



Concordia

Merchant Taylors' School



Welcome



Moses Ng (5ths) playing Bach's Toccata and Fugue in E minor for the new Scholarship at MTS video. Please visit Merchant Taylors' YouTube page or the school website to view.

Dear reader

After appearing biannually since its inception, we have decided to produce one (larger) edition of Concordia per year for the foreseeable future. This enables us to plan further ahead and hopefully ensure each magazine contains something of interest for every reader. This edition focuses on the momentous events of the past year, both from the perspective of OMTs and from that of the school, which had to shut for the first time since World War Two.

Our front cover makes strong reference to this with OMT trainee medic, James Holt (2013-2018) returning to MTS to pick up some face shields which were produced in the Design Centre by MTS staff and boys. The aerial photo of the school, taken in April, shows the campus deserted, with nearly all pupils and staff working from home aside from a small number of children of key workers. The image of the Undercroft shows the new one-way system which was essential to the reopening of the school in September.

I would like to thank all those who have submitted articles to this edition. A particular thank you to actor Robin Askwith (1963-1968) whose article reflecting on his time at the school evokes a very different era with great honesty and humour.

Jon Rippier
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Concordia

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Front cover photo:
Main image: James Holt
(2013-2018) returning to the
school to pick up NHS face
shields.

Bottom left image: An aerial
photo of a deserted campus.

Bottom right image: The
Undercroft with a new one
way system, in operation
since September.

Do you know a missing alumnus?

Add a friend to Concordia's
mailing list alumni@mtsn.org.uk

In this issue

4-9

MTS in lockdown, Deputy Head (Academic) **Rob Garvey** and Second Master **Michael Husbands** explain the pressures and protocols of school in a pandemic.

10-21

Navigating Covid-19: OMTs - **Michael Curtis** (2003-2008), **Keval Shab** (2005-2012), **Nikbil Patel** (2005-2010) and **Suraj Shab** (2005-2010), **Rikbil Morjaria** (2006-2011), **Ben Seabrook** (2008-2015), **Simon Fishman** (1993-2000), **David Smith** (1983-1990) and **Matt Press** (1991-1996) share their diverse experiences

22

Robin Askwith (1963-1968) looks back at his time at Merchant Taylors' and reflects on its role in preparing him for a life in film

30

An interview with Head Porter, **John Reynolds**

34

From the Archive - History Master and Registrar **Jonny Taylor** reflects on how MTS has handled previous pandemics

36

Development Office News

38

Roll of Benefactors

41

Telephone Campaign update

42

Events

46

Class Notes

50

Obituaries

We have made every attempt to locate copyright ownership of archive photography but have not always succeeded in doing so. Any owner of copyright of individual images is invited to contact the editor.

Supporting MTS

To find out more about how you can support the school, please go to: <https://development.mtsn.org.uk/supporting-MTS>

Introduction

An introduction from the [Head Master](#):

All of us here at Merchant Taylors' School have experienced extraordinary times since our last edition of Concordia. We have lived through a period of unprecedented upheaval and uncertainty, as the Covid-19 virus emerged and upturned our lives. Since 20 March, Merchant Taylors' School has undergone two transformations. The first was from the familiar school that we all know and love to virtual teaching and online learning. The second was on our return in September to a very different educational landscape. The story of both of these educational revolutions is told within these pages. Here, I merely tip my cap to the remarkable efforts of teachers and students, who found new opportunities amongst the challenge and disruption.

Covid-19 was also a challenge when it came to the organisation of our usual summer telephone campaign. There were justified concerns: no school had previously run such a campaign under Covid restrictions. No one knew what appetite there was in our community to support fundraising. We were buoyed by the extraordinary efforts of parents to support others in hardship: in the summer term, many had declined an offered reduction in school fees to donate the difference to bursaries. No one imagined that over the course of the summer, parents and OMTs would give an unprecedented £200,000 through donations. It is a measure of the strength of our community that in times of challenge we draw even closer, and ensure that regardless of their circumstances every pupil at Merchant Taylors' can complete their education. Very many thanks to all who donated, and to those who shared their recollections of the school with the pupil callers – our boys thoroughly enjoyed the chance to hear the memories relived.

A further way for the community to come together, even as we are separated by a second lockdown, is through the excellent series of online gatherings called MTS Together. To date, we have hosted three events – the first on the school's history, the second on remembrance, and the third on the inner workings of the House of Lords. All were hugely successful and very popular – keep an eye out for the next!

My greatest aspiration is for the pupils at our school to go out into the world and thrive. In order to do so, each pupil must have the best possible experience of school. Equally, each pupil must be equipped to function as a global citizen. By this, I mean that each pupil must be at ease alongside other cultures, ethnicities and ways of life. In order to pursue this goal, I have made the promotion of global citizenship a key focus for the year. I was prompted by the killing of George Floyd, but inspired by the opportunity to explore improvement in the experience of pupils and the approach of the school. My intention is to review the school's academic and pastoral curriculum, explore the experience of pupils and staff and consider the relevant data we have gathered. No knee-jerk actions will be taken; the year will be spent in reflection and discussion. In the months ahead, I will meet with twenty focus groups, representing different groups of pupils and staff, including one made up of recent school leavers.

I will be reporting back regularly to the Governing Body, and will make my recommendations in the summer. I anticipate that we will conclude that, for the overwhelming majority at Merchant Taylors', all is well. However, no school is perfect, and I hope that we will also emerge with concrete proposals for new ways of working that will improve yet further the experience of school for those of us who live and work within it. An exciting project!

S. Egan

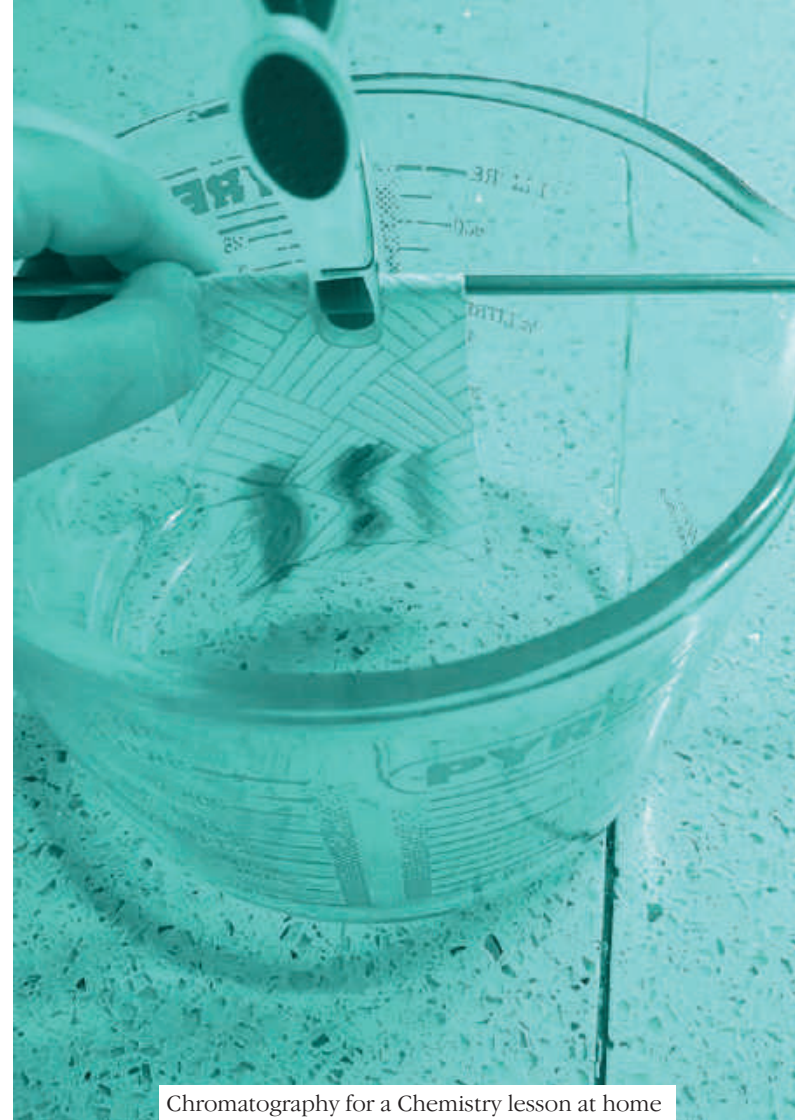


Virtual School

After several weeks of uncertainty in February and March, the Government announced the closure of schools in an attempt to control the epidemic. Merchant Taylors' moved its teaching provision online, and students worked from home. A small number of students whose parents are key workers continued to attend school, supervised by teaching staff. Over the course of the spring and summer, students and teachers became increasingly familiar with the technology required to teach lessons remotely. Some creativity was required: in Chemistry, students carried out experiments using kitchen materials; in MFL, students wrote letters to vulnerable people abroad; and in Art, students used household items to make their own paint. Both staff and pupils responded to the challenge of learning in lockdown by demonstrating many of the school's values, not least innovation and bravery. We will no doubt learn a lot from this technological approach to take into the coming years.

Extra-curricular pursuits were not neglected. The boys carried out athletic activities and challenges in their gardens. A 'Monologues' competition for Drama saw many creative entries. Members of the choir recorded arrangements of songs remotely, and Ben Hunt, before taking up an organ scholarship, used bed planks to make a pedal board so that he could simulate an organ using his piano. Many other clubs and societies continued remotely, while new clubs also started up. Beyond the clubs and activities offered by school, students took up all sorts of new projects, from CGI to magic tricks. Among the most unusual of these projects was the Tillotson brothers' impressive construction of a trench, which involved moving over two tons of clay and flint by hand.

Rob Garvey
Deputy Head (Academic)



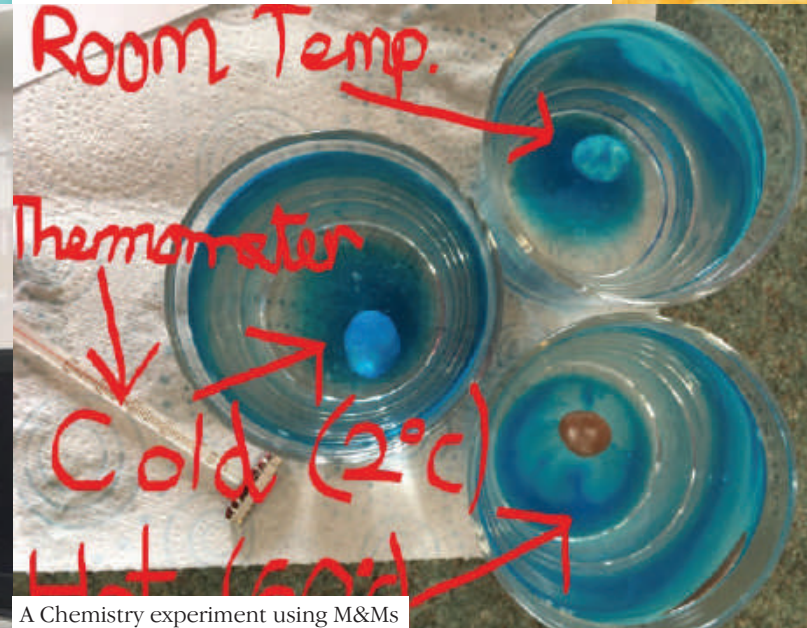
Chromatography for a Chemistry lesson at home



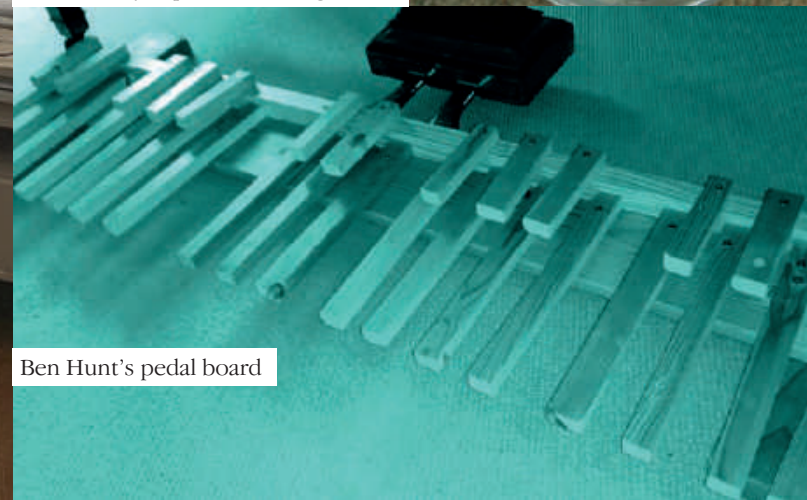
Anish Bharadwaj's painting in the style of Patrick Morgan



Music lessons continued at home



A Chemistry experiment using M&Ms



Ben Hunt's pedal board

Back to school

Second Master *Michael Husbands* describes the process of having to close and then reopen the school at very short notice

The first recollection I have of the school considering the possible impacts of Coronavirus came in late January or early February when it appeared as an item on a School Leadership Team meeting. The Head Master asked us to consider what preparations the school might make in the event of a pandemic. I remember the contributions from the group (including yours truly) distinctly: we had an old policy drawn up during the Swine Flu scare in 2009; like then, this Coronavirus was likely to fizzle out; any closure of schools would have to be just for a few days, as anything more would crash the country's economy and fracture society; "pandemic" was listed as one of the clauses in our contract with parents and also in the terms of our insurance (presumably along with 'plague' and 'pestilence'). In short, spending too much time fretting about this was not a valuable use of time or resources (especially with a Triennial to plan and an imminent ISI inspection to prepare for...).

Well, Head Masters don't get to be Head Masters through lack of courage in their convictions. Regardless of our scepticism, we were told to plan for a lengthy closure. And so we did. All staff began to migrate their resources to the cloud, setting up classes on Microsoft Teams and habituating pupils to the ways of online submission of work (no more "dog ate my homework, sir" and more "cat sat on the delete button, sir"). Even after a hastily arranged Inset in February to ensure that even the most atavistic teacher had some technological competence, it still seemed like a contingency that would never be needed; parallels with the unused pillboxes of the Outer London Defence Ring that dot the school site were easy to draw.

And then things happened. Fast. I can't remember the exact order of events: some staff

(including myself) got a taster of the disruption that awaited by having to self-isolate; then, with only 24 hours' notice, all schools were ordered to close; and finally, a few days later, the whole country was put into lockdown. Those early weeks were characterised by an enormous amount of anxiety, confusion and hard work. Government guidance was published without fanfare late, and then found to be nugatory. Contracts with parents and insurance against closure were determined to be worthless. Communication with staff was problematic (death by email...). And questions, questions: What is going to happen with GCSEs and A-levels? What pastoral support could/should be provided? Was the co-curriculum deliverable? What fees remission will be offered? And most recurring: how long was this going to last? We staggered over the line at the end of the Spring Term, reliant on the innate professionalism of the staff and their dedication to their roles: each tutor had been tasked with phoning every family every week; all exam classes should continue to be taught and set work as before. Steady as she goes.

The start of the Summer Term brought (some) clarity. We would likely be in this for the long-haul, at least until the end of May (oh how naïve we were!). "Virtual MTS", with guides for staff, pupils and parents, was set up properly. Lessons would be taught "live", via video-link, wherever possible. Tutor and Form periods, assemblies and co-curricular clubs would run as before, just 'virtually'. Exam classes would cover all remaining material and be set work to support and inform the Government's "Centre Assessed Grades" scheme. Fees would be reduced by 15%, made possible by some savings through the furlough scheme (no school lunches to cook...). The school site itself

remained closed to all but a few pupils – children of key workers – and those staff supervising them in the new Geography building. And so it went on, with several false dawns (and disappointed leavers, whose right to a proper farewell was frustrated by a thousand cuts), until the end of the Summer Term. The Head addressed the SCR on the final day of term at a staff meeting on site (socially distanced, outside in the quad!): the first time many of us had seen our colleagues for four months.

It was just after the end of term that guidance began to seep out of the Department for Education about the proposed reopening of schools. Details were still unclear, but talk of "social-distancing" had finally and practicably been replaced with the concept of "bubbles", within which pupils are not expected to have to socially distance. Key decisions had to be made, priorities determined. The school would ensure that the academic curriculum would be delivered to all pupils with the minimum amount of disruption (no changes to sets or teachers; retention of specialist classrooms). The vertical tutor system, the 'heart' of the school, would be preserved, as 'bubble-bursting' as that might potentially be. The whole school would do games, and have a hot lunch. At this point, anything further would be a bonus. To facilitate this the school day, and the school site, had to be reconfigured. Tutor groups were split into three and spread across lunchtimes (pity the tutor!). The dining hall, split in two like cold-war Germany, hosted three separate sittings. Separate break times for all year-groups. And a one-way system and the wearing of masks at all times inside, unless sat at your desk or eating your lunch. This is the way.

And so we carry on. With characteristic Taylors' ingenuity and resilience things have started to "grow within the cracks". Music ensemble rehearsals (bubbled and well-ventilated) have resumed; the CCF has once again taken the square; House rugby dominates the fields on Wednesdays. And much more. But, as with all of this, the hope remains that it is transitory, and we will be able to return to the more familiar, the more comfortable, before too long. Spring will be here soon: that always brings hope.



MTS in lockdown



Staff and student volunteers with PPE manufactured in the Design Centre

MTS production of NHS face shields covered by BBC News

In response to the growing spread of Covid-19 in March, BBC London News covered the production of NHS face shields by the MTS Design, Technology and Engineering Department. Under the guidance of Head of D,E&T, Andrew Duffey, hundreds of these were initially produced by staff and boys, all gratefully received by medical and care professionals in the London area. On hearing of this coverage, OMT Jonathan Duck (1974-1978), CEO of Amtico Flooring, offered to adapt his factory so that key parts could be sent to MTS for assembly, thus accelerating the school's production process.

BBC News correspondent, Guy Lynn, whose initial story was picked up by the national BBC News Channel, then travelled to Coventry to interview Mr Duck, resulting in a follow-up news story in April. The additional coverage spurred further demand for the face shields which Mr Duffey and his team were able to meet, turning MTS into a hub and supplying



Cian Omert (4ths) operating one of the laser cutters

other schools with the materials and designs to ramp-up production further.

As well as providing PPE for NHS staff in local hospitals and GP practices, Simon Etheridge (1982-1987) contacted the school to enquire about obtaining face shields for the workers at his company. Simon and his brother, Mark (1979-1984), work for their family business, Metro Plating Ltd. At their factory they were working on components required for McLaren, Dyson and Smiths' contracts to produce ventilators for the NHS. For McLaren alone, the contract for 15,000 ventilators meant that 240,000 components passed through their factory in Uxbridge. Metro Plating Ltd had a hand in some 70% of the UK's ventilators. The face-shields provided by the school enabled their staff to remain safe while keeping this vital work going.

In the end, MTS produced 12,000 units and supplied partner schools with parts to make an additional 9,000 units. The national coverage that our team received spurred on production by schools all over the country. By May, it was estimated that schools had produced over 200,000 items of PPE.

As schools began opening for some year groups in the summer term, we were able to provide face shields for a number of local primary schools, enabling them to put in the precautionary measures required to open safely.

The story at Merchant Taylors' generated a huge amount of activity on social media, including many sincere messages of gratitude from health professionals. We are very grateful to a number of people who made donations to enable us to purchase the raw materials required for this project.



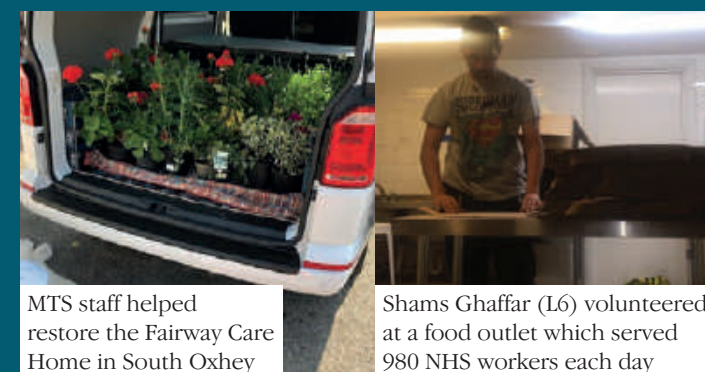
BBC News reporter Guy Lynn reporting from the Design Centre

MTS in lockdown

Community Support

As well as distributing the face shields made in the Design Centre, support staff from the school delivered aprons, gloves, goggles, hand gel and food to local hospitals, hospices, surgeries, pharmacies, food banks, and schools. Thanks to their hard work, the school has been able to play its part and support the wider community.

To take one example, the school responded to a request from Hertfordshire County Council to assist the Fairway Care Home in South Oxhey as their team prepared to reopen the facility in response to Covid-19. The home had recently closed down and was being reopened to support patients leaving hospital but not yet ready to return home. MTS provided Jamie Williams as a volunteer to work alongside the care home team and coordinate our support. Andrew Duffey provided PPE manufactured in the Design Centre. Our Grounds Manager, Richard Ayling, provided plants to improve the outdoor space, and Steve Mitchell, one of our gardeners, volunteered his time to restore the gardens and assist with planting. Shirin Irani, our School Accountant, helped out with her son, Alex, during a day of annual leave to support the team. Students have also been helping their local communities with a range of tasks, from helping at local pharmacies to collecting for food banks.



MTS staff helped restore the Fairway Care Home in South Oxhey

Shams Ghaffar (L6) volunteered at a food outlet which served 980 NHS workers each day



Avi Shah (U6) volunteered at a pharmacy



Multiply

An entrepreneur in the time of Covid-19

For some reason, the idea of starting a company never occurred to me until several years after I had left school. Despite the amazingly broad education Taylors' afforded me, I'd always felt that there was an unspoken assumption that I was destined for some respectable profession. I took part in Young Enterprise, but for some reason I never connected the idea to something I could do as a career.

I met my co-founder, Vivek, in 2016, and we founded Multiply. We were a good fit; I was young and arrogant enough to set our sights on changing the entire finance industry, he had the war wounds to understand how hard that was going to be. Multiply was born from our shared idea: what if we could automate what a financial advisor does, and make it free for everyone? This meant solving two things: getting a computer to generate advice, and then making it seamless to put that advice into action. Four years on we've become the first company to fully automate regulated financial advice, and we were knee-deep in the second stage when coronavirus hit.

With the onset of lockdown, start-ups were initially at a big advantage. Our business was born in the cloud; everything we did was designed to be accessed from anywhere, and so our switch to full-time working from home was easy, painless and quick. We even managed to save money – our previous office had been a private room in a co-working space, and when it became clear that we weren't going to be coming back any time soon we were able to terminate the short-term contract and cut out office fees almost overnight.

If this early success engendered a sense of complacency, then a few days later I was back down to earth with a painful bump. My mentor – an ex-Chief Technology Officer who'd seen first-hand the impact of the 2008 financial crisis on companies like mine – laid down the reality of the

situation: our funding would run dry, our ambitious projects with other companies would be shelved, and it would take years for things to get back to normal. We had to give ourselves as much time to survive the storm as possible, and we couldn't afford to wait.

Taking money from Venture Capital investors is something of a Faustian bargain, but if you want to change the world then chances are it's the only way you'll be able to achieve your vision. The plan is to raise money, invest in growth, and make enough progress to raise again 18 months later. There is rarely a plan B.

We were early enough in a funding cycle that we could give ourselves a good chance of surviving. Many of my friends were not so lucky, and it wasn't long before the lists of employees let go from other start-ups started to mount up. Businesses that a month earlier were flying high, focused on long-term growth at the expense of short-term profit, were suddenly forced to refocus, downsize and lay aside their loftier ambitions. In one important way, though, the virus brought us an opportunity. Our core reason for being – advising people what to do with their money – became even more important than before. We saw more people reading our advice, signing up for news, and asking questions. Because our advice is automated, we were able to react to the situation in a very short space of time – we could update 20,000 people's advice in the time it might take a human advisor to update one. Starting a company is hard. There's a very high chance that we won't be successful. In that context, the uncertainty caused by coronavirus, the weekly changing situation and the feeling that everything might fall apart is not out of the ordinary; it's business as usual.

Michael Curtis (2003-2008)

<https://www.multiply.ai/>

A change of key: a musician's perspective

As I sit at my desk to write this, the dome of Helsinki Cathedral is just about visible through the window. The night is already encroaching, but the brilliant white of the cathedral towers fights its way through the darkness and stands tall above the rooftops of the city. I've been in Finland for two months now and feel extremely grateful to be living here – not only is the pandemic situation far less serious than in the UK, but after months of unemployment as a freelance concert pianist, I now find myself with some job security, having relocated from London after being appointed Head of Lieder at the Sibelius Academy.

It's hard to overestimate the devastation that Covid-19 has caused to the creative industries. Back in March, concert halls and theatres across the country shut down and, overnight, hundreds of thousands of artists had their livelihoods taken away. I remember very clearly 16th March, one week before the national lockdown was imposed. In the space of five hours I lost four months of concert work, and as the severity of the pandemic situation became clearer over the following months, more and more recitals were postponed or cancelled. As I write, my next performance in the UK is supposed to be in December, nine months since my last. The economic fallout of such a situation is clear, but so much more has been lost, too. Like elite sport, working as a classical musician requires endless training: consistency of focus, dedication and trial, are all essential in order to perform at the highest level. With the loss of concerts comes the loss of preparation and the loss of the artistic process, whose constant adjustment and refinement defines our way of living. I'm only in the early stages of my artistic life, and this year was full of important opportunities that were designed to help carry my playing and career to new heights. It's been difficult to find the motivation to commit to daily practice without the prospect of an upcoming concert, and I've had to find new ways of making music and collaborating with my colleagues. I spent much of the early months of lockdown creating a virtual performance of Hugo Wolf's *Italienisches Liederbuch*. It was a fairly low-tech endeavour involving nothing more than an iPhone, but these sorts of long-distance recordings have become hugely important to so many musicians, as a way of reconnecting with the artistic process and sharing our art with a wider audience online.

Away from the concert platform, physical or digital, my work as a teacher has helped to keep me busy, and has also led to some surprisingly fruitful exchanges with students hungry for music and for detailed, focused work in the middle of so much upheaval. Before moving to Helsinki, I was teaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London and, like teachers across the country, I quickly had to adapt to virtual classes. Despite the inevitable challenges of teaching music over the internet, here was an invitation to approach our work from new angles, and to devote some time to a different sort of musical practice.

In Helsinki I am back to teaching in person, and I really feel very fortunate to have this new teaching job in the middle of such a difficult time. Apart from the financial security, working at the Sibelius Academy has allowed me to re-engage with repertoire and artistic processes through my pupils, and to feel once again a complete immersion in music, which had been so absent for months. Above all, the challenge of preparing my pupils (and myself!) for a radically transformed industry is one which I am enjoying hugely.

Keval Shah (2005-2012)



In the eye of the storm

Junior doctors, *Nikhil Patel (2005-2010)* and *Suraj Shah (2005-2010)*, both found themselves working in Stoke Mandeville Hospital from the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. They reflect on an extraordinary few months.

12

The Covid-19 pandemic has created challenges never seen before by the NHS. After graduating from medical school, the idea of working on the frontline in the middle of the worst pandemic for over 100 years was unfathomable. Within weeks the usual routine of elective surgery, outpatient clinics and cancer treatment were brought to an abrupt halt, as hospitals prepared for an influx of patients seriously ill with Covid-19.

Nikhil Patel (Junior Doctor, General Surgery Trainee) writes:

As a Junior Doctor training in General Surgery, I was redeployed along with many other Junior Doctors from our own specialties to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to look after the sickest patients needing intubation, ventilation and multi-organ support. To prepare us for this, our hospital ran training sessions on critical care physiology, how to prone patients (turn them on to their abdomens) safely while they are intubated to increase the volume of oxygen delivered to their lungs, manage ventilators and how to safely 'don and doff' personal protective equipment (PPE). The change from my typical working pattern of the operating theatre, the outpatient clinics and assessing patients with emergency general surgical conditions on call, was dramatic and pushed me far out of my comfort zone. We were managing patients on the verge of death, suffering from a disease the world knew very little about. I am extremely grateful to have worked alongside a fantastic team of staff; ranging from intensive care doctors to radiographers, nurses, theatre assistants, porters, pharmacists and physiotherapists to name but a few; all staff at our hospital came together to support each other and help us get through this challenging and unpredictable time.

Suraj Shah (Junior Doctor, Anaesthetics and Intensive Care Trainee) writes:

Following the first two 'Foundation' years of working as a junior doctor, care of the critically unwell patient is what has particularly interested



Nikhil Patel and Suraj Shah wearing their MTS PPE

13

“We were managing patients on the verge of death, suffering from a disease the world knew very little about.”

me. Since then, I have been training in the specialties of Anaesthetic and Intensive Care for just over three years and have developed skills and knowledge to manage a variety of illnesses. When the pandemic struck it genuinely felt that it had come out of the blue, and management of this disease was baffling the medical community. Like most hospitals, our Anaesthetic and Critical Care department took the lead and I was involved in helping design safety protocols, the training of junior doctors and the recruitment of patients to the RECOVERY trial (Randomised Evaluation of Covid-19 Therapy – a trial conducted by researchers at Oxford University) in search for possible treatments. There has been much to grieve over, including the loss of staff and young, healthy patients, but I have been amazed by the overwhelming sense of unity and willingness to help tackle this issue. Despite the normal bustle in the corridors

quietening and some anxiety with having to socially distance from colleagues, a positive spirit seemed never to waiver and this really helped us pull through what seemed like endless long days and nights at the height of the pandemic.

It goes without a doubt, this pandemic has changed our lives both inside and outside work. We have never truly understood why it is a privilege to work as doctors, but seeing and treating patients who put their faith in you, a stranger, to look after them has never been clearer than now. As we are now in a 'second wave' of cases, we thank the public for their support which helped us through some very difficult times during the first peak. As OMTs we were especially proud and grateful for the visors donated by the MTS D,E&T department which were a vital part of our PPE.

Life in the fast stream: delivering the Test and Trace programme

As a Civil Service Fast Streamer, rotations last between six and 12 months, depending on the scheme. It provides a fast-paced and effective way to familiarise yourself with varying aspects of the Civil Service. Earlier this year I was informed that for my next rotation I would be joining the newly formed NHS Test and Trace (part of the Department of Health and Social Care), in the Finance section.

In previous rotations, the first few days of a placement would involve meeting my new team and familiarising myself with my new working environment and day-to-day business. Naturally, given that I'd be working for the Department for Health in the midst of a national lockdown, this was going to be very different.

While I was familiar with working from home at times, my working environment and 'office' would undoubtedly be my living room. I joined a team of very experienced Civil Servants from a wide range of departments and backgrounds, bringing a wealth of experience. Early on, I realised a lot of what we do is reactive and the thinking behind Test and Trace was topical,

logical and certainly very interesting. We were directly solving a problem at a national level, and being so close to the decision-making, makes you feel like you're making a real difference early on.

The sheer volume, scale and numbers are unimaginable and not something that you'd come across in many roles. There's no such thing as a typical day in Test and Trace; anything can happen and we've become very familiar with priorities rapidly changing and having to reassess our day's focus. We always work closely with senior colleagues, making my role in Test and Trace an exhilarating one.

One thing I'm very grateful for is being part of such a wonderful and diverse team. Everyone is approachable and friendly – even with the constraints of working virtually. Given the scope of the project, we have to deliver everything at top speed constantly but the mutual understanding and respect which exists has enabled us to work collaboratively and very often embrace the unknown.



Especially for us in Finance, we had to grasp the scientific concepts quickly and I've found various business areas in Test and Trace to be very accommodating in taking the time to explain key concepts and terminology, relating these to what we hear in the news. Indeed, it's a very proud moment when you are working on a certain aspect during the day, and then see the Prime Minister refer to this during a daily briefing or speech.

Naturally we've had to embrace very new ways of working, particularly a heavy reliance on video and audio conferencing. However, these tools certainly help in settling in and while it's strange not seeing a colleague in person, you are able to connect and work collaboratively just as easily as when all are in the same place.

Throughout my time on the Fast Stream, I've been fortunate to work in a variety of departments and postings. However, my time at Test and Trace has been by far the most rewarding. We are delivering so much, so quickly, while the future is unknown. It makes me extremely proud to be working for the

Civil Service at such a pivotal moment. While there is negative press for the Test and Trace programme, we feel the key thing is to keep going in the knowledge that we are doing the best we can.

While on the Fast Stream, I am studying for CIMA & CIPFA accountancy qualifications. Thankfully, I had a break within my study plan when I started with Test and Trace, although recently I've started studying towards my next exam and, as such, had to establish a new revision routine at home. It's been difficult to adapt to, but the wisdom of colleagues has certainly helped me in rising to this additional challenge.

Rikhil Morjaria (2006-2011)



Turbulent times for a BA graduate

In March, when the pandemic brought life to a standstill, the aviation industry had already begun charting its response to our greatest challenge since 9/11. At the time, I had just begun my next graduate role in the Research and Insight team at British Airways. Here, we analyse customer satisfaction data and wider industry trends to provide actionable insight to our Senior Leadership Team, who can then use it to inform changes to any part of our customer journey. Suffice to say, the immediate, almost total, collapse of our operation was a definite learning curve.

Immediately, with such a reduced set of customer surveys as only a few passengers were flying, we looked at other industries to help understand how to respond best. My manager and I collected insights from across other sectors, such as hospitality and retail, to see how the top brands were dealing with the crisis. What kind of concessions are businesses making? How are they communicating? How is the public responding to their proposals? These were all captured in order to provide recommendations to the business on how to shape our own response. This work has helped feed into the measures we've undertaken, such as our 'Book with Confidence' scheme where passengers can rebook without incurring a fee.

Moreover, we knew we'd have to begin preparing for when our customers did start to fly again. From the limited survey data we were given by customers, and the feedback we receive from our own crew, we began to identify sticking points in our on-board experience. Can passengers be boarded in new ways to ensure minimal contact with each other? How does our food service need to change to reflect how the disease may be likely to transmit? Most importantly, though, what changes can we make to ensure our customers are as safe as possible? Using this analysis, we have made substantial changes to our on-board service

to make flying as safe and comfortable as possible, with a new catering service and enhanced cleaning and protective equipment measures.

However, as the industry continued to struggle, many of us were moved onto the furlough scheme to help the long-term financial position of the business. Furlough has proved to be challenging in new ways, with a chance to explore new skills and interests. I spent much of my time volunteering for the Merchant Taylors' Company, reviewing their external communications and interviewing CEOs of charities who are recipients of their grant funding. I've also taken part in a bioenergetics course, written a LinkedIn article on one of my favourite films, and been accepted onto a part-time Masters course which starts in January.

Looking back, this last year has provided some incredible highs, but also some frustrating lows. There's certainly been no shortage of new lessons, though. If I've learnt anything it's that when presented with new opportunities, grab them and see where they take you. Hopefully, it won't be long until we're all exploring the world again soon, too.

Ben Seabrook (2008-2015)

Merchant Taylors' School Mug



A bespoke half-pint mug decorated with memorable motifs and words from the Merchant Taylors' School lexicon

A half-pint mug decorated in school colours, hand-made in Britain and packaged in a strong presentation box.

Available to purchase at an introductory price of £17.50 excluding delivery.

For more information about the Merchant Taylors' School Mug please visit our website <https://development.mtsn.org.uk/mug>



Where there is life, there is travel

With the embers of 2019 still flickering in the distance, I set off on the habitual dash to London. The smell of the freezing January air, mixed with pungent jet fuel, provided the necessary adrenalin jolt for the 7:20am flight from Geneva; I was alive with the possibilities of the year ahead. What would it hold for us?

As usual, I managed to beat the London locals into the office and was comfortably ensconced in the meeting room for our 2020 planning session. Coffee and croissant in hand, all was calm as I put the final touches to a presentation.

“Crikey!” (or words to that effect!) shouted Chris as he bundled into the room, staring down at his phone. “Have you seen what’s going on in China?”

That was the start, and the next few months passed in a blur – hospitals overwhelmed, borders closed, world travel ground to a halt, lockdown – we all know the rest...

Taking a few steps back, I joined Expedia in 2013 and over the subsequent years, watched as the business grew massively. Our company has a mission to bring people together through travel, helping travellers to enjoy different cultures and new experiences. We have always been operationally robust, known for good customer service and trying to go the extra mile to help our travellers. It has been, unfortunately, second-nature to have to deal with all of the fall-out of force-majeure events that happen across the globe, with particular attention to the travellers, hotel partners and employees impacted, but never could we have had the necessary infrastructure in reserve to deal with a black swan event of this magnitude.

By mid-March, we were helping tens of thousands of travellers with their efforts to get home, but how do you do that with planes grounded, half of your global call-centres shut

due to Covid-19, and call volumes orders of magnitude higher than anything you have ever seen before? The focus then shifted to the financial aspects, with travellers out of pocket for trips they couldn’t take and our hotel and airlines partners facing the most uncertain of times. In the true tech-company spirit, the only answer was to innovate, build and automate. In the following weeks, guided by the unforgettable advice of my Fifth Form Physics master, Mr Bridgeman (“KISS - Keep It Simple, Stupid”), I saw more ingenuity and hacking than can be imagined. Daily stand-ups, war rooms and 9pm meetings became the norm.

From a personal perspective, my life became a cocktail of stress, coffee and the occasional late-night whisky. I obsessively followed the daily Covid-19 statistics across multiple countries, watching the evening news from Switzerland, France and the UK daily. They say information is power, but in this case the more I knew, the more powerless I felt. Shut in my home office morning to night, seven days a week, there was not enough time to wonder how all this would play out. As the schools shut, my wife took on teacher duty for our two young daughters (five and eight years-old) to “complement” her full-time job. I was next to no help, with Godot-esque assurances that things were about to calm down, that we just needed to get through the week.

Weeks turned into months, but as we headed into the summer, things did calm, and life slowly started to resume. The Swiss schools reopened in May, weekend war rooms were no longer needed, and life returned to some kind of normality. Spurred on by their respective governments, holidaymakers came back to the Spanish beaches and the Italian lakes, while for the first time ever, even the German Baltic coast became a veritable hotspot! Restaurants across Europe reopened with plexiglass and customer tracking becoming the norm, while the Swiss even started a petition to copy Sunak’s ‘eat out to help out’! On one hand, it was good to see people enjoying their holidays and some volume returning to the business, on the other, Covid-19 was still out there, and there was a deep sense of unease at the speed at which the handbrake was being released.

As I write this in late-October, much of Europe is heading back into some type of lockdown and the tabloid editors are busy wheeling out their Richard III headlines. Quite what this winter holds in store for us, I can’t tell you, but undoubtedly the lives of many millions will be impacted. My thoughts continue to be with every person impacted by this tragedy, be it the loss of a loved one, family separation or the impact to their livelihood.

I do remain a deeply optimistic person, and the words of our Chairman, Mr Barry Diller, are as true today as they were when he coined them in the aftermath of 9/11: “Where there is life, there is travel”.

Simon Fishman (1993-2000)



Meeting the Challenge

After leaving Merchant Taylors’ School in 1990, and getting my degree in Business, Economics and Accounting from Southampton University, I became a career “airline guy” – 10 years with British Airways at Heathrow in Finance, and 17 years with ATPCO in Northern Virginia, USA. ATPCO handles pricing and retailing data and standards for all airlines worldwide, and I currently head up their Industry Standards Development function.

Our industry was hit as never before by Covid-19, in terms of health, subsequent economic conditions, and the accompanying government travel restrictions. I have been through the economic impact of two Gulf wars, a housing crisis, a banking crisis, but nothing even remotely this impactful to air travel demand.

Our business is not transactional, rather being standards and data-content based. Interestingly, there was a strong shift from pricing, to rules to handle changes and refunds of passenger travel, as well as a strong interest in consistent communication of health and sanitation policies from airlines.

David Smith (1983-1990)



Kimal's 140,000 sq ft Worcester facility completed in 2019



Matt (1991-1996) at Kimal's Worcester offices



Andy (1979-1984) with his wife, Sue, and children, Hannah & Sam



Ben (1993-1998) with his wife, Faye, and OMT Yush Shine (1991-1998) who works at Kimal



Kimal Procedure Pack



James (1992-1999) and his wife Noi



Kimal's Altius® Catheter



OMT healthcare business nominated in National Business Awards for NHS support

Founded in 1964, Kimal is a family-owned medical devices manufacturer of customised procedure packs and vascular-access devices to clinical departments in over 70 countries worldwide. The company has a strong link with Merchant Taylors' with its founding family counting four OMTs amongst its ranks. The association with the school started with Andy Press (1979-1984) albeit the gap to his nephew Matt Press (1991-1996) meant that Andy's link to Mulcaster was not continued, as Matt joined White house. This White house tradition was then continued with Matt's brother, Ben Press (1993-1998), and his cousin, James Martin (1992-1999). There were some teachers that overlapped both generations of the family, with all having fond memories of Mr Ingram in the Chemistry lab, for example.

The family's involvement with the company has changed over the years as the business has grown from Andy's father's shed in its earliest days to now employing over 550 people across seven sites in five countries. As the company has evolved, so has the family's involvement in the business, with Andy now acting as non-executive Director on the company's Holdings Board, where his experience in senior management across the telecommunications sector is utilised by the company. In terms of the next generation, Matt is now the company's CEO after 16 years working in banking and private equity, while Ben runs the Uxbridge facility – where another OMT, Yush Shine (1991-1998), works – which both distributes the innovative vascular access range and houses the international customer care team. James remains involved as a shareholder of the business while he has pursued his passion for teaching and boxing, which has seen him based in Thailand for the last 15 years, where he has a 5-0 pro boxing record and now also trains young fighters in his spare time.

We have all experienced the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the devastation it has caused, and this has been no different within Kimal. At the start of the pandemic, Kimal made the decision to commit 100% of its catheter manufacturing facility, and a significant proportion of its procedure pack facility, to producing equipment for the NHS. This included creating its specially designed Nightingale procedure pack through a dedicated multi-disciplinary team,

and saw the first 1,000 designed, manufactured, sterilised and despatched to the field hospital at the London ExCel inside ten days in March. The company has now made over 200,000 of these specialist packs. In addition to the Kimal Nightingale procedure pack, Kimal decided to fully commit three months of its catheter manufacturing capacity to the NHS in order to make a specific configuration of its innovative Altius® catheter. This response to Covid saw Kimal nominated by Lloyds Bank for the National Business Awards "Pivot for Purpose" category, whilst the British Chamber of Commerce announced Kimal as a UK Business Hero.

"Whilst our packs are used in hospitals around the world, it felt morally right to pivot our efforts to help in the fight that's right on our doorstep, here in the UK," says Andy Press. Matt Press was keen to state that "From manufacturing to logistics, our team has worked tirelessly to meet the urgent needs of both the NHS and also our international customers".

Outside work, friendships and memories have been more important than ever in helping people to get through these tough times and in that regard Andy, Matt, Ben and James all retain strong links with MTS alumni. This includes their four weddings, where most of the best men and ushers were OMTs. Those happy memories of time at the school are also regularly shared with friends, as Andy was keen to point out: "One of my closest friends and the best man at my wedding, Andy Cornish, is an OMT and in my 40s I started playing hockey again for the OMTs along with my former 1st XI teammates Ian Lomas and Dan Hassell". James added: "I loved the sports culture at the school, including playing with Ben in the hockey 1st XI". Ben also thoroughly enjoyed his time at the school which culminated in playing in the 1st team for rugby, cricket and hockey: "My best mates to this day are boys I was at Taylors' with and I have great memories of our time at the school". While Matt may have had the least celebrated sporting career of the family at the school, he was keen to add that "My greatest sporting memory is still scoring the winning try for White in the senior house rugby competition against Manor, and what makes it even better is I still remind Rob Cooper and Ben Knowles, both ex-Manor, about it to this day".

CONFESSIONS OF AN ENT



After being expelled from Merchant Taylors' in the Upper Sixth, **Robin Askwith (1963-1968)** has gone on to enjoy a successful career of over fifty years in film, television and theatre. He looks back at his time at the school and reflects on its role in forging his character.

I arrived at Merchant Taylors' School, a short journey from my prep school, Orley Farm, in September 1963 and was escorted off the premises in the early summer of 1968. In the rather cruel and scathing obituary of my Head Master, Brian Rees, in *The Times*, it declares: "Although he regretted having to expel Robin Askwith, the future star of the Confessions films, owing to his antics on a motorcycle, Rees improved exam results and opportunities to study music and art." *The Times*, 21st May 2016. I have had, over the past 53 years, many articles written about me, much of it criticism, but this extraordinary declaration needs addressing.

I was installed into Lower 5B, my Form Master was Mr "B.O." Barnes, whose body odour would precede him into the classroom by a good two minutes. I advanced to Modern 5B where my Form Master was the indomitable "Dick" Hawkey, who eyed me with suspicion from day one. He was a magnificent squash player, cricket player and coach. The two reasons he could never really warm to me were:

1. I amused the class, with brave comedy antics.
2. I had one useless leg, the result of Polio and therefore, served no purpose for him in the cricket arena, or so he thought.

This, of course, was a very different era. Nicknames were often cruel (mine was Spaz) and there was a latent brutality that existed on every level but, if nothing else, it was a realistic

preparation for the real world I ended up in: show business. It certainly built character, something I feel is much lacking these days and positively discouraged in industry and sport.

Masters were to be feared ... "Any boy found playing with round balls in the Quad will be beaten". Football was abhorred and seen as working class and too simple for our advanced minds. Another Master had a selection of canes with different names. We never did get to see "Charlie" but I am sure it is now employed in a Singaporean detention centre. There were exceptions. The enigmatic and always encouraging John "Pickwick" Steane. I could make him laugh and infuriate him in equal measures and in years to come he would turn up at virtually every theatrical performance I ever gave. Mr "Daddy" Tillott was another great favourite. A Geography teacher who was pretty easy for me to imitate and is definitely the reason I did so well on "Pointless Celebrities".

Amazingly, I took to Merchant Taylors'; I am just not so sure it took to me. If Orley Farm was Wandsworth then Merchant Taylors' was Ford Open Prison. To work the system there were three options: be academic, be sporty or be amusing. I chose the last two, although passing exams never really proved a problem once I had kicked any science related subjects into touch. My first Head Master was Hugh Elder, who

retired after my first year. He was succeeded by one Brian Rees who would shape and change my life in many ways, and I his, I suppose. It was his first stab at being Head Master; he had come from being a House Master at Eton, having married the Head Master's daughter. Our weird and wonderful relationship would last for the rest of his life.

This was the Sixties. National Service had just been suspended and it looked as though we were going to be the first British generation ever, not to fight a war. You could say our generation was shaped by the abolition of National Service and the introduction of the Pill. My friends were:

Tony Stark – Documentary film maker
Campbell Galbraith – Lawyer.
David Ravden – Accountant to Elton John.
David Cust – Business executive.
And ...

Ronald Stern – Sold Nick Mason his Ferrari 250 GTO for £35,000, now worth approximately US \$20 million.

Without sounding completely paranoid we were being watched by boys who I am sure are now working for MI5/6. One morning in assembly, Brian Rees made an unprompted speech about the rising "Dolce vita" clique that was developing within the school – eerily prescient of my first screen role in Lindsay Anderson's

"The third offence, holding up Pinner Post Office (it was Rag Week and I was doing it for charity), was a little more serious... This time it transpired that Brian had all the proof he needed, provided by the two accompanying Police Officers."



The band at MTS (from left, David Clayton, Campbell Galbraith, Robin Askwith, Keith Long)



White House (1964)

"If...". My first big plan was to empty the school library, having gained possession of the master key to all the boys' lockers, an ideal hiding place. This plan was scotched pretty early on by an MI5 informant, which led to my first face-to-face with the Head Master. Lectured, beaten and sent on my way. The second more dramatic meeting came after I had managed to persuade some builders to crane-lift his Austin 1100 onto a building opposite his living quarters. Once again, he called me into his study but owned up to having no actual proof it was me.

The third offence, holding up Pinner Post Office (it was Rag Week and I was doing it for charity), was a little more serious. After raiding the Armoury for a couple of rifles, a friend and I persuaded the local Post Master to hand over all the commemorative stamps. This time it transpired that Brian had all the proof he needed, provided by the two accompanying Police Officers.

Turning to the sports arena, I enjoyed cricket, rugby, squash and swimming, despite the one leg situation. Richard "Dick" Hawkey had to concede that

my "gait" created a very effective away-swing which many years later my dear friend David Gower would deem to be "unplayable". Another friend, Ian Botham, thought otherwise: "It's absolute tosh, Squiffy." I played as hooker in most rugby teams, aided by my wonky leg which proved successful even against the strike.

GIRLS!

The other thing that we were denied of course, was female company. This was solved by forming a band with my friend Campbell Galbraith and managed by the now Ferrari curator Ronald Stern. It was virtually impossible to get girls on the premises so I approached Brian Rees and said I was mending my ways and would it be at all possible to hold a musical recital in the Exam Hall and invite the girls from St. Helen's School and Northwood College. He agreed and congratulated me, stopping me briefly on my way out of his study to ask: "Will it be a quartet?"

That Saturday, the Exam Hall was awash with pupils from St Helen's School and Northwood College. John "Pickwick"

Steane was to be seen quietly removing the disappointed Head Master quite early into the set. This band, incidentally, later merged with a band from Charterhouse. I was to replace one Peter Gabriel, who was an awful drummer. Much to the annoyance of my parents and John Reid, my House Master, it was pretty apparent that I had a strong leaning towards the acting profession. Made more apparent by my ability to read iambic pentameter aloud and make some sense out of it.

"Very well done, Askwith," Pickwick would say.
"Any idea what's going on here?"
"None Sir."

At the weekends we would sneak off to the Marquee Club in Wardour Street to see the birth of bands such as Pink Floyd, The Rolling Stones and The Who. It was a very exciting time; everything seemed to be so new and daring. I wanted to be part of it.

It is indeed a bit sad now that Brian Rees cannot read this and hear me say, that in a way, he made it all happen. My expulsion had caused quite a furore, so much so that Mr Rees actually stood up in Assembly and explained his actions. Much graffiti had been daubed on the school walls and eventually I was allowed back just to sit my A-Levels ... "As long as you get your hair cut!"



Beryl's Lot (1973)



Confessions Of A Window Cleaner (1974)

This got a big laugh, including from Pickwick himself. This confession never deterred Mr Steane from getting me up to read long monologues from some of Shakespeare's great tragedies; I loved it. I would like to say here, it would have been an even better story if Pickwick had said,

"One day, your Bottom will be remembered forever." But he didn't!

Moving back to girls, briefly, Tony Stark and I discovered that a great way to attract female attention was by joining the Communist Party. Every Saturday we would stand outside the Top Rank, Watford, selling the Young Socialist, and achieved moderate success until one day we were picked up by Tony's father, an eminent Dentist, in his top-of-the-range Jaguar.

During the hiatus that followed my expulsion and while waiting at home to sit my A-Levels I had come to the notice of director Lindsay Anderson, a director I greatly admired, thanks again to the ubiquitous Pickwick. He had parcelled us off to The Royal Court, London to see his production of Max Frisch's "The Fire Raisers". We actually performed "The Fire Raisers" (directed by Pickwick) in the Great Hall. I played the Doctor of Philosophy who becomes an ape in Act 11. I was invited by Lindsay Anderson to screen test for a part in a film he was to make entitled "The Crusaders", later changed to "If...".

After several meetings it was decided I would be cast as "Keating", and required to film at Cheltenham College for the entire eight-week schedule. No university, no college, no Drama

"No university, no college, no Drama School would or could offer the education I got during that time, something Brian Rees would remind me of in years to come."

"Between 1968 and 1982 I made around 30 films, working in Hollywood and for an eclectic bunch of directors from Lindsay Anderson, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Franco Zefferelli and Pete Walker through to the madness of Norman Cohen and the extremely successful "Confessions of..." films."



Cool it Carol! (1970)



Coronation Street



Britannia Hospital (1981)

School would or could offer the education I got during that time, something Brian Rees would remind me of in years to come. Maybe to ease his conscience of his “regret”, I do not know. The film “If...”, of course, has become iconic. For me, it was strange to be a rebellious public school boy, then play a rebellious public school boy for £49 a week.

It was many years later, 1982, when we were dining at Warwick University where I had just performed the title role in Bertholt Brecht’s “The

“For me, it was strange to be a rebellious public school boy, then play a rebellious public school boy for £49 a week.”

28



The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (1982)



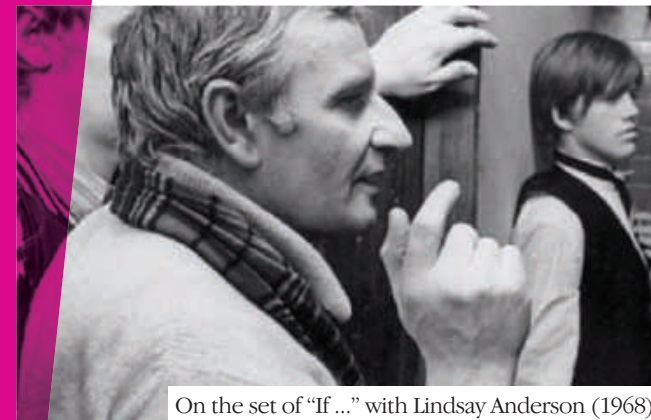
The Childcatcher, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (2005)



West End (1978)



Evening News Film Awards (1975)



On the set of “If ...” with Lindsay Anderson (1968)

“It was a mistake to expel you. You were guilty only of high spirits. Now I have to deal with pure evil, and I’ve seen it face-on”

Brian Rees



Stand Up Virgin Soldiers (1976)

Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui” that he scratched his head and admitted the following: “It was a mistake to expel you. You were guilty only of high spirits. Now I have to deal with pure evil, and I’ve seen it face-on”. It was an extraordinary confession, especially considering he was going through his own personal nightmare at Rugby School, where he was then Head Master.

After “If...” I was lucky enough to keep working consistently. Between 1968 and 1982 I made around 30 films, working in Hollywood and for an eclectic bunch of directors from Lindsay Anderson, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Franco Zeffereili and Pete Walker through to the madness of Norman Cohen and the extremely successful “Confessions of...” films.

On television I have made over 200 programmes, comedy/drama, situation comedy, drama and of course soaps like Coronation Street. For all the intimate details, you might like to purchase a copy of my fantastic autobiography “Confessions of Robin Askwith”. If you are an OMT, you might just find yourself in there. If you went to St Helen’s School or Northwood College you will almost certainly find yourself in there!

I have no idea what life is now like in an English public school but I know that it will never be like my time again. Good and bad. As for Brian Rees, we remained friends to the day he died. He would come to see everything I was appearing in, usually accompanied by John Steane, whether it was “Who goes bare?”, “Artuto Ui”, “Twelfth Night” or “Run for your Wife”. We would have dinner afterwards where the two of them would intellectualise the works of Ray Cooney, with references of course.

I will never know if it was a mistake, being expelled and being propelled straight into work aged 18, or how it would have all turned out had I taken up my place at Bristol to read English and Drama as planned. Who knows? But it has certainly been interesting...

The Head Porter

John Reynolds joined Merchant 'Taylors' in 1996 having previously run his own cleaning business. As Head Porter, he and his team are essential to the running of the school and know every inch of the 285 acre site. He looks back at his time at the school.

What did the school look like in the late-90s?

It was a very different place. There were no AstroTurf pitches, Economics and Politics were taught in a portakabin and there was no Reception as it is today - in fact there was a huge toilet block where the Undercroft now sits. Apparently it was the biggest block of toilets in the country and there was a lot of filming done in there, including the WH Smith's adverts with Nicholas Lyndhurst. In Music I can recall the school builder, Alan Costa, building the classroom at the back of the Recital Hall. Over the years there have been several major infrastructure projects like the Design Centre and Sir Edward Evans Geography Building as well as new Grounds Sheds and a new Deliveries Depot for the Porters, adjacent to the Head Master's garden.

What was the atmosphere like then?

I had never worked in a school so it was something of a culture shock. I was in awe of all the Masters, many of whom were much older than me - the Common Room was much older back then. In those days, the boys would walk down the left-hand side of the corridor. The Great Hall was set up differently with more tables by the stage. More recently, we lost the Monitors' table and the side tables for the JCR as there are now 930 boys in the school, an increase of over 100 from when I started. Another thing that struck me was that, along with Pullen's (still our official outfitter), Harrods would also come to the school so that boys could purchase school uniform, their van arriving resplendent in the famous green and gold livery.

In the late-90s we still had boarders in The Manor of the Rose. There were House tutors who lived there such as Stephen Cole, Patrick Wild and Geoff Colley with a Matron, Elizabeth Easter. The Manor was an incredibly tight-knit community.

There were bonfire nights for Guy Fawkes and Manor boys used to invite guests to the Dining Hall for an evening meal. It was invitation only and anyone from the staff could be invited. They used to pass a jug around and everyone used to drink out of it, while their neighbour would mimic guarding them with a ceremonial sword while they drank. The tradition was to put spirits of some kind into this jug; something that I observed when my wife and I were invited by one of the younger boarders. We ate superbly thanks to Val Cliss - then the Domestic Bursar - and after the meal, the chalice, referred to as the Loving Cup, began to be passed around. Everyone took a swig but I do remember my wife hesitating slightly before it was her turn.

What was your role then?

I was initially a full-time Cleaning Supervisor and then, after Mick Clamp passed away in 2004, I was asked to take over as Head Porter.

How would you describe your current role?

My main responsibilities are for the day and evening cleaning teams, security (shared with four others), and I order all stationery for the school. In total I manage 12 different budgets to keep the school ticking over. Covid-19 meant many people were furloughed including the rest of the Porters, so I was on my own looking after the school. It was an honour to be asked to look after the school at such a unique time. It was very quiet and, while normally you can't wait for the summer holiday, the place is too big to be empty. Four months was a long time to be without the Porters, the boys and the teaching staff.

That said, I did enjoy being part of the MTS staff effort to help the local community. With the DT department spearheading the production of NHS face shields I was able to drive the minibus to local care homes and hospices during the worst of the lockdown. On one day I opened my front



door and was surprised to see an OMT who had clearly become a doctor. He had come from Wexham Park Hospital to pick up some PPE and it was wonderful to see him after so many years. Like other medics he was leading the fight against the virus and it was sobering to hear his stories of life on the front line.

What are your favourite memories?

I am lucky that I enjoy my job. I have many fantastic memories of my time.

One of my favourite memories was long-time friend and recently-retired colleague, Gordon Jeffery, interrupting an assembly. With 800 boys sitting in silence and the Head Master in full flow, Gordon opened one of the two rear stage doors which existed at the time. Even Mr Gabitass was laughing! Gordon shut the door and disappeared double-quick! In the end, those doors were removed to enable the new screen at the back of the stage to be built.

Phab was always a great privilege to be involved with. Also, the big days like Doctors' Day, St Barnabas Day and the Triennial Service. I stand at the Head Master's corridor, welcome all the Governors, the Master and Court of the Company and escort them to the Great Hall. I used to also welcome pensioners from the Merchant Taylors' almshouses in Lewisham for tea at the school before the Carol Service. Former Chairs of Governors, Sir Geoffrey Holland and Christopher Hare, used to greet them as well - they were special days and the pensioners were hugely appreciative.

Also, I was once asked by Sir Geoffrey Holland and fellow Governor (and OMT) Peter Watkins to take them on a unique tour of the school. Of course, they knew the place well but they wanted to see the nooks and crannies or in their words 'places you wouldn't take a Chair of Governors'. So I took them to the loft space above the Great Hall where the Duke of Edinburgh's Award tents were drying out and showed them the view from the roof of the Great Hall. I also asked Langley Denhard, then Head of Maintenance, to take them into the heating ducts underneath the corridors. Perks of the job!

One of the other perks is that every day is different. One day I was performing some errands with Gordon as we walked past the classrooms that look onto the Rose Garden. Suddenly, a school bag came flying out of the window and we heard a teacher at full volume yell: "I don't care about your calculator!" I seem to recall that the subject was not Maths.

You must have fond memories of the Triennial Service ...

I do. It is a huge day for the school and there is an enormous amount of organisation which goes into it – led by Caron Evans-Evans for most of my time at the school. I can recall in 2005 it was especially important as the Lord Mayor, David Brewer, was also an OMT. There was a big fuss about his chair coming from Mansion House along with his sidekick, the Wandsman. In the end it went very smoothly. It is not all glamour, of

Triennial Service (2006)



course. In the old days we used to give the toilet attendant at Paternoster Square £20 to allow the boys to use the facilities.

How has it changed?

In terms of the Senior Common Room, the teachers have got much younger – as is maybe true of the profession more generally – and there are many more female teachers. The school still has a unique ethos which I hope it never loses.

Do you remember any muck-up days?

There've been a few but I do remember "Cows are Coming" from 2008. The boys had put signs all over the school which had made us think they were going to try to let the cows out at night and then let them roam all over the site. In the end, a small number of the boys piled into a pantomime cow suit and walked through the school including through a somewhat bewildered Rec Room (the old teachers' tea room). In 2006 I recall boys honing their business skills as they sold hamburgers on the peninsula by the school's entrance. 2009 was maybe when things got a little out of hand as boys threw smoke bombs from high up, including one at a startled Head of Upper School. When Stephen Wright put an end to these in 2012 I felt it was the right decision – times had changed.

Many boys will remember meeting you through being given the infamous Work Party punishment. What can you recall of this?

I used to manage this on Tuesdays after school. The boys would be given various tasks, such as putting the chairs up in classrooms, litter picking and clearing leaves. Sometimes there were too many boys. A few miscreants became regular customers and I got to know them by their first names. I liked to maintain standards where possible and would always ask the boys to tuck their shirts in, adjust their ties, etc.

Which staff do you remember most?

The school has obviously changed as there is now a greater turnover of staff. I have always been closest to those staff who gave a lifetime of service to the school. I was at Geoff Colley's funeral recently and, while it was a sad occasion, it was wonderful to see a great many of the old Masters: former Second Master Crispin Collier, David Critchley, David Andrews and Harry Latchman were all in attendance along with many others.

When have you been most stressed?

The work of the Porters is largely unseen as we work while all the teaching is happening and before school starts, especially. One of the most stressful times is in the last week before Christmas after the boys have gone home. We have very few days to get everything in order for the January trial exams before the school shuts down totally over Christmas.

A dramatic moment which will always stay in the memory was on the eve of Doctors' Day many years ago. With name tags all assigned to seats and everything in place, Gordon called me: he



said there was water pouring through the ceiling down into the Vestibule and by the War Memorial Roll of Honour. After stemming the flow, we worked through the night with school plumber, Fred Birchell, and managed to ensure everything was ready for the morning.

It has been a very tough year for your team losing both Michael Richards and Pete Pumilia. How have you coped this?

Both Michael and Pete were hugely valued and hardworking members of the Porters' team, both having given close to two decades' service. Their deaths were a terrible shock and the experience will never leave me. The Bursar's Office and Accounts Team offered the most outstanding support at a very difficult time to all of us – they were moments when the strength of the MTS community shone through.

What do you do at weekends?

I tend to go down to my house in Sussex by the beach, walk the dog, and I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren and my wife Carol. By coincidence, one of my neighbours when I bought the house turned out to be an OMT who had been at MTS in the 1940s. He sadly died soon after, but it was a real pleasure meeting him. He was a true gentleman and I was able to bring him copies of the Tylorian and Concordia, and hear his stories about the school, including walking on the frozen MTS lakes as a pupil.

Do you have any plans for retirement?

When I eventually retire, I will move to the south coast and enjoy life down there.

Merchant Taylors' and the plague

Registrar and former Head of History, *Jonny Taylor*, looks back at how Merchant Taylors' survived much earlier pandemics

Given that Merchant Taylors' School was founded in 1561 at Suffolk Lane in the heart of the City of London, it should come as no surprise that the school has endured several epidemics in its long history. In fact, records suggest that the school had to cope with outbreaks of plague in 1592, 1603, 1626, 1630, 1637 and 1666.

In 1592, the school closed in response to an outbreak and perhaps the biggest consequence of this was that the newly

appointed Head Master, William Smith, was immediately 'dismyssed for this tyme vntill the schollers be drawn together agayne'. One can only assume that, in the absence of any fee-paying scholars, the Merchant Taylors' Company exercised financial constraint without the benefit of any government furlough scheme.

In 1603, the plague was particularly virulent and the Head Master, William Hayne, sought the opinion of the Company on whether he should shut the school. The Company's reply that 'The Company houlding him to be A man of Judgm.t doe referre the same wholly to his own discrecon, And what he shal thinke fytt to be done the Company will allowe'. Such a response suggests that the members of the Company had already headed for the countryside as did most of the Scholars. Despite this, Hayne (possibly learning from William Smith's experience) decided to keep the School open. This led to a major loss of income for Hayne and he had to petition the Company for help, which they gave in the form of a grant of 20 marks – worth approximately £4,500 today.

The plagues of 1626 and 1630 had similar effects, the school's pupils stayed away and the Head Master, Nicholas Gray, wrote that he was 'forced to discontinew & give over for that tyme'. The Court's records suggest he was compensated with £20 on the first occasion at least. For the pupils, there was the concern that the Fellows of St John's College, Oxford would not visit the school to elect scholars from the school to the College – though the 1566 Statutes of the College suggest that these elections could be held in some place not far from the City.



Perhaps the most significant impact of the Plague was felt when the school had to close between 17th May 1636 and 19th October 1637. This fact can be seen on the list of Head Monitors by the stairs to the Great Hall. The school struggled to survive – no pupils joined until December 1637 when 33 scholars joined. It seems clear that the Company helped the school pull through: the Head Master, William Staple, received grants totalling £140 in five instalments – something like £16,500 in modern value. Even though the school was shut, Staple was praised for keeping the head form together – the Sixth Form – and giving them regular instruction without a precaution. This enabled four pupils to be elected scholars of St John's College. Nevertheless, once the school reopened, the Company had to dispense with the Deputy Usher (or Deputy Head) who sulked at the lack of promotion to Head Master, following Staple's own departure.

Interestingly, the Great Plague of London (1665) gets very little mention in the records of the Merchant Taylors' Company. The diarist Samuel Pepys noted that the Plague reached London

on 10th June and the school held its normal St Barnabas ceremony on 11th June, and fifteen boys joined the school. No-one joined thereafter until March 1666, when 11 boys took up places. However, the great disaster of the Fire of London was just around the corner and there were no further enrolments until March 1670. The heroism of the Head Master, John Goad, in saving the school's precious library of books (still in the school's archive today) and keeping the school going is a story in itself and best saved for another day.

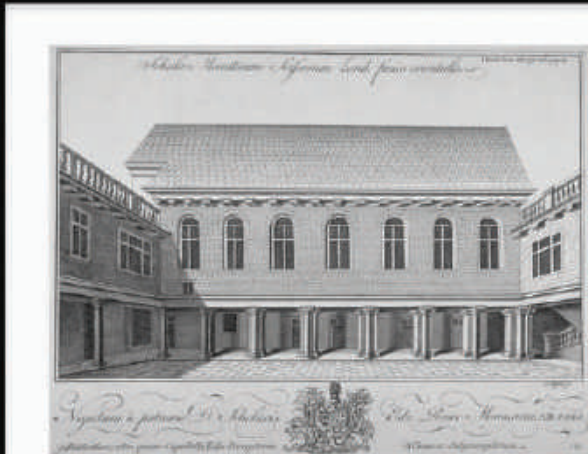
The school survived a turbulent century where epidemics were an existential threat to its existence. By the 18th century, Plague had diminished, so that in 1731 Daniel Defoe was to write 'Merchant Taylors' School is situated near Cannon Street, on St. Lawrence Pountney Hill. This school, I am told, consists of six forms, in which are three hundred lads, one hundred of whom are taught gratis, another hundred pay two shillings and sixpence per quarter, and the third five shillings per quarter; for instructing of whom there is a master and three ushers.'

Living with lockdown: a Merchant Taylors' archive project

The school is living through challenging times; the most significant challenge to education since the Second World War. The Archive has launched a major project to record what life has been like for all those in the Merchant Taylors' Community during this crisis. We would like you to share your memories with us while they are still fresh, so that we can document these times for future generations.

We are looking for a piece of writing up to 400 words long and/or a single photo that epitomises your experience of the lockdown. This is open to all members of the school community: OMTs, pupils, parents, staff and friends.

If you would like to submit something for the project or to find out more, then please email your memories and photos to jtaylor@mtsn.org.uk.



1629-30 HUMPHRY GREEN	1600
1630-31 THOMAS SNELLING	1601
1631-32 THOMAS SNELLING	1602
1632-33 GEORGE MILLER	1603
1633-34 HENRY WESTLEY	1604
1634-35 THOMAS WARD	1605
1635-36 THOMAS PAINTER	1606
THE SCHOOL WAS CLOSED FROM 17 MAY 1636 TO 19 OCT. 1637.	
1637-38 SAMUEL SMITH	1607
1638-39 WILLIAM CONYERS	1608
1639-40 FRANCES LOWNDES	1609
1640-41 LEWIS GRIFFITH	1610
1641-42 BENJAMIN NEEDLER	1611
1642-43 THOMAS WINNARD	1612
1643-44 WILLIAM MAINSTONE	1613
DANIEL BATCHELOR	1614
GARFORD	1615

Development Update

If you walk through the Music Department at the moment, you will hear individual boys practising their parts for the school orchestra. Until they are recorded, they will not get to hear the whole piece performed together. This seems to me to be analogous to many aspects of life at the moment. While I think we feel fortunate to work in a school, and therefore not be forced to work alone at home, there is still a lot missing from our ordinary school working day. A lot of which you can't really put your finger on until you sit and think of when you last saw a member of staff that you would normally see – in passing at least – every day. The same goes for OMTs. There are many OMTs that I would normally see on many different occasions during the year; others I may happen to bump into on the boundary of a cricket match. Very few have I seen so far in 2020.

Following the last edition of Concordia, we had a successful run of events, both social and career-focused, in January and February. March was set to be the start of a very busy season of events; I think we would have had at least 300 OMTs at various events in March alone, including a sold out City Network event, and our largest ever Afternoon Tea event. However, March's work turned into a series of cancellations. Then the school was closed. Then much of the Support Staff team were furloughed. It all went very quiet in April.

I was so grateful, therefore, to all the OMTs who got in contact with messages of support for the school, the boys (and for me), in response to the update emails I sent out during that first period of lockdown. While I always feel proud to work for Merchant Taylors', this period certainly heightened that sense of pride. I'm sure OMTs felt the same when they saw our staff and boys being featured on the BBC news for becoming a manufacturing hub for PPE. Not only that, but in true MTS fashion, our Head of D&T, Andrew Duffey, shared his expertise with other schools around the country, such that the impact was even greater. I felt pride in the way my colleagues and friends rose to the challenge of teaching remotely in such a short space of time; support staff adapting to new ways of working while supporting the



school; as well as members from all parts of our community volunteering to help.

Looking back to March, as we were cancelling our entire events programme, I defiantly – and naïvely – said to my team, “the one thing that I can't see being cancelled is the telephone campaign”. It turned out I was right, but for all the wrong reasons! It can only have been a week or two later when it became apparent that having a team of 13 callers and staff in a room at the school during July and August was simply not going to happen. Furthermore, at that stage we felt that fundraising in the grip of a pandemic may not be appropriate.

As the weeks went by, the technical issues we faced were surmounted by people much cleverer than me, and we realised we could go ahead. Whether we should go ahead or not was a question, as always, of balancing the rights of potential donors, with the beneficiaries' needs. The Head Master and I agreed that, with families potentially being forced to remove their sons from the school because of the financial impact of Covid-19, the beneficiaries' needs had only increased during the pandemic. As for the donors' rights, I hope we are always respectful, would never pressure anyone to make a donation, and always offer people the opportunity to opt out of a campaign in advance. Furthermore, in response to some smaller appeals for support for both bursaries and for materials to support the school's efforts

in producing PPE for front-line workers, we had received a very positive response. We therefore agreed that we should go ahead.

The strength of support we had from our community was incredible, and certainly vindicated our decision. While it was like no other campaign we have run before, it was our most successful telephone campaign ever, with 191 of you giving over £160,000 in two weeks to projects like the MTS Together Fund. The impact has already been huge, enabling us to keep 13 boys at the school who, without support, may have had to leave. You can read more about it in a separate article on page 41.

Since the telephone campaign, life has returned to normality in some senses: the teachers and boys are back on site, and the Development Team have returned and we are running events and producing communications, albeit all our events are virtual. The MTS Together series of online events has got off to a great start. We have already run four at the time of writing, and they have been very well attended. OMTs and parents who have missed the usual in-person events have ‘returned’ and caught up with friends at the events. We have also had OMTs attending from Canada and the USA, which is a definite benefit of the online format! I have also been delighted to welcome Governors, former staff and other friends of the school to the series. Along with online careers events, I think

there is every chance that this series will be here to stay, even when it is possible to gather again. You can read more about the events we have already held and what is to come on page 45.

When it is finally possible, I very much look forward to welcoming the Class of 2020 to their first OMT events. Ordinarily by this time of year they would have had three opportunities to get together; they have had none. They haven't even had a Leavers' Day and Ball. When the day comes, they certainly deserve a warm welcome back to Sandy Lodge.

I should like to thank my team for their support and dedication over the course of this challenging year. We look forward to working with Hamish Stewart, who joins us in the New Year. He brings a wealth of experience of development in the university sector.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the school this year by making donations, volunteering, supporting our events programme, or by staying in touch. We are so grateful to you all.

I hope it will not be long before we can welcome you back to Sandy Lodge and to all our various events around the country and the world. Like hearing the full orchestra perform together again, this is really something to look forward to. In the meantime, please do stay in touch. Look out for forthcoming virtual events; we hope there will be something for everyone.

Roll Of Benefactors

Thank you to everyone who has supported the school since September 2019, to the members of the 1561 Foundation who have made provision for the school in their will, and to a number of other anonymous benefactors. You make a wonderful difference to the lives of the pupils and staff, and we are extremely grateful.

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Telephone Campaign 2020

In August we ran our fifth telephone fundraising campaign. With a slight change of date and a complete change of approach, it turned out to be the most successful the school has ever run by pretty much every measure.

Ordinarily, we would conduct our campaign with a team of 13 OMTs being supervised at the school. Clearly this was not going to be possible in the summer of 2020. Buffalo Fundraising Consultants, with whom we have worked on all our campaigns and who have been an excellent partner to the school over the years, were forced by the pandemic to transform their business in the space of a few months to get themselves in a position to be able to offer their clients an entirely off-site solution. It was then just a question of whether we trusted them to deliver the logistics and whether we believed in our community's strength of feeling and support for the school. The latter wasn't in doubt; but we just happened to be the first English school ever to run a remote campaign, which was daunting.

As usual, we recruited a team of 13 OMTs as callers for the two-week campaign, but this year they worked remotely, in their homes, supported by us online through Zoom and Google Chat.

This team of 13 did the school proud with their approach to the online training and the calling sessions thereafter. Despite not setting foot inside the school grounds over the course of the campaign, and missing some of the social elements that would normally exist as part of

the calling team – Quad Soccer in their breaks, for instance – they embraced the role and the challenges it presented; they were focused on the job for the duration of the campaign, made so many amazing connections with fellow OMTs, and raised an extremely impressive amount for the school. I know they also took a lot from the experience, especially the invaluable careers advice that OMTs and parents gave them.

We spoke to 575 OMTs, parents and friends of the school over the two week period. We really appreciate everyone who took the time to talk to our team and are so grateful to the 191 people who decided to support the school and who gave over £160,000. Your support for the MTS Together fund has already helped 13 families of boys who otherwise may have had to leave as a result of financial hardship emanating from the pandemic. Further support for entrance bursaries will enable us to offer more places to deserving candidates in September. You also supported the Arts, Sport and the Head Master's Discretionary Fund. These gifts will all make such a difference to the lives of the pupils and staff at the school.

Thank you to our campaign calling team of Myles Alexander-Bryan (2013-2020), Yasar Cohen-Shah (2011-2018), Ronan Haskurti (2011-2018), Darsh Jani (2011-2018), Brij Kantaria (2014-2019), Jake Keisner (2012-2017), Max Kendix (2012-2019), Fore Obatusin (2010-2017), Niam Patel (2015-2020), Rutvik Patel (2011-2018), Siddhant Patki (2011-2018), Samir Sardana (2013-2020) and Charlie Woolley (2013-2018).



Lord Sacks

Events Roundup

This time last year, the calendar for 2020 was brim-full, with plans for a number of new events as well as a busy summer of cricket, the Triennial Service and firm favourites such as the OMT Society Annual Dinner. How things change; Covid-19 caused us to spend much of March 2020 cancelling in-person events. Since school returned in September, we have launched MTS Together, a series of online events for all our community to join and more details can be found on the following pages.

During winter 2019/2020, before the requirement to social distance, we enjoyed some very happy in-person events. At the end of December, we welcomed donors and volunteers to our Benefactors' Day where guests toured the school and enjoyed meeting some of our boys at a reception in the Exam Hall before taking their seats at the annual Carol Service.

Later in December, OMTs from the Class of 2019 came back to school for the first time for pizza and drinks in the SCR. While we're not able to invite leavers from the Class of 2020 back to school yet, they will be a priority for us as soon as restrictions are lifted.

In January this year, we assisted the school's careers department to host their annual Career Inspirations morning for the Fourth Form; an opportunity for Year 9 boys to hear from OMTs who left school only a few short years ago. Careers as diverse as PR, medicine, law and the Civil Service were represented. We're very grateful for the support that our OMTs give to the careers programme, and this support is increasingly important given the paradigm shift in the workplace brought about by the pandemic.

On the 6th March, we were proud to host the former Chief Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, in the Great Hall to discuss his newly published

book, "Morality: Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times."

At first impression, the message of the strength of community against the surge of individualism seemed difficult to portray against a backdrop of what we thought we knew about Lockdown before it was imposed upon us. And yet, Rabbi Sacks compellingly described the shift in focus from "we" to "I" over the 20th century.

Tracing the seismic shift in relationships since the advent of the internet and the Information Revolution, Lord Sacks reflected on the amount of time that we spend as individuals and the impact that has on us and society. His message is of the importance of connections and community. He used the example of The Beatles who conquered the world as the identically styled "Fab Four" in 1964 and argued that their creative peak was during their most close and collaborative years which, he argued, petered out not long after each began to go their individual ways. As for a solution, Lord Sacks urged compassion and kindness, listening with reason even when a view differs from one's own.

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death of Lord Sacks on 7th November 2020 and are very grateful that we had the opportunity to hear him speak on the eve of the national lockdown.

The final dinner that squeaked through before the March lockdown was the Kent, Sussex and Surrey Dinner. It was an enjoyable evening attended by the Head Master, 2019/20 President General Sir Richard Barrons and OMTs from the 1950s to the 2000s. Looking at the current restrictions, the Kent dinner may not be back in the calendar until 2022 but, like all other dinners and lunches regrettably cancelled this year, it will be all the more welcome when we can gather again.



The Head Master and guests



Peter Stott (1956-1960) in Conversation with Philip Newfield (1958-1963)



Benefactors' Day Reception



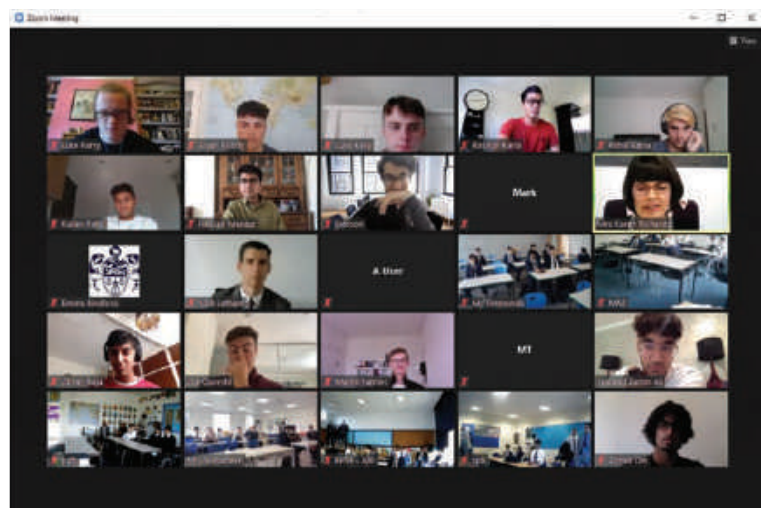
Mr Dipesh and Mrs Annie Shah



Fifths student discussing the Geographical Society



David Thornberry (1981-1986) and Harvey Cammell (1981-1986)



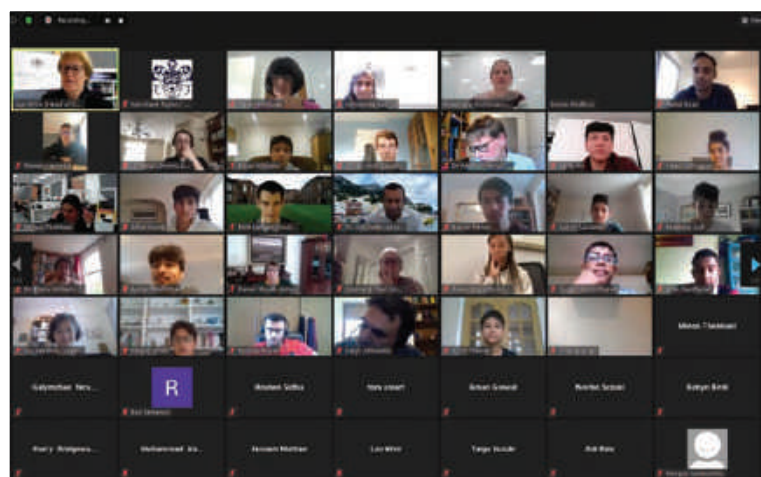
Careers programme goes online

At the start of the autumn term, we began to host a number of online careers events. The boys have benefited from hearing the experiences of our undergraduate OMTs at the University Choices afternoon, and OMTs and parents in healthcare professions generously gave their time at the recent virtual Medicine and Dentistry Convention, for which over 100 attendees joined us online.

Before we organised these events, there was concern that the limitations of hosting networking and Q&A sessions would make for less engaging events. However online events also create opportunities and the boys benefit

from a much broader range of experiences, given that physical distance becomes no barrier. For example, at the University Choices event, despite it being during term-time at some universities, OMT undergraduates joined from Edinburgh, Durham and Sheffield, as well as those universities closer to home.

We're all looking forward to hosting events in person at school but there is no doubt that online events in some form will continue to play a very useful part in the careers programme in the future. Thank you to all the OMTs and parents who have helped to inspire our boys with their careers advice over the last few months!



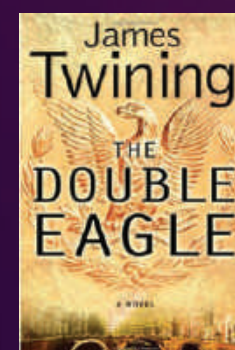
MTS Together



You will have read on page 41 that the financial effects of the pandemic have been felt by many of our current parents and has increased requests for bursary support by some number. The response to the 2020 Telephone Campaign has enabled us to agree to so many of these requests and to keep the MTS community together.



Lord Faulkner



James Twining

In keeping with this ethos, in October we launched a series of online events for our whole community to participate in; talks which stimulate, inform and entertain. To date, we have held talks as varied as The House of Lords: Dispelling the Myths, by Lord Faulkner (1959-1964), Remembrance with Paul Collins (1953-1959) and David Ellis (1988-1993), a presentation by Chris Hirst (1958-1965) on his excellent research into why Merchant Taylors' School was included in the "Clarendon Commission", and an Introduction to Mindfulness by current parent, Dr Afrosa Ahmed. All of these talks can be viewed on the Merchant Taylors' School YouTube channel.



Dr Afrosa Ahmed

At the time of printing, we were also looking forward to hearing Darren Richman and Pat Sharp speak about Pat's "sorta-biography", Rerun the Fun and a recording will be available through the YouTube channel. See page 46 for Darren's description of how the book came about.

The New Year will bring more online events and details can be found by clicking on the Events page. On the 13th January, look out for "Writing a Wrong: Art Theft as Inspiration". Governor, OMT and author James Twining (1984-1991) will reveal the world of international art theft through the eyes of his fictional character, Tom Kirk, the world's greatest art thief!

We hope also to bring you more news about the annual Dinosaurs' Dinner, currently planned for the 27th October 2021 and a virtual afternoon tea – please continue to look out for further communication by email or on the website about future events either in person or online.

Class Notes

Re-run The Fun

The idea for Re-run the Fun: My Life as Pat Sharp came to me about five years ago. The concept was that iconic '90s radio DJ and television presenter Pat Sharp could produce an almost entirely fictional autobiography. Memoir is always an act of memory and never a completely faithful reproduction of life so why not go one step further and make it all up?

I ran the idea past my writing partner, Luke Catterson, and his response was exactly the one I needed to hear: "Sounds good, let's do it." There was, however, one other person I had to speak to and Pat invited me for breakfast in early 2016 so we could talk things through.

The Fun House legend and fellow OMT is the patron saint of self-deprecation and was on board immediately, suggesting lines ("It was then that I realised I had a bright future behind me") and generally revelling in the idea. Pat had never wanted to write an autobiography because he doesn't believe his life has been especially interesting or noteworthy, but he loved the concept of a sorta-biography. He even suggested the title, "Re-run the fun" being the words he uttered when they cut to instant replays during a decade hosting the greatest kids' show of the 1990s.

The writing began in earnest the day after David Bowie died in January 2016 as we took the rough timeline of Pat's career but invented everything beyond the basics. We decided to present Pat as a figure akin to Zelig or Forrest Gump, constantly popping up

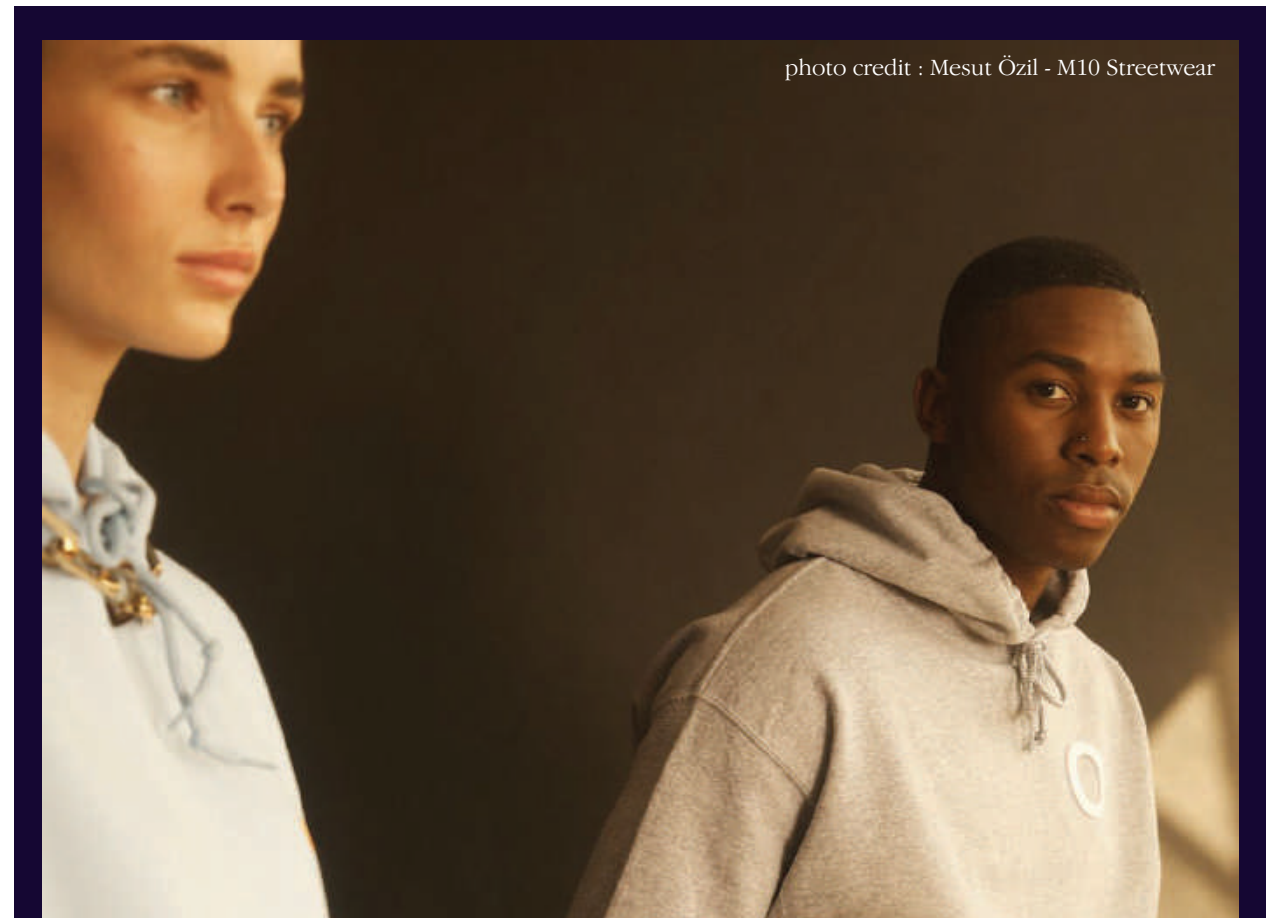
during the key cultural moments of the last 30 years from the Brits to the Berlin Wall. Anywhere the mulleted icon could conceivably have been, we gave him a starring role. As comedy obsessives, our primary aim was to cram in as many jokes as possible.

In late 2019 we found an agent and in later 2019 he found a publisher. The book was released in early November of this year (on the very day the second lockdown began and bookshops closed) and I braced myself for responses ranging from apathy to antipathy. Instead, we were overwhelmed to receive praise from the likes of Greg James and Nish Kumar, while GQ, The Huffington Post and The Guardian were equally effusive, the latter calling it the funniest book of the year.

I've dreamed of having a book published since I was writing sketches at school and Re-run the Fun is easily the thing I've worked hardest on. As a spoof memoir, it requires no knowledge of its subject beyond the fact that he had a mullet, presented a TV show for kids called Fun House and is/was a DJ. As an added bonus, readers will spot a

chapter set at Merchant Taylors' early on in the book. If that's not enough then rest assured this is the warts and all story of a life lived just about in sight of the top – the highs, the lows and the hair tips.

Darren Richman (1996-2003)



Aaron Francis (2008-2015) creates skincare products OURSKIN

Since graduating from the University of Birmingham, Aaron has been working with the Prince's Trust to build a skincare brand accessible to teenage boys.

"My dream is to build a brand of products for young, sensitive and acne-prone skin, while also using my platform as a model and YouTuber to provide tutorials and information regarding self-care to young men across the UK and Europe."

Launching in April 2021, Aaron can be followed on Instagram @ourskin.men

Martin Booth (1995-2000) showcases parts of Bristol not usually featured in guidebooks.

Martin and former newspaper colleague, photographer Barbara Evripidou, have pulled back the curtain to reveal dozens of fascinating and eccentric destinations in "111 Places in Bristol That You Shouldn't Miss" published by Emons Verlag.

Already in its second edition, it can be found in bookshops and online for a price of £12.99 @beardedjourno



Martin Booth with his daughters and signed copies of his new book

Class Notes

Happy Birthday to our OMT Centenarians!

Bill Sheppard (1933-1936)

Bill Sheppard celebrated his 100th birthday on the 11th February 2020. "Bill left Merchant Taylors' School in 1936", writes his son, Tim. "There have been many stories regaled over the years, but he does remember vividly, that his Mother would come into his room with five starched collars for the week ahead. Linked to the collars was the story that boys would have blobs of blotting paper and would endeavour to flick the blobs onto other boys' collars and then enjoy the fact that the starch would drip down the boy's neck!

He had a wonderful day and it gave him great joy to receive over 80 greetings including the telegram from The Queen, a letter from the Prime Minister and a card from the Head Master of Merchant Taylors' School, Simon Everson."



Douglas Bull (1933-1938)

Douglas Bull celebrated his 100th birthday on the 23rd October. Arriving in September 1933, Douglas was among the first boys to join Merchant Taylors' School on its new site at Sandy Lodge.

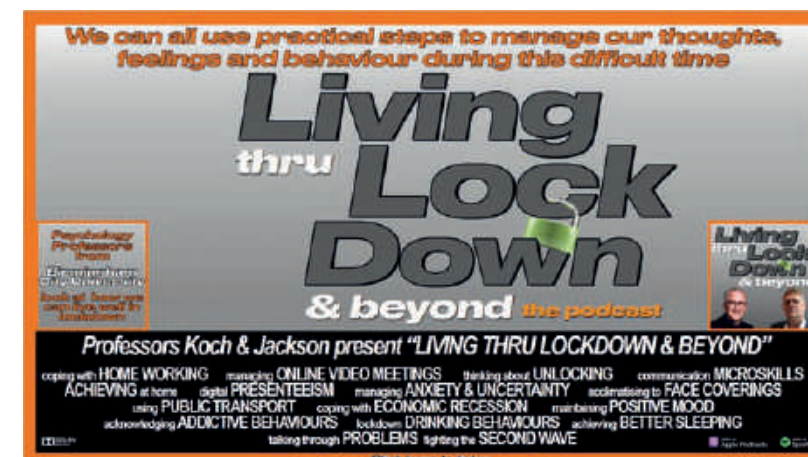
Douglas's son, Peter, says his father loved his time at school, particularly practical subjects, science and sport. His main interest was rugby, in which he played as a forward for the 1st XV. He also played squash, cricket and football. "He made some good friends and especially remembers Head Master, Mr Birley, and his form teacher, Mr Lummis, with affection".



Fox, J. Rae, D. G. Bull, C. A. W. Weston, P. A. Newnham, P. C. Gardner, D. T. H. C. R. Foss, H. Harold, F. J. Fowles, R. A. Bishop, D. White, G. M. Chiles, R. A. Haskinson.

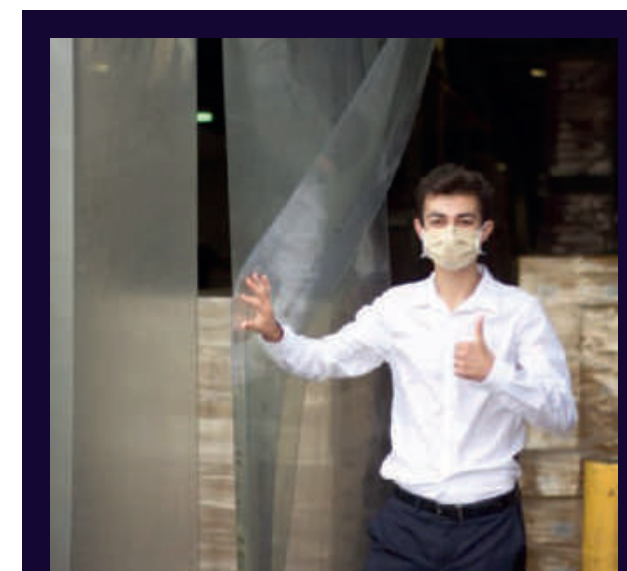
"Living thru Lockdown"

Hugh Koch (1964-1969) is a Chartered Psychologist and Visiting Professor of Psychology and Law at Birmingham City University. He has collaborated on a series of podcasts aimed at helping university students and colleagues to live well in lockdown, examining areas as broad as achieving better sleep, and acclimatising to face coverings. He also produces a weekly blog which can be found at <http://www.pibulj.com/content/law-journal-summaries/news-position-1/5089-use-your-resilience-to-manage-your-coronavirus-risk-dr-hugh-koch>



OMT donates plasma to help fight Covid-19

Steve Arliss (1979-1985) fully recovered from Covid-19 after contracting it during the first wave. He subsequently volunteered for the NHS convalescent Covid blood plasma donation programme. His initial antibody levels were high enough to be helpful, and he has since donated five times and will continue to donate weekly as long as his antibody levels remain high enough.



Introducing Signature Masks

Lancaster University Business Management undergraduate, James Eid (2012-2019), began selling disposable face masks on campus before the March lockdown. The procurement costs rocketed as the pandemic grew and so Mark looked for an alternative product that was made in Britain. Since then his venture has expanded into Signature Masks, an online shop where he provides affordable face masks available in a variety of colours for all. Following the devastating port explosion in Beirut on 4th August, Mark supported relief efforts by donating masks to Lebanon.

Tony Bell (1952-1957) died on 16th November 2019 aged 80

Tony, or At or Atty to some, but more correctly Anthony John Graham Bell, was born in 1939 in Croydon, his family moving from there to Roxeth, Middlesex, where he and his brother Martin, also an OMT, grew up.

He was educated firstly at Heathfield School for Girls Kindergarten, St Keverne, (where he was the only boy!), then at Quainton Hall Preparatory School in Harrow, progressing to Merchant Taylors' in 1952. He went up the Classical side, finishing in the Sixth Form, and on the way collecting accolades as a first-rate prop on the rugby field, a stalwart in the First Fifteen, and gracing the Prompters' Table.

I cannot say that we were great friends at school. I was on the Modern Side, we never shared the same form, and were in different houses and I never progressed further than the Third Fifteen. However, as luck would have it, on leaving Taylors' which we both did in 1957, our career paths converged. We both went into the law as articled clerks. Tony was offered a place at St John's College, Oxford, but preferred to start his business life in the law and was articled to Jimmy Hughes of Beddington Hughes & Hobart in the West End and of Swatton Hughes & Co in North Harrow (where he spent most of his business life), while I was articled to a partner in a small West End practice.

We qualified as Solicitors in 1962 and 1963 respectively. Tony went on to become a partner with his old firm, while I said a thankful farewell to the daily commute, and became an assistant with a rival firm, Lynch Hall & Hornby in Central Harrow, also eventually becoming a partner, and so our paths, inevitably, started to cross. Indeed, in the early 1990s during a particularly bad recession, our firms decided to amalgamate and so we then also became partners.

But this was a long time in the future, and going back to our formative years, as we were also regular devotees of Durrants, its sports facilities and comforts – particularly the bar – we began to see much more of each other and became firm friends.

Tony married Margaret in 1968, and for 30 years they and their children, Jim and Phil, lived in Chesham Bois, moving



after 30 years to Amersham, and then to Bothel in Cumbria in 2004.

Another great friend of ours, who also sadly died this year, was Colin Harris OMT, married to Wendy, and all three of us had two sons. Our wives also became good friends. I am not terribly clear how it came about, but the six of us started to dine out on regular occasions. On one early occasion, lobster must have been on the menu, because we called ourselves the Homardians. Tony even managed to acquire, I know not how, the skeleton of a lobster, which always adorned the table on these occasions, much to the bemusement of catering staff. The skeleton even bore a name, Ephraim!

Tony's great prowess was as a prop on the rugby pitch, destroying front row opposition on a regular basis for OMTs. He made 380 first team appearances between 1958 and 1978. He also got the chance to play on the same pitch as his sons, Jim and Phil, before retiring.

My fondest memory of those halcyon rugby-filled days was an occasion when, for some strange reason, Tony and his long-time partner-in-front-row-crime, Geoff Shilling, appeared for the Lambs propping me as hooker playing away against the London Irish Wild Geese at Sunbury in the first match of the season. The very first scrum collapsed. In the ensuing melee, I received a punch to

a private place, causing considerable discomfort. Tony laconically remarked that it would not happen again. The scrum was reset, and duly collapsed, revealing one of the opposing props lying on the ground in a condition requiring him to be escorted from the field, Tony bearing an unholy grin!

His retirement was, sadly, marked by a very serious decline in his health, both physical and mental, and indeed his last years were an enormous burden, not only to himself, but also to his devoted wife and family.

He died peacefully in his sleep on 16th November with Margaret, Phil and Jim by his bedside. His funeral was held on 29th November on a glorious sunny day at Carlisle Crematorium, attended amongst many others, by OMTs Tony Wright, Richard Burt, Tommy Willcox, Dick Clack, Jeremy Gaskell – resplendent in OMT blazer – and me, and many members of the North Harrow mafia.

I will miss his hearty laugh, his bushy eyebrows – which he steadfastly refused to have trimmed – and will never forget him. He was one-in-a-million, a wonderful playmate, bon viveur, expert on cream buns, companion and partner, a constant source of laughter and merriment. Farewell old friend!

Peter Lever (1951-1957)

John David Blumsom (1946-1951) died on 19th November 2020 aged 86

John was born in December 1932, to Tom and Joan Blumsom. Their home was in a quiet road in Purley and he was joined, in due course, by his two sisters, Sheila and Jennifer. Tom worked for his father in the family business and they all enjoyed a happy and peaceful life with holidays on the south coast. In fact, that is where they were when war was declared.

Following in his father's footsteps (Tom had been at Charterhouse Square), John went to Merchant Taylors' at Sandy Lodge as a boarder in The Manor of the Rose in 1946. During his time there, he proved to be a good all-rounder – in class and in all his sports activities. He played fives and squash, cricket and rugby, the latter in the first XV.

This was followed by doing National Service in the Queen's Royal Regiment (the West Surreys) and the Royal West Africa Frontier Force, serving in Nigeria and Germany. On leaving the Army, he transferred to the Territorial Army with the Queen's Royal Regiment TA, whose drill hall was in Bermondsey. Later, when John and Jill moved to Bedfordshire, he transferred to the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment TA. Before he retired from this, he was fortunate enough to receive his TD from the Queen Mother, their Colonel in Chief.

While he had been away, John's parents had moved the family home to Little Chalfont, from where he immediately enrolled as an articled clerk with a firm of Chartered Accountants in the City. He embarked on five years' study alongside his full-time job there.

It was about this time that he met Jill Paul, who lived a few doors down the road in Chalfont. They were married in 1957, and in 1959 they bought their first house in Barton-le-Clay in Bedfordshire, where Giles, David, William, and Alix were born. Then the family moved to Berkhamsted where, almost immediately, Lizzie arrived to keep Alix company with their three big brothers.

The reason for the move was that John, after qualification, had taken a job with Electrolux in Luton. He then went on to Hambros Bank in London in 1971 where he remained until his retirement in 1992. Not ready to give up at the ripe young age of 60, he went on to work for Fairbridge, a charity helping disadvantaged children and now part of the Prince's Trust, until he was 71.

His family meant everything to John. He was always supportive of the children's endeavours and provided wise and thoughtful counsel to them without

obviously telling them what to do. He had the knack for quietly guiding them away from bad ideas, which usually worked. When the children grew up, they all came home with wives and husbands, and then their own children, all of whom Jill and John welcomed with open arms. There was always such a lot of fun and laughter and the family grew up very much enjoying John's wonderful dry sense of humour. He was much loved by his grandchildren who all have wonderful memories of time spent in his company.

John continued his military connections by serving on the Hertfordshire committee of the Army Benevolent Fund for over twenty years, the last eighteen of them as Chairman. For his tireless work with the ABF, he was awarded an OBE by Her Majesty the Queen in 2003.

When John retired completely in 2004, he and Jill were able to travel the world, visiting three of the children who lived abroad at that time, and also went on some interesting and enjoyable cruises. However, Parkinson's had caught up with him and eventually started taking its toll. It led to some great frustration over time, but he never once complained. He was determined to fight on and keep all his activities going as long as possible. He was an intensely principled and loyal family man. He strongly believed in providing a helping hand to others less fortunate than himself and his strong dedication to work and earning a good living set an example to all the family.

But the longest, enduring thread was his continuing connection and support of the Old Merchant Taylors' Society. When he had finished his National Service, he joined immediately and for years played in the Rugby First XV. He also played squash and cricket for some time, not forgetting his golf involvement. There was a period when family commitments seemed to take up a great deal of time, but he and Jill supported the Society as much as possible. John's proudest time was when he was elected as President for a year, which he thoroughly enjoyed. His great sadness was that his father never knew about it. He and Jill continued to support as many social activities as they could until, sadly, it was no longer possible.

Giles Blumsom



Gavin Brown (1947-1951)

died on 7th March 2020 aged 85

I was appointed Head Master of Merchant Taylors' almost 15 months in advance and at times it felt as if I had been bought and tucked away in a drawer to be forgotten for a while, as I wrestled with excitement and anxiety in equal measure. During this time, as an apprehensive new Head Master, about to join an outstanding school, it was Gavin who, with Tim, was unfailingly kind and reassuring to Fiona and myself. Of course Gavin and I had a love of rugby in common, though Gavin had retired, I think, before I began a series of confrontations with the OMTRFC.

Above all, however, I was getting to know someone with natural modesty, enormous common sense, his own kind of gruff charm, a lack of pretentiousness, and, above all at that time, a real capacity to sense how others might feel. It was reassuring to meet someone so approachable, so welcoming, with his feet firmly planted on the ground.

I had been at the school just one or two years when the Merchant Taylors' Company decided to bring the governance of the school in line with the sort of demands and pressures that

all schools were coming under. The Company appreciated the need for an OMT, universally respected, who was close to the pulse of the OMT Society and who could interpret the views of members to the School Committee. The momentum that would lead to the OMTs' move from Croxley Green to Sandy Lodge was beginning to roll. Gavin's insight and steady, sensible thinking were of enormous benefit during that exciting and tricky period.

Gavin was asked to liaise in particular with our large support staff, and I know that his practical nous and sympathetic understanding were highly appreciated. He was an invaluable governor, in fact, and of course hugely committed to the OMT Society and the school, to whom he gave unselfish service over his entire life.

His son Gavin recalls the friendship that his father built with successive Head Masters. I can vouch for that. I never doubted that Gavin was Merchant Taylors' through and through, and the incarnation of all that is most important about the school and the Society.

Jon Gabitass



Geoffrey Colley (SCR 1971-2013)

died on 25th December 2019 aged 71

In a few short words, I cannot possibly do justice to my dear friend...and so – as he would have done for me – I will try and celebrate his memory with some of the more fun times that we enjoyed together.

It all began in the early '70s when Geoff joined the school, bringing his skills to the PE department to complement mine. He was particularly talented at hockey, cricket, gymnastics and golf, and these fitted in perfectly with mine – rugby....and rugby.

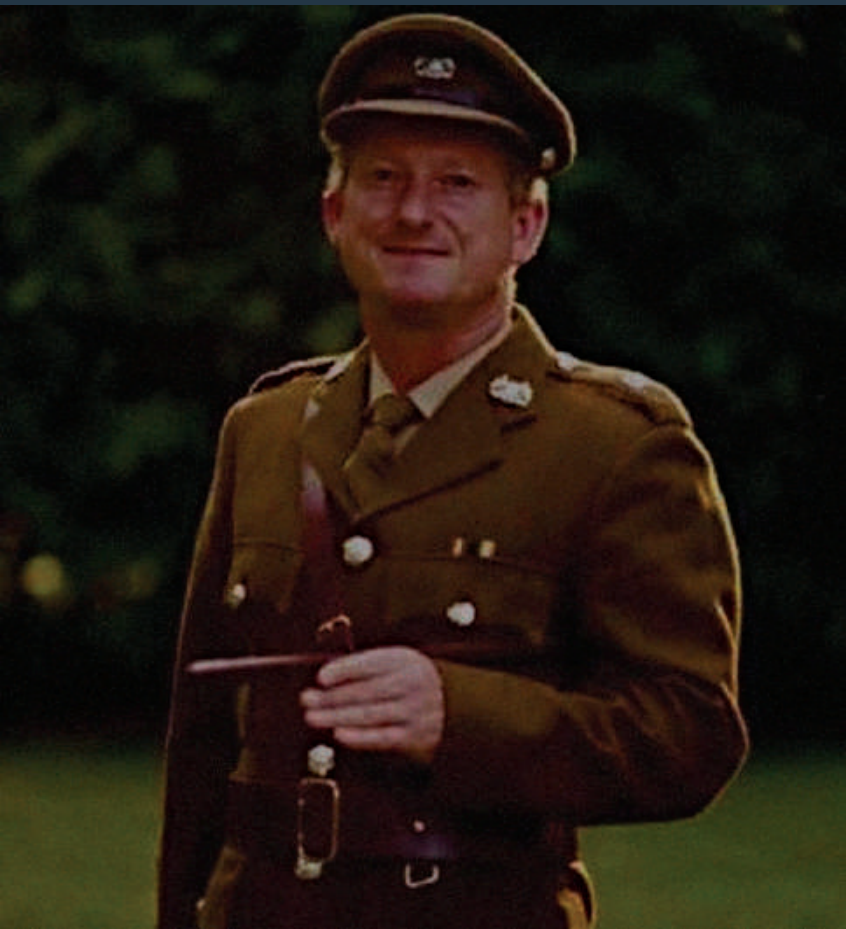
His array of skills was used to good effect, along with his humorous delivery, both in the classroom and sports hall; his humour was a hallmark of his style throughout his teaching career.

It soon became clear that life with Geoff was going to be different. He was an addictive joker...a constant whistler, who greeted you, not with "Good Morning", but with "Have you heard the one about...?"

However, he also brought a degree of trepidation to entering the PE office. It could be Vaseline on all the door knobs... shaving foam in your trainers.... itching powder in your speedos ...or when you opened your filing cabinet drawer, exploding fluorescent pink unmentionables!

We were not only colleagues but also neighbours, living in the small community at the bottom of Askew Road, first with the Prescotts and then the Trebbles. Our children grew up together and enjoyed a wonderful childhood, with all the school's facilities and playing fields at their disposal. My daughter reflected on Geoff's impact on her: "He was a total legend, a prankster with the best laugh, but also capable of delivering an almighty rollicking if need be". My son recalled, "He taught me to bowl spinners, to hit a golf ball and to blow raspberries with my armpit. He was bulletproof, could fix anything and always with a grin on his face; he was like a second Dad".

In those early days, the Senior Common Room was filled with staff nicknames, and there are many colleagues who will always be remembered by theirs. I won't



embarrass everyone, but just, give you a flavour, there was: Hot Rocks, Tonka, Zappy and Bodger and, of course, the unforgettable Action Man. Geoff and I, as a pair, did not escape this tradition. We were, at different times: Laurel and Hardy, Little and Large, but most memorably perhaps, Batman and Robin. Perhaps that should have been Batman and the Joker!

One of the most memorable of Geoff's jokes took place one Doctors' Day, when the Merchant Taylors' Court and their ladies are invited to lunch on the final day of the Autumn Term. We were all "suited and booted" and Geoff was proudly displaying a new tie. It was a rather snazzy navy affair with an all-over motif of golden anchors, on top of each one was perched a capital "W"! How did he get away with it?!

Geoff also had a craving for tomato ketchup. The story goes that one day he and Lesley were in a rather upmarket restaurant and when his main course arrived, he politely asked

the waiter if there was any ketchup available. This rather shocked the waiter, who nevertheless retreated to the kitchen, returning with the smallest imaginable pot of ketchup on a tiny saucer. Placing it in front of Geoff, he turned to leave, but Geoff called him back. Geoff looked at the tiny pot and then at the waiter, lifted the pot to his lips and took a sip. Smiling, he looked at the waiter and said "We'll have a bottle, please!"

Throughout all the years that I knew Geoff, we were many things to one another. Opponents, partners, teammates, colleagues and firm friends. He will always be an unforgettable part of my life.

When I next hear the distant rumble of thunder, will I think, "is that rain on the way? Or has Geoff just got St. Peter again with his whoopees cushion?!"

We shall miss him.

John Pallant

David Faulkner (1950-1952)

died on 16th November 2020 aged 86

My brother, David Faulkner, who has died aged 86, was a distinguished career civil servant from 1959 to 1992, serving mostly in the Home Office before becoming an Oxford academic, a trustee of numerous charities and the author of books on criminal justice, better government, civil renewal and public service reform.

His ambition in the Home Office was to establish a humane and just criminal justice system and he worked towards that as head of the department's prison department, trying to reduce the size of the jail population and advocating for alternatives to prison to be seen as socially productive, rather than soft options.

After he retired from the Home Office, with the rank of deputy secretary, he became senior research associate at the University of Oxford's Centre for Criminological Research, and a fellow of his old college, St John's. He was also chair of the Howard League for Penal Reform, a trustee of the Thames Valley Partnership, and, with Lord (Rodney) Elton, helped to run the charity Divert, which aims to keep children out of crime and persuade magistrates to prefer non-custodial sentences. He knew more about juvenile justice systems than anyone.

David's passion away from his work was railways. He built an enormous model railway in the loft of his house in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire, and had an encyclopedic knowledge of

timetables and history. I interviewed him last year for an oral history project about his recollections of rail travel. Every journey was recalled in meticulous detail.

David was born in Peking (Beijing), where our father, Harold, was manager of the Chartered Bank. Our mother, Mabel (née Riley), had gone out to teach at Raffles school in Singapore, where they met and married in 1932. The family left China in 1937 after the Japanese invasion, and David spent a lot of the second world war at our grandparents' home in Cradley in the shadow of the Malvern Hills, which he grew to love and returned to many times during his life.

Our father became manager of the bank in Manchester, and David went to Manchester Grammar School, followed by Merchant Taylors' School, after the family moved south in 1950. He studied classics and philosophy at Oxford (securing a double first), did two years' national service as a second lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps, and then went to the Home Office as a fast stream entrant.

In 1961 he married Sheila Stevenson, whom he met at the Home Office while she was a secretary there. She survives him, as do their children, Martin and Rosemary, and five grandchildren, Louise, David, Jonathan, Heather and James.

Lord Faulkner of Worcester (1959-1964)



- Martin Beresford (1948-1955) died on 14th January 2019
- Julian Britt (1983-1988) died March 2019
- Peter Goodford (1946-1951) died on 10th May 2019
- James Carter (1947-1952) died on 26th June 2019
- William Bent (1947-1952) died on 22nd August 2019
- Herbert Hackett (1932-1939) died on 10th December 2019
- George Krasker (1947-1952) died on 26th December 2019
- Paul Houghton (1949-1953) died 2020
- Terence Lynch (1955-1960) died 2020
- Frank Robinson (1942-1946) died on 27th January 2020
- Allen Boothroyd (1957-1961) died on 28th February 2020
- Derek Whatmoor (1947-1952) died on 3rd March 2020
- John Humphries (1947-1951) died on 11th March 2020
- John Stevens (1951-1958) died on 16th March 2020
- Martin Verden (1941-1945) died on 17th March 2020
- Peter Hopwood (1939-1944) died on 18th March 2020
- Brian Amor (1949-1954) died on 27th March 2020
- Vernon Hurst (1944-1948) died April 2020
- Lawrence Adler (1966-1971) died April 2020
- Brian Lupton (1940-1945) died on 15th April 2020
- Peter Powell (Consultant Architect to School 1989-2007) died on 19th April 2020
- William Hinks (1943-1947) died on 21st April 2020
- James Minnis (1936-1939) died on 28th August 2020
- Michael Christie (1949-1955) died September 2020
- Derek Gray (1945-1949) died on 11th September 2020
- Tim Wood (School Doctor 1969-1988) died October 2020
- Tim Basnett (1966-1970) died October 2020
- Michael Davies (1947-1950) died on 5th October 2020
- David Brasier (1955-1961) died on 3rd November 2020

Stephen Richard Henig (1958-1963)

died on 10th September 2020 aged 76

From the moment that I can first remember Stephen as an infant, just over two years younger than me, he was lively, irreverent and always bursting with humour and human warmth. We lived in Eastcote, North-West Middlesex, where our father was a local GP and the house was always full of books and lively conversation and argument – and Stephen certainly could argue! His intelligence shone through, often in zany ways, in the stories he told throughout his life of contacts with schoolteachers, lecturers, and colleagues, always hilarious and full of understanding and warmth. I never heard him being malicious about anybody.

At Wellington Preparatory School in Hatch End, he was happy and gregarious and there he made his two closest friends who remained friends for life. Showmanship came naturally to him and at childrens' parties – which at that period always featured jelly and blancmange – he would, as an 8-year-old star, perform as the conjuror to fellow classmates.

He enjoyed his time at Merchant Taylors' in some ways rather more – at least it was largely sane and mainly civilised, while Wellington had an unpredictable and sometimes violent Head Master. Even the CCF was more fun for him than it was for me. His clowning won the heart of the kind-hearted Sergeant Major, Arthur Bell, and his wife, so he dodged parades and took Mrs Bell shopping instead.

Academically, he only really shone at school in English, inspired by the teaching (which I had also been privileged to enjoy a few years earlier) of Harry Hunter and especially John Steane, who deepened his already quite extensive knowledge of drama (thanks to our parents' passion for the theatre) and especially opera, which he discussed enthusiastically with John Steane, an authority on both Elizabethan plays and Italian opera. At that time we seemed to go often together to the theatre or the opera in London every week, thanks to cheap evening fares. That wide knowledge stood him in good stead, when some years later he applied for, and was accepted, to read English at Bangor in North Wales, by Professor John Danby, author of Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature.



After Bangor he took his Postgraduate teacher's training course at Bristol and then had a career teaching at many schools. Stephen always believed that one of the keys to education was giving pupils from whatever background an enduring love of knowledge and sense of achievement. He gave confidence to a number of highly intelligent pupils from relatively deprived backgrounds, setting them on the path to university and high achievement, but even more typical was giving students regarded as failures a sense of their worth through a friendly manner.

Stephen was a contented man; he spent his latter days listening to music, especially opera on, which he was exceptionally knowledgeable. He loved nature films in particular and he so relished the view from the terrace of the house to the nearby woods, in one of which his ashes were laid to rest on 22nd October under a cloudless sky amidst the falling leaves and the birdsong.

Martin Henig (1955-1960)

Peter Robert Voice Henson (1950-1955)

died on 16th March 2020 aged 82



Peter sadly lost his fight against cancer, primarily Hodgkin's Lymphoma, and died on 16th March. He was at the school from 1950 to 1955 and was a Vice-President of the OMT Society and brother of Brian Henson, a past President.

In working life, he was an accountant and eventually became Director of Finance of the UK subsidiary of the US Multi-National, Armstrong World Industries, based in Uxbridge. Upon retirement, he continued his association with the school and became their Development Director.

My friendship started in 1975 when he joined the Pinner & Hatch End Operatic Society (PHEOS) where I was a member, having joined them in my last year at school. Thus started a shared interest in the performing arts where he was particularly good, performing many leading roles.

Before that time, he performed with the St Lawrence Church Players based in Eastcote, where he was also an active member of the Eastcote Lawn Tennis Club. There, he became Treasurer and Chairman as he also did with PHEOS.

His musical tastes ranged from folk to jazz to musicals, but particularly Gilbert & Sullivan. It was this aspect that brought him to PHEOS, who specialised in performing G & S. He will be fondly remembered for his renditions of the Major General in "Pirates", Lord Chancellor in "Iolanthe" and King Gama in "Princess Ida" to name but a few. Perhaps an unknown fact to many, he was also quite an accomplished tap dancer! He and I trod the boards until PHEOS sadly decided to close down in 2016 after being in existence for 94 years.

It was through mutual friends at PHEOS that he met his second wife, Jan, and through their shared love of G & S and the charity, Cancer Research UK, they persuaded PHEOS to put on a sponsored 24 hour 'sing in' of all the G & S Operas. Very successful it was too and was repeated a number of years later. During the intervening years, they couldn't see their support for the charity dwindle so they organised a fundraising G & S concert at the Royal Festival Hall in the presence of HRH Princess Alexandra. A few years later with the help of the BBC, they organised a broadcasted St

George's Day Concert at the Royal Albert Hall. All in all, Cancer Research benefitted from over £100,000 being raised by their efforts. Peter was honoured with becoming a Life Governor of the Charity.

Peter and I also sang, on and off over the years, with the Malcolm Sergeant Festival Choir and with customary generosity of time and talent, he volunteered to be their treasurer a couple of years ago when they needed someone to assist in their run down to closure.

As well as musical theatre, Peter and I shared the same joy of Freemasonry. He was a member of four lodges and chapters and, typically, was Treasurer and/or Auditor of all of them. One of his lodges was the old school lodge, Sir Thomas White Lodge, where he was looking forward to being their Worshipful Master a couple of years ago, until his illness sadly prevented this.

Peter was a devoted father to Mary and Sarah and a beloved grandfather to four, who gave him so much pleasure in seeing their own interest in the performing arts take hold and grow. RIP dear friend.

Ian Crawford (1960-65)

For publication of full obituaries and tributes please visit <https://development.mtsn.org.uk/obituaries>

Julian Michael Hartley Hill (1974-79)

died May 2020 aged 58

Julian "Hartley" Hill was a larger than life character who was well known among OMTs as a prominent member of the Hockey and Cricket sections, both as a player and as an administrator. He died in May at the relatively tender age of 58, following a six-month battle with cancer.

Julian was born on 27th June 1961 and spent the early years of his life in Pinner. He was the eldest of four children, with three sisters: Carolyn, Rosanne and Amanda. His family moved to Northwood when he was aged seven with the intention that he would go to school locally, but he didn't settle and moved to York House prep school in Croxley Green which was much more to his liking. From there he followed on to Merchant Taylors'.

Throughout his time at school, Julian joined in robustly with sports, enjoying hockey and rugby in the winter and cricket in the summer. His mother was a little less enthusiastic as she had to deal with regular phone calls from the MT sports master saying that Julian was in Mount Vernon Hospital with some injury or other.

Julian proudly attained the status of Junior Corporal in the RAF section of the CCF. From this and his study of the Hill family history, Julian developed a life-long interest in military history, reading up on the subject, researching and logging the

military successes of many UK soldiers, SAS and airmen.

After school, Julian had a necessarily brief flirtation with accountancy, before moving across to the world of insurance which was to prove to be his natural home. It was while working at Richards Longstaff that he started to develop an interest in protection assurance, where life cover is used to protect against inheritance tax liabilities. Over the next 30 years, Julian was to become recognised as one of only a handful of real experts in this narrow field.

Julian was fortunate to inherit a network of clients and connections, many of whom followed him loyally through a turbulent period in the late 1980s when the business he was working for changed hands on several occasions. As a direct consequence, in 1992 Julian decided to branch out on his own and Hill Oldridge was formed, initially providing general financial advice, but latterly operating as a niche specialist protection assurance adviser. At the time of Julian's death, Hill Oldridge was regarded as one of the premier firms for complex life assurance placements and acted for more than 80 landed estates and their families.

Alongside his burgeoning career, Julian became a fixture at Durrants where he was an enthusiastic player in the

social sides of OMT cricket and hockey. It is no secret that Julian's keenness to participate in sport exceeded his capabilities as a sportsman and he was the butt of endless mickey-taking, which he always accepted with good grace and humour. However, he did notch up quite a few appearances in the Cricket First XI because he lived locally in Croxley Green; for some years with Nigel Smith as his lodger. He was always easy to contact and a certainty to fill in at short notice if a player was injured or failed to turn up for a game. Within a few years, Julian was roped in as one of the cricket club administrators. At various times, he was Team Secretary, Membership Secretary, 3rd XI Captain, Colts Cricket Manager and finally Club Chairman – quite a record which will not be easily surpassed!

In later years, Julian and Hill Oldridge were significant financial sponsors of OMT cricket and hockey events and activities. Julian continued to support OMTs even though he was less directly involved after his move to Kent around ten years ago, where he bought a lovely converted barn with a considerable garden, woodland and a river flowing alongside. It was perfect as a long-term project for Julian to oversee. He fully embraced village life over the years, joining the cricket club, pub quiz team and making lots of friends in that community. Although Julian never married, he had a long-term relationship with Doey. She moved to Kent with him and they spent many happy years together. Julian enjoyed nothing more than a social evening in convivial company at The Man of Kent or The Bell Inn, his two favourite pubs. For a few glorious weeks, he even acted as "mein host" alongside Doey at The Bell when the proper landlord went missing in action.

Julian never missed an opportunity to mix business with pleasure! Whether hosting his business contacts at The Oval or entertaining the local professionals or OMT friends at Vats Wine Bar in Holborn, Julian was unfailingly generous, courteous and engaging, but above all, good fun to be with. The warmth of the many tributes received after his untimely passing show that he was respected by everyone he came across for being a true gentleman in the very best sense.

David Pollock
(1971-1975)



David Sells (1941-1943) died on 6th February 2020 aged 91

David Sells was one of the most informed and erudite BBC foreign correspondents of his generation. His BBC career spanned 40 years, 26 of them for Newsnight.

Born in Birmingham, David was the son of James Sells, a businessman, and his wife, Anne (née Hills). He was educated at Merchant Taylors' and King Edward's Schools, did national service in the Royal Navy and studied modern languages at Lincoln College, Oxford.

He reported on the very first Newsnight forty years ago, criss-crossing the world for more than a quarter of a century for Newsnight. David had been a correspondent for Reuters

News Agency before he came to the BBC, steeped in bygone traditions of telegrams, smoky news rooms and film reports literally edited with razor blades and Sellotape.

To me as a rookie, he gave invaluable advice: "Never run to the studio; you would appear flustered!" "Always take a newspaper into the studio with you; if all else fails, at least you will have something to talk about." And perhaps most importantly, given all the wars we both covered, "The hotter the pictures are, the cooler your script must be."

Mark Urban 7th February 2020

58

David Smee (1950-1953) died on 1st November 2019 aged 83

David and Sue have always been great supporters of OMT social events at Durrants and Sandy Lodge. Many of us have also enjoyed his company for so many years at the Falics lunches. The music at his memorial service reflected his love of jazz and included recordings by his fellow OMTCC player, John Eastcott. It is also not a coincidence that some of the very pleasant evenings which Gill and I, together with Graham and Meg Kimber, have shared with Sue and David until very recently were pub sessions of the Dixieland jazz band led for decades by David Jones OMT.

Graham Prodger's tribute and the memories from David's teammates assembled by Philip Newfield (which can be read in full in the OMT News Sheet and on the school website) recall his years as a player and outstanding captain of the OMTCC 1st XI. As has been mentioned, David also did so much for the OMT cause off the pitch. With sons Anthony and Jonathan at the school, he was founder and first chairman of the Longstops cricket supporters group. For OMTCC, he was the organiser for a number of seasons of the very successful Colts section, including in 1984 when they won all four Middlesex County titles. He was made an Honorary Life Member of the Club.

On a personal basis, never having reached the exalted 1st XI level of OMTCC myself, it was not until the later years of the Veteran's XI in the mid-1990s that I was able to directly share and enjoy the experience of his captaincy. However, we had somewhat earlier been fellow members of the OMT Sunday Soccer team.

David served for some years on the OMT Society Committee in his role as Chairman of the School Liaison Committee and in 1995 was elected a Vice-President of the OMT Society.

He will be well remembered by so many of us.

**Tony Wright
(1950-1957)**

Malcolm Reid (1940-1945) died on 11th May 2020 aged 93

Malcolm Herbert Marcus Reid was born in Palmers Green, North London, in 1927, the second of four children of Marcus Reid, a senior official in the Inland Revenue, and his wife Winifred (née Stephens), a civil servant. He was educated at Merchant Taylors' School between 1940 and 1945 – a member of Hilles House – and from there joined the Royal Navy, serving in HMS Defiance and HMS Ocean, whose captain described him as "a zealous and efficient young officer".

Reid went on to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics at St John's College, Oxford, where he coxed the college boat, and then joined the Civil Service, starting at the Board of Trade. In 1957 he was appointed trade commissioner in Ottawa.

Returning in 1972 to what was then the Department of Trade and Industry, Reid served under various secretaries of state, including Tony Benn, whose well-known consumption of tea he witnessed first-hand. He was also private secretary to two very different prime ministers: Sir Alec Douglas-Home and Harold Wilson.

In retirement, Reid lived in Cambridgeshire and kept a narrowboat that he would cruise along the River Great Ouse around St Ives. He enjoyed National Hunt racing and though he never owned a horse, for his 70th birthday his children leased a chestnut gelding for the day as a surprise. He had taken a box at Sandown Park and discovered his "ownership" only on arrival. To his astonishment Jovie King, ridden by Dominic Alers-Hankey, won the Barclays Bank handicap hurdle and the trophy remained on display for the rest of his life.



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