

# From City Solicitor to Netherhall Director

**The job of director is a thankless one. Throwing in a stressful City job to retire to suburban Hampstead and run a student residence might inspire the jealousy of some colleagues. But this implies a certain naiveté about the life of a director...**

First up and last to bed. He's the permanently cheerful one you see breezing through the front entrance of Netherhall greeting students as he passes on to deal with another problem with the central heating. A shoulder to cry on, a motherly touch when someone's ill in bed, a firm hand when dealing with breaches of house rules, a fatherly air when Spanish teenagers arrive for the Summer Courses and think it is funny to call the fire brigade for the third time that week.

If there's one person residents throughout Netherhall's history never forget, it's their director. Many undergraduates will in later years recall with fondness his guiding hand and paternal concern, while many less-young postgraduates maintain a friendship forged over long conversations in the dining room, lounge or director's office. Without his concern for every resident, Netherhall could not maintain a family atmosphere.

Here is a list of some of the directors and chaplains from the 1970s onwards, with details of where they are now. Further information can be obtained from Netherhall.

**Fr Stephen Reynolds** director from 1970 to 1974, returned to Netherhall as chaplain (79-84) following his ordination in Rome. He is now the priest at Westpark Study Centre in Ealing.

**Neil Pickering**, resident (67, 69-70) and secretary 73-77, helped to spearhead the 1985-1995 Netherhall building project, along with Andrew Hegarty. He now lives in London, is chairman of the Netherhall Educational Association, and actively involved in fundraising efforts.

**Javier Castanon**, resident from 74 to 75, and from 80-91 and assistant director from 93-95, is busy with his new architectural practice, in partnership with George Rickman. He was the creative mind behind the new (1993-94) Netherhall buildings.

After leaving Netherhall, **Jim Mirabal**, director from 74-77, qualified as an accountant and has occupied several posts in the educational and public sectors. These have included the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England where he is director of finance

and administration. He lives at Grandpont House, Oxford.

**Fr Bernard Marsh**, director from 77-83, was ordained a priest in 1992, and is now living in London, and working at the regional headquarters of Opus Dei in the UK.

**Clifford Cobb**, secretary from 1977-80, is active in the world of publishing, most recently with Mecklermedia. He has also been director of Kelston Boys Club in Wandsworth since leaving Netherhall.

**Jack Valero**, resident from 78-81, started a computer software business



which he sold off in 1990. He now lives in London and is a full-time director of the Netherhall Educational Association

**Stephen Tsang** (78-81 and 83-85) was assistant director in 96-97 is now director of Rutland, a centre of Opus Dei adjacent to Netherhall. He has his own architectural practice in Chelsea, though he can often be seen adding the decorative touch to the new buildings of Netherhall to give the new purpose-built buildings the same family character of the old Victorian buildings.

After leaving Netherhall **Fr Michael Chan** (78-80) was ordained a priest in Rome. He then moved to the Philippines for a while before going to Singapore

where he is the priest of an Opus Dei Centre. He attended the Singapore reunion in November 1998, which was hosted in the Opus Dei centre next to the University.

**John Horgan**, secretary from 79-82 and resident since then, is teaching at Watford Grammar School. He regularly gives slide shows on the art galleries of London to new residents.

**Andrew Curtis**, resident in 85-86, is director of Westpark Boys Club in Ealing and secretary of Netherhall Educational Association.

**Paul Diaper** (82-93) left a career as a solicitor with the London Underground to become a priest of Opus Dei. He was ordained in Rome on June 8, 1997, which was attended by former residents Mike Delaney and In-Keun Lee. He is currently chaplain of Greygarth Hall in Manchester. Among the former residents who attended the Mass of Thanksgiving organised by his parents in Teddington, Middlesex, on 17th April were: David Exon, Chris Rouse, Michael Flaherty, Peter Brown Tony Day, Bill Boardman and Neil Pickering. Fr Gerard Sheehan, the current chaplain of Netherhall, was Master of Ceremonies. Fr Andrew Byrne also assisted.

**Andrew Hegarty**, (director 83-88), is director of Grandpont House in Oxford, and has recently completed a doctorate in 17th-century history. He is now a director of Netherhall Educational Association, but managing to keep his hand in with matters academic, for example by contributing articles to the *New Dictionary of National Biography*.

**Fr Andrew Byrne** (chaplain 84-85 and 93-94) taught moral theology at the Pontifical Atheneum of the Holy Cross in Rome from 85-93, with an emphasis on Faith and Culture. He is now living in London and working on an annotated bilingual (Spanish-English) edition of Blessed Josemaria Escriva's spiritual classic, *The Way*.

**Peter Bristow**, a resident in 1971 and later chaplain of Netherhall from 1985 to 1989, is now living in Manchester. He is a tutor on Moral Theology at Maryvale Institute of Theology in Birmingham. His book, *The Moral Dignity of Man* was published in 1992.

**Fr John Joly**, chaplain of Netherhall from 1986-1991, is chaplain of a boys club of Opus Dei in Badalona, Spain, and still playing golf.

**Paul Shrimpton**, assistant director from 89-91, returned afterwards to Grandpont House in Oxford and to his for-

mer post of maths master at Magdalen College School in Oxford. He has recently been appointed head of careers at the school, and should be completing a part-time PhD very soon.

**Peter Herbert** moved to Hong Kong after being director of Netherhall from 1988 to 1996, and is helping to set up the Sixth Form College of Tak Sun in Kowloon. This is now in its second year and growing very successfully.

**Fr Stefan Hnylycia**, chaplain from 90-94, recently moved to Glasgow to be chaplain of Dunreath Study Centre.

**Michael Lowenthal**, after 7 years as secretary (92-99), during which time he mastered the labyrinthine accounts of the Business Expansion Scheme, will head off to the Roman College in October. Matteo Farina will replace him as secretary.

**Gerard Sheehan**, assistant director from 85-86, went off to Rome and was ordained a priest in 1990. He has been chaplain of Netherhall since 1994.

**Peter Brown**, resident since 1985, worked as a City solicitor, initially for Allen & Overy, then for Royal Insurance. He left this position in 1996 to replace Peter Herbert as director of Netherhall.

**Patrick Kelly**, assistant director from 96-99, also works as a financial journalist in the City. He will be moving to Barcelona in September to start a 2-year Masters of Business Administration course at IESE, and at the same time co-author a guide to business schools.

Check  
out the Netherhall website:  
[www.netherhall.demon.co.uk](http://www.netherhall.demon.co.uk)

## Do you have e-mail?

Would you like to hear from former residents of Netherhall?

Then sign-up for the

Netherhall House Electronic Mail Postbox

Do you wish to register your e-mail address with Netherhall's e-mail postbox? This will allow other former residents to send an e-mail address which will be easy to locate and remember. Mail will then be forwarded automatically to your personal home or business e-mail. If you wish to use this service, email your details to

[alumni@nh.netherhall.org.uk](mailto:alumni@nh.netherhall.org.uk)

Please ensure your e-mail contains all of the following information:

(1) Title, Forename(s), Surname

(2) years at Netherhall

(3) e-mail address that you wish to register, i.e. the address you wish to receive mail at. Specify whether this is your home or business e-mail address

The Netherhall alumni e-mail postbox addresses use the format

[forename.surname@alumni.netherhall.org.uk](mailto:forename.surname@alumni.netherhall.org.uk)

e.g. [john.smith@alumni.netherhall.org.uk](mailto:john.smith@alumni.netherhall.org.uk)

## Who are they...? Why Netherhall?

*New residents of Netherhall inevitably wonder why so many young men of Opus Dei dedicate their lives to make Netherhall the unique place it is. In short, what motivates them? The answer is perhaps best expressed by Blessed Josemaria Escrivá (1902-1975), founder of Opus Dei, over 30 years ago:*

"Who are the men and women who have accompanied this poor sinner, following Christ? ...A great multitude of men and women of different nations, and tongues, and races, who earn their living with their professional work. The majority of them are married, many others single. They share with their fellow citizens in the important task of making human society more human and more just. And they work, let me repeat, with personal responsibility, shoulder to shoulder with their fellow men and experiencing with them success and failure in the noble struggle of daily endeavour, as they strive to fulfil their duties and to exercise their social and civic rights. And all this with naturalness, like any other conscientious Christian, without considering themselves special. Blended into the mass of their companions, they try at the same time to detect the flashes of divine splendour which shine through the commonest everyday realities."

— from *Passionately Loving the World*, a homily given by Blessed Josemaria Escrivá in 1967, at the University of Navarre, Spain.