



# The Old Mancunian

December 2003

## The OMA Century

The OMA Celebrates its 100th Birthday in 2004. There is much that the Old Mancunians Association can look back on with pride in its first century. It has helped to maintain active links between its members and the School.

The OMA has provided a wide range of opportunities for Old Boys to meet at social and sporting occasions all over the country. It has also provided support in the form of money and individuals' time for the School - Old Boys are among those who provide careers advice through the recent biennial Careers Convention for senior pupils and **Len Rix**, Head of Careers, extends his thanks to them. Any OMs interested in helping in this way in future are asked to contact **Len Rix**. [l.b.rix@mgs.org](mailto:l.b.rix@mgs.org)

The London Section acted as hosts at a concert at St John's, Smith Square when MGS musicians played to great acclaim before an audience of more than 300. The programme included the winning composition of the prize instituted by the Section in 2002 judged by **James MacMillan**, & awarded to **James Drinkwater**.

The Annual Founder's Memorial Service at Exeter is arranged by the South West Section, to which visitors are made most welcome.

The likelihood is that more support will be needed in this 21st century, if we are to ensure that our Founder's aims are to be attained. There are ambitious plans for the development of the School buildings, in particular the swimming pool, theatre, library and classroom space.

Ian Thorpe has now taken on the role of Development Director, charged with planning to ensure that the funds are in place for these changes. The Foundation Bursary Fund remains open to donations in

order to ensure that ability, not parents' means, dictates entry to the School.

## The 200th Old Boys Dinner

To celebrate the 200th Old Boys Dinner and the 100th birthday of the OMA, the two organisations are planning to hold a special celebratory dinner on 13th November 2004. The venue and details are currently under review. This promises to be a truly memorable occasion.

## Trek Centenary Reunion

The School Trekking is also 100 years old in 2004. To celebrate this, it is planned to hold a grand reunion at School for all former trekkers on Saturday 25th of September. We are looking for photographs and other souvenirs to display as well as individuals to help organise this event.

**If you would like to help in any way please, contact Carole Pemberton in the Development Office.**

Treks are still going strong with 20 boys undertaking a 180 mile trek across Moorish Morocco scaling two of the highest peaks in North Africa in 2003.

## Cufflinks

The MGS Parents Society has added school cufflinks to their extensive list of school-related merchandise an illustrated selection of which is available via mail order in the Parents' section of the school website at [www.mgs.org](http://www.mgs.org), from which an order form can be downloaded.

OMs who do not have internet access may contact Mrs Carole Pemberton in the Development Office at School. The cufflinks are shield-shaped and depict the school arms in three colour enamel. They are available in either 9ct gold or sterling silver with T-bar swivel fixing in a presentation box. The gold set costs £125 and the sterling silver set costs £40, inclusive of

postage and packing to addresses in the UK.

## 1970s Reunion

The next 'decade' Reunion will take place at School on **Saturday 15th May 2004**. This will be for all those who entered the first form at MGS in the 1970s, together with members of these cohorts who may have joined a higher form later. If you would be able to contribute to the success of this event (for instance, by contacting contemporaries and encouraging them to attend) please contact **Carole Pemberton at School**.

## Troop 2 Scouts

This reunion will be held at lunch time on the 15th May to enable those travelling to the 1970s reunion to attend both events. Further details from **Dr John Stewart** [Doc@Gordon3.Freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Doc@Gordon3.Freeserve.co.uk) Tel 01524 701325

## Northern Youth Theatre

The initial production of **Romeo & Juliet** was an outstanding theatrical experience for all those who attended and took part. The play opened with fire crackers and made full use of fire and fireworks permitted by locating this theatre in the round, in the main quadrangle.

The students taking part were recruited from fourteen inner city schools and sixth form colleges. **Pete Baylis** Artistic Director and Head of Drama at MGS and **Jennie Baylis**, Artistic Director and Head of Drama at Withington Girls School (who both worked so hard all through the summer) are to be congratulated for the very polished performance by all concerned, from the actors and musicians, to the stage hands who worked near miracles.

As the High Master said "I have no doubt this performance will be remembered for the rest of their lives by the performers.

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It will have changed some lives as well. I do not think any of us lucky enough to see that show will ever look at the quadrangle in the same way again."

"Consideration is being given to mounting a production every two years. I was flattered to be invited to become patron of the Northern Youth Theatre. I will ask my successor as High Master to give his or her consent, and will be delighted to accept if that consent is given".

## MGS Angels

Two small business start-ups are already being supported by this group of OMs interested in fostering the entrepreneurial spirit in Sixth Formers and young OMs. Other proposals are under consideration. At present about £20,000 is available to support grants (not repayable loans), but even more important could be the quality and commitment of the business advisors involved in the scheme.

Mentoring and professional advice can be made available at every stage. MGS Angels will not in future take a fixed share of any new business. A very flexible approach is being taken, putting the major emphasis on trying to provide a package of assistance ideally suited to each applicant.

Approaches from OMs in their 20s are particularly welcome.

Further details from **Paul Ormerod (MGS Angels Chairman, [pormerod@volterra.co.uk](mailto:pormerod@volterra.co.uk)) or Ian Thorpe (Director of Development, MGS, [i.thorpe@mgs.org](mailto:i.thorpe@mgs.org)).**

Angels meet every six months or so, in Manchester or London, and hold a business meeting, followed by a dinner. New members are welcome.

An outline of the scheme is provided at

[www.oldmancunians.org](http://www.oldmancunians.org)

## Denis Holden

I wanted to let the readers of *The Old Mancunian* know that my Dad, Denis Holden (1921-26), had died in August this year. He was the youngest of 12 children, whose father William was a Church of England Vicar and Rural Dean in Manchester and Lancashire. All the sons were at MGS. Norman, Jack, William, (Bill) and Arthur. They lived in a house in Cheetham Hill, close to the school.

At my Dad's funeral service we read extracts from his memoirs and thought you might be interested in some stories about his schooldays.

*"Art was my forte. I would go into the big hall and wait while the rest of the form were given their task. Then Miss Cutter would sigh, look at me, and in rather more lady-like terms to "Get the hell out of here!" whereupon I would get a drawing board and stool, and wander off where I pleased. Sometimes to sit on the main stairs to do a crayon drawing of the Poets Corner, Elizabethan cottages that leant over Long Millgate, sometimes go into Chetham's College, which at that time was just a bluecoat school. My delight was to get into a small internal courtyard, about two yards by four, open to the sky and sketch in pen and ink".*

*"I landed up in Science 5A, known as "Slackers Rest", the last term in school. Taffy Hughes had been engaged in making TNT during the War. One had to watch the temperature carefully, and run like hell if it got too high. I suppose it was about this period that I was experimenting with surreptitiously stolen chemicals. I had run out of test tubes one day at Brindle. There was this brass rifle cartridge that I had stuffed with potassium chlorate. A lighted taper sufficed to heat the cartridge. The resulting explosion baffled me. Potassium chlorate wasn't supposed to do that! Then I noticed something dripping on the ground. It was blood from my finger. I hadn't felt a thing from the cap of the cartridge going through my finger, but felt it would be*

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*desirable to take a rest on a sofa until I got over the shock".*

*"Then there was the bell jar on the kitchen table, full of hydrogen at the time, which burst when set light to, tilting the light over the table more than somewhat, but doing me no damage."*

*"We had a .22 Winchester rifle, with half-inch long bullets. Our only target was a penny stuck in the top of a cane, twenty yards away. Either you hit it or not. One could hear the whirr as the penny left the stick. But cartridges had a habit of going too quickly. I had the brilliant idea of filling an empty cartridge with match-heads, tamping with cotton wool, and pouring melted lead on top. Fortunately I was wearing motor-goggles, which took the brunt of the resulting explosion".*

I suppose it was a wonder that he lived to adulthood! My parents were married for 65 years, in July this year, *Cumbria Life* asked me to write the story of their meeting in 1936. My Mum was a visiting American student and my Dad was rock climbing in Langdale. My Dad was able to give me a lot of help with adding colour to the story, although sadly he died just as the magazine, the October 2003 issue, was going to press. If any of your readers would like to read the story, they will find it on the *Cumbria Life* website, or under my name **Penny Mutch**.

**Hope Cottage, 19 Hawthorne Grove, Bramhall SK7 1EF**  
[alastair.mutch@virgin.net](mailto:alastair.mutch@virgin.net)

## Stephen Tillyard

I have just heard from his wife that Stephen Tillyard who taught at the School from 1949-53, has died. He contributed a letter to *The Old Mancunian* about 2 years ago so he obviously kept in touch. It would be fitting if a short appreciation could be included in the next edition. We gave him a very hard time with S4F but I remember him with considerable affection.

Stephen who taught modern languages at the School died in March this year. Spurred by his note to *The Old Mancunian*, I wrote to him reminiscing about two trips he had organised

during my year in S4F. His delightful reply showed that his memories were much sharper than mine and (considering what a dreadful form we were) remarkably positive.

He was a life long pacifist, having served in the Friends' Relief Service during WW II and after retiring from his post as a Senior Lecturer and Librarian at Norwich Teacher Training College in 1981, devoted his energies to animal welfare, ecological issues and global problems. He was indeed a very kind man.

**Rodney Pollitt (1947-54)**  
[Rodasitch@aol.com](mailto:Rodasitch@aol.com)

## Donald Shasha (1927-31)

The sad news that Donald had died on the 14th of November was announced by the new Recorder Paul Rose at the Old Boys Dinner on Saturday, and was marked by a minute's silence.

Donald was a regular supporter of the OBD and a founder member of the 20/30 Club. He retired from private practice in 1980 and from Tribunals in 1986. He was the President of the Bramhall & Woodford Old Peoples Welfare Committee, and a former Trustee of the MGS Trust.

## MGS News 2003

For the benefit of some of our younger readers I reproduce some snippets from the MGS News (by kind permission of Mrs Helen Butchart the MGS News Editor).

**"Results put us in a league of our own"** Dr Martin Stephen said we have every right to feel pleased with results this year, at all levels. A levels in particular were very pleasing up 2% on last year at 86% A & B grades. This means that over 7 years we have been remarkably consistent at A level averaging 85.6% - even though for the past two years our students have taken four rather than three A levels. We also have one of the largest number of entrants of any school in the UK.

## Quiz Masters

Our junior team has just been crowned national champions in the Schools Challenge - an inter-school general knowledge quiz. The team consisting of

Joshua Owens, John Oxley, Jamie Kane, Philip McCullough with Richard O'Connor in reserve took our boys to the final against King's School, Rochester. Both teams were evenly matched, but MGS eventually triumphed by 1,440 points to 940. Our score was the highest in the history of the competition.

## John joins the army

During the 2003 National Youth Brass Band Competition of Great Britain, cornet player John Lees won an invitation to Kneller Hall to play alongside an array of Army bands, including the Coldstream Guards, in one of their summer concerts.

After a nerve-wracking rehearsal in front of almost 200 Army musicians, John played a solo in the concert the following evening to around 2,500 people. John said: "The band were fantastic and so was the audience, it was truly a night to remember!"

## Lost Owls

Just noticed there were a few lost owls and went on to the Internet to trace them.

Regards

**John Bitton (1960-67)**

**Well done John! He found all three! See page 3 for more.**

## Last word for a good sport

Dr David Jones has retired from MGS after 21 years of distinguished service in the Modern Languages Department. David has made an outstanding contribution to both Soccer and Cricket coaching, including four years with 2nd XI Soccer and 17 years with U12 Soccer winning the Manchester Cup on many occasions. Since 1982 he has also coached U14 Cricket. His teams have often won the Lancashire Cup, including consecutive victories in his final two years. Few, if any, can have made such a huge contribution to major sports at MGS.

# News & Views

## The New High Master

It was announced on Thursday 27th November, that the new High Master will be **Dr Christopher Ray, currently Head of the John Lyons School, Harrow.** We hope to provide more news at Easter.

## The OMA AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held in the Paton Library at School on Tuesday 25th November. This was a longer meeting with more discussion than usual. It was followed by an excellent buffet supper. Ian Thorpe gave the High Master's report which thanked the OMA for all the support it has given to the School and to him personally.

## Cambridge Section

Ian Thorpe would be interested in hearing from all OMs at the University and resident in the Cambridge area who might like to attend the Dinner in 2004. The organiser will be Daniel Elton (Trinity Hall).

The 2003 Dinner was held at Clare College on Wednesday 5th March 2003. Thanks to Ronnie Davies for the organisation.

## London Section

The AGM attended by 25 members followed an excellent meal at The Cheshire Cheese on Fleet Street on Tuesday 11th November. **Alec Elmer (1950-57)** was elected as Chairman and **John Reddish (1961-68)** as Vice Chairman the next year.

An informal pub evening was held on October 8th at Ye Olde Cittie of Yorke, 22 High Holborn (Chancery Lane tube) from 6:30 pm. Following a mail-out to London OMs, lots of new faces joined London Section regulars. Ian Thorpe from School attended.

The Section agreed to sponsor another Music Composition Prize, and to host a concert at St. John's Smith Square in early 2005. The Secretary (or Ian Thorpe) would be pleased to hear from any OMs who may wish to sponsor the 2005 concert.

Future events for 2004 include the Annual Dinner (venue will appear on the website in due course) which will be held on 11 March 2004, and the Golf Day, which will be held on 29 July at Knole Park, Sevenoaks. New members are very

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welcome and should contact the Secretary, [Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com](mailto:Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com)

## Midlands Section

The Annual Luncheon and Annual General Meeting were held at the Forest Hotel in Solihull on 15th November, when thirty one people were present, including the High Master as a guest of the Section.

After the luncheon the outgoing Chairman **Dr A J Waring** welcomed all those present. The High Master then spoke and referred to his forthcoming departure from the School. He also reported on the successful progress of the Bursary Appeal and emphasised the importance of the Old Mancunians Association.

At the AGM which followed, the Chairman reported on two successful functions held during the past year. A new Committee was approved. Members were also reminded of the informal luncheons held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Old Royal Hotel in Birmingham, when ladies are most welcome.

**Dan Binnion, Hon Secretary**  
Tel. 01902 758447.

## Sussex & South East Section

The next Annual Dinner of the Section will take place on Saturday 8th May 2004. Details of events and membership are available from:

**John Shippen**  
**4 Graftons, Christ's Hospital**  
**Horsham, West Sussex**  
**RH13 7LU.**

## South West Section

The South West Section was shocked and deeply saddened to learn of the death of its Immediate Past Chairman, **Frank Oliver**, just over a month after handing over the badge of office.

On a happier note, the Autumn Luncheon was regarded by those who attended as a great success. The Committee had agreed to back **Chris Burd's** idea of incorporating activities other than eating and drinking into the event. The chosen venue was the National Trust property of Stourhead. Thus we were able to investigate the treasures of the Palladian Mansion after an informative introductory talk. Then following an excellent lunch, members and guests could choose how long to spend admiring the famous garden and grounds.

Our next event will be the 2004 Commemoration Service at Exeter Cathedral followed by Luncheon. It will be held on 20th June. All Old Mancunians with guests are most welcome to the occasion, which promises to be **Martin Stephen's** final visit to the Section. Anyone who wishes to learn more should contact the **Section's Secretary - Ed Bridge (01934 834521).**

## Michael Crick

**"Michael Crick (1969-76)** was the man who blew the whistle on Ian Duncan Smith. He follows in the footsteps of **Martin Sixsmith (1966-72)** was the person who blew the whistle on Steven Byers, the then Transport Minister."

"Was it their education at MGS (which encouraged pupils to question everything and to stand their corner) that led them to stand up and reveal what they believed to be wrong?"

**Maurice Diner (1943-49)**  
**(Photographs of both these old boys by Sefton Samuels (1942-47) are displayed on the walls of the main corridor. Ed)**

## School Doctors

The text of five studies of MGS School doctors have been published via the news section of the Old Boys' website.

## Lost Owls (Cont.)

The article on 'Lost Owls' brought a great response. **Chris Heaton (1951-55)** who lives in Western Australia phoned **Ken Steer**, while **Derek Murphy (1947-52)** who lives in Germany wrote to him, to prompt him to get in touch. Ken not only contacted us, but updated his biography ready for the next **Blue Book!** Ken's address was also supplied by **Ian Davies**, who is currently living in Sydney and working as Advertising Manager for New South Wales Railways  
**Ken Steer GPO Box L 903 Perth, WA 68.**

## Thank you!

Guy Hindley's letter in the September edition of *TOM* received a tremendous response. He was absolutely delighted with the many replies received. In particular, he received a copy of a photograph of form IIIC at Bromwell Road Council School, Pendlebury in 1930. This is the only photo that he has of his father as a boy.

The photograph came from **Albert Watkiss**, 30854 Olund Road, Abbotsford, BC V4X 1Z9

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Canada, who wrote 'Walter was a contemporary of mine, we were in John Buckland's class and I have a photo with a proud Buckland, who had arranged his class with the County and MGS Scholarship boys on the front row. There were six of us, four of whom, including Walter, were wearing clogs. Since leaving MGS in 1935, I have lost touch with all my former classmates. Letters were also received from **R B Terry (1941-48)** and **T C G James (1928-37)** among others which were routed direct to Guy in Greece.

## Missing Staff?

Mention is made of missing owls, but what about staff members missing from the **"Blue Book"**? Diligent combing through the register failed to turn up the names of at least two members of staff who taught during WWII years: **Alex Berlyne (Art)** and my 3rd or 4th form History mistress whose name **Whittle?/Pickle?/Tickle?** - has become sadly mangled in my memory.

Congrats to Sir Ben Kingsley are in order, but if an OM, why is he missing too? **(He isn't! Look in 1955, Ben is the name he uses) Ed.**

Undoubtedly, the most intriguing item was that concerning 'Old Girl' Naomi de Ferranti, another unaccountably 'missing person'. As her exact coeval, I should have bumped into her in the corridor, but cannot for the life of me recall anyone dressed in Gymslip and blouse throughout my entire 6+ years at MGS. Ed's comment "There were others!" only compounds the mystery.  
**S Levenson, (1939-46) Kfar Mordecai, Israel 76854**

## New Books

**David Hoffman (1983-90)** and **J J Rowe QC (1945-54)**, barristers practising in Manchester, are co authors of a book published in May 2003, **"Human Rights in the UK"**, (Pearson Longman). It is intended for new students of law - school or university or beyond - as an introduction to the Human Rights Act 1998, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

**Dr Martin Stephen** has published his latest historical thriller in the Henry Gresham series entitled **"Conscience of the King"**. The book poses the question, about whether William Shakespeare was the front man for a variety of real authors.

I entered North in 1932, the Headmaster was Theodore Horne known as 'Tiddy', he was a model railway enthusiast and lived on Park Road, Prestwich where I believe he had a permanent model railway set-up in his attic. Ernest Hollowell was always 'Ernie Boller', and in retrospect strongly resembled Stanley Holloway.

The only worthwhile event I remember at North was on the occasion a senior boy named Hoyle set back the school clock which was connected to the bell, by ten minutes during morning break. We all had that amount of extra time playing outside, and he acquired heroic status.

I arrived at MGS in 1934 my form-master was Simkins who was a very withdrawn person. He used to board the electric train at Crumpsall station at the same time every morning. Also waiting on the platform was Alan Peake, like me a twelve year old in Simkins' form. Simkins totally ignored Peake each morning on the platform, on the train and then on the 40 tram. As they passed through the school gates virtually together, Simkins would turn, and only then, acknowledge his presence saying 'Good morning Peake'. Simkins admitted to having a radio, but only ever switching on to listen to the six o'clock news.

I remember all my other form masters, Keaney who was so gentle that he would never use the ubiquitous very flexible gym slipper which was used to administer summary punishment for small crimes. We used to take cruel advantage of him.

Johnnie Lingard who used to have a desk drawer half open, which he would slam violently shouting 'blimey' at the top of his voice if you made an error.

'Haffie' Fields was so dissatisfied with my academic performance in Science 3A that he actually rode his bicycle from Rusholme where he lived, all the way to my home by Heaton Park one Saturday to speak to my father. Could anyone imagine the present generation of masters being so

devoted to their pupils as to pedal a round twelve miles or more on a Saturday, just to meet the parents and discuss a boy who just wasn't trying hard enough? 'Haffie' was the very essence of true British fairness as we like to think of it now, and I still treasure a letter from him written long after he retired.

H B Toft who was the England hooker, thick set with a real rugby hooker's neck, straight down from his ears to halfway along his shoulders. There was briefly a Walls Ice Cream man on one of those tricycles outside the school gates who bolstered up his sales by showing you a pornographic photo if you bought a penny ice from him. One day he was parked as usual outside the gates at lunch-time with a queue of goggling 'owlets' waiting for their ice and a quick flash of the well thumb photo. Suddenly 'HB' was seen striding purposefully from the direction of the masters' common room, apparently he'd been tipped off. As the queue melted away, Toft reached the ice-cream cart, and without a word knocked the entrepreneur down with a straight left on the nose. He then about turned, and marched straight back through the school gates. The Walls entrepreneur picked himself blood streaming from his face, jumped on his Walls tricycle and was last seen pedalling very quickly into the distance, never to be seen again. Today of course he would have sued HB for heaven knows how much in damages.

M M Scarr was my form master in Sc6 BZ. He famously wrote on my report 'There is no room for both of us in the same school'. Mind you I was a bit of an arrogant B. Maurice Scarr actually represented England at the Empire Games, in what athletic capacity I can't remember. He frequently got confused with complicated chemical formulae on the blackboard and used, very good-naturedly, to ask Solly Clynes to come in from next door to straighten him out. We all loved it. When I think that we all went through the bombing and Blitz,

with probably a hundred disturbed nights a year, kept up our attendance at school very often avoiding dangerously wrecked buildings on the way, played games, did our homework, and like myself and many others did our stint in Dad's Army, ARP, and Firewatchers - then still teenagers joined the Services. Where on earth were all the counsellors that we didn't know we needed?

Perhaps some readers might have memories stimulated by this account of what were really very happy days.

**Barry Posner (1934-40)**

### Malta Convoy

I was on the convoy to Malta in HMS Manchester. When Mr Moss visited her before the convoy sailed he says "Inside one of her gun turrets crudely splashed in red paint he was thrilled to read 'Sapere Aude' so there must once have been one of us there!"

I was there but not guilty of writing graffiti. It was difficult to believe that this was done, well before there was any high tension. The gunnery officer would have been down on the writer like a ton of bricks and he would have been up before the First Lieutenant. The first part of his punishment would have been cleaning off all the red paint and repainting.

If Mr Moss wants to know who it was, the Admiralty has all the names of the ship's company as was demonstrated when they checked up on those people entitled to the Malta medal issued in 1992.

Comparison with the list of Old Mancunians of the appropriate age might be revealing.

**Stephen B. de C. Baker (1934-39)**

**Ballanarran, Surby,  
Port Erin,  
Isle of Man, IM9 6TE**

### University Admission

I read the High Master's reply to Dr Oliver's letter with interest. As an Old Mancunian myself with two boys currently at the School the issue obviously concerns me.

Dr Oliver seemed to discount the effort it may have taken the candidates at the age of 11 to

win entry to "the best schools". He further ignores the additional stimulation that pupils receive at schools like MGS, which promote their future creativity and ability to think (often laterally) on their feet. MGS certainly taught me to do this. Is this added value worthless to these universities? William (Bill) Lister (1967-75) [William.Lister@pannone.co.uk](mailto:William.Lister@pannone.co.uk) (Sadly, Dr Frank Oliver died just as his letter was going to press. ED.)

### George 3

Alan Pickwick advises me that Delwyn Holroyd (1981-87) has now got George 3 running on an ICL 1900 series emulator running on a PC under Linux. This is part of a BCS Computer restoration effort. The School used (and in fact built a special version) of a 1900, which did sterling service for many years.

Alan Pickwick is also looking into the production of an electronic Blue Book, and would like to thank all those people who were kind enough to submit suggestions.

### Notes For Your Diary

**Troop 3 Reunion** 15th May  
**The 1970s Reunion** 15th May.  
**Trek Reunion** 25th September  
**Please address all correspondence to Mrs Carole Pemberton**

[c.m.pemberton@mgs.org](mailto:c.m.pemberton@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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**Ulula 2004 the closing date is 3rd September. Please**

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**MGS, or email to**

[c.p.thom@mgs.org](mailto:c.p.thom@mgs.org)