

The District's Website

www.delasalle.org.uk

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The site was set up in the spring of 1995 by Brother Terrence Collins and is presently run by myself. It contains:

1. General information about our Order, De La Salle and Lasallian spirituality.
2. Contact information regarding our District, schools and past pupils.
3. Specific information on individual missions, e.g. L.D.W.P.
4. Latest news and forthcoming events, including articles from the Lasallian Magazine.

The website has gradually developed and now contains over fifty web pages, plus links to numerous articles, and although its appearance may be a bit dated, we know that around a thousand pages a day are accessed i.e. looked at. We know that those who discover our website via a search engine, such as Google, are either searching for information on De La Salle or a particular school. What I find extraordinary, is that one third of all the web pages looked at are articles from the Lasallian Magazine.

Over the past year I have been experimenting with the best way to publish the web version of the Lasallian Magazine. Initially the whole magazine was placed on the website, but this only created a very large file for downloading and also made available to world information that was unsuitable for general distribution, e.g. copyright articles and Community Notes. Therefore, we now publish on our website selected articles from the magazine that are grouped by the month of publication. Although the content of the articles are the same as in the magazine, the layout is slightly different including the addition of web-links. One by-product of producing the electronic version of the magazine is that the website now contains an archive of articles from the magazine.

The website has an email address, mail@delasalle.org.uk. The majority of emails are from past pupils asking to have their details placed

on our 'Past Pupil Email Exchange' page. We also have a steady stream of emails that would fit under the category of general enquiries. Some may be simple questions such as 'How can I become a Lasallian Volunteer?' and now and again I have a very unusual request. One such request was from West Yorkshire Police, who sent a picture of a school badge which they were trying to identify and which I was able to do.

Another unusual request was from JoAnne from Oakland, California, trying to find the history of a watch that was presented in 1961 to Mr. Boris Gregory by the pupils of St. Joseph's Academy, Blackheath. As with most historical requests I turn

to the Brothers who were in that Community at that time, but in this case, nobody had heard of a Mr. Gregory. Then I had an idea, maybe the past pupils would be able to help, and checking on our website I found several past pupils who were at Blackheath in 1961. The past pupils told us that Mr. Gregory was a Californian sports teacher who, as teacher exchange with Mr. Taylor, taught at the Academy for one year.

The majority of the people who access our website remain anonymous, quietly finding out about De La Salle, or searching for the contact details of a school, or just reading an article from our Lasallian Magazine, and for these the website provides an invaluable twenty-four hour service.

What of the future of the website? The main structure and its contents are fixed by the service it is providing, and therefore would only change if the above foci were to change. However, some people feel that the layout of the website needs to be updated, reflecting the more recent developments in web page design. We have explored the possibility of using a professional company to redesign our site, but due to the size of our site, the quotes were expensive and therefore the idea of redesigning the site was put on hold.

