall very well from those days was **Fr. Joe Madurga**, who later went to Japan. Other residents I knew very well were **Dick Stork** (who also graduated in EE), **John Galaraga** (who graduated with a PhD, as I recall, in biochemistry), and **Andrew Vasquez de Prada** (who published a number of books, including a treatise on Cardinal Newman, and was a Director of the Spanish Tourist Office in London)." [tbc]

**Javier Castanon** (1973-1974, 1980-1991, 1993-1995) was not only a resident at Netherhall for many years, but was also Assistant Director during his last spell. He was the creative mind behind the new Netherhall buildings in the mid-90s and

is currently busy with his architectural practice. In early November, he is going to Mexico for a reunion with former Mexican residents, to be held in Mexico City on 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**Javier** writes:

"I remember **Luis Foix**. He was working as journalist in Kabul in the late 70s, when the Russians were in Afghanistan. When he left, he told me to make sure that there was some money in a particular bank account, just in case... We used to follow his whereabouts by following the Times' correspondent, who would mention him. Unlike the other journalists in five-star hotels, Luis would venture out into the thick of the action and even made it all the way to the Khyber Pass. And when he eventually came back to visit, he had some real stories to tell."

**Lars Nilsson** (1976-1978) lives south of Stockholm and

is married with five sons, ranging from 12 years to 7 months of age. He works part-time as a teacher of business and also as an administrator of an old people's home.

**Fr. Bernard Marsh** (1978-1983) was Director of Netherhall from 1978 – 1983.

**Fr. Bernard** writes:

“The academic year 1977-1978 began in a rather unusual way – at least, that's how it seemed to me then. We had plans to spend a weekend early in November celebrating the 25th anniversary of Netherhall. The Saturday was to be for the “celebrities”: past guest speakers, local and national dignitaries etc. The events on the Sunday were to be more in-house: principally for past and present residents and their families.

“My memory of the celebrations is of how all the residents rose to the occasion and helped make the weekend a tremendous success. I was just beginning my period as Director at the time, and was a little apprehensive about how things would go: logistics, welcoming guests, feeding them, etc, etc. As it turned out, any fears I had proved to be completely unfounded! The residents took to heart

their responsibility in continuing Netherhall's tradition of service. I can still see some of them now – from all over the world, first years and postgraduates, recent arrivals or “old-timers” – moving about with one concern: to fulfil their allocated duties and ensure the guests were well looked after. Anyone who thought that hungry young students might assess their own needs of nourishment to be more important than those of the visitors was completely mistaken!

“Perhaps this aspect of the celebrations might seem rather mundane. However, to me it illustrated just how generous the students could be in setting their hearts to serving others. I've often wondered since how much this special call on the residents to give up a weekend in that first term of 1977-78 contributed to setting the tone for the whole academic year. I certainly remember it as a period in which I was able to witness time and time again over the following months how young people are capable of great generosity in self-giving.

“Now all this might seem very far off. The beginnings of Netherhall in 1952 sounded almost prehistoric to me then in 1977, so I can only guess how both those

dates would appear extremely remote to many of the residents today. But I wouldn't be surprised if, in spite of the passing years, the basic lesson is very familiar to all who happen upon Netherhall: serving others brings such joy to all, that it must be somehow part of the blueprint according to which we have been made.”

**Ali Rahman** (1986-1988) currently lives in Melbourne, Australia with his wife, **Farzeen**, and their seven-year-old son, **Hasan**, who, like most Australians, is an avid sportsman. After spending the better part of a decade as an investment banker, Ali qualified as a lawyer and currently practises in Antitrust Law and Economic Regulation. He and his family divide their time between work in Melbourne and regular 'bushwalks' in the hills around Melbourne. Together with his wife, Ali also has a strong interest in the visual arts and architecture.

**Pablo Carrasco Martinez** (2001-2002) currently lives in Madrid and works as a private banker. He writes that everything is going well.

[ZM]

## V. BUILDING NEWS

It is the people that make Netherhall the place it is. However, without buildings we wouldn't be able to do anything. It is crucial that hall structures are maintained at a high level and not infrequently it is necessary to undertake more significant building works.

In the next few months we have two significant projects that we hope to get underway. First we have planning permission to install a free-standing lift between the central area and the 60s

building inner facade. This will offer disabled residents and visitors full access to all public areas in the hall.

The second, and much larger, project we are launching is a major overhaul of the oratory. The underfloor heating ceased to work years ago. In the chilly winter months it is not uncommon to find people praying wrapped in scarves and thick coats. The whole floor has to come up and so we are making use of the opportunity to beautify the sanctuary.  
[PB]