Bill Baker, former Warden of Markham College, Lima, died on 20th August, of kidney failure, following a long illness. Bill was a highly influential figure during the genesis and early years of LAHC. His imposing presence, authoritative voice and forthright opinions had a charismatic effect in encouraging the membership to keep its sights high. The following tributes, made by some of those who had the privilege of knowing him, are testimony to the extent of the debt which we all owe to him.

For all those who lived and worked at Markham it was a familiar sight: Mr. Baker ... striding across the school in his slow, slightly stooped gait and with his eyes fixedly staring straight ahead, gazing not so much at what was actually in front of him but straight into the future. For if something singled out Bill Baker, it was his uncanny ability to envision what was and could be, if one only strove to attain it. Thus it was that for him the sky wasn’t the limit—the limit simply lay far beyond the sky, if one actually existed.

Javier Flores Espinoza (former teacher at Markham)

Few make an impact on the life of a school as Bill did here at Markham College. His contribution to LAHC in its early days was very significant, too. His briefing of me as his successor was a model for all retiring heads to follow.

Trevor McKinlay

Bill's death will sadden us all - bold, demanding, a visionary, a remarkable gentleman who had so little time to enjoy a well deserved retirement. We will never forget him.

Graham Hurrell

(Bill’s) enthusiasm for (LAHC) spurred many on and helped forge what is now a very solid educational network. I should like to think that, if there is a Heaven for teachers, Bill will already be (there) … working out the logistics of a polemic debate, certain to toss the serenity of the area into one of focus and furious discussion! We will not see his like again.

Rina Bayly

Bill was a giant in so many ways: a great educator, a man of clear vision and forthright opinion. LAHC owes much to his clear-sightedness and belief in what we wanted to establish. He encouraged us to move forward boldly when caution seemed to be indicated.

David Bantford

Peruvians and teachers all over Latin America have a lot to thank Bill Baker for. He introduced meaningful changes and we all are aware that changes bring along learning and with it wisdom.

We are in debt to him and thus, on his death pay tribute to his contribution to education ,especially in Peru.

Norma Bustamante

Without (his) support the LAHC would not have got off the ground. … a man of strong opinion, ready to take decisions and to lead his community but also a man who could readily recognise a mistake and then apologise for it. … I will remember him with great fondness and sadness that the world has lost him but gladness that I had the privilege of knowing him.

Geoffrey Fisher

Such men come but rarely and it is our good fortune when, for one reason or another, we are able to work alongside them.

Nick Martin
Les Misérables at the British Schools, Montevideo
Graham Gisby reflects on the biggest ever stage production to have taken place in Uruguay

October of 2004 was one of those memorable periods in this Headmaster’s life that will remain for the rest of my life. We chose to stage Les Misérables (School Edition), and if the intention wasn’t daunting enough, then the preparation and production certainly were. The work required 340 people to perform each night, from the eighty on stage, to the 120 strong choir, the massive backstage presence, costume design and production, choreography, lighting, direction, make-up, ushers, prop design and construction, and to the voice training. One of the 340 was in fact myself, playing all of the woodwind parts on my saxophone and flute.

For me, apart from a demonstration of the highest cultural levels by the Uruguayan people, what set the work apart was that the 340 participants were drawn entirely from students, staff, parents and the Old Boys and Girls. Entire families took part from the current students right up to their grandparents, making a wonderfully healthy event that is so often absent these days in schools. Indeed, the theme that united all was that ‘only through Generosity, Teamwork and School Spirit, was this work able to take place.’ All three were in ample evidence.

Some facts concerning the production are that to stage it we had to construct the biggest stage ever made in Uruguayan history. It measured almost fifty metres by twenty, and took up half our gymnasium, as our auditorium was far too small. We performed for eight evenings to over 900 strong sell-out audiences each night, making almost 8,000 spectators in all. In its size and scope, it was also the biggest musical ever staged in Uruguayan history and made the British Schools the cultural centre of the entire country.

The performances by the student actors were quite the most professional that I have ever experienced in any performance of any work, in any school I have been in, working or visiting. This was underscored by the American Ambassador who was heard to quote that he had seen Les Misérables on Broadway several times. The only difference between the two performances was that they charged USS 95 on Broadway, while in the British Schools, only 4.

Given the enthusiasm of the participation of all, the only problem that has arisen is what to perform next year!

Graham Gisby

Shadowing in Buenos Aires

In August, Paula Crocker and Patricia Arrosa, from The British Schools, Montevideo, spent three days as the guests of St Andrew’s Scots School in Buenos Aires.

Paula Crocker, who has recently taken on the post of Drama Director in the Junior School, shadowed Peter Macfarlane at St Andrews in Olivos and was able to observe him in action at a very critical time; just two days before a final performance.

Peter Macfarlane went out of his way to make her feel welcome; he offered material and information which enabled Paula to make the most of the experience. He allowed her to observe lessons, answering all questions, including a thousand and one doubts, with clarity and dedication.

Mr Macfarlane even took both ladies out to the theatre, which was a bonus, as he pointed out tips and different techniques used in the show that he thought might be useful in Paula’s teaching role at school.

Patricia Arrosa, ICT Coordinator, was able to visit three different ICT Laboratories: St. Andrew’s in Olivos and in Punta Chica, and Northlands. The purpose of her visit was to compare ICT Departments and exchange information in order to improve both her work and the students’ results.

The three-day visit was very productive and enriching. It allowed Patricia to reflect on the strengths and areas for future development in The British Schools, in comparison to the schools she was visiting. By experiencing other ICT Labs first hand, talking to teachers with similar objectives and problems and seeing the outcome of their hard work, Patricia felt a tremendous sense of collegiality towards them.

Both Paula and Patricia could not have returned in greater spirits! This opportunity offered by the LAHC to our teachers, is a tremendous form of Professional Development and we would recommend it very highly.

Corina Gill
Head of the Junior School, The British Schools, Montevideo
Debating at Holy Trinity

Elliott O’Brien, an intern from New Zealand, shares his enthusiasm for debate

When I tell most people about debating all I get is blank looks. This is surprising considering how important it is to our society. From the living room to the House of Parliament, discussions pervade our lives. The ability to persuade others is a key skill for life, and debating happens to be the most intensive practice.

Debating is becoming increasingly popular amongst bilingual schools in Argentina. The growth of pursuit has been aided by the success of national teams in the World Schools Debate Championships (achieving 4th place in the tournament in Canada 2005) and Pan-American Championships. Usually competition is held in English and follows the British Parliamentary style (explained in the following paragraph). However, events have been held in Buenos Aires where students debate in Spanish. There are two accepted divisions of competition: Junior, consisting of students in ninth grade and below and Senior for students of polimodal.

Normally there are two teams of three speakers which are given between thirty and sixty minutes to prepare cases for a set topic or motion. Students are expected to speak for either five or eight minutes depending on their age. During the debate, points of information allow the opposing team to ask short questions if their request is accepted by the speaker. Once everyone has spoken the leaders of each team have half the normal speaking time to give a short summary of the debate from their team’s perspective.

Once this is clarified, most people ask ‘so what do you debate about?’ Topics canvass a broad range of topical social, economic and political issues like euthanasia, animal rights or democracy. Anyone involved in debating must keep up with current affairs and build an extensive vocabulary and general knowledge.

Finally, people say ‘why do you bother?’ Debating is more than just moaning about the news. Among many other things, students must learn how to communicate (both through speaking and listening), work as a team, apply logic, think creatively and manage time. Above all, they develop confidence in speaking their minds while maintaining tolerance through being made to argue causes that are in conflict with their own opinions.

While parents and teachers may find it frustrating when these skills are turned on them, few would deny our world is made a better place through reasoned argument fostered by debating.

Elliott O’Brien
Holy Trinity College, Mar del Plata

INTERCAS and LAHC

The energy and enthusiasm of young people – constructively channelled - is always invigorating, even for the more jaded amongst us. Imagine then, having 149 IB Diploma students from 31 schools in 9 different countries all together for 3 days of CAS (Creativity, Action and Service) work. This was Intercas 2005, held in October in the Peruvian Paracas desert, some 250 kilometres to the south of Lima.

A total of 41 students from nine LAHC schools in Peru, Chile, Uruguay and Brazil took part. The planning of Intercas started over a year ago and the first activity was in April, when the Diploma students from the Lima IB schools worked together to produce the striking Intercas logo and poster. This was not a competition to choose the best designs, but a genuinely collaborative effort and this sense of teamwork permeated everything connected with Intercas.

The students worked in three large groups (C, A and S), further divided into subgroups, where there was a minimum of five nationalities in each. All groups rotated each day, so that everyone experienced the full range of activities. These included surveys with the people of Paracas, cleaning beaches, marking routes within the Paracas National Reserve and working closely with state school #22489. The latter involved shelving for the library, (subsequently stocked with books brought from all 9 countries), teaching the primary students and the completion of two vivid murals. On the last night, everyone paraded through the local town with placards reflecting environmental issues, ending with a series of enjoyable drama presentations on these themes in the town square for the local people.

The Intercas community work was very important, but so was the intense experience of four nationalities living and working together. Equally, the “Talent Evening” provided a showcase for each country to demonstrate their creativity and culture. Time was also found for daily reflection, perhaps best summed up by the group of students who asked their teacher to lose their tickets home! The next Intercas will be in Mexico in 2007...

Derek Pringle,
President of the Intercas 2005 Committee
Fund-raising and Solidarity in Caracas

Venezuela has experienced its fair share of earthquakes and tremors so the horrific tsunami and subsequent devastation affecting the lives of people bordering the Indian Ocean resonated with our children and teachers. We have teachers and children who have taught and studied in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Some still have friends there. Naturally we wanted to do something to help rebuild rural schools in the affected area.

Through LAHC we contacted Ray Davis the current Chair of FOBISSEA and, through him, Room to Read (www.roomtoread.org) and a project to rebuild rural schools on the Indian Ocean coast of Sri Lanka.

In 2004, the orchestra from the Lancaster School, Mexico City, was hosted by Newton College, Lima. This year, a reciprocal visit, involving performers from four schools, took place in Mexico. Alan Downie shares his feelings on what was a highly memorable event.

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Music in Mexico

In 2004, the orchestra from the Lancaster School, Mexico City, was hosted by Newton College, Lima. This year, a reciprocal visit, involving performers from four schools, took place in Mexico. Alan Downie shares his feelings on what was a highly memorable event.

On 11th of October, some 250 musicians of countless nationalities, both young and not so young, congregated in one of the finest concert halls in Latin America to an audience of well over 1,000 people, to participate in what will be for many of them one of the unforgettable moments of their life. In the first half of the concert each of the four schools performed separately, with the Newton College orchestra, Suzuki group and soloists drawing standing ovations for their outstanding performances. In the second half the four orchestras combined to perform four pieces, each one under a conductor from a different school, finishing with a selection from Carmen Burana.

It is easy to trot out clichés when it comes to music, but the power of this universal language to unite complete strangers in such a short time around a common objective that transcends language, cultural and age barriers is quite extraordinary. As we squeezed every last ounce of effort out of our exhausted bodies to fill the hall with Orff’s spectacularly effective music, the young student from the public secondary school sent surges of electricity through every person in the hall with his phenomenal performance on the bass drum. It was a fitting climax to a concert that broke all the rules and proved that with enough enthusiasm, belief, raw energy, and the right attitude, we can achieve the near impossible (and raise almost US$2,000 for the National Cancer Institute).

For the Lancaster and Newton orchestras, this cemented a relationship established a year ago in Lima, and left everyone with no doubt that this is only the beginning of something that will continue to develop and flourish over the years. The Newton musicians gave three more concerts and packed in some intensive sightseeing before returning, exhausted but elated, to Lima.

The concert and the trip were made possible by the efforts of an enormous number of people, far too numerous to mention, but special thanks must go to Roberto González and Natasha Encinas from Newton, and Diego Rosas and Carmen Magaña from Lancaster for all the hard work and dedication with their respective students that made this all possible.

Next stop … LAHC orchestra?