



The Old Mancunian

Easter 2002

Credit Card

Fund-Raising

This edition of *The Old Mancunian* is accompanied by enclosures, two of which concern the invitation being sent to all friends of the School to consider registering for an affinity VISA card to be issued in association with MGS by MBNA.

The High Master's letter explains how important this can be to the School in supplementing our fund-raising activities on behalf of the Foundation Bursary Appeal, which is now three quarters of the way towards its £10 million target.

VISA have now announced that from 1st April 2002, the card will have the additional security of a password for online transaction processing in the UK. This feature is designed to help boost e-commerce and reduce internet fraud.

OMA Executive

The inaugural meeting of the new Executive was held in the High Master's Office with David Walton in the Chair.

The first task was to identify the main areas for management action. Six areas were picked out as in need of immediate attention, these are Membership Records, Membership Promotion, Financial Records, Section Liaison, Publications and Reunions. Individuals were allocated responsibility for each area.

The Chairman and Secretary of each OMA Section will receive minutes of each of the meetings together with a letter from the High Master for this initial distribution.

It is hoped to recruit other Members to the Executive, to cover a wider spread of ranges and interests.

It was proposed to give Honorary Membership of the Association to Ernest Fuller the Assistant Treasurer and Sally Williams the Secretary. The motion was passed unanimously, but will require ratification at the AGM.

This is your Committee, so please let us have any ideas for the development of the OMA.

Write to Sally Williams in the first instance.

Reunions

1999 Leavers

6th April 2002

A letter has been sent out to all those for whom we have an address who left in 1999.

Details are available on the website. Price £5:00 per head to include drinks.

1950-1959 Old Boys Reunion

This gathering to be held on Saturday 11th May, is open to all Old Boys who joined the School in the 1950s. It will again be organised by Sally Williams from School and applications were sent out at the beginning of March.

It is hoped to set up a small sub committee for future Reunions so that any changes to the arrangements will be made by Old Boys themselves. However, Sally is looking for two or three volunteers for this year's event who would be prepared to help her 'chase up' people who have not replied, as well as encouraging people to organise tables of 8 or 10.

Would any former member of Staff or Old Boy be prepared to make a short speech?

Any help would be most welcome – please get in touch with Sally at School – direct line 0161-228 0298

MGS Parents'

Society Fund

Raising Dinner

The Parents' Society is committed to supporting the MGS Foundation Bursary Appeal. An initial donation of £10,000 two years ago was followed by a further £15,000 last year. The Management Committee has now decided to go 'the final mile' with a pledge of a further £10,000 (to a total of £35,000) which is equivalent to full fee support for seven years of education.

We plan to hold a special fund raising dinner to be held on Saturday 25th May 2002 at the

Edition 10

Yang Sing restaurant n central Manchester. At this function there will be an auction of a small number of goods and services as well as a raffle. (Do you know of anyone who would be willing to donate items for either the auction, or a raffle?)

Why not organise an OMA or company table? Tickets are priced at £30.00 per person for a full Chinese banquet.

For further information or ticket application form please contact Bill Maynard on 0161-904 0520.

DIRECT DEBITS

Thank you, to all who completed and returned the direct debit forms. System testing is progressing well and we are confidently looking forward to a good first run in May.

This really is the most efficient way for the Association to operate its accounts and it is very cost effective for you too, saving the cost of envelopes, postage stamps and bank charges for processing the cheque (if this applies). This method also means that you don't need to worry about forgetting to send a cheque. If you have lost your form, or would like another one please write to, or leave a message for, Ernest Fuller. The OMA really would like to make this method of payment apply to all its members.

Please will you check with your bank that you have cancelled your old standing order for £9:00.

William Reynish

Memorial Concert

William Reynish (1978-85) died in an accident in the Pyrenees. There will be a Memorial Concert in the Great Hall at the Merchant Taylors School, at 2.30 pm on Sunday 2nd June 2002. Tickets £10 adults, £5.00 concessions, children free, in aid of PHAB and Age Concern from Matt Reynish, Merchant Taylors School, Sandy Lane, Northwood. HA6 2HT

Christmas Edition

We apologise to those of you who did not receive their copy of the December edition of *The Old Mancunian*. This was due to a problem with producing the labels. We have taken steps to avoid a recurrence of this problem, and hope (subject to possible delays through industrial action) that this edition arrives safely and on time.

Edition 9 is now available on the website. It takes about 45 seconds to download.

Alternatively, if you would like to receive a paper copy of the December edition, please will you send a stamped self addressed envelope to Mrs Sally Williams?

Music Competition & London Concert

The date has now been fixed for the inaugural London concert by young MGS musicians. This will feature, among other pieces, the winning composition by a pupil who will this autumn be presented with a £500 prize by the OMA London Section.

The concert will take place in the evening of Friday 21st February 2003 at St Johns, Smith Square. Please put this date in your diary. Further details will be available in a future *TOM*.

£9,033.74 Profit

Judy Robinson the Finance Manager advises me that a cheque for the profit so far on the "Blue Book" has been paid to the Appeal. This arose largely, because of collections and the increased numbers sold due to the delays!

Ian Thorpe said what a pleasure it had been to meet so many Old Boys. There are a very small number of copies still available.

HEARING A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

Part 2

I am very conscious, as I write this, that my experiences as a pupil at a single sex secondary boys' school inevitably rule out any reminiscences about extraordinary female teachers, of whom there were none in my field of vision at that time. This prompts me to refer to that phenomenal fictional pedagogue, Miss Jean Brodie, depicted in her prime by Muriel Spark, who must have surely had some ex-teacher(s) in her mind's eye when she came to write that delightful novel. Even in the period depicted in the novel the eponymous Miss Brodie had her little local difficulties with the powers that be, but nowadays I couldn't see her emerging successfully from any appraisal which attempted to set her performance targets linked to the school development plan. Teachers like Jean Brodie are a law unto themselves, and any attempt to constrain them within the narrow confines of lesser mortals would be counter-productive. In real life, her pupils would, in their post-school days, one hopes, have sifted through her words of wisdom with extreme care, but they would surely never have forgotten her teaching during the years in which they were constantly informed that they were *la crème de la crème*.

There is, after all, good management research evidence that effective teams require at least one creative ideas person in their ranks. Teams made up entirely of efficient completer-finishers, or company workers (to use just a couple of Meredith Belbin's terms for typical group members) are unlikely to contain that vital spark which the successful team needs.

All managers should learn to live with the creative iconoclast(s) in their midst (although it is certainly

legitimate and pardonable fervently to pray there aren't too many) if they really want truly effective educational organisations. It's the B. A. Giles's of this world who help to develop creative and critical thought on the part of their pupils. In my bleaker moments these days I sometimes have the feeling that the Government is determined to drive out such teachers, in favour of a docile and conformist teaching 'workforce' which will 'deliver' the national curriculum in such a way as to produce further generations of pupils who are equally good at following instructions handed down from above. This might have some pay-offs for those in high authority who do not want to have an active and thoughtful citizenry who might actually be critical of Government measures, but I shudder to think what it will do in the longer term for a nation which is increasingly going to have to live on its creative and imaginative wits if it is to prosper economically.

It's worth remembering the words of Friedrich Nietzsche which roughly translate as: 'You need a little chaos in your heart to give birth to the dancing star.'

Here's to the managers of schools who are prepared to pay the undoubted price in order to allow the dancing stars to continue to illuminate our lives.

(This extract is the second and final part of a longer document published by Prof. David Hellawell 1949-55). What do you think? Should there be more scope and latitude in education?)

Busy Times

In accordance with tradition the Entrance Exam took place on the first and third Fridays in February with the now standard 500 boys starting the process which will result in 200+ arriving in September. Early suggestions are that this looks a good vintage.

Sandwiched in-between these two a team of inspectors descended upon MGS to

determine whether our teaching, learning and organisation are up to standard. The inspection report is yet to be published, but the verbal feedback suggests that we will come out of the inspection smiling as broadly as we did last time but with some goals for attention, after all there is little point in such a massive exercise unless it leads to improvement in some way. Immediately after the half term which follows Part 2 like night follows day, Charities Fortnight crashed upon us with the usual cacophony of stalls, bands, shows and sponsored events. Mufti Day took place on Tuesday 5th March and readers are invited to tell us when the first Mufti Day took place and why?

Rodger Alderson

(Editor's note: thank you Rodger for encouraging another long and no doubt contentious wave of correspondence)

Tours galore

In due course readers of *Ulula* will hear all about the tours undertaken in 2002 but it is interesting in advance to speculate which school might match:- a Music trip to Holland, Cricket tour to Barbados, Soccer to Italy, and Rugby to South Africa as extras beyond the annual trips and treks throughout the Northern hemisphere!

Daily Mail Cup

How bitter-sweet March 2nd turned out to be for MGS Rugby. For the first time ever the 1st XV reached the semi-final of the Daily Mail Cup - the National schools competition with over 1 000 schools entering. The four semi-finalists at Castlecroft were MGS and three ex-champion schools in Oakham and R.G.S. High Wycombe (where Oakham won a fairly mundane match) against holders, Champion School.

Playing in front of a big, enthusiastic crowd the second semi-final was a classic. Champion dominated the first 15 minutes but scored only once to lead 5-0. MGS dominated the rest of the half to score three times to lead 11-5. The second half followed the same pattern with Champion storming over to lead 12-11, before MGS restored their lead and with a well-taken try led 19-15.

Those of you who read the Daily Mail will have seen a description of MGS defying their coach who suggested a safe play on their own line to run the full length of the field for a "score" only to be denied a breath-taking try by a foot on the touchline. When Champion scored with a minute to go to win 20-19 the immediate reaction was despair, soon replaced by a sadness that such a game had to have a loser, and by the Monday a resolve to bounce back and win the Rosslyn Park Sevens - if you cannot win one national competition then win another!!

The Desperate Remedy By *Martin Stephen*

Yes this is it, the long awaited new book, the High Master's first novel. This is a full-blooded historical thriller, set in the early 1600s. The book, published by Time Warner Books, was launched at the Whitworth Art Gallery Manchester in March and is planned as the first in a series.

The invited audience (which included the Bishop of Manchester and leading figures from the stage and TV) was treated to a reading of a dramatic excerpt by actor Philip Franks.

Old Boys Dinner

The 197th Old Boys Dinner was held at the School on Thursday 20th December. Judge Desmond Franks was the Senior Steward and Mr Maurice Watkins the Junior Steward. Mr Michael Sargent gave the response to the toast.

The shock news of the evening was the announcement that Neil Jones our Recorder for 33 dinners was stepping down. Neil said that he had attended 51 such events without missing one, a record achievement in itself. Neil has also set a very high standard for anyone to follow; all who have attended the Dinners owe him a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you, Neil.

Don Isherwood

OMA

London Section

The London Section welcomed David Maland, High Master 1976-85, to its Annual Dinner as guest speaker. High Master Maland remarked that he was very pleased to be addressing the London Section after a 17 year absence and reminisced both about his days as High Master and his experiences at the Bar.

Ian Thorpe and the High Master were in attendance from the School, and the Section was particularly pleased that Tim Hall made the journey from Manchester to represent the OMA. 31 Old Boys attended the Dinner and it was pleasing to see a number of new faces, including Nigel Davenport (1986-93) and Richard Whitehead (1988-95).

Future events this year include a tour of Highgate cemetery, and a guided walk around Dulwich coupled with visit to Dulwich Art Gallery. New members are particularly welcome and should contact the **Hon Secretary, Nick Gartside** <nicholas_gartside@ml.com> or Telephone 020 7743 4614

Midlands OMA

Members of the Midlands Section are planning to hold a special luncheon in Meriden on the 7th April in honour of Cecil Jordan who will be 100 on the 28th March. Arrangements are also in progress for the next Summer Luncheon which is expected to take place in the later part of June.

Members are asked to note that the Annual General meeting and Luncheon will be held on Saturday 16 November. New members will be most welcome at all the above functions.

Dan Binnion, Membership Secretary, 01902 758447

South West OMA

The Secretary reported that there are 78 current members on the list and no outstanding subscriptions. The Treasurer Geoff Richardson presented the accounts and proposed that we make a donation of £600.00 to the School. Ian Thornton will discuss the precise destination for these funds with the High Master.

The Commemoration Service is confirmed for 23rd June in Exeter with lunch. Autumn lunch venue was discussed and will be confirmed later. John Betts is to explore other informal events as part of the Sections continuing efforts to attract younger members. Ian Thornton Hon Sec.

Tel 01454 632137

Sussex & SE Section

The Sussex and E Section AGM will be held on Saturday 11th May at 18:30 for 19:00 at Christ's Hospital. The cost is £20 per head (including sherry, wine and supper), guests and non-members are also very welcome.

For details please contact: John Shippen at 4 Graftons, Christ's Hospital, Horsham, West Sussex. RH13 7LU 01402 2475333.

Associate Schools

Plaque Unveiled

There is now a plaque in the entrance to the Memorial Hall commemorating the Associate Schools which states:-

“IN RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE MANCHESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL OF THE STAFF AND PUPILS OF: SOUTH MANCHESTER SCHOOL 1898-1940 NORTH MANCHESTER SCHOOL 1905-1940 AND SALE HIGH SCHOOL 1908-1949”.

Congratulations

Sir Ben Kingsley

Ben Kingsley was awarded a knighthood by the Queen for his services to drama in the New Year's Honours lists. Our sincere congratulations to 'Sir Ben' on this well deserved recognition of his talent and hard work.

Richard Morgan

Congratulations also to Richard Douglas Morgan (1961-68) who was awarded The MBE in January for services to charity in general, and for his work in connection with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Kingston-upon-Thames.

Royal Television Society Awards

At a glittering ceremony held in the Hilton Hotel London **Tim Samuels (1986-93)**, who used to edit The New Mancunian, was declared Young Journalist of the Year. Tim is now 26 and works for the BBC in the South East and London areas. Tim's father **Sefton Samuels (1942-74)** is the photographer whose stunning collection of photographs of Old Mancunians is on display in the main corridor to the left of the Memorial Hall at School. At the same ceremony, **Michael Crick (1969-76)** the well known TV Journalist, received an award for the best Home Current Affairs Programme which he wrote and presented, but of which he modestly says

“Lots of other people worked on it too.” The Programme, entitled “*A Life of Lies*” was a **Panorama Special** transmitted in July 2001, on the night of the Jeffrey Archer trial verdict. Michael also wrote an independent biography called “*Jeffrey Archer: Stranger Than Fiction*”, first published in 1995.

The Will to Achieve

Only three years out of MGS. I was still at Nottingham University studying Economics and Philosophy and towards the end of my course wondering “What to do with the rest of my life?” I decided to transfer all the knowledge I gained from running the Student Theatre here in Nottingham into running my own production company. Although 20 may seem a little young to be running my own company, it is always surprising to count the number of MGS boys running small businesses alongside revision for their exams – I was running a software company, which still exists, making bespoke software systems, but the task at hand is the theatre

Spurred on by memories of assemblies telling me that no job is too big and that I will never achieve if I don't try, I have gone ahead and started a company. Within two months I have two directors, a producer, eleven actors and a playwright working for me. We are planning next season's tour and our assault on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

O course, we're facing problems with backing and all the other problems that small companies suffer but I have confidence that in time the desire to succeed will overcome.

So thank you MGS, not because you helped me achieve my best in A-Levels and drama, but because you have taught me to achieve the best in every walk of life. **Ben Richards (1999)**

Easter 2002

The Biographic Register - Corrections

As a result of a most unfortunate mistake in updating our biographical records, for which we apologise most sincerely, the following amendments should be made to two Blue Book entries:

Page 296 Mr Michael Stephens (1944-51).

Delete 1999

Enter 11 Fog Lane Didsbury Manchester M20 6AX

Page 556 Mr Graham Stephens (1974-81).

Delete home address Enter ACA 1984; Corporate Finance Director KPMG; Died 1999.

Two Lost Owls

Having recently received the 2001 Register, for which I thank you, I would point out an omission. The name Cohn, John H E (1947-55) is omitted. He was included in the 1965 Register.

Yours sincerely,

Rabbi M Roberg
19 Sorotzkin Street,
Jerusalem, Israel

I was very impressed by the new edition of the Biographic Register, which I received in October. However, I was surprised to find no entry for my direct contemporary Peter Aaronson (1967) either in the main body of the text or the index. I do hope that you can confirm that such an omission was unintentional. Is there any plan to publish an errata list in the form of a supplement?

Yours sincerely,

Steven Joseph
Rue Bordiau 5
1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Definitely unintentional! We are looking into the possibility of producing such a list. We need to find the addresses of John and Peter in the first place, can anyone help? Peter was last heard of working as an Inspector in the Greater Manchester Police.

Thank you for sending me a direct debit mandate and copies of the latest 2 bulletins of *The Old Mancunian*. Reading the rather self-congratulatory articles did remind me of my experiences at MGS.

Being unable to do subjects I was interested in at 'O' level, History, Geography and Biology I was demoted from the 'A' stream to 6T, where people who were "too young" to start an 'A' level course met up with pupils who had done badly in 'O' levels from the five year stream, leading to an all too predictable demotivation and deterioration in work.

Receiving the poorer end of available teaching in Bio 6, and getting indifferent 'A' levels, I left the School with a sense of failure and stupidity.

For me personally MGS was a disaster and I thought it would be interesting for you to know that not all ex-pupils have such a rose tinted view of their time there.

My title is not Mr and I did wonder why you waited 30 years to contact me in such a supercilious way with news that the reunion of pupils who went to MGS in the sixties was last year.

This kind of organisation is so typical of my time at MGS that it did raise a wry smile

Dr R J Westrop MBChB
27 St James Road, Melton,
North Ferriby, Yorks.
HU14 3HZ

For you to have missed the first seven editions the School could not have had your address. Presumably one of your colleagues provided it. We have now corrected your title in our files and hope that publishing this letter helps in some way to right some of your complaints. Ed.

Naomi de Ferranti

The death at 73 of Naomi de Ferranti might seem to be an unusual thing to report in *The Old Mancunian*. However, Naomi was a former pupil at MGS. She believed that she was the only Old Girl. (There were others! Ed.)

Naomi went on to be a Deputy Lieutenant of Manchester, a leading hunting figure in Cheshire, a stylish hostess and an outspoken and industrious promoter of good causes.

In the last fifteen years of her life Naomi devoted much of her time to campaigning, lobbying and fundraising to help young people with drug abuse problems.

August Suns

To celebrate (if that is the right word) the 50th anniversary of my leaving MGS let me send you the **School Song Mystery** In the 1955 British made comedy film "*Doctor at Sea*" (Dirk Bogarde, Brigitte Bardot) there is a prison scene during which a drunken seaman sings, sotto voce, "When August Suns are shining, or August raindrops fall the owl alone is pining upon the ancient wall..." and then trails off inaudibly, on at least three occasions. Every time the film is repeated on TV, as on Boxing Day, I try to watch this sequence to convince my disbelieving ears. How on earth does the MGS School song come to be there?

Yours sincerely,

Derek N Andrew (1944-51)
Walnut House, Old Coach
Road Cross, Axbridge,
Somerset BS2 2EH

A P (Tony) Barnett (1945-50) also wanted to know whether his ears were deceiving him. The answer is simple, the film star **George Coulouris (1916-21)** was the singer and no doubt improvising with a well remembered refrain!

Manchester Old and New

I recently discovered the enclosed whilst looking through some old books at my parents' home. It is a section from a publication entitled Manchester Old and New" Volume 1, by William Arthur Shaw MA. There is an author's note dated 1894 and I believe that this is a first edition.

I trust that the High Master's House on Old Hall Lane has a more appealing frontage than the one if shown on page 80.

PS Thoroughly enjoyed the Biographic Register
Terry Giles (1956-62 and not a very distinguished scholar, I regret).

**Charnwood Cottage,
Upper Warren Avenue,
Caversham, READING,
Berkshire RG4 7EB**

Thank you, I have passed the documents on to the School Librarian.

The High Master has moved to a more comfortable residence in Didsbury.

Correspondence

I receive many more letters than I can publish, or even acknowledge. They are all read however, and much appreciated. Without your letters there would be no magazine. It is our policy to include as many as we can; brevity is much appreciated. I must mention one correspondent who wrote advising us of the address of a number of "lost owls" and making some corrections to the Blue Book, he is **Ken Bowden (1950-56)** a retired librarian.

Thanks Ken, keep them rolling!

Editorial Committee

The next Editorial Meeting will be held on the 10th April.

Rodger Alderson

Ian Bailey

Ian Thorpe

Lawrence Copitch

work 0161-223 5484

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Don Isherwood Editor

home 0161-483 7214

All correspondence should be addressed for the attention of Mrs Sally Williams in the School Appeal Office

s.e.williams@mgs.org

or to The Editor

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To register on internet go to

www.mgs.org

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