

# The Old Manorian ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

*July 2014 Issue 1*



Dear Alumni Members,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Alumni Association Newsletter, the first of which is hopefully many more to follow in the years ahead. When our current Head, Matthew Lantos, asked me to set up a formal Alumni Association earlier in the academic year, I had no idea of just how significant a project that this would become. Already, we have over 800 members and this figure will grow considerably in the months and years to come.

Many benefits are already being experienced by the members of the Association and the School. Many old classmates have been able to reconnect with each other, and this month sees nearly a dozen former students coming in to speak at a Year 8 Boys Careers Day. Several Alumni have also been able to provide desperately needed one week work experience placements for our year 10 students which took place last month. Additionally, a number of Alumni have expressed a desire to mentor students or become part of the School's Governing Body in the years ahead. Two members of the Alumni Association have also taken up constituency representation on the newly established Co-operative Trust Forum which meets three times a year, and whose main purpose is to deepen the school's relationship with the local community.

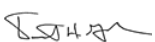
One particular highlight of the past few months was a meeting which took place on 2 April 2014, during which time I had the pleasure to spend time with former students, Mrs Pat Roberts, Mr Jack Sadie and Mr John Thirkettle. They have been part of a group known as 'OM41', which I had not heard of until meeting them. I was pleased to hear that OM41 was not a term for a secret government spy unit, but stood for Old Manorians 1941, the year in which an earlier version of the Alumni Association was created. This group of approximately 300 people have met annually for a number of decades and will have their last formal luncheon at Brunel University on 26 July. We hope that these luncheons can continue under the guise of the new Association and take place in future years, here at the school.

I greatly enjoyed their stories about being at the School during the years of World War II and hearing about the punishment book which I have subsequently discovered in the school vault. Things were very different back then. There were tales of teachers who could throw chalk or board erasers with great accuracy at the foreheads of children who talked or misbehaved in lessons, as well as of canings in the Headmaster's office. Their stories of days at school during World War II were truly humbling, as well as sobering. They also kindly offered memorabilia from their time at the school, asking if it can be donated for future safekeeping. The plan is to display these items in a new boardroom being created this summer.

Included in this inaugural newsletter are profiles on former students and staff. Two have been written in-house by future Alumni, others written by professional journalists or the Alumni themselves. The plan is for these newsletters to be published bi-annually (in January and July) so please feel free to contribute to the next edition. Please send your contributions to: [d.graham@preston-manor.com](mailto:d.graham@preston-manor.com)

Finally, enjoy the story of your school, its former students and staff.

With warmest regards,



Daniel Graham

## THE OLD MANORIANS

The name 'Old Manorians' originates from a group of students who came to the school in 1941. These students developed a special bond during their time here, which gave birth to what was to become known as OM41. Over time, OM41 would allow students from other years to become part of this group and they have met regularly since the 1950s. Many members of OM41 were present for the School's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations last year, during which time they presented the school with a bench which is located to the side of the bee friendly garden area near the Platinum Block.

The students from this year group were also very sporty and they set up the Old Manorian Football Club in 1950. This Club still thrives today and provides a platform for grassroots football and currently run six teams playing on Saturday's in the AFC - Amateur Football Combination leagues. The teams also play in the AFA - Amateur Football Alliance and LOB - London Old Boys' Cup competitions. The Club is also involved in charity work as well, supporting Cancer Research UK and other charities.

The OM41 Reunion Club will meet for a final luncheon at Brunel University on 26 July 2014. However, they are an important and integral part of the new look Alumni Association, which will host events here at Preston Manor School in the future. They have already provided significant help in growing our Alumni Association numbers and in providing much content on the fascinating history of the School.

## Alumni Profiles - Pat Roberts and Monica Goulden - Interview by Hazel Mutabazi



On a recent hot summer's day, I was lucky enough to interview Mrs. Pat Roberts (nee Brownbill) and Mrs. Monica Goulden (nee Brownbill). Pat attended Preston Manor County School as it was then known, during the years 1943 – 1948. Monica, who now lives in New Zealand, attended 1943 – 1950. Their sister, Mrs. Roma Lane (nee Brownbill), also attended the School 1943 – 45.



**Mrs. Pat Roberts  
(nee Brownbill)**

The two former students attended the school during the latter part of World War II. It was fascinating to hear their stories of what it was like to attend school at this time.



**Mrs. Monica Goulden  
(nee Brownbill).**

Things changed greatly during this time. Many of the male staff were called away to serve their country. This meant many retired teachers were called back into service.

They related stories about riding their bikes to school from Kenton only to find the streets in this area to be deserted as Air Raid warnings had been sounded. One quickly parked their bike in the bike shed and ran to the shelter located under the area where the Art Block is now situated.

We also talked about the visual changes which have taken place at the school. For example, in the main hall where we have assemblies, all of the students used to have their lunch. There was a long table across the whole of the room where all the teachers sat. The Head Master (the school's first Headteacher), was Mr Bannister, and he would say a prayer in Latin before they ate. Also there was a balcony in the hall where the music and art classes would take place. One of the worst experiences Pat shared with me was when the siren went off they would have to rush to the air raid shelters and have to stay in the air shelters for hours on

end. Also, when there were tests in the hall and the air raid sirens sounded you would immediately go under the desk.



## Interview cont...

Other notable differences that they referred to were the workshop rooms that used to be located where one now finds the Music Department. Also, the Sixth Form Car Park were once tennis courts! The physical school has changed greatly from their time here, with new buildings, huts, a CLC and a whole 'new school' in that of the Lower School.

I also discovered that Preston Manor once had a House System even before the one introduced last year. There were five sports houses; Butler, Farran, Millwood, Vernon and Erlebach. These were the names of Governors of the School and these groups were used for sports day just like the sports houses we have now. At this time they would stick a pale blue badge on your blazer if you were good at sports. Subject wise Monica loved PE and Art as she found them very outgoing subjects while Pat loved Maths finding it a very easy subject. Pat ended up becoming a maths teacher then a Head of Maths before becoming a Deputy Headteacher at a school in Harrow. Monica travelled around the world, teaching in Delhi, India and in Israel in the 1950s. She then moved to New Zealand where she has lived since. There she worked as a Special Needs Counsellor and as an Advocate for the New Zealand Education Institute.

While being interviewed Pat noticed the names of two of her former classmates imprinted on the wall of the hall. These were the names of Barbara and Olive Jacobs who were joint Head Girls and ended up going to Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

I also showed them a copy of the punishment book during their time here and asked them if I would find their names in the book. Unsurprisingly, their names were not to be found in the book. However, students today would be surprised to find out that one could get a caning for back in their day at school.

Despite the many changes that have taken place since they attended the school, they are pleased that one thing has remained permanent. They believe that the School is still a happy place for students today, as it was when they were here. They were so impressed by the current students when they attended the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations last year, and what they saw to be a happy school.

It was a great privilege to interview these two remarkable women, and I am very proud of the fact that I will soon join them as a member of the Old Manorian Alumni Association.

**By Hazel Mutabazi, Year 10  
June 2014**



From left to right, Hazel Mutabazi, Pat Roberts, Monica Goulden and Omari Mensah-Davis - Year 13 Film-maker

**Mike Hennessey began his studies at Preston Manor County School in 1939, the year World War II began. He would go on to blaze a path in the entertainment world as a jazz pianist, writer, composer and producer. He now lives in Germany, with his German wife. Now, 86 years old, he still plays the piano, writes and travels to jazz festivals worldwide. With his permission, we have included the following piece written by Lawrence Brazier in September 2003.**

## **A Portrait of Mike Hennessey**

*by Lawrence Brazier*



Nice chap is Mike Hennessey (photo by Tom Hanley)! It was a joy to hear a fellow Brit sign off with "cheers" at the end of our telephone conversations. The sort of man I would like to spend an evening with, together with a bottle of the same name. It seems now somehow sacrilege to select "English (USA)" when starting a new Word Doc.

Hennessey slips easily into a state of recall. The stories abound, about the piano playing, compositions, productions, books and liner notes. He has been there, done it, rubbed it and probably played it. Hennessey is the universal man, albeit one whom William Blake would have failed to understand, although Art Blakey sure did.

The hip among the British are likely to say "man" to each other, and then lower their eyes in embarrassment because it seems, well, not quite British. Appropriate to form, yours truly enjoyed conversation with a man one could easily meet at Lord's (cricket) or down the boozier (pub) for a pint of warm beer. Having said all that, we are talking about a bloke who has played with Messrs Griffin, Golson, DeFranco, Clark Terry and Nat Adderley, and plenty more besides. His own interviews have ranged from the sublime - trailing around Paris with Thelonious Monk in a interview that eventually took fourteen hours (he spoke

slowly?), to the ridiculous - a two word comment from Miles Davis, the second word of which was, characteristically, "off."

Being British, of course, means that humor is among the Hennessey talents. Nothing loud and outrageous mind, but "CDs last longer because you can't get the cellophane off" or "Has there ever been a non-special special guest?" Since living on the Continent with his German wife he gets asked "How's your German?" and his reply is, of course, "She's lovely." However, Mike Hennessey likes his humor to be mostly British - The Two Ronnies, The Goons (among which was Spike Milligan, a Jazz fan beyond the call of duty), and above all "Only Fools And Horses," which two Brits can talk about for hours, retelling the highpoints of one episode after the next. This means that a salient awareness of the utter daftness of life (the root of all real British humor) has not passed unnoticed as far as Hennessey is concerned. Combine humor with Jazz and you get Ronnie Scott. The book on which Hennessey collaborated with Ronnie Scott is so loaded with humor one wonders how Scott ever managed to find time be the great tenor saxophonist he was. Hennessey has captured many of the Ronnie jokes (and there were plenty that got away; like when it was suggested that Scott played free Jazz and the man replied "Well, I sometimes play very cheaply, but never free."). Ronnie Scott could have been a stand-up comic any time he ran out of reeds. It was Ronnie Scott who was able to slowly drive a wedge between the ban against foreigners and a virtually incestuous British Jazz scene, which would bring American stars to that isle set in a silver sea. The Scott/Hennessey book, *Some Of My Best Friends Are Blues*, relates not so much the down side of running a Jazz club ("...we were so poor we were obliged to sell clothes-pegs to Gypsies to make a living."), but more of the will to survive coupled with an uncompromising dedication to presenting great music. The book is out of print and that is a shame, because a better read, and the chance to laugh out loud while doing so, is seldom found within the realm of published biography. (Publishers should go for this one, it's a guaranteed bestseller.)

## Mike Hennessey cont...

Mike Hennessey was born in London on 25 February 1928, one of four children - two older sisters and a younger brother. "The family was musical, my mother played piano and had a good contralto voice and my brother took up drums as a hobby, and still plays (related without a jot of irony). He is managing director of the Welsh Jazz Society. I wound up learning to be a teleprinter operator in the RAF, prior to being given the opportunity to beat the system by becoming a musician and writer.

"I began playing piano, encouraged by my father, at the age of six. I would sit on his knee and he would teach me tunes, mostly in the key of F sharp. He had a most sensitive musical ear, which happily I inherited. He was also a nifty tap dancer. I remember that "Whispering" was one of the first tunes he taught me.

"Although my father left school at 14, he read books by Bertrand Russell, C. E. M. Joad and other philosophers and, having served in the 3rd Dragoon Guards in the 1914-1918 War (the war to end all wars, or should have been) was a dedicated pacifist as, indeed, I am.

As far as philosophy goes, my own outlook on life has been taken primarily from my mother and father, and is summed up by the phrase "Live and let live." I think one of the most profound statements I ever read was made by the French writer, Madame de Staël, who said, "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner" (To understand all is to pardon all). A most compassionate philosophy. A book that has impressed me very much recently is *Saving Private Power* by Michael Zezima, which dramatically contrasts war, as portrayed by Hollywood, and war as it really is."

I asked Mike to offer his thoughts about what seems unavoidable to a life in Jazz: racism and integration. "Integration is a long and painful process and it is bitterly resisted by people driven by insecurity. Jazz can help though it doesn't always. One still sees leaders selecting sidemen on the basis of their ethnicity rather than their talent. The white membership of the Lincoln Center Orchestra is somewhat scanty and the much-vaunted Ken Burns documentary on Jazz did not give, in my view, a fair representation of the contribution made to Jazz by white musicians. At the same time it may be relevant to mention that it is not only Europeans who feel that Americans don't appreciate Jazz to the extent that Europeans do. Many American musicians feel the same. The great pity is that Black America gives so little support to its own music."

Despite the taboo subjects (especially for Englishpersons) of Sex, Politics and Religion, Mike Hennessey was able to give a succinct and straight-ahead statement on all three.

**Sex:** "By all means. Moreover, I believe in mixed marriages. The Pope should marry the Archbishop of Canterbury."

**Religion:** "Something of a closed book to me. I'm a cozy agnostic - so I'm keeping one foot in the door. Religious factions have been the cause of more wars than any other movement. I think the penchant some black American musicians have had for the Muslim religion is a response to the fanatical white religious fundamentalists who were prominent in the Ku Klux Klan and who have been, and still are, xenophobic. In my view, organized religious groups tend to distort the message of God."

**Politics:** "I'm passionately interested in politics and depressed by the fact that fewer and fewer people trouble to vote. This is not apathy - its disillusionment. They are not turning away from politics but from politicians. I was Paris correspondent for the Labor Party-supporting national newspaper, the *Daily Herald* for five years in the 1960s. One of the great characteristics of Jazz is that it is a socialist music, as that great British writer Max Jones was always pointing out. There is the communal, co-operative aspect of ensemble playing, plus you get a chance to display you own individuality in solos. But it is teamwork which makes a good Jazz group and a good political movement. I have been a member of the Labor Party for years, am a strong believer in unions (unlike Wal-Mart) and am a life member of the National Union of Journalists and a member of the Musicians' Union.



## Mike Hennessey cont...

**Hennessey the immigrant:** "I am extremely happy on this side of the English Channel in Germany and, as a firm believer in a united Europe, I deplore the Little Englander attitude of some of my compatriots and their wish to preserve currency with a portrait of the Queen on it. Yes I miss cricket (though it is not the game it used to be - old fogies like me, of course, say that about everything), country pubs, English villages, and, of course, Ronnie Scott's. On the other hand, my wife Gaby and I usually make it to half a dozen different countries in the year - recent trips have included France, Switzerland, Israel, Lithuania, Spain, Cyprus and Corsica, mostly in connection with Jazz festivals.

**Mike Hennessey and a life of Jazz.** "My attraction to Jazz began when I heard a 78 rpm record of the Gene Krupa Orchestra playing 'Tuxedo Junction' - that would be around 1940."

Thereafter we read that that man has written for Jazz publications in Canada, the USA, the UK, Poland, Italy, Spain and Germany. He has chaired and spoken at music business conferences worldwide and is an acknowledged specialist on copyright and intellectual property protection. Together with the *Some Of My Best Friends Are Blues* book with Ronnie Scott in the UK, he also published *Klook*, a well-received biography of Kenny Clarke, and *Tin Pan Alley*, a book about the British music business. Hennessey covered the international music scene for *Billboard*.

**Then there is Mike Hennessey, piano player.** The CDs featuring Mike on piano are as good as it gets in the bop field. *Unsung Hero* features Chas Burchell, one of the undiscovered geniuses of Jazz. Burchell could be likened to the Austria Hans Koller. Both had a fantastic talent and both did not really achieve the fame they deserved. Koller is still an insider's tip among musicians, but Burchell simply died before his time. Hennessey took over "The Chastet" after Burchell passed on and "Shades of Chas Burchell" is a fine swinging CD, with some light yet persuasive piano interludes by Mike.

"One of the greatest experiences was having the honor to play and record with Nat Adderley, Billy Mitchell, Arthur Blythe, Benny Golson, Keter Betts and Jimmy Cobb on a "Tribute To Dinah Washington" tour in Germany with singer Jan Harrington. What more could a pianist want than to be backed by Keter Betts and Jimmy Cobb? Of course, I had great pleasure over the years playing with the "Chastet". I also have to mention Clark Terry, one of the greatest musicians and nicest guys in the business. Much satisfaction, too, from touring with the great Buddy DeFranco, playing with Nathan Davis, Johnny Griffin, Dusko Goykovic and Louis Stewart and recording (just one track) with Ronnie Scott.

"My idols - Lester, Bird, Diz, Clark and scores of pianists - Garner, Cole, Shearing, Flanagan, Hank Jones, Kenny Drew, Bill Evans, Pete Jolly, Wynton Kelly, Monty Alexander etc., etc. I guess I drew inspiration from all of them, plus others. My wife is currently knocking me out when I have the volume too high on the record player.

"I have many favorite songs, the choice of a very wide range depending on my mood. "Autumn Leaves" takes a lot of beating (just consider how many other composers have borrowed, and only slightly altered, the sequence). Potential standards are increasingly rare - there's been a general dumbing down in music - but now and again a worthwhile composition emerges - "Estate" is a good example. There are so many great songs. One of my all-time favorites, and one of my father's, is Poem by the Czechoslovakian composer Zdenk Fibich. The great benefit of having a 7,000-plus collection of LPs and CDs is the bonus of rediscovery. Just recently, I rediscovered the abundant talent of the Martinique-born, Paris-based pianist, Michel Sardaby - who was a good friend when I lived in Paris, he made a duo album in 1984 with Monty Alexander, *Caribbean Duet*, and it's a gem. I think the Lynne Arriale Trio is one to be highly commended, as is the brilliant German tenor saxophonist, Peter Weniger, who has just produced the album *LegalParadizer* with Decebal Badila on bass and Wolfgang Haffner on drums.

## Mike Hennessey cont...

"Basically, of course, there is hardly any music that I'm not interested in? The hackneyed old maxim stands good: "There are only two kinds of music - good and bad." So I could give a flip answer and say, "Only bad music." But I detest rap and hip-hop and the more bizarre excesses of the Jazz avant-garde, (so-called, dentally, because they avant-garde a clue). As for Classical music, well, I guess I simply don't have the chops to play myself and I don't read."

**On the meaning of Swing.** "Just listen to Lester Young with Count Basie, or dig Zoot Sims."

**Bass players.** "When it comes to bass players, I'd happily settle for John Clayton, Peter Bockius, Keter Betts, Buster Williams, Niels-Henning, Ray Drummond."

**Singers.** "Apart from Francis Albert, one of the best singers of the great American songbook is Jack Jones." (Yours truly always felt that Jack Jones was really out on his own - Cockney joke.) "I also dig Peggy Lee and Greetje Kauffeld (apart from other qualities, they both have impeccable intonation), Nat Cole, Mel Torme, Billie, Ella, Sarah, Ernestine Anderson, Annie Ross, Anita O'Day."

**Favorite club.** "How did you guess? - at No. 47 Frith Street. I also dug the Paris Blue Note, Chat Qui Peche and Living Room in the good old days. And in New York - the Blue Note, where I played a few Monday jam sessions with Ted Curson, and the Village Vanguard."

**Ambition.** "To learn German." (Lord knows why.)

The entire interview was carried out by phone and e-mail and I for one loved every minute of it. It is a shame that Mike Hennessey and your correspondent didn't actually meet. Still, it doesn't seem to matter. Such rapport is seldom found and our relationship certainly transcended these earthly bounds. I am sure we will run into each other one day, I shall throw open my arms to await a friendly embrace, and he won't have the foggiest idea of who I am.

**by Lawrence Brazier, Sept. 2003**

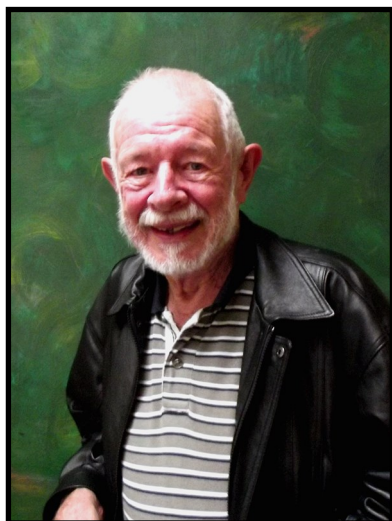
Further reading:

<http://jazzinstitut.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/mike-hennessey.html>

<http://www.londonjazznews.com/2013/05/book-review-ronnie-scott-with-mike.html>

## James C. Marwood

### Unexpected Visit



On 17 June 2014, Old Manorian, James C. Marwood, paid the school an unexpected visit. James, who has lived in Tasmania (Australia) for the last thirty years, is in the UK and Europe for the next month. He will be travelling around much of the UK as well as visiting Paris during his time here. James attended the school from 1944 – 1951.

James was helpful in identifying a number of teachers appearing in the staff photograph from the 1940s (included in newsletter). In addition, he provided many stories behind the names of many of the former Alumni whose names appear on the walls of the Main Hall.

He also recalled the sighting of a German V-2 Rocket fizzing in the sky whilst out on the playground one day during his early years here. An extended profile on James will feature in the January 2015 Alumni Newsletter.

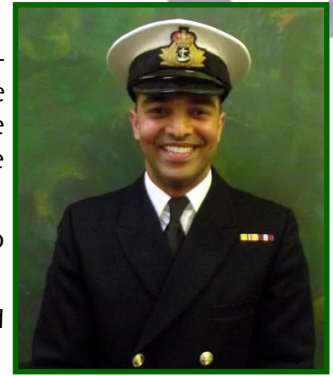
## Alumni Profile - Vivek Raval

On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2014, we were fortunate enough to get a visit from an Old Manorian, Vivek Raval who is currently a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

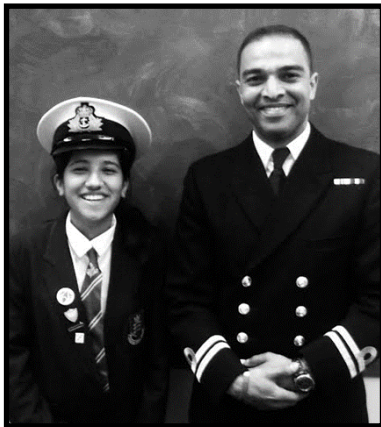
Today he does something everyone dreams but not everyone dares, he drives Warships. Lieutenant Raval described it to be a 'Love-Hate profession'. It's inconceivable to imagine the immense pressure of supervising 5000 tonnes and being responsible for 1000 men. Raval's expeditions have enabled him to travel and triumph over the seven seas with the exception of the minute Pacific.

In spite of being born in India, he was educated in London. His family came to London when he was merely four years old.

Raval, possessing a strong sense of patriotism and citizenship always felt obligated to give something back to the country and held ambitions to do so.



He gave up seventy percent of his twenties for national service but doesn't regret a thing, he's proud to be standing where he is and is forever indebted to those remarkable teachers who pushed him to his potential and expanded his boundaries. During early stages of High School he struggled to find his way. However, a number of key teachers influenced and motivated him. All of these inspiring role-models shaped his perception of society and stretched him into being the man he is today. He stated that our school teachers were just 'utterly phenomenal' and I quote 'You don't actually realise the impact they have until you leave'.



After year ten came around the corner, he was much more settled in and completed his GCSEs with the guidance of his influential mentors, the epitomes of perfection and determination.

Due to the fact he was the eldest child in a family who were completely foreign to the conceptions of a new country, he had to learn as he went along. Again, Lieutenant Raval highlighted teachers having specifically had an influence on him.

When questioned whether he had his future completely planned he simply stated he only completely decided after a careers fair in university where he chose the job with the biggest guns! At first he was studying Economics at the University of Nottingham but hated the internship; he stated he always felt inclined towards forces and he took that leap of faith.

He joined Dartmouth directly after his completion at University and was trained to be an officer and cadet like every other individual. From that stage he expanded his role into a highly-trained naval warfare officer. He learnt the ideals and etiquette expected from every cadet and learnt how to conduct oneself. Indoctrinated with views on loyalty to the motherland; Raval relentlessly sustained his spirits and continued through. He gained experience and understanding during his time in Greenwich he particularly enjoyed and underwent exceptional tasks unlocking hidden attributes, elements and developing leadership abilities. After specialist training, he went to the Britannia Royal Navy College for a year of in-depth training; he was commissioned his rank and even received a prestigious certificate from her majesty herself. Whilst preparing to become a Branch officer, he headed to sea to acquire knowledge in splendid skills such as Navigation training; Stellar reading; Warfare skills, Tactical manoeuvring and identifying potential threats.

Lieutenant Raval's competence was pushed to its boundaries with the perilous tests; bombarded with submarine attacks and potential threats. Deprived of sleep, his capabilities were tested to significant extents. At the sheer age of twenty-two and fully qualified, Raval supervised a warfare mechanism carrying over two hundred passengers.

His first employment was in Iraq where he aided the financial and oil infrastructure which was significant for the welfare of the community. He also was employed for the anti-piracy operations in Somalia and was offered opportunities to work with multinational organisations and other navies. I quote 'You genuinely realise the significance and impact every level of government has on society'.

He stumbled into the path best suited for him and is as happy as could be. Thus it must be true, destiny is not written for us but by us.

By Disha Dagli, year 9



## The Late Barbara Bray (nee Jacobs)

The names of Barbara Jacobs and her sister Olive Jacobs feature prominently on the gilded walls of the Main Hall at Preston Manor. Barbara passed away in 2010. An account of her life featured in *The Guardian*, which is provided below.



1942 BARBARA JACOBS GIRTON COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE	1943 OLIVE JACOBS STATE SCHOLARSHIP
1942 OLIVE JACOBS EXHIBITION IN MODERN LANGUAGES ST HILDA'S COLLEGE OXFORD	1944 K.J. WARREN R.A.F. KILLED IN ACTION
1943 BARBARA JACOBS STATE SCHOLARSHIP	1944 BETTY GOULDING A.T. SIMMONS PRIZE FOR GEOGRAPHY OXFORD UNIVERSITY
1944 W. LANNING R.A.F. DISTINGUISHED FLYING MEDAL	1945 D.J. GODDARD LE MAC PRIZE FOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION BROUGHAM RD. COLLEGE
1944 L.T. BOWERS R.A.F. KILLED IN ACTION	1945 BARBARA JACOBS SCHOLARSHIP IN ENGLISH GIRTON COLLEGE CAMBRIDGE
1945 R.E.P. WILLIAMS CROIX DE GUERRE	1946 BARBARA JACOBS 1 <sup>ST</sup> CLASS HONS ENGLISH TRIPOS CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY
1946 OLIVE JACOBS 1 <sup>ST</sup> CLASS HONS IN MODERN LANGUAGES OXFORD UNIVERSITY	1948 K.J. WATSON STATE SCHOLARSHIP
1946 K.J. MYERS STATE SCHOLARSHIP	1948 P.J. DAVIES 1 <sup>ST</sup> CLASS HONS B.S. (ECON) LONDON UNIVERSITY
1947 J.A. FULLER BRITISH BOYS' CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP	1948 F. KONOPASEK STATE SCHOLARSHIP

Barbara Bray, who has died aged 85, was one of the most significant links between British and French literature in the 20th century.

She was the principal translator and an early champion of Marguerite Duras, who was her close friend, and also translated the work of Jean Genet, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Anouilh and [Alain Robbe-Grillet](#). As a young and influential script editor at the BBC in the 1950s, she fostered the work of many writers including [Harold Pinter](#) and, perhaps most importantly, [Samuel Beckett](#), who became her personal and intellectual partner for more than 30 years.

An identical twin, she was born Barbara Jacobs into a lower-middle-class family in Maida Hill, west London, and raised in Harrow. She attended Preston Manor County Grammar school, in Brent, and went to Girton College, Cambridge, where she took a first in English. She married John Bray, an Australian born RAF pilot, after they both graduated from Cambridge. She spent three years with him teaching English in Cairo and Alexandria before returning to London and landing a job, in 1953, as script editor in the drama department of the new BBC Third Programme, one of a handful of women then in positions of responsibility there.

Working under Val Gielgud, Donald McWhinnie and John Morris, she was at the spearhead of a risky enterprise to introduce the postwar British public to avant-garde 20th century drama. She was involved in recommending, commissioning and translating work by Duras, Robert Pinget, Ugo Betti and Luigi Pirandello. Bray supported Pinter in particular, assuring him a steady flow of commissions after the failure of his London theatre debut, *The Birthday Party*. Pinter wrote *A Slight Ache*, *A Night Out* and *The Dwarfs* initially as radio commissions for her, and remained grateful to her throughout his life for this crucial early support.

Bray met Beckett in 1956 during the production of his radio play *All That Fall*, and they became more closely involved when she helped him with *Embers*, his second BBC commission, in 1959. By then Bray was in a relationship with McWhinnie, her estranged husband having died in an accident in Cyprus, leaving her in sole charge of their two young daughters.

She said later that it took 30 seconds to fall in love with Beckett. Despite being drawn by his graceful, generous manner and his voice, which she described as sounding like the sea, she nonetheless kept her distance, and it was he who made the first moves in what was to become a relationship of central importance for both of them.

Strikingly beautiful, opinionated and headstrong, Bray had run the course of her career at the BBC by 1961. At the age of 36, she moved to Paris with her daughters, partly to be closer to Beckett (who was 55) and partly to pursue a freelance career as a translator and critic. Besides writing for the *Observer* and appearing regularly on the BBC programme *The Critics*, she translated almost all of Duras's work; Anouilh's *Antigone*; Pinget's *Clope*; Genet's *Prisoner of Love*; Michel Tournier's *The Ogre*; works by Julia Kristeva, Philippe Sollers, Michel Quint, Frédéric Richaud and Amin Maalouf; Flaubert's correspondence with George Sand; and Elisabeth Roudinesco's biography of Jacques Lacan. She won the Scott Moncrieff prize for translation four times.

In 1975 she collaborated with Joseph Losey on the later abandoned screenplay of a film about the life of Ibn Sa'ud, the founder of Saudi Arabia. The material she generated was refashioned into a biography, co-written with Michael Darlow, which will be published later this year. With Losey and Pinter, she undertook the immense task of adapting Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* for the cinema (Beckett also lent a guiding hand). The film was never made, but their text was published (under Pinter's principal authorship) as *The Proust Screenplay* in 1978.

## The Late Barbara Bray (nee Jacobs) cont...

Her relationship with Beckett lasted for the rest of his life. He sent her work in progress by mail (sometimes twice a day, even if they were meeting anyway) and worked with her, by her own account, as a sounding board, as a direct help with translation (he translated his own work between French and English), and as a gadfly who would encourage him to complete projects.

She was the only person with whom he regularly shared his work in progress and one of very few with whom he discussed his work at all. She never claimed credit for his work, stating that she had no creative imagination at all. She "wasn't any influence on the nature of the work", she later recalled, "because he was absolutely unique and sure of himself and knew what he wanted to say". She described their relationship as one of equals, an impression corroborated by those who knew them at the time.

Beckett had just married Suzanne Dechevaux-Dumesnil when Bray moved to Paris in 1961. Suzanne had helped him recover his health after he was stabbed in 1938, and both had been hunted members of the Resistance during the latter part of the second world war. Bray claimed that Beckett remained faithful to both of them, a situation which was not without consequences for Bray and her children, who were brought up as the offspring of an occasionally anguished "other woman", devoted to her often-absent companion.

Beckett and Suzanne's relationship had been forged in adversity and before his fame. They had much less in common intellectually than he and Bray. His double life was most likely the point of departure for *Play* (1963), in which a man, wife and mistress confess their lives to an intermittent spotlight, confined to the neck in earthen jars. The similarly-confined but irrepressible Winnie in *Happy Days* (1960) has sometimes been likened to Bray, who was possessed of an unstoppable, effusive attitude bordering on the manic. She denied the link.

Bray spoke of writing a memoir of her life with Beckett, but never completed it. She abhorred others' tell-all accounts of sometimes superficial relations with him, and perhaps preferred in the end to allow silence to descend on the mystery of their relationship. We can nonetheless speculate whether the second part of his career would have been as varied and adventurous without her, ranging across television and film and inspired by sources including the Noh theatre, to which she introduced him. Her last collaborative act with him was to type his final work, *What Is the Word* (1989), which he composed when confined to the Tiers Temps nursing home in Paris. He died that December. His 713 letters to her are kept at Trinity College Dublin (he destroyed all personal correspondence he received). She left a brief account of her life with him in an interview with Marek Kedzierski.

After Beckett's death, Bray continued to translate, and she put great energy into the bilingual Paris-based theatre company *Dear Conjunction*, which she co-founded and for which she directed lesser known Pinter and Beckett works.

A stroke in 2003 limited her activity, and left her using a wheelchair. She remained doggedly independent in a studio flat in the Rue Séguier, proudly reciting swathes of Shakespeare, Donne and the King James Bible from memory. After a steady decline in her health, she moved last December to Edinburgh to a nursing home near her daughter Francesca's house.

Resolutely rational and atheist to the last, Bray eschewed a funeral and donated her body to science. She is survived by Francesca and her other daughter, Julia, and her sister, Olive.

- Barbara Bray, editor and translator, born 24 November 1924; died 25 February 2010
- This article was amended on 5 March 2010. The original said that [Samuel Beckett and his wife Suzanne] had been hunted by members of the Resistance during the latter part of the second world war. This has been corrected.

## 'The Two Colins'

## Former Staff

Collectively, Colin Rowlands and Colin Towndrow gave over sixty years service to Preston Manor School. It seemed only fitting that these two former members of staff, and good friends, feature in our inaugural newsletter.



### Colin Rowlands Preston Manor 1981 to 2011

Born and bred in "Ponty" as the locals call it, Pontypridd is at the junction of the Taff and Rhondda Valleys. The town's greatest claim to fame is Tom Jones and yes the Green Green Grass of Home really is greener there because It's Not Unusual – more like frequently - raining there.

I was good at sums at school maybe because the first one to complete them and get them all right when marked at the teacher's desk was given a sweet. At secondary school maths was split into Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry, and appropriately my geometry teacher was Mr Angle.

Three of the most memorable experiences for me at secondary school were: listening to the 1812 overture for the first time, My English teacher reading The Listeners by Walter de la Mere and my introduction to the power and precision of Calculus in breaking things down into an infinitesimally large number of infinitesimally small pieces then recombining them to get an absolutely accurate answer compared with the only approximate answers which had been possible pre calculus.

I thoroughly enjoyed my A-levels in Pure Maths, Applied, Maths and Physics and went on to do a Joint Honours degree in Maths and Physics at Bristol University. After one year in a hall of residence I moved into a house in Clifton with five other students: two Medics, two Vets and a Civil Engineer. We have all kept in regular contact over the years. Some of us are also keen fell walkers and we regularly meet for a week in the Lake District or weekend in the Brecon Beacons.

In my final year at university I was invited through a school friend Phillip to a house party in Parson's Green. It was there I met my wife Anne. She was from Llanelli and in London training as a nurse at Hammersmith hospital. As it happened her best friend was from Pontypridd. In fact her best friend's boyfriend and his friend Phillip were both in the same class as me at school.

After university I went on to do a PGCE and took my first teaching job at St Olave's School in Orpington. St Olave's was originally a school for the poor children of Southwark but moved out to Orpington because there was no space to expand in Southwark.

After three years I moved to Drayton Manor School in Ealing where I got my first experience of the Secondary Maths Individualised Learning Experiment or SMILE. I became second in the maths department as well as assistant Head of House. While at Drayton Manor I did a MEd and a Dip MA in Management of Maths Departments at Brunel University. This put me in good stead for my next job when I moved to become Head of Department at Preston Manor in 1981.

Despite taking the job only on condition that the accommodation for maths be substantially improved the then Head teacher Dr Mason retired just a year later and the dining rooms and dilapidated huts were still being used as main stay maths teaching rooms even 20 years later. At the time Preston Manor was considered to be one of the best if not the best school in Brent. However, many pupils were not being stretched and less than 50% of pupils at this time were achieving even grade C at GCSE Maths.

In the 80's Brent was rarely out of the Headlines. With its extreme "looney left" council it was labelled the barmiest borough in Britain. Education in Brent was high on its agenda but considerable funding was diverted into misguided ideological projects and very little actually found its way into the classroom.

Like many other teachers I tried to work around the distractions and focus instead on raising achievement. It was a slow process but by the mid 90's 55% of pupils were achieving Maths GCSE grade C or above. In 1998 we raised this to 60%, by 2001 to 68% and by 2004 to 73%. In 2006 we eventually reached the target we had set ourselves with 75% of pupils achieving a maths GCSE grade C or better. Our achievements were duly recognised in the Panda and Raiseonline reports where value added was comparable with the top 10% of schools nationally.

After 25 years, I handed over the management of the department to my assistant Paul McDonagh. He continued to raise the achievements of the department while I reduced my hours and turned my attention to managing school data and teaching A-level maths.

Since retiring in 2011 I have met regularly with my good friend Colin Towndrow. We meet up for walks both in the country as well as central London and often take in the fantastic art galleries, museums and pubs that London has to offer and which I was usually too busy to appreciate while I was teaching. We also sometimes meet up with our wives the two Ann(e)s who by the way are both still working while we are enjoying ourselves.



## Colin Rowlands Cont...

In 2012 I enjoyed some high altitude trekking with an old university friend walking over the Alps from Switzerland to Italy and staying in Mountain Huts on route. We are planning to do something similar in the vicinity of the Matterhorn in 2015.

I have also joined a local choir in Ealing and enjoyed singing in several concerts. The most amazing was singing Beethoven's ninth with the West London Sinfonia in December 2013.

My favourite recent theatre visit was to see David Hare's *Skylight* with Bill Nighy and Carey Mulligan. I saw the original National Theatre production with Michael Gambon and Lea Williams back in the 90's and the current production is as good if not better. Hare's drama involving an idealistic maths teacher working in a tough East End school is especially relevant to me and is just as pertinent now as it was back in those post Thatcher years when it was written.



Colin Towndrow worked at Preston Manor School for 28 Years, and in Brent for 36 Years. He retired from Preston Manor School in July 2013.

You'll realise I've led such an exciting life when I tell you that I now live in Stoke Newington - a full two miles from where I was born in University College Hospital in 1952!

My dad worked on the railway and we lived in railway property: a slum tenement in Somers Town, close to Euston Station. My parents were catholic. All the schools I attended were called St. Aloysius: Aloysius infants in Phoenix Road, then Aloysius juniors in Aldenham Street and finally Aloysius up in Highgate, then a grammar school which served a wide area of North London for those catholic boys who passed the 11+.

Times was hard in the olden days! So I got a Saturday job when I was thirteen in a butcher's shop in Kentish Town. As a consequence, I'm your man if you want a leg of lamb butterflying or a chicken jointing or spatchcocking. It also means I eat those bits of meat usually given to the dog or cat. At fifteen, it was time to move on, so my Saturday job was selling socks at the, now defunct, Littlewoods store in Oxford Street, where I worked until the end of A levels.

My A levels were in English, French and German so at 18, off to Keele University, after a summer hitch hiking with a friend through Germany. My first time abroad. You could only do a 4 year course at Keele in those days and I ended up doing Sociology and American Studies with subsidiary English and Astronomy. Don't ask me why.

Summer work normally found me high. No, not that. I usually worked as a labourer on demolition. An Irish firm. I had long hair, so in the hut first thing I'd tie it in a pony tail, much to the amusement of the gang who affectionately referred to me as "the English \*\*\*\*" (rhymes with hunt) with the bun.



## Colin Towndrow Cont...

I met my wife ,Ann, in my final year , and she still had two to go. So instead of a post graduation travelling year I stayed in the Potteries, initially working in a factory producing powders for pottery glazing ....lots of lung disease! Then a six month stint in Newcastle under Lyme' s rates office .

In my wife's final year at Keele, I went up the road to Madeley College and did my PGCE in English , Drama and Integrated Studies. I still don't know what Integrated Studies is.

So I became a teacher. My first 8 years were at Claremont and then in 1984 I moved to Preston Manor where I stayed until retirement in 2012, not teaching during my final 5 years but managing cover and exams. Many happy memories of both schools , the happy memories far outweighing the ones that grate.

Yes , I have lots of amusing anecdotes, no they're not being written down here . I don't mind embarrassing myself but I don't want a joke at someone else's expense in print. Similarly I've known many brilliant staff who deserve praise , but I know if I mention some I'd leave out others who should be mentioned and that would upset me , even if it didn't them.

So , if and when we meet up the stories will roll.

Retirement. Love it. I've got myself fit losing a lot of weight over the last year. I swim regularly and have been a keen walker for some time.

Myself and my good mate Colin Rowlands have walked most of London's waterways, both the canals and the Thames and have recently been trudging the Chilterns. We meet regularly . It's beer as well as coffee now. Holidays with my wife are usually walking ones , frequently in the Lake District where we still just about manage the high peaks. We also like the Cornish Coast and last year did Hadrian's Wall.

Myself and my wife are members of the Tate and the Royal Academy so gallery visits are regular and we frequently go to the theatre. On Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Hackney Picturehouse old farts can get in for 3 quid with a free coffee and biscuits so I've been rather indiscriminating in my frequent viewing of films.

DIY projects keep me busy and our house has never looked so good. Family life is still busy. My wife still works. She's a solicitor working at Shell.

London property prices means that 2 of my 3 sons still live at home, my youngest having just finished his finals at Manchester . With a degree in Ancient History , I suspect he might well be lounging on the settee for a while along with my middle son who's just resigned as a primary school teacher with no job to go to! At least my eldest son is gainfully employed in management at Great Ormond Street.

The future? Who knows . Those of you who were there for my leaving speech will know that I think Preston Manor is ripe for satire. Maybe penning a sitcom ? Suits me.



## Photographs Gallery

Can you identify anyone in the photograph below?

This staff photograph taken in the Quad is believed to have been taken in the late 1940's.





## Photographs Gallery Cont...



This photograph, taken in the late 1940s or early 1950's, is of a production of Gilbert and Sullivan's HMS Pinafore which was staged in the Main Hall. Are you in this? Can you identify any of the cast members?

## Higher Education Day

All Year 12 students, 160 in total, took part in our annual Higher Education Day on June 25<sup>th</sup>. This was an opportunity for all our students to register with UCAS and learn how to write an outstanding Personal Statement. We were delighted to welcome back to the VI Form a number of ex-Preston Manor students who are excellent role models for our VI Form students.

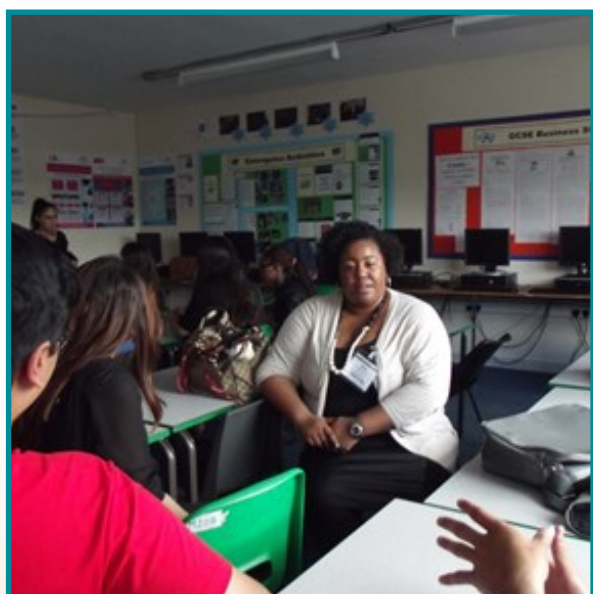
Dr Harish Mistry, one of our long-standing Alumni, gave up his time again this year to host an ethical issues workshop for potential medicine candidates; Mansi Shah, currently studying Medicine at Brighton and Sussex, supported Dr Mistry, ably assisted by Jigisha Gaglani from Year 13, one of five students who have offers of places to study Medicine this Autumn.

We were also delighted to welcome back Peter Nugent, currently in his fourth year of studying Civil Engineering at Imperial, who hosted the Engineering workshop together with Hasmatullah Elhani, who has just completed his First Year in Civil Engineering at Brighton University and Jonathan Knight, a student ambassador from Brunel, our local university. Peter is a regular contributor to Imperial University's LIVIC on-line newspaper for Engineers and has kindly made his 'Hot Topics' articles available to would-be engineering students via our virtual learning platform, Firefly.

Students interested in studying Maths at university attended a workshop run by Melinda Neminathan and Jade Dunning-Joseph; Melinda is a graduate from Leicester University and is about to start work with Ernst and Young. Jade is currently studying Maths at Birmingham University. Shivani Gandhi and Michelle Yembra also gave up their time to come back into school; Shivani, who graduated with a degree in Chemistry from Imperial is now working for Ernst and Young and Michelle has a Law and Sociology degree from Warwick University. She works on university access schemes to improve the educational chances of young people from less well-off backgrounds.

Year 12 students also had the opportunity to attend a Law workshop with Phyllisea Peltier, Legal Consultant Manager with KPMG, and recent Law graduate from Birmingham University, Aquila Akbarali who now works as a Financial Ombudsman, both Preston Manor Alumni. Dimitri Vinnikov one of our Year 13 students who this year made successful applications to study Law, also joined the workshop to give help and advice.

Students were also given the opportunity to consider alternative routes to university. Representatives from Deloitte and PriceWaterhouseCooper spoke to interested students about their school leavers' schemes while those interested in a Gap Year were able to investigate options with Project Trust and to discuss the advantages of taking a year out with ex-Preston Manor student Paul Nugent, who now studies History at Manchester University after having taken a gap year.



Phyllisea Peltier, Legal Consultant with KPMG, held a workshop with approximately thirty students applying to do Law at University.



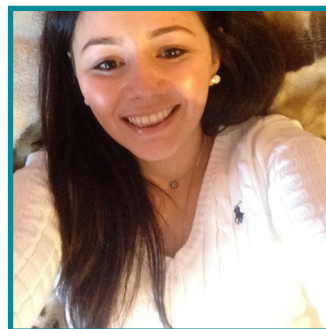
Dr. Harish Mistry and Ms. Mansi Shah hosted an ethical issues in Medicine forum on the day.

The Alumni Association have constituency representation on the School's Co-operative Trust Forum. Your representatives are:



**Isatu Haddi**

Email: [isatuhaddi@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:isatuhaddi@hotmail.co.uk)



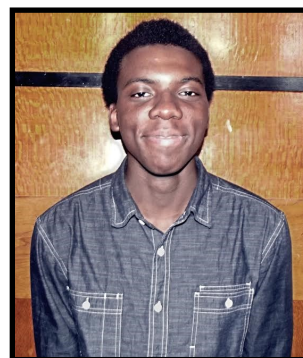
**Ornela Marcu**

Email: [ornelam17@hotmail.com](mailto:ornelam17@hotmail.com)

Please let us know if you would like to become a member of this Forum.



We will be filming a documentary style film titled 'Old Manorians – Voices of the Past'. Filming will begin in early July. Please get in contact if you are interested in being included in this film.



**Omari Mensah-Davis**  
Year 13 documentary  
Film-maker



### Old Manorians – On the Stage

Follow the careers of these former Alumni, all of whom left Preston Manor in the noughties:

Ahir Shah – 'Comedian and pile of leaves.' Regular at Edinburgh Festival. <https://twitter.com/AhirShah>

Juliana Lisk (left in 2003) – Actress, Singer, Writer - <http://www.julianalisk.com/>

Former Head Boy – Aatif Nawaz – Comedian, Actor, Writer - <http://aatifnawaz.com/> -

Louise Harman – Singer

<https://twitter.com/ladysov>

Please pass on this newsletter to anyone you know who has yet to sign up to the Alumni Association. Encourage them to sign up today at: <https://networks.futurefirst.org.uk/former-student/prestonmanor>



You are cordially invited to.....



On Thursday 10 July at Preston Manor School, The English Jazz Orchestra will be working alongside students from both Preston Manor and primary school pupils from the local community under the umbrella of the Music Academy to take a workshop and informal concert. ENJO are a semi-professional community based 1940's style swing/jazz band who play the repertoire of Glenn Miller and his contemporaries. Before the concert there will be a two hour workshop for saxophonists, guitarists, drummers and pianists of various ages and abilities given by members of the band.



The workshop starting at 4:30pm is an open rehearsal and open to members of the Old Manorians. The concert, which is free of charge, will start at 7:30pm in the main school hall.

## GENERAL NOTICES



### Message Board

A 'Message Board' section will feature on the back page of each newsletter. Please send any requests for messages to be included in future editions to [d.graham@preston-manor.com](mailto:d.graham@preston-manor.com)

We always need work experience placements for our Year 10 students. These students complete a one week work experience placement during June each year. If you can help us in offering placements, then please contact our Head of Careers, Information, Advice, Education and Guidance (C.I.A.E.G), Ms. Christel Thames at: [c.thames@preston-manor.com](mailto:c.thames@preston-manor.com)



Thank you to those Alumni who have been helpful in arranging placements for students this year.

### Thank You

In this inaugural issue, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Matthew Lantos, Mrs. Pat Roberts (nee Brownbill), Mrs. Monica Goulden (nee Brownbill), Mr. Jack Sadie, Mr. John Thirkettle, Mr. Mike Hennessey, Mrs. Elaine Page, Mrs. Loreen Williams, Ms. Andrea Reid, Lieutenant Vivek Raval, Mr. Colin Rowlands, Mr. Colin Towndrow, Ms. Isatu Haddi, Ms. Ornela Marcu, Mrs. Elaine Georghiades, Mr. Omari Mensah-Davies, Ms. Alison Wilding, Ms. Bethany Savage, Mr. James C. Marwood, Ms. Disha Dagli, Ms. Hazel Mutabazi, Ms. Christel Thames, Ms. Abigail Nokes of Future First and to all members of the Alumni Association. Long may the Old Manorian Alumni Association prosper!

