



MOREANA

THE ST. THOMAS MORE OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

DON'T MISS THE DINNER



Saturday 4th February should be a date that is indelibly marked in your diaries since that is the date of this year's Old Boys' Dinner.

Once again the banquet will be held in the school Dining Hall, but if you've never been before don't let your memories of school dinners put you off. The meal will consist of a five-course menu and every single one held at the school has met with nothing but high praise from those who've attended.



This year's speaker will be **David O'Ryan (1979)** who will be regaling us with tales of derring-do on the High Seas as he recounts his experiences as a participant in the Round-The-World Yacht Race.

The menu will consist of:-

Seafood Cocktail with crab, prawns and smoked salmon

Spicy Parsnip Soup with roll & butter

Roast Beef
with
Roast Potatoes
Roast Parsnips
Cauliflower Cheese
Peas
Carrots
Brussel sprouts

Sticky Toffee Pudding

Cheeseboard

Coffee and Chocolates

The cost for this evening of culinary delights will be a mere **£20.00** for members of this esteemed Association.



Old Boys who are not members are also welcome and the cost to them will be **£25.00**.

So hesitate no longer, just grab those cheque books and make one out to *St Thomas More Old Boys Association* just as soon as is humanly possible, then pop it in the post to the address below.

Don't forget... encourage those Old Boys that you know who are not members to attend since they, unlike you, will not be getting this esteemed publication and will thank you

for the tip-off.

Our numbers are usually in the mid-thirties to early-forties. Let see if this year we can't top fifty!

CHECK-OUT OUR FACEBOOK SITE



Despite managing to break a leg whilst playing golf [Don't ask! - Ed], our hard-pressed Membership Secretary Liam Rand has been busy beaver away deciphering the techno-speak of the younger generation and has succeeded in creating a Facebook site for this esteemed Association.

Most members will, I am sure, be overjoyed at this opportunity to further commune in cyber-space, but there will, no doubt, be those to whom such things are as impenetrable as French vocabulary or the mysteries of trigonometry!

Nevertheless, don't let such things put you off trying. Just go to **St. Thomas More Old Boys' Association** on Facebook and everything should become clear. Your ideas and suggestions will be gratefully received I'm sure!

LIVING AS AN ALIEN

A number of Old Boys no longer live in the UK and we have been fortunate enough to receive the following despatch from our roving reporter in Austria—none other than ex-Social Secretary Glen Sweeney...

I have known many people whose dream it was to live somewhere else other than the UK. The first place that springs to mind is of course Spain, but in my years of travelling and in the many places I have visited I have invariably found a few Brits doggedly flying the flag and ironically, sustaining a very British way of life despite residing in foreign climes.

Personally it was never a dream of mine either to leave the UK or for that matter to live in Austria. It was circumstance that brought me to this land-locked central European country and those circumstances were brought about by a long train of events, which are not the main theme of this article and therefore I will not burden you with them just now.

A friend once told me that wherever you live away from the UK, you will always be a foreigner. I am not sure I totally agree but one major factor in feeling alienated from the local community is language. This is not just the spoken word, which is bad enough, but in other ways that I personally did not anticipate.

When you do relocate to another country the first thing you encounter is bu-



reaucracy, and of course not only all the forms are in German but the officials who stamp them do not, or will not, admit to speaking English. So, immediately you are reliant on another person to translate. This inflicts a great burden of time and effort on the poor soul who has been kind enough to volunteer and it becomes a real saga going back and forth from one official office to another.

And then the simplest of things: For instance let's go to the local DIY. What is gloss paint called? How do I identify brush cleaner? Get the message? Then there are the instructions to decipher on any product you purchase - of course, they're in German. I have spent five years now trying to get a grip of this language and I have to tell you it isn't easy and I am still struggling with it.

Another aspect of not speaking the local language is the isolation you

begin to feel because you cannot communicate with the world around you on a day-to-day basis. It is virtually impossible to use the telephone, either to make or receive calls, because of the language and local dialect. Making enquiries in shops normally goes no further than: "*Sprechen Sie Englisch?*" "*Nein*". In the city centre it's not such a problem but drift into the suburbs or worse the country and you cannot take for granted a command of English from anybody you may come across. And why should you, it is their country and their language after all.

When I first arrived here in Vienna I was almost daily being asked if I missed the UK, well I have to admit yes and no. Yes I did miss my friends, and all that was familiar to me, but equally I was occupied by a new life, a new adventure here in Austria. However, I can now understand the term 'homesick'. It is a form of

pinning for everything that is familiar.

When you join a world where all is totally unfamiliar it is such an effort, because instead of knowing exactly where to go for whatever you require, acquiring anything in such an unfamiliar environment is an uphill struggle and you just long to know what to get and where to go for it.

I was lucky in that I had a loving wife, who I had recently married, and who speaks perfect German and already had a comfortable home established in the suburbs of Vienna. I had previously been labelled a lifetime bachelor; this is not true, I just took a long time and had a good time waiting to find the right one. So, because of Alison, for me the transition was, let's say, easier. I think that is why whenever anybody moves to an alien environment alone, they quickly find people of their own nationality to link to and identify with. I have to admit I avoided joining an ex-pat

community as I did not want to isolate myself from Austria, Austrians and their culture (especially their traditions - read on).

One aspect that people do not consider, or are unaware of, is when you move away from your previous life you leave behind your personal identity, you lose who you are and you have to establish your own, and sometimes different, personality anew amongst a completely different community. This of course can be a good or bad thing, but if you are not aware of it this loss of identity can undermine who you are.

So back to me, having established myself in Austria and in the hope of finding employment in my profession as a corporate event manager I set about approaching the many event management companies based here. The city itself is 'event city', there is always something going on—a celebration, a festival, a show, a parade—indeed the Austrians celebrate just about anything and everything. But sadly in this vibrant event-full city I could not get the locals to break ranks and offer me work. It was impossible. I could not

find full-time, part-time or freelance employment anywhere regardless of my years of global experience organising major corporate events. Since that time I have heard many comments about the incestuous nature of Austrian business and I remain amazed at their narrow scope of business acumen in this ever-changing and fast shrinking commercial world. The Austrians remain a little insular and have yet to embrace change itself yet alone the speed of change in an accelerating global business community.

Eventually after three years I found work as a Native Speaker Teacher, teaching English in the Viennese school system. It was a great cultural and professional change for me but I have come to enjoy this job and find it fulfilling and rewarding. I am working with kids of around 10 years of age, which is Year 4 or 5 for those of you familiar with the modern year system. I must say although I have never had children of my own I thoroughly enjoy mixing with this age group—they are multi-cultural, enthusiastic, en-

ergetic, funny and some times surprisingly mature.

Although completely exhausting for an old duffer like me, in one year I see approximately 900 kids, it is heart-warming to see these wonderful young people and their flowering personalities. But do they ware you out?

Culturally the UK and Austria are worlds apart, although only 1,000 miles away we are totally different people. However there are two factors that do undoubtedly link us, and they are food and drink. The Austrians love to socialise, albeit on a slightly varied format—they do not have 'The Pub' as we know it, instead they meet regularly as groups of friends or family in a restaurant, gasthaus or heuriger (a type of wine pub with food). They love to eat, drink and chat, it is very much part of the social tradition and one that I am not averse to participating in myself.

Personally I also like to walk and ski so this country, that offers an abundance of both, is an ideal place for me and my wife. And to complement that, just about anywhere you go there is a hostelry of one sort or another, so I am able to maintain the very best local traditions, if you see what I mean.

One of my other passions is travel and being so centrally located in Europe it is just a short hop, by road, rail or air, not only to the other regions of Austria, but also Italy,

Switzerland, Germany, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia and so on.

Let me finish by saying that moving to another country is an upheaval, it certainly is not plain sailing and you should be ready for a few frustrations here and there. Also wherever you live you are always going to experience surprise costs and unwanted problems, the same as you do living in the UK after all. I certainly have no regrets but I would add that if any of you are contemplating a move from the UK then do learn the local language, at least the basics. Concentrate on how to say specific things and don't get bogged down with grammar.

Last but certainly not least make sure you have adequate funds to survive for a number of years and/or secure contracted employment. You may find yourself having to adapt to opportunities that take you away from your original plans but it is important to adapt to the needs of the moment, so don't be too stubborn or too proud to move your own goal posts.

And I must tell you emphatically: 'The grass isn't always greener!'

All the best to you from Vienna and if any of you are visiting then please feel free to contact me and I will help and or advise if I can.

Glen Sweeney
gleneventsupport@chello.at

Perhaps other ex-pat members might like to share their experiences with us?
- Ed



MEMBERSHIP AS AT JAN 2012

MEMBERSHIP AS AT JAN 2012			Paul Marsh Chris McHale	Richard Copley Martin Hodson John Judge Liam Rand	1989	Damian Dillon Justin Hennessey Paul Lynch	
1961	Graham Lewis	1971	Bernie Brooker Mike Donovan Kevin Flynn	1978	Kevin Thomas	1990	Christopher Hull
1962	Michael Hughes John Lewis	1972	Paul Culleton David Thompson	1979	Paul Clarke Paul Driscoll David O'Ryan Sean Tyrie	1995	Paul Bending
1963	John Bowman John Sheehy	1973	Phil Mahoney			2000	Daniel Kelly (Chpln)
1964	John Griffiths Ronald Patchett	1974	Paul McArdle	1980	Sean Leggett Martin McKeown Nial O'Callaghan	2001	Chris Thompson
1965	Brian Dalton Terry Knights	1975	Eamon Day David Ekers Keith Exley John McDermot Andrew McGregor Gerry Thomas	1981	Sean Conlon	2011	Dale Claridge
1966	Martyn Barker Patrick Clancy Bill Clegg Paul Hutchinson Paul Wenham			1982	Mark Harvey	FT	Ian Britt
						FT	Dominick Fanning
						FT	Tom Kennedy
				1983	Richard Allard Anthony Crowley	FT	David Milne
						FT	John O'Connell*
1967	Tony Cane Paul Clancy Glen Sweeney Mike Thompson	1976	Laurence Blainey John Chambers Guy Francke Clive Knight Andrew McWilliam Simon Ravinet Martin Sullivan John Todryk James Tyrie	1984	Michael Barry Mark Denton Stuart Humfrey	FT	David Finnigan
						FT	John Askew
				1985	Tim Allard	H/M	Peter Travis
1968	Martin Duggan Geoffrey Lewis					Hon	Jan Lewis Helen Wigmore
				1987	Martin Corr Martin Diggines Steven Hurren		
1969	Peter David	1977	John Cobbold				

*John O'Connell is currently a member of staff having previously left.

HE'S A POET...AND HE KNOWS IT!

*Diligent readers of this esteemed publication will recall an article about Glen Sweeney's book of poetry and lyrics—**Silent Voices**.*

Well this humble editor was delighted to receive a copy of the book from Glen himself and has been impressed by the content.

So much so, that I felt it incumbent upon me to share with you one of the poems contained within the book.

If nothing else, it teaches us that Glen must have paid some attention to Dominick Fanning's English lessons all those years ago...

YOUTH

Youth, unreachable youth
I see you there courageous but naïve
Riding the crest of a wave
It is your time, go with it, run wild, run free
let nothing hinder your lust for life
Discover your yourself within it

But still, be aware of the waves
that have already found the shore
Crashing blindly from their illusions of themselves
Into the reality of their own destiny
Absorbed by the ever thirsty sands of fate

Know sweet children of the day
of the raging surf that will follow even you
Now still water, but already stirring within the loins of your own futures
The surging flow of time waiting, waiting patiently to push you
Into the inescapable depths of truth

No matter how fast we run
or how far we reach reality gains on us slowly
Then, truth reigns over us all

When Glen left the school in 1967 Dominick told him that "he could be whatever he wanted to be."

It is our hope that, in reading this, our former Deputy (and later) Headmaster, will see in the fruits of Glen's labours something of the results of his own.

HATCHES, MATCHES & DESPATCHES

It is a delight this edition to be including a "hatch"...

Our congratulations go to Matt Hardiman (who left the school in 1999) and his wife Amy on the arrival of their healthy son Corban Matthew born on 3rd January.

Matt is now Pupil Progress Director at the old place and Amy teaches in the science department.