



# MOREANA

THE ST. THOMAS MORE OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## EATING AGAIN

Around three dozens members enjoyed a marvellous four-course dinner at the Annual Old Boys' Dinner on the last Saturday in October.

Many regulars were joined by quite a few new faces and participated in the traditional playing of Intercourse Bingo so ably administered by John Cobbold.



Paul Driscoll made the speech this year on his experiences in meeting a variety of celebrities in the theatre world.

We were also delighted to welcome new Headmaster Peter Travis to his first Old Boys' Dinner and he

kindly gave a speech outlining some of his priorities and objectives.



## HELP WANTED!

Help is needed maintaining the Old Boys website!

Would you be willing to take over the maintenance and upkeep of our Association website which needs attention. Due to other commitments, Damian can no longer produce updates for the website, and we need someone who is willing to put in a small amount of time on a monthly basis to maintain the site as needed.

Please email the Association at [stm.oldboys@btopenword](mailto:stm.oldboys@btopenword).

## PAUL GRACES GRACELAND

*From time to time this hard-pressed editor makes an impassioned plea to all you gentle readers for articles with which to fill these glorious pages. Most of the time this plea falls on stoney ground. But just occasionally it does land on fertile soil and we are delighted to be able to now run a two-part submission from that sterling Old Boy Paul Lynch (1989) who gives us this fascinating account of his visit to the home of Elvis*

Last April I embarked upon yet another trip to the USA. This time, as a change from the big cities, I visited the Old South taking in the following locations; New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Natchez, Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Atlanta, Savannah and Orlando.

There were many highlights on this trip. One that was of particular interest was our visit to Graceland, the home and resting place of the Late Great Elvis Presley.

I've always liked Elvis

Presley's music, and shared a lot of the same interests as him, particularly in the diet department. While there I did actually try a fried peanut butter and banana sandwich, mmm yummy I'll have 2 please. Not the healthiest of snacks, but still when in Rome.

Graceland is a classic 1930's Tennessee Ranch. It represents typical upper class 1970's decor with a few other Presley style surprises thrown in for good measure. Of particular interest were: the TV Room, the Jungle

Room, Private Planes and the Racquetball room. I will describe these in more detail shortly.

Elvis loved to be surrounded by people, and constantly entertained his friends and family at his home, often meeting fans at the gates to sign autographs. He had a close-knit group of friends known as "The Memphis Mafia". He was very generous with his wealth and often bought cars, houses and other gifts for his loved ones.

*Continued on page 3...*  
Once he famously on the

## MEET THE NEW MAN

*Having given him three months to get his feet under the desk we thought that now was the time to interview the new Headmaster of our old school. With his usual impeccable manners Peter Travis agreed to the ordeal and is now believed to be recovering well (and probably seeking legal advice).*

Peter has been a teacher for about 24 years and, of course, is no stranger to STM since he has spent the last 6 years as Deputy Headmaster of the place. Prior to that he was Head of RE at St. John Payne school in Chelmsford (the previous and current Head of which are both ex-members of STM staff!). He is married to Karen and they have two young daughters aged 12 and 8, so he is still experiencing school life from both sides of the fence!

He gives the impression of calm and thorough preparation in both his mannerisms and in his answers to our questions and projects an air of pleasant courtesy. As we drunk our coffee (I was even offered the choice of mug or cup!) I asked what had impressed him at STM above other schools in which he has worked.

"The friendly atmosphere," he responded almost immediately, continuing, "and the very real commitment to learning by encouraging pupils to



do their best in all areas. The Christian nature of the school is self-evident and, indeed, this is common to many Catholic schools, but there is certainly a great emphasis at STM on developing all of one's talents. At the same time Catholic schools are not factories - there is a humanity about them and at STM there is a friendliness and comfortable feel about the place even though there is very serious business taking place.

"We are also dedicated to the idea that we will not give up on anyone - everyone is important. At STM care and support is given to everyone and difficulties taken account of. We are firm in our purpose so that we don't deviate from what we are about, but we provide an opportunity or invitation to progress."

When asked what he considered to be the main changes that have occurred at STM since he joined in 1998 (coincidentally the year in which our esteemed Association was founded), he thought for a moment before suggesting, "Obviously the actual fab-

ric of the building has been transformed tremendously, but the pastoral support systems have also developed considerably in the last 6 years. There has also been development of teaching and learning practice within the school and the associated rapid rise in examination results."

Warming to the subject he continued, "The amount and variety of extra curricula activity has increased which, when you consider that it is all voluntary on the part of the staff, shows commitment and, perhaps, is another reason why STM is special. Yet with all of this change most of our staff still believe that the role of a teacher has a vocational element to it and this is reflected throughout the life of the school."

Turning now to the future under his leadership, Peter clearly has his own vision of how the school should develop and he outlined it as follows:- "I want us to develop further the ethos of culture and learning and to nurture a greater love of learning amongst the pu-

pils - for pupils to be excited by their subject through intellectual enquiry and discussion/debate."

Acknowledging the fine traditions of the school, Peter continued, "In essence improving what we already do by providing the best education for each and every child of all ability. We should strive to capture their attention and encourage them to demand things of us.

"I want to see us develop further the specialist status (ICT & Maths) of the school using the latest technology to improve the teaching that takes place." He is quick to add, "This is not to say that traditional methods are irrelevant, but a mixture of the two should be achieved."

Moving away from the core educational activities of the school Peter also wants to see further development of the pastoral and academic support systems that STM currently has in operation and would expect the school to remain at the current size. "We have about 900 pupils here with a five form entry at Year 7 [*1<sup>st</sup> Year to many of us - Ed*], but I would expect the 6<sup>th</sup> form to continue to grow through a combination of more pupils staying-on together with an increase in the number of pupils who choose to join us at Year 12 because what we have here is special."

Peter clearly has a great interest in the pastoral as well as the educational



and management roles of a Headmaster which, perhaps, is not surprising given his RE teacher background. "My degree is actually in Philosophy and Sociology," he told me, "but I have always been interested in religion both as a Catholic and intellectually. I became a teacher because of the excitement that comes from the discovery and exploration of questions."

His background in Philosophy will, he believes, assist greatly in his new role as Headmaster. "Philosophy asks two questions: (1) Is something coherent? and (2) is it consistent? In other words what are we trying to achieve and do our actions reflect that ambition? My RE experience underlines the basic message of Christian love - wanting what is best for everyone and the individual. Together both of these disciplines provide me with patience and a desire to work with and converse with children."

Having set himself some clear and worthy goals for the development of the school and its pupils I wondered if he had the time or space to consider the part that this esteemed Association might play. "I want to see the Old Boys' Association flourish, not just for itself but also as a means by which it might contribute to the school. For instance a number of Old Boys already accompany the school on trips and at least 2 are now Governors."

"I believe continuity is important as is a sense of tradition and I am delighted that the stuffiness that can so often accompany tradition is definitely not present at STM. Instead we have the much more positive manifestation of pride. Pride in both the school itself and what it is achieving and I believe that the Old Boys' Association builds on that very strength."

*We are sure that all members will wish to pass on to Peter our very best wishes for success and enjoyment in his new role and we look forward to meeting and working with him over the coming years.*

### HOW THEY DOIN'

In his first week as Headmaster Peter Travis was able to report that the school had, once again, achieved excellent exam results.

78% of pupils sitting GCSE's had gained 5 or more at A\*-C, with two pupils achieving 10 A-grades or higher!

Those taking A-levels also fared well scoring, on average, three grade C passes. All pupils wishing to go on to university secured places, and this year's Lower Sixth has the highest intake ever at 125.

GRACELAND continued...



spur of the moment decided to buy several Harley Davidson Motorcycles for himself and friends to ride to Miami on to do some partying. When it came time to return home they didn't fancy the long ride, so instead they chartered a passenger plane to fly home on, leaving the motorcycles on the beach and giving the keys to several lucky fans they had met.

In his earlier years, Elvis had been quite a sportsman; he enjoyed playing football and racquetball, did Karate, rode horses and worked out. Although he enjoyed his food, he didn't drink alcohol, nor use recreational drugs, but did enjoy the occasional cigar. He also collected police badges, firearms and jewellery, and enjoyed reading and listening to all sorts of music. Elvis also loved animals and had many dogs, cats and horses over the years.

The public can tour most of the Graceland ranch, but certain areas are excluded due to tour traffic logistics. Also restricted is the second floor in the main house.

Elvis rarely let people go upstairs to the first floor as he considered it to be his own private kingdom, and this has been respected to this very day by one and all. Elvis would have welcomed visitors at the bottom of the stairs, or in the front lounge. Staying guests would sleep in guestrooms located elsewhere within the grounds of the property. According to the records the upper level contains many rooms. Those of particular use by Elvis and family were two bedrooms, perhaps Priscilla's, also a private bathroom each, a playroom for Lisa Marie, walk-in wardrobes and Elvis's private office.

Many items and clothing from the upstairs rooms are displayed elsewhere on the tour. Graceland is still home to Lisa Marie who stays there when returning to Memphis mainly for live performances. This is another reason why you're not allowed upstairs.

*Concludes next issue...*

## MEMBERSHIP as at 30th NOV 2005

1961 Graham Lewis  
1962 Michael Hughes  
John Lewis  
1963 John Bowman  
Frank Daley  
Tony Howlett  
John Sheehy  
1964 John Griffiths  
Ron Patchett  
1965 Terry Knights  
Brian Dalton  
1966 Martyn Barker  
Patrick Clancy  
Bill Clegg  
Paul Hutchinson  
Gareth Lewis  
Paul Wenham  
1967 Tony Cane  
Paul Clancy  
Glen Sweeney  
Mike Thompson  
1968 Geoffrey Lewis  
Martin Duggan  
1969 Peter David  
Paul Marsh  
Chris Mchale  
1971 Bernie Brooker  
Mike Donovan  
Kevin Flynn  
Brendan J Foy  
Nigel Hurley  
Robert Murphy  
Charlie Sheppard

1972 Paul Culleton  
Tony Imossi  
David Thompson  
1973 Martin Carroll  
Michael Glen  
Phil Mahoney  
Simon Millyard  
1974 Ray Allum  
Nick Cousins  
Paul McArdle  
Victor Peretti  
1975 Eamon Day  
David Ekers  
Keith Exley  
Christopher Fairchild  
Guy Franke  
John MacDermott  
Andrew McGreg-  
or  
Kevin O'Hanlon  
Andy (Guy) Thomas  
Gerry Thomas  
1976 Trevor Barr  
Laurence Blainey  
John Chambers  
Tony Harmon  
Clive Knight  
Andrew McWilliam  
Simon Ravinet  
Martin Sullivan  
John Todryk  
Jim Tyrie  
1977 John Cobbold  
Richard Copley  
Martin Hodson

John Judge  
1978 Richard Clegg  
Kevin Thomas  
1979 Paul Clarke  
Paul Driscoll  
David Kitchens  
David O'Ryan  
Tony Parsad  
Sean Tyrie  
1980 Paul Glynn  
Sean Leggett  
Martin McKeown  
Nial O'Callaghan  
1981 Richard Baker  
Sean Conlon  
1982 Sean Corr  
Mark Harvey  
Michael Mullally  
1983 Richard Allard  
Anthony Crowley  
1984 Michael Barry  
Stuart Humphrey  
1985 Tim Allard  
1986 Paul Cotgrove  
Alan Martin  
1987 Martin Corr  
Martin Diggines  
Christopher Hall  
Steven Hurren  
1989 Paul Baynes  
Damian Dillon  
Justin Hennessey  
Paul Lynch  
Brian Martin  
1990 Christopher Hull

Stuart Saggars  
1991 Graham Diggines  
1995 Paul Bending  
Douglas Walter  
1997 Elliot Clark  
2000 Daniel Kelly  
2001 Chris Thompson  
2003 Chris Barker  
Andrew Cooper  
Sean Perrotton  
James Smith  
Alison Walker  
2004 Liam Dean  
Michael Gilham  
Thomas Grant  
James O'sullivan  
Peter Travis  
Rev. Kevin Hale  
John Askew  
Ian Britt  
D Fanning  
David Finnigan  
Richard Jarman  
Elsie Kemp  
Tom Kennedy  
John O'Connell  
Rev. David Peck  
D P McGregor

### LET US KNOW...

If you change address  
(or e-mail address)  
please be sure to let us  
know...

## WHAT DO OTHERS THINK?

It's almost taken for granted by most, if not all, members of this Association that STM was a pretty good school in our day, whenever that was.

But what do those connected with the old place today think of it?

Well this esteemed publication has obtained details of the results from a recent Parental Survey that shed light on this subject.

Amongst other things,

100% felt that the school is well led and managed and that it was encouraging their child to be a good citizen!

All of the other questions gained positive results of 90% or higher and included such things as: **My child ... enjoys school... is making good progress because the teaching is good... is safe and well-cared for...is being prepared for the world of work and that the school ...encourages religious growth.**

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