



THE MITRE

2015

Communicating with Old Michaelian's

All over the World



EDITORIAL



Welcome to another bumper issue of ‘The Mitre’ communicating with Old Michaelian’s all over the World.

If you are a new reader of our annual publication, or a lapsed Member of our Association, please accept my sincere additional ‘Welcome’ and I hope you will all find something juicy and absorbing to interest you.

My name is **John Wallington** and, together, we will glide ourselves through ‘The Mitre’ with ease. As I mentioned in the 2015 OMA Newsletter earlier this year, I am astonished to realise that I have been responsible for managing the two annual publications for the Association for nine years and I continue to enjoy every moment.

The Association is in extremely good health, thanks to the dedicated and conscientious work carried out by all Members of the Association Committee. I will be paying tribute to the Committee Members a little later. Those of you who are regular readers of our publications will, by now, be totally aware that I would not be able to carry out the duties as OMA Editor if we did not receive contributions from you, the Association Members and our President, Chairman and all OMA Committee Members appreciate the input received each and every year.

Sometimes a new initiative and/or idea is conceived and a tiny mention is made in the publications to trigger off an avalanche of stories and memories from the Members. That is exactly what ‘The Mitre’ is all about and it is my hope that this will continue.

I hope you all thoroughly enjoy the contents of ‘The Mitre’ and, in addition, I hope this may trigger off even more memories of your time spent at St. Michael’s School.

Best Wishes to you all

John Wallington
OMA Editor

3.

I mentioned in my Editorial how much I enjoy writing and organising the two publications for the Association and here is an example of why. The 2014 'Mitre' obviously prompted **Bob Balshaw** to have a bit of a rummage and send me the following article. Not only that, **Bob** was able to add photographic evidence. Great story **Bob** and 'Thanks'. Ed.



This photograph shows John Cullin and myself on board a Chilean Destroyer at Vickers Armstrong Shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness with one of the crew namely Comandante Felix Labble, and if my memory serves me well, he was Chief Engineer of the ship. The photograph was taken in 1962 (it says so on the back) and, curiously, both John and I are in suits!! **(Good education and upbringing, Boy! Ed)**

The story behind this photograph begins when Vickers were engaged by the Chilean Navy to build 2 x 'Almirante Class' Destroyers and these were suitably built and launched in 1958 but not commissioned until 1962 after fitting out, sea trials and crew training before being handed over to the new owners. This is where my Mum gets involved – becoming the adopted unofficial mentor to help the Spanish speaking Chilean crews, and their wives and families, with their everyday needs, finding shore accommodation, helping with shopping, arranging for the repair of domestic appliances, attending to medical requirements, arranging toddler nursery etc. Thus, the Balshaw family became friendly with both crew and their families while they remained domiciles in Barrow before the official handover. My Father did the entertaining! Pubs, Rugby matches, sightseeing around the Lake District etc. My folks made themselves available, some years later, and offered similar support services to the Argentinian Navy crews when they came to Barrow-in-Furness for a ship build, but that is another story. (The Balshaw's don't take sides!)

John Cullin and I were guests aboard either the 'Almirante Riveros' or the Almirante Williams (It is such a long time ago I simply cannot remember) and the photograph above shows the three of us, John Cullin is on the left (John attended St. Michael's School between 1958 – 1961 and very sadly passed away in 1962), Comandante Felix Labble is in the middle and myself on the right, aft of the vessel with the Chilean flag in the background. My guess is that when this photograph was taken John would have been aged 19 years and I would have been 21 years old.

Sadly, after more than 30 years service with the Chilean Navy, both vessels were decommissioned, partially dismantled and deliberately sunk as a direct result of target practise deep in the Pacific Ocean in 1998.

Photographs of both vessels mentioned within the article are available via the Internet but be aware if you are making a search to ensure you are seeking the correct vessel since the Chilean Navy, similar to many others, has a long tradition of using named vessels over and over again. Lastly, I have been in contact with Anne Gunner (nee Cullin) who is the sister to John and also Anne's brother Bill who have approved 100% for this article to be published within 'The Mitre' this year.

Best Regards
Bob Balshaw

My sincere 'Thanks' to Anne, Bill and Bob for making the publication of this article possible. A truly remarkable story. Ed.

One Hell of a Day!



There I was, sitting at the Bar, staring into my drink, when a large, trouble-making Biker steps up next to me, grabs my drink and gulps it down in one swig.

“Well, what are you going to do about it?” he said menacingly, as I burst into tears.

“Come on man” the Biker said, **“I didn’t think you would cry. I can’t stand to see a man crying”**.

This is the worst day of my life. I am a complete failure. I was late for a business meeting this morning and my Boss fired me. When I went to the car park to collect my car I found it had been stolen and I do not have insurance. I left my wallet in the taxi cab on my way home and when I arrived home I found my wife in bed with another man..... and then my dog bit me. So, I came to this Bar to work up the courage to put an end to it all. I bought a drink, dropped a capsule into the drink and sat here watching the poison dissolve. And then you showed up and drank the whole damn thing!

But, Hell. Enough about me. How are you doing?

THE GOOD OLD DAYS!



We were born before ITV and SKY broadcasting, before botox, plastic, contact lenses, WiFi, Frisbees and the Pill.

We had no concept of radar, credit cards, laser beams or even ball-point pens; before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, drip-dry clothing..... and long before man walked on the Moon.

We got married first and then lived with our partner. We thought ‘fast-food was eaten during Lent. Our ‘Big Mac’ was worn in the rain and/or (according to the rule book) required to be worn for the four steps outside 12 Dorm when the need arose. Crumpet was eaten at tea time.

We existed before Househusbands, gap years, computerised dating and carbon footprints. In our day, a meaningful relationship meant getting along with your relatives and sheltered accommodation was a bus shelter.

We were born before Day Centres, Group Homes and disposable nappies. We had never heard of CD’s, PC’s or DAB radios.

Artificial hips (not forgetting artificial knees), pace makers and organ transplants were beyond our understanding. If someone gave us a ‘Blackberry’ we would eat it. Sailors had tattoos – not teenage girls and young men never wore earrings or headbands.

We did not have Pizzas, McDonalds and ‘skinny lattes’ to fortify us. In our youth, smoking was fashionable.

Our ‘grass’ was mown, our ‘coke’ was kept in the coalhouse, the ‘joint’ was a piece of meat and ‘pot’ was what was used to cook it in.

No wonder some of us get confused and grumpy. There really is a generation gap, but we have all **SURVIVED!!**

THE 2014 OMA REUNION WEEKEND



The Committee

The 2014 OMA Reunion weekend took place in Hunstanton over the weekend of 25/26 October 2014, was very well attended by Old Michaelian's and their partners and on behalf of our President, Simon Pott, Chairman Bob Hill and all OMA Committee Members..... we all say.....THANK YOU.

The Association AGM took place, after lunch, at the Le Strange Arms Hotel, Old Hunstanton and all of the general Association business was successfully undertaken.

The photograph that is shown to the left is a collective photograph of all OMA Committee Members and, during the AGM, it is with much regret, that our President and Chairman accepted the formal resignation from the Committee of Heather Kelly (nee Gadsden) and Elizabeth McLeod (nee Shearman). We offer our sincere thanks to both Heather and Elizabeth for all of their hard work and support of the Association during their time as OMA Committee Members. It is much appreciated.

Apology

Within the 2015 OMA Newsletter I regrettably reported that Elaine Humby (nee Clarke) had resigned from the OMA Committee and I wish to formerly offer my sincere apologies for this error. I have communicated this apology to Elaine and she is still an active Member of the OMA Committee.

One important aspect of every AGM is to nominate and re-elect the Association Committee in accordance with the Constitution. The existing Chairman, Bob Hill, was Chairing his last AGM since his three year tenure as Chairman was to expire at the end of 2014.



John Wallington

I will be taking time to thank Bob properly later within 'The Mitre' but I am sure that many of you, like me, are keen to know who has been nominated and voted as Chairman of your Association.

During the spring 2014 Committee Meeting the nominations for consideration were presented to the Committee for debate and Mike Chilvers nominated myself (**John Wallington**) for this post. Since I already held the post as Association Editor, I needed time to consider the nomination and, after time, I was able to reply back to Simon Pott and Bob Hill that my nomination for the post of Chairman would be an honour and I was content for my name to be placed forward at the AGM for suitable consideration. I am very pleased to report that, during the AGM, my nomination was placed before the Members and it was agreed that my three year tenure as Chairman of the Old Michaelian Association should commence on 1 January 2015.

The remainder of the existing OMA Committee were successfully re-elected en bloc.

The Association were delighted to welcome back **Mike Shellock** to the OMA Reunion weekend and during the AGM Mike spoke movingly about the health problems experienced by his wife Pauline and the Association wishes to take this opportunity to send our very best wishes to Mike and especially Pauline for the future.

It was also a pleasure to welcome back Shirley Smith, wife of Mike Smith, who had been very poorly during 2014 but who was now back on the speedy road of recovery.

Although the numbers who attended the 2014 OMA Reunion Dinner on the Saturday evening were slightly reduced, we still entertained over fifty people and it was a delightful and entertaining evening made even more acceptable by the service provided by the Management and staff of the Le Strange Arms Hotel.

The 2014 OMA Reunion weekend cont:

We were so pleased to welcome everyone but this report would not be complete without making mention of the attendance of **Les Roberts**, all the way from Australia, and representing the OMAA. Les entertained us all loyally during the after dinner speeches. Les was appropriately able to update all Members about the untimely passing of **David Winter** as a direct response to the many complimentary comments made by **Simon Pott** about David and his attendance at the 2013 Old Michaelian Association Diamond Anniversary Reunion weekend.

Lastly, we offer again our Thanks to everyone who made the journey to NW Norfolk to join us all towards the end of last October. And we offer our Thanks to **Roger Wikeley** for leading us through the Reunion Eucharist as Celebrant at Ingoldisthorpe Church on the Sunday and to Roger's wife, **Geraldine**, for stepping up to the plate at the eleventh hour and playing the organ for us. Ed.

THE OMA WEB SITE - WWW.OMA.ORG.UK



William Cullin

Our so successful OMA Web Site deserves all the recognition it gets and so does our OMA Web Site Editor, **Bill Cullin**. Most of our existing Members have access to a computer and I would encourage you all to make full use of the OMA Web Site to enable you all to keep right up to date with all the latest input and news.

This really has been a tremendous success and, checking on the Stop Press page of those ex-pupils who have made contact with the Old

Michaelian Association as a direct result of 'finding' the Web Site, I note that we are currently recording sixteen (16) people who are now back in contact with the Association and who have become fully paid up Members.

2013 was a very successful year and 2014 was notable for the fact that we are now back in contact with **Cequi Baeta**.

Besides boosting our Membership, there is a host of additional material for our Members to browse through and, quite recently, **Harold East** unearthed a remarkable piece of archive footage made by John Betjamen of the steam railway journey between Kings Lynn and Hunstanton.

And..... if that were not enough to wet your taste buds, **Chris Gibbs** has been having a bit of a rummage and came across two programmes of St. Michaels Theatre productions namely "**Peter Pan**" and "**Where the Rainbow Ends**". All of this has been added to the OMA Web Site by Bill Cullin who in turn ensures that the whole Web Site is kept as up to date as possible for all of our Members.

Added to all of that, Bill ensures that every annual publication is placed on the Web Site as soon as possible after publication date.

We know that the Web Site is used on a regular basis and we also realise how important it is to have the Web Site available to all our Members and non-Members in our attempt to communicate with Old Michaelian's all over the World.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to **Bill Cullin** who helps to maintain a very high standard of work managing the OMA Web Site on our behalf. Thank you Bill.

And..... of course a huge word of Thanks to you, the Members, for finding additional material to add to the Web Site. It is all very much appreciated. Ed.



BOB HILL



This edition of 'The Mitre' cannot continue any further without saying a huge '**THANKYOU**' to **BOB HILL** for his leadership, conscientiousness and sheer hard work over the past three years as Chairman of the Old Michaelian Association.

Many of us, as existing members of the OMA Committee, have known Bob for a long time and we have witnessed the effect Bob has had on the management of the Association in many ways. For example, Bob has worked tirelessly to ensure a good working relationship with the new Management at the Le Strange Arms Hotel and this continuing work has paid dividends for the Association in the knowledge that, each and every October, the Association will receive the very best of service and support from the Hotel Management and staff.

Three years ago at the AGM of 2011, there was no obvious nomination received by Simon Pott for the post of Chairman and it was suggested that Bob should be nominated and elected, in accordance with the Association Constitution, as Chairman of the Association for his second tenure as Chairman commencing 1 January 2012 and we were extremely fortunate that, not only did Bob agree to this nomination, but that the Members at the AGM duly elected Bob as Chairman and the rest is history. Bob's term as Chairman has now expired and a new Chairman has been nominated, elected and has replaced Bob as Chairman of the Association.

Thank you Bob for all you have achieved on behalf of the Association and its Members.

We are very fortunate that Bob has decided to stay as an OMA Committee Member and he has been asked to continue his work maintaining a close working relationship with the Management and staff of the Le Strange Arms Hotel on behalf of the Association. Ed.

WELCOME BACK TWO OLD MICHAELIAN'S

The post as Mitre Editor has many rewards and, within this edition of 'The Mitre' there are sufficient stories to confirm that the Association is likely to run and run for many more years especially if we continue to attract new Old Michaelian's and/or lapsed Old Michaelian Members as is this wonderful account.

John Haslett and Barbara Haslett (nee Packer) were active Members of the Association for many years and many of you will remember the fine work achieved by John as Mitre Editor.

For reasons involving business responsibilities, both John & Barbara lost contact with the Association and were unable to attend the Reunion weekends.

I am delighted to report that John & Barbara are now back in contact with the Association, wish to renew their Membership and will, hopefully, be making plans to join us at some future Reunion weekend.

Welcome back John and Barbara. Ed

THE OMA COMMITTEE

It has been said many times before that the workings and success of our Association is due entirely to two factors.

1. The continuing support from all Association Members all over the World
2. The dedication and management of the Association Committee

It is worth taking a moment to absorb the names of those who make up the Committee and the roles they undertake:

President.....Simon Pott
Chairman.....John Wallington
Secretary.....Ian Dupont
Treasurer.....Ruth Chilvers (nee Peckover)
Membership Secretary..... Ruth Chilvers (nee Peckover)
Web Site Editor..... Bill Cullin
Mitre Editor.....John Wallington
Committee Member..... Bob Hill, Special Responsibilities
Committee Member.....John King, Special Responsibilities
Committee Member.....Geraldine Ellison (nee Moorhouse)
Committee Member.....Pat Frost (nee Dove)
Committee Member.....Elaine Humby (nee Clarke)
Committee Member.....Mike Smith
Committee Member.....Mike Chilvers

Congratulations to all of you for the continuing work you undertake on behalf of the Association. It is all very much appreciated.

If any of our Members are interested in becoming part of our Committee, please let me know, and I will be delighted to place your name forward at the next Committee Meeting.

John Wallington



ANOTHER SUCCESS STORY FOR THE OMA

Immediately after last Christmas, we received an email from an 'old' St. Michael's School student and I have decided to include the transcript of the email for you all to enjoy as follows:

"I was pleasantly surprised to discover the existence of the OMA. My name is Cequi Baeta and I come from Ghana. I was a boarding student at St. Michael's from 1956 – 1959. I stayed at the Shooting Lodge and later at Gresham House. Going through the list of those who attended the 2014 OMA Reunion weekend, I could remember 'old' friends like Colin Ratcliffe, David Ratcliffe, Peter Yarker, Bob Balshaw, Michael Barnes and Jeremy Le Poer Power, all of whom I have lost contact. I am presently living in Ghana and visit the UK now and again and I would like to re-establish contact.

Best Wishes

Cequi Baeta

ccd_baeta@yahoo.com

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



John Wallington

Wearing my brand new Chairman's hat, may I welcome you all to the 2015 'Mitre' as we attempt to continue our objective to communicate with as many Old Michaelian's across the World.

Being nominated for the role of Association Chairman is indeed an honour in itself, but being actually elected to the role makes me feel extremely proud and excited about the whole future of the Association.

Yes, I will be very honest with you all, I did have my doubts about whether or not I could carry out my duties as Association Mitre Editor and Association Chairman but, having asked for advice from fellow colleagues, I formed the opinion that everything is possible if you put your mind to it, and therefore, I decided to accept the nomination.

I step into the vacant shoes as Association Chairman in the knowledge that the Association is in extremely good shape and I suspect that many of you, like me, have to be continually reminded that the Association has been alive and kicking since 1953. That statistic is simply incredible! Because the Association is in such good health, you will all be relieved to know that I am not proposing to make any major changes. We continue to thrive in the knowledge that the Association is managed by a very enthusiastic and supportive Committee under the ever watchful eye of our President **Simon Pott**.

Good luck to you all for 2015 and I look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible at the OMA Reunion weekend. Pop the following date into your diaries before you forget and try to join us all. It will be a fun weekend.

24/25 OCTOBER 2015

Best Wishes
John Wallington

HEACHAM CHURCH ORGAN

You may recall an article in 'The Mitre' last year entitled, "**St. Mary the Virgin Parish Church Heacham**" and this has stirred up memories including a load of information recorded by **Chris Gibbs** at the time relating to the installation of a replacement Organ in the Church. The article, written by Chris, is now available on the OMA Web Site www.oma.org.uk

"Thanks a million Chris" Ed

OLD OMA PHOTOGRAPH

Many of you will already be aware that our colleague **John King** has been responsible for collecting and exhibiting some remarkable archive photographs and memorabilia relevant to the school over a considerable number of years.

This is where we ask you to take a peep at the photograph below and place some names to the people in the photograph please.



This looks to me as if this photograph may have been taken inside The Shooting Lodge but if any of our Members can place any names to the photo and/or the circumstances that led to this photograph being taken, together with its location, we would be extremely grateful.

All responses please back to me: hinckleytowers@btinternet.com

Thank you. Ed.

QUOTE

‘ IF YOU CAN STAY CALM WHILE ALL AROUND YOU IS IN TOTAL CHAOS.....

....THEN YOU PROBABLY HAVEN’T FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION.....!!!!

FIFTY SHADES OF.....GOLF!



Four guys have been going on the same golfing trip to St. Andrews for many years.

Two days before the group is about to leave, John's wife Paula, puts her foot down and tells him he isn't going. John's mates are very upset that he can't go but what can they do?

Two days later the three buddies get to St. Andrews only to find John sitting at the Bar with four drinks set up!

"Wow, John. How long have you been here? How did you talk the missus into letting you go?"

"I arrived here last night. Yesterday evening I was sitting in my living room chair and Paula came up behind me and put her hands over my eyes and asked, 'Guess who?' I pulled her hands away and there she was, wearing a nightie.

She took my hand and pulled me out of the chair, upstairs and into our bedroom. The room had candles and rose petals all over the place. Well, I quickly realised she had been reading that 'Fifty Shades of Grey'.

On the bed she had handcuffs and ropes!

'Tie me up and cuff me to the bed' she demanded. So I did.

'Do with me whatever you wish'

So.....

Here I am!"



After being married for 49 years, a wife asked her husband to describe her.

He looked at her for a while, then said,

"You are an alphabet wife.....A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K."

'What the Hell does that mean?' she asked.

"Adorable, Beautiful, Cute, Delightful, Elegant, Foxy, Gorgeous and Hot".

She smiled happily and then turned and said, 'That is really lovely darling but what about I, J, and K?'

He replied..... ***"I'm Just Kidding!"***

The swelling in his eyes is going down and the Doctor is fairly optimistic about saving his testicles.

IN MEMORY



It is with great sadness that it is necessary for the Association to confirm the passing of two Old Michaelian's. In doing so, we remember with great affection the following people and offer to their family and friends our sincere condolences.

GORDON WOOD

Gordon was born on 11 September 1937 and is the brother of Reggie Wood. Gordon passed away on 28 July 2014.

A Thanksgiving Service was held at St. Peter's Church, Woodhall Spa on Friday 8 August 2014 and the following Old Michaelian's represented the Association on the day:

Simon Pott

Pat Frost

David & Carol Pleming

Robin & Jenny James

Jeff Lake

Peter Hartley

Geraldine Ellison

After the Thanksgiving Service everyone was invited by the family to join them at a local Hotel for refreshments.

DAVID WINTER



ANOTHER TRULY REMARKABLE TRUE STORY

The Association has relied heavily, over the years, on word of mouth, the OMA Web Site and/or a chance meetings in the street, to find the whereabouts of Old Michaelian's wherever they may be all over the World.

On 24 December 2014, Simon Pott received an email from a Ruth Hunter under the subject heading of '**Help/Advice**'. The content of the email read as follows:

Dear Sir,

This query comes rather out of the blue... and might sound quite ridiculous.

From 1995 – 1997 I was an English teacher in The Gambia. While I was there I made friends with a teacher whose name was Dawood Njie, son of a Gambian politician, who used to talk about his time at Boarding School at Heacham in Norfolk.

Years later, I am about to go back to The Gambia on holiday with my family and I suddenly remembered his stories and wondered if I could track down any of his old school colleagues.

The thing is, I don't even know the name of the school, so I realise how silly this might all sound.

Do you have lists of past students at St. Michael's? Is the name of Dawood Djie on the list?

It would be so fascinating to track down some old memories/pictures for him.

I know this is all a long shot though!

Ruth Hunter

Simon replied back to Ruth and confirmed that Dawood was a student at St Michael's School and directed Ruth towards the OMA Web Site but also invited Ruth to get back in contact should she require any additional information.

Since the beginning of this year there have been various communications with Ruth Hunter who is preparing for her family holiday in The Gambia over the Easter holiday when, not only will she meet with her friend Dawood but also obtain a mailing address so that the Association can keep in contact with him. He does not have access to a PC and, as a consequence, cannot access the OMA Web Site.

We have provided Ruth with a couple of back issues of 'The Mitre' for her to take to The Gambia and present to Dawood during her visit.

This is an on-going story and I will be pleased to keep you all updated over the next few months. Incidentally, you may be interested to know that our School Register, that is readily available via the OMA Web Site, confirms that **Dowda Njie** attended St. Michael's School as a boarder between 1953 and 1958. Ed.



This photograph of Dawood was taken several years ago. The evidence is the rather youthful photograph of Tony Blair in the background! It is hoped that we may be able to publish a more recent photograph of Dawood and his family in the next issue of 'The Mitre'. Ed.

THE COMMER



I really did not expect to receive too much reaction to a story I added into the OMA Newsletter this year relating to one of the school vehicles but there is quite obviously a great amount of affection for the old Commer that served the school well as a workhorse transporting pupils and staff between school locations and also as far afield as London and many places inbetween. The following couple of recollections have been very well received and my hope is that these may trigger off even more memories that we can publish in future publications. Ed.

The first recollection comes from **Peter Carter** who writes:

“Your reference to the Commer reminds me of many moments I have had in that vehicle. *Steady on Peter, there may be children reading this!*

The first that comes to mind is when **David Ratcliffe**, who I believe was Head Boy at the time, drove us left out of the school gates at Ingoldisthorpe and forgot to straighten up. As a consequence, he drove the Commer up the grass bank outside the gates and, in the process, turned the Commer onto its side in the middle of the road. Utter chaos and pandemonium broke out! I managed to open the back doors, ran back to the school and told the Headmaster what had happened who immediately rushed to the incident. Without enquiring if anyone was hurt, the Headmaster grabbed the wooden bench and took it out of sight before returning back to the Commer to enquire about casualties. There were none, thankfully. I never did know about any final outcome and can only assume that the whole incident was brushed under the carpet never to be talked about again.....until now!!!

I also recall **Henry Taylor** driving the Commer from Ingoldisthorpe to Kings Lynn and scrapping the side of the Commer on the school gate posts while exiting the grounds. On the way back from Kings Lynn Henry bought us all sweets and asked us not to mention the incident!

There were the long trips for sporting events, one the longest being to Sherrardswood School at Welwyn Garden City. I straddled that wooden bench all the way there with only one comfort stop at Cambridge where **Roger Collison** and myself wandered into Kings College Chapel where the choir were practising for the annual Nine Lesson and Carols. Wonderful.” **Thankyou Peter. Ed.**

Another story relating to the Commer and, surprisingly, involving Henry Taylor is reported by our very own Elaine Humby. (nee Clarke)

Henry Taylor chucked me out of his class for being cheeky and totally forgot I was outside the door. When he saw me at the end of the lesson, he was mortified that I was still there and apologised profusely (as only he could). At the end of the school day Henry was driving the Commer, with all of the school girls, back to Fridhem in Heacham. I happened to sit at the front of the bus next to him and he once again told me how sorry he was. He was clearly quite upset and I kept telling him it was okay – I had deserved it and I told him I was also sorry for being cheeky. He was quiet for a couple of minutes and then he reached under the driver seat and pulled out a dead pheasant! Apparently, he had run over this poor creature earlier in the day and was taking it back home for supper. He handed the corpse to me and asked me to accept it as compensation for having stood in the corridor for a couple of hours!!

15.

Of course, I didn't know what the heck to say other than I did not want the dead pheasant. He was adamant as he was sure that Mrs Wase would cook it for me! I still insisted...."**No sir. I do not want it**". So he gave me a piece of chocolate instead!!!! God luv'im.

That is a wonderful memory, Elaine. Thank you Ed.

As a passing comment, that was sent to me by Bob Balshaw, and in case any of you thought that the Old School Commer was a one off, Bob Balshaw tells that a similar model Commer has been sitting in the driveway of a local residence, near to where Bob lives, for years and he promptly produces a photograph as proof.

There has got to be loads more tales to be told of life in the Old Commer. I suspect that 'The Mitre' this year may spur our Readers on to reveal all!!!! Ed.





The mother-in-law arrives home from a shopping trip to find her son-in-law, Paddy, in a steaming rage and packing his suitcases.

"What has happened Paddy?" she asks anxiously

'What's happened? I'll tell you what has happened shall I. I sent an email to my wife, your daughter, telling her I was coming back home early from my fishing trip. When I get home, what did I find? Yes!

Your daughter, my wife, naked with Joe Murphy in our marital bed.

This is unbelievable – the end of our marriage. I'm done. I'm leaving forever"

"Ah now, calm down, calm down Paddy" says his mother-in-law, "She would never do such a thing. There must be a simple explanation. Let me go and speak with her".

A few moments later the mother-in-law comes back with a big broad smile.

"There Paddy, I told you there was a simple explanation

SHE NEVER DID RECEIVE YOUR EMAIL!!!"

EDUCATION

A reflection by The Reverend Canon Jonathan Russell

‘Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school’ ALBERT EINSTEIN



I wonder how many of us who attended St. Michael’s School, Ingoldisthorpe, would agree with this rather cynical statement. Certainly the detail of what I learned at school has largely been forgotten, and yet, thinking back, I would say that I received a most valuable, unique and well- rounded education – an education which enabled me to set out in adult life and to survive the many changes and challenges of a World now so different from that of the 1960’s. Even in retirement, the education I received then, is still bearing fruit. Here are two examples:

Roger Pott, in my opinion, was something of a prophet – for-seeing well into the future. He correctly foretold there would, in years to come, be a serious shortage of church organists. With this in mind, he arranged for a number of us who were fairly competent pianists, to receive organ lessons from **Michael Illman**, organist at Sandringham Church. Consequently, since leaving school, I have been much in demand as a church organist, including at one of my last group parishes where I not only officiated at services as priest, but also accompanied the hymns at the same time. I may have forgotten much of the maths I learned, but I can still manage to understand the maths within music. For that particular education I give heartfelt thanks.

The second example involves Christian education. I grew up in a Christian home, sang as a cathedral chorister in the company of Deans, Canons, Archdeacons, Bishops and Archbishops. But it was whilst at St. Michael’s, set within the rural parishes of Heacham and Ingoldisthorpe that the call to ordination became apparent. Without a doubt, **Roger Pott’s** example and valuable assistance enabled me to answer that call. The rest is, as they say, history – ecclesiastical history! Now in retirement I am aware that the unique blend of education during 1958 – 1962 continues to influence my situation. Again, there are a couple of examples:



When my wife **Monica** and I retired and moved to a village near Dover, we started to attend the Garrison Church within the grounds of Dover Castle. At the time, our son **Tom** had taken the job as verger of St Mary-in-Castro. (Since then, he has moved up the verger ladder by becoming verger at Ely Cathedral). On discovering that I played the organ, the regular Army Chaplain very soon signed me up as one of the small team of organists. Also, within a short time I was enlisted as an OCM (Officiating Chaplain to the Military) to conduct services in the absence of the full-time Chaplain. The story does not end there! In 2014, as part of the reduction of the armed forces, it was decided that the local HQ of 2(SE) Brigade be removed to Aldershot to be combined with another Brigade. Sadly, this meant that the church of St. Mary-in-Castro, which had served the community for centuries, was no longer required by the Army. Because the building is owned and maintained by English Heritage and has an existing civilian congregation, it was decided that there was sufficient support for the continuation of regular Sunday worship with the help of a team of retired clergy. Needless to say a leader was required and you can guess who answered the call of God and that of the Canterbury Diocesan hierarchy.

EDUCATION cont.....

Although retired and past the age (70) when one can hold a legal parochial position within the C of E, yours truly has gained the unique title of Co-ordinating Chaplain of the Extra Parochial Church of St. Mary-in-Castro in the Diocese of Canterbury. I am now, de facto, Priest-in-Charge. Little did I realise what the job would entail. Of course, I continue to enjoy playing St. Mary's organ and occasionally officiating at Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals. However, additional responsibilities have proved to be quite a headache. For example, the setting up of a whole new administration structure in place of the former Army Chaplaincy, churchwardens, sidespersons, church council, secretary, new Bank account, treasurer, insurance policies, data and safeguarding officers, lists and rotas of different kinds, all having to comply with current ecclesiastical requirements.



This whole interesting, demanding and unique exercise is all the more remarkable when one considers the age and history of the church building itself. It proudly stands on an ancient raised earthwork on the white cliffs overlooking Dover Harbour and across the English Channel to France and to that part of France that once belonged to this country. The building dates from c. 800 – 1000AD with several Saxon architectural features. It is likely that the present building, though heavily restored by the

celebrated Victorian architects George Gilbert Scott and William Butterfield, was originally on the site of earlier Roman foundations. In fact many building materials, especially Roman tiles, were re-used by the Saxons in the walls and arches of the church.

The really amazing and unique feature is the existence of a Roman Pharos or lighthouse positioned right outside the west door of the church that dates back to the **1st century AD**. **The picture above shows off this historical building perfectly.** I cannot resist re-telling a recent story of a couple of amateur sailors who attended Sunday worship one day last year. They explained that they had been on holiday in France and planned to cross the Channel in their yacht. Whilst waiting at Calais for favourable weather, they spotted our church and lighthouse through their binoculars. They then set sail, navigating without the benefit of modern high tech. equipment but simply by setting a bearing lined up on our iconic buildings. They had then come to church to give thanks for their safe crossing and for our ancient 'guiding light'. Truly, a gift of a wonderful message for clergy sermons!!

I started by expressing the opinion that, in some way, our Headmaster could see far forward into the future and, with wisdom, set our feet on the path leading to achievement and success. There is one final story to tell of a strange prophetic event.

Way back in 1989 when I was Vicar of a group of five country parishes south of Faversham in Kent, one of my churchwardens was. And still is, a professional artist. One summer day she appeared with a camera and asked if she could take a photograph of me dressed up in full clerical gear pretending to be trudging along through imaginary wintry weather. I thought nothing more about it 'til some months later she presented me with a large pictorial calendar for the following year. It transpired that she had been commissioned to paint different castles situated in Kent. There I was in the picture wrapped up against the cold on the December calendar walking beside the Church of St. Mary-in-Castro, Dover Castle and beside the ancient Roman Pharos. How prophetic was that over 25 years ago?

Do please come to visit this very special place.

2015 OMA REUNION WEEKEND

WHEN?.....24 & 25 OCTOBER

WHERE?.....HUNSTANTON



Two years ago, the Association met for its annual Reunion weekend in the knowledge that the Old Michaelian Association was celebrating yet another milestone in the long history of the Association.

Many milestones have been celebrated by the Association since its concept in 1953 and, in 2013, we were delighted to welcome many Members, together with their partners, to the Le Strange Arms Hotel, Old Hunstanton

to help us celebrate the OMA Diamond Anniversary Reunion.

The Association has been very fortunate over the years with the support we have been given by various venues over the years. We remember with fondest Reunion weekends celebrated at the Kit-Kat Club and the Dukes Head Hotel in Kings Lynn to name just two.

For more years than I can remember, the home of the Old Michaelian Association Reunion weekends has remained at the Le Strange Arms Hotel in Old Hunstanton and this has proved to be extremely successful. The 2015 OMA Reunion will again take place at the Le Strange Arms Hotel and Simon Pott together with all OMA Committee Members would really appreciate your attendance.

Two matters we would like you to consider please.....

First, please read through the programme covering both the Saturday and Sunday and make up your minds soon whether you will be attending this year.

Secondly, take a peek at the Booking Form at the rear of 'The Mitre' and make certain you have a reserved place at the Reunion Dinner and mail it to Ruth Chilvers as soon as possible

Saturday 24 October 2015

The 2015 OMA Reunion weekend will begin in the Mariner Bar at the Le Strange Arms Hotel, Old Hunstanton at lunchtime on Saturday 24 October. Traditionally, the Mariner Bar has become the meeting point for all Old Michaelian's and whether you intend taking advantage of the extensive Bar Menu for lunch and/or an enjoyable drink from the Bar, you can be ensured of a very friendly welcome by Committee Members and fellow peers in the Mariners Bar.

In the Palace Suite will be a truly remarkable display of photographs and general memorabilia relevant to life at St. Michael's School throughout the years. The exhibition will be available for viewing from lunchtime and throughout the afternoon. The exhibition is the brainchild of John King who has managed all of the photographs and additional material each and every year giving everyone the opportunity to view each item, each photograph producing... sometimes, the odd tear and/or smile.

2015 OMA Reunion Weekend cont.

The Annual General Meeting of the Old Michaelian Association will take place in the Palace Suite commencing at 3:30pm and becomes the first official session of the OMA Reunion weekend and we invite as many Old Michaelian's as possible to help us debate and decide all relevant business of the Association.

If any Member has a specific question that needs to be considered for debate during the AGM, please make this known to the President or Chairman **before** the date of the Reunion weekend so that we may ensure that sufficient time is given to all OMA business. Once the AGM business has been completed, we invite everyone to join us for afternoon tea.



The main event of the OMA Reunion weekend is always the OMA REUNION DINNER located in the Palace Suite of the Le Strange Arms Hotel where, both Members and their partners, can look forward to a mouth-watering and entertaining evening hosted by our President, Simon Pott and his wife Jenny.

The evening begins in the Bar of the Palace Suite where everyone will be welcomed by Members of the OMA Committee and registration takes place. We invite everyone to assemble in the Bar of the Palace Suite from **7pm** onwards.

Dinner will be served at **7.45pm**

Similar to previous years, the OMA Committee have negotiated the best possible price covering the OMA Reunion Dinner and we are delighted to announce that prices have remained the same and the price of **£25 per person** will apply. This is remarkable value for money.

Besides a stunning evening with many friends, you will be served with the following:

- **Cream of Winter Vegetable Soup with Rustic Croutons**
- **Braised Leg of Lamb Steak with Wild Mushrooms etc.**
- **Apple Crumble with Vanilla Custard**
- **Tea/Coffee with Mints**

The Hotel is offering the following Vegetarian option:

- **Vol au Vant with Wild Mushrooms**

We hope that you will all agree, this is a mouth-watering menu and extremely good value.

2015 OMA Reunion Weekend cont.

The excellent relationship our Association has with the Management and staff at the Le Strange Arms Hotel continues and we can be assured of a very scrummy Reunion Dinner accompanied by a professional service.

The Reunion Dinner is just part of an evening of entertainment, laughter and good conversation in the company of people who you may not have seen for many years. Please do not miss out on this opportunity.

During the evening you will be pestered and probably bullied by the ladies of the Committee to part with your well earned money and buy numerous quantities of Raffle Tickets. The prizes are quite spectacular. You will not be disappointed.

The evening would not be complete without the After Dinner speeches and we will be ably entertained by our President, Simon Pott and our newly elected Chairman John Wallington and various other Members who have asked to make SHORT speeches at that time.

The OMA Committee has negotiated the best possible price for the Reunion Dinner and we have also negotiated with the Le Strange Arms Hotel Management in order to secure the best possible accommodation costs at the Hotel.

A Single Room has successfully been negotiated at £75 per night including breakfast

A Double Room has successfully been negotiated at £95 per night including breakfast

It is suggested that if it is your intention to stay at the Le Strange Arms Hotel that you make your reservation as soon as possible. Rooms are being reserved as we speak and we would not want you to be disappointed.

Sunday 25 October 2015

Traditionally, the annual OMA Reunion weekend is aptly completed with a Reunion Eucharist at Ingoldisthorpe Church. The Parishioners of Ingoldisthorpe always provide a warm welcome to all Members of the Association together with their partners and this year will be no exception. The OMA Reunion Eucharist will begin at 11am and we are delighted to announce that we will welcome TWO former School Headboy's to lead us through the service.

Jonathan Russell has agreed to be our Celebrant and Benedict Gunner will be playing the organ. The OMA Reunion Eucharist is always a very special part of the weekend and the local Parishioners of Ingoldisthorpe invite us to use the Church for this one Sunday in October. Those of you who are able, please delay your journey home and join us all at Ingoldisthorpe Church for the OMA Eucharist that will begin at **11am.**

After the service the whole congregation is invited to join us for light refreshments that will be served by the Ladies of the OMA Committee at the rear of the Church.

REG AND PIDGE WOOD

In May this year, Reg and Pidge Wood celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary. That is a remarkable achievement and the Association acknowledges this Anniversary in the right and proper manner as follows:

CONGRATULATIONS

OMA SUBSCRIPTIONS

Since the Old Michaelian Association was created in 1953, we have annually scrutinised the way Membership to the OMA should be managed. We have constantly endeavoured to keep the cost of maintaining Membership to a realistic and fair rate.

Our membership Secretary, Ruth Chilvers (nee Peckover) has maintained that fairness and, with due professionalism, has ensured that our Membership listing is kept up to date and that Members who allow their Membership to lapse, are informed immediately.

Funds that are generated by subscriptions are vital to the continuing relevance of the OMA and we are sure that every Member and former Member will recognise the importance of supporting the Association continually so that we may professionally manage the Association for many more years.

Membership costs continue to be very little and there is a choice of either paying **£5** covering full Membership for the following three years, or a single payment of **£20** that will ensure a Lifetime Membership. Please consider the choices provided and help the Association to represent Old Michaelian's all over the World. Please ensure that all cheques are made payable to the Old Michaelian Association.

If you are aware that your own Membership has expired and/or you are not too sure of your current status, please make contact with Ruth Chilvers at the following address enclosing your subscription and your Membership will be resumed and you will continue to receive all annual OMA publications. Thank you.

Ruth Chilvers
OMA Membership Secretary
85 Elliott Road
March
PE15 8BP

THANK YOU

OUR PRESIDENT...SIMON POTT



Simon Pott

My Fellow Old Michaelians,

I always try to think of at least one exceptional reason for Old Michaelians to attend the annual OMA weekend, to be held again this year at the Le Strange Arms Hotel, Old Hunstanton. We have been there for so long that we are given unusually attractive rates and welcomed by the Management and staff in great fashion. This fact that I share with you all this year is because the school, created by my Father from tiny beginnings at Heacham Vicarage in 1946 and finally closing its doors in 1969, means that it was open for 23 years and has

been closed for 46 years (*do the Maths, boy, can't you see the point?!!*).

However, each year someone new pops up and is royally welcomed and even allowed, nay encouraged, to say a few words at the Reunion Dinner and we have been entertained with some great stories told, some funny, some sad and a few that were simply outrageous!

Your Committee have worked hard and preparations are at an advanced stage organising the next OMA Reunion weekend towards the end of October over the weekend of 24/25 October and we would be delighted to see you. You will be amongst friends and the camaraderie is heart warming.

We look forward to seeing you and you will not regret making the effort!!

Very Best Wishes for a great Summer

Simon Pott

A Final Word from the Editor



John Wallington

When I reach this stage of compiling another copy of 'The Mitre', there is quite naturally a genuine feeling of relief. I am quietly satisfied with the contents and I really hope that you all enjoy the read.

I hope this may also encourage you all to have a bit of a rummage and seek out those priceless photographs of school life that have remained dormant in the attic for many years. And.....maybe 'The Mitre' has inspired you to sit down and write some meaningful memories for inclusion into the next edition.

Here is a couple of likely lads who find that a pint or three often stirs the memory bank and causes a real need to write an article for 'The Mitre'. The only problem, I suspect, is finding their way back home!!



To everyone who has contributed to 'The Mitre' this year, please accept my sincere Thanks. To everyone who serves the OMA on the Committee..... again, my sincere Thanks for all the encouragement and suggestions.

Lastly, it just remains for me to say a final word about the forthcoming OMA Reunion weekend towards the end of October.

Please remember the dates.....

24 and 25 OCTOBER

We would love to welcome you all to the Le Strange Arms Hotel, Old Hunstanton. It will be a fun weekend.

I hope you all have a stunning summer/winter wherever you live in the World and, if possible, we look forward to seeing you again this coming October.



OMA 2015 REUNION DINNER BOOKING FORM

**Would you please reserve
me..... number of places for the 2015 OMA
Reunion Dinner at the
Le Strange Arms Hotel, Old Hunstanton on Saturday
24 October 2015.**

Name:.....

Partners Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Post Code:.....

Telephone Number:.....

email Address:.....

‘I would like to sit with..... (if possible)

**I enclose my cheque (£25 per person) to the value of
£.....Please make all cheques payable to the Old
Michaelian Association. Thank you.**

**Please detach this completed form and send it, with
your cheque, to Ruth Chilvers, 85 Elliott Road,
March, Cambs PE15 8BP**

