



2020

NEWSLETTER



WELCOME to the 2020 edition of the OMA Newsletter.

As we start the beginning of yet another decade, there is always room for nostalgia, memories, stories, items and memorabilia, that cross our paths from time to time, and cause us to pause and think about times and events in our busy lives that immediately transport us, albeit briefly, back some years to an event, a person and even an old bus!!

I make no apologies for presenting a wonderful photograph of the old 'Chieftain' that transported St. Michael's School pupils and staff daily between the various school locations. In my Oxford English Dictionary the name is defined as follows and I quote:

***"a leader of a people or clan"*. Well, beyond doubt, the 'Chieftain' became iconic in its own right and became so well known along the highways and byways of NW Norfolk and especially to those residents of Heacham, Ingoldisthorpe, Hunstanton and many other towns and villages around the county.**

Someone out there knows far more about the history of the bus than I will ever know. So, if you do have knowledge that will improve my own ageing brain, please let me know.

Where did it come from?

Where was it built?

How many passengers could it carry?

How old was the 'Chieftain'?

The reason why I ask is quite simple. The Old Michaelian Association has been financed, by an Old Michaelian, to publish a book providing as much information as possible about St. Michael's School that will become a living memory to many people of "Life at St. Michael's School". More about that in the Newsletter and 'The Mitre'

My very good wishes to you all no matter where in the World you may be digesting these words.

The 2020 OMA Reunion weekend at the Heacham Manor Hotel will be over the weekend of:

24 & 25 OCTOBER 2020

LIFE AT ST. MICHAELS SCHOOL

Within previous OMA publications we have spoken freely about our intention to publish 'THE BOOK' that will show life, as it was, for pupils, staff and everyone associated with St. Michaels School whether that be at Heacham, Ingoldisthorpe and/or Hunstanton. 'THE BOOK' has been generously financed by an Old Michaelian and this proposed publication will enable all who wish to participate, the opportunity to recall events, moments, occasions, people that immediately come to mind as soon as the name of St. Michael's School is mentioned. Fortunately, we have received many anecdotes and stories but we need more. Perhaps the following will help you to retrieve those personal moments that you wish to share with everyone.

Heavy Macs, Mini Buses and Justice

It was one of those days when compulsory games could not take place and instead, an obligatory walk was required. The weather was no inhibitor to this and here, the ubiquitous 'Heavy Macs came into their own. Being a Day Boy at the time, I was allowed to wear a 'civilian' rain coat and I was rather pleased with the coat my Mother had provided as it fashionably contained a 'poachers pocket' allowing large items to be carried unobtrusively if needed. However, the downside was that it was rather conspicuous amongst a sea of Heavy Mac clad persons. On this particular day, having been dropped off between Heacham and Ingoldisthorpe, a long snaking line of walking pupils was negotiating the "S" bend at Snettisham and there was some light hearted horse play amongst the pupils which unfortunately resulted in one of the girls being jostled off the pavement and briefly into the road. No harm was done other than a passing motorist sounding a warning toot on their horn. I observed this from a kneeling position having stopped to do up my shoe laces and as I rose from this position it coincided with Mr Pott passing by in the Hillman. Unfortunately for me, he had the luxury of being able to view the event, albeit seconds after it happened, as a passenger, the driver (a pupil) was under his instruction. What he actually observed and heard was a motorist tooting his horn and a boy in a non-regulation Mac rising from a kneeling position. His glare held out an ominous portent! Later, after lunch at Ingoldisthorpe, we had the customary address from the Headmaster which, as usual, began with a hand appearing at the door edge as it opened, followed by an Alfred Hitchcock like outline, a clap of hands and a bellowed, "*Now will you listen....*"

I certainly did! Amongst other announcements he stated that a boy in a 'shorty mac' had been seen to be misbehaving on the walk nearly causing an accident. Burning with suppressed outrage at this miscarriage of justice, I foolishly muttered something to my neighbour at the table which was rather more audible than intended. This elicited the response from RPP that he had not intended to name the boy (shorty mac was enough) but he had now revealed himself! No further action or punishment was indicated and I just had to put it down to experience but clearly the 'shorty mac' had a lot to answer for! (What was it with those Heavy Macs? There must be a story behind them.

All I can add is that, if you ever boarded in 12 Dorm. it was obligatory that all pupils should wear a Heavy Mac + Boots to visit the urinal that was exactly 3 x short steps away! What was all that about? !! Ed.

A second event rather balances the book with RPP which took place several years later when I was a proud driver. Again, on the way to lunch at Ingoldisthorpe but this time as a driver conveying a group of pupils in my favourite vehicle, the Austin Mini Bus. Having passed through the same "S" bend at Snettisham and across the little hump back bridge, I overtook a slow running Flat Back truck. Hearing a bit of a ruckus in the back, it was apparent a few pupils had made some rude gestures to the driver behind who was flashing his lights. Road rage is clearly not a new phenomenon! Apparently infuriated, the driver seeing us take a left turn up to Ingoldisthorpe, followed us up to the School. He loitered at the gate as we disembarked. I thought nothing more of the incident during lunch 'til RPP appeared in the dining room and asked for the driver of the mini-bus. I dutifully followed the Headmaster out of the Rectory only to be confronted by the aggressive driver of the Flat Back truck who reiterated the tale he had told the Headmaster that I had clipped his vehicle. We all examined the Mini-bus for any damage and there was none. The unpleasant accuser then pointed to damage on his own vehicle alleging that I had somehow caused this whilst overtaking. RPP asked the man to stay with his vehicle while he went back into the Rectory. As RPP and I walked back I took the opportunity to point out that for me to have caused the damage indicated, I must have been overtaking his Flat Back truck on the inside, a fairly obvious detail neither of us had actually grasped during the exchange or the vehicle inspection. A delighted Headmaster stopped in full stride, turned and walked back to address the driver of the Flat Back truck who received both barrels of outrage from a country vicar, and the man made a very hasty retreat. I rather enjoyed that! My earlier 'shorty mac' injustice had been somewhat redressed even though matters had been instigated by the ill-advised actions of my boisterous passengers and the quest for revenge by the Flat Back truck driver! The irony is that if the truck driver had merely complained at the behaviour of my passengers, beatings a plenty would no doubt have ensued! Ahh! School days.

I seem to remember that the Snettisham "S" bend became notorious for accidents involving St. Michael's School drivers. I was travelling in the back of the Wolsey. (Another iconic beautiful motorcar). Geoffrey Kimberly was driving, attempting to control the 'beast', with Jonathan Russell riding 'shotgun'! Kimberly provided a little too much right pedal as we entered the "S" bend and the whole car did a pirouette in the middle of the road and shot straight into the front of one of the cottages dislodging the 'BED&BREAKFAST VACANCIES' sign! Ed.

These are the type of memories and stories we need for 'THE BOOK' and if the above has not stirred a few stories of your own.....well! We have received some wonderful memories from fellow Old Michaelian's already and we do Thank you all for all of your contributions. Ed.

- ❖ **WHAT? 2020 OMA REUNION WEEKEND**
- ❖ **WHERE? HEACHAM MANOR HOTEL**
- ❖ **WHEN? 24 & 25 OCTOBER 2020**

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL THERE

www.oma.org.uk