



MOREANA

THE ST. THOMAS MORE OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

On Thursday 7th May the Association's Annual General Meeting was held in the school Dining Hall.

This year, perhaps more than any other, there was vital business to consider, but only four members turned up!

Two of the four-man Executive have, after many years of dedication, stood down. Gareth Lewis has served this Association for 8 years, firstly as President from 2001-2004 and since then as Treasurer. Gerry Thomas had been the Membership Secretary for the same amount of time. So, having done their bit for Martyr and Country we wish them well and thank them for such devotion.

However, their departure means that two of the most important positions on the Executive are now vacant. We certainly need someone to look after the money and, as you will see from the much-reduced membership list on page 4 of this publication, we desperately need someone to take charge of driving up the membership.

Since 2007 all positions on the Executive have been open to ALL members (both past pupils and ex-members of staff).

The tasks are not particularly onerous—one very light-hearted meeting per month and some fresh ideas are all that's required!

Who knows how best to serve this esteemed Association? There is certainly not a rigid formula that any incumbent must stick to. It may be that some of our younger members will have the brightest and freshest ways to move us into the second decade of this new millennium. It may be that the wise heads on the shoul-

ders of former teachers will offer tried and tested methods.

One thing is for sure, if we wish the Association to continue then we must do something to achieve this.

None of us should simply stand-by and wait for the other guy to step up to the plate, because the "other guy" will be doing exactly the same.

We have a good spread of ages and experience amongst our membership. For the first four years of its existence the Association was run by, predominantly, leavers from the 1970s. More recently it has been the turn of

those from the 1960s (with a little help from the 1980s). Both sets had their merits.

There are precious few members from the 1990s and 2000s so we can't expect them to necessarily take-up the gauntlet. But what we do need are ways of attracting more members from these eras.

So, if you've got just a little bit of time, a few ideas, and plenty of enthusiasm please do contact the address at the bottom of this page. Under the enthusiastic leadership of our President, Kevin Thomas, you'll be part of the team that moves us onwards and upwards.

MEMORIAL MASS AND OTHER MATTERS

Friday 19th June is the **NEW** date for this year's Memorial Mass to be held, as usual, in the school.

As you will read on the back page of this edition of *Moreana*, there will be at least another two names to be added to the list of deceased that we traditionally read out during the Mass.

Not only is it a time for recollection and remembrance, it is also a time for the inauguration of the President and is always followed by a lavish buffet provided by this esteemed Association free of charge for all those who attend.

Bring your wives and girlfriends and enjoy the chance for a good old natter over a few beers, some wine and plate-loads of food after the serious business of the evening.

Mass will commence at **8.00pm**.

The other main social activity of the year for this Association is the **Old Boys' Dinner** which, this year, will be held on **Saturday 24th October**, again in the school.

Full details, menus and costs have yet to be announced, but please clear your diary in anticipation of what is usually a fun and alcohol-fuelled evening.

COPING WITH COPLEY

*In early April this intrepid Editor bumped into fellow Association member Richard Copley (1977). As many of you will know, Richard has been "under the doctor" since 2007 and is currently unable to work due to his condition. One thing led to another during the course of our chat and I casually mentioned that if he had time on his hands then, perhaps, he might be willing to submit an article or two for a future *Moreana* (see my article *You Never Write on page 3*), to which he casually directed me to his website blog.*

Having now surfed my way through his many writings I am left seriously impressed not only by the cheerfulness and courage with which he is meeting his illness, but also his prolific prose.

He kindly gave me permission to pilfer whatever I wanted, but not wanting to steal his thunder I have merely scratched the surface of a very interesting and uplifting account of his life at this uncertain time.

The following (very) abridged extract is taken from the first of his blogs in July 2007 and the most recent in March 2009. For the full account I do most earnestly recommend that you visit his site.....

"I was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma at the end of March 2007. A month later I had the right kidney removed together with the original lump behind my right ear and a small lump on my scrotum (too much

information I know!). An additional lump was also found on my head a couple of weeks later and was removed.

The other day I went on a hunt in the loft with the sole purpose of finding the thousands of photos and negatives that I have shot from the age of 7. From the earliest fuzzy black and white shots taken on an already aging Ilford camera to the professional photos taken in the eighties.

Photography was the perfect diversion from school work and the tedious lunch breaks. I would hide in the purpose built school darkroom honing my skills in total darkness with only a radio to keep me company. Not being a popular pastime I revelled in the fact that I had the only key to the place to enter and leave as I wished. There in the gloom amongst the acrid smelling chemistry I was comfortable. No one taught me what to do in those days, but I suppose I have always been driven to self study and experimentation when circumstances demand, later of course completing my Pilot Licences in the same way. Just like the stereotypical lab depicted by Hollywood I would have the room bathed in red light, with prints hanging up to dry on criss-crossed washing lines. Those magical solutions cast a spell on me to last a lifetime.

So what of these photos? Well, for those of you who have found me on [Facebook](#) will know, I have



Richard, 3rd from right, back row in 1974

found some cracking shots of me as a teenager. As we speak I have just calibrated the fancy scanner of mine and aim to archive everything I have ever shot worth a look. The Ministry of Defence however have most of the professional stuff. You will be missing the self portrait of me sitting on a thousand pound sea mine with a brush fire all around me... the spectacular things we did to one of Her Majesty's frigates and the courageous things our crash test dummies went through. Numerous aircraft were also destroyed (sniff) but fortunately long after the famous 65 Spitfires were trashed in 1957! Oh, and photos of me with permed and dyed hair. The latter has the highest security clearance of the lot. I could show you.....but then I would have to kill you.

I have to admit to having a great time at work, if you could call it that for most of the time. Who else gets to drive around in tanks and helicopters and blow things up...damn that Berlin Wall coming down and ruining my fun! Who else can say that

about their entire working life? Apart from the odd night flying freight in less than safe conditions when I had bicycle clips on my trousers and a short prayer on my lips, I have always had a grin on my face. Even now!

So, what have I been doing about my health this last month? Finally the medics have stopped the ridiculous weight and tiredness issues caused by my thyroid taking a break. Now we have reached a point where I actually feel like exerting myself...look out the London 2009 10K Run! This time round I'd have to lose a couple of stone as well as make the grade.

Scans come and go. The last one a month ago kept my oncologist happy as I have once again stabilised with some evidence that my body is fighting the tumours independently of the drugs. So, good news there.

I'm thankful that the only evidence most people see of my condition is my grabbing my back occasionally as a nerve gets trapped. But the Paracetamol is never far away and an hour or so later I'm fit for anything. I'm still a fraud in my eyes.

There is still no chance of going anywhere near an aircraft and let's face it, the aviation market is in turmoil with most of my friends working abroad after the collapse of so many airlines last summer. I still potter about doing the odd photographic job and do a platinum service in housekeeping.

Do I want a real job? I was considering that question the other day and with the jobs on the market at the moment I would simply not benefit from a sense of worth. It would have to be flexible to enable me to attend all of my medical appointments and rewarding in that I would feel that it was a worthwhile use of my precious time because for sure there is no money out there to give you a sense of financial worth. Charity work comes to mind and I will undoubtedly find an outlet somewhere to justify my existence as a burden on the State.

To surmise therefore I offer you my thanks for wanting to know about me. I am usually oblivious but always humbled at your caring natures and need to know more about me. I guess I just get embarrassed. I remain healthy enough to do practically everything I used to do, except of course to fly an airplane. As I progress through the illness I am of course just naturally getting older. When you next notice my odd grey hair or tired look, it is probably just because I am a tired, greying, middle aged, grumpy old sod!"

YOU NEVER WRITE (OR EVEN E-MAIL)

The initial idea of this esteemed publication was for it to be a mouth-piece for both the Executive and the members of the Old Boys' Association.

We envisaged that it would be made up of articles submitted by members supplemented by announcements and reports from the Executive.

As always the difference between what was planned and what actually transpires is considerable.

There have been peaks and troughs as far as members' submissions are concerned. We've had articles about life in the Royal Navy, visits to Elvis' home and floods in Cornwall to name but three. But the truth of the matter is that such submissions are becoming rarer and rarer.

Very early on it became apparent that if we were to produce *Moreana* on a quarterly basis as originally planned then the Editor would have to source and research the stories himself!

Sadly after 11 years I seem to have run clean-out of ideas, hence the long delay in getting this edition out to you.

Perhaps it is now time for a fresh approach. If you feel that you would like to take on the job of editing (and writing) *Moreana* please give it some thought!

DINNER TIME LAST YEAR

It seems a long time ago now (perhaps because it is) but last year's Old Boys' Dinner was held on 25th October and featured former Biology teacher and Deputy Headmaster John Askew giving a very interesting talk on jazz—complete with audio-aids!

If you were there, relive the occasion with this selection of pics, if you weren't then see what you missed!

Don't forget this year's dinner will be on **Saturday 24th October**.



MEMBERSHIP AS AT MARCH 2009

| | | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|------|--|
| 1961 | Graham Lewis | 1969 | Chris McHale | 1977 | Richard Copley Martin Hodson John Judge |
| 1962 | John Lewis | 1971 | Bernie Brooker Mike Donovan | 1978 | Kevin Thomas |
| 1963 | John Bowman John Sheehy | 1972 | Paul Culleton David Thompson | 1979 | Paul Clarke Paul Driscoll David O'Ryan Sean Tyrie |
| 1964 | John Griffiths Ronald Patchett | 1974 | Ray Allum Paul McArdle | 1980 | Martin McKeown |
| 1965 | Brian Dalton Terry Knights | 1975 | Eamon Day David Ekers Keith Exley John MacDermott Andrew McGregor Gerry Thomas | 1981 | Sean Conlon |
| 1966 | Patrick Clancy Bill Clegg Paul Hutchinson Gareth Lewis Paul Wenham | 1976 | Trevor Barr Laurence Blainey John Chambers Guy Francke Clive Knight Andrew McWilliam Simon Ravinet John Todryk James Tyrie | 1982 | Mark Harvey |
| 1967 | Tony Cane Paul Clancy Glen Sweeney Mike Thompson | | | 1983 | Richard Allard Anthony Crowley |
| 1968 | Martin Duggan Geoffrey Lewis | | | 1984 | Michael Barry Stuart Humfrey |

MARTIN PAINTS HIS FUTURE

Martin Sullivan (1976) has has recently taken the opportunity to re-train as a City & Guilds qualified decorator, after many years as a car designer.

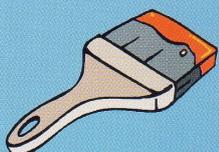
We're pleased to be able to include his business card here and even more delighted that he is of-

fering a 10% discount to all members.

This is perhaps just one way in which this Association and this publication could benefit Old Boys. If you are starting a new business just let us know at the address on the front page and we'll do what we can to include a mention in future editions.

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HATCHES, MATCHES & DESPATCHES

It is with great sadness that we must, this issue, report the deaths of not one, but two past pupils, both of whom left in recent years!

Lara Plewa left the school in 2007 after completing her A-levels and was studying at university when she died in February this year. To our knowledge she is the first female past pupil of STM to pass away.

In April, many members may have read the tragic story in the local and national press of the death of Matthew Dear who also left the school in 2007 and was training to gain admission to the Royal Marines.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of both Lara and Matthew. Their names will, of course, be added to list of deceased to be remembered every year at our Memorial Mass.

May they Rest in Peace.

On a much brighter and happier note we are delighted for once to be able to provide news of a birth amongst our membership!

Former Membership Secretary Damian Dillion and his wife Suchi become the proud parents of a baby boy when Suchi gave birth to Ankush Thomas Brian Dillon on Good Friday morning.

We offer them both our congratulations.

| | |
|------|---|
| 1985 | Tim Allard |
| 1987 | Martin Corr Martin Diggins Steven Hurren |
| 1989 | Damian Dillon Justin Hennessey Paul Lynch |
| 1990 | Christopher Hull |
| 1995 | Paul Bending |
| 1997 | Jonathan Holland |
| 2000 | Daniel Kelly |
| 2001 | Chris Thompson |
| H/M | Peter Travis Chaplain Rev. Kevin Hale Henry Helen Wigmore |
| F/T | John Askew |
| F/T | Ian Britt |
| F/T | Tom Kennedy |
| F/T | David Milne |
| F/T | Rev. David Peck |