



April 2006

The Old Mancunian

Edition 22

The Old Mancunian Editorship

It is very appropriate that we devote a significant amount of this issue to a tribute to our first editor and a founding father of *The Old Mancunian*, Don Isherwood, who died very suddenly in January. The service of thanksgiving on the 3rd February for his life was led by Rev John Roskilly (who left MGS in 1952). A full St Michael and All Angels Church in Bramhall heard John Roskilly give a memorial address (see below) and Simon Hunt and other singers from MGS sing ("When August Suns") during the course of the service. Don's widow, Liz, thanks all the people from MGS who attended Don's funeral. They were among the many who donated £1,855 for Christie's in Don's memory. I have assumed the editorship of *The Old Mancunian* at least for the time being, and Carole Pemberton at School, who is also, of course, Secretary of the OMA, will continue her indispensable role in its production. For those who do not know me, I was a pupil at MGS from 1947-54, had spells of teaching there from 1961-64 and 1965-66 and am a member of the OM Executive Council.

John Horsfield

Funeral Address for Don Isherwood

3rd February 2006

John 14:1-6

The death of someone whom we know and love is hard to come to terms with and it is made that much more difficult if it is really not expected – we have no opportunity to prepare ourselves for it. It is inevitably a time of sadness and grieving, and of crying, and there is nothing wrong with that. Such is the case with Don, so those words of Jesus can bring both hope and comfort. Hope, be-

cause they assure us that death is not just a pathway to empty nothingness, and of comfort because they show that dying is but moving closer to Jesus in the place that He has prepared for us. And that is where Don now is.

He was born in Gatley in 1934 being the only boy with four sisters, Elsie, Betty and Sybil being older than him, and Anne who was younger. After school in Gatley, he went to Manchester Grammar School where he took A-level in Sciences, hoping to train as a Doctor, and where I first met him. His father died when he was only 17 and Don was then head of the household. He did his National Service in the RAF and started work as a salesman for Rowntrees Chocolates to help support the family.

Among his hobbies were tennis and it was at Cheadle Lawn Tennis Club that he met and fell in love with Liz. He proposed to her within four weeks of them starting to go out together, but when he asked Liz's father if he might marry her, he was told he had to be earning £1000 a year – more even than his boss earned, never mind himself (we are talking of 1955 here). Taking advice from the careers master at Manchester Grammar School Don moved job to Burroughs Adding Machines and he and Liz were married in 1958 on, as he often said, "a perfect Spring day with not a cloud in the sky." They lived in Handforth and his beloved girls were born, Sally in 1959 and Jane in 1961.

In 1963 the family moved to Wolverhampton and were there for 4½ years, before returning to the Manchester area with a job as a Management Consultant in Computers at Peat Marwick Mitchell. One of the companies he worked

with while there was Century Oils in Hanley where he later became Management Services Manager and in 1984 a Director of the Company. Computers became very important in Don's life and he was a member of the British Computer Society. In Hanley he was appointed as a Governor representing Industry at Staffordshire Polytechnic, later to become Staffordshire University where he remained on the Board of Governors for 20 years. He maintained links with the University for the rest of his life and had been invited to have lunch there with the Queen at the end of March as part of her official tour of the historic Borough of Stafford, an appointment he will sadly be unable to keep.

He kept strong links, too, with Manchester Grammar School and gave much time to the Old Mancunians Newsletter which he edited for the last seven years and he was also a member of their Executive Committee. As a token of the School's regard for Don, children from there will be singing the School Song later in this service.

He loved all children and through his own was drawn into Girl Guiding at Benja Fold here in Bramhall where he worked in every and each support role from lighting camp fires, to cutting down trees, plumbing, electrics, cleaning, you name it. He was also able to pass on some of his computing know-how to the children of Gatley Primary School and here at Pownall Green where Sally and Jane worked for a time and he was able to enjoy being Father Christmas at both schools as well as at Bramall Hall.

His enthusiasm and help to future son-in-law Martin encouraged him to make a career

for himself in computing. Don's family have asked me to tell you some of their own happy memories of him: Rosie remembers that "Pa," as the grandchildren called him, always had a song for every occasion. He would sing "I'll take you home again Kathleen" at the end of a holiday, or "Put your shoes on Lucy" if he wanted one of the children to put on their shoes. Rosie accused him of making them up.

Matt remembers him jumping into the swimming baths at Hazel Grove, causing a huge wave, and coming up without his glasses which he had forgotten to remove.

Katie remembers when she couldn't pick up a rubber brick from the bottom at the deep end of the baths and he made her drop her pearl earrings to the bottom of the pool and patiently taught her to dive until she could get to the bottom.

Andy has happy memories of playing Badminton with Pa – he always played to win – a very strong competitive streak. Don taught his grandchildren to swim, bribed them into learning their multiplication tables and took them walking, cycling and for lovely days out. Sally and Jane will never forget the Wendy House which they were given by Father Christmas one year, which Don lit up with fairy lights and the whole family took a tray of tea down the garden at some unearthly hour to share the new present.

I met him first at Manchester Grammar School and when the family moved to Hazel Grove, I became their GP so continued to see him. I also had the great privilege of marrying Sally and Chris, and Jane and Martin and being involved in some measure with the appearance of grandchildren in the

world. I am therefore glad, if saddened, to be here with you today.

Don was a warm and gentle person, a devoted husband, father and grandfather all of whom will miss him greatly, as too will the many friends and colleagues who held him in such high esteem. He faced his cancer without flinching and the treatment with courage, determination – and a smile. Such a man was Don. The kindness of the many tributes which the family have received during the last few days are a great comfort to them.

And so we gather here this afternoon to thank God for his life, for the person that he was, for the privilege of knowing him and to commend him to the loving arms of Jesus until we all meet again in the great day of Resurrection. Until then, may he indeed rest in peace and in due time rise in glory.

Obituaries

Richard Andrew Helman (1990-97) died in December 2005. Graduating in Medical Science at Birmingham, he gained his private pilot's licence and became a restaurant owner in Arizona.

Keith Taylor (1960-69) died in January 2006. Graduating in Politics, Keith became a political scientist and charity founder.

John Dickinson (1933-39) died in November 2005. Industrialist and Benefactor after whom 1D and 2D were named in the 1990s.

William Henry Shercliff (1929-37) died in August 2005. He started School at Long Millgate and had R M Simkins as his first form master and Scout troop 1 Leader. He enjoyed the Owl's Nest and trekking.

From the High Master

We have just concluded a series of interviews, all of which were recorded and one of which was filmed, with Ian Bailey. Four boys from the first four years in the school and the School Captain ques-

tioned Ian about his days in the School as a boy and as a teacher. The boys were enthralled by his stories of earlier days – and even discovered his alliterative nickname! A memorable moment was his impromptu rendition of *When August Suns* – a song now rarely heard by the boys here. During the Michaelmas Term, a joint initiative promoted by Jewish and Muslim boys raised £2,800 for emergency medical services in Israel and Pakistan. Our boys have now decided to raise some £40,000 for an ambulance in the School's name for Magen David Adom which will be of enormous benefit to all in Israel; and plans are under way for the School to have a permanent supportive link with a School in Indonesia. I have been delighted to see how well our boys and the wider school community respond to such challenges. We have, of course, already established a significant link with a school in Uganda. The School aims to provide active and long-term support for and links with charitable endeavours on every continent – perhaps with the exception of Antarctica! I have recently appointed Alan McDonald, one of our science teachers and a keen camper and trekker, as our Director of Activities – a new and important post. He will be responsible for ensuring the continuing success of outdoor activities for our boys. With large numbers wishing to join our camps and treks and to take part in shorter weekend activities, his role in encouraging a new generation of MGS boys will be vital.

I look forward to welcoming Old Mancunians back to the School for the 1960s reunion on Saturday 6th May.

It was with great sadness that I attended the memorial service for Don Isherwood earlier this term – but there was also a sense of celebration of a life shared with others and in the service of others. He was a great and loyal friend of the

School and will be missed.

1,000 miles

In July MGS will lose one of its most charismatic teachers when Leighton ('Bo') Bohl retires after 30 years in the English Department. As a farewell present, he is planning to cycle approximately 1,000 miles to raise funds for the MGS Bursary Fund. For further details, and to make a contribution, you can visit his website via

www.oldmancunians.org.

Old Exchange Days

'Manchester Mafia' has for me a connotation different from the one adopted recently in *The Old Mancunian*. I should be interested to learn whether my recollection is shared by other OMs, especially of the early 1940s output. At that time the term 'Mafia' was not in common use in the UK. For that we had to await *The Godfather*. Applying the metaphor retrospectively is, however, an entertaining fancy.

In 1941, from U4C, I was delivered to the School's careers service, in the person of 'Grunter' Griffiths. He filed me under 'office work'; in due course he informed me that the vacancy for me had been notified; and so - for fifteen shillings a week, ancient top hat provided - I came to occupy the office boy's stool in a firm of yarn agents. The firm was housed in Dickensian premises adjacent to the then Manchester Guardian office. The gloomy ambience would have been congenial to *The Godfather*. The hat was my badge of recognition when I, a humble foot soldier, delivered messages to the firm's dealers on the Cotton Exchange. Adjusting the hat to fit a variety of head sizes over the years was achieved by newspaper (the Manchester Guardian of course) beneath the head band. The dealers were no doubt making offers that could not be refused.

In breaks between errands, spent in tea shops to supplement the meagre official food rations, I compared notes with

School contemporaries who were similarly occupied and I came to realise that to some extent we as School-Certificated OMs had been recruited by older OMs to endow the hurly-burly of commerce with the quality that the cavalry is said to lend to battles as much as to match abilities with job specifications. In short we were Manchester Mafiosi.

As I made my subsequent career in the public employment service I used to wonder whether the School's careers service had improved; and whether the Manchester Mafia had raised its sights and was recruiting foot soldiers with academic degrees.

Ronald Stephenson, 62 Ludlow Road, Church Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6AD

(ronald.stephenson2@btinternet.com)

MGS and Ulysses

I was interested to read that Eric James's rather eccentric censorship excluded "Ulysses"..... from MGS.

He did not, however, exclude MGS from Joyce's novel, for Buck Mulligan therein purchases in fee simple, 'forever, the freehold of Lambay Island', from 'Lord Talbot de Malahide', later described by the novelist as 'hereditary lord-admiral of Malahide and of the seas adjoining'. The same phrase is used for Talbot de Malahide in Dr Smith's 'Manchester School Register' (publ.1865), where 'TDM' is a contributor to Volume II. According to that register, three Talbots of Malahide (sic) Castle entered the Manchester Free Grammar School on 14.02.1780. Three brothers followed, and a seventh gave his address as Phoenix Park. The register records, also, a pleasing portrait of one Lord Talbot de Malahide, a 'lithographed portrait' of Sir John Talbot (a full admiral under Nelson and Collingwood), and a picture of William Talbot's Van Diemen's Land estate, on the School's refectory walls.

I began this letter some dis-

bering advice given by I Tenen to Remove Beta, on an occasion when Ike's Old Mancunian, and Balliol, friend Louis ('Magnolia Street') Golding was visiting the school. "So, Mr Tenen," said the over-coated gentleman, crammed into a front-row desk. "The best essays start one inch from the margin? I must remember that."

John Bentley

(jhbentley2002@yahoo.co.nz)

London & South East Section

Please note the following events for 2006. If you wish further details please contact Nick Gartside.

Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com

1 May Tower of London visit

13 May Sussex Lunch

15 June Beating the Retreat, followed by supper at The Commonwealth Club

5 July Pub evening at 'The Anchor', nr Southwark Cathedral, from 7.30 pm.

14 July Golf day at Theydon Bois. To book a place e-mail Jeremy Atherton at:

dentistjem@aol.com

September Croquet Day

7 Nov AGM at Ye Olde

Cheshire Cheese

Midlands Section

The Summer Luncheon will be held on Saturday 17th June this year at the Anchor Inn, Eckington, near Pershore. The Annual Luncheon and AGM will be held on Saturday 25th November this year at the Forest Hotel, Dorridge, Solihull. Further details will be sent to members about 4 weeks before each function. Informal lunches for members and their wives are now held at the Old Joint Stock Hotel in Temple Row in the centre of Birmingham on the first Tuesday of each month. Members wishing to attend this luncheon are asked to communicate with Dan Binnion.

(tel no 01902 756894)

South West Section

The Committee was about to confirm this year's activities when it was shocked and saddened to learn of the tragic death of our long-standing

Treasurer, Geoff Richardson. We enjoyed his company and appreciated his work for the Section. Our condolences go out to his widow, Jill and the family.

The Section will next get together in Exeter on 25th June. We will be present at a Commemoration Service in the Cathedral for Hugh Oldham on the 487th anniversary of his death when the High Master will lay a wreath on his tomb.

As usual, we will follow the service with luncheon at a nearby hotel. Please note that ALL Old Mancunians are welcome to attend this occasion. The autumn event will be held in Plymouth on 4th November. Apart from lunch in the Royal Western Yacht Club, and after seeing the sights of the city, we will have a guided tour of the Royal Naval Base and its Museum.

Ed Bridge (01934 834521)

Football Section

Old Mancunians AFC is about to embark on its centenary season in 2006-7. The Club is currently enjoying one of its most successful periods, with four teams competing every Saturday in the Lancashire Amateur League. The first team is currently second in the Premier League and in the quarter finals of the Cup. The Club would like to hear from any ex players/members who would like to contribute to creating a history of the Club.

Any articles, photographs or player's recollections would be greatly appreciated and would help immensely in our quest to document the Club over the ages. If you have something to contribute or would just like to enquire about joining the Club please contact Mike Richards (Mrichards@deloitte.co.uk, 07867 64233) or Geoff Loughlan (geofflo@lineone.net).

20/30 Club

We usually meet for lunch on the third Friday each month at the Freemasons Lodge on Bridge Street, off Deansgate in Manchester. After lunch a speaker will talk to us for about half an hour, and re-

cently we have been lucky to see the School Captain and Vice-Captains, the High Master, and Sir Douglas Brown. The forthcoming meeting on the 27th June is different - we will visit the School for a buffet lunch, where we are joined by members of the staff and pupils. This gives us an opportunity to see a small but stimulating selection of the current activities.

Guests and new members (OMs or previous members of the school staff) are always welcome. Please contact Alex Wells (alex_wells@onetel.com)

Chess Section

Saturday 16th September is the 20th in a series of OM chess events at School dating back to 1984. For this event we are planning to hold an individual tournament where everyone plays everyone else, and trophies are awarded for the winning individual and the best team. We are in touch with most of the leading players from the past 20 years, but have lost contact with a number of players who started at the School in the 1980s and who have played in the earlier events in this series. We would therefore particularly encourage these people to get back in touch and ensure that their era is represented at this event. Contact Peter Webster (peter@ichthus.com)

Happy Days at Grasmere

I was interested in the article on Grasmere Camp in the September edition of *The Old Mancunian*. I was at North Manchester School from 1930-35, before going to MGS after passing my Matric. I went to School camp at Grasmere every year 1930-35. The camp was in a big field below a barn used for meals and meetings. We slept in bell tents in the field, and washed in the cold stream which ran from the gate down the valley. At the bottom across (beyond?) the stream were latrines, behind a sacking screen and the thunder boxes with fitted metal lids. This prompted a special poem writ-

ten for the camp magazine, (read every evening in the barn):-

'You may talk of the wind and the weather

You may talk of the birds how they sing,

But we take off our hats

To the lids on the lats,

Made by us as supplied to the King.'

We were under the supervision of two masters—Tommy Stott and Bill Wray. Stott taught English Lit and Latin, Wray Physics and Chemistry. We went on daily hikes—generally to Sour Milk Gill, where we would strip and swim naked in the cold stream.

We were divided, on arrival into daily shifts, with one a day serving on 'fag duty' - serving meals, cleaning up, as well as cutting wood for the cooking stove, and cooking the meals under the supervision of Stott or Wray. I have very happy memories of Grasmere. Albert Watkiss, 30854 Olund Road, Abbotsford BC, V48 1Z9, Canada

Seton and Clynes Recalled

Reminiscing about previous masters, I remember Cuthbert Seton generally gave me 1/10 for my history essays for School Certificate and threatened me with another year with him if I didn't improve. So I worked hard and managed a credit, which I didn't need for sciences! Robinson sat on the front row and his desk used to bear the full brunt of 6 or 8 large cardboard mounted maps or diagrams, as Seton dropped them with gusto from the top of the cupboards, the dust would cover the first two rows of desks.

His private detentions were to be avoided. If the punishment was for bad titles on your homework, you were given an A5 sheet of paper to draw lines with a ruler until the sheet was a mass of ink. This was difficult enough without him giving you a poke in the ribs as he passed. Unless the sheet was absolutely perfect you had to start again. A great character

and teacher.

I think Sol Clynes returned from the war in 1947 to Science Sixth Maths, teaching me chemistry. When my son Roger was in Sol's class in 1978, we went to a Parents' Evening and were disappointed our son had only achieved 75-80%. Sol leaned back to reach his filing cabinet and offered to get my results out and compare them! Derek Blain (1943-47)
1 Stokesay Road, Sale M33 6ON

The 2006 Hugh Oldham Lecture will be given on Monday 3rd July by OM Michael Wood, historian and television presenter. Tickets and further details will be available in May from Sally Rogers, PA to the High Master.

The Old Boys' Dinner will be held on Saturday 18th November. Further details from Paul Rose, Recorder, 95 Century Buildings, 14 St Marys Parsonage, Manchester M3 2DE. Tel no 0161 831 7323

(Paul.Rose@halliwells.co.uk)

1960-69 Reunion

A reunion for all those boys who joined the School and Masters of that era, will be held on Saturday 6th May. For further details contact Carole Pemberton at School on 0161 224 1746.

MGS Parents' Society Extravaganza

Last year's very successful event will be repeated on Sunday 2nd July 2006 from 11am-2pm at the School.

OMs are most welcome and being evergreen may find the Bungee Run, assault course and 35 foot slide particularly to their taste. *Sivoris* will be there and food will be on offer. Other features will include a Birds of Prey display. A family ticket will cost £5 with adults £2 and children £1 each. OAPs and under 5's free.

If you wish to book in advance send a cheque payable to the *MGS Parents' Society* at the

School with a sae or alternatively pay on the day at School.

If you wish further details contact the Chairman of the MGS Parents' Society, Laura Evans at 12 Brookwood Avenue, Sale, Cheshire M33 5BZ tel no 0161 973 2084 or 07976 894419.

As part of the MGS Parents' Society event at School on Sunday 2nd July, I would be happy to arrange for Old Boys and their families to have access to look around the School buildings if they contact me via i.thorpe@mgs.org.

Cufflinks

Just to remind OMs in a free spending mood that the MGS Parents Society has for sale Gold Cufflinks with MGS Crest £125 and Silver cufflinks with MGS Crest at £40. Examples can be inspected at MGS or www.mgs.org and purchased ones can be collected by arrangement at MGS.

Cheques should be payable to *MGS Parents' Society* sent with order to Ellen Wheeldon, 55 Heaton Moor Road, Stockport SK4 4JY tel no 0161 432 7653. All proceeds from the sale of such are used towards the purchase of items for the School which will benefit the boys.

Seventy-five years at Old Hall Lane

MGS had its first term at Old Hall Lane in September 1931. Old Mancunians reading may have memories of this fresh start or may have heard the memories of others. It would be good to hear of them.

Dicky Radford

In your September issue Brian Berry asks "Why has Dicky Radford disappeared from polite conversation?" I hope he hasn't, for he made a distinctive contribution to School activities—as a charismatic conductor and Flt Lt CG Radford MC MA OC no 600 Sqn ATC (as Mr Berry recalls).

I remember, when home on leave from the RAF, watching one of his parades and being impressed with the smartness

of his squadron.

I also recall—with affection—his musical activities, training choirs for Gilbert & Sullivan performances, or for the Founder's Day Service in Manchester Cathedral, or Speech Day in the Free Trade Hall.

He always gave me a friendly wink after processing into the Memorial Hall for morning prayers when I was at the organ—having discovered at the last minute, by timorously but loudly knocking at the Masters' Common Room Door, what the hymn for the day was to be.

Humphrey Wynn (1931-38)
14 The Moorings, Hindhead, Surrey GU26 6SD tel 01428 606679

A Film Production and the Film Society

I was interested in two items in the latest *Old Mancunian*.

One was the reference to Francis Minns. He never taught me but I knew him through the Film Society which he ran after School during the Autumn and Spring Terms. This showed classical cinema films, eg, *Battleship Potemkin* and *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, and much more to my liking, Ealing Comedies and Hitchcock. I particularly recall *Kind Hearts and Coronets* and *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Lady Vanishes* and a slightly risqué film to be shown to schoolboys at the time, *It Happened One Night*, in which an unmarried couple were seen sharing a bedroom. I recall Minns asking me what I thought of it but cannot remember my reply.

Having played with my father's 9.5 mm cine camera, I was at the front when Minns agreed we should make a silent story film the first few days into a holiday. His department had a 16mm Bolex camera and a team came together, including Harold Rottesman (writer and co-director) Michael Chisnall (cameraman), myself (assistant cameraman and stills photographer) Geoffrey Roberts, David Newman and our actors William Stevenson

(master) and Alec Elmer (schoolboy). Francis Minns was as enthusiastic as the rest of us and most encouraging probably because of his eccentricity.

We were later featured in the *Daily Sketch* which reproduced a large photograph, the story line of the article being that we had borrowed a tea trolley from the 'dinner lady' (Mrs Bedford) to film a shot of the master chasing the boy along a corridor at speed. Chisnall lay on his stomach on the trolley holding the camera while several of us pushed it along in a straight line as we could. As the stills photographer I produced a montage of production stills and was thrilled when *Ulula* printed it as a centre spread. This was my first published work preceding a lifetime as a professional photographer.

This leads me on to John Hartley's letter re the relevance of success at school to later achievements. Although I too appeared useless (to myself as well as to masters) at some subjects I have since enjoyed a successful and extremely satisfying career and many times have been left in no doubt that MGS laid excellent foundations for this. I have served as President of my professional institute, examiner, author, editor, lecturer in several countries and contributor to British and American professional journals as well as being a working photographer, originally mainly in industry and latterly as a portraitist.

I would also like to add to previously published testimonies to Ernest Hollowell, who as a keen photographer himself recognised my interest, encouraged me and convinced my parents that here was a worthwhile career to follow. Ian Gee 1944-49 Sale High 1949-54 MGS.

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tel no 01242 261918.

Please address all correspondence and news to Mrs Carole Pemberton at MGS (c.m.pemberton@mgs.org) or to John Horsfield, Editor, also at MGS.