



The Old Mancunian

September 2003

High Master for St Paul's

Dr Martin Stephen has announced his departure from MGS at the end of the next School year, and his appointment as High Master of St Paul's, London with effect from September 2004. He follows in the footsteps of an equally illustrious predecessor Frederick Walker, High Master at MGS 1856-74.

Like Frederick Walker who revitalised every aspect of education at MGS in the 19th Century (including the introduction of fees), Martin Stephen in his nine years tenure so far, has made equally dramatic changes of significant benefit to the long term future of the School. He has launched and vigorously supported, the Foundation Appeal Fund to keep the School true to Hugh Oldham's original aim for it to be open to all boys regardless of financial background, race, or creed. His enthusiasm reached the highest levels and was a major factor in the Prince of Wales agreeing to be Royal Patron of the Appeal which has reached a total to date of £8.4M plus some promised substantial legacies.

Martin has also set in train the major development plans for the School buildings to carry the School forward into the 21st century.

What else can I say about a man who is an expert on education and warships, an author of historic novels, and who has been such an influence on so many educational organisations, that he has been appointed Chairman of the Head Masters' Conference.

Martin has worked tirelessly to involve MGS with pupils from different schools in the Manchester area. He has also been central to setting up the Northern Youth Theatre to give 50 children from 14 local underprivileged schools theatrical experience. The Northern Theatre Group will

give its first public performances of *Romeo and Juliet* in the School quadrangle on the 9th to 13th of September.

Those of us who attend the Old Boys' Dinner will miss his verbal sketch of the School, interspersed with humour often directed against himself.

Our loss is St Paul's gain. I am sure you will join me in wishing Martin every success for the future.

Don Isherwood

University Admissions

You head the High Master's essay on university admissions "What do you think?"

I take that as an invitation to tell you! I have had a lifetime of dealing with just the problem he ventilates, and am happy to answer your question. I have tried to do so in a temperate, indeed tactful, manner.....

I was for many years a University admissions tutor, retiring within the last year. I believe that heads of fee-paying schools grossly distorted how we perform this difficult work.

Everyone welcomes the improvements in state-sector primary and secondary schools that have taken place in recent years, while recognising that considerable further progress is certainly needed. Pending that progress we cannot, as Dr Stephen suggests, merely ignore the disadvantages that many very able schoolchildren suffer from as compared with those in the "best" schools.

We cannot wait for all schools to reach the standard of MGS!

Many courses in many universities receive enormously more applications than they have vacancies. There is no question of the candidates with poor A-levels of which Dr Stephen writes being admitted to them.

Our aim is to choose the students who will benefit most from our courses. We look for natural ability and character since we are concerned with

how people will perform in the future. 'A' levels measure how they did in the past, and have been found highly imperfect in forecasting degree levels. There is little practical difference between students with AAB and those with ABB, for example. In particular, it has become sadly evident in recent years that A level mathematics no longer measures mathematical ability.

Admissions tutors give considerable weight to candidates' personal statements and to references from their schools as well as to their A level grades.

There is every reason to think that a candidate who has overcome poor schooling or some other handicap to achieve highly satisfactory A level grades may have greater natural ability and character than another who has enjoyed the finest schooling that our country offers but has got only marginally higher grades.

I believe that my colleagues at Bristol, an outstanding and deservedly popular university, have been grossly traduced by some head teachers of independent schools. Good candidates will get places at good universities, even if not their first choices. Readers may be comforted to learn that almost no boys from MGS ever apply to my former, and heavily over-subscribed, Exeter University!

Dr Frank Oliver (1944-50)

Reply to Dr Frank Oliver

I'm afraid Dr Oliver has misread my article. I have never suggested that we should 'merely ignore the disadvantage that many very able school children suffer from as compared with those in the 'best' schools.' I made it clear that we should address this disadvantage at school level. MGS, with its Bursary appeal, has put its and Old Mancunians' money where its mouth is. As

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for the remainder of Dr Oliver's article, I'm afraid it is factually incorrect in some areas. There is clear evidence of candidates with poor grades being admitted to universities. Dr Oliver seems unwilling to recognise, or may not know, that an employee of the University of Bristol stood up in front of a conference of Heads and stated explicitly and categorically that the Human Rights Act demanded that universities discriminate against applicants from independent schools. I am afraid that the evidence that four Departments in particular did exercise major and unwarranted discrimination is categorical and definitive. However, this is not the real point. We all understand that a university is right to regard a B grade from a candidate who has never been taught by a graduate in that subject as the equivalent of an A grade from someone who has—the exact point I made in my article.

However, universities who make these claims really ought to put the time in to the selection procedure to justify them. Oxford and Cambridge, for example, interview all candidates and set special aptitude tests for many of them. Exeter do not. Dr Oliver is right to state that universities who do not interview place great weight on a candidate's personal statement—yet there is absolutely no method of checking whether that statement was written by the candidate at all, or even whether it was simply lifted off the Internet.

No-one seeks to deny a university's right to try and spot potential—but if this is what is going to happen then the universities who do this must put as much time, effort and money into selection procedures and interviewing, as do Oxford and Cambridge. **(Cont Page 2)**

News and Views University Admissions

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MGS has put its time effort and money into access; so should universities, and at the moment they rely far too much on a paper application which need not be authentic and which can only ever provide inadequate information. As for MGS candidates applying to Exeter, the reason why they do not do so is very simple. It is a very long way away from Manchester, and with a graduate soon to be leaving university with an average debt of over £25,000 the additional cost of getting to and from Exeter will inevitably discourage the many MGS boys who do not come from privileged backgrounds.

Dr Martin Stephen

Michael Wood "On the Trail of Shakespeare"

I wonder how many of our UK readers realised that the Michael Wood (1959-66) who recently produced an excellent series on Shakespeare on BBC2 was an old boy of the School? He has also written an accompanying book which he dedicates to two former English teachers at MGS, Bert Parnaby and Brian Phythian.

Michael was recently on Radio 4's "Start The Week" with a fellow old boy Nick Hytner who is now a famous film director. When he saw the inscription to those teachers he said he got a lump in his throat. The project took two years to complete and Michael's painstaking historical detective work revealed the richly textured religious, social and family background which influenced Shakespeare the man and the writer.

Michael has made more than 80 documentaries including the award winning film "Saddam's Killing Fields" which showed the brutal reality of the dictator's regime. "We showed those documentaries years ago, but nobody did a thing" he says dejectedly.

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These days making documentaries is very much a family affair as he now runs a London-based television production company with his wife Rebecca.

This is a brief extract from the Manchester Evening News 25 June 2003.

HOW'S THAT?

I was visiting Manchester last year with my younger brother Stephen (1935-42). As we drove past Hulme Grammar School, I was reminded of a cricket match played there in 1934. We were a rather strong U.14 that year, when the local 'Derby' match took place. They elected to bat first and the first four batsmen fell without a run being scored. Things didn't improve, and eventually they were all out for 2 runs, with 'Chippy' Roberts taking 7 for 2 and Blenkinsop finishing with an even better average of 3 wickets for 0 runs. I was the opening batsman, and the first ball was extremely fast, but well outside the off stump. I judiciously shouldered my bat, but the wicket-keeper fluffed the ball and it went through for 4. We thus won the match without a stroke being played. I wonder if any other members of that team still bore their friends with the same story?

**Phil Wilshere (1932-38)
P.O. Box 98789,
Sloane Park 2152
GAUTENG South Africa
MALTA**

The Late Kenneth Hindley and I were both Foundation Scholars. We left MGS at the end of the old School's final term at Long Millgate to take up awards at New College, Oxford. After Graduating he taught at New College School and Eastbourne College; I at Wellington College, until 1940, when we both joined the Instructor Branch of the Royal Navy.

During the War our Midshipmen pupils were too heavily committed to their action stations to have much time for higher mathematics; we, likewise, were fully occupied in charge of our Ships' Action Plotting arrangements, Kenneth in HMS Edinburgh and I in HMS

Kenya, cruisers which escorted convoys to and from Arctic Russia, West Africa and the Mediterranean. We often steamed in close company, but never met again until both our ships were either damaged or sunk, when towards the end of the War we both became members of the staff at HMS Dryad, the School of Navigation.

I am writing now because in September 2002, with about 100 survivors we were guests of the Maltese Government at the 60th anniversary of Operation Pedestal which brought relief to that beleaguered island just in time. Of the naval escort more ships were lost than survived; most of the merchantmen were destroyed also; but the tanker Ohio just managed to deliver her vital cargo of oil to Malta's Grand Harbour.

Many years later I was privileged to meet Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, when he admitted that it was the Ohio's oil which enabled our Maltese based submarines to ensure that not a drop reached Rommel's tanks in time to inhibit his tanks en route to El Alamein.

Never, ever in my 90 year experience have I encountered anything like the week long hospitality of the Maltese last year. I shall also never forget the re-enactment of the Ohio's arrival; like her a borrowed tanker, half sunken, but kept afloat by two destroyers, one lashed firmly on either side, while the whole was propelled by a third pushing at the stern. Among the hundred guests were two German officers who had been with the Luftwaffe bombing the Pedestal ships in 1942. We all got on together perfectly well in 2002 and paid formal respects at each others' war memorials.

Just before pedestal I was invited to visit HMS Manchester, one of the cruisers lost during the operation. Inside one of her gun turrets crudely splashed in red paint I was thrilled to read "Sapere Aude" so there must once have been one of us there!

Next, I am well aware that it is perilous to criticise the editor; but nevertheless, I must call

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attention to page 2 of the Easter 2003 edition of The Old Mancunian, for some of the dotted lines there are misplaced. There ought to be one below the name and address of Dennis Bottomley, who wrote about flying bombs, one below my name and address, for I wrote the rude reference to Gertie Elsdon. Then the following letter would be K B Winpenny's account of his musical experiences.

Best wishes to you all

Robert Moss

**Seven Bells, Botesdale, Diss,
Norfolk IP22 1BP
(Sorry about the lines. I tend to scatter them to fill up vertical space. "Must pay more attention to detail" as Freddie Winterbottom said a long time ago. Ed)**

ROMEO & JULIET

As mentioned at the foot of column one and start of column two on page one, the first public performances by The Northern Youth Theatre, an exciting new group of talented youngsters, is to take place under cover, in the quadrangle at School on the 9th to 13th of September. Remember warm clothing is advisable. The show was nearly cancelled at the outset by the withdrawal of £10,000 from a sponsor, however the show goes on! If you would like to support this venture, you may wish to make donations to The Manchester Grammar School, or attend a performance (or indeed both!)

Tickets are £5 (adults) concessions £3. The Box Office telephone number is on the normal School number 0161 224 7201.

Please send donations FAO The High Master The Manchester Grammar School, Old Hall lane, Manchester M13 0XT

Golf Day

The Golf day planned for 20th May was cancelled mainly for lack of support. As it turned out it was rather a wet day.

Sadly one man who wanted to join us was a former President at Disley **Gerhard Wolf (1936-39)** who died just before the date.

London Section Summer Outing 7 June 2003

A select but disappointingly small group of London Section members met at the River and Rowing Museum in Henley on Thames. We enjoyed coffee in the attached restaurant whilst waiting to see whether any more would arrive but by 10.30 am. none had so we started on the museum.

The permanent display is devoted to the river, its natural history and the history of human activities associated with it. The latter range from river control (locks; the Thames Barrier) to water supply and from trade and transport to hydro power. There is also a section about the building and operation of a modern replica of a Greek Trireme. Many of the exhibits are interactive and I am pleased to report that the vice-Chairman and the Treasurer displayed excellent co-ordination as members of the crew of a rowing eight!

The main exhibition was supplemented by two special ones, "The Romans in Britain" and "The Thames at War (1939-45)". We caught the last day of the "Romans" and had great fun with it. A toga is not as easy to put on as you might think! A circular board game with counters had a strong resemblance to "noughts and crosses" so we had a go at that too. "The Thames at War" was not so interactive but was fascinating nonetheless, showing the exploits of the "Upper Thames Defence Force" (a specialised part of the Home Guard), the work of the Land Army, local aircraft construction and some of the little ships of the Dunkirk

evacuation. By the time we had seen all this, lunch was required so we strolled about half a mile along the towpath to a café by the river and filled up. After recharging, we had a look round the centre of Henley. Then it was back to the Museum to collect our cars and disperse at about 4pm. after a very pleasant day.

For more details of social activities please contact:
Ian Shepherd 01491 572393 or
ian.shepherd@soci.org

The Annual General Meeting of the Section will be held on Tuesday 11 November, in the Williams Room in the Cheshire Cheese, Fleet Street. All are very welcome to attend.

For other activities or general enquiries contact:

Nicholas Gartside
Nicholas.gartside@schroders.com
Flat 16

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

Midlands

The Summer Luncheon was again held at the Anchor Inn, near Pershore, on Saturday 21st June, when 18 people, including members' wives were present. Following the buffet lunch, our Hon Treasurer, Pat Montague, gave a fascinating account of cruising on a sailing ship, supported by an entertaining video presentation.

The Annual General Meeting and luncheon will be held at the Forest Hotel, Dorridge, Solihull, on Saturday 15th November. Further details will be sent to members early in October and new members and their ladies will be most welcome.

For further information please contact:

Dan Binnion, Membership Secretary,
Tel 01902 758447

South West Region Autumn Luncheon 4th October 2003

At the AGM the members voted £250 of the Section's funds to help ensure that the "Romeo & Juliet" project remained on track. Our next event was outlined by Chris Burd. We have booked a private room at the National Trust site of Stourhead with its

Palladium mansion and wonderful landscaped grounds. Thus we will be in a position of offering other activities as well as the lunch itself. On the day it will be possible to tour the House or Gardens (free to members of the National Trust) with some expert guidance.

Ed Bridge 01934 834521. The latest information about the Section's activities can now be found on its new website
www.oldmancs.org.uk

Old Mancunians AFC

Your item on the Old Mancunians AFC reminded me of my final years at School, when I reached the dizzy heights of the School 3rd eleven team. Ken Griffiths (also in Maths Sixth was captain and I was vice-captain. At that time (1956-7) the Old Mancs had at least 4 teams and were always short of players for teams in the lower divisions. Boys from the School were asked to help out and, because the 3rd eleven only had a few fixtures, I was able to turn out on a number of occasions. Home games were played on the municipal pitches near Stretford Station. I remember changing in a shed and being given black tea (no sugar) after matches.

Chris Hobbs (1949-57)
chris.hobbs@cwgsv.net

The above report was a long time ago and things have improved somewhat!

Anyone interested in joining us should telephone:-**Mike Richards (first XI captain) on 01706 840980 or mobile 0777 9807236**

or Harry Hinchcliffe (Club Secretary) on 0161 432 0265 or myself Geoff Loughlin (Vice Chairman) on 0161 320 5992 or mobile 07713 085013
We look forward to seeing you!

Congratulations!

David Adams (1954-61) a former Chairman of the London Section OMA, has just been appointed President of the LSCA leading 37,000 London Chartered Accountants. David worked in Manchester as Chief Executive of Henry Cooke

Lumsden, before moving to London to head up Capel-cure Myers private client Division.

The article in the June edition of the *London Accountant* announcing David's appointment reviewed his professional career including his attendance at MGS and his membership of the Dramatic Society.

Research into Aging

Jim Leeming a retired Consultant Geriatrician wrote to publicise a fund raising "Lecture & Gala Dinner" which he organises, which this year should have a special appeal to Old Boys.

The Speaker is Dr Martin Stephen on the subject "Dare to be Wise? (Subtitled MGS and the Battle for Standards). It will be held in the Haworth Room, Manchester University on Thursday 16th October. Dress informal. Arrive 6.15 for 7.0. Lecture 7.0 prompt. Dinner 8.15 to 10.30.

Cost £30 for Lecture & Dinner. £10 for Lecture only.

Jim Leeming 0161 445 3580
james.leeming@tesco.net

Peter Sheldon

I was saddened to read in Ulula 2002 of the death of Peter Sheldon who I knew as Peter Schwarzenberger. The entry seemed to suggest he arrived at MGS direct from Germany in 1938. This was not so. I was at the old Sale High School in Poplar Grove, Sale before it moved to Woodbourne Road, Brooklands. This happened in 1935 so Peter must have appeared at Sale Prep in 1934.

I am pleased more mention is being made of SHS. We were proud of that association **Malcolm Hunt (SHS 1934-37, MGS 1937-39) Breydon, The Street, Somerleyton Nr Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 5QB**

Sol Clynes

Seeing the recent obituary on Mr. Clynes put me in mind of a particular example I remember of the wisdom of Sol who, in addition to being an extremely entertaining and thus effective teacher, secured me a vacation job in the chemical industry which was instrumental in setting on the path to my subsequent career as a patent agent.

The example concerns an epigram which, at least in my own personal mythology, has become "Clyne's Law" a subparagraph of "Murphy's-" or "Sod's Law" and, paraphrased no doubt by my frequent re-telling, now reads as follows:-
"IF YOU HAVE A 50% CHANCE OF BEING RIGHT, YOU WILL BE WRONG"

This has often stood me in good stead and I recommend it to you all as a reality check before your next impulsive action.

Allen Norris (1958-65)
 Avenue des Villas 77
 1190 Brussels Belgium
Allen.norris@ucb-group.com

Walter (Bill) Hindley

My father, Walter (Bill) Hindley, was a scholarship pupil of MGS (1930-37) He went up to St Catherines Cambridge where he studied classics. He returned to MGS as a master from 1941 to 1945 and again from 1950 to 51 but then he died on 28 January 1951 at the age of 32.

I was nearly 3 years old and therefore have no recollection of my father save some writing, a copy of a school report from a student of his, Peter Brown, who by pure coincidence was renting my house near Bath and must have sensed some distant connection. Incidentally the handwriting was uncannily similar to mine and I understand that there was a similarity of expression.

I am trying to piece together information, to locate any contemporaries or any other incidents either from his time as a student or as master, which

will add some texture to a tragically short life. I would appreciate any information, data or leads which may provide some depth and breadth.

GuyHindley
guvansu@otenet.gr

Many thanks for the recent edition of TOM. Reading the letters from W.A.Gasse and Leon Brown stirs me also into sending you a note.

I entered South Manchester School aged 8 in 1928, and moved to MGS, newly built, in Sept 1931. I have always been a great admirer of W.S. Montgomerie, who was a marvellous Headmaster of South, strongly supported by "Piggy" Erskine. Mr. Rigby was also a first rate Woodwork teacher whose wisdom in the handling and care of woodwork tools has remained with me ever since.

I cycled the 3 miles from home in Chorlton each day along Nell Lane past the old 'Work House' with its hand made brick boundary walls, not realising that 18 years later I would be completing my training in General Surgery leading to the final exam for the F.R.C.S. (England)

At MGS, I joined Form 1b presided over by Billy Hulme of the well respected trouser dusting Wooden Spoon, and also for the Tuesday afternoon Scripture lessons, more often than not replaced to our great enjoyment by readings from W.W. Jacobs. Happy Days! I continue to look forward to the arrival of 'The Old Mancunian'.
Percy Jewsbury, (1931-1938)
Trevone, 15 Oak Lane,
Norfolk NR9 4JY.

John Shore's appreciation of Billy Hulme's teaching qualities is long overdue. He took 2b for English in I think the school year 1935-36.

True he was quick to display his armoury of wooden spoons (one broken), a bayonet frog, a slipper and a rather tatty cane and expiated on their corrective potential at length; but during that year, he only slipped one boy and that with a couple of not very impressive swipes.

On the other hand he introduced us to the delights of Saki who has given me and, I understand, the present High Master, a lifetime's enjoyment. I particularly remember his initial readings of '*Sredni Vashtar*' and '*Tobermory*'. As WC Fields almost said "No man who enjoys Saki can be all bad." Incidentally, the most brutal assault with a slipper I witnessed was in Sc 4b by Ronnie Plackett. It hurt just to watch.

J R Anderson (1934-38)
 4 Vardon Drive, Wilmslow,
 Cheshire, SK9 2AQ

The Blue Book

I am puzzled by Judy Robinson's comment in the Easter 2003 edition that while it would be feasible to produce an electronic version of the *Blue Book* it would land you "in trouble with the Data Protection Registrar."

David Green (1946-52)
Rhyd yr Harding
Castle Morris
Nr Haverfordwest, SA62 5EJ

(The comment was mine David and I was incorrect, provided that we only publish what would appear in a book. If anyone misuses the data they would commit an offence under the Data Protection Act.

There is a difference between publishing an image of a book on a disk and the data base behind it. Both the book and the database can exist on a single CD ROM. The book image is extremely boring to use, as you cannot go directly to the page you want to read. Even looking up a name in the directory is a slow scrolling operation. We would therefore need to put out a data base image together with a program to enable readers to make rapid searches. Thank you for querying this. We shall look further into the feasibility. Have readers any low cost ideas? Ed)

Lost Owls

Can anyone help us locate The following whose copies of *Ulula* were returned?

Michael Anthony Acrapulo (1980-87)
Christopher James Forrest (1990-97)
David Charles Jones (1982-89)

Please can anyone help us trace **Kenneth George Steer (Sale 194?-49), (MGS 1949-54)**. He was last heard of working for the State Government Crown Law Dept in Western Australia, but has probably now retired.

I was surprised to find I had been dropped from the email directory. (This is a semi-automatic routine after a period of inactivity. Ed)

I am presently managing a small commercial school – which currently uses the LCCIEB course material as the basic curriculum, with optional oral English and several career related program offerings. The School is based in Quindao in Shandung Province, but I will be moving to a new position based in Shanghai shortly.

Ian Wyder (1945-52)
Wyder@pilgrimsestate.com
Please address all correspondence to Mrs Carole Pemberton
c.m.pemberton@mgs.org

or, to The Editor
 'The Old Mancunian'
 To register on internet go to www.Oldmancunians.org
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Ulula 2003

Closing date is 5th September. Please address your entry to **Patrick Thom. The Common Room MGS, or email to c.p.thom@mgs.org**