



# The Old Mancunian

December 2002

## London OMA Composition Prize 2002

We make no apology for repeating this heading. Without doubt this is one of the biggest events staged by any section of the OMA on behalf of the School and fully deserves your support. We also repeat the invitation on their behalf.

“All Old Boys and their guests will be very welcome to attend a concert to be given by pupils of MGS at St John’s Smith Square, London on Friday 21st of February 2003 at 7:30pm. We hope to fill the 600 seat auditorium.

The programme will feature chamber works by well-known composers, but the highlight will be the world premiere of the composition written by an MGS pupil and awarded the London OMA Composition Prize, 2002. The value of the prize is £500. **Tickets priced £10, concessions £8, will be on sale from the St John’s Box Office from January 1st.** Telephone 020 72 222 1061

## MGS Angels

The initial meeting of nine members with two members of staff (Ian Thorpe and Judy Robinson as Treasurer) in support, met at the Yang Sing on 24th October 2002. Apologies were received from six other members. It was announced that there was £15,500 donated by members, with a further growth anticipated.

Discussion focussed on the need to help eligible Old Mancunians and MGS sixth formers apply for grants to be placed on the old boys’ website [www.oldmancunians.org](http://www.oldmancunians.org) This has now been done. Ian also addressed the sixth form assembly at School on 20th November, and some serious enquiries are being developed.

It was agreed that 31st January 2003 should be the deadline for applications.

Subject to the response Paul Ormerod, who was appointed Chairman of the Committee will make arrangements for our next meeting to take place in London in February 2003.

The official part of the proceedings lasted one hour, followed by an excellent meal, (thanks to Gerry Yeung for the choice of menu and wine). It was resolved that future meetings should offer similar opportunities for an enjoyable meal and a report from School on matters such as the AS/A level marking and current sixth formers attitudes to commerce and industry.

Ian Thorpe

## Rugby & Soccer Dinners

Any Rugby or Soccer men interested in a good dinner? Can I encourage you to look at the MGS website [www.mgs.org](http://www.mgs.org) as soon as possible, for advance information about the Soccer and Rugby Club Dinners in April.

I can find the info and I am web illiterate, so you should be OK!! See Old Boy events. Further details will follow in January and I will alert you then.

## Rugby Sponsors

Rodger Alderson would also like to hear from anyone interested in either personal or corporate sponsorship of School Rugby. The deals in return give many benefits to the sponsors. Look at the website, or contact **Rodger Alderson** at School for further details of the above.

## Staff Common Room

For those of you with memories of hanging round the door of the rather dark and dingy old masters’ Common room, there are still boys waiting at the entrance of the present brighter staff common room hoping to meet members of staff. The staff may all look much younger, but then your mole is getting much older.

Edition 12

One story I heard this term was that the ‘A’ level fiasco should have been foreseen by the powers that be. In 2001 students all over the country took ‘AS’ levels for the first time. Those that did badly in certain subjects dropped them. This was in effect a filter applied half way through, the other aspect was that they then knew what they had to do and applied themselves more to their subjects.

The problems multiplied, presumably due to action of those ministers and civil servants ordering ‘an adjustment’ in a bureaucratic way, to bring results nearer to the previous year. This was at a time when the educational adjudicators were on holiday.

The High Master was heard to say that MGS had had a good year achieving 2nd, 23rd and 37th place in the ‘A’ level results, depending upon which newspaper you read! The School achieved a very respectable 85% of A or B grades. He went on to say “We would never achieve the 92% level, because we do not cut out the lower achieving students as some London schools do.” And he added, “We don’t want to.”

## Scout Canal Boat Reunion

Former members of Troop One Scouts and MGS Canal Societies who cruised the canals on the Narrow boat *William* are invited to attend a reunion at the Boat Museum Ellesmere Port on the afternoon of Saturday 19th April 2003, (during the Museum’s annual Easter gathering of traditional boats) to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the boat’s launch. Details from **Alan Jones Tel 01925 740386 or email [alanjudycsf@btopenworld.com](mailto:alanjudycsf@btopenworld.com)** (See article page 4)

## GAP YEAR HELP

I run a gap programme for volunteers from around the world in Central Brazil and we are now involved with a series of social, cultural and

indigenous outreach projects. I am looking to MGS for help in supporting these projects and possible co-operation on the part of MGS boys. Further information available on our website [www.nativeenglish.com.br](http://www.nativeenglish.com.br)

I would appreciate staff at MGS contacting me – Mr NJM Munday – who was my form master for many years in particular, as well as any other member of staff (or pupils) who may recall my name.

Many sincere thanks – by the way, read the Good Schools Guide write-up on MGS, and I am very proud to have been part of the School. I would now like to give something back – broaden the scope of the current lads at School.

**Steve Robinson (1982-89)**  
**Director, Native English Ltda**  
**Rua Sao Benedito, 306**  
**Bairro Lixeira, Cuiaba**  
**Mato Grosso 78.008-100**  
**Brazil**

## Any Other Winners?

I was on “Who wants to be a Millionaire” last year and won £32,000! I wondered whether any of the many brighter OMs than myself, have been lucky enough to get on the show and reward their academic brilliance more handsomely. It would be interesting to know if any OMs have been a life saving ‘phone a friend’ leading to great rewards for friends of theirs.

**Julian Bloom (1976-83)**

## Oops! Guilty M’Lud

What a howler by the Editor. If he reads the Blue Book carefully he will realise Fred Hyslop’s brother was Albert (not Archibald who left in 1928!)

Edward Knowles (1950-58)  
[Edwardknowles@onetelnet.uk](mailto:Edwardknowles@onetelnet.uk)

# News and Views

## Congratulations

**David Nott (Staff lists 1963-1980)** has been awarded a personal Chair in Foreign Language Studies by Lancaster University, where he is Head of Department for European Languages and Cultures.

## Old Boys' News

**Paul M Ager (1970-76)**

Paul's Mother wrote me a very nice letter giving me apparently rather belated news of Paul's change of address. She writes, "He is seven years married and a Dental Surgeon who can put LDS (Glasgow) after his name. He owns a Dental Practise in Gatley" His older brother **John S Ager (1968-74)** now lives in North Carolina with his American born wife and 13 year old son. She says "John does complicated things with computers".

She went on to say "I will miss reading the MGS News-letters and I must ask Paul to pass them on to me! We parents are eternally grateful for the wonderful start our boys had with their MGS Education. John was a Foundation Scholar".

## Staff Nicknames

Key who took us for English, was Oscar – derived no doubt from his initials which were 'OS'. McGuire, the pianist of the 'Pedagogies and whenever required, of the Dramatic Society, was inevitably 'Maggy'. Heywood, he never taught me, but to Maths Sixth he was 'the Old Man', said affectionately and with more than a touch of reverence. Maugham, yes, he was 'Killer', but in my day a relaxed and immensely competent communicator, particularly of calculus. Wood, to all of us he was 'Gosser'. It was rumoured he had been gassed in the first World War. Griffiths, a bit improbably, he was 'Danny' or 'Daddy'.

Smyth (not Tommy Smith who came back from Sale). He was Irish and to us he was 'Mustorr' Smyth said in the strongest possible stage Irish accent. His favourite phrase was "I'll send you to a Sattor-day, but he never did.

## Christmas 2002

**Noel Thompson (1946-51)**

Thank you for the TOM which dropped through my door this morning. I wrote to Ian Bailey a couple of times about "Staff Nicknames," and my recollections are similar to those in Noel Thompson's letter (though I pre-date him by a few years.) I would add "Smiggy" Smyth, "Johnny" Hunter, "Chang" Lund, "Daddy" Griffiths and "Mac" Ricketts. Incidentally, surely "Jasper" was Bowden not Boden?

I am intrigued by R J Westrop's letter and the two replies. I must agree with Stan Nield, that some of the teaching in those post-war days was "uninspiring." However, one person's comments on teachers should never be taken in isolation: they can be very personal, and surprisingly, teachers change as the years go by! Stan Nield's and my recollections of D.J. Williams illustrate the point. He taught us Chemistry in ScVI(iii)ma and (ii)ma. It was his first year of teaching and he was certainly not then the inspiring "shining light" that Stan recalls! Reams of blackboard notes, and the highlights were when he burned his fingers, or gave himself an electric shock! After leaving school, I found the textbook he had used as his own guide — I recognised lots of the notes he had given us verbatim!

Two more examples: Field and Winterbottom have been spoken of as interesting, inspiring (that word again) teachers. They taught us science in U3a and U4a and it was BORING! Field in particular just filled the board with notes to be copied down. Yet when I taught at MGS in the Summer of 1960 (filling in a term after finishing a D.Phil. and starting my first teaching job at Oundle) "Freddie" Winterbottom went out of his way to be helpful to this very "green" teacher.

I recall E D Hodge, who taught me Maths in the fourth year and again in ScVI maths. He would enter the room and begin writing on the board without a word or a glance at the class. In the Sixth he left most of us behind pretty

quickly: the interested boys sat on the front row and he taught them while the rest of us whiled away the time (in my case getting homework done!) What a contrast to B G J Wood (ScVIim) and "Daddy" Griffiths (Aleph 1), they were inspiring.

As for "Billy" Hulme: I think he was past his "vintage years" when I knew him as form master and French and German teacher in 1948/49 in U3a and U4a. Certainly his wooden spoons had disappeared into legend by then! He was arbitrary, unpredictable, eccentric, yes, but he gave me a basic knowledge of French and German grammar which are still with me over fifty years on, in spite of being a scientist! One mistake in an adjective ending and you had to write out the whole table of endings, all cases, singular and plural, definite and indefinite and article — with your own examples! P D Wood mentions "Bert" Parnaby. He taught us English for School Cert (Macbeth, Milton's minor poems etc). He was new to the school (and to teaching.) He made us learn great chunks of Macbeth and Lycidas - with all punctuation correct as well! I shall always be grateful to him for stocking my mind with (some) great literature. Many years later he was referred to by a teaching colleague of mine as "the only HMI I ever met who was any use at all." High praise indeed.

From MGS I went up to Merton, and I have always been intrigued by the way MGS assigned us to colleges. It was assumed, without question that we would be entered for Oxbridge, and I remember Roger Stone (wonderful physics teacher) standing up in front of the class and saying "Any of you got a father or a grandfather who went to Oxford or Cambridge? No? Then we'll just allocate you to a college. When I think of the heart-

searching that goes on nowadays I shall always be grateful for being sent to Merton. I was a very young naïve Northern grammar school boy, and I found myself

## Page 2

accepted and welcomed. (Incidentally the old chestnut about the two freshman from MGS at the same college who didn't know one another until they met at Oxford actually happened to me and Gilbert Benson!)

I wonder if anyone else remembers the school cellars where some of us who had got Oxbridge places were allowed to do practical work on our own? It's enough to give the Health and Safety people nightmares! There were rooms full of war surplus electronic equipment down there; I wonder what became of it all? Enough waffling on — a disease of the old! Feel free to use any or all, or none of this, as you see fit. **W. John Shore (Shorty) (1946 – 53) 215 Whitecross, Abingdon OX13 6BW 01235 520470 [jandgshore@onetel.net.uk](mailto:jandgshore@onetel.net.uk)**

**It is worth visiting the School just to see the new blue toilets in the basement at the bottom of the main staircase. You wouldn't recognise the place! South Manchester**

The lady who taught the top class, Miss E Bice will be remembered by many pupils, not least for the fact that when I got married I received a Ronson table lighter, as did a fellow OM and old friend Peter K Kershaw (1938-45). My father another OM who knew her said that she did this for all her old pupils who were getting married.

When the War started I was staying with my grandparents in North Wales so was not evacuated to Blackpool with the School. I did however, soon return to Heaton Moor. I along with others was called upon to fill sand bags at the School. This constituted my first "education" at MGS I seem to remember being very fed up with it! **William T Cook (1939-44)**

## OMA AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held at Sam's Chophouse, Chapel Walks, Manchester, on Tuesday 19th November. The High Master chaired the meeting. The Reports and accounts were accepted and thanks expressed to Philip Johnson, Hon Treasurer, and our Hon Auditor Jonathan Brownson.

Gavin McBride who was co-opted onto the Executive during the year, was officially elected. The other Members of the Executive were re-elected without opposition. Martin Stephen asked for the Authorisation on behalf of the Executive to enable it to make appointments of Vice Presidents to support Tim Hall who as Senior Vice president continues to represent the Association at various gatherings.

This was a rather more cosy and intimate affair than usual. The venue was slightly noisier. Numbers attending were slightly up on last year and we hope to continue investigating other interesting locations for this annual gathering.

## NW Golf Day

It was a beautiful morning when three intrepid golfers met-up at mid-day to take up the challenge of the Chapel-en-le-Frith golf course in Derbyshire. The course which surrounds the superb new clubhouse has been rebuilt and improved recently. It now boasts a full 18 hole, par 72 course with an official length of 6434 yards.

Two of us had never played there before and we all set off full of confidence across the road which divides the first nine holes from the second half of the course to find the first hole. After a little march along a side road we found we were actually at the start of the second. Not deterred, we agreed to start there and go back to the first later and that was the pattern of a very light hearted day's golf. The course was surprisingly level, only undulating slightly, with a large number of quite broad fairways some of which doglegged interestingly. We

found the greens extremely fast and the putts very easily rolled way past the hole!

We talked about our memories of MGS and of the various extra curricular activities such as treks and camping at Grasmere and Lyonshall in Herefordshire, which we had enjoyed. With a twenty year age difference we were amazed at the more relaxed atmosphere our younger competitor had experienced at School some years later.

It was a magnificent day with not a cloud in the sky, so we had no excuse for the standard of play which with one exception left something to be desired!! We laughed so much at our attempts to master what appeared to be such a simple course. However, we must have enjoyed it, because we have agreed to meet up again next year.

I would say to all OM golfers, "How about joining us next year for a lovely day out with both School and golf as the theme, with plenty of nostalgia? We are suggesting May and this time we promise to publish a day and date which match on the calendar". **(Oops sorry about the date! Ed)**

## P E Ireland (1942-49)

## London Section

We recently held our AGM at Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese where Ian Shepherd was elected as Chairman and Eric Elmer as Vice Chairman.

Looking ahead to 2003 the main event will be the School Concert at St John's Smith Square, SW1 on Friday 21 February, at which the London Music Section Composition Prize will be played. Tickets will be available from the St John's Smith Square box Office in early January, and all Old Mancunians, their family and friends are encouraged to support the School and attend this event.

The 2003 Annual Dinner will be held at the House of Lords on Friday 7 March and details will be available from the Secretary. Nick Gartside.

[Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com](mailto:Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com)

## Flat 16

69/71 St. George's Drive  
LONDON SW1V 4DB

## Midlands OMA

The Annual General meeting and Luncheon was held at the Forest Hotel, Solihull on 16th November 2002. Thirty four people were present, including twenty member and their ladies. The High Master, Vice President Tim Hall and Ian Bailey were guests. After luncheon the Chairman welcomed all those present. In response the High Master referred to the inspired teaching at the School and the opportunities given to pupils. The School backed its own judgement and consequently was one of the most distinctive schools in the country. Following some interesting observations concerning the recent 'A' levels episode, the High Master advised those present of the satisfactory progress of the Bursary fund.

At the Annual General Meeting which followed, the Chairman reported that three functions have been held in the past year. A new Committee was elected and members approved another donation to the Bursary Fund. Members were also reminded of the informal luncheons held on the first Tuesday of each month in Birmingham, with ladies also being most welcome.

For more details please contact:  
**Dan Binnion, Membership Secretary, 01902 758447**

## South West OMA

Ian Thornton advised me that Peter Saunders (1943-46) a past Chairman of the Section, died on August 13th after a brave struggle against serious illness. Peter was the son of Jack WJB Saunders (1945-61) who tried to keep us all fit in the Gym.

**Frances Annear (1984-2000) Honorary Secretary, Chestnut Cottages Sand, Wedmore Somerset BS28 4XF Tel 01934 713865**

**Congratulations to Frances on her appointment as Head of Geography at Badminton School. Ed**

## Sussex & SE Section

For details please contact: John Shippen at 4 Graftons, Christ's Hospital, Horsham, West Sussex. RH13 7LU

**Please note the correct telephone number is 01403 247533.**

I always stop to read "*The Old Manc*" the moment it drops through the my letter box. Its always interesting and occasionally there is something in it appertaining to my generation.

Just a few comments; a word of advice to Dr Westrop. If you feel the need to write such a letter, do so by all means, but wait 24 hours before posting it and think again. Incidentally, his name does not appear in my (original) copy of the "Blue Book" – I bet he didn't play Rugby, or even Soccer! On the subject of Staff Nicknames, Toby Cantrell and dear old Harry Lob, I was whacked by both, but still have fond memories.

"Sixty years on". My wife and I have just celebrated our Diamond Wedding. Our Guest of honour was Derek Barrowcliff (1930-37) who was our Best Man in 1942. We had been together in Sc1V and ScV1, before he went off to Oxford and I went to Edinburgh and have kept in touch for over 60 years. (Incidentally, he is Dr (shades of Westrop!) and may I say I am entitled to "Commander RNR", but never use it! Best Wishes,  
**Ian W Callan (1928-36) Winllan, Talsarn, Lampeter, Ceredigion SS48 8QE**  
**Congratulation on your Diamond Wedding to you and your wife.. Ed.**

## STOP PRESS

The death of Phil Wade, School Rugby Captain 2000-01, in a car accident, has shocked the School and his many friends.

December 2002

## Canal Boat, The William Story

(See notice on page 1)

The canal narrow boat *William* was seventy years old this year. Harold Gwyther (1945-54), John Wilson (1954-61) and I bought it in 1962 when it ceased trading as a cargo carrying boat.

R Simkins, Classics Master 1922-1966 persuaded us to help him with Troop One Scouts and Harold and I took over the Troop when he retired. We were its Scout Leaders until 1993, meeting at School and running annual camps. In 1953 I had the bright idea of hiring a canal boat as a scouting activity. It proved so popular that we ceased to hire boats and bought *William* mainly for Scout use. From 1963 to 1997 we ran 'barge crawls' (as Simmy called them) once or twice each year for Scouts and members of various School canal societies. There is a picture of an early cruise on plate XII of *The Manchester Grammar School* by Graham and Phythian. (And, incidentally, of Sir Howard Davies treading an early tight rope at Cumberland Cottage).

We think a re-union of the many former Scouts and canal society enthusiasts who travelled on *William* over the years would be a fitting celebration of the 70th and 40th anniversaries. We are arranging to hold it in the Rolt conference centre at the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port in the afternoon of Saturday the 19th April 2003 with *William* on display in the canal outside as part of the annual Easter gathering of traditional canal craft.

**Alan L Jones (1941-48)**  
Canalside Farm  
Off Hobb Lane, Moore  
Warrington WA4 5QT

## April Fools Days

I attended MGS in the 1950s and have happy memories of the lighter side of school life. April 1st was always celebrated in traditional fashion, often on a

grand scale. Three occasions I remember well were as follow.

One year at morning assembly the organist strayed from the usual solemn format. As the masters walked in with gowns flowing they were greeted with the Wedding March, which even produced a smile on Eric James' face. They left to the strains of the March of the Gladiators.

Another year, our class S3L had history for the first period and we managed to dismount Harry Plant's blackboard and hide it outside the window on the atrium before he arrived.

The best and most organised wheeze was when the whole school collected waste paper and put it all in Room 24 in screwed up balls. When Mr Raistrick arrived the class were sitting in a two foot high sea of waste paper. He was not amused!

**John Darwent (1951-57)**

## 1950-59 Reunion Speech

Dear Mrs Williams,

I could hardly believe my eyes when I read your emollient report of Alan Kenworthy's speech, which was nothing less than an embarrassing disgrace. I believe the complete silence at its thankful and eventual termination said that everyone else agreed with this view. Images and words used by Kenworthy may be permitted for a lads' night out with off duty police, But they are not for a gathering such as May 11th. My wife and I made something of an effort to attend the dinner, but as far as I was concerned, after Alan Kenworthy's speech I wished I had stayed at home.

I cannot believe that you do not agree with my opinion of this speech. I am therefore writing to you to criticise your letting Kenworthy off the hook in the newsletter. There is no law that says Old School newsletters must consist entirely of pleasantries and mush. Something might have been said in order to express the feelings of those who had

attended the dinner. Even a speech report comprising a column inch of white space would have said something!  
**David Crabtree (1952-8)**  
(The report was not written by Sally but by GIS Bailey Ed.)

## A Broader Curriculum?

As an exception to my rule, Michel Goldman (1940-47) thinks that MGS in the 40's was an example of CP Snow's "Two Cultures". Perhaps that was the case for the Classical Side, but on the Modern side, I learned French, German, Latin and European History. In School Cert I took these together with Maths, Additional Maths, and Physics with Chemistry. We also did Woodwork, we could not do Metal Work – the lathes were reserved for war work.

The only subject I failed was Art – odd because since school days, my work has often required the hurried undertaking of art work, whether diagrams for computer systems or presentations and notices or posters for Societies.

Now for the important point, I rarely see references, let alone write-ups of the two masters who were brothers – **Albert** and **Fred Hyslop**. Their life styles did not have the panache of other more fabled masters, but they stamped their personality on generations of Modern Side boys. Their life stories deserve a write up sometime.

**Philip Gordon Barnes (1939-46)**  
30 Torver Road, Harrow,  
Middlesex HA1 1TQ  
So, any volunteers? Ed.

## Who'd be a Teacher?

I forgot to add another name, which may appear in your next instalment, but in case it doesn't, my form master in R Alpha (1947-48) was W J Graham. He was always known as "Daddy" because he was grey before his time and deaf. One of my form mates who always sat at the back and shall remain nameless, used to set off a battery bell in his desk five minutes before the end of a lesson to mislead Graham and get us to the tuck-shop first.

On second thoughts, why should he remain nameless; it was "Lawrence Michael Seltser", who later became a lawyer.

Mike Broadbent (1944-50)  
[mike\\_broadbent@yahoo.com](mailto:mike_broadbent@yahoo.com)

Will the boy who did that please own up. More seriously though, does anyone know Lawrence's address?

## The Biographic Register

Dear Don,

I have arranged for a further £84.00 to be paid over to the Appeal Fund – this represents various 'blue book' sales since the last payment.

Regards

**Judy Robinson**  
Finance Manager

Well spotted to **Edward Dodson (1977-83)** and one or two others! He and they noticed a comma had crept in between Grammar and School on the 'return to' label address at Easter. We send out about 9,500 copies of *The Old Mancunian*. Where were the rest of you? Incidentally, Edward's new address is - **21 Brookside Avenue, Lymm, Cheshire, WA13 9BL**

## Editorial

**Please address all correspondence to**

**Mrs Sally Williams** in the School Appeal Office

[s.e.williams@mgs.org](mailto:s.e.williams@mgs.org)

or, to The Editor

'*The Old Mancunian*'

To register on internet go to [www.Oldmancunians.org](http://www.Oldmancunians.org)

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