

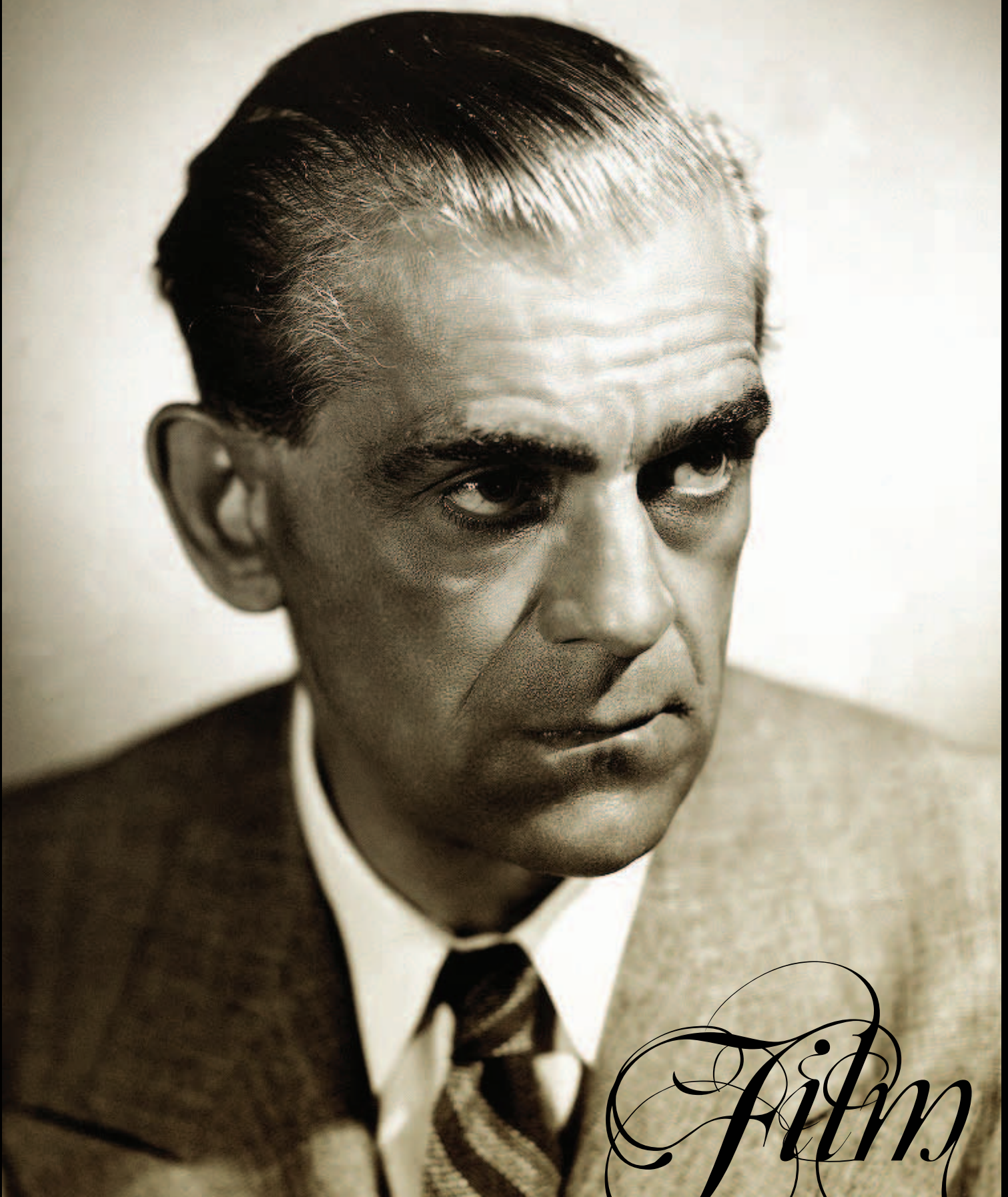
Concordia

Merchant Taylors' School



1561

Summer 2013



Film



The Chamber Choir singing Bruckner's *Christus factus est* at the Annual Concert at Merchant Taylors' Hall



Welcome

Dear reader

In this edition we focus on the world of film as we hear from OMT actors, writers, producers and directors. I should like to begin by thanking Sara Karloff, daughter of the great Boris Karloff, and his official biographer Stephen Jacobs. Sara's interview and Stephen's article reveal another side to a man who appeared not only as the iconic monster in *Frankenstein* but produced such a great and varied body of work. I am indebted to the many

other contributors who symbolise the extraordinary creative talents of OMTs within the film industry, particularly Nigel Lindsay and Riz Ahmed, both of whom recently starred in the award-winning comedy *Four Lions*.

As Stephen Wright's Head Mastership comes to a close, we pay tribute to his nine years of outstanding service to Merchant Taylors' with contributions from former Chair of Governors Sir Geoffrey Holland

and Second Master Dr. Tim Stubbs. We also welcome incoming Head Master Simon Everson.

We continue to try to reach as many alumni as possible – please feel free to send us addresses of OMTs who would like to receive *Concordia*. Lastly, we welcome your feedback so do let us know if there is anything you would like to see appear in the magazine.

Jon Rippier
Editor



Concordia E-mail Concordia at editor@mtsn.org.uk

Sandy Lodge, Northwood, Middlesex
HA6 2HT, Tel: +44 (0)1923 820644
alumni@mtsn.org.uk
www.mtsn.org.uk

Editor: Jon Rippier

Contributing editors: **Chris Roseblade,**
Nick Latham
Sub-editors: **Alison Dawson, Sandra Sansom**

Photography: **3Sixty, Ding Ding Photography,**
Geraint Lewis, Jonah Surkes (5ths)

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www.3sixty-creative.com
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DO YOU KNOW A MISSING ALUMNUS? Add a friend to Concordia's mailing list alumni@mtsn.org.uk



Introduction

An introduction from the **Head Master:**

Welcome to the latest edition of Concordia, which has an entirely dramatic feel to it – indicating, indeed, that OMTs’ rise to prominence in all walks of life – inspired, one would hope by their early experiences at Sandy Lodge. Their words, of course (and as one might anticipate), speak for themselves, so I want to focus, if I may, on an event that took place earlier in the year which seemed to encapsulate much of what the wider Merchant Taylors’ community is (and should be) about.

I refer to the City Network evening that took place at the end of February. Hosted by KPMG through the kind offices of Simon Collins (a current parent) with attendees including current pupils,

parents, teachers, former teachers and OMTs, it was an excellent occasion and was still going strong when I left at a late hour – and, I believe, continued at other venues thereafter. For many it marked (one hopes) the start of genuine and long term re-engagement with MTS and, if the offers of work experience and mentoring that were received post-event are anything to go by, then it will develop still further the cohesion, mutual support and social interaction of all the members of the Merchant Taylors’ family.

In this light, and if I could be reflective for a moment, it is this concern for others and generosity of spirit that has been the salient feature of all that I have encountered at Sandy Lodge – one sees it in Phab and the Charity Drive run by the boys at school, but also in much that the OMTs undertake

as well. It is this, possibly above all else, that makes MTS such a special place.

Finally I should say how delighted we were to see ‘The Rollers’ on a recent visit to the school. Having read the blow-by-blow account of their carefully engineered plot it was a real pleasure to welcome the participants as they revisited the scene of their ‘crime’. We hope there will be further such visits and all OMTs, either singly or as a group, are always more than welcome to visit the school – simply contact the Development Office and book a time and a tour.

With all good wishes for the summer and beyond.

Stephen Wright
Head Master

Summer 2013

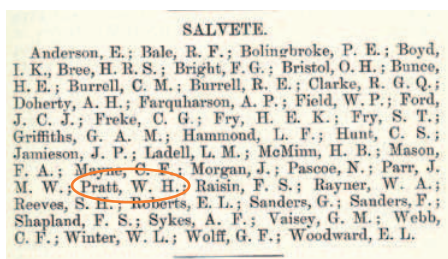
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Boris Karloff



Boris Karloff (William Henry Pratt) attended Merchant Taylors' from 1899 to 1901. After struggling as a labourer in Canada, he began to act in travelling theatre before eventually breaking into Hollywood and gaining global recognition as the monster in Frankenstein in 1933. He acted in over 170 films, performed on Broadway where he was nominated for a Tony award and won a Grammy as the voice of The Grinch. He was also one of the founding members of the Screen Actors' Guild. His daughter, **Sara Karloff**, who now runs the Boris Karloff Foundation, is interviewed below



Your father's family were mostly members of the diplomatic service. What motivated him to take a different path?

My father, William Henry Pratt (Billy), a.k.a. Boris Karloff, was the youngest of nine children, seven brothers and one sister. His closest in age brother was seven years older than he was. His father was in the Consular Service and served in India. All of the Pratt boys, including my father, were trained for the Consular Service and all but my father served in it, either in India or China. My father's oldest brother, John, was knighted for his service in China and my father often referred to him as "My brother, The Sir."

Although schooled for "the family business", my father wanted no part of it. His passion was the theatre. Having taken every opportunity to see every play he could as a young man growing up in England, once he reached the age of 21, he left home with £100 in his pocket and boarded a ship to British Columbia determined to become AN ACTOR, despite the fact he had not set foot on a stage since the age of seven!

He spent 10 years learning his craft with three different repertory theatre groups, sometimes getting paid, sometimes not. He dug ditches, worked at the B.C railway, the B.C. Electric Co., he drove a truck, he did whatever it took to sustain himself between theatre jobs. But he learned his craft and fortunately was a quick student. These theatre groups would do three or four plays a week and travel around the country night after night. Not an easy life. But he was AN ACTOR!

Eventually, my father made his way down to Hollywood and auditioned for everything and anything that came along. He was an extra...the third from the left in the fourth row...as he told it. Finally he began to get bit parts, a move up from "extra" parts. These were often speaking roles, small but "showy".

Stardom came with the release of Frankenstein. What was the experience like for him?

After 20 years in the business and at age 44, he got his break! James Whale spotted him in the studio commissary and asked

him to test for the role of the Monster in the upcoming film, Frankenstein. Bela Lugosi had already turned the role down. My father was delighted to be offered any role. After two weeks of working with makeup genius Jack Pierce, the makeup was completed and ready for the film test. The rest is cinema history! My father was an overnight star. Frankenstein was his 81st film and hardly anyone had seen his first 80 films!

However, no one expected this film to be the huge success it was, nor did anyone expect the Monster to be the star of the film. My father was not even invited to the Première! He was not even mentioned in the front running credits of the film. There was a "?" opposite the Monster in the credit line.

The physical effects of the costume were significant. Did he feel it was worth the sacrifice?

This stardom, however, did not come without cost. The wardrobe and boots weighed over 70 pounds and my father had to carry Colin Clive (Dr. Frankenstein) up the back lot hill of the studio several times before "the shot" was just right. It took a terrible toll on my father's already bad back. He was already very slender, having spent years as a starving actor, but he lost 25 pounds during the making of Frankenstein.

The makeup alone took nearly four hours each morning to put on and over three hours each night to take off and that was in addition to 12-14 hour shooting

days. But my father was grateful to be working and by nature and throughout his life never grumbled or complained. He showed amazing stamina and professionalism. I'm sure that is one of the reasons he felt so strongly about the importance of his involvement with the founding of The Screen Actors' Guild. His card number is #9. He, along with the other founding members, felt that it was their obligation to give a voice to those actors who did not yet have a way to speak up in their own defence against the all-powerful studios and the working conditions; the long arduous hours; the unfair and broken contracts. Those founding members put their own career on the line with their involvement with the start-up of SAG. I think this was some of the work of which my father was quietly the most proud.

How did he view his success?

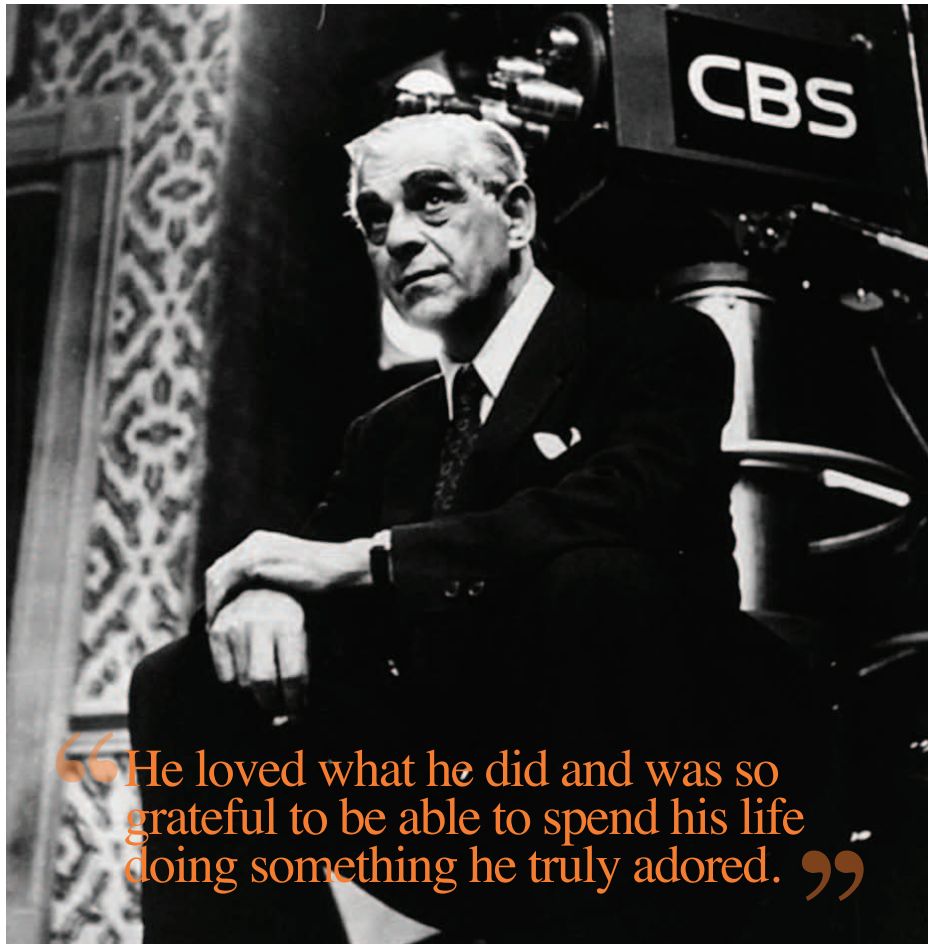
My father was the consummate professional. He loved what he did and was so grateful to be able to spend his life doing something he truly adored. He was a very modest, self-effacing man, well educated, articulate, a voracious reader, a quiet listener and a very funny man...the antithesis of the roles he played. He was an avid gardener, loved animals and was passionate about the game of cricket. At one time he and my mother had 22 dogs. They had a pig named Violet and even some turkeys...all in Beverly Hills!

Which films was your father most proud of?

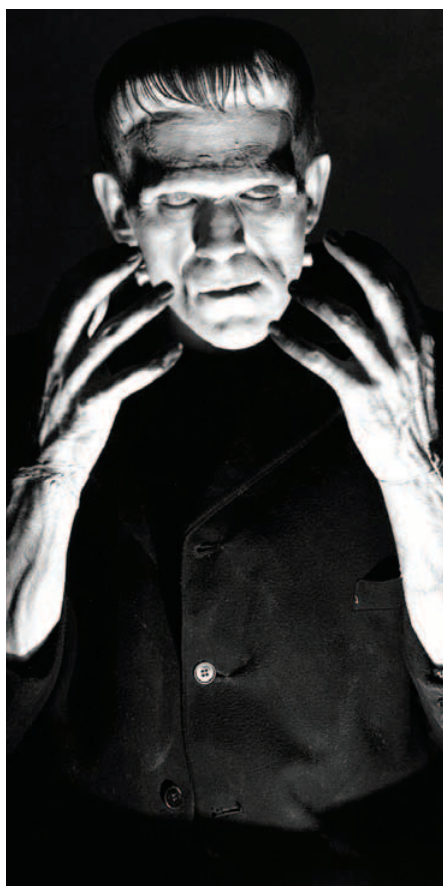
My father did over 170 films, a huge body of radio work, 20 some children's recordings, had three television series of his own, having embraced the new medium of television early on when most "movie stars" were afraid of the "live" aspect of it. He guest starred on all the big shows of the time and even sang and danced and spoofed his own bogey man image. He loved it. He starred: on Broadway in *Arsenic and Old Lace* in a part written especially for him; in *Peter Pan* opposite Jean Arthur; in *The Lark* opposite Julie Harris who he adored working with, a role for which was nominated for a Tony. And of course he IS *The Grinch*...both the Narrator and the Voice of *The Grinch* in *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* for which he won a Grammy.

He returned to England for the final years of his life. Did he always view England as home?

English through and through, my father's schooling, upbringing and work ethic



“He loved what he did and was so grateful to be able to spend his life doing something he truly adored.”



always stayed with him both personally and professionally. He returned to his beloved England in 1959 and spent the last 10 years of his life commuting back to the States for work, but he was Home. He had a flat in London and a cottage in Bramshott which he adored.

Fans continue to be fascinated by your father's work. Why do you think his work is of such enduring interest?

No one would be more amazed that my father at the enormity of his popularity and the devotion and respect of his fans. He is one of the very few people in "the industry" about whom nothing negative was ever written or said. When my Godmother and his good friend, Cynthia Lindsay, wrote a biography about my father, she said that almost to a person when she interviewed people about him they would preface their remarks with "Oh, dear Boris..." and so she entitled her biography *Dear Boris*.

How do you remember your father as a person?

My father left the most remarkable and loving legacy, both personally and professionally. What more could be said of a man, an actor or a father?

Boris Karloff: a brief biography

The day before *Frankenstein* opened in November 1931 Boris Karloff was one of a myriad of character actors in Hollywood. The night after the opening he was a star, and would remain one for the rest of his life.

Yet being a star hadn't been the be all and end all for Karloff. For his main ambition had always been the same – to be a professional actor. Financial security was nice, of course, but he had endured over two decades as an actor without it. But this was the life he had chosen – to the consternation of his family.

Boris Karloff was born William Henry Pratt on the 23rd November 1887 in Camberwell, South London. The youngest of the nine children of Edward and Eliza Pratt Billy, as he was known, was expected to follow his father and the majority of his siblings into Government Service.

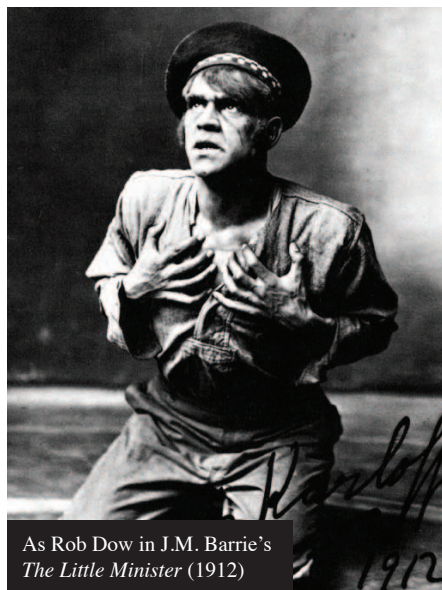
Billy's father, Edward Pratt, had had a volatile career in India, working in various roles within the Customs department, collecting tax on salt and opium. In 1879, having been forced to retire, Edward brought his family to England. He remained an embittered man and in December 1889, when Billy was just two years old, Edward and Eliza legally separated.

Of Billy's 7 brothers 4 followed in the father's footsteps, as he later recalled: "Two were in the Indian Civil Service [Edward and Frederick], two were in the Chancellor's Service in China [John and Richard] and I was supposed to go to the Chancellor's Service in China with them... I didn't want to." Billy had other plans. "I was a lazy little devil at school because I knew exactly what I wanted to do, go on the stage," he said. "I was not going to pass any examinations if I could possibly help it. I wanted to be an actor."

He would not be the first actor in the family. His favourite brother, George, had also trodden the boards, billed under the stage name of George Marlowe. "Despite the fact that George was an extraordinarily handsome man, he never went very far on the stage," Karloff later explained, "which was the reason he gave it up for a city job.

But I tried to emulate him."

Billy's love of acting had begun at an early age. After his mother and siblings moved to Enfield they attended St. Mary Magdalene's church on Windmill Hill. Here Billy joined a drama group and at Christmas 1896, at the age of nine, made his acting debut appearing in one of the plays – a version of *Cinderella*. "Instead of playing the handsome prince, I donned black tights and a skullcap and rallied the forces of evil as the Demon King," he recalled. That role proved to be the catalyst. "From then on," he proclaimed, "I resolved to be an actor."



As Rob Dow in J.M. Barrie's
The Little Minister (1912)

Despite brotherly attempts to dissuade him from an acting career Billy's mind was set. Even his schooling at such notable institutions as Enfield Grammar, Merchant Taylors' and Uppingham could not divert him from seeking a life on the stage.

In 1909, aged 21, he used a £150 legacy to leave the country. He emigrated to Canada and made his way to Vancouver, working along the way. When he arrived in the city he had only five dollars in his pocket. Within days he was down to 15 cents. "There wasn't a hope of stage work," he explained. "There was little doing in the theatre at that time and, in any case, managers were

not interested in gangling youths with no experience. The dire necessity of eating was soon apparent." He took what work he could. "Men were wanted to dig a race track and a fair ground," he said, "and the pay was one and threepence an hour."

He later found work as a real estate broker. He also found himself a wife. On 23 February 1910 Billy married a fellow English émigré, Jessie Grace Harding. His new bearing in life, however, had little effect on his ultimate ambitions and his search for an acting job continued. He eventually was offered a place with the theatrical troupe the Jeanne Russell Players and left his wife in the city while he made his way to join the company. "I had finally become an actor, but I mumbled, bumbled, missed cues, rammed into furniture and sent the director's blood pressure soaring," he admitted. "When the curtain went up, I was getting 30 dollars a week. When it descended, I was down to 15 dollars." Thus began almost a decade of the theatrical work with various companies as Billy – now calling himself Boris Karloff (he later erroneously claimed the surname came from ancestors on his mother's side) – learned his trade. Years later he arrived in Los Angeles and began to look for work. "I made the rounds of the only possible outlet, the film studios," he said. "I appeared before the camera for the first time in a crowd scene being directed by Frank Borzage at Universal City."

For over a decade Karloff made a living, initially as an extra and then as a character actor. Sometimes the work was so scarce he would have to return to manual labouring to earn a crust. Two more wives came and went (he had divorced Grace in 1913) and in 1930 he married librarian Dorothy Stine. The couple would have one child – a daughter named Sara Jane – who was born on 23 November 1938 (her father's 51st birthday).

One day in June 1931 Karloff entered the commissary at Universal Studio where he was making the picture *Graft*. That day would change his life forever. "I was having lunch," Karloff explained, "and James Whale sent either the first assistant or maybe it was his secretary over to me,

and asked me to join him for a cup of coffee after lunch, which I did. He asked me if I would make a test for him tomorrow. 'What for?' I asked. 'For a damned awful monster!' he said. Of course, I was delighted, because it meant another job if I was able to land it. Actually, that's all it meant to me. At the same time I felt rather hurt, because at the time I had on a very good straight make-up and my best suit - and he wanted to test me for a monster!"

After the success of *Frankenstein* the studios, naturally, wanted to feature Karloff in further horror offerings, and in that decade alone he starred in such genre classics as *The Mummy*, *The Ghoul*, *The Black Cat*, *The Raven*, *Bride of Frankenstein* and *Son of Frankenstein*.

Although he would remain, primarily, a movie actor Karloff would return to the stage from time to time, with varying degrees of success. The plays *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *On Borrowed Time*, *Peter Pan*, and *The Lark* were successful. *The Linden Tree* and *The Shop at Sly Corner* were not (both closed after only 7 performances).

In 1933 Boris Karloff became one of the nine founding members of the Screen Actors Guild, established to look after the rights of movie actors. He was always an advocate for actors' rights and had, himself, suffered at the hands of the studios. After shooting the famous lake scene in *Frankenstein*, for example, when the Monster inadvertently drowns the little girl, the cast and crew returned to the studio. "We went back to the studio in the evening to have some supper and then... back onto the backlot and worked all night until five in the morning... I had it [the make-up] on for over 25 hours. It was a long pull." In addition, Karloff was required to report to the studio at 4 a.m. in order for Jack Pierce to apply the makeup (which took over four hours) to be ready for the 9 a.m. start. At that time neither the application nor the removal process (an hour and a half) was considered to be part of Karloff's working day.

Although the movies would prove to be the mainstay of his career, Karloff would regularly appear on television and radio.



In *Arsenic and Old Lace* on Broadway 1941

His guest appearances would often play on his horror persona. For example, on 18 April 1953, he was the guest on Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis's radio show. "In spite of the fiendish parts that I play in pictures," Karloff told Martin, "I'm really a kind and mild-mannered man. In fact, I'm as soft-hearted and gentle a man as you could ever meet. Don't I appear that way? Dean—why don't you answer?" "I can't," Martin replied. "You're choking me!" Still, TV and radio also presented him with some of his best dramatic roles. It remains a pity that more of his shows are unavailable for us to enjoy.

Karloff was rarely out of work. Such a busy schedule, however, had a detrimental effect on his home life and in May 1946 Karloff and Dorothy divorced. He married his fifth and final wife, Evelyn Helmore, the following day.

Karloff continued to work until the end of his life, even when dogged by ill health. He had been plagued by back problems and later wore a brace on his left leg. His years of smoking also took its toll and during the making of his final films an oxygen tank accompanied him on set.

When he died, on 2 February 1969 aged 81, the newspapers, naturally, concentrated on his horror roles - most significantly that of the Monster in *Frankenstein*. It's doubtful

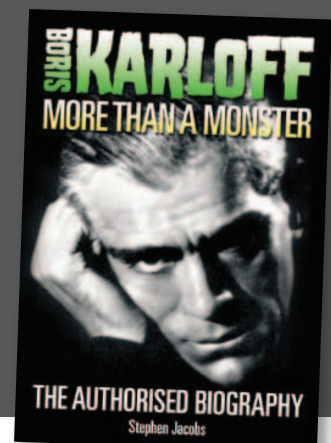
that Karloff would have been concerned. "Well, I must admit the whole of my career has, shall I say, a familiar ring about it," he said in 1968. "They don't change the pattern very much. But I don't hanker for changes."

by **Stephen Jacobs**

Official biographer of Boris Karloff and author of *More than a Monster*

Did you know Boris Karloff?

Do you have a relative who knew him? Please contact Stephen Jacobs at email@morethanamonster.com



Nigel Lindsay



Nigel Lindsay spent three years as an analyst in the City before studying Drama at the Webber Douglas Academy. After early performances in Tom Wilkinson's *King Lear* at the Royal Court and the original award winning production of *Dealer's Choice* with Ray Winstone at the National, he played Max in Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*, which transferred from the Donmar Warehouse to the West End and then to Broadway in 2000, winning three Tony Awards. Nigel played Ariel in the 2004 Olivier winning National Theatre production of *The Pillowman*, Nathan Detroit in *Guys and Dolls* at the Piccadilly Theatre in 2005, Lenny in *The Homecoming* and Moe Axelrod in *Awake and Sing* opposite Stockard Channing at the Almeida for which he was nominated for Best Supporting Actor in the 2008 Whatsonstage Awards. He won that award in 2011 for his performance as Dr Harry Hyman in *Broken Glass* with Sir Antony Sher as Gellburg, and was last seen on stage in 2012 playing the eponymous green ogre in the original London production of *Shrek the Musical* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, for which he was nominated for Olivier and Whatsonstage Awards.

Nigel has appeared regularly on television in series such as *George Gently*, *Spooks*, *Silent Witness*, *Waking the Dead*, *Rome* and *Midsomer Murders*; in comedies such as *Brass Eye*, *I'm Alan Partridge*, *The Amando Iannucci Shows* and *Jam and Jerusalem* and in single dramas such as *Best of Men* and in the BAFTA winning *Relief of Belsen*. In film, Nigel was in Woody Allen's *Scoop* and was nominated for a British Comedy Award for playing Barry the Muslim convert in *Four Lions*.

He has just finished filming the, as yet untitled, *Alan Partridge* movie and is currently working on a ten part adaptation for Sky Atlantic called *The Tunnel*, an adaptation of the Danish series *The Bridge*

I was told by a philandering friend of mine that he'd forgotten how many women he'd kissed. Well, not "kissed" exactly, but this is a school magazine so we'd all better calm down, hands on desks and behave. He may have lost track of the number, but I bet he remembers his first kiss. I'll stick my neck out and say we all do. Mine was with Tracey Atlas, built as she sounds, just like in comic books. The kiss itself was wet and slushy and as clumsily executed as most 13 year old kisses are, but if I close my eyes tight I can still remember the indescribable excitement that accompanied that first foray into the unknown. Many "firsts" are that memorable. First driving lesson, first time travelling on a plane without parents, first marriage... thinking about it, there are firsts some people would prefer to forget.

I remember my first day at Merchant Taylors' as if it were last week. Or I have a memory of it that might not be entirely accurate but will remain seared into my brain until that shrivelled organ switches off for good. For instance, I remember sitting cross-legged on the floor of the balcony of the Great Hall with all the other new boys. But if we were on the floor how would we have been able to see what was happening below? I remember sitting at our desks in alphabetical order so that our form master, "Stumpy" J, could make a reasonable stab at guessing our names. I recently visited the school for the first time in about thirty years and was told by one of the boys that hardly any of the incumbent teachers had nicknames. I find this hard to believe. In my day, I can only recall two or three masters (and it was only masters) who didn't sport an alias or bogus first name, none of them particularly pejorative (well I suppose you could make a case for "Booby" R and certainly "Piggy" B), but worn with weary pride by their owners and used with almost affectionate nonchalance by every boy. After all these years they still roll off the tongue, their connotations lost in the mists of time: "Daddy" T, "Fanny" H, "Chuff" LR,





Photo: Geraint Lewis

With David Tennant and Jim Broadbent in *The Pillowman* at the National Theatre in 2003

“Hairy Hands”, and that mercurial pixie of an English teacher, the wonderful “Jock” Steane, who used to sit on my desk and read Robert Browning with ebullience enough to turn the head of even the most bovine miscreant.

I had that on a detention card once: “offence – bovine miscreance”. I also had “stunning recalcitrance”; “recidivism” and “sheer impulchritude”, which I think is a made up word but which I took to mean I was given a detention for being ugly, which in anyone’s book is a bit harsh. Mind you, I don’t want to come over all “Four Yorkshiremen” (look it up and enjoy if you’re under 40), but the current intake doesn’t know it’s born. When I was at Taylors’, the school swimming pool was outside and unheated, and if you forgot your trunks you had to go in without – if you see what I mean. I remember an unseasonably cold day when twenty eight boys, a third of them naked, broke a thin film of ice with their racing dives at the start of the 50yd freeze to death. Of course, all generations think they had it harder than the next. My sneering at the “Mickey Mouse schoolwork they get these days” came to an abrupt halt when my twelve year old daughter presented me with ten quadratic equations to solve before dinner; and when I asked the current Taylors’ Head Master whether I would have been suspended today as I was then for interrupting the magnificently robed Bishop of Gloucester as he raised his arms to bless the congregation during an Ascension Day service by shouting



On set of latest film (*Alan Partridge*) with Steve Coogan and Colm Meaney

out “Beam me up, Scotty!”, no amount of genial diplomacy could disguise the fact that I would have found myself similarly dispatched. And rightly so.

However a school develops over the years – posh, new reception area where a scruffy snooker table used to live, glassed-in Cloisters (is that to stop boys throwing their cigarette butts on the grass?), heated indoor pool, lecture theatre, no boarders and no Saturday lessons – the key to doing your time seems to me as evident today as it was when “googling” somebody would have had you arrested for common assault: embrace the ethos of the place without selling your soul and be

fortunate with your fellow intake of prisoners. Although it was our common misfortune that our secondary education coincided with the brief regime of a hapless martinet, I count myself extremely lucky that the boys in my year and those above and below were almost unanimously warm-hearted, decent and friendly. That’s not to say we were a homogeneous bunch. We had the usual quota of aesthetes and oiks, wide-boys and mummy’s boys, but we all rubbed along pretty well, and my closest mates today are still those I made in the quad over thirty years ago.

In those days I was desperate to be liked (wonder why I became an actor?!) and spread



On set of *Best of Men*, filmed for BBC last year, with George Mackay, Rob Brydon and Eddie Marsan



Four Lions



Four Lions (outtake)



Taylors' almost invincible 1st XV rugby team of 1979-80

my dubious charm thinly and broadly like Gentleman's Relish on white bread toast, seeking out the company of the planet-sized brains for pseudo-intellectual chitchat before helping the less intellectually gifted throw the class "Benny" headfirst through a waist-high window into the Head Master's Garden, an event he professed to enjoy. This eclectic mix of friends and the fact that I loved sport, and managed to sneak via the back door into probably the best rugby and athletics teams the school ever had, may have rose-tinted my view, but my abiding memory of Taylors' in the late seventies is walking along the Long Drive, or later picking up the Head Boy (so

I could park in his private space) in "Derek" the Ford Anglia, and *looking forward* to the day ahead. Never mind league tables, that's the sort of memory I want my daughters to conjure up when they think back on their schooldays.

To any of the current crop of Taylors' boys still reading, three cheers for your stamina and let me end where I began, with "firsts". Prepare yourselves, for they never go away. Just when you think you're old enough not to care, another one sneaks up and bites you on the bum. For me, by far the most important are family firsts: getting married, having kids (or the other way round in our case), and watching

as they in turn smile, speak and stumble their way into the world. But there are career firsts too that I'll never forget: debuting at the National Theatre and on Broadway; rehearsing for the first time with a playwright I'd studied at school (Tom Stoppard) in the actual bloody room; my first professional audition, the nerves raising my voice two octaves; first time in front of a camera pretending I knew exactly what a "mark" was; sitting in a squat in Sheffield at 5.30am having just shaved my head before the first take on *Four Lions*; and standing in an ogre-sized book on stage at Drury Lane, dressed in green fatsuit and prosthetic, waiting for the orchestra to hit the note that would propel me into song in front of Prince Charles and an audience of three thousand on the Press Night of *Shrek the Musical*.

All these firsts have two things in common: they scared the bejesus out of me and I would never take them back. Your "firsts" will not be the same as mine, nor would you want them to be, but whatever they are and whenever they approach, don't be daunted: embrace and enjoy them. I hope to God it's a long way off, but by the time you start thinking "this is the first time I've popped my clogs" all you will have is your experiences. So now, especially now and for the next few years when it doesn't matter, stick your hand up and dare to declare who you are and what turns you on. Sooner than you think you'll be paying the rent, mortgage, alimony and anything else the bastards can think of. Remember you're not the only one to feel daunted...I think it was Jack Lemmon who said that he chose parts on the basis of how much they terrified him – the scarier the better.

I leave you with a truism (as Jock Steane shakes his head at me from the clouds): life is not a rehearsal...although at times we all wish we could have another go.

Riz Ahmed

Riz Ahmed (1994-2001) read PPE at Christ Church, Oxford. An acquaintance saw his stage performance in *Jesus hopped the 'A' Train* and recommended he apply for the Central School of Speech and Drama at the University of London, where he was spotted and cast in the award-winning Michael Winterbottom film, *Road to Guantanamo*. He has gone on to star in a series of films, including Chris Morris's *Four Lions*. His latest film, Mira Nair's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, premiered worldwide in May 2013. He is in conversation with Chris Roseblade

When you came to MTS you were on a bursary. Was that ever an issue?

I came on an assisted place but when they were scrapped by the government, the school swapped that for a bursary, which I thought was really cool – though as a kid I was nervous, not sure for a time what was going to happen. It wasn't ever an issue amongst any of the boys per se but there was definitely a sense of "travelling" from home to school – I don't just mean geographically – I grew up in Wembley - I guess there was a culture gap between the peers I grew up with in my home life and those I grew up with at school, but really that was enriching as a teenager; I think it was at times confusing, when you are a teenager you're always trying to find out what the real version of you is, or if there is one, but looking back, towards the end of my school life, I realised how privileged and lucky I was to have my life enriched in that way; I experienced things I wouldn't have if I hadn't come to MTS.

You once said to me "I had no idea how aggressive I came over as". Do you think that was something to do with that social journey from Wembley to the more genteel, refined world of MTS?

I guess that had something to do with it! I grew up in a large, boisterous, loving household, not particularly spacious, with six people living there – a typical, noisy immigrant household with lots of food

and loud conversation and sometimes you had to fight your corner. That might have been part of it, the different cultural milieu of growing up in Wembley, but to be honest, part of it I have to take responsibility for, and say that was just

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I played Prospero on my 18th birthday. It was a Saturday and most people for their 18th birthday were going out clubbing in Leicester Square – I was doing Shakespeare at MTS

me, it sometimes is still just me – I can be overcome with enthusiasm for what I want to get across and it can come across as aggressive or overbearing – there are pros and cons to that. (Rueful smile).

What Drama moment do you remember at school?

I remember a lot. I played Prospero on my 18th birthday. It was a Saturday and most people for their 18th birthday were going out clubbing in Leicester Square – I was doing Shakespeare at MTS. I remember my dad came to pick me up and on the long drive home from Moor Park to Wembley my little celebration was putting on Jay-Z's cassette *Hard Knock Life*. I don't know why I remember that moment. For me that was my celebration, driving home with Jay-Z, as Prospero, in full costume and make-up.

Which teachers do you remember?

The teachers I remember are definitely you – you were an influence full stop. Tony Booth was my tutor and put up with me especially when I got into trouble and tried to give me true pastoral care and sort it out. David Green, I remember big time! When I was in the Third Form he did that amazing thing of allowing me to be over-exuberant at times, if he saw there was something to be gained by that in terms of getting a spark out of me. John Coleman got me into acting with South Pacific. David Brown, who directed me in *The Threepenny Opera* and *The Tempest*. I have recently started taking French lessons again and I think one of the reasons was the way Mr Rocher taught, which was kind of throwing away the syllabus and talking about Truffaut movies and *La Nouvelle Vague*, and French



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I always feel that work grows out of that kind of organic relationship in some way – it's got to be interesting to you

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culture. As an 18 year old I saw myself as a rebel and found that iconoclastic approach very attractive and that passion for things French has stayed with me.

You went to Oxford to do PPE. What was the tipping point when you decided 'I'm going to do the acting thing?'

It was very late in my third year. At Oxford I'd done drama but never really felt I was 'part of the club', as drama at Oxford is quite institutionalised. All we did was classic old school stuff which I found quite stuffy and there often wasn't a part for me even though I loved it. A female acquaintance of mine had seen me in a play and she emailed me and said now that everyone's applying for jobs, you should apply for Drama School. That was the first time I really dared to think I could do it, so I applied on a whim to London Drama School and got in but I couldn't afford it, so I applied for a Scholarship, which I got. I just hadn't dared to think it was possible. I'm so glad I did it.

What was the break that got you Road to Guantanamo?

I was on the one year course at Central School and when students leave they showcase your photos on the website so casting directors can check you out. By coincidence, a casting director was scouring the website, saw me, and happened to think I resembled one of the Tipton Three. I met her and it turned out I didn't. But I met with Michael Winterbottom anyway who thought I looked like one of the other guys in the Tipton Three. (Road to Guantanamo is based on the true story of Ruhul Ahmed, Asif Iqbal and Shafiq Rasul from Tipton in the Black Country. They were captured in Afghanistan in 2001 and detained at the US base in Guantanamo as enemy combatants. The Three were repatriated to the UK in March 2004 and released without charge the next day). So I auditioned for it, got it, and left Drama School two months early to play that



Riz in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

role. I felt that it was what I had always dreamed of – combining my interest in politics with some causes that are close to my heart and it was a really renegade acting experience, literally in the front line of the war zone, all improvised – it was a refreshing change from studying Shakespeare.

I guess until *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Four Lions* was your most well-known film in the UK...

I am really proud of *Four Lions* because it was a product of a long process of conversation and collaboration with Chris Morris and the other actors. When I put out the rap 'Post 9/11 Blues', Chris sought me out and said he was doing some research about the war on terror and he wanted to speak to lots of different people, hear different voices on it. I thought that was interesting and we hit it off and I was researching for two years. I always feel that work grows out of that kind of organic relationship in some way – it's got to be interesting to you, if not to an audience, and luckily this was both. We worked on it for three years and took it from there.

What has happened to radical British cinema?

I think that is something that has changed in radical British culture – even the use, the currency, of a word like radical. The radical social movements have lost direction and a certain currency because of certain battles they weren't able to win. There's also been a mainstreaming of things that were radical, you could say a co-opting – that those elements of culture are now mainstream and change has accommodated and incorporated what was once radical, although sometimes it's tokenistic – a black face in a Richard Curtis film. But sometimes it's much more authentic and genuine, like when we're talking about Idris Elba as the next James Bond and sometimes it gets in through the back door. *Four Lions* wasn't being funded for a long time but now it's one of the best loved British films in the past ten years, so I think it's changes in our wider culture, it's a more absorbent, plural society – also some of it's down to pure economics – there are direct consequences to slashing subsidies ... cuts in the funding of institutions like the



Riz opposite Liev Schreiber in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Film Council, the BFI. It comes down to publicly-subsidised bodies being under pressure to bring in a commercial profit and cater to mass audiences more. There are very few people that are able to tick the boxes of reaching mass audiences and still tell stories that once would have been called radical. Like what Shane Meadows was able to do with *This is England*, but he was able to establish himself on the tail end of a period in the 90s when there were still public subsidies for film makers making alternative films. A lot of this simply comes down to the slashing of Arts funding, public subsidies, that is a lurch to the right socially, if not necessarily politically.

Does that worry you that you are typecast as the intelligent radical guy in the intelligent radical movie?

I think if I was, that would be pretty cool, but I don't think I am typecast from the point of view of an actor, because what you worry about is playing the same role again and again as it simply isn't satisfying. All the roles I've played have been very different characters, even if the thematics of the movies have overlapped. One thing I am proudest of is not

“ You see how much talent is out there and how diverse it is ”

necessarily doing films that are pushing to get a message through but just having fun in a variety of roles. The kind of roles in *Trishna*, or *Shifty*, or *Black Gold*, or *Rage*, or *Guantanamo* – they are just very different characters and that is satisfying to me creatively.

As we aren't big enough to sustain a really commercial free market in storytelling like Hollywood, we are forced to do something slightly alternative, but that's cool because that's the stuff that resonates, that's the stuff that touches people's hearts; even if the stories we tell might not break a million in the box office every year, the stories we tell resonate because they come from an angle of

humanism and social realism, so I think we need to embrace that. Danny Boyle has shown us how we can reconnect with our history and move forward to a more inclusive Britain in the opening ceremony of the Olympics and we need to embrace that vision.

The thing is the films I have been lucky to do – and maybe the kind of films that seek me out – are ones that maybe are not catering to a mass audience but often may have something to say about post-riots Britain, like *Ill Manors* or *Four Lions*. I would like to have a career that has a cumulative impact. I love it when I hear that certain actors are really well respected though they may not have won 50 Oscars or broken the box office and you kind of step back and look at them and think that's an amazing body of work, that's solid.

What was your star struck moment? When was the moment you when felt “Wow, I'm in the same room as ...”?

It was when I met Mos' Def at the Royal Court Theatre and I was looking for him so much that I actually missed him. He was standing next to me at the time. He was wearing a flat cap which made me

excited as I wear flat caps all the time! So it was like a souvenir, a photo moment for about 10 seconds, with Tom Burke (OMT), who's in an amazing rock band called 'GoCitizens' – that was pretty special. I am meeting the Queen in 10 days. I met her once before and she just seems incredibly normal, if you can get past the jewellery.

Do you find it hard to fit your music in now with all the film commitments?

I still end up splitting my time 50/50. I'm never going to be that person that does a film or TV show because there's one going, and they want you to do it, and the pay is good. If I don't feel excited about something I won't do it.

In acting you inevitably there's a certain plasticity, to get into role you have to be malleable? Did you learn that at school?

Yes I think I learnt that growing up. I learnt that living between what was inside my home and at school. It was also the different world I got to see through school, you know I would never have ended up randomly at lovely pool parties in Radlett if I hadn't gone to Taylors'. Nor would I have seen an aspirational Asian middle class lifestyle in Northwood. Going to MTS definitely broadened my horizon socially, and I think as actor to experience these different things in life is important.

Given that humanist sense, I would like to talk to you about your charity work. You told me you were involved with the Pakistani diaspora?

I am trying to set up a leadership force that empowers the next generation of Pakistanis at home and abroad and the way to do that is first and foremost is connecting them. I believe that connections between talented peer reaps unforeseen dividends that will be rich down the line. It's called Rasta which means pathway and one of the things that inspired me was seeing lots of my Jewish friends at MTS being members of youth groups or organisations like BBYO (B'nai B'rith Youth Organization) who connected with their Jewish peers in the UK and peers from around the world. So the aim is to connect the Pakistani diaspora who are in their 20s and 30s in



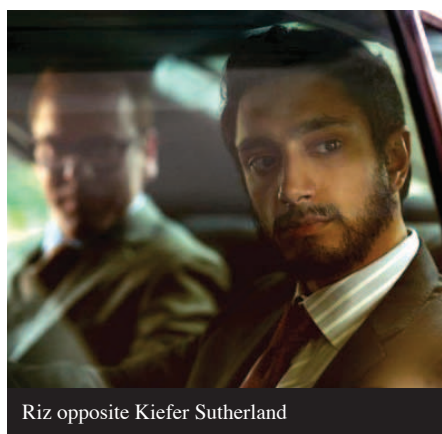
Riz with The Observer's film critic – and fellow OMT – Jason Solomons at the BAFTA new films screening

“ I think it does give you a sense of the importance of giving people opportunities they may not otherwise have had ”

London, New York with Karachi in a big kind of get together. But it is not a get together like a party, it's about dealing with social problems in Pakistani cities and challenging them to come up with creative solutions, to explore that problem by going out there and checking out those responsible for the sewers and the people whose houses are flooded by the sewage and the people whose job it is to clean the sewage and to meet the Minister who is in charge of the sewers that understands the complex dimensions of the problem and to challenge them to solve that problem. Their feedback may not be implemented by those in power or the stakeholders, but that is not the point: the point is the key leadership and analytical skills young people learn and to reconnect them globally and bond them in a unique experience.

You are also closely involved with some of the disaffected kids in the Southwark area. Tell me about that project.

There are two types of projects I am involved with now. One is called STEP, a theatre education programme that could provide learning and training courses for young people in the community given by people who work in the professional theatre. You see how much talent is



Riz opposite Kiefer Sutherland

out there and how diverse it is and the massive disconnect between that talent pool and formal drama education. A lot of that is inequality of opportunity and I am committed to help equalise this somehow – currently we are trying to work on a new funding strategy.

The second project is trying to set up the UK's first gang rehabilitation clinic. There is a gang problem in London and in many inner cities in the UK, similar to the US, but we don't want it to get as bad as there, and it's getting worse. In the context of the lack of public provision – which most youths rely on, be it youth clubs, health services or education services – we need to try and find a way to treat gangsterism as though it were an illness, as though it were an epidemic and not just criminalise it – get into gang rehabilitation – in a similar way to drug re-habilitation. So I'm interested in this clinic run by an amazing guy called Karl Lokko who is an ex-gang leader himself.

Do you feel a pressure to be a spokesman? When something happens that affects British Muslims do you get the BBC on the phone as if you're Mr Rent-a-Quote? How do you feel about that?

I felt it a lot more 2005/07 when there was that ugly climate of xenophobia, and the spotlight was on the war, and the terror thing was really intense. It is much less now, but I did feel pressure to do that. I also realise there are other people whose job it is to work in this area and it is right they should be given that voice and that platform rather than someone who's just better known but is not a specialist in that area. You've got to have faith that the person whose burning need is to talk will do it, but I don't feel you should step up to do something because you feel like, "Well, I guess I should" – you have to want to.

You've got charisma. One of the things that goes with that territory is that you polarise people – like at MTS people either loved you or hated you. But as an actor you have to embody emotional experiences that the broadest spectrum of people can relate to. How have you learned to manage your Rizness – the charisma that polarises?

Watching you do it so badly at Taylors' definitely helped! (Laughter) I think I

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I think sometimes the transition is what you kick against. I think sometimes there could be a sense of confusion and a sense of not fitting in”



Riz as Mack the Knife in the Threepenny Opera at MTS (1999)

have changed. As I've got older I listen more and talk a little less than maybe I did before. Maybe I am not as polarised as the person I was. I do think that I have evolved and have mellowed a bit as I've got older, maybe I'm not as polarising as I was, but then – I wouldn't want to be boring! (smile)

You're Asian from a Muslim background, but at root aren't you simply this generation's incarnation of a certain radical conscience that Britain's public schools have always produced? Do you think in some indefinable way there's a British public school spirit that people like you embody?

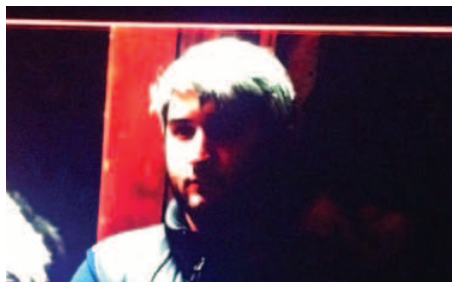
I think that being at a school like MTS and not being able to afford to be there, for example, yet being welcomed in and accepted in and nourished – I think it does give you a sense of the importance of giving people opportunities they may not otherwise have had and I think that is an aspect of my schooling that I am very proud of and glad to be associated with.

Given that we withdrew several years ago the financial advantages associated with scholarships and put it all into Bursaries, we are now at the stage where more and more children are coming from less advantaged backgrounds. More OMTs are prepared to give for bursaries than for building projects. What would your message be to those kids who arrive at the school today and tomorrow?

I think sometimes the transition is what you kick against. I think sometimes there could be a sense of confusion and a sense of not fitting in. But I would say this: if you don't feel like you fit in you can either say to yourself you are not wanted here or you can say "hang on a minute, I am unique and can bring a fresh energy to this place and help redefine and rejuvenate it. The future looks like me". If you are different you are change, so embrace yourself and what you bring to the table and don't walk away.

If you are interested in supporting any of the charities Riz is working with, please get in touch via Concordia – editor@mtsn.org.uk

Vaughn Stein



Vaughn Stein (1998-2003) studied Drama at Bristol University and intended to become an actor before breaking into the film industry. As an Assistant Director, he has worked on a variety of productions including the latest *Harry Potter* film, *Quantum of Solace* and *Pirates of the Caribbean 4*

‘Living the dream’: An ironic phrase or greeting used widely in the film industry while standing in a puddle in a freezing field at silly o’clock in the morning on a Sunday waiting to start an eighteen hour day wondering why you don’t work a 40 hour week in an office. Also used in 40 degree heat stuck up a mountain, in your fifth hour of overtime after a twelve hour shooting day or when you fall over in front of the whole film crew trying to pull on waterproof trousers over your shoes.

First, let me give a brief outline of what I do: the Assistant Director department in the film industry is charged with facilitating the director’s vision in a practical capacity. We schedule the filming period by breaking down the script into component parts and working out the most efficient way of shooting the film. We organise all cast, stunt and crowd requirements and run the set on a day to day basis, coordinating and knitting together the other departments and enabling the physical film-making process by bringing everything together at the right time with the right elements to roll the cameras. The AD department is comprised of a First Assistant director, who is responsible for all scheduling and HOD coordination and who runs ‘the floor’ (the set), the office based Second Assistant Director who handles all administration and cast requirements and

generates the call sheet, the universal and hugely important document handed out on wrap every night that details the next day’s work schedule and all departmental requirements, the Third Assistant Director who works directly for the 1st AD on set and liaises with the 2nd AD at base, channels all requirements to cast and crew and ‘sets the crowd’ (directing the background artists around the main action) as well as being charged with coordinating the floor runners, the blood sweat and tears of the film industry who, quite frankly, do all the work for a fraction of the money, none of the glory and tend to be the most over-worked, under-appreciated and generally loved members of the film crew.

I started in the film industry through a combination of the two ways that most people who work within it do; through a bit of luck and an opportunity taken, and sheer blind nepotism! I read Drama at Bristol University with the intention of going to drama school afterwards to pursue a career in theatre, but became fascinated with the complexities and intricacies of film and film making in my

first year (and in no small part thanks to Messrs Roseblade and Andrews who taught outstanding screenwriting and film appreciation General Studies classes in the Upper Sixth). My cousin was a production accountant for a small production company and I asked him to put my name in for any work experiences or placements that came about. Matthew Vaughn was filming ‘Stardust’ at Pinewood Studios and my CV made its way into a huge pile of CVs in their murky production office in the Kubrick building. One of the production coordinators thought it funny that my name was spelt incorrectly, as is his, and I received a call on a Friday asking if I would like to come in and do a week’s work experience. Delighted beyond all reason, I accepted. The work consisted of turning air conditioning units on and off on E stage at Pinewood in between takes... Hollywood indeed! However, when it’s Michelle Pfeiffer and Clare Danes one is directing them at, it’s quite a buzz. I smiled at everyone and made a lot of cups of tea when I wasn’t sweltering in the rafters holding air conditioning tubes, landed a full time running job with the VFX department, and spent the next eight weeks running around Pinewood in ecstasy without a clue what was going on or what I was actually doing.

I went back to university and spent the last two thirds of my final year training with The Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company as part of my degree. I got a call, two days after handing in my final essay, from a





Vaughn Stein (left) as Creon in *Antigone*, 2002

friend I'd made on *Stardust* asking if I wanted to come and do a week 'locking off' (standing in a perimeter around the set shouting 'rolling' and 'cut') on a film she was working on. It was 'The Dark Knight'. After a week of staring open-mouthed at Batman and the Joker, I was hooked. I started working as a floor runner and nearly starved my first year, as most do. But I scraped by, and began to establish myself as a good Runner, working on 'Quantum Of Solace', 'Adulthood' 'The Imaginarium Of Doctor Parnassus', 'Wolf Man' 'The Boat That Rocked' and 'Never Let Me Go' in the first eighteen months of my career. I subsequently was offered a job as a stunt Third Assistant Director on the last 'Harry Potter' film and through this began specialising as a Stunt AD, working on 'Pirates Of The Caribbean 4' in the same capacity, and then onto the soon to be released 'World War Z'. I now work as either a Floor Second Assistant Director, working directly for the director and the 1st AD running the set, most recently on 'Kick Ass 2' and currently on 'The Fifth Estate', or as a Crowd Second Assistant Director; casting, budgeting and organising the extras and stunt performers on a day to day basis in an administrative capacity, most recently on 'Gambit' and 'Cuban Fury'. I have had the honour of working with some truly incredible actors



On the set of *World War Z* with Brad Pitt

and directors; Jonny Depp, Brad Pitt, Michael Fassbender, Dame Judi Dench, Jim Broadbent, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Keira Knightley, Geoffrey Rush, Carey Mulligan, Bill Condon, Dustin Hoffman and Christopher Nolan to name but a few – and to have worked in such a passionate, charged, perfection driven industry such as the British film industry is, has been a dream come true thus far.

It is also a cut-throat, brutal, competitive and unfair workplace, as many freelance professions are, and I cannot begin to recollect the number of four am starts, missed social engagements, missed mortgage payments and times spent standing shivering in the pouring rain waiting for an actor to get into their car before I could go home. Yet it can also be an incredible, diverse, vibrant and unique workplace and one I love. I was determined to add practical 'nuts and bolts' know-how to my creative training, and being an Assistant Director has taught me these practical skills more thoroughly and cogently than any degree or drama school could possibly have done. It was always my ambition to write and direct, and through contacts made working on smaller independent projects, I have directed music videos, produced short films and recently I have had a television series I wrote, inspired by plays and playwrights I have always admired, optioned by a production company: it's currently being transposed into a feature film scheduled to be shot later this year. Being an AD has given me a capacity for organisation, practicality and work ethic I never had before and has handed me tools and opportunities I would never have otherwise had. And it's been a hell of a lot of fun.

Philip Simon

Philip Simon (1992-1997) attended the Guildford School of Acting before becoming an actor and comedian. He looks back at his career so far

A few years ago I revisited MTS and was chuffed to see a photo in the drama studio of me in the school play 'The Roses of Eyam' from about 1996. Man, I looked young!

When I left MTS, I knew exactly what I wanted to do with my life. I had been acting in youth theatres and school plays since I was 12 and had even managed to fit in a couple of professional TV & commercial jobs during my time at school. Having taken a gap year I completed an Acting Degree at The Guildford School of Acting, graduating from there in 2001.

I had a fabulous time at GSA and left after three years with an all round training in acting, singing and dancing...yes, even ballet! Since then I've been fortunate enough to have worked in most media, and though there's a lot of down-time between jobs, I have mostly managed to stay busy either acting, doing voiceovers, teaching, working in offices, writing and anything else that affords me the flexibility to do an acting audition or job as it comes up.

Acting-wise, I have done a number of high profile commercials, which are always fun to make. I have been the face of Heathrow Airport for a couple of years, and it's always lovely to hear from people who have passed through the terminals and seen my over-sized face towering over them. Other highlights would be my first theatre job in a production of *The Winslow Boy* starring Edward Fox and the late Simon Ward (his son-in-law was former MTS pupil, comedian Michael McIntyre), small TV roles including the BBC's 'My Family' and then in more recent years I toured the UK and received my West End debut playing Daddy Pig in



I entered the world of stand-up comedy. It's odd starting afresh after such a long time, but after years of resisting everyone's insistence that I try, I only wish I'd started earlier. Now, two years and well over 200 gigs in I have started building a really nice place for myself on the comedy circuit. Last year I won the Comedy Cafe's New Act night for the 2nd time and also placed well in a number of high profile competitions. Acting is still my main focus, but stand-up comedy is a huge part of my professional life.

I think back to my time at MTS and I realise how lucky I was to attend a school so open to the idea that life wasn't all about academia and rugby. I excelled at neither and having teachers (both at my previous school Orley Farm and MTS) nurture my



children's hit *Peppa Pig's Party*. This was a fantastic experience that took me all over the UK and Ireland, playing almost 500 performances in 80 venues. In other work I have played a character called 'stunned nerd' receiving a lap dance from a stripper in a vampire feature film (tough day at the office) and even embraced the concept of full-frontal nudity in Channel 4's epic adaptation of William Boyd's 'Any Human Heart'.

Around all this I have taken my experiences as an actor and written regular features for industry newspaper 'The Stage', as well as other publications in print and online. I also created a theatre-related website that listed plays and playwrights, providing supplementary information for actors, students, directors, theatregoers, etc. A few years ago this was bought out by another theatre website (www.StageWon.co.uk) and I now also work for them consulting about all things theatre-related.

Then in 2011 my life took a bit of a turn as

creative streak made a huge difference in my life. Having largely failed my Common Entrance exams, it was the open-minded generosity of then Headmaster Jon Gabitass who granted me entrance to the school, accepting that MTS could be a place where creative endeavours could be just as celebrated, endorsed by inspirational teachers like John Coleman.

Sure, I don't (yet) have a house in the Hollywood Hills, and I can't (yet) get into The Ivy without having to book three generations in advance, but I've followed my dreams, crashed through some hurdles along the way, and can honestly say there's no greater feeling than having control of your own life, and making a room full of strangers laugh with jokes that you've written.

For more information:
www.philipsimon.co.uk
Follow Philip on Twitter: @PhilipSimon78

Luke Aikman

Luke Aikman (1995-2002) grew up surrounded by actors and starred in *Fever Pitch* with Colin Firth while still in the Third Form. Now an entrepreneur and film producer, he writes of his acting experiences and the lessons it has taught him

I grew up surrounded by the film industry; my dad a stuntman, mum and sister actresses and uncle in SFX. By the time I was six I was doing TV commercials, followed by guest parts in shows like *The Bill* and then had the opportunity to lead in educational dramas (some of which embarrassingly were shown by my science teachers!).

When I arrived at Taylors' in the Third Form I was still working and fortunately, within a year or so of arriving, I landed the 3rd lead in *Fever Pitch*, starring Colin Firth. It was a great experience and something I won't forget in a hurry. The shoot was roughly five weeks and I was needed probably three days per week on average. It was quite easy to balance the work with school as at that age there is nothing too demanding. The teachers were understanding, in that as long as I was up to date with the learning, it was ok to leave some pieces of work undone. It taught me how to get up at 0530 to get into work, and, most importantly, how to eat a plate of fish and chips identically throughout dialogue over a period of three hours.

I left acting in my late teens. Acting had been a consideration from a young age, but I always thought I would pursue a professional career. It was not for me; it's not a hard or full-on job and there is



a lot of waiting around, which doesn't suit my character. It also isn't as creative as it looks; the industry is small and you get cast in the same roles with different names and dialogue over and over again. You need to look a certain way or get very lucky to be cast in a 'character role'.

Acting is merely a manipulation of one's character in order to fit a circumstance. Humans are all inherently similar, but with a different mix hormones, emotions, afflictions and interests. When acting, you are simply dialling bits and bobs up or down. This is exactly the skill-set needed in 'the real world' to build and maintain relationships both personally and professionally. The idea is not to be 'fake' but to have a heightened understanding of the character in front of you allowing more empathy and ultimately more

understanding and a better rapport.

Rejection is the best lesson available. Auditioning is hearing "someone else got the part" repeatedly, until you finally get lucky. You enjoy the job, then start all over again. Your skin gets hardened and you learn that persistence is the critical success factor, nothing else. This, in my opinion, is reflective of personal and professional pursuits. Other things come into play, of course, but within the realms of possibility, persistence is usually key.

I have worked on a few films in the last 10 years, but behind the camera. There are not a huge number of individuals that understand the world of film, especially low budget film (it's very strange, doesn't make a lot of sense, but somehow works and survives) and also understand the world of business. People seem to end up going down one route or the other and rarely cross. Having reached a decent level of big picture understanding, I've helped smaller films bridge that communication gap, ensuring that financial and business plans for films return in palatable ways for non-traditional film investors and vice-versa.

Film is a magical world and the cinema is sacred; there are few things better than a great story portrayed on screen. Acting is a precarious career that suits few, but, acting as a child at school, professionally and in local drama groups, I couldn't recommend highly enough.

Tom Walter

Tom Walter (1998-2003) is Operations Manager of The Mill, a state of the art VFX studio. He writes about how he entered the industry and offers some advice to those considering a similar path



Working in film and commercials was never a plan of mine while at MTS. I always had envisaged myself working in the civil service, management consultancy or even as a building surveyor. However, film, TV and commercials always seemed to be in my life, with both my father and grandfather being film editors. It wasn't until I did a summer job, while at University, as a runner in Pinewood Studios that I started thinking the VFX industry would be something I could work in. I was working for the late Gerry Anderson on his CGI series of Captain Scarlet, as a runner fetching teas and coffees. It was while working on this project that I realised that this was what I wanted to do.

So, having finished at Nottingham University studying Politics, I got a running job at The Mill. The Mill was founded in 1990 as the first end to end digital VFX facility for advertising. Through its history it has diversified into film, most notably winning an Oscar for Gladiator in 2001. Now The Mill is much more than an advertising VFX facility, working on design, animation, content direction and Film and TV projects. During my early months in the company I realised that I would most likely steer away from the creative side of VFX and be more useful as producer. After seven months of running (which was truly character

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Through The Mill's history it has diversified into film, most notably winning an Oscar for Gladiator in 2001

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building!) I got my first opportunity to work within The Mill's production team and was specifically focused on CG. From there I have been lucky enough to advance to the role of Operations Manager, which involves working closely with our scheduling team to manage and co-ordinate some 200+ VFX artists within The Mill.

My work on a day to day basis involves working with artists and producers to ensure the flow of commercial projects through the building. We work with some of the country's top directors to make the most iconic commercials on TV. Our work has included multiple flagship campaigns for brands which include Nike, Guinness, Adidas, Audi, Mercedes and many more. However my role as a member of the production side of VFX is only small part of the industry.

Almost all VFX which people see on TV and in the cinema, are produced using some kind of computer software, be it using 3d software like Maya or Houdini, or 2d packages like Nuke or Flame. The software package is only part of the

story - it also requires a huge number of artists and variety of different skillsets. It may be that people expect to have to go to university and study a VFX-specific course. However, this is definitely not the case. Some of the best artists I have worked with studied a science, art or even a Humanities subject at university. Working in visual effects combines various disciplines: you'll need to have a problem-solving mind; enjoy technologies - computer and engineering; have a strong affinity with maths and science, and finally, an artistic and creative aptitude. There can be a tendency for people to feel they have to choose which academic route they must go down, be it at university or school. In VFX, artists that combine Maths, Science and artistic subjects are often the strongest.

My advice, for students who are considering getting into the industry or would like to learn more about it, is to look at online resources. The creative skillsets website <http://www.creativeskillset.org/> is a fantastic source of information to get you started.

Nimer Rashed



Nimer Rashed (1991-1998) is an award-winning writer/director. His Film Council-funded short film *Baghdad Express* starring Georgina Leonidas and Riz Ahmed premiered at the London Film Festival and has gone on to screen at festivals worldwide. He was the Royal Court Theatre's filmmaker-in-residence in the summer of 2012. His plays include *Wild Horses* and *Itchycoo Park* (winner of Soho Theatre's Westminster Prize) and his TV scripts include *The Great McGinty* (winner of the Sir Peter Ustinov Television Scriptwriting Award)

HOW TO BE CREATIVE AND GET PAID FOR IT AND BE HAPPY AND LIVE FOREVER

So it's a late Thursday afternoon in 1996 and you're walking down the Long Drive and talking with your friends about the latest Tarantino flick, quoting lines and acting out scenes, and at the back of your mind you're thinking I wish life could be this cool.

On the train home you're reading a David Mamet play and buzzing off its staccato electricity, then the next day you're sitting through a Mr Roseblade peroration about *A Perfect Day For Bananafish* trying to avoid the classmate flicking rubber bands at your face when you suddenly realise what it's all for, this cavalcade of words and learning and ideas, which for some reason no one's bothered to explain: you're building your inner life. It's the wit of Wilde and the wisdom of Forster, the distillation of other people's lives mainlined into your nervous system and it is more real and vibrant and interesting than anything around you.

Which is tricky, because the world makes its demands. There's homework, and deadlines, and rules, and exams. Monies owed and people to be nice to: the cost of doing business.

Time goes by. You ace your exams, tick all the right boxes, but realise that your inner life means more to you than the outer world of telegrams and anger. That there are people out there – curious, demented strangers – who spend their days squeezing

their dreams into images and ideas. They call themselves writers, and you'd like to be one of them.

Your journey kicks off in Cannes, where you work for a famous New York film company, and discover that these moustachioed tyrants in sleek suits are businessmen, nothing more. They mispronounce French words and summon and abandon plates of food between puffs of their cigars. Some call themselves executives, others producers. Like you, they value the imagination, but unlike you, their language is power. You attend their parties, sip champagne through straws, are surrounded by movie stars – and feel strangely deflated. The glamour of the pageants is seductive, but when the lights have dimmed, you realise your mistake: you've been looking for the source of the wellspring, but have ended up at the bottling plant, surrounded by plastic.

Although everyone wants to be an "artist", to transmit their ideas into the mind of another, to paint their feelings in colours so thick and bold that others gape at their intensity, the work doesn't begin on a red carpet: it begins alone at home, in a dusty corner, when you dip your brush into a colour called honesty. So far, you've been honest about your love of storytelling, but you haven't been able to sit in front of a blank page and confront your flaws and your fears. And this is where the real work begins. And it turns out it is very hard.

Eventually, you head away from the distracting glare of the outer world, and retreat to your imagination, the world of

the inner life. You start to write. And slowly, you get a little better. You write plays, and short stories. You make films and television. And every day, you still feel like you're just getting started.

*

Many years later, you're asked to write an article for your old school magazine, and you use it as an opportunity to go back in time and teach your sixteen-year-old self the wisdom of the saying: "be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle". One day you'll understand this phrase, and quoting it will impress girls, but when you look back now, it makes think about the people at school you might have once dismissed.

Many collaborators are required to bring books, plays, and films to life. You'll meet all these people along the way, and realise you've met them all before. They were the ones on Young Enterprise schemes, the hockey stars, the jokers flicking rubber bands. They weren't your friends back then, but they knew things you didn't. Like you, they were fighting their own battles, but you didn't realise this until much later.

Later, when you meet them again, you'll forgive them everything, for the truth is that artists and businessmen are in an eternal dance, clinging to each other's lapels: the foolish think they are in the lead, while the smart ones know how much they need the other.

Be kind, and keep on wishing that life could be cool.

One day it will be.

Tristan Bernays

Tristan Bernays

(1998-2003) trained as a producer before becoming a writer and performer. He will soon be performing his one-man show at the Edinburgh Fringe



When I was a kid, I wanted to be a marine biologist. I definitely didn't want to be an actor. Indeed, the first thing I did after leaving two years of drama school training was to say to myself "Well, I definitely don't want to be an actor."

Think of the many clichés you can about drama schools – group hugging, song and dance numbers that would make Glee wince, entire lessons spent on learning to be a tree – and they're probably all true. Don't get me wrong – I don't regret it. I had enormous fun, made wonderful friends and learnt more about myself and theatre than I care to know. But being an actor in the Real World doesn't involve film stars, fast cars and frappuccinos. It involves huge periods of waiting about for work, scrabbling for jobs and (when you finally get them) being poked and prodded around the stage like chess board pieces by a director.

I didn't want that but I knew that I wanted to work in theatre. I love theatres – the energy, the imagination, the physical building itself. It's wonderful. So I trained as a producer. For two years, I worked in the offices of numerous theatre companies on loads of different shows – dramas, comedy, even a Bollywood stage musical of Wuthering Heights. I learnt amazing practical skills about how to make theatre happen – spread sheets, contracts, organisation, how to put together the perfect first night party. I started working in fundraising so I could learn how to get the cash to make plays happen. I even

“Well, I definitely don't want to be a producer.” You see, I wasn't made for an office. I missed the creative stuff – the storytelling

produced two of my own shows in rep. It was very exciting.

But then after those two years of producing I said to myself "Well, I definitely don't want to be a producer." You see, I wasn't made for an office. I missed the creative stuff – the storytelling, the playing, the relationship with audience. So one day I gave up my full time job and started writing. It's one of the scariest things I've ever done and I don't regret it for a moment.

Over the next two years, I wrote as often as I could – plays mostly. I spent a whole year working on how to write, how I write, what I wanted to write. It was exciting and experimental. And at the end of the year my first play *Coffin* was put on at the King's Head Theatre in London. The following year I wrote three more plays which have had readings at Soho Theatre and Roundhouse. People want to work with me and produce my work. This summer, I'm taking a one-man show (the first I've written for myself to perform) called *The Bread & The Beer* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. And it's coming up to the end of two years. By all accounts I should be saying "Well, I definitely don't want to be a writer and

performer." But the fact is, writing and performing is the first thing I've ever done when I've said to myself "Yeah – I could do this for the rest of my life."

Again, don't get me wrong – it's hard work. Really hard. At this point in my career, I don't get paid to write and I have to work as tutor to make ends meet. But it's worth it. I'm my own boss; I do the work I like and that I care about; I work with the people I want to work with; and every time I sit back having finished my first draft I look at it, I swell with pride and say "Yeah – I made that."

So for now I am happy and proud to be a writer and a performer. It's tough but rewarding and seems to be getting good results. But if that falls through, I can always be a marine biologist.

Tristan is taking his one-man show *The Bread & The Beer* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2013. To find out more about the show, visit www.thebreadandthebeer.com

For more info about Tristan, visit his website: www.tristanbernays.co.uk

Tristram Summers

Tristram Summers (1997-2002) trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Having performed in a variety of different media, he writes on the many challenges of being an actor



Acting. It's a strange one. Often established actors will tell you if there's ANY other way for you to make a living, take it. In fact the late, great Walter Matthau famously said: "All you need to succeed in this industry is fifty lucky breaks;" and it's true: the life of an actor is more up and down than the *Pirate Ship at Chessington* - but it can also be incredibly rewarding.

Since leaving Taylors' I've come a long way in the pursuit of what seemed at the start to be a pipe-dream. I've acted in a variety of short films, gained qualifications in both dance and stage combat, signed an agent in London, trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama, acted in plays off West End, bolstered my showreel, recorded a voice-reel, appeared in staple TV shows such as 'The Bill' (may it rest in peace) and 'Material Girl'. I've also worked on feature films (even as a stunt-man in one), I've landed roles on internet soaps and animated sketches, acted in commercials for the likes of Walkers Crisps; I've obtained an entertainment visa for the USA and moved to Los Angeles, developed a coffee addiction, signed a manager, signed a theatrical agent, signed a commercial agent, signed a voiceover agent (I know! Why so many agents?!); I've had sketches play out on shows in the U.S. such as 'Jimmy Kimmel's Late Night Live!' (which isn't altogether 'live'. Nor is it filmed 'late at night' - welcome to Hollywood, folks). I've impersonated Ben Wishaw's 'Q' in the

latest Bond film and was also the voice for all Apple adverts in the UK for almost three years, advertising everything from iPhones to Apps. And given that these played out at prime time on all channels during shows such as 'Downton Abbey' and the 'X-Factor' it's more than likely you've heard my dulcet tones without even knowing it. So for this, I half-heartedly apologise.

It's currently 'Pilot Season' in L.A. - when actors from all over the world descend on Hollywood hoping to land a role in, for instance, the new Robin Williams TV pilot 'The Crazy Ones', set in an ad agency in Chicago (keep an eye out for this one; it looks to be a good 'un). The potential for success here is mind-blowing, but so is the competition. While the UK has fewer people chasing the roles, there is also far less being made. I should also say that this career isn't for the pusillanimous either - you need the heart of a child and the hide of an elephant, to endure rejection on an often daily basis. Worse than the rejection though and by far the norm, is hearing absolutely nothing at all back from the latest audition that you spent hours preparing. But such is the life of an actor.

That said, there's never a dull moment - only last week I was negotiating the snowy streets of London in my ski gear and now I'm sat at a coffee shop in West L.A with the sun on my face. I should offer another apology at this point - this article was going to focus on advice for anyone hoping to break into the world of acting but I have literally just

received a call from my voiceover agent (at which a painfully fashionable barista politely indicated the 'no mobile phones' sign on the wall of said supremely pretentious establishment and ushered me out). It was for an audition to play an animated robot, and now instead of extolling the virtues of a career 'treading the boards', I feel I have no choice but to share with you, the description of my character 'Copper' from the accompanying email, as a window into my life as an actor:

"Copper: A Retro-Futuristic robot..." (hang on a sec ... Retro...futuristic?) "... Can be a 12 year old boy, or a young teenage voice or adult male ..." (so at least they're clear on what they're after!) "... MUST BE A GREAT SINGER ..." (why they feel the need to shout this is beyond me) "Should sound a little British or perhaps Jordanian ..." (!!!!!) I'm not making this up) "...Think John Cleese, Billy Connolly or Russell Brand ..." (a more disparate group of individuals one can barely conceive). "...Appointment time/address... blah-blah-blah". I wish I could say this isn't a regular occurrence.

And so there you have it - that gives you an idea of what we actors contend with on a day to day basis. It also has the secondary benefit of solving what I shall do tonight: Why I will be dusting off my 'Retro-Futuristic-Billy-Connolly-Robot' impression of course. That old chestnut! So wish me luck (As ever). And if you don't believe me, I'm at Tristram_summers@hotmail.com and will be happy to forward the email.

OMT actors: The next Generation



1. Emilio Iannucci (2005-2012)

2. David Randall (2007-2012)

3. Peter Randall, pictured right, (2003-2008)

Scissorum:

Merchant Taylors' weekly newsletter



Our e-bulletin showcases everything that goes on each week at MTS

Please e-mail alumni@mtsn.org.uk to be added to the mailing list

Stephen Wright

retires this summer after nine years as Head Master. He recounts here some of his most entertaining memories of his time at Merchant Taylors'

Write something funny,' they said! 'We don't want any well-trodden homilies or a leaden reprise of how the school has changed. We want to be amused.' Little did they know that the main reason for my retirement was the fact that I had exhausted my fund of educational anecdotes and was fearful that public appearances on high days and holidays would not be the same as they once might have been. In desperation I turned to my family. 'What about the time ...?', they said and all suddenly began to fall into place.

When one takes on a position such as the Head of Merchant Taylors' it is quite a daunting experience and the badge of that particular office, whatever one's shortcomings, does bring a certain degree of authority that is manifest in the way one is treated by others. It could be quite easy to be beguiled by this and to assume an attitude that reflects it; it is good, therefore, to have any potential pomposity punctured from time to time – and pupils are certainly good at this (albeit often unwittingly).

I recall early in my term here that, whilst talking to a colleague in the corridor, a young boy approached who had performed particularly well in the Junior Play the previous evening. Wishing to congratulate him but, not wanting to be rude to my colleague, I held up my hand to indicate that he should stop so that I could talk to him when I was able. He looked slightly bemused but then had a moment of epiphany, gave me a high five, and continued on his way. I would guess that Hugh Elder never had such an experience.

Assemblies are always fraught with danger and almost inevitably there are potholes that can trip an unwary HM up, or, for the very unfortunate, be fallen into. I was generally on my guard having fond memories of a Head under whom I served in a former position who announced in the final assembly of the year that 'Mr Maxwell and Mr MacPhee were getting married in the summer' – and got no further. For my first assembly at MTS I decided to focus on the school motto – a fairly safe topic one would have thought – but unfortunately I also chose to mention some mottos from other local schools which included that of Watford Girls' Grammar School whose

abjuration to its pupils was 'Be ready, and have hope'. I am still not quite sure why this caused such mirth – it may be that I used the phrase 'somewhat enigmatically' when I introduced it – but I do know that I was severely upbraided for my effrontery by the first member of that august institution that I actually met.

Apart from this I generally avoided assembly mishaps though I narrowly missed decapitating a member of the Third Form when presenting a fencing award in the form of a fairly vicious sabre. I was also blindsided by an inappropriately named Quad Soccer team and apparently to have a 'beef' with somebody means something completely different these days.

Dignity is of course but skin deep and I recall meeting with a group of three boys in the Head Master's corridor and, turning to retrieve something for them from my office, I slipped on the (highly polished) steps and measured my length. As I

“ In lessons I have tended to teach only the Fourth Form, and they seem to find that the thought of being in a lesson taught by the HM as being rather daunting – well, for a few weeks at least. ”

struggled to my feet I could sense a silent but pronounced tension behind me that I could only put down to a genuine concern for my welfare and a real urge to burst into hysterical laughter. It says much for the quality of the MTS pupil that it was the former that triumphed – I have taught in schools where it certainly would not have done – and all that was proffered (by the eldest of their number) was an enquiry as to my well-being.

Interviews have always been fruitful ground for precocious words of wisdom. Very early in my headship I recall interviewing a young man (now studying at Oxford University) and entering into a discussion on the political mores of the time. After a short time, and getting out of my depth, I said to him, 'I think you know rather more about this than I do.' His response was nothing if not honest. 'You know sir,' he said, 'I rather think that I do.' There have been those who (hopefully confused) have asked whether I recall the foundation of the school and there was one young man who, when I offered the

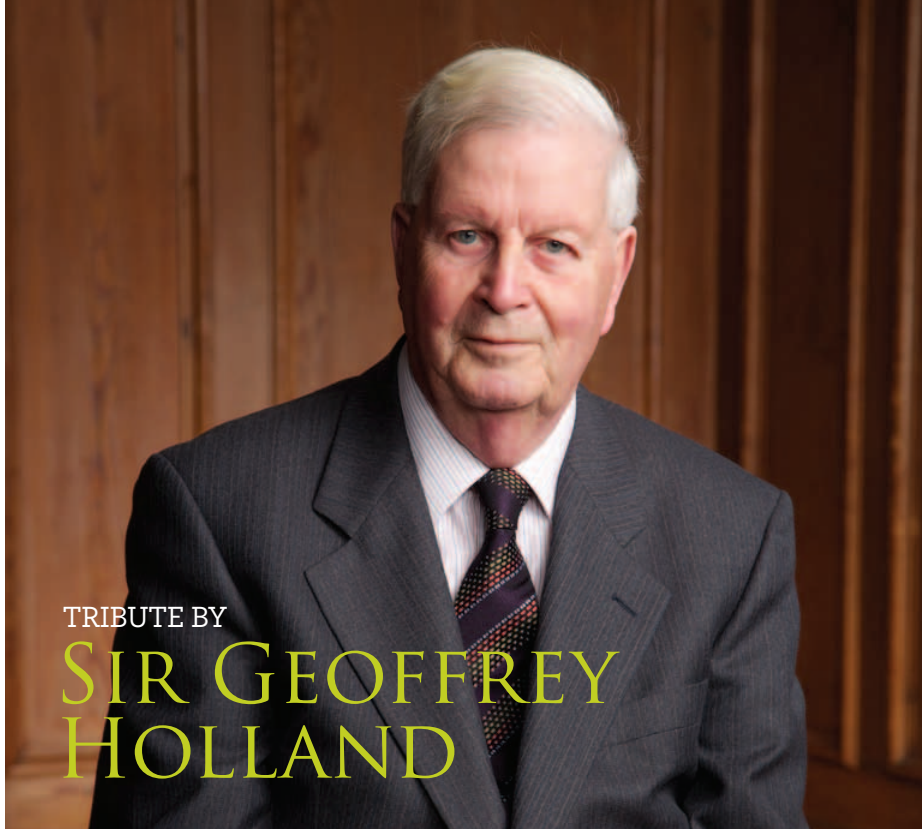
information that, when I was at school, there were no calculators, responded with the observation, 'Gosh, you must be really old!' In the interview process I tend to ask candidates what their favourite film might be – and there have been some interesting answers. An 11 year old who could talk with passion about 'Duck Soup' certainly got the thumbs up but my favourite has to be the slightly older boy who professed a love for 'Breakfast at Tiffany's.' When asked why he looked me in the eye and said, 'I think Audrey Hepburn is simply gorgeous, don't you?'

In lessons I have tended to teach only the Fourth Form, and they seem to find that the thought of being in a lesson taught by the HM as being rather daunting – well, for a few weeks at least. In one lesson we were looking at the Siege of Leningrad in the Second World War where temperatures fell to minus 40 degrees. One of my charges asked what it was like to be in such low

temperatures and I said that I had only ever been in temperatures of minus 26 when skiing, but that I did remember being able to break off bits of my moustache. He looked at me innocently and asked, 'Did the same thing happen to your hair?' One cannot help but laugh.

There are lots of events that Heads have to attend and these in their turn can give rise to embarrassment. For example, being forced, at the Drama Support Group murder mystery evening to accept the booby prize on behalf of my losing team; regularly showing my ignorance at the Music Quiz Supper including, on one notable occasion, failing to recognise the school song (though, in my defence, it had been expertly disguised by Mrs Stubbs); and failing to back any winning beast at all in the Scrummers' Ferret Racing evening.

I will finish though with Phab, which is, of course, a special part of the school. I have always fought shy of playing the role of Father Christmas – some, inexplicably, feel that I am suited for the role – but when asked to do so for the Phab South East Christmas Party I felt that I could not refuse. The Phab guests, of all ages, believed implicitly in Santa and their subsequent affection was quite physical. I was black and blue by the end but there were a lot of happy guests. They never told me about that at interview!



TRIBUTE BY

SIR GEOFFREY HOLLAND

Stephen Wright's first Governors' meeting at Merchant Taylors was a quiet event: no opening statement by the School's newly appointed Head Master, no great 'vision' unveiled. Instead we embarked, through Stephen's leadership, on the progressive methodical approach to development that has taken us to the very top. By the end of the Gabitass years the School's performance had never been better nor had its reputation been higher. Stephen Wright's legacy is to have instilled in the whole School a belief in the possibility and rewards of continuous improvement.

That process has taken all parts of the School to new highs. It has been based on constant involvement and consultation. There has been a sharp focus on the question: what value is the individual boy getting from his time and effort and could it be greater?" Answering that question honestly involves all staff and, of course, every boy individually. It is very noticeable how active participation by boys has grown over these last years - through closer and more frequent contact between teachers, tutors and boys, through the growing role of the student councils and through the part boys play as ambassadors for the School.

Hearing all this you might suppose that there has been endless change in the School. Herein lies a paradox: innovation has indeed been progressive but it has not chased passing fashion for its own sake. Proposals are evaluated and the timing of changes carefully judged - for example, changes to fortnightly timetables and double lessons, which have resulted in greatly widened choices for older

boys in particular. The great national debates about the future of A levels or the sudden fashion in some circles for the International Baccalaureate were worked through. In both cases the School emerged with well prepared developments, which have not lowered standards and are now resulting in the creation of the School's own diploma structure which is attracting so much interest from other schools.

There has been progressive widening of access to new opportunities and possibilities. New subjects such as psychology and sports science have been added to the academic choices on offer. To sports have been added rowing and horse-riding. The so-called minor sports of tennis and swimming are booming. All-pervasive in every classroom and used every day by every boy and member of staff, the latest technologies have dramatically added rich teaching and learning resources. All this has in no small way contributed to the building of a real sense in the School that all boys and staff are members of one community. Symbolic of this has been the Head Master's concern that disabled people should have, as far as possible, full access to all parts of the School. Real improvements have been made.

For the School to be successful it must maintain and develop its relationships with parents, other linked educational institutions, Old Boys and the Merchant Taylors' Company. All have made real progress. The Head Master is accessible from the earliest moments of a boy's candidature for entry to the School. Parents' meetings with staff are more purposeful and professional. Opportunities for parents to participate in School activities have multiplied. Parents'

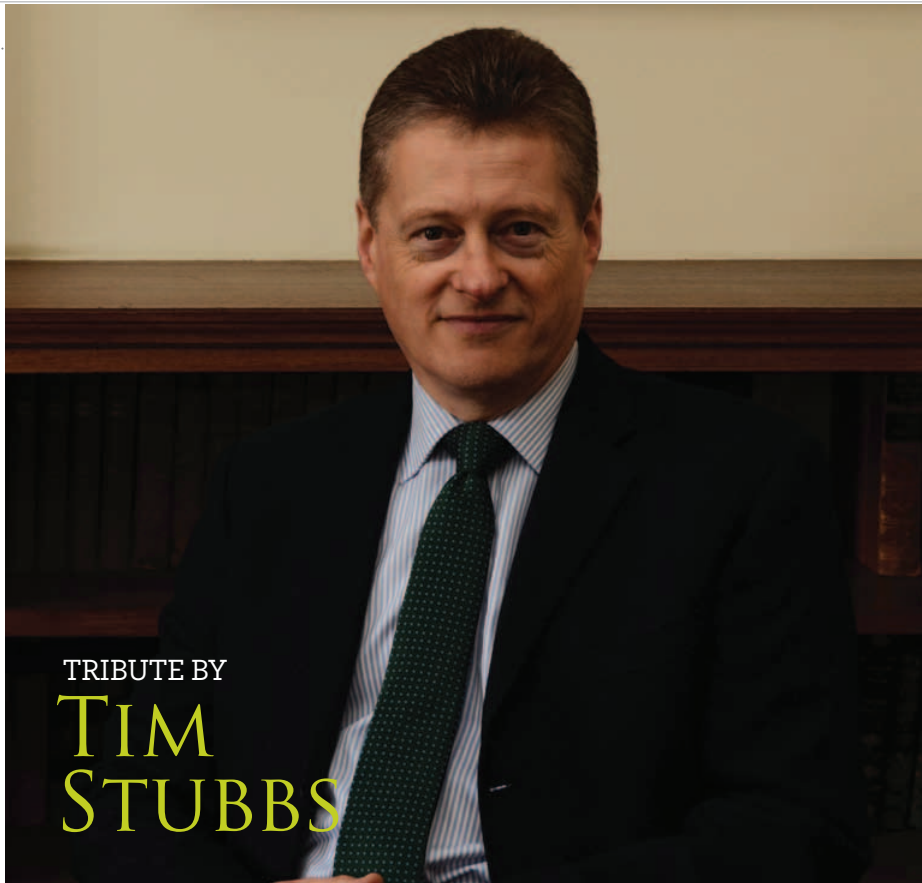
views are regularly sought through questionnaires, the results carefully scrutinised by staff, the Head Master and Governors. Collective or individual meetings with heads and staff of schools from which boys progress to Merchant Taylors' have increased in frequency.

The opening of the Old Merchant Taylors Society clubhouse and new sports facilities at Sandy Lodge was the culmination of a project that required solid commitment over the years from the School and the Society. The Society's administration is now increasingly integrated with the School's development office. Less visible perhaps but appreciated by Old Merchant Taylors all over the country, has been the time and effort devoted by the Head Master to attending each year many regional events, reunion lunches, dinners, receptions to meet Old Boys and bring them the latest school news.

The 450th Anniversary of the founding of the School was the occasion for announcing one of the most significant policy decisions made by the Head Master and Governors in recent years. Scholarships will in future be primarily honorific. The money saved is to go to bursaries to open up the opportunity of an education at Merchant Taylors' School to boys and their families who would not be able to join without financial support. No recent new policy by the School has received wider acclaim.

This decision was a major milestone but took its place quite naturally in that most important legacy from Stephen Wright's years - that of continuing improvement in everything at Sandy Lodge. It has been a process led by the Head Master and encouraged by his personal style.

A few years ago, as Chairman of Governors at Speech Day in our Great Hall, I announced that the Governors had set as their aim that Merchant Taylors' should be among the top ten schools in the country. As Head Master, Stephen had private doubts because the competition was so tough. However, reviewing the School's results for 2012 in the recent Winter edition of the OMT Society News Sheet, Stephen concludes "Though it is difficult always to assess, such results ... would almost certainly have placed us as one of the top ten schools in the country". They would indeed. Thank you, Head Master, for all you have done for and with us. Your years have been a memorable, enjoyable and a hugely rewarding period in the School's long history.



TRIBUTE BY

**TIM
STUBBS**

Tim Stubbs has been Second Master throughout Stephen Wright's Head Mastership. He reflects on what it has been like working with him over the past nine years

The second half of the Summer Term 1993 was an interesting time at Merchant Taylors' School with speculation rife as to whom the Governors would choose to succeed Jon Gabbitass; the final shortlist was down to three and although Stephen did not know it he was in pole position to win the race to be the next Head Master. The giveaway was an aside from Geoffrey Holland during the Company reception that year; "I like Wright" whispered Sir Geoffrey and it seemed to those of us who heard this that the die was all but cast. There was a rather neat symmetry to Stephen coming to Sandy Lodge as Head Master as he had been a pupil at The King's School, Macclesfield which is another school in the Merchant Taylors' family of schools. After reading History at Queen's College, Cambridge, Stephen began his teaching career at Woolverstone Hall in Suffolk, before moving on to Framlingham College as Head of History and subsequently a House Master. On leaving Framlingham, he became Deputy Head of the Judd School in Tonbridge and four years later the Head of Borden Grammar School in north Kent.

“...building carefully and sensitively on the work of his predecessor, strengthening the school and taking it forward, always with the key objective in mind of improving the welfare and development of the pupils”

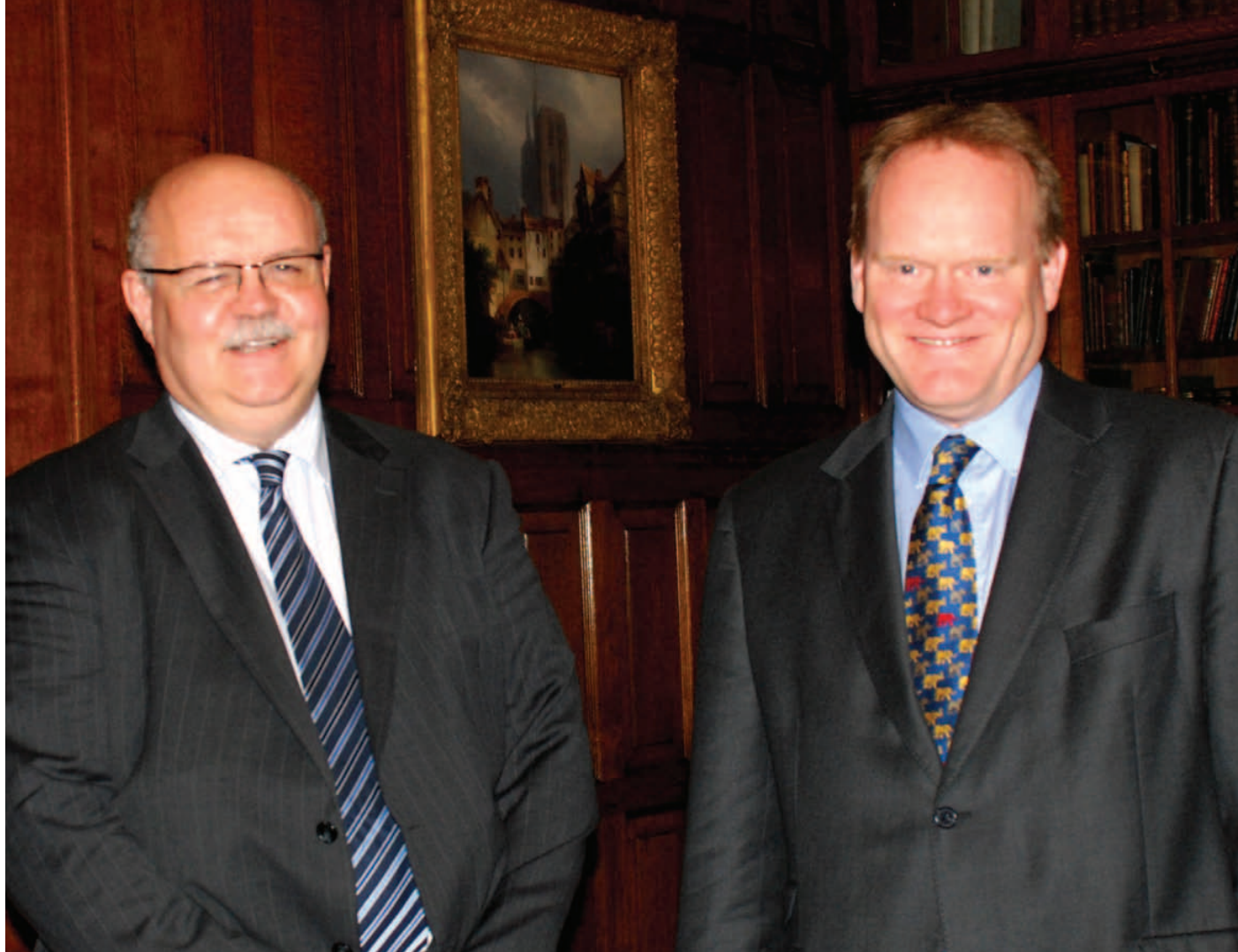
Steve brought with him to Taylors' a wealth of experience and it rapidly became clear that he had an exceptional understanding of the way in which a school works. After a year of listening to what staff, parents and pupils had to say, he put this knowledge to good use, building carefully and sensitively on the work of his predecessor, strengthening the school and taking it forward, always with the key objective in mind of improving the welfare and development of the pupils. The list of changes to the school over the last nine years is a testament to Steve's hard work and determination: the introduction of hour-long lessons, the increase in tutorial time, the introduction of new subjects to the curriculum, the major improvements to disabled access, the restructuring of

scholarships to enable more bursary support to be offered and the building of the perimeter road in preparation for the new Design and Technology building have all happened on Steve's watch. All this has been achieved whilst retaining the relaxed, friendly and purposeful atmosphere which is the hallmark of Merchant Taylors' School.

From a personal point of view, working with Steve has been a pleasure; he has been unfailingly approachable, supportive, considerate and courteous, as well as being refreshingly self-effacing. It has been extremely comforting to have someone of his experience and ability at the helm – he has always been a source of sound advice and reassurance during difficult times. Steve's capacity for hard work has made it difficult for the rest of us to keep up – always keen to lead from the front he insisted on teaching History to the Fourth Form and, typical of the man, he made sure that his lesson would be observed during the last inspection (no surprise that the

lesson was rated as outstanding).

As many governors, staff and parents will confirm Steve and Penny are welcoming and genial hosts and Steve's long experience has enabled him to build up a fund of entertaining anecdotes which have enlivened many a gathering. Steve will have completed fifteen years as a Head Master at the end of this term and he and Penny have certainly earned a long and happy retirement. It must be the aim of all Head Masters to leave their school in a better state than they found it, but taking over a school at the top of its game as Steve did makes this an especially demanding task – that Steve has succeeded in moving the school forward over the last nine years is a tribute to his skill as a leader. We shall miss him.



Simon Everson

Incoming Head Master **Simon Everson** joins Merchant Taylors' from Skinners' School, Tunbridge. He outlines his thoughts on education and some of the challenges that lie ahead, both for Merchant Taylors' and independent schools in general

Can you tell us a little about those aspects of your own life, career and family life which you think will help you in your Head Mastership at Taylors?

My parents were both senior HMIs, so education runs in the family. However, I draw first upon the support of my wife; we have been married for eleven happy years. As for my own resources, I think that I will draw upon the diversity of my educational experience. I have worked in the independent sector, the state sector and taught for a year in a school in Japan. I have experience of boys' schools and mixed schools; schools with wide ethnic diversity; schools that serve challenging communities and those that are highly academic. My own life experience has helped me to formulate a clear educational philosophy. I firmly agree with the MTS tradition that no boy learns well unless he is happy. Pupils need to develop their intellectual capacities in an environment

of respectful and supportive relationships. I believe that pupils and staff alike should expect from their school an equal measure of support and challenge. A culture of high expectations is essential for the institution and those within it to thrive. I am also clear that a school functions best in a collegiate fashion.

What are your intellectual passions?

I have a wide diversity of interests. I approach life with curiosity and enthusiasm to learn. My primary intellectual interests are currently philosophy, the study of pre-history, music, art and literature.

Many incoming Headmasters start from the adage "If it's not broke, you don't need to fix it." Is this useful or disguised complacency?

The adage contains a hidden false assumption that it is possible to avoid change. I believe that change is inevitable and should be welcomed. However, before

any change can be made, I would like to understand the school. It is important to spend time with staff and pupils to discover what works best in the school and what might usefully be improved.

Of course, any change should be made in the context of a clearly articulated educational philosophy, an understanding of what works best in practice and not just for the sake of it.

What do you think have been the major educational changes of the last decade that are likely to impact on independent schools?

Independent schools are certainly not immune to the changes that have been imposed upon state education. There is huge turmoil in education at present. State schools have had to absorb reductions in income and changes to performance management. All teachers have seen adverse changes to their pensions.

Further, a hasty introduction of major

changes to assessment affects everyone in education. Although schools were promised freedoms by the government they are currently being judged by a narrow and limiting process. Most recently, A-level league tables were published in which certain subjects were privileged over others. This initiative mimics the assertion of the pre-eminence of certain subjects over others in the GCSE English Baccalaureate.

One is prompted to ask a wider question: what is education for? Should education serve only the economic needs of the nation or has it a wider duty? I believe that it does and that there is value in scholarship beyond the provision of a practical means to generate national wealth. He who sets aside learning for the sake of material goals knows, in Wilde's comment, the cost of everything but the value of nothing.

You have significant leadership experience as a Head. What do you feel that the independent and maintained sectors can learn from each other? Is the setting up of academies by independent schools the only way to go?

I think that we always have something to learn from others. Whether as a school, a department or an individual only the very confident believe that there is no possibility of learning something new and useful from another.

I do not think that the setting up of academies is the only route for the independent sector, although it is one that some may benefit from following. Skinners' School has set up its own academy as lead sponsor. In the short time since we took over the school we have helped to transform the educational experience of the pupils and the school's results have hugely improved. That is not to say that such an approach is right for every school – each situation must be approached on its own merits.

What do you think are the main challenges facing independent schools in the next decade?

We will have to ensure that the principles of academic rigour and scholarship are sustained and enhanced. We will have to define a role for the sector within the wider community. We will need to be responsive to the challenges and pressures imposed upon the pupils by social networks and an

increasingly digital world. Finally, we must equip our pupils to thrive in a world where China and other emerging markets come to exert an influence equivalent to that of the USA today.

Is there a long-term future for single sex boys' schools?

Yes. I think there is a bright future in which single sex boys' schools will thrive. There is much to be gained from an education alongside other young men. Friendships, sport and study thrive amongst peers. The popularity of schools such as Skinners' School and Merchant Taylors' School show that plenty of young men want such an education.

A-levels, Pre-U, IB – at times it seems like an unholy mess. Is it time for independent schools to embrace an inevitable range and diversity in post 16 provision?

The school will need to think long and hard about the way in which we assess the success of our pupils. The government sees assessment as the most effective means to make the changes they want to see within the curriculum. Our focus should be upon ensuring that the range and quality of the pupils' experience of the school curriculum is sustained. Rather than allow assessment to define the learning that takes place within the school, we should first decide what learning we value and then ensure that we choose the best means to evaluate it.

It is too early to say whether the new look A-levels will meet our requirements. I sense no immediate necessity to make the significant shift to the IB. The Cambridge Pre-U is still a relatively new qualification and will require continued study.

Should British independent schools shadow maintained sector best practice and the National Curriculum or should we become more individual in the identities, teaching styles, curricula we offer?

The principle that we first identify what we believe is best in education, that we seek to understand fully the needs of the pupils we serve and that we shape our practice accordingly has already been expressed in previous responses. Independent education is founded upon the principle of autonomy – that is a hugely valuable asset and is not one that should be discarded or neglected lightly. We have the freedom to

choose the path we believe to be the best. We would be remiss if we did not take it.

What are your thoughts on the importance of a school's relationship with its old boys?

I think that the relationship with former members of the school is of crucial importance. That link maintains the identity and the continuity of experience of education at MTS. It is a means by which the school can speak to itself and both assert and preserve the best of what has gone before. The old boys represent an immensely valuable resource to the current pupils, offering their life experience, advice on careers and work experience.

The school will, of course, also seek to work with the old boys in supporting bursaries and the capital projects to develop the school site. We will draw upon the wisdom, the professional expertise and the support of the old boys in doing so, always mindful of the fact that the relationship with the old boys extends very much further than development projects.

Will the UK follow the path of American education where – in a world of rising costs where one can't keep raising the fees – the only way to finance bursaries and capital projects is to prioritise the role of the Development Office?

The Development Office will be very important to Merchant Taylors' School in allowing us to create the facilities we seek and the environment we desire. The Development Office will also play an increasingly significant role in allowing the school to broaden access. All independent schools are aware in the current economic climate of pressures upon parents and all must work to find ways to mitigate those pressures. One of the ways that the school can achieve this is through the work of the Development Office. However, there are other important possibilities. We will need to be rigorous in our management of school budgets and ensure that value for money is achieved.

Taken as a given that we are a diverse, multi-faith, "rainbow" school that aims to educate "citizens of the world", what parts of what we used to call "Englishness" remain of permanent value?

I would question some assumptions that seem to underpin the question. My first



thought is that the concept of “Englishness” is not outmoded. My second is that we are not required to choose between the elements that make up Englishness and then discard some parts.

When I think of the English I think of a nation of good humoured people, not prone to revolutionary outbursts. We are motivated by a sense of fair play, tolerance of others and respect for each other’s rights. We are a mercantile and financial nation but are never inclined to define a person by their material wealth. We laugh at those who think too highly of themselves and champion the underdog. A sense of service and duty has defined us.

We have given the world a disproportionately large number of its inventions and scientific breakthroughs and almost all of its games. We are prone to self-deprecation but when the moment comes we stand up and are counted, as we saw last summer at the Olympics.

I see no value in stepping back from any of these admirable qualities and would extend them to all who inhabit our island – the English have always been a collection of peoples from a wide variety of backgrounds. We have been a nation of immigrants from the moment the hunters first followed the herds north after the retreating glaciers of the last Ice Age.

Traditionally Taylors’ has been a “broad church” with many teaching styles and personality types in the academic faculty. Should we maintain this approach or seek to follow more rigorously current best practices in education?

We should seek to identify and celebrate the best and most effective work in Merchant Taylors’. Typically that will be characterised by high expectations and high standards of scholarship. We should seek to share that best practice so that each learns from the others. I am unconvinced by imposed “cookie cutter” approaches to improving teaching and learning. However, we can learn from research and each other to help us develop our practice and we should do so.

Given the choice would you describe yourself primarily as a pragmatist or a visionary?

I would resist the choice. I think it is perfectly possible to pursue an ideal through a pragmatic and practical process.

Are you an elitist? Do schools like MTS need to reclaim the word elite as an aspect of excellence about which there is nothing to be ashamed of?

No-one criticises professional sports teams for being an elite. No-one felt it inappropriate for the British Olympic team to select those athletes who were most gifted, who had trained hardest and who had the greatest ambition to represent our country. If we were to find ourselves facing an operation we would wish the surgeon to have been selected carefully for aptitude and then trained to the best of his or her ability. I have absolutely no problem with the concept of an elite group and would seek, through the provision of an outstanding education, to enlarge the intellectual elite in this country.

The concept of an elite group becomes problematic only where the support and provision for the gifted few prevents or

diminishes the support for those less fortunate. As such, as we stretch our most able we should also find ways to support others and inculcate a sense of service and wider responsibility in our brightest and best.

The pace of change seems only to accelerate. What can we do best in terms of preparing pupils for adult life with such rapidly changing patterns in the skills requirements, career paths, and job opportunities across the economy?

If we encourage such qualities as curiosity, resilience, integrity, academic rigour, determination, ambition, and good humour I think that our pupils will be able to find ways to apply those talents in whatever way they wish and will be able to find success in whatever aspect of life they choose to seek it.

MTS lays huge emphasis on the quirky and the value of being independent minded. Can we retain that emphasis in this world of systems and accountabilities and homogenized examination systems?

Yes, I believe we can. We must have the courage of our convictions.

At the end of the day, schools like MTS offer more than simply an excellent education – they open a window onto a world of values. What values do you cherish most as a man and as a teacher?

I agree that the purpose of a good school is to do more than provide an excellent academic education. A good school should inspire its pupils and foster creativity. A good school provides an environment where the pupils are confident and personable, with highly developed social skills and the capacity to form lifelong friendships.

The values of comradeship, good humour, service, loyalty and resilience will sustain our pupils and guide their decisions. I think a school should try to develop a moral compass within the pupils. A sense of right and wrong, a desire to serve others and an adherence to the principles of fair play should not be the preserve of the pupils but should be modelled, exemplified and embodied in the actions of their school.

Values are best shown in practice rather than theory; I hope that my previous answers will have given a better demonstration of the values that I espouse than any simple assertion of them could do. I believe that values lie at the heart of a good education; I am delighted to join a school whose values I share.

From a Head Monitor

Jeremy Cox was Head Monitor in 1978/79. He recalls his time at the school and his career in medicine

I am in Bali, having just arrived from Sumatra, Indonesia. I have been over there with my wife on a trip looking for orangutans in the tropical rainforest. We had planned to go to Borneo but there has been an outbreak of serious violence due to an incursion from the Philippines and so it wasn't thought to be safe.

Though I might not have thought that a trip into the forest was a good preparation for writing an article such as this, it makes you reassess many things and is a good time to contemplate what effect Merchant Taylors' had on you.

A brief résumé of myself then; I left MTS in 1979 and went to medical school in London at the Royal Free Hospital. I trained as a GP in North Hertfordshire working at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage and then as a trainee GP in Letchworth. I applied for and got a partnership in Hitchin North Herts in 1988 and have been there ever since. At present, I work 4 days per week as a normal GP, the other day I work as a Child Protection Named GP and also as the Chairman of Hertfordshire Local Medical Committee (the organisation that supports and represents all GPs in Hertfordshire).

If I were to have any thoughts about what MTS provided for me it wouldn't be about the academic results I achieved or the sporting training; my view would be that it was about the all-round education, the sense, even if I didn't appreciate at the time, of what one's relationship is with the rest of society.

Watching the guide - whose annual salary is £2500 per annum - taking us through the Sumatran jungle, and who would have to spend all of that if they had any serious medical condition, made me appreciate



“ Am I trying to say that my time at Taylors' prepared me for this sort of work? Not specifically of course, but in general, absolutely. ”

how lucky I am to have had the start in life I had; and to be born where I was. The skills taught at Taylors' of understanding that and understanding the differences between cultures and people are crucial.

The same knowledge and understanding of our place in, and debt to society is an important part of my safeguarding work. I teach and support other GPs regarding the issues and cases involved in the protection of children who have been subject to some form of abuse in their lives. At present there are about 400 children on the Child Protection register in Hertfordshire; in my day there were 700 odd pupils at MTS to give you some feeling for the numbers. The cases that I am involved with, could, if you were not careful, give you a rather jaundiced view of our fellow human beings; and certainly when we were discussing animal cruelty in Sumatra I was thinking that people are just as or more cruel to their fellow human beings!

My LMC work also involves me in a lot of negotiating and discussions regarding my colleagues' conditions of work and speaking at meetings and conferences. Representing

your peer group is very satisfying but can be quite stressful. Am I trying to say that my time at Taylors' prepared me for this sort of work? Not specifically of course, but in general, absolutely. The education clearly prepared you to be confident and self-assured, or at least appear so; to argue without being aggressive and to try to understand the other person's point of view. The House system meant that you learnt what it meant to have particular people with whom you had a particular relationship and responsibilities.

I still have an OMT tie; indeed I have found an internet retailer and bought myself and my brothers a new tie each. I wear the tie frequently and although I have only been recognised once by another OMT (in London and the other man had been abroad in South Africa for 50 years) it still makes me feel positive, even if it is rather garish.

To sum up, I think I gained a lot from my time at Taylors'; the present pupils I met at the former Head Monitors' dinner last year seemed clearly to be getting the same sort of experiences and benefits; long may it continue.

Development:



DEADLINES for Concordia articles seem to come around extremely quickly. I can scarcely believe that six months have passed since the last. I am pleased to report that a lot of exciting projects are now underway, keeping the Development Office extremely busy.

New database and website

The move to the new database will change significantly the way we operate. It is a far more powerful system that will enable us, as a community, to communicate far more effectively. You will be able to log into the school's website and make use of a number of services there. This will also be the site of the new Careers Directory. There will be a search function for you to track down old friends and contemporaries. Registration and payment for events will be possible through the website, with tickets issued via email. Online giving will now be possible; we are always overwhelmed by the generosity of OMTs and parents towards the school. In the past, this has involved writing cheques and filling in donations forms – these options will remain, but there will be now also be the option to give securely through the website.

Update your details

Many of you will have received an email from me in March asking you to follow a link to complete an online form to update your details. Those who didn't should have received a hard copy through the post. As well as improving the data that we hold about you, we asked a number of questions about the types of events that you would like to see us run and your preferences for the way in which we communicate with you. Once we have gone through the process of uploading that information to the database, we will respond accordingly. I have been delighted by the level of response we have

had and am very grateful to those who completed the form.

Careers

One of the questions on the update form was whether you would be prepared to help Merchant Taylors' boys and OMTs by offering careers advice or work experience. It was heartening to see that so many of you are happy to help. It is our hope that in future, our careers and mentoring scheme will mirror the system of tutor groups at MTS, where there is a system of guidance, help and support that trickles down through the generations. I will be in touch with everyone who responded to offer careers guidance soon. You will be issued with login credentials to the website mentioned above, where you will be able to check, amend, or expand upon, the details that will appear in the Careers Directory before its launch in September.

Networking events and reunions

The City Network event run in February was a fantastic start to what I hope will become an annual fixture in the calendar. The aim is to offer something similar for other professions. We began with the City, but we certainly won't end there. By getting in touch with us to let us know about your current role and what sort of events you would like us to run, you will make this possible. In addition to employment-related events, we will soon be launching a programme of rolling year group reunions, giving all OMTs an opportunity to return to Sandy Lodge to catch up with old friends, to reminisce and to see the new developments to the school.

Fundraising

Fundraising for our Campaign for Bursaries continues apace. We have been delighted by the number of donations and the generosity that parents and OMTs have

shown. In December 2012 we held our first Benefactors' Day. Benefactors were invited back for lunch with the Head Master and also had the option of a tour of the school from members of our current Upper Sixth, or to watch the a rugby match between this year's and last year's 1st XV. It was a wonderful occasion and one that will be repeated annually for those that have supported in any given year. A separate annual event will also take place for members of our 1561 Foundation – those who have left a legacy to the school. Our campaign is taking place at a tough economic time and competes with many extremely worthy charitable causes, so we are very grateful for your support. We are making a very real difference to lives by supporting bursaries, breaking down barriers to the wonderful opportunities that a Merchant Taylors' School education offers. This summer the school will be running its first telephone campaign: over a two week period, current boys and young OMTs will be telephoning OMTs and parents. Some will be asked to support the campaign; others' views will be sought on the range of initiatives we are running. We hope it will be a great success and that those called will enjoy the experience.

Contact

Please do stay in touch with us. Keep us updated on where you are and what you're up to. Whether that is: just to ensure you continue to receive Concordia; to include an update in Class Notes; to join our growing group of careers advisors; or whether you would just like to come to visit and have a tour of the school. It is always good to hear from you. I can be reached at nlatham@mtsn.org.uk or 01923 845545. I look forward to hearing from you.

City Network Event

ON February 28th, the Development Office held its inaugural City Network event at the KPMG offices in Salisbury Square. The event for Old Merchant Taylors and parents of current boys working in the City of London was hosted by Simon Collins, a current parent and UK Chairman and Senior Partner at KPMG. It was a marvelous event and incredibly heartening to see over 180 people gathering together in one room to socialise, network and catch up with old friends and teachers. Both the phenomenal personal success of the OMTs and their genuine affection for their alma mater was remarkable.

the importance of networking, careers advice and work experience and made a plea for those present to offer their support for the online Careers Directory



Development Office saying they would like to help. This is a wonderful start as we build towards a launch of the directory in September. We are on course to have over 300 OMTs and parents listed and prepared to help.

Head Master Stephen Wright spoke of the future vision for the school and outlined the major developments to come. The first of these, the pedestrianisation of the campus, is well underway. The new perimeter road is now complete and in use. The sensitive re-development of the Great Hall into an Art Deco classic with twenty-first century facilities begins in the summer, and the exciting new Technology building that will



Many of the OMTs spoke of memories well beyond the purview of their current careers, reminiscing with real affection on subjects as varied as rugby fixtures, school assemblies, concerts, plays and individual lessons they remembered. One KPMG high-flier even quoted verbatim an entire stanza of a Sylvia Plath poem he had been taught at the age of 14!

Simon Collins spoke about the challenges facing school leavers and graduates when they enter the job market. For KPMG, who receive 25,000 applications from graduates each year for just 600 jobs, this is particularly pertinent. Simon stressed



that the school is to launch later this year.

At the event, over 60 people registered to be a part of the directory and, since then, a further 50 have contacted the

bring together Art and Design with traditional and new technologies to transcend the traditional divide between the arts and the sciences will follow.

Our warmest thanks go to all at KPMG, but particularly to Simon Collins for so generously hosting the event.

If you missed the City Network this year and would like to attend in future, please do get in touch. Whether you work in the City or not, if you let us know what your current role is, it will enable us to shape future sector-specific networking and social opportunities.

Development:

Benefactors' Lunch



Benefactors to the school enjoying a champagne reception in the Head Master's House before lunch in December.



Leaving a Lasting Legacy

FOUR years ago, the school established the 1561 Foundation to recognise and thank those individuals who have committed to leave the school money in their Will. We are delighted that so many have responded and let us know that they intend to do so. This summer we will be holding a lunch to thank all our 1561 Foundation members.

Gifts like these help secure the school's future. Unless specified otherwise, all legacies contribute to the endowment of bursaries. This means the capital sum that is left to the school will not be touched and the legacy will go on supporting boys in perpetuity.

There will, of course, be many reasons why someone may wish to help the school. Allan Henchoz (OMT 1964) recently contacted the school to let us know that he intended to leave a legacy. He writes:

"Having spent the first half of my working life in the Royal Air Force I have always had a Will. But normally it is only when one retires that a Will takes on a more poignant dimension.

And it was about that time, two years ago, that I received a mailing from Merchant Taylors' School about legacy giving. Writing a will is not like writing a cheque – it's not something you respond to immediately. However, the

idea remained with me and so when I did come to re-write my Will this year, I made a provision to support the school.

Why? I am the youngest of three brothers and the father of the fourth Henchoz to go to Merchant Taylors'. We span four out of five decades beginning with the 40s and ending with the 80s and there is no doubt the school did a great deal for all of us. Each of us benefited

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It gave me a wonderful start to my adult life. I am anxious that the school should continue to do this in the future and maintain the standards it has achieved over many generations.

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from a first class education and the high standards set by the school in self-discipline, team spirit, integrity and so on, had a lasting impact on how we all attempted to conduct our lives thereafter.

By leaving a legacy to provide bursaries at the school, I feel that this is a way that I can help provide the same opportunities

for others that otherwise would not be able to have such an experience. The fact that my support will go towards the school's bursary endowment fund and will provide this support in perpetuity, means that I will make a lasting legacy.

The legacy doesn't need to be a fixed sum. It can simply be a proportion or the residue of a trust which ensures that any provisions for dependants are protected. If you haven't made a will or are thinking about updating it, please also consider leaving a legacy towards the school's bursary fund."

Bobby King, OMT (1947) and 1561 Foundation member, said: "I benefited enormously from the all-round education the school gave me in very difficult circumstances during and just after the last war. It gave me a wonderful start to my adult life. I am anxious that the school should continue to do this in the future and maintain the standards it has achieved over many generations. It needs money so to do."

If you are someone who has made this wonderful commitment to Merchant Taylors' or would like information about how you can do so, please do get in touch with the Development Director, Nick Latham. We can then invite you to join our 1561 Foundation and, of course, thank you for leaving a lasting legacy to the school.

Sixth Form Bursaries

FOR the last four years, we have run an appeal to the parents of boys in their Upper Sixth year. This Sixth Form Bursary appeal has offered the chance to make a donation of what remains of the deposit parents put down for their son before joining the School. This usually amounts to around £200.

The resulting Class Gift has established a bursary for a boy to come to Merchant Taylors' School for the Sixth Form

the following year who otherwise would not be able to afford the fees.

We are extremely grateful to all those families who have supported over the last four years who have in total raised £38,700. Thank you very much!

A number of parents have already been in touch with us this year to indicate that they intend to make this gift and we hope that many more will follow, to establish the Class of 2013 Sixth Form Bursary.

Bruce Ritchie: a tribute



Bruce Ritchie taught English at Merchant Taylors' from 1966 to 1995. He died on 15th October 2012

“

he was, above anything else, a gentleman...

”

Mr. Ritchie was my 3rd Form and English master when I entered MTS in 1990/91. He always wanted us to do well, and taught with enthusiasm and passion. I remember fondly a trip he arranged for us to see *Tales of Hoffman* in the West End.

He loved his cricket and I recount his frustration, which I shared, with the England selectors when David Gower was left out of the England tour party to India in 1992. He had a long discussion with me about the issue lamenting Gower's omission.

I also appreciated the time when I broke my collar bone in the Upper Thirds and he sent me a cricket book with a note “enjoy the book while you recover, I'm glad the injury was not on your bowling arm.”

No-one ever had a bad word for him; he was, above anything else, a gentleman. We miss him greatly.

Rajiv Radhakrishnan (1990-1997)

It is always sad when it takes someone to die for us truly to reminisce about special times in our lives. With the news about Bruce Ritchie's passing coinciding with the tragic news about the loss of one of my classmates and 1st XV rugby team mate Paul Shyvers, I felt compelled to write.

Everyone has at least one teacher with whom they really connect; for me it was Mr Ritchie. Whilst most of my time at Taylors' seemed to be about me indulging my sporting passions, Mr Ritchie imbued in me a similar passion for English literature and, in particular, plays. The real gift he had was in persuading a group of adolescent boys that “acting” a play in a classroom could be both fun and educational (even for those reading the part of the female characters!).

The result was an eclectic mix of boys trying to mimic what they thought would be the correct accent for Biff or Willy Loman from *Death of a Salesman*, or perhaps even more memorably, that of Blanche DuBois from *A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. However, for me, I will always remember attempting the Italian accent in the “starring” role of Rodolfo in a *View from the Bridge*, alongside my fellow lead

(and fellow rugby team mate) Antony Craft (also sadly no longer with us) playing the character of Marco. I have no idea which of us was worse (although Ant was accused on more than one occasion of sounding like The Count from Sesame Street!), but what was special is that Mr Ritchie was able to get us to leave behind our inhibitions and just have a go. This made the lessons as fun as they were memorable. I am no actor (unlike Mr Ritchie), but I am forever grateful to him for opening my eyes as to the merit and enjoyment of going to the theatre.

Matt Packham (1984-1989)

“ I am no actor (unlike Mr Ritchie), but I am forever grateful to him for opening my eyes as to the merit and enjoyment of going to the theatre. ”

I, along with many friends - and I would suggest countless other OMTs - have very fond memories of the 3rd Form and our first form master Bruce Ritchie. Those of us who began our MTS careers in the 3rd Form I feel are very fortunate to have gained two years' invaluable experience on those who joined us in the 4th Forms, and Bruce Ritchie was responsible for helping all of us settle into life at one of the country's most famous and best schools, which for a lot of 10 and 11 year olds might have been daunting. His manner, experience, understanding, ability, encouragement, humour, empathy, joviality and maybe, most significantly,

“ Many have a lot to thank MTS for, but for a special group of us, Bruce Ritchie set us on our way. ”

belief in all of us, was probably something we only appreciated years later. We came to MTS from a hugely diverse range of family backgrounds; academic/intellectual, artistic, sporting abilities and of course in the 3rd Form at an age of quite varied physical and emotional development. Many have a lot to thank MTS for, but for a special group of us, Bruce Ritchie set us on our way.

Matthew Miller (1982-1989)

Bruce was always very kind to me. He would guide rather than instruct, and influence rather than command. He was a very effective communicator - the sort of person you learn from without necessarily realising it.

Bruce had been a family friend for many years before I got to know him, as my father and he taught together at the school long before I joined. It was in my four years in the cricket 1st XI that I really got to know Bruce, and especially on the annual cricket festivals at the end of the summer terms, our tour to Singapore and Australia, and in my 6th Form season when I was Captain of the XI. I think it's fair to say that our teams included their fair share of characters over the years, and Bruce's calm and reassuring presence, with a good dose of humour, always seemed to manage any difficult situations. Our successes, as a team and as individuals,

always delighted him. When we fell short, we could tell how disappointed he was - not for himself, but for us.

Bruce knew a great deal about cricket and whilst he held traditional views for the most part, he was open to new ideas and ways of thinking - though I think the (now routine) concept of warm-ups and stretches before a game always slightly bemused and amused him. I have very many happy memories of the school, and most of all of time spent on the cricket field, and that is due in no small part to Bruce.

Allan Hawkey (1986-1991)

“ He was a very effective communicator - the sort of person you learn from without necessarily realising it. ”

As I did not know of his death before my copy of Concordia arrived I read with real sorrow David Andrews' worthy appreciation of Bruce, for whom I had the highest regard.

Since reminiscences are invited may I offer this among the many possible. One morning just as he was leaving my study Bruce said, "Oh, by the way, Head Master, this man [A.N.] Wilson whom you have just appointed showed us [Bruce and John Steane] some of his writing last night. He hasn't had anything published yet, but we think he will. He is really good."

**Francis Davey
Head Master (1974-1981)**

Class notes:

Updates

William Baker (1951-1955) is a Chartered Surveyor and recently retired as Director of Slough Estates (now Segro) plc. He is an Underwriting Member of Lloyds and Chairman of Fallings Park Industrial Estate Ltd and Nettledene Ltd. He enjoys squash, golf and hill walking as well as travelling to see family and friends in the US, Australia and New Zealand.

Jonathan Baker (1978-1984), formally, The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker was ordained Bishop in June 2011. He is the Bishop of Fulham and Guild Vicar of the Parish of St Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet Street. He is living in London.

Robin Bradbury (1937-1943) writes: "Some of the most memorable sessions at MTS that I enjoyed were the "Three Sixths" - the only time we sat together - on a Friday afternoon, with Norman Birley in the chair in the Physics Lecture Theatre when we learned how to move an amendment to an amendment or refer it back as the mood took you.

In the subsequent seventy years I have served almost without a break as an elected member on three Parish Councils, one Rural District Council and a County Council and enjoyed practically every minute of it. "Standing Orders" have a fascination all of their own...not enjoyed by many, but invaluable in a difficult and tense situation.

My time at MTS was followed by a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering at Bristol and then two years as a Staff Captain R.E. (Railways Operating) at BAOR GHQ. My main career followed in Public Works contracting, mostly in the Bath /Bristol area. I am now at pasture in Radstock, Somerset."



Andrew Binstock (1989-1994) is a professional auctioneer. He is a director of Auction House London – specialist property auctioneers.



Martin Cook (1971-1976) has designed The Mindfulness Garden for the Chelsea Flower Show. The garden will be in the Fresh Gardens section. In the photo Martin is etching the lettering into a Cumbrian Slate Spiral Carving which is in the corner of the garden.



OMT News

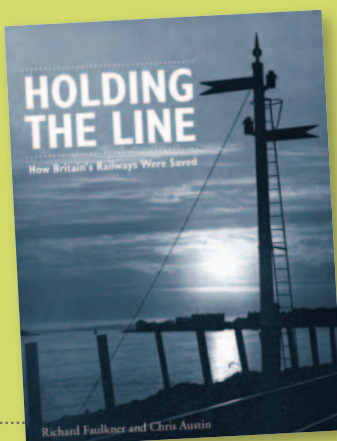
Business

Lex Deak (1993-2000) has launched a new venture in partnership with the Quintessentially Group, the world's leading concierge company with 60 offices worldwide and over 100,000 members. Q Ventures is an investment platform that connects entrepreneurs with investors through schemes like the American Express (Black) Centurion Card and other Quintessentially managed services. More information is available at www.qventures.co Lex welcomes contact from MTS alumni involved in finance and venture capital.



Books

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (1959-1964) has just co-authored this book on the history of Britain's railways and how they have had to fight to survive. 'Holding the Line: How Britain's railways were saved' by Richard Faulkner and Chris Austin is published by Ian Allan (RRP £19.99) but available at a special offer of £13.95 including postage to Concordia readers. Use voucher code HTL13 on the website www.ianallanpublishing.com or write to Offer HTL13, Marketing Department, Ian Allan Publishing Ltd, Riverdene Business Park, Hershams, Surrey, KT12 4RG. Cheques should be made payable to Ian Allan Publishing Limited

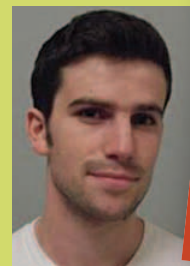


Matt Greene (1998-2003) has had his first novel published by Curtis Brown. Ostrich is a story of a young boy - Alex - adjusting to the pressures of growing up when strange things start to happen ...

Alex has a story to tell. He just doesn't know what kind it is yet.

He's got a lot of the same concerns most of us have growing up but lately, ever since his brain surgery, everyone in his life is behaving somewhat mysteriously.

Maybe it's adjusting to life after epilepsy or maybe it's the pressure of his imminent scholarship application, but Alex is starting to see the world through different eyes. He's certain there's something rotten at the heart of his parents' marriage, and when his beloved hamster Jaws 2 starts acting up as well he decides it's time to investigate.



So begins the journey that takes him to the limits of his understanding, the edge of his endurance, the threshold of manhood, and the country music aisle in Virgin Megastore. And eventually, on the eve of his English Composition exam, to the door of his mother's home-made dark room. But will Alex have the courage to expose the terrible secret that lies beyond? Or would it be better for everyone if he buried his head in the sand?

Richard Germain (1984-1991) having recently published *Death by Chilli Sauce: The Remarkable Truth and Surprising Science Behind 101 Memorable Movie Moments*, has now been given a movie reviewing slot on BBC Three Counties Radio (Herts, Beds and Bucks, 103.8, 95.5 & 104.5FM).

Rod O'Donoghue (1951-1956) writes: "After a working life in business, I turned to history, genealogy and writing in retirement. I have published two books 'O'Donoghue People and Places' and 'Heroic Landscapes: Irish Myth and Legend'. I founded and run The O'Donoghue Society and The Irish Folklore Centre."

Class notes:

Calling Third Formers of 1946

Michael Hercher (1946-1951) writes: "In 2006 the members of the first Third Form at MTS held a reunion at the school. I don't have a list of who was there but afterwards I had the thought of putting together a small book of our individual memories of that time, immediately after the war. Sadly, only a few of us contributed their thoughts - not enough for the book I had in mind. I would be delighted to hear from anyone else who might wish to contribute." Please contact Michael at MichaelHercher@gmail.com

Births



Mahmood Jessa (1991-1996) and family are celebrating the arrival of their second child Ali-Hadi Jessa who was born in Watford on 4th February. Mahmood is currently living in Dubai where he is in the process of opening his own management consultancy. He is pictured with eldest daughter Nadia (aged 6yrs) and baby Ali-Hadi.

Honours

Air Chief Marshal Lord Stirrup (1961-1967) has been made a Knight of the Garter by the Queen. Lord Stirrup was Chief of the Defence Staff when British forces were committed in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Knights of the Garter, founded in 1348, are appointed by the Queen without her having to consult the government and recognise significant contributions to public life.

Lord Stirrup sits as a crossbench peer in the House of Lords where he has argued the case for Afghan interpreters and their families to be allowed to settle in Britain.

Christopher Hurran (1961-1967) has been made an OBE for his work at the Ministry of Defence in London. He is now a Senior Associate at the UCL Institute for Security & Resilience Studies.



Bandish Gudka (1993-1995) has been awarded Runner Up with Special Mention in the Spears Wealth Manager of the Year Awards 2013. The award nominations were compiled by Freddy Barker, and Mark Nayler, senior researcher at Spears, along with Guy Paterson at Stanhope Capital and Yogi Dewan at Hassium Asset Management. The award recognises the brightest talent in the private client world and comes after Bandish was selected as "Rising Star of Wealth Management 2012" by Spears Magazine - the leading Wealth Management publication. Bandish is presently a senior investment manager at Vestra Wealth LLP, managing UK and International HNW and UHNW clients, corporates and charitable institutions. In October 2012, he was offered and accepted an honorary position at the Chartered Institute of Securities and Investments UK (CISI) Professional Interest Forum Committee.

Neil Flash (1987-1992) has just taken on a new role of Managing Director of European Integration at Huntsworth Health.

Allan Hawkey (1986-1991) is now living in Winchester and runs

his own business, ClubNet.org.uk, which provides websites and club management systems for sports clubs all around the UK. He previously worked for KPMG as a Chartered Accountant.

OMT News



Air Vice-Marshal (ret'd) Michael Harwood (1971-1976) writes: "My final days at Merchant Taylors' were in the glorious summer of 1976 (yes, such a season existed in those days!). My final days as a serving officer in the Royal Air Force were then in the summer of 2012. This family photo was taken in the inspirational surroundings of Windsor Castle. Cheryl and I were flanked by daughters Sophie and Nina and we all certainly felt "yet one more fascinating era is put to bed, now what?"

Retirement is out of the question. The challenge is to find something as intensely stimulating as my 34 years in the armed forces. From flying fast-jet aircraft to commanding operations in the Gulf to being involved in higher education and even the crucial international diplomacy scene, it is thus far proving more interesting to be involved in short-term consultancy contracts rather than settling in a single role. A business trip to China, close to the home of both Confucius and Sun Tzu, set my pulse racing. Working with the first-rate Henley Business School and a varied selection of other companies has also provided ample scope to translate many rich and compelling experiences in the military sphere into something relevant for commercial organizations and their people. Working from our home in the city of Bath, every week seems to be a new adventure and I relish the future."

Dick Taylor (1959-1964) writes: "I was at the school from 1959 to 1964. I remained a friend of John Steane's for many years afterwards. I went on to Oxford where I read PPE (1964-1967) and then as a first job to the (then) new University of Lancaster 1967-1970, as the lowest form of administrative life. Then in 1970 I moved to Leeds University's Dept. of Adult Education, where I stayed for 34 years, eventually becoming Head of Dept. and then Dean of a large Faculty. (If you stay somewhere long enough, you are almost bound to be promoted through inertia).

In 2004 I moved to Cambridge to be Professor of Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning. I retired in 2009. Among other things, I have written 13 books, with the latest due to be published in late 2013 on the historian and political activist, E. P. Thompson (Manchester University Press).

I now live in the Lake District. I would welcome contact with any MTS contemporaries. My e-mail is richardtaylor321@btinternet.com

Tom Willcox (1948-1953) sent in this photo from a holiday in the Lake District. The road was blocked with 4 foot of snow and he required a tow to get to a road that was open!



Class notes:

Joe Ray wins Grammy Award

Congratulations to **Joe Ray (1997-2002)** on his Grammy Award for “Promises (Skrillex & Nero Remix)” which won the Best Remixed Recording category at the 2013 ceremony in Los Angeles. Joe (pictured below left) read Philosophy and Modern Languages at Exeter College, Oxford before becoming a professional musician. His band, Nero, have enjoyed massive success in the USA this year.



Alay Vora (2007-2012) is currently in his first year at the University of Warwick studying Economics. He writes: “At the university I have continued my interest in tabla playing and was very fortunate to become the University’s world music scholar in my first term for the rest of my degree course. The scholarship requires me to be an active participant in the Warwick World Music Group as well as the Warwick Indian Music Ensemble and generally be an ambassador for world music and Indian music at the university. Recently, I performed with these ensembles at ‘Warwick Fused’, a fusion music concert that showcased all the different styles of music around the world. At school I was a member of the senior orchestra from 2007-2012 (playing violin) and participated in four Asian Cultural Shows with my tabla playing, co-ordinating the whole music act in my final year at MTS.”



OMT News

Alex Roth (1996-2001) is currently crowdfunding a UK tour with his jazztronica quintet Otriad. If you would like to support Alex, please go to this link: <http://www.sponsume.com/project/alex-roths-jazztronica-quintet-otriad-has-its-first-uk-tour>

You can also get more information on Alex's website: www.alexrothmusic.com



See Tristan Bernays at Edinburgh Festival Fringe



Olly Lambert (1987-1991), an award-winning documentary maker, spent weeks living deep inside Syrian territory - with both government and opposition supporters - to explore how the two-year-old conflict is tearing communities apart. His unprecedented film witnesses first-hand how the country is collapsing into sectarian conflict and faces a bleak, Balkan-style future. Syria: Across the Lines aired on Channel 4 on 17th April.



Class notes:



Sam Katz (2004-2009), currently a student at Loughborough University, and playing for Rosslyn Park this season has been selected for the England Students Rugby squad.

OMT rugby star J.E. Raphael remembered

The World Rugby Museum in Twickenham is working on a project in advance of 2015. The project relates to the 27 names commemorated on the RFU's memorial board at Twickenham in respect of England internationals who perished in WW1. John Edward Raphael OMT was one of these. He is remembered at the school on the plaque commemorating fallen OMTs outside the Great Hall. It also transpires that there is a memorial to him in St Jude on the Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb (pictured).

Below is an extract the school was able to send to Twickenham to aid their research from the School Register 1561 - 1934.

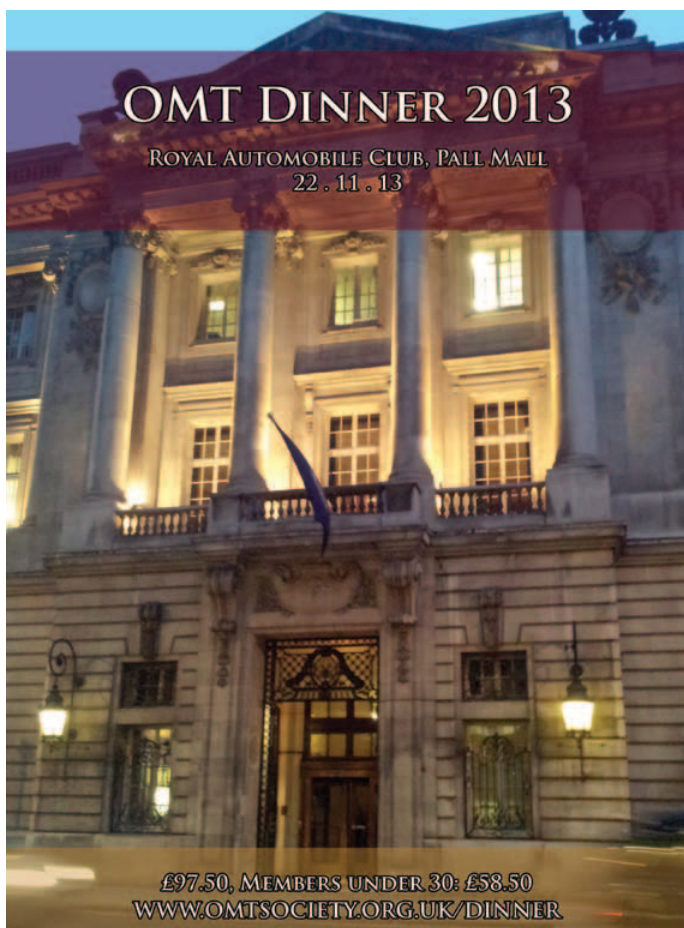
John Edward Raphael 1896-1901 b. 30.4.1882 s. of Albert and Harriette, of Brendon, Lewin Road, Streattham; capt. Sch XV and XI; Andrew Exhib, of St John's Coll. Oxf. 1901; BA 1905; capt. OMT FC; Rugby and cricket blue; English Rugby international; barr at law, Linc. Inn 1908; (W); H.A.C.; Lt KR Rif. C.; d. of wounds 11.6.1917



OMT News

OMT CC Bowler selected for England over 70s

Anthony MacDonald-Barker (1954-1961) writes: "I have been playing cricket for OMTCC since 1962 as a slow left-arm bowler (taking over 2300 wickets) and in recent years have also been playing for Hertfordshire CCC at 60+ and 70+ levels. In August this year the Australian 70+ team will be touring England, playing against several County sides and England 70+ in three "Test Matches". To my surprise I have been selected as a member of the England squad, so I am hoping to become the first OMT cricketer to represent England at a senior level."



Great Hall Chairs

Many OMTs will recall assemblies in the Great Hall in which their attention may have wandered from the oratory being delivered from the stage. They may have glanced down at the chair in front of them and noticed a name plaque. These plaques mark donations that were made many years ago.

The Development Office is now attempting to track down families of those benefactors to offer them the plaque, chair or both, to keep. A list of names can be obtained from the Development Office, so please do get in touch if you are interested.

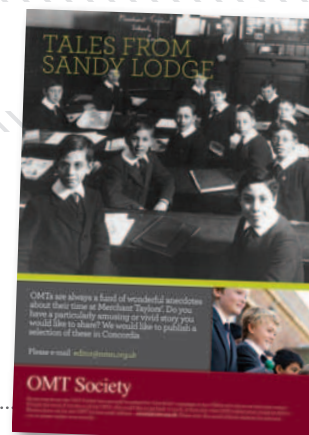
There are of course hundreds of chairs that were not named. Anyone who would like one of these chairs to remind them of the hours spent sitting in the Great Hall while they were at Merchant Taylors' School is welcome to collect one from us. Please do get in touch if you would like one. All we ask is that you make an appropriate donation to our Campaign for Bursaries and collect your chair before August 1st.



Class notes:

Tales from Sandy Lodge

UNAUTHORISED WOODWORK



During my early years at Merchant Taylors' in the mid-1950s, we were required to attend a weekly period of "Woodwork", held in the Workshop and under the guidance of Mr. Beech.

Mr. Beech was insistent that no matter how long it took, we all had to master the art of forming mortice and tenon joints from lengths of 2" X 1" timber. For those of us in Upper IV B, who were never going to excel in woodwork, the weekly performance of hacking pieces of wood became somewhat tedious and thus, we decided to turn our hands to something more interesting.

During the lunch hour, we would occasionally play a game of darts, with the dartboard hung on the inside of the Form Room door and using a set of darts which had seen much better days. Our unauthorised Woodwork project was therefore to produce a set of 'superior' darts for lunchtime entertainment and a specification was duly drawn up.

For a change, the following Woodwork period was much anticipated and under the less than eagle eye of Mr. Beech, a fine set of six U IV B darts was produced.

Essentially, our new darts comprised 8" lengths of ½" dowel, cross-cut at one end, into which suitably shaped pieces of veneer were inserted and glued to form the flights. The business end involved hammering in a 4" nail, with the nail-head then milled off to form a very sharp point.

The resulting, potentially lethal devices required immediate testing. The dart board was speedily set up in the usual place during the next lunch hour and testing commenced. In a short while, the new darts were declared an unqualified success, if only for landing on their target with a loud and satisfying thud.

Unfortunately for us, we became more focused on the aerodynamic and audible qualities of our new toys than the fact that it was time for the first afternoon period to commence. As Dart No.5 left my hand - they were all numbered so as to allow the best ones to be further refined - the Form Room door opened and in strode our good Form Master, Mr. (Sooty) Blackburn. Dart No.5 missed his temple by about three inches, landing, again with a nice thud, in the door jamb.

It took Sooty a few moments to compose himself, doubtless thinking that he had either walked into a war zone and/or

giving silent thanks for his life having been narrowly spared. Slightly ashen-faced, he required to know the names of those involved in this life-threatening enterprise. We all owned up of course and Sooty, one of the gentlest of men, was reluctantly required to balance the books with 'three each' and a severe dressing-down for all involved after school. None of us suffered more than a briefly tender backside, but collectively decided that we might consider the Chemistry period for something more creative and dramatic, although possibly with a little less deadly potential. However, that is another, somewhat explosive story.

Nigel Carter (1955 - 1959)



Do you have a story from your school days?
Please send it to editor@mtsn.org.uk

From the Archive



1



2



4



3



5

1 The emergency boarders 1942

2-3 Athletics 1949

4 Steeplechase 1949

5 CCF 1949

Class Notes:

Canon Keith Weston

Canon Keith Weston, who has died aged 86, was an unusually gifted preacher, engaging blue-collar workers and university dons alike as rector from 1964 to 1985 of the medieval church of St Ebbe's in Oxford.

The parish bordered university colleges to the north and east, while also housing some of the neediest families in the city, with a night shelter for the homeless. Weston saw his calling as pastor to all.

Keith Aitken Astley Weston was born on July 30 1926, the third son of Sir Arthur Astley Weston, Chief Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and educated at Merchant Taylors' School, Northwood.

At the age of 12, at a "Varsity and Public Schools" camp in Branscombe, Devon, Keith found the faith that would transform his life. These camps promoted the Christian faith and leadership skills, and influenced many who would become successful in the Church, the armed forces and the professions. Among them was the Rev John Stott, the rector of All Souls, Langham Place, and one of the most celebrated evangelicals in the Anglican Church; and it was in this tradition that Weston would find his voice.

From 1944 to 1948 Weston served as



a captain in the Royal Artillery in Italy and Palestine, and on his return went up to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, to read French and German. He was active in the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU).

Having trained for the ministry at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, Weston was ordained in Bath Abbey in 1953, when he was 27. After curacies at Weston-super-Mare and Cheltenham, he was appointed vicar of Christ Church, Clevedon, in 1959. From there he moved to Oxford.

Wherever he served, Weston offered careful and lively bible teaching, always applied to contemporary life. Over the years he was deeply involved in the work of the annual Keswick Bible



Convention, which draws thousands to its summer gatherings in the Lake District; he was its chairman from 1994 to 1997, travelling to expound the Scriptures at sister conventions in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Latin America and Australia.

While he loved the inter-denominational work of Keswick and the Universities and Colleges

Obituaries

Christian Fellowship (UCCF), Weston remained committed to the Anglican Church, drawn to its pattern of ordered worship, liturgical richness, and its commitment to the public reading and teaching of Scripture. Although it was not commonplace in his day, he always welcomed people of any Christian denomination to receive Holy Communion, and appointed women to positions of leadership. He also encouraged students to consider many forms of lay ministry, as well as vocations to the ordained ministry.

Weston served as rural dean of Oxford from 1971 to 1976; as a canon of Christ Church Cathedral from 1981 to 1985; and, for 10 years in the Seventies and Eighties, as a member of the General Synod. He sat on the Synod's Dioceses Commission.

He became one of the best-loved speakers in university Christian Unions, travelling hundreds of miles to speak at campus meetings regardless of other pressures. He was a trustee of the UCCF, whose students elected him president in 1987-88.

In 1985 Weston was invited to become diocesan director of ordinands and post-ordination training for Norwich diocese, where he worked alongside his friends Maurice Wood, Bishop of Norwich, and Timothy Dudley-Smith, Bishop of Thetford. During this period he also served as vicar of St Stephen's, Norwich.

After retiring to Thame in 1991, Weston continued to preach, in St Mary's, Thame, in its surrounding parishes, and also abroad. This passion never abated, and after nearly 60 years of ministry he preached for the final time just four months before he died.

He is survived by his wife Margaret, whom he married in 1954, and by his two sons and two daughters.

Canon Keith Weston, born July 30 1926, died February 5 2013

This was first published in The Telegraph on 17th February 2013

Donald G. Bompas (1933-1940) died 18/01/2013 aged 92. He was a Vice President of the OMT Society.

Charles F. Minifie (1955-1962) died 31/07/2012 following a short illness. After leaving Merchant Taylors' he became a Chartered Accountant and enjoyed a successful career. Charles lived locally and often talked to his family about the happy years he spent at the school.

Paul W. Graver (1951-1956) died 7/12/2012. He had been chairman of OMTCC and the Durrants Club. Allan Hawkey OMT writes: "Paul and I were from different generations, but knew each other well through our involvement with OMT cricket, where Paul was a player and then prominent club member, supporter and hard-working committee member for many years in many roles. He was a tremendous support to me in my time as Chairman of OMTCC - a very knowledgeable, wise and supportive person to have around, and he is sadly missed."

Barbara Lloyd, died 4/01/2013. Wife of the late Donald Lloyd, Manor of the Rose Housemaster 1958-1970 Mrs Lloyd was the last full time 'Housemaster's Wife' and in the early years did all the catering for 60 boys who had breakfast and evening meals in the dining room at the Manor.

Philip H. Lynch (1953-1958) died 12/12/2012 after a short spell in hospital aged 72. He lived in Clevedon, Avon.

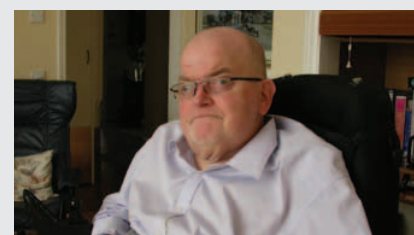
Reverend Father Malcolm D. Mullins (1953-1960) died 13/02/2013 aged 71. He worked overseas for many years as a missionary and for the past few years was Honorary Assistant Priest at the Parish Church of St George's Headstone, Harrow.

Alan J. Reid (1957-1963) died 19/01/2013. He lived in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

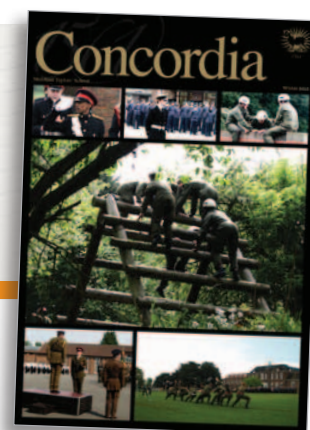
Geoff Shilling (1943-1947) died 9/04/2012 after a short illness.

Jeremy Warren (1995-2000) died 1/08/2012 aged 30 of a brain tumour. A full obituary will be published in the December edition of Concordia.

Paul Greene (1966-1972) died 22/02/2013 aged 59. Paul was one of the founding members of Phab. He had recently returned to the school for the 40th anniversary of Phab in 2011.



Letters to the editor



I was a Manor Boy from 1957 to 1961 then known as Ken Davies. When I was commissioned I added the double barrel to my name which makes looking me up in any records difficult! My father and his two brothers had been at the school in Charterhouse Square before the First World War. My father VKN Davies left the school in the summer of 1914 aged 17 to join The Artist Rifles. Subsequently he made a career in the Indian Army and died soon after the retreat from Burma in 1944. I was at the time 14 months old. My time at Sandy Lodge was greatly facilitated by support from The War Memorial Fund about which I know very little. I was however very interested to read what the Head Master had to say about bursaries. Without financial help I would not have been able to attend the school.

The letter on the penultimate page from Peter Bowen caught my eye. We must have been at school at the same time but I do not recognise the name. He questions whether room still exists at the school to educate the less academically inclined. I

I very much enjoy getting Concordia and once again the Tylorian. I have heard from a couple of friends ... the school seems so high powered these days I seriously wonder if many of my contemporaries would have got in if we were trying to today.

In about 1966 or so the OMT Society started to build a personal dossier on all the OMTs they were in contact with on a year by year basis. There were, I recall about two prints of the results, which did in some people's eyes serve a useful and even impressive purpose.

I also know that many did not respond because they did not think their achievements were good enough. Some of course went overboard and later felt embarrassed. Some recorded with justifiable pride that they had got a degree

do hope so. For various reasons I fell into that category and was still in the V Form at 17, struggling to pass 7 'O' Levels. I was supported and helped in my development by being made a House Prefect and a Sergeant in the CCF. On leaving school I joined the Metropolitan Police where I had a very full and satisfying career reaching the rank of Superintendent. I also managed a Short Service Commission in the Brigade of Gurkhas.

In my younger days I played rugby for the OMTs but for various reasons my membership has lapsed. I do however meet many OMTs at MT Company functions and have kept up with developments.

May I just put in a word of praise for the OMT Archivist, Jem Birch. I have been researching my father's life at the school and his subsequent enlistment. Jem has done some wonderful work for me trailing through old Tylorians which makes fascinating reading.

I much appreciate the publications. I shall pass on my copies to friends in the hope that they may send their sons and grandsons to Sandy Lodge.

Ken Neville-Davies (1957-1961)

at Cambridge or Oxford or St Andrews and had then done National Service, some becoming officers - as you would probably expect OMTs to do.

But one 'rebel' who was a year older than me put in 'Left School 1953. Went into the Army for 2 years and became a Lance Corporal.' It was a sort of protest vote. I think the index then withered on the vine

I have lived in Australia for 50 years and am an Australian citizen as one should be. I am proud of having been to MTS for five years and of having become a Freeman of the MTS Company some years ago.

If you can just continue to send me the Tylorian and Concordia, and I will enjoy both when they come with a good whisky and a measure of nostalgia.

Michael Hodgetts (1949-1954)

I was drawn to Peter Bowen's letter to the editor, as I followed a similar path through school and not reaching any academic heights. We had known each other at school but we were not in the same year. In 1985 I was living in Al Khobar in Saudi Arabia and my wife and I had been invited to play bridge with friends. We were paired at a table with an English couple from Guernsey. The gentleman said that he thought he knew me from somewhere but we couldn't work it out. We talked about stints in the West Indies and East Africa and found we had some friends in common in those territories, but could not recall ever meeting. We accepted that position over the next few weeks.

A month or so later I was in Dubai and played tennis with a business friend. We talked about schools and when I mentioned MTS one of his playing partners said that his brother Peter Bowen had gone there. I said I knew Peter but could not place him. His brother Jeremy then told me that Peter was now living and working in Al Khobar and it suddenly dawned on me that we had been playing bridge together in the previous weeks. You can imagine Peter's surprise when I asked him the following week at bridge, which house he had been in at school and he said to me 'you don't even know where I went to school'. I suggested MTS and Andrewes and a very funny and astonished expression spread across his face as he suddenly realised how we knew each other.

We didn't see an awful lot of each other after that as he moved to Dubai and I shortly went off to Paris. It's strange how paths cross fleetingly, but seeing his letter brought back these memories. Funny to think that we both had undistinguished careers at school but went on to have fulfilling lives.

Yours sincerely

Mike Patton (1956-1960)

Open Morning

September 21st 2013 10.00 - 12.30



- 2014 Registration:
 - 13+ June 30 2013
 - 11+ November 30 2013
 - 16+ December 31 2013
- Bursaries
- Academic, Art, Drama,
Music and Sport Scholarships

Getting here

- **Car** MTS is 15 minutes from the M1, the M25 and the A40
- **Coaches** Beaconsfield, Ealing, Harpenden, Harrow, Highgate, Mill Hill, Radlett, Stanmore
- **Transit** MTS is adjacent to Moor Park (Metropolitan Line)
Chiltern line trains change at Rickmansworth

www.mtsn.org.uk

Guided tours (last tour 11.30)
The Head Master speaks at
11.15 and 12.15

Please contact **Penny Wright, Admissions Secretary**
admissions@mtsn.org.uk +44(0)1923 845514
Merchant Taylors' School Northwood Middlesex HA6 2HT



Development Office
Merchant Taylors' School
Sandy Lodge, Northwood
Middlesex HA6 2HT
01923 845545
alumni@mtsn.org.uk
www.mtsn.org.uk