



MOREANA

THE ST. THOMAS MORE OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

FOOD & DRINK

Saturday 18th October saw 42 members attend this year's Old Boys' Dinner. The largest number ever! Even more remarkable was the age range. As usual the 1960's and 70's were well represented with a smattering of members from the 1980's, but this year we saw a small contingent from recent times. This has got to be applauded and encouraged if the Association is to thrive and we congratulate those younger members on making the effort to attend.

Congratulations must also go to those who travelled any distance to attend. While some of us might consider it praiseworthy for members to travel from other counties, or even from other countries, it certainly takes dedication to journey from not only other continents but also other hemispheres! This is exactly what Robert Murphy (1971) did - joining us all the way from Australia!

Everyone present certainly seemed to have a good time and, judging by the few unopened



bottles that remained at the end of the evening, partook of refreshments fairly liberally!

Stalwart John Cobbold again refereed the intercourse bingo and made sure that no-one was allowed to ignore the opportunity to part with some cash. Towards the latter games it was noticeable that those members primarily responsible for the imbibing referred to earlier seemed only too delighted to be knocked out in the early stages and permitted to sit down before they fell down!

Paul Wenham (1966) gave the talk this year about his experiences in the catering trade. Paul was only at the school for a reasonably brief period of time and completed his

education further north! However he praised the sporting facilities at STM (in which he excelled) and recalled his disappointment that his new school didn't offer anything comparable. Clearly fond memories there.

Paul's career has led him into running the catering operations at a number of top London clubs and he has been presented to Royalty in the course of his duties (a certain history teacher was seen to turn a noticeable shade of green at the mention of this).

Hopefully his professional opinion was the same as this editor's that the five course meal served up by Bev and her team was excellent and certainly seemed to be enjoyed by

everyone present. Frank Keenan also took the opportunity to say a few words, tell a few jokes and thank the Association for its recent donation (see *COUNTING ON US* article on page 4).

All in all the evening was great fun and raised £246.65 for the Association coffers. Our thanks must, of course, go to the President and Executive for organising it so well.

That's six dinners that the Association has now held and each one goes from strength to strength. Next year's has yet to be finalised, but assuming that the new President (whoever he may be) continues with tradition it should be sometime in mid-October. Make a note in your diaries now!

NEW BLOCK OPENS!

That well-known Westcliff Property Developer, Frank Keenan, gives us an in-depth description of the latest little "extension" that he's helped to bring about....

for by central government.

We in school are delighted with the new building, both for the extra space it gives us and also for the new facilities. The departments which are

The advent of the new building has of course meant that we have been able to refurbish and extend existing departments within the school: Geography, History, the Special Needs department,



The new block viewed from the playground looking towards, what was, the old workshops and kitchens. The boiler house chimney helps to give a reference point.

The new teaching block was duly opened at the start of this term back in September. It was not complete in every detail, but it was able to be used for teaching purposes from the beginning of the term. Readers will remember that it had been a difficult journey through various meetings of the Southend Council Planning Committee before we were able to get approval to go ahead and build a two-storey building, rather than the three-storey block which had originally been envisaged (and indeed agreed with the D.F.E.S. architects and funding people). The extra cost of having to spread the third floor over a wider area on two floors was, I am glad to say, picked up by the D.F.E.S. This is a good example of how local planning decisions sometimes have to be paid

now housed in the new building are Technology (seven new workshops including two new multi-material rooms [woodwork and metalwork to the old stagers!], a high-tech "clean" design room, a sixth form computer aided design room, an electronics room and a graphical design room); the Music department (which has a large teaching room, four practice rooms and a recording studio, together with a lot of fancy new equipment); the Art department (which has two art rooms plus a third dedicated sixth form art room); the departments of Psychology and Business Studies; a new suite of changing rooms for the P.E. department; a new centre and workshop for the Site Management Team as well as associated link corridors.

English and I.T. are some that have benefited.



Work in Progress: How readers last saw it.

If our Specialist School Bid is successful, we will be able to refurbish the Maths and I.T. departments and if our Science bid is successful, we will have a major refurbishment of the Science department to look forward to as well.

We are, of course, delighted to report that amongst his building and decorating work Frank still finds time to run the school!

What a comparison with original plans – see Page 3!

PASTORS NEW



It is with sadness that we have to report that our Chaplain,

Rev. Andrew Headon, Parish Priest of Eastwood, will be leaving us at the end of this year when he takes up the post of Vice Rector at the English College in Rome.

Andrew has been our Chaplain for almost four years and has, in that time, presided at the Memorial Masses, "sworn-in" a new President and, I am sure, kept the Association and its members in his prayers.

We wish him well in his new position and hope that the sun, food and wine of Italy don't make him too homesick for wet and windy Westcliff.

Obviously our President is currently sourcing a replacement Chaplain to care for the Association's spiritual needs and we shall report further on this in a future issue.

WHAT LIFE IS THIS?

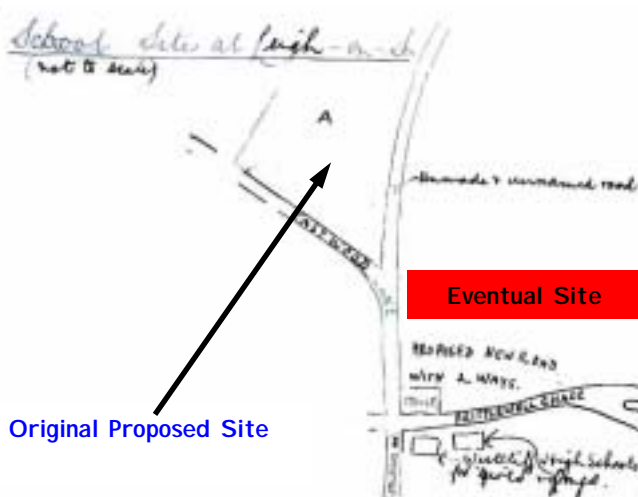
I am informed by our illustrious Membership Secretary that one of our Former Teacher members wrote on the membership renewal form next to the Lifetime Membership tick box:

"It wouldn't be a bargain for me!"

We'll leave you all to guess who you think it might have been ...

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

In the last edition of this esteemed publication we teased you all with a titbit of information about the origins of the school. Well now, thanks to the sharp eyes of the Brentwood Diocese Archivist, we are able to give you the following details about the turbulent decade leading up to the opening of the school. It certainly wasn't as straight forward as you might imagine...



The whole issue about a Catholic secondary school for boys seems to have come to a head as part of the huge nationwide building programme that took place after World War II, although according to the archives the issue had been talked about for the previous 40 years!

The principal players during the 1950's appear to have been Canon Whitfield, who was Parish Priest at Sacred Heart, Bishop Beck and his successor and a Mr Tolhurst from a local firm of solicitors. They were ably supported at various

times by other local clergy including Canon Bishop (Westcliff) and Canon Toft (Leigh on Sea) and one or two local councillors (such as Alderman Sullivan). These worthies were pitted against the massed bureaucracy, and fairly apparent anti-Catholicism, of the then Southend council!

In 1949 Canon Whitfield wrote to Bishop Beck complaining, that despite the support of the Central Government, the

local council appeared to be employing delaying tactics. At that time most of the non-grammar secondary education for boys was carried out by the primary schools with, certainly at Sacred Heart, all of the 11-15 year olds being in one class!

The plans being proposed called for a single form entry school and the site being discussed was at the junction of what is now Mountdale Gardens and Treecot Drive (to the north west of the school).

However, the thinking changed to 2 form entry

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

As reported in the last edition of *Moreana*, our esteemed Executive have decided to abolish Christmas this year! Not the real thing, you understand, just the Old Boys' Christmas Dinner bit! This is actually quite a sane and well-conceived idea in that the Association has long been on the receiving end of that terrible Christmas malaise brought on by too many parties and dinners to attend in such a short space of time. After all, there are only so many stuffed birds you can sink your teeth into!

The intention, therefore, is not so much to do away with it, just simply move it to mid-January. **Saturday 17th January** to be precise.

So just as you're beginning to get withdrawal symptoms about the lack of social



events once everyone resumes their winter hibernation you've got a perfect excuse to wine and dine your partner as a way of apologising for not getting them for Christmas what they had been dropping increasingly unsubtle hints about since last Easter!

The Mulberry Restaurant in Thorpe Bay Esplanade is the venue for the three course meal. The evening will commence at 7.30pm for 8.00pm and the cost will be £18.00 per head. Please send cheques payable to *St. Thomas More Old Boys Association* to the address on the front page.



Original Plans

about 1950 and the catchment area was widened westwards to Laindon and north to the river Crouch. At the same time the Bishop began overtures to two religious orders (The Salesians and Christian Brothers) to provide teaching staff. This, of course, never

came to fruition due to shortage of money and lack of vocations.

In 1952 the need for the school was further compounded by the closure of the Junior Department at the Municipal College because of the opening of a new comprehensive school (the exact one is not identified).

Would you believe it? Just as it was getting interesting we go and run out of space! The concluding part of this fascinating tale will feature in the next edition of Moreana.

MEMBERS AS AT 18th November 2003

1961 Graham Lewis
1962 Michael Hughes
John Lewis
1963 John Bowman
Frank Daley
Tony Howlett
John Sheehy
1964 John Griffiths
Ronald 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
Toni I mossi
David Thomspen
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 Francké
John MacDermott
Andrew McGregor
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 Humfrey
1985 Tim Allard
1986 Paul Cotgrove
Alan Martin
1988 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 Elliott Clark
2000 Daniel Kelly
2001 Chris Thompson
2003 Chris Barker
Sean Perrotton
James Smith
Alison Walker
H/master Frank Keenan
Chaplain Rev Andrew
Headon
FT John Askew
Ian Britt
D Fanning
David Finnigan
Richard Jarman
Elsie Kemp
Tom Kennedy
John O'Connell
Rev David Peck
D.P McGregor
Tom Mayhew

COUNTING ON US!

When this esteemed Association was created 5½ years ago one of its stated aims was to be able to give something back to the school.

This has slowly been happening since then with small gestures such as the Association providing mulled wine at the Christmas concert, participating in the 40th anniversary cabaret, the annual awarding of a prize "For Endeavour" and other ad hoc ways.

However, we were able recently, for the first time, to make a really worthwhile and sizeable gesture just when the school needed us.

Throughout the early autumn the school had been preparing a bid to become one of these new-

fangled specialist schools and had chosen Maths and Computing (goodness knows why!) as its topic.

As part of this bid the school had to raise £50,000 (to which the Government would add £100,000) in just two months and set-to with great enthusiasm approaching anyone or anything that might lead to some of the much needed cash. In fact many members may well remember receiving an appeal letter from no less than the Headmaster himself. However, as he ruefully pointed out at the recent Old Boys' Dinner, none of us bothered to respond (rumours of class detentions were swiftly

scotched!).

All was not lost though, since we did all in fact end up making a donation of sorts when the Association itself rallied to the colours and donated £1,000 to the cause!

Whilst there may be many members who are, at this very moment, contemplating whether helping the school to specialise in such a subject area like Maths and Computing is good for our *street cred*,? I am sure we all agree that it is extremely impressive and worthwhile that, after only 5½ years, we have been able to make such a

sizeable donation! Apparently the bid has now been successful, and this Association helped it to be. Something of which all members can be justly proud!

Further details of how exactly this will benefit and improve the school (and how they'll cope with the boredom factor of Maths and Computing – *did I allude to that fact already, Ed?*) will appear in a future edition of *Moreana*.