



# The Old Mancunian

September 2002

## London OMA Composition Prize 2002

All Old Mancunians 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 each will be on sale from the **St John's Box Office from January 1st.**

**Telephone 020 72 222 1061**

This competition highlights the changes in curricular and extra-curricular music (indeed in all, the performing and visual arts) since the artistically rather arid days at MGS prior to the 1960s. Since then, successive Directors of Music (David Cawthra, Richard Sinton, Andrew Dean and now Robert Carey have encouraged enormous growth in instrumental tuition, class music lessons and public performances. Each year we now perform an Easter Concert at the Royal Northern College of Music, and several young Old Mancunians have held prestigious choral and organ scholarships. Moreover, the practice and love of music is nurtured amongst all boys who show an interest, not just the exceptionally able.

**Ian Thorpe**

## Photographs

Old Boys from time to time very kindly send in to School photos and negatives for the Archives. Sally Williams asks that before you send such photos you take copies for your self, especially if they are of sentimental value.

## OMA Cufflinks

The sale of a pair of 9 carat gold and enamel Old Mancunian cufflinks raised great interest recently. At a charity auction held by the MGS Parents' Society at the Yang Sing restaurant in May, a boxed set was sold in aid of the Foundation Bursary Appeal for £590. A number of disappointed bidders willing to pay over £500 per pair to the Appeal, are in touch with Ian Thorpe, the Appeal Director.

If you have a pair which are no longer being used and you would like to help by donating them, Ian would be delighted to hear from you.

## Blue Book

Despite two reminders by letter or telephone answering systems, there are still about a dozen Blue Books which have not yet been collected from School. Please note you have paid for these! If you have not picked up your copy, please contact me as soon as possible.

If you missed out on the first print run and would now like to purchase one, (subject to sufficient numbers being requested), I will arrange for a reprint. Please register your interest with me at School - by phone, email or post.

**Sally Williams**

## 1950-59 Reunion

Those OMs who joined the School in the 1950s had a most successful reunion on Saturday 11th May 2002. There was a splendid attendance. There were 130 Old Boys and their ladies who arrived at School in the afternoon who, after a cup of tea, were taken on a tour of the School conducted by current Prefects. It was a very pleasant day. Drinks were served in the Main Quad and at 7pm we assembled in the Memorial Hall for dinner.

Ian Bailey said grace and Rodger Alderson made us feel at ease as Fear and Tighe. After the Loyal Toast had been honoured, Alan Kenworthy was called upon to propose the toast

"The School and Masters". It was clear he had enjoyed his time at School by his many kindly references to his time here.

John Horsfield a former Master (and currently a member of the OMA Executive), replied for the Masters recalling the many pleasant times he had here as a boy and in the Common Room as a teacher. The High Master was then asked to speak. He always manages to combine the present day life at MGS with the abiding purpose of the Foundation.

His audience which knew the School in the rather austere days after the War could appreciate that changes had taken place, but the spirit remains the same.

It was an enjoyable occasion and once again we were indebted to Sally Williams for ensuring the event ran smoothly. Our thanks also to our colleague Alan Pickwick who as the sound engineer made the speakers come out loud and clear.

**G I S Bailey**

## Congratulations

**Richard Saxon (1953-60)**

Richard was awarded the CBE "for services to architecture and the construction industry" Richard lists as major works the Halifax Bank HQ 1975; Merseyside Maritime Museum masterplan; J P Morgan HQ, London 1991; All England Lawn Tennis masterplan 1980; and Adam Opel HQ, Frankfurt 1997.

In addition to the publication of a number of books on building design, Richard has served as an adviser to NEDO, SERC, DOE and the Treasury. **Colin Millar (1949-56)** was awarded the OBE in the New Years Honours List for political services in Aberdeenshire. His brother Ian (1948-52) and Sale (1946-48), wrote and told me that Colin was the first person to be elected Convener (Leader) of Aberdeenshire CC, a post which he held for three years.

Edition 11

Colin spent his career in forestry, with two sabbatical spells in South Africa assisting in forestry plans and projects.

**Chris Gillibrand (1971-78)**

Chris advises me that he has been appointed General Secretary of the European Association of Chemical Distributors based in Brussels.

## Never Believe....

**Anything** you read in a newspaper, including this one, I suppose. Those of you who saw the Daily Mail article about the pupil's newspaper, The New Mancunian, doubtless marveled at the number of clichés compressed into the Headline: 'Top school's newspaper pulped after pupils find simple route to net porn'.

Never mind that the story was way off beam, at least the photographs they printed were of the correct school and the right High Master.

Our protest about the misleading nature of the article – in which we made clear the value that we see in encouraging our pupils to produce a newspaper, and the pride we take in the many awards they have achieved – led to the Mail agreeing to publish a letter from us that served, we hope, to redress the balance.

For the record, of course access to the internet continues to pose problems to schools, given the nature of the many websites, but the MGS web-filtering software very far exceeds what most parents arrange for their machines at home.

## Old Boys Dinner

Following the resignation of Neil Jones as Recorder of the Old Boys Dinner, there has been a delay in the appointment of his successor. Make a note in your diaries now that the possible date for this year's dinner is Thursday 19th of December.

# News and Views

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE GIVES MGS A GOOD MARK

In the latest assessment the Inspectorate gave the School good marks for its high levels of academic attainment, its excellent links with the community and very good links with parents.

The report rated the provision for extra-curricular activities as outstanding. It continues with "the School has a very good ethos and excellent relationships pervade the whole school community, supported by pastoral care of a very high quality and teachers who demonstrate scholarship and a high level of commitment" The full report is available on the Website < [www.mgs.org](http://www.mgs.org) >

It was a tragedy that **Brian Giles** (MGS staff 1951-55) died so young. (*T.O.M.* December 2001). We benefited greatly from his relaxed and creative approach, not to mention his vivid turn of phrase. "Why not attempt to contribute a little" I recall him saying to a temporarily uncommunicative pupil, "instead of sitting there like a fakir, hard arsed on a bag of nails?"

Brian Giles was one of a number of new members of staff in those post-war years. I think several of these men including Brian, had served in the Forces. Whilst maintaining discipline and traditional high standards of scholarship, they brought to their teaching a refreshing informality and humour to which boys responded positively and strongly.

Brian and his colleagues made their welcome contribution at what I believe had become in certain ways, one of the darker periods of MGS history. We continued to enjoy great academic success, but the curriculum was very narrow. Apart from Nature Study in the first year, many of us on the Modern Side went through the School without a single period of biology. Games were once a

### Autumn 2002

fortnight if it didn't rain. For my group there was no Art after the second year and Music did not appear on the timetable at all apart from the Choir.

Michael Leach  
[mj\\_smleach@compuserve.com](mailto:mj_smleach@compuserve.com)

## An Election

The Director of the LEA often forgot that we were a Voluntary School. Even I was surprised to find that the County Council automatically assumed it would be perfectly in order for the General Election count to be held in my school hall without so much reference to the school and it was something of a shock to see lights blazing away at midnight, with the Clerk to the County Council puffing away on his curly pipe in his role as Returning Officer.

I thought I would join the fun, so I received my second shock of the evening when my way was barred by a burly and worthy member of the Lincolnshire Constabulary, who said that I was unable to enter the hall because of a lack of an affidavit signed by a local magistrate.

However, living on the premises was not without its advantages, so I strode home, across the playing fields, to collect that large bunch of keys always associated with a motley array of ancient and modern buildings; (the superb library of Boston Grammar School dates back to 1567, being the old school room.

With jangling keys, I then effected an entrance through the back of the school, entered my study and put on my gown – not my usual garb at 01:30 hrs! Manfully striding down the corridor towards the aforementioned school hall, I duly presented myself to the same policeman, who quickly saluted me, and proceeded to hold the door open for me...!

And so I saw my first proclamation by a Returning Officer, of the election of (Sir) Richard Body, Member of Parliament for Holland with Boston duly elected...

**Philip Johnston (1946-54)  
Town Head, Long Preston,  
Skipton, N Yorks. BD23 4QH**

(Philip was formerly Head of Boston Grammar School and Queen Elizabeth Grammar School Blackburn.)

## Staff Leavers

Full appreciations of leaving members of staff appear in Ulula - yet another reason to join the OMA - but readers of TOM may be interested to know that four teachers who left MGS this summer had served a long enough 'term' to qualify to give a valedictory address to the Comon Room. These were **Richard Travers** of the Religion and Philosophy Department, **Andrew Dean**, Director of Music, **David Whiteley** (Old Mancunian), Head of Mathematics and **Nigel Reynolds** of the History Department. As is so often the case, their reminiscences had as much to do with life at MGS outside the classroom as in it, reinforcing the importance of the range and depth of extra-curricular activities at the school. **Ian Thorpe**

## Staff Nicknames

I have been meaning to extend Ian Bailey's excellent opening innings on this subject, but due to pressure of Council business haven't got round to it before now. I do hope we can persuade Ian to get into print again on this fascinating subject.

So masters' nicknames are on the wane. Perhaps the lads know the real ones these days. In my time only initials were in the public domain on the wrong side of the Staff Common Room door. So we had to invent familiar names that fitted; and I am bound to say that we did better in many cases than our dominees' own parents.

There were a few that derived straight from euphonious initials – notably 'Arty' Moore, 'Haffy Fields, and Ikey Tenen – but these were very much the exception.

'Sol' Clynes, the finest Chemistry teacher of my day. I still remember him saying a really good teacher did not need to beat the boys. Yes, we were

### Page 2

thinking of the difference between Sol and 'Billy' Hulme (with his wooden spoons) at the time! I suspect that you were too, Sol?

Stone, Head of Physics and then of the Science Side, was I think correctly known as Roger. He was living proof that a great teacher did not need to be extrovert or flamboyant.

Here are a few more nicknames from my day (1946-51) to add to Ian's list in no particular order.

Seton, 'Cuthbert' to all except those he had particularly offended by some dire punishment, to whom he was sometimes 'Satan'. I remember many tales about Cuthbert, but I feel sure that he still holds the record for getting through the Founders' Prayer in Assembly.

Mason, despite his wish to disown his proper name he was always 'Hepel' to us. I am not at all surprised by Gerhard Wold's letter about him.

Wilson, always 'Andy' to us. However could his parents have Christened him differently? To Modern Sixth he was 'Andy Gump'.

Boden, 'Jasper' of course, it fitted him like a glove.

Hill 'Percy' dapper and elegant, as well as being a formidable classical scholar.

The Hyslop brothers physically as different as any two siblings could be were 'Cess' and 'Fred' were these their real names. **(I don't think so, they were always known to us as 'Sloppy A and Sloppy F. They are listed in the Blue Book as Archibald Forbes, and Fred. Ed) Murphy, who subsequently became the Film Censor, was inevitably 'Spud', never Stephen.**

Radford, he did have a nickname Ian. In my day he was always 'Dicky'.

**Noel Thompson (1946-51  
This is part of a longer document, which Noel sent in, to be completed in edition 12**

## OMA The Executive

The new Executive has met three times so far this year. Gavin McBride (1983-90) was co-opted onto the Executive at the April meeting.

One solid achievement reported has been the success of the first direct debit collection of subscriptions. Once we had overcome the problem of registering all the mandates at the various bank branches (which delayed the operation) the systems themselves worked well, collecting over £7,000 in subscriptions for a few minutes work on the computer. Please give consideration to changing your payment method over to direct debit it saves so much clerical effort in the office, as well as reducing bank charges. The last meeting in June also heard that there has been an apparent growth in membership of 140 so far this year, reversing the rather static levels achieved in recent years.

## SAM's CHOPHOUSE

In a complete break with tradition we plan to hold a get together at the Sams Chophouse, Chapel Walks Manchester on Tuesday the 19th of November. There will be a brief recess for the AGM of the Association, during which members of the newly formed Executive will be available to answer questions from the audience. Details to follow please make a note in your diary now.

## London Section

It may be of interest to Old Mancunians in general that there is an association of Lancastrians (& others - Ed) in London, to which any OM would be eligible to be a member.

I have to declare an interest as I am Vice-Chairman and all being well, Chairman in January 2003. This is a particularly active association with events almost every month throughout the year.

We are looking for some younger members to swell the membership beyond the present 680. With best wishes,

**John Nuttall (1932-1944)**  
"Hatherlow",  
24 Lodge Avenue,  
ELSTREE, Herts. WD6 3ND  
London Section OMA events planned in the near future at the time of writing are:

### Friday, July 12th Highgate Cemetery

A guided tour of the old western part of Highgate Cemetery – a Victorian extravaganza! Approx 1.5 hours after which those who wish will move on to a local hostelry. The cost will be about £6 per head and numbers strictly limited to 20.

### Saturday, October 5th Dulwich

John Sennett will again lead us on an interesting historical walk of Dulwich, after which there will be an opportunity to visit the renowned Dulwich Picture Gallery. A pub lunch will be on the itinerary. Dulwich is only 15 minutes by train from Victoria or London Bridge.

New members are particularly welcome and should contact the **Hon Secretary, Nick Gartside** <nicholas\_gartside@ml.com> or Telephone 020 7743 4614

## Midlands OMA

The Annual Summer Luncheon was held on June 22nd at the Anchor Inn Eckington, near Pershore. Following a buffet lunch, the Chairman of the Section, Dr A J Waringe, gave a fascinating account of his career, referring to his time at MGS, the influence of Stockport Sunday School and his academic life, including research work in chemistry in the country and the USA.

The Annual General Meeting and luncheon will be held on Saturday 16th November at the Forest Hotel, Solihull. Further details will be sent to members about one month before the event and new members and their ladies will be most welcome. For more details please contact: **Dan Binnion**,

## Membership Secretary, 01902 758447

## South West OMA

The annual committee meeting was held at the home of Jim and Pat Brookes 29 High Street, Marshfield, Chippenham.

The Chairman Jim Brookes welcomed the new members of the Committee and affirmed the co-optation of Frances Annear.

Geoff Richardson the Treasurer presented the accounts and proposed that we make a donation of £600 to the School. This was agreed by all present with the proviso that the Secretary should discuss with the High Master the precise destination of these funds for this year.

The Committee had been superbly entertained by Jim & Pat Brookes and grateful thanks were expressed by all (that is by all who could orientate themselves after considerable consumption of the Chairman's cellar!

The AGM was held on Sunday 23rd of June following on from the 36th Annual Hugh Oldham Commemoration Service held in Exeter Cathedral.

The Chairman reported that the year had been one of great privilege and pleasure and expressed his thanks to The Secretary and Treasurer for keeping matters moving smoothly. He hoped that we would continue to attract new and younger members and welcomed the new structure of the OMA which sets out to preserve contacts with School leavers. This task has been undertaken in the SW by John Betts, who is looking forward to county by county records and the options of smaller meetings in local areas.

The Secretary reported membership of 75. Sadly Heric Kenyon had died just before his 101st birthday last December and in the same month Harry Boardman had died aged 86. He left a legacy to the OMA of £5,000 "for its general purposes with my thanks for the wonderful start in life that the School gave me". All present

were very appreciative of this gesture.

The Autumn lunch will be held at the 'Cat & Fiddle' at Clyst St Mary on October 26th.

The Treasurer, Geoff Richardson  
**Ian Thornton, Secretary**  
8 Farm Way,  
Easter Compton  
BRISTOL BS35 5SE

Frances Annear is to take up the position of Secretary in September. **(Welcome Frances. I have to say, I shall miss Ian Thornton's pithy and somewhat lengthy minutes, which I tone down for publication! All the best Ian, and thank you very much. Ed)**

## Sussex & SE Section

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

## Golf Days

London Section OMA are holding a Golf Day at Knole Park, Sevenoaks in Wednesday 31 July Players are meeting at noon and teeing off at 1:30pm.  
**Alec Elmer**  
[alecelmer@supernet.com](mailto:alecelmer@supernet.com)

## North West

We plan to hold an afternoon Golf event at the Chapel-en-le Frith Golf Course on Tuesday 3rd October. The course (formerly known as Combs) has been extended and now offers a par 72 course of 6134 yards operating from a brand new club house. It is an interesting, but not too hilly course set in the beautiful Derbyshire countryside.

If you would like to know more please contact:  
**Don Isherwood on 0161-483 7214 or email**  
[Isherwood.don@tesco.net](mailto:Isherwood.don@tesco.net)  
as soon as possible to help determine the final format.

## The Biographic Register - Corrections

I would like to thank John Mumford for his careful research of his year 1944, which revealed that 44% of Doctors were not addressed correctly. I can only apologise and say that if anyone wishes to correct anything on their details, they only have to contact Sally Williams who will take the necessary action for future correspondence.

I have heard from one lost owl Peter Aaronson and we now know how that error occurred.

### Tim Hall

The High Master together with committee members of the OMA and their ladies met for lunch at the St James's Club Manchester on Tuesday 11th June. It was a special occasion as we were saying thank you to Tim Hall for his years as the Honorary General Secretary of the OMA. A period that included High Masters Lord James, Peter Mason, David Maland, Geoffrey Parker and our present Chief, Dr Martin Stephen.

After lunch, David Walton, who was in the Chair spoke and recalled Tim's years of fine service. He then called on the High Master to speak. Dr Stephen adumbrated the good work and influence that Tim had exercised over the years. This was heartily endorsed by the guests. Tim replied and said how much he had enjoyed his years of service to the OMA. The proceedings came to a happy conclusion when David Walton presented a bouquet of flowers to Marjorie Hall.

G I S Bailey

### A Surprise!

I was somewhat surprised to see my letter printed in *The Old Mancunian* Easter, edition, but it has generated some letters of support from other pupils, some of whom had experiences much more brutal than mine.

If this letter has drawn attention to some of the inherent problems in a school like MGS and there has been some attention paid to them, then it will have been a useful exercise.

I thank you for printing it.

**R J Westrop MBCChB**  
**27 St James Road**  
**MELTON, North Ferriby,**  
**HU14 3HZ**

Dear Sir,  
 I tend to think that letters like that of **Dr R J Westrop** are best unwritten: if the passage of 30 years can breed a rose tinted view of the past, it can also allow bitterness to fester.

After dire 'O' levels and being young, I went into 6T. Perhaps naively, I didn't regard this as a demotion. 'T' meant (I thought transitus) and thus being outside the A/B grading system. It was a great year for me – I always thought the rest of us, a rather unruly lot, enjoyed it. We had a marvellous form master in Bert Parnaby, who encouraged a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities and I never felt unloved or undervalued! My work improved, as a result I think of being given the chance to do the sort of things I wanted to do – particularly in Parnaby's English classes – and when I went on to win an Exhibition to Cambridge 3 years later, I always ascribed this success to the fresh start 6T provided. It saddens me to suspect that in today's over-examined education system; perhaps forms like 6T are no longer viable.

I don't think my view is rose-tinted. There were good and bad aspects of MGS then as I am sure now – and as with life generally. But, I am grateful to MGS above all for encouraging me to be able to think for myself- and 6T was a vital stage in this.

Best wishes,  
**P D Wood (1957-1965)**  
**Burns Cottage, Cornhill,**  
**Banff AB45 2DL**

**P.S. I of course, include myself in the unruly lot I refer to!**

It is with regret that the letter from **Dr R J Westrop**, prompts me to write in a similar vein. My experience of the teaching at MGS was that it was largely uninspiring. Were it not for the excellent quality of the raw material the outcomes of the School could have been less than outstanding.

However, in my experience one teacher stood out like a shining light above the rest. He was Mr D J Williams ('Gobbi' to us). I would look forward with expectant anticipation to his chemistry lessons. He made it so meaningful.

Why was there no teaching of music in the School? Apart from Dicky Radford and being in the special choir, I can recall no experience of music teaching.

Mathematics was the great debacle. Mr Elliot taught me in Form 1 term one in 1949. He died sometime during that term as I remember. He was followed by a variety of 'minders' including senior boys. It didn't get much better in later years. Later circumstances allowed me to remedy the unanswered questions I had about mathematics. So my teaching career involving mathematics was with a determination that my students would be better served than I have been.

**Stan Neild (1949-56)**  
**Stan and Marie Nield**  
[added.value@xtra.co.nz](mailto:added.value@xtra.co.nz)  
**Ps my address is Te Wharau**  
**not Te Wharall.**

-----  
**The editorial content is left totally at the editor's discretion, I am sure the School has listened and is aware of some of the failures and in particular punishment practices in the past, which I know Martin Stephen bitterly regrets.**  
**(I would also refer you to extract from the Independent Schools Inspectorate report on page 2, which refers to the high standard of pastoral care and the item by Michael Leach.)**

### Sponsored Walk

This walk was in aid of Youth Cancer Research and the Bursary Appeal Fund. It is believed that it will raise a significant sum to these two worthy causes.

The High Master Martin Stephen was delighted to report that he completed the walk, with most of the Lake District and with most of his limbs intact. (That was what he said, did he crawl?) There were 60 other staff involved on this ramble over rough terrain.

**What about the Old Boys joining in next year? I bet there are some who would sponsor me to keep right on walking! Ed.**

### Apologies

Under the article '*The Will to Succeed*' by **Ben Richards** in the Easter edition we inadvertently put his date at MGS as **1929**, which should of course have been **1992-99**. Sorry Ben!

Ed.

### Editorial Committee

**The next Editorial Meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th November.**

Rodger Alderson

Ian Bailey

Ian Thorpe

Lawrence Copitch

work 0161-223 5484

home 0161-491 3371

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](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)

**Closing Date for *The Old Mancunian* December**

**(Edition 12) is Friday the 8th of November 2002.**

**Published by:-**

**The Manchester Grammar School, Manchester**  
**M13 0XT**

**Tel: 0161-224 7201**

**Fax: 0161-257 2446**