

# The Old Manorian ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

*July 2015 Issue 2*



Dear Alumni Members,

We had hoped to publish Issue 2 in January. However, as always, things have been very busy at Preston Manor and we hope you will forgive the late publication of your Newsletter. This issue contains pieces from afar; Israel, Australia and the USA. We also recently hosted a visit by Dr. Alan Gilchrist who can be seen above pointing to himself in photograph taken in 1938, the year of Preston Manor County School's first ever intake of students. He has also written a piece remembering his time here.

Other highlights in your newsletter include Alumni Profiles on Professor Emeritus Maurice Cohen, James Marwood, Vincent Ruggiero, Sandi Robinson and David Woodcock. Mr. Peter Stevens reveals how the OM41 Group began and Minal Patel provides a review of the first ever WOW Talk to take place in a UK school.

Sadly, we also report on the sad news of the passing of Jack Sadie and Adrian Clive Plummer, who are fondly remembered and missed by all who knew them. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families at this time.

We hope you enjoy Issue 2. Please pass on the Newsletter to other former Alumni and encourage them to sign up to the Old Manorian Alumni Association through our website [www.prestonmanor.com](http://www.prestonmanor.com) or at <https://networks.futurefirst.org.uk/former-student/prestonmanor>

With all good wishes.

## Alumni Profile - Dr Alan Gilchrist

### PRESTON MANOR. The Early Days. By Alan

The School opened its doors on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1938. 150 pupils were admitted in five forms; 1A,B,C,D and E. The youngest were in 1A and the more senior in 1E. Everything in the School was new; new floors, new walls, new windows, new cloak rooms, new desks, new chairs, new stage, new piano, new gymnasium, new showers, new teachers, new Head and new girls and boys in new uniforms.

In June that year, a photograph of all the pupils and teaching staff was taken. I have a copy, and I can remember some of their names.

Beginning with the girls in the back row from the middle; the 6<sup>th</sup> is Peggy Green, whose father had been a sub-mariner in the Great War, the 14<sup>th</sup> is Dilys Jones, a Welsh girl. I met her at a party; her kisses were 'something else'. 16<sup>th</sup> is Hannah Harman, and next to her is Elizabeth Guttman, whose stockings were always falling down. 22<sup>nd</sup> is Joyce Stevens, a great athlete.

The 7<sup>th</sup> in the second row is, I think, Pauline Cave. 12 is Mathieson, and next to her is Betty Williams. 18 is Olive Jacobs and 19 is her twin sister Barbara.

I cannot remember the names of the girls in the front row, though I remember most of the faces.

Now the boys in the back row from the middle. The first is Craddock, a great character who had a large influence on his classmates. The boy next to him had a French name I think. Next is Wiggington, then Bennet, Patman and Woodbridge. The 8<sup>th</sup> is Raine, from Wallsend who was very bright at maths. 10<sup>th</sup> is Leon Jacobs, one of my friends; no relation to the Jacobs twins, but almost as bright. 11<sup>th</sup> is Baker 12<sup>th</sup> Brian Trowbridge, another friend of mine. A distant relative had been an admiral. 13<sup>th</sup> is Roy d'Urban, 15<sup>th</sup> is Ralph Nunn, the first prefect, 16<sup>th</sup> is my best friend Ralph Williams. He became a successful Spitfire pilot in France, and when the war finished flew home for his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. He hit a mountain in a cloud and was killed. Van Dyke is next, then Roy Gosling, Futch. Peter Burnett (Snowball) is at the end of the row.

I begin the middle row, then Arthur Kerr, Charlton and Roberts. 9<sup>th</sup> is Ken Warren who was killed in the war. 15<sup>th</sup> Clifford, was born in India, he had a bit of an Indian accent. At the end of the row is Lanning or Laming. He broke his elbow which gave him a permanent deformity.

The 7<sup>th</sup> in the front row had a name like Isset. I think 5<sup>th</sup> from the end is Milburn.


The boy at the right far end of the seated boys is I think Grisewood, who was good at the piano.

Now the Staff. The man in the middle is of course Mr Bannister our Headmaster. Next to him on his left is Audrey Elliott, our 1e form teacher who taught French. Next is Miss Farger from the Isle of Man, who taught history. Next Miss Frankel, Geography, then domestic science, P.E, and Miss Johnson, Mr Bannister's secretary. To the right of the Head is the maths teacher, Mr Taylor, then Mr Greenough, science, Mr Bigger, art and woodwork, then the gym. teacher whose name I cannot remember. He left us early and was replaced by a Mr Sharman, a good-looking fine physical specimen.

Each day began with assembly in the hall, where Miss Farger played the piano. Mr Bannister usually addressed us. On one occasion he told us that there had been eleven applicants for each of the school places.

Then we filed off to our classrooms. I rate Mr Taylor and Audrey Elliott as outstanding. There was a mid-morning break, I think, when the girls and boys could come out to play. I think there was a tuck shop at the back of the hall run by the Caretaker Mr Bierley. He looked after the central heating of the School. He once took me down to the boilers, and showed me how he kept the two large furnaces going. His wife was our cook.

In the lunch break, some children would stay at the school and eat in the hall. We were divided into two sections; those who had the school dinners ate on the side of the hall nearest the quadrangle, while those who brought their own sandwiches to school, fed themselves on the corridor side. I think the school food was very good. It was dished out by a flustered red-faced Mrs Bierley and her helpers. The staff ate at a table in the middle of the hall. We would not begin until Mr Bannister came in and said grace in Latin. After the meal, a group of us would fold up the legs of the tables and put the tables against the wall of the hall on the corridor side.



There were Houses. I can remember the names of two; Erlbach and Vernon. Leon Jacobs was head of Erlbach, I was head of Vernon.

I cannot remember any particular event in the first year. I think it must have been in the second year, that the more senior pupils went to the Open Air Theatre in Regents Park, to see a performance of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. In the summer of that year, the School organised a camp for some of the boys, I think. It was held in Swalecliffe, a small place near the north Kent coast, between Whitstable and Herne Bay. It was a strange co-incidence, because my father had a small holiday cottage built for our family, about two miles from the camp. We were on holiday there at the time, and some of the boys visited us, and we them. After a week, Mr Greenough came along to meet my parents, and asked if he could have a bath! He certainly had a good one, and came out a new man, refreshed in body and soul.

Later that year, came the war. At first, we were not allowed to go to school in case of enemy action causing damage and harm to the pupils. Then the safety curtain on the stage was closed, and each form had one lesson each day on the stage, all of us carrying our gas masks of course. In the meantime, air raid shelters were being constructed in the School grounds. They were made of inter-locking steel plates, driven into the ground, and covered on top with a roof of reinforced concrete. The entrance was at one end, and at the other there was an escape hatch. I think there must have been benches along each side, because when the air raid sirens went off, we all walked, in orderly manner of course, to the shelters, and continued our lessons inside them; Mr Taylor having brought some chalk along with him, and using the end wall as a blackboard, with the escape hatch open letting in the light. So we were allowed back to our normal class routine when the shelters had been finished. We were now 2A, B, C, D and E, and there had been a new intake of younger children in that year, 1939.

Although I had to pass in the academic subjects, to follow my vocation, my favourite subjects were sport and woodwork. But during the war, our supply of Canadian deal was cut off, and the woodwork classes were stopped.

The School did not have its own playing field, but adjacent to the School ground was the United Dairy sports ground, which we were able to use; for cricket, soccer and athletics etc.

Two new tennis courts were built in the School grounds, for the girls only. My best sport was tennis. So my Dad wrote to Mr. Bannister, and asked if the boys could use the courts too. He refused. But in one of the holidays, I invited Barbara Jacobs to come and have a game with me. She accepted, and we played a few games. Then I walked her home and met her parents. The mother was attractive.

She pointed to the south-east, where the sky was lit up red from the burning London docks, and chivvied me off home. A short time later, we met again; this time we were joined by my young brother and Olive.

The School was in the safest part of London, being in the north-west. So children from schools nearer the centre of the city came over to join us. One of the most senior pupils was Derek Waters, who became our first Head Boy.

Also joining us was a remarkable man, George Swidenbank, our new music teacher, the organist of Muswell Hill Methodist Church. He was a real accomplished, professional musician, and played the piano beautifully. In 1940 he was mainly responsible for putting on one of the early Gilbert and Sullivan operas, Trial by Jury, all about a breach of promise case. His brilliant playing was the only musical accompaniment throughout. Derek Waters was the Judge, Leon Jacobs and Ralph Williams had parts. I was the naughty defendant who had not kept my promise to a young lady, Angelina. Now her part was played by Marion Wells, a beautiful girl with a voice to match. I often thought afterwards, that no young man in his right mind would ever do such a thing to her. Nevertheless, in the play I had done it, and they were all very rude and biased towards me. "Doubly criminal to do so, for the maid had bought her trousseau." The opera was a success. Afterwards, Mr Swidenbank formed an octet from those who had sung in the opera. There were two bases, two tenors, two contraltos and two sopranos. We met frequently in the music room in the lunch hours.

## Alumni Profile continued - Dr Alan Gilchrist

That Christmas he took us over to his church, and we sang carols for the congregation. Derek, Leon and I became friends with George Swidenbank, and we went to various musical events together. He took us to the film 'Fantasia', which I enjoyed immensely. On one Saturday afternoon, he took us to Alexandra Palace. The great hall was empty, except for large bundles of the possessions of Gibraltar refugees, which lined the walls on both sides. But at the far end was the most magnificent organ that I had ever seen. It was even bigger than the one in the Albert Hall. G.S., as we called him, had access to the organ, and gave us a recital of snippets of favourite musical pieces. Shortly afterwards, Alexandra Palace was bombed and the organ destroyed.

My young sister, Janet, was at the School for a short time before I left. I once heard the girls of her class singing Longfellow's 'The Song of Hiawatha' set to music by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, accompanied of course by Mr. Swidenbank. Most beautiful.

I took part in other plays. One of them was Karel Capek's R.U.R., about robots. (Karel's brother Joseph, was the originator of the word 'Robot'). Produced by the new art teacher Mr. Holtze. I can remember tall Woodbridge calling out "Workers of the World Unite." I made a brief appearance as a robot called 'Primus' in the climax to the play, together with one of our attractive girls, showing the transition from machine to man. We walked slowly across the stage, arm in arm, accompanied by Saint Saens' 'Danse Macabre' in the background. "Look, Primus" she said, "the sun is shining." The music reached a crescendo and the curtain fell.

In the summer holiday of 1942, the School helped to get in the Nation's harvest. Many of the boys, and girls, went to Chesham in Buckinghamshire, and were housed in an empty school. Our beddings were on the floor. We were split up into small groups and sent out to the farms. Most of us had come to Chesham on bicycle, so each group cycled to the work. Derek Waters, Leon Jacobs and I were sent to Bank farm, a few miles away. It was uphill all the way, which was a good thing, because after the day's work, which was very tiring, we could almost free-wheel the whole way home. Even some of the girls did the heavy work; others prepared the sandwich lunches for those who spent all day at the farms. Bank farm was owned by Mr. Anderson, ex India, who came round the farm on horseback to supervise us. He had a somewhat exaggerated pukka English accent. We all got on well with him. The more senior boys were paid eight pence an hour for their labours. The younger ones received six pence an hour.

Our first job, was to gather up the corn sheaves, after they had been tied up in twine, and shot out from a machine pulled by a tractor. The combine-harvester had not arrived in Britain, so everything was done in stages. The sheaves were heavy, and we either picked them up with both hands, or with one hand holding the twine. The latter method soon made our inexperienced fingers sore; later I was able to obtain my leather gloves which made the work more comfortable. Then we 'stoked' the sheaves in groups of about ten or twelve. There would be a double line of four or five sheaves facing each other and sloping towards each other, with two sheaves at each end. The stalks were on the ground of course, and the seeds on top, the whole arrangement designed to keep the rain off. The work was hard, and the days were long.

Not far from Chesham, was an American Airforce Base with Flying Fortresses. It was the beginning of America's magnificent contribution to the war effort in Europe. The 'planes would take off and fly over us in the morning as we worked in the fields, and return in the evening. I did not fully realise the significance of those flights 'till long after the war was over, when I saw the series '12 O'Clock High', starring Robert Lansing, on TV. The British blanket-bombed at night, with 1000 bomber raids. But the Americans precision-bombed during daylight. If I had known then what I learned later, I might have counted the 'planes when they left and returned.



The stooking was the hardest job I think, and it probably lasted a week or two. Then we had to help loading the sheaves on to the farm carts. We used pitch forks to hand up the sheaves to the most senior old farm worker, who was an expert at arranging the sheaves in the carts. At the end of a long day, the carts were pulled home by the farm horses. There were two of them; both strong animals. We rode on top of the corn on the way home. Then came the building of a corn rick; again, this was done by the senior man. It was an expert's job, and he was very particular about how it was done. The next stage was the threshing. There were two machines; one resembled an old steam roller, which provided the power for the operation. It had a large driving wheel on which a belt connected to the other machine. This one contained many sharp blades, which revolved at high speed. At the top of this machine there was a large square opening, through which the sheaves were thrown on to the blades. Only the most senior man was allowed to feed the machine. Any limb which entered the feeding gap meant instant amputation. The machine separated the wheat from the chaff; the corn being collected in sacks as it poured out. The full sacks were very heavy, and were carried by the strongest man on the farm up to the loft in a nearby building. So we successfully brought in the harvest.

There were other jobs to do, especially when it was raining. We once had to clean out the pig's sty; a very dirty, smelly, mucky job. We used pitch forks to move the muck from one place to another. We were now joined by Roy Gosling, 'Gozzo'. There was a little antipathy between him and Derek, and somehow, one of them splashed the other with the dirty liquid in the sty. There was a similar response from the other, and soon there was a little battle going on, each trying to pretend that it was an accident, and each singing away trying to pretend they were just getting on with the job. Fortunately it didn't last long, and we all finished the task to the boss's satisfaction.

Mr. Anderson had rented an adjacent farm, which contained some fruit trees. One was a greengage tree, full of ripe fruit. He encouraged us to eat of the fruit, while he watched from a distance on horseback. That night there was a cataclysm, and I had to dash to the toilets. Then I heard someone dashing in to another toilet a few seats away. Eventually, we both came out together. It was Leon. With one voice we said "Those greengages."

Mr. Bannister paid us a visit. He came along with his handsome five year old son John. Proudly told us John knew all the facts about having babies. We asked John about this, and he nodded. The visit was good for our morale, and for our relationship with the Head. From being the rather stern and aloof gentleman we knew at school, he became warm-hearted and friendly. He was now known as 'Banny.'

Towards the end of our stay there we had to dip the cattle, to get rid of ticks and other things. There was a narrow trough, with sloping entrance and exit, and filled with yellow dipping fluid. In order to do the job properly, one had to get involved and even push the animals through the liquid. My clothing became splashed with the stuff, and on one occasion I slipped and sat down in it. At this point in time Banny appeared on the scene, and remarked that I had dipped myself instead of the animals. Later on, when we were back at school in the following term, the Head gave an account of our farm work in assembly; including how I had dipped myself, which amused the whole School.



Towards the end of 1943, Leon and I left the School. He had become Head Boy. (Barbara became Head Girl). He had developed a fine singing voice. He addressed the School, then sang 'So long, it's been good to know you', accompanied by G.S. on the piano.

The origins of OM41 have been somewhat shrouded in mystery with varying accounts or being offered. Peter Stevens puts the matter right in this account below.

## HOW THE OM 41 GROUP BEGAN

BY PETER STEVENS

On the evening of **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September 1986** a group of about forty people gathered in the Assembly Hall of Preston Manor High School. They had responded to a letter (sent out on **1<sup>st</sup> July**) from which I am now quoting - "This is intended for those who entered the school in September 1941, and/or took General Schools exams in 1946. The plan is to assemble for a sherry reception between 7.00 and 7.30pm, have a buffet supper with wine at 8.30pm and to finish by 11.00pm. It is hoped that some two dozen old scholars will attend together with half a dozen guests (Mr Snell, the headmaster and a few of the retired staff.) The cost will be £8.00 (buffet £5.50, sherry and wine £1.00 leaving £1.50 to cover guest tickets.) Please fill in the reply slip and return by **August 1, 1986.**"

This was a first time experience for those present, made more unusual by the fact that it was organised from a distance of some 400 miles away. My name is Peter Stevens, my home from 1934 to 1948 was in Kingsbury, and I started at **PMCS** (Preston Manor County School) in 1941, having passed the eleven plus exam while evacuated to Wiltshire. I left in July 1948, and like every other sixth form boy was called up during the first year of compulsory peacetime National Service (in the RAF). I then got a degree in chemistry at Bristol, moved to Manchester where I met my wife, and started married life in 1956 working for Glaxo at a drug making factory in Montrose, halfway between Aberdeen and Dundee on the East Scottish coast, where I have lived ever since.

My mother was still at Kingsbury, so I kept in touch with a number of school friends. On visits home, as time went by I asked those still living in the Wembley area to try and organise a reunion for our year. Nothing happened, so I decided to take action. It helped that, as you will gather, I am a compulsive hoarder of data, from schooldays onwards, and that from 1960 I had plenty of storage in a ten roomed house that no-one else wanted to buy. I am also obsessive about correct dates.

In my first letter sent in **January 1986** I wrote "I am trying to arrange a reunion for everyone who started at PMCS on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 1941..... I have abstracted about 70 names from the 1947 'Pressman' record of 1946 General Schools results ([see list](#)). .....Please send a copy of this letter to anyone you know on the list." The Pressman was the annual school magazine.

It became apparent as replies were received that most Old Manorians (**OM's**) were only in contact with one or two fellow pupils at most. I was a life member of the original **Old Manorians Association** but this disbanded in **1982**. Fortunately there still existed active OM teams both for football and cricket, and these proved an essential line of communication. My last name was obtained through a chain of eight successive OM friendships. We finally contacted 35 of the 70 pupils and 26 attended the reunion, together with 5 ex-members of staff. As far as I was concerned this was a one off occasion.

However two years later on **July 9<sup>th</sup> 1988** many of us met again as the school celebrated its **Golden Jubilee**, at an event arranged by the headmaster Mr P J Snell, who wrote "During the afternoon we are arranging tennis, cricket, hockey and netball matches between old scholars and the present members of school and staff..... In the evening we are having a buffet/barbecue with dancing to live music."

A further celebration took place when a committee of six local OM's plus Clive Hamilton as chairman held a **'41 intake Reunion** on the evening of **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September 1991** at the Century Tavern. This was very close to the school and known as the Century Hotel in our time, but later demolished to make way for a set of flats. The occasion was the **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of when we started at the school.

Yet another more elaborate celebration took place on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 1998** organised by Headteacher Andrea Berkeley, with an afternoon garden party and an evening champagne reception in the quad. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this **60<sup>th</sup> School Anniversary** as I was at an Open University Summer School in York, having decided to take a five year Arts honours degree during my retirement, I did send a donation for the Millennium Maze 2000 fund and received a very nice letter in reply.

## PETER STEVENS (continued)

Earlier, on **28<sup>th</sup> January 1996** I had a change of heart and wrote to Clive Hamilton asking that his committee hold one final reunion of our year that September. I also suggested that “a brief CV is requested in advance from everyone who responds ....partly to avoid repetitive questions at the reunion, but also to provide a remembrance of every individual.” Clive was unable to take action until **17<sup>th</sup> September 1997** when I could not attend. Following the 1998 school gathering he and his committee subsequently organised reunions twice a year, in March and September, and extended the scope to a much wider group of OM's From 2000 onwards we gathered at Brunel University since Clive lived in Uxbridge and was involved with the university. We were asked to make out cheques for the lunch to The 41 Reunion Club. I don't know where the recent term OM41 Group came from!

I try never to make suggestion without being prepared to take action, so on **21<sup>st</sup> January 2001** I sent out another letter 15 years after the first, this time written on my computer. It began “At the Reunion Lunch on **26<sup>th</sup> September 2000** I took the opportunity to ask each of those present from my years at Preston Manor whether they would be interested in contributing to a simple database.” I provided a basic outline, and also offered to include remembrance of those in our year who had died.

My first postal database, issued on **28 March 2001** was headed “Because of the wide response, to keep this list manageable I have decided to restrict it to those at PMCS between **1938** and **1950**, and individual entries to 4 lines only.” OM's were naturally proud of their careers, which I sometimes had to compact, and their families where I had no space for grandchildren. I felt an obligation to include those from the three years before we arrived, who had set the standard for the school, and passed all other entries back to Clive. The list contained **29** four line entries, plus single line entries for 11 OM's who had died.

Although I emailed Clive an updated list twice a year, I had no way of ensuring it reached every individual. There were also a number of years when I was unable to attend in September. March reunions did not suit me. On **18<sup>th</sup> March 2009** I sent 24 letters by email and post asking each individual for approval to include their name on a new electronic database. The first issue on **28th March 2009** (for the reunion on 31<sup>st</sup> March) only went to 6 authorised four line email entries, but contained another 40 single line entries awaiting approval or biographic details.

Because of parking problems at Brunel, the last two OM reunions were held annually in July. **Friday 19 July 2013** saw the **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** celebrations at the school. In 2014 the OM41 committee disbanded and handed over responsibility for the Old Manorians Association to Daniel Graham, Deputy Head at Preston Manor.

My final electronic issue went out in **July 2014** with **51** entries, of which 32 were email listed and thus sent direct to each OM. Sadly the deaths list had grown to 31, a number of which contained autobiographical details submitted since 2001.

For reasons of space this has been a mainly factual account of events, and although I only managed to attend a dozen times over the period I must emphasise the happy times we spent together. Many OM's contributed to their success, but on a personal level I thank four special friends from my year. Pat Brownbill was my local contact from the first reunion onwards, and served throughout the life of the OM41 committee. Ken Dixon was the key sporting contact in 1986, and in recent years drove me from the Premier Inn at Wembley Park to Brunel and back. Bob Taylor and I have shared many occasions throughout National Service, University, marriage, working lives and retirement. Finally I pay tribute to the late Clive Hamilton, who transformed my initial idea into a wide ranging and memorable series of gatherings. We all spent the first four years at PMCS during the war, and I sometimes wonder if that was what has held us together. I leave you with an abstract from my OM entry

**Stevens, Peter.** Fryent Infants, **PMCS 1941-48**, Erlebach. RAF Signals 1948-50. Bristol University 1950-53. Analytical Chemist, Glaxo Laboratories, Montrose 1956-92



## Alumni Profile - Maurice Cohen

### Preston Manor County School in the 1950s - 'as I think it was!'

I spent less than four years at Preston Manor County School (PMCS) in the early 1950s, and have only happy memories of the school at that time.

In the first place, I had to adjust to mixed classes and lady (!) teachers. as I had transferred from PGS (Portsmouth Grammar School, a direct grant boys' school). I caused no little amusement when I replied to a question from the senior Mistress, Miss Cliffe (who also taught us French, I seem to recall) and concluded quite naturally with a 'Sir!'

I had transferred to a fifth-form pre-GCE class at PMCS, from a lower-fifth form at PGS where the GCE O-level programme was normally completed over four years, not five. So I was younger, smaller physically, and much less mature socially than my new classmates, both girls and boys. I had a lot to learn from my peers, as well as my teachers.

It soon emerged that I would not be allowed to write University of London GCE exams together with my classmates, because I was underage (the 1950s marked the zenith of doctrinaire socialism in Britain!) But I was still required to write 'mock-GCE' exams in the hall in the spring of 1950, shocking everyone (including myself) with marks of 100 in algebra, 100 in geometry, but only 95 in arithmetic; my numeracy has never improved!

During my years there, PMCS was the Middlesex Schools Champion at athletics, and there was no chance of my being selected for any of the school teams in athletics, soccer or cricket, but I did some non-competitive cross-country runs (around the homes and gardens of Preston Road and Wembley Park).

My fifth-form class timetable included Greek with Mr Bannister, our Oxonian Headmaster. It was assumed that I would try to go from PMCS to Oxford or Cambridge through an entrance scholarship exam. At that time, there had been some recent successes, mostly at Cambridge.

But first, I sat O-level GCE exams in 1951, A- and S-levels in 1952, and I was awarded a State Scholarship on the basis of my papers in Mathematics (taught me by Miss Hobbs and Mr Jones) Latin (Mr Byron) and Classical Hebrew (this last studied privately); I also gained 'pass' marks in Greek, French, English and English Literature. I received notice of my State award only at the end of August 1952, long after several friends at other London schools.

From PMCS I went up to Univ (University College, Oxford) to read for a BA degree in Mathematics. It had always been my intention to read law at university, as I hoped to become a barrister-at-law, but I was very lucky in my quite random choice of Oxford college.

I sat my Oxford scholarship exams at school in what was called 'Modern Subjects'; in my case, these were Greek and Latin as well as Pure and Applied Maths! I had previously sat entrance scholarship exams at St John's College, Cambridge for a Rogerson Scholarship in Hebrew; apparently, my Hebrew was fine but my Greek and Latin were reported to be 'well below the 'exhibition' standard required and I was then only 17 years old, and 'young enough to try again for an award in the following year', and St John's turned me down flat.

All my Oxford interviews were held at majestic Magdalen College (with its grand deer park, much more imposing than any ancient quadrangle or college room I had seen anywhere at Oxbridge). And I was very fortunate to be interviewed by Univ's Senior Tutor and Dean, Giles Alington. He asked why I wanted to read law, and was quite unsatisfied with my answers; consequently, although Univ did offer me a place as a 'commoner', their unconditional offer came with a very strong recommendation to read Mathematics, not Law.

On the day of my interviews, I did not even visit Univ, and I was unaware that my (randomly chosen) Oxford college had no teaching Fellow in Pure or Applied Maths but did have some outstanding Law Tutors. So I became a mathematician thanks mainly to a question from Giles Alington!

During my first two years at Oxford, Norman Lambert and I were the only undergraduates reading Maths at Univ, and we were 'farmed out' for all Tutorials. The sole Univ Physics fellow, Bob Berman was formally our College tutor, charged with our 'moral' instruction, but he was not responsible for our Mathematics. In our first year we were sent out of Univ to Fred Cornish, and in second year to Ian Grant (both young theoretical physicists at Wadham College and the Clarendon Laboratory both of whom went on to become distinguished Professors of Applied Mathematics. Only in third year did Univ finally appoint a college lecturer in Pure Mathematics (Kenneth Gravett, a very bright young Algebraist). However, Norman and I both chose to specialise in Applied Maths, and I was sent to Jack de Wet at Balliol College, and Norman to Charles Caine at St Peter's College (then St Peter's Hall) and we both got good degrees. Norman went on to a prestigious career in the scientific civil Service. while I began DPhil research in Quantum Mechanics at the Mathematical Institute.



My supervisor was Professor C.A. Coulson, FRS, then Rouse-Ball Professor of Applied Mathematics. His large and happy research group included many postdocs (mostly from overseas, some of them quite eminent scientists) as well as many graduate students (not all of them Oxbridge graduates), including chemists, mathematicians and physicists. Our weekly group seminars were attended by all graduate students and many postdocs, and we all learned by experience how to present our research to a critical but sympathetic audience with very varied backgrounds and interests.

In 1959, Prof Coulson encouraged me to apply for a vacant assistant lectureship in Applied Maths at the Queen's University of Belfast (QUB) before my thesis was complete, but the advertised job went to a better qualified candidate, John Michael McNamee, a young PhD from Cambridge. However, QUB did offer me a Research Fellowship in Applied Maths, and I was required to teach one short lecture course in my first term at QUB. I had given college tutorials for Hertford College, Oxford but now began to lecture at QUB without any teacher training or previous experience.

Just before I moved to QUB in September 1959, I was one of no less than four recent PMCS graduates then at Oxford and the four of us entertained Mr and Mrs Bannister to a celebratory Old Manorian lunch at the Mitre Hotel. It was a convivial and happy occasion and a proud one for the head. That was my last contact with PMCS until I revisited the school quite recently, perhaps ten years ago.

I did help with several school plays, but only backstage and with ticket-sales; as an observant Jew, I could not perform at the Friday evening performances. I was active in the chess club, which met daily during our lunch breaks, and I was roundly defeated by Mr Jones, the senior Maths teacher, who introduced me to some opening gambits I had never seen before!

At the beginning of my second sixth-form year, I was appointed one of twenty school prefects; in the following year, we elected our own head girl (Marion Chaplin) and head boy (Walter Buckley). We were responsible for monitoring the daily school assembly, and very occasionally a prefect read the biblical lesson at morning prayers. Our main job was to 'keep order' in the separate girls' and boys' playgrounds during the various lesson breaks. Because I did not eat school lunches, I was spared lunchtime dinning-room duty, which was apparently the nastiest activity undertaken by my fellow prefects.

Our only privilege was access to the remote prefects' room up in the school tower; this had a full table-tennis table right up at the top, but we were forbidden its use during class hours. The lower room had a few worn but comfortable armchairs, and we very much preferred to do our own homework there than in the spartan school library. The entire tower was in a very poor state of decoration, apparently not having seen a coat of paint for several years. We demanded that the school get it redecorated, but had to settle for a compromise; paint and brushes were provided by the school, and we prefects spent our first half-term holiday painting walls! This experience was a great contribution to my own informal education, and the shared painting effort helped turn the twenty of us into a collaborative and friendly group for the rest of our school lives.

Nonconformists, mainly Catholics and Jews (there were very few Muslims in Wembley in those days) were required to attend morning prayers at PMCS, so that over the four years I learned many tuneful hymns, as well as a wide selection of classical music, beautifully played on the piano before and after morning assembly by the school's music teacher; she became head of BBC schools' music shortly after I left PMCS.

The formal letter of the award of my State Scholarship arrived from the Ministry of Education in late August 1952, and when I revisited the school not long ago, I was delighted to see my name, still in gold gilt paint, on the honours board of the school hall.

One random memory of PMCS is of Friday afternoons in the warm prefects' room; I often assumed the role of 'agony aunt', reading aloud (to all who had time to waste!) some 'personal' letters addressed each week to 'Woman' and 'Woman's Own', together with their editors' sage replies!



Maurice Cohen in 1952 at the end of back row right hand side

James Marwood featured in Issue 1 of the Old Manorian. He now lives in Tasmania. James visited the school last summer whilst in the UK visiting family and friends. Through the Alumni Association he had made contact with old classmates. A copy of a letter sent by James, as well as an extract from the Pressman sent by James are provided in the pages that follow.

Copy of letter e-mailed 21<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2-14

14 Hope Street,  
New Town, Hobart  
Tasmania 7008

Dear Daniel,

I hope I may redeem my failure to supply you with the promised essay (but it will come!) – by sending you these reprints of two school magazines. Number one was the idea of Mr Kernutt, to make something better than the rather scrappy little numbers that had appeared in previous years. He called Roger Tringham and me into the Staff Room and set the task: a larger format, to include more contributions from our fellows, something from each little club and society and of course, plenty of sports results.

For me, 1952 was the great gift of a third year in the sixth form – a result of the demand for places in medical schools. Most of them insisted on certain exam results, and by the time the end-of-year results came out, they had no places left. I had the runs on the board in 1951, then came the extra year in sixth form before going up (to Birmingham University). It meant postponed wage-earning by a year, but since newly-qualified doctors were required to work in a hospital for £5 a week, the loss was not great. The gain was in personal development! I took Botany and Zoology as separate subjects, art because I would be drawing and painting in spare time anyway, and Ordinary-level German. That had to be via a tutor, whom I disliked, and though I survived a week's solo hitch-hiking in Germany that Easter, I scored very badly in the exam.

The annual play deserves a footnote. It was a privilege to be cast as Noah and wear the costume last used by Laurence Olivier in the West End production, but the Christian Union objected that it was blasphemous (the play, not the costume). Sheila Bagnall and the other staff members involved fought hard for us, but our cautiously cultured and religiously orthodox Head was nervous. The outcome was that performances were cut to just one. At that point I realised my mistake in getting confirmed in the Anglican tradition and joined my fellow-editor to become a lifelong atheist.

From its birth, the Strebina (debating) Society showed a pronounced leftward bias, and we were never quite sure whether our Hon. President ever spotted the anagram in the name.

Much of the Magazine's success was due to Sheila Bagnall's encouragement to us, to be proper editors – to slash, burn and to some extent re-write the more incoherent contributions, while Mr Kernutt shepherded the very limited budget and helped us squeeze in the illustrations. The typeset printing of the time needed copper-etched halftone blocks for photographs, so they were quite costly (I see I added a few highlights by hand!), but the printer accepted linocuts with success.

I wonder what became of that book I gave to the School Library in 1985! It is no small paperback, but hard cover in the rather awkward format of 250x280mm. Oh well, if it ever gets reprinted I'll replace it. I do have a few copies of another, less well-produced book – *Ways of Working*, so I'll send you one of those instead. I wrote it in collaboration with five other photographers and the Trades Unions. It's not an impressive volume, but it's an important record when several of the industries were soon to close down.

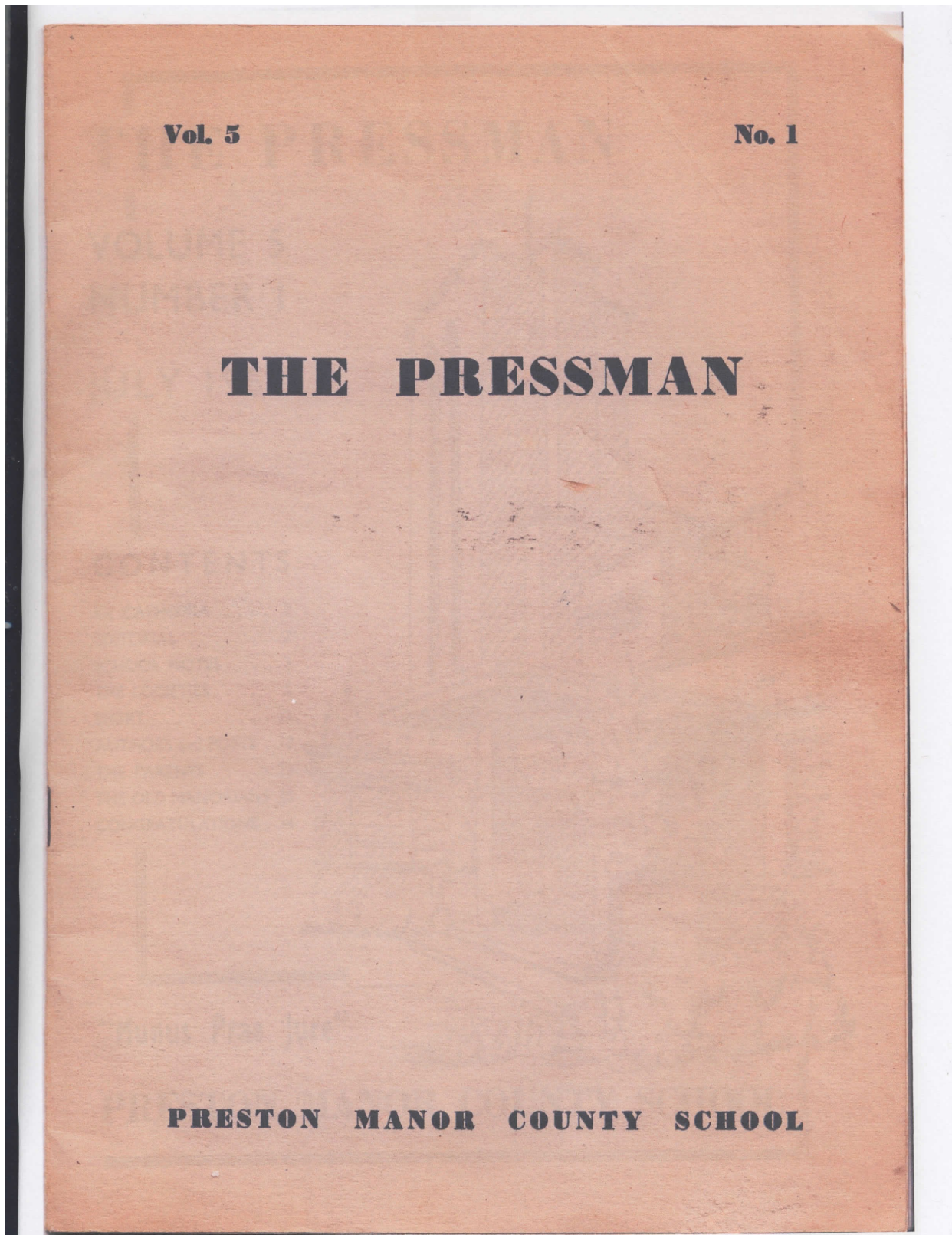
With all best wishes for you, for the Project, and for the School,

*See, the book makes the whole package ruinously expensive, so I'll delay that until I or some friend makes the trip in person!*

*Jim Marwood*



The Pressman was published annually at the school until the late 1980s. Jim Marwood and others are referred to in this issue from 1952. The school is working to resurrect the Pressman this year.





### "NOAH," by Andre Obey

A shaggy-bearded patriarchal figure holds the stage. A voice, at first diffident and uncontrolled, quickly attains an easy, ruminative quality, and a restless audience settles down . . . at long last the Dramatic Society's production of "Noah" is under way.

Noah, on whom the weight of every scene falls, takes us with him through the vicissitudes of the storm-tossed voyage of the Ark to Mount Ararat. What a challenge the part is! And how satisfying to have the challenge met so ably. Jim Marwood, who played Noah, had our confidence and understanding throughout, but more than that he made us acutely aware of the buffetings he suffered at the hands of ingrate sons, hostile neighbours, and ultimately savage animals. It was a great achievement to carry this part so well; Marwood justified at one and the same time the choice of the play and of himself as leading actor.

This is not to say that he lacked support. The casting throughout was excellent. Perrott, Lambourne and Roger Tringham as the sons were appropriately churlish and disloyal. The girls aboard the Ark, played by Pat Lennie, Pamela Goodwin and Celia Falkus, managed to portray a diversity of character with limited opportunity. The animals, always a delight in this play, achieved recognizable traits, and made their final defection the more saddening because we had grown to love them.

Mrs. Noah, played by Shirley Green, is a straight forward part for most of the play. Shirley gave the right impression of sorely-tried wifely faith combined with motherliness. In the last scene Mrs. Noah loses her faith and reason after the trials of the voyage and the disappointments of arrival. The playing of this scene was admirably done and the tenseness and tragedy of the moment were most moving.

And so we found Noah in lonely contemplation of the bleakness of Ararat, and heard his final soliloquy, his re-affirmation of faith. What an interesting and moving play it had been! And how well played.

Miss J. S. Thomas, as producer, had carried the day successfully with this most controversial play, her cast had worked with her splendidly and if there





had been a second performance no doubt many of the minor hitches of this one performance would have been overcome.

Mr. Salmond and Mr. Pilcher had given the play interesting sets and some queasily lifelike turbulence of the sea was beautifully managed. Miss Mullins was in charge of properties, Mr. Clark of lighting, and Mr. Williamson was the stage manager.

S. H. B.

### LES EXPEDITIONS

During the past year two diversions from the serious business of "Cyrano" and the Subjunctive have been arranged for those who study French; last summer Miss Thomas and Mr. and Mrs. Peckham took a party across the Channel to see the sights of Paris and then on to the Loir Valley to spend a fortnight more quietly, though less expensively, among the chateaux and wine-cellar of that region. (This summer a school party is visiting Besancon in eastern France.)

The other, much more select, diversion was the "Deuxieme Séjour des Eleves du Premier" at the Maria Gray Training College, Twickenham. Anne Schlatter and Ann Trowles attended this week-end course which is intended to help sixth-formers who are taking French at Advanced Level. It was a week-end of French conversation, debate and lectures, lightened with "soirées" of songs, games and plays. One of the prizes (first for the "Concours de Versification") was won by Ann Trowles, and as this course is an annual event, we may hope to see Preston Manor represented again next year.

### "THIRTY-TWO OF HER OWN"

At the beginning of the year the atmosphere of Hollywood came to the school, with cables snaking across the front corridor and batteries of floodlights, cameras and directors in the hall. The Realist Film Unit was taking a part of their new colour film "Thirty-two of Her Own" which shows the training of a dental student and some of her subsequent work. The film is designed to be shown to schoolchildren and to combat the fear of the dentist's chair.

Although an *Evening News* reviewer gave the latter parts of the film an "H" certificate, pupils at this school will probably prefer to reserve this honour for the first part, taken at Preston Manor, in which some of our Sixth Form took part, for this shows the prospective dental student taking her "G.C.E." and the invigilator is no less a person than our own Senior Master, Mr. Clark!

### ARTS AND CRAFTS EXHIBITION, 19th March, 1952

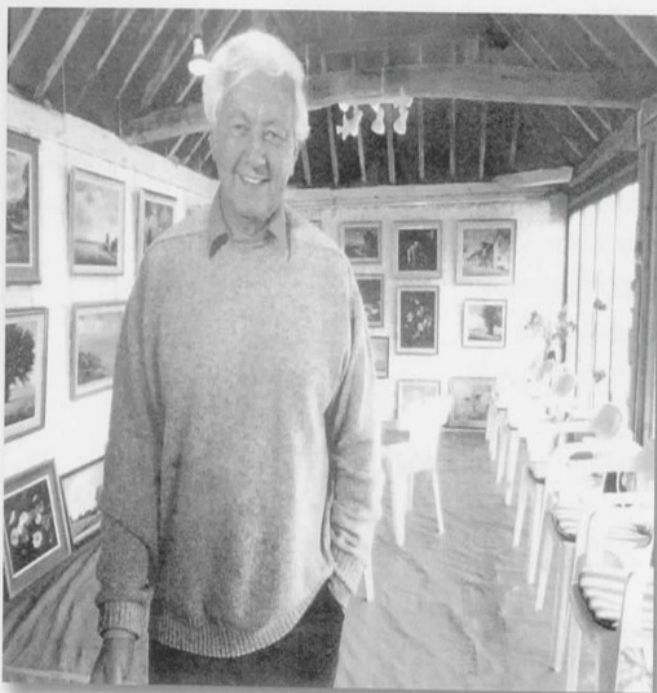
The Art, Craft and Domestic Science Departments are to be congratulated on giving us an excellent exhibition of work. The pity of it was that it was not on view longer so that more parents could have the pleasure of seeing it; the work shown was both useful and ornamental.

The woodwork exhibits in the Hall ranged from egg-stands made by junior boys to beautiful furniture, and gave proof of real interest in creative work and of considerable skill in the handling of tools. In the Craft Room the centre of attraction was a large machine which had been constructed to reproduce blue-prints, and an interested crowd watched this process demonstrated by senior boys. The Domestic Science Department made our mouths water by putting before us the most delicious-looking dishes and showed us attractive garments made by girls of all ages. The Art Room was a hive of industry. We watched with great interest while looms rattled and the potter's wheel turned, and downstairs we saw printing and puppets, pottery and posters, all so artistic that we found it difficult to decide which we admired most.

In short, an exhibition of such interest and variety that several parents were overheard to say that they wished they could go back to school again so that they might have the opportunity to make such lovely things. I believe one father was so envious that he was bold enough to suggest an exhibition of parents' work to show us, perhaps, that some of our skill is inherited!

## Alumni Profile - Vincent Ruggiero

It is a small world. Vincent became known to the school via our Director of Music, Keir Crawley, whose Mother is a friend. Vincent has enjoyed a long career as a successful Artist, see below. In a recent letter Vincent recalled his time here at Preston Manor.



Vincent in his Sussex Studio

## Vincent Ruggiero

*has paintings and commissions in many countries of the world. He has also exhibited and held several one man shows in Europe and America. Some of the galleries where his work has been shown are listed below:*

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF OIL PAINTERS, LONDON.

LE SALON DES NATIONS, PARIS.

ROBERT WILSON GALLERY, PALM BEACH FLORIDA, USA.

SHERRY FRIEND GALLERY, PALM BEACH FLORIDA, USA.

GALERIA JAMIE III, PALMA DE MALLORCA.

GALERIA GRIFESCODA, PALMA DE MALLORCA.

ALFRISTON GALLERY, EAST SUSSEX.

CRANE GALLERY, CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX.

CHARLESTON MANOR, EAST SUSSEX.

ST. GEORGE GALLERY, EAST GRINSTEAD, WEST SUSSEX.

STABLES THEATRE GALLERY, HASTINGS, EAST SUSSEX.

CENTURY GALLERY, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, OXON.

TOWNER GALLERY, EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX.



## Vincent Ruggiero F.R.S.A.

Born in Richmond, Surrey, and Grammar school educated, Vincent realised at an early age that his main talents involved football, cricket and drawing. It was fortuitous that his headmaster spotted his artistic talent and encouraged him to draw or paint at every opportunity, even at the expense of other subjects.

His efforts came to the knowledge of the Art Director of a large London Advertising Agency who immediately offered him a place in the studio. His headmaster was far sighted enough to realise that was where Vincent's future lay, and allowed him to leave school and take up this much sought after position. After two years his career was interrupted by his volunteering and training as air crew in the R.A.F.

On returning to civilian life he continued his advertising career producing top quality art work for world-famous companies. When he was twenty-eight he designed and had built his own house at Windsor Great Park, and lived there for over twenty years, but as aircraft noise became more invasive he moved to the nearby beautiful Thames-side village of Cookham, living next to the home of the famous artist, Stanley Spencer. Whilst living there, having held the position of Creative Director for a number of years, he made the decision to become a full-time artist. His love of nature and the joy of working outdoors on location, away from the confines of the studio, led him to travel widely, capturing the essence of the scenery in Britain and abroad. He painted extensively in Spain, and lived and worked in Mallorca for a period of time. Whilst enjoying the challenges of painting abroad, he always welcomed his return to the English countryside, where he now lives in a lovely old farmhouse in the Sussex Downs, near the picturesque village of Alfriston.

His landscapes, though gentle in approach, have a quiet strength combined with an authority which is immediately apparent. He finds the study of personal characteristics deeply absorbing, and this is evident in his portraiture, where his ability to get an accurate likeness with true character is so positively displayed. These qualities are particularly apparent in his golf action portraits, or 'Sportraits'.

He opened an Art Gallery in Alfriston featuring the very best representative artists in Sussex, and it quickly became widely known for the quality of the paintings it displayed. Apart from a number of one-man exhibitions, Vincent Ruggiero's paintings have been exhibited in many art galleries, and are held in private collections in America, Australia, Spain and Mallorca, as well as England.

Vincent was elected to be a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1975. He loves all forms of music, particularly modern jazz, and enjoys playing piano.



Drawing of Vincent's bank in Oxford Street, commissioned by his bank manager!

Milton Street Farmhouse  
Milton Street  
Allington  
East Sussex  
BN26 5RW  
2<sup>nd</sup> Oct '14

Dear Mr Graham,

I was recently given a copy of your latest school prospectus by the mother of one of your teachers - Keir Crawley.

You might be interested that I joined the school not long after it had been opened as a Grammar School in 1938. It was well designed, very modern in its concept, and very exciting to be part of the foundations of its future development.

The staff, from what I remember, were rather strict, I know they wore their gowns during morning assembly, and very often during the day! Having said that, they were very fair, and were very respected, under the guidance of a very good headmaster Mr Bannister.

My three best subjects were football, cricket and art, and as my headmaster thought that I had a special talent for art he allowed me to allocate much more time to art than any other subject. This



must have paid off because when I was sixteen a very large advertising agency in London got sight of some of my work and immediately offered me a position in the art studio. I was due to take matriculation so I approached Mr Bannister for guidance. He immediately said that if I was going to be a professional artist matriculation would not help, and advised me to take the position. I enjoyed the challenge. I was working with top flight illustrative artists, and I learnt a lot. As by then the war was on, and I volunteered to serve as aircrew with the Royal Air Force. After serving for four years I was able to leave, and take up my career again as a commercial artist. My ~~&~~ variation of work was immense, producing work for many world known names, and after a number of changes I became creative director for a London Agency. When I was twenty eight I designed, and had built, my own house at Windsor Great Park. After a number of years I moved to the nearby Thameside village of Cookham, living next door to the house of Sir Stanley Spencer.

the famous artist. This inspired me to stop spending five hours a day <sup>travelling</sup> to my London Advertising Agency, and to take up painting.

I managed to forge a very interesting career landscape painting, not only in England, but ~~also~~ in America, and also Spain. I actually travelled the journeys of 'Don Quixote' across La Mancha plain, painting views from the places mentioned in the famous book about him. (see photo.)

I had my work in a number of exhibitions in London, Paris and Palm Beach (Florida), but also had some one man exhibitions.

I was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 1975, for which I am very proud.

I opened up my own gallery in the beautiful Sussex Downs village of Alfriston where I have lived for over thirty years.

Through standing painting at an easel for thirty five years I developed repetitive shoulder strain, so could no longer paint.

My love of modern jazz persuaded me to take up piano, and it has been a godsend.

I am enclosing a copy I did of the first school magazine which you might find interesting



Also a copy of a book of my paintings, most  
which were done whilst living at Adfister.  
I hope you find them both interesting.

This has all stemmed from the far-  
sighted decision of Mr Bannister (see forward)  
to allow me to leave Preston Manor County  
Grammar School to pursue a life of art!

I have enjoyed every minute of it!

I hope you find this interesting

Vincent Ruggiero.

You are at liberty to reproduce any  
work from my book should you wish  
to do so.

P.S. Please excuse the rough copy of  
the original school magazine.



## Alumni Profile - Wilfred Obeng

BSc Computer Science

University of Sussex

Academics and Arts

Since leaving Preston Manor, seemingly not too long ago, Wilfred's achievements have been many. He was selected as one of the Top 100 Outstanding African and African-Caribbean Students and Graduates in 2014-15.

He was also awarded a Rare Rising Start (Top 10 Black Students in the UK), and has completed internships at J.P. Morgan, Goldman Sachs and Google. Wilfred was also a guest speaker at our second WOW Event.

Wilfred was raised in Wembley, an area with one of the highest incidences of child poverty in London. His own family was on an extremely low income and he used to receive Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) before it was scrapped. In spite of his hardships, Wilfred has a charming and positive personality and is modest about his achievements, summarising this period by saying: "we just had to make it work, I guess".

**"There's not a lot of hope in the poorest communities and to help rectify that will be my biggest achievement!"**

He attended Preston Manor, a school that achieved good grades for a bad area, but wasn't exceptional by any means. Wilfred had a keen interest in technology growing up and was always really inquisitive, constantly asking his brothers to explain exactly what they were doing on the family computer. When they went out without him one day, aged 8, he decided to open up the computer and find out what was going on inside. This became a theme and, by the age of 12, he was taking apart all of the sibling's remote-controlled cars and the controllers themselves. He would use the parts to build new toys or controllers that did what he wanted them to!

**"Never be discouraged from achieving what you know you are capable of."**

Wilfred carried this creative technical ability through to his academic studies, where he would go on to achieve the highest ever IT coursework grade at his school. He has since secured highly competitive technology internships at a series of prestigious companies, including JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs. During a two-month internship at Excelian, Wilfred even devised a complicated solution for a universal back up image to back up company hardware, a system that the company still uses for their data security to this day.

He is an Amos Bursary Scholar, recently re-designed the organisation's website and was named as its 'Beyond Outstanding Student of 2013'. However, Wilfred is no one-trick pony: his creativity also extends to the Arts. A keen and prodigiously talented actor, Wilfred was encouraged to take part in after school drama classes during Year 7. He was eventually selected by the tutors above his fellow students to take part in auditions at the BBC, although he was forced to stop taking the classes for financial reasons.

Wilfred also has a keen interest in poetry. He wrote verse as part of the 2004 Young Writers' National Poetry Competition, and his work was published alongside other winners in the resulting volume. Today, he continues to perform spoken word poetry that is mostly centred on social commentary and highlighting the inequality within society.



## Terry and Julia



Old Manorians, Julia Khatib and Terry Murphy attended a Year 11 Careers Day this May. Julia spoke about her work as a Digital Content Producer for The Walt Disney Corporation. Terry, an accomplished musician and composer spoke to students about his work for Yamaha. Students greatly appreciated their contributions on the day and it was great to see them back at 'The Manor'.



# Alumni Association Profile

## Former Staff

### Sandi Robinson

It was wonderful to read Colin Rowland's and Colin Towndrow's contributions in the inaugural Newsletter of the Old Manorian Alumni Association as I spent many years working with them on the staff of Preston Manor.

I had lived for many years in Cyprus and Aden (now south Yemen) before going to Dartford College of Physical Education and subsequently teaching at a small state run boarding school on Cannock Chase in Staffordshire.

I joined Preston Manor Senior High School in September 1970 as Head of Girls' PE, taking over the post from Iris Martin who was retiring and I can remember being slightly taken aback by the separate staff rooms for the men and women and everyone wearing gowns for teaching.

In those days, students joined Preston Manor in Year 3 (now Year 9), having been to Wembley Junior High School or Neasden Junior High School for the first two years of their secondary education. It wasn't until a few years later that the school became an 11 – 18 comprehensive with new Science and Jubilee Blocks and a new staff room, allowing the whole staff to meet in one place!

Sports facilities were also very different to those in place now. The only indoor space consisted of the 'Old Gym' (now I believe it is a dance studio) and outside we had the use of the playing fields adjacent to the school which belonged to United Diaries. The tennis courts had moved from the 'car park' area remembered by Pat Roberts (Alumni Newsletter Issue 1) to the back of the school where the Science Block and Jubilee Blocks now stand. Swimming lessons were very much part of the sports programme but we used to travel by coach to Granville Road Swimming Baths near Queens Park Station. We spent twice as long on the coach as we did in the water swimming!

Over time the facilities grow and I spent many happy years teaching a broad curriculum of PE – netball, hockey, gymnastics, dance, badminton, volleyball, tennis, athletics and swimming as well as extra-curricular teams and events at school, borough and county level.

Throughout this time I was also teaching Art and much of the pastoral curriculum and in the mid 1980's took responsibility for Careers Education and Guidance, an area that was to become very important to me. I completed a Masters in 'Guidance and Counselling in Education' at Brunel University and in 1996 I took a big step into the unknown, left teaching and became a self-employed consultant and trainer in Careers Education and Guidance. I continued in a freelance capacity to work with Preston Manor until 2001 to support careers education programmes and work with Lifetime Careers the guidance provider, but over the years have had contracts to work with a number of local authorities, enterprise agencies, careers services, Connexions, Universities, Ofsted and on various career related Government initiatives.

I still maintain contact with many of my Preston Manor colleagues from across the years – Ruth Whittaker, Karen Sampson, Lesley Sawyer, Steve Rigby, Tony Maguire, Sheila Bond, Alison Earnshaw and Sian Rhodes to name but a few and hear news from many others.

I am now winding down towards retirement – a little bit of work and lots of adventures and over the last three years my husband Peter and I have been 'seeing the world'. So far we have travelled around Australia, seen New Zealand in a camper van, explored Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, driven round Malaysia, seen the Orangutans in Borneo, kayaked in the warm seas around Mauritius and Fiji and we have just booked to go to Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and the Galapagos' Islands in 2015. Happy days.

As for the future? To quote Colin Towndrow in issue 1 – Who knows...?



Sandi Robinson



## Profile of David Woodcock

I lived in Uxbridge but attended PM from Sept. 1950 until July 1956. I was also an active member of the Air Training Corps and in 1956 was selected to be one of 25 cadets who visited the USA on a 3 week exchange program. (Back in the 50s this was an incredible opportunity for a 17 year old!) On my return I joined the RAF and served for 3 years at RAF Hornchurch working in the Aircrew Selection center. While in the US I met a family in the Chicago area who I stayed in touch with and after my release from the RAF they agreed to sponsor me to emigrate which I did in 1960. This time it was at my own expense so instead of flying I took a cargo boat which was the cheapest way but took 21 days to cross the Atlantic. I was able to find a job with BOAC but was laid off after 3 years and switched to Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) where I stayed for 39 years most of which as Station Manager at O'Hare International Airport. In the late 80's I led the International Airline Group in negotiations with the Airport Authority to build the new International Terminal 5 which was opened in 1993. On my retirement from SAS in 2002 I stayed on as President of a consortium of airlines that operate in Terminal 5 and still hold that position today.



In 1980 I was invited to join the Chicago-O'Hare Rotary club which I did and am still an active member having held a number of leadership positions in the club and District 6450.

On a personal level, I married in 1961, had one son then divorced and have since remarried. My wife is originally from Guadalajara, Mexico and we now spend time in Mexico during winter to get away from the harsh Chicago winters.

During my time in the airline industry I have been fortunate to be able to travel the world extensively and have been back to the UK numerous times. I have been to a couple of Old Manorial reunions at Brunel (which is half a mile from my old home in Uxbridge) and have visited the school also. My favourite teacher was Hugh Kent and I was able to have lunch with him a few times before he died.

I'm still in touch with some of my classmates some of whom have also moved away from the UK. Alan Western lives in Australia, Dianne Potter (Lorraine) lives in France and my best school friend Mike Palmer lives in Copenhagen.

That's about it - nothing special but I have been very lucky and try to repay society in any way I can.

David





## Minal Patel - Started 1992 and finished in 1999

Dear fellow Manorians,

I recently experienced something that I am compelled to share with you! It left me feeling inspired, motivated and excited for the future. Not just my future, but also the future of the students at PMHS. A social enterprise called WOW Talks collaborated with PMHS and organized for 4 speakers to address the Year 10 and 11 students and talk about their passion for their career, and how and why they had chosen their career path. It sounds pretty generic, right? But these speakers weren't the unreachable, dreamy job folks, who seem a million miles from our everyday lives; these speakers were everyday people who simply loved what they did for a living. Ordinary people, who looked forward to Monday mornings, and had an extraordinary zest for life.

There were 4 speakers, a Math teacher currently teaching at PMHS, a digital artist, a musician and singer, and a co founder and creator of a software product. Every speaker was moving and inspiring in a unique way. Some had taken a traditional education path, leading to a related profession, and then taken a U-turn to seek the excitement, fulfillment and passion that they felt was missing from their work. Others had resisted parental and community pressure to pursue a particular path and taken a 'risk' for their passion and interest. Each speaker had a remarkable story to share. We the audience, were filled with positive emotion. It was refreshing to hear of the many choices that are continually available to us, a relief to be told we could change our minds if we were not happy or excited by our choices, motivating to know that there are careers that lay outside of the traditional educational framework, and inspiring to believe that there are 'regular' people all around us who can't wait to wake up in the morning to do the thing they love.

Reflecting on this evening, I wondered how differently many lives may have been affected if previous generations had been fortunate enough to hear the stories of these interesting strangers. As each speaker left the audience with a thought-provoking question, I want to ask you, 'what will you do to inspire a young student at PMHS'?



Photograph above featuring members of Alumni Association; Zara Fejani, Alex Kempson, Mina Bahadur, Ahir Shah and Wilfred Obeng, all of whom spoke at our second WOW talk and inspired all who attended.



Preston Manor School, Carlton Avenue

8NA

East, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9

Head: Mr Matthew Lantos BA (Hons) **Director of Music:** Mr Keir C. Crawley GTCL, MMUS  
**Community Coordinator:** Mr K. Papasavva BA (Hons), MA

The Faculty of Performing Arts invites you to its

## **Summer Concert**

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2015  
2pm in the Upper School Hall

### *Featuring*

*The New Ensemble, The Opposites,  
The Preston Manor Project*

&

*The Senior & Junior Choir  
Solo & Ensemble Items*

&

*The Academy Orchestra Performing  
Themes from 'Sherlock'*



## Priyanka Radhakrishnan

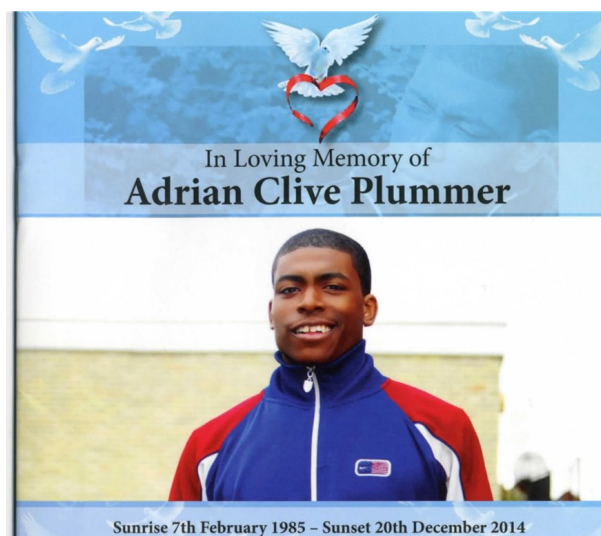


My name is Priyanka and I am currently studying at the schools Sixth Form for my A-Levels. This year that baton has been passed over to me to create a documentary style film for the Alumni Association. If you have attended the school any time between 1939-1945 the please feel free to contact me, your participation in the film would be much appreciated.

If you have not attended the school within the time period stated but would still like to take part please do not hesitate to contact me too.

Contact: [priyankaradh@gmail.com](mailto:priyankaradh@gmail.com)

As reported on page 1, we were very saddened to hear the news about the passing of Jack Sadie and Adrian Plummer.



## EULOGY OF ADRIAN CLIVE PLUMMER

Whenever we call or mention the names of our ancestors or loved ones, they become alive in our memory and sometimes in our actions. They remain silent in our conversation. Sadly, today Adrian has become such a person.

Adrian was born on the 7th February 1985 at Park Royal Hospital, Acton London NW10. He tipped the scales at 10lbs 4ozs. This was an indication of things to come. He attended Chalk Hill Primary School, Wembley. He then went onto Preston Manor School and whilst he was there excelled in sports and his education. He also began to show an interest in dramatic studies. It was during this time, he attended Sharron Harris Theatre, a school for acting and performing arts on a part-time basis.

Adrian later attended Hammersmith and West London College for the Performing Arts where he gained a National Diploma in Performing Arts. This further propelled him to go to Roehampton University where he gained a Bachelor of Arts in Drama and Theatre Studies with Creative Writing. During his studies, he worked in retail where he gained personal experience in the field of customer care. Adrian's talent was recognised to the extent where he gained roles in television shows such as Grange Hill, The Vice, The Bill, and he played an extra in the Hollywood Blockbuster Captain America: The First Avenger amongst other roles. Most recently Adrian was a cast member on the show "All About the McKenzies". His character was called Ian.

Adrian had a deep passion for, and love of football, a life long supporter of Manchester United. He also played for Saturday and Sunday football league, West London Football Club as a goal keeper.

Adrian's desire for the love of music, especially in the area of rapping illustrated his character and his keen observation for the world around him. Adrian once said "As I've got older, I've learned to take inspiration from different things and people". His main inspiration above all was his son Tyrese.

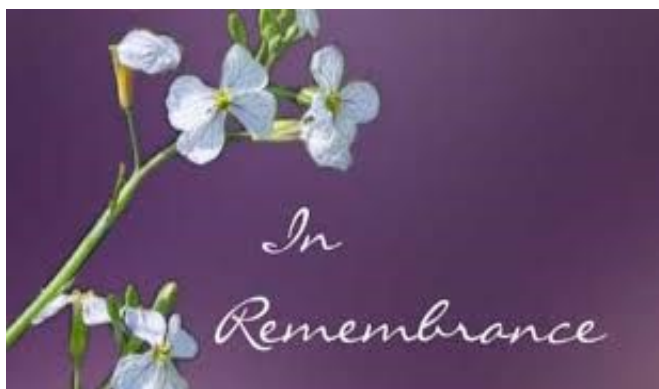
Adrian passed away on Saturday 20th December 2014.

Adrian leaves behind his mother, father, sister and a son, Master Tyrese, his grandmother, many Uncles, Aunts, and Cousins are left to mourn his passing. Master Tyrese' mother and her family have been a great source of comfort and assistance to Adrian's family.

Finally, an author once said "To the bee the flower is a fountain of life, and to the flower the bee is a messenger of love". Equally we are all messengers of love and friendship.

Adrian will be greatly missed by all those he touched, helped and inspired.  
Rest In Peace.





The Alumni Association is grateful to Mrs Pat Roberts a member of the original OM41 Group, who has kindly written a short piece on Jack Sadie below. Jack was also a founding member of OM41, and the Alumni's numbers, which are now over 1050 are in large part down to Jack's earlier work. He will be greatly missed.

**Jack Sadie (intake year 1946) left Preston Manor in 1953.**

In Erlebach House he showed prowess as a footballer and in later years his love of sport continued with him playing a major role in Middx Bowls. After National Service in the RAF Jack qualified as an architect.

His attention to detail and organisational abilities were put to good use when he served on the OM41 Committee. The compilation and running of the Data base took much of his time and he was well known for his thoughtful and kindly replies to those who contacted him.

The Old Manorians presented the school with a stainless steel bench to commemorate the seventy fifth anniversary and Jack again played a major role in arranging this.

After a long fight against cancer, Jack died at his home on March 10th 2015. He is sadly missed by his wife Anne, his loving family and many friends.

Adrian's eulogy (see page 28) has been kindly given to the school by his family who have permitted us to include it in this newsletter. Adrian's news came as a shock to the teachers who were at Preston Manor when he was a student here. They remember him with great fondness. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families at this time.

## Alumni Profile - Nitish Upadhyaya

Nitish left Preston Manor School in 2007 to study law at Cambridge University and is now an Associate Lawyer at city firm, Allen & Overy. He has regularly returned to Preston Manor to speak to Sixth Formers who are interested in studying law at University.



Many of you will have heard about the devastation caused by the earthquake in Nepal over the weekend.

I am a former pupil of PMHS (2000-2007) who has stayed in contact with the school. During my time at PMHS I was always humbled by the amount of effort the school made to raise funds for emergency relief operations at times of great need.

Although I have a day job as a lawyer, I am also a Trustee of Mondo Foundation, a development charity which has projects in Nepal. When I was last out in Nepal in February 2014 (having previously taught there in 2010), and indeed up until last week, we were supporting 30+ primary schools in the Helambu valley, a remote location in the Himalayan foothills about 70km NE of Kathmandu. The quake has totally flattened the villages and the sheer scale of the devastation is difficult to comprehend but the attached photos may help.

Over the course of the week after the initial earthquake, we have established contact with our teams on the ground. The situation is dire. We are working hard to evacuate casualties and provide basic assistance to the villages. We are ploughing our reserves into the effort but would be grateful for any assistance you can provide. Part of the funds raised so far have been used to buy medical supplies and yesterday our team transported 5 tonnes of food to the region. Today, our teams have begun walking to each village to offer support and construct camps to provide shelter. Even if you can donate the price of a pint or a glass of wine, those funds would really go a long way:

<https://www.justgiving.com/Mondo-Nepal-Quake>

We've been working in this region a long time and are very well placed to understand the needs on the ground. Whilst it remains important to support international organisations (and they are doing a fantastic job), targeted aid is needed for some of the most remote places. You can read more about our efforts here: <http://mondochallengefoundation.org/nepal-earthquake.html>

Do get in touch if you would like to know more ([nitish.upadhyaya@gmail.com](mailto:nitish.upadhyaya@gmail.com)) and I'll keep those who donate in the loop about where the funds are spent. We take the view that feedback to our donors is very important and will send regular updates on our progress in the region.

Many thanks in advance for any assistance you are able to provide.

Nitish

We are pleased to report that a Student Council initiative and Year 9 bake sale raised £700.00 which has been donated to this charity.

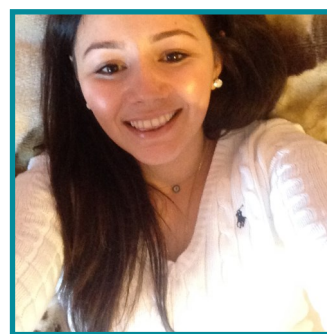


The Alumni Association have constituency representation on the School's Co-operative Trust Forum.  
Your representatives are:



**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.



### **Old Manorian, Vikesh Champaneri, Shines on The Voice**

Vikesh was the surprise star of the most recent series of The Voice. A crowd and judge favourite – he surpassed all expectations, nearly reaching the final. Students and staff proudly watched him every Saturday night, texting and emailing in votes of support. Highly talented and telegenic, a bright career in the entertainment world has now begun.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvHe4YEZxFE>



### **Old Manorians – On the Stage**

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

Kapil Trivedi of Mystery Jets—see [www.mysteryjets.com](http://www.mysteryjets.com)

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>

## Poacher turned Gamekeeper?



There was a time when there was only member of staff known to have taught here, and to have been a student here. The legendary Andy Maurer taught Geography at Preston Manor for twenty plus years, and was also a student here in the 1970s. He left some years ago, but other former students, like boomerangs, have come back. At present, there are seven former students who all play key roles at Preston Manor. They have all agreed to write a short piece about what it is like to teach at the school where they were once students.

My sister attended Preston Manor four year before I did so I followed suit. I started Preston Manor in 1999 and was part of the “Millennium Year Group”.



Being Nepali - education is regarded fundamentally the most important part of growing up. Fresh faced and always eager I loved learning and I loved my school. I was part of many clubs and societies and went on to take the role of a prefect in year 10 and also education was to me, A Level choices were not so and so I took a range of sciences, business and psychology. I went on to university to study Statistics with Business at Kingston University and quickly learned to be a responsible young adult.

My dad insisted that until I was 18 I wasn't allowed to work as I needed to be completely focused on my education. So at the start of my degree I eagerly tutored as a part time job which made me find my passion for teaching. Instead of doing a thesis in maths I opted to take a two part-dissertation focusing on Mathematics in Education and in the classroom. This furthered my enthusiasm for teaching.

After graduating, I decided to put my mathematic skills to good use by work in an investment company. As good as the job, its prospects for growth and its incentives were, within three months I knew teaching is what I yearned to do. I quickly applied and was accepted to a PGCE program. I was fortunate to have been offered a place back at the same place where I learned so much. 3 years later working in Preston Manor has been an absolute honour. Being on the other side of the staffroom door was at first surreal but now feels like where I belonged all along. Having the opportunity to work alongside the very teachers that have been part of who I am today is a privilege.



Anjana Vishnuram

Studied at Preston Manor: September 1995 – July 2002

Degree: Biology BSc from UCL

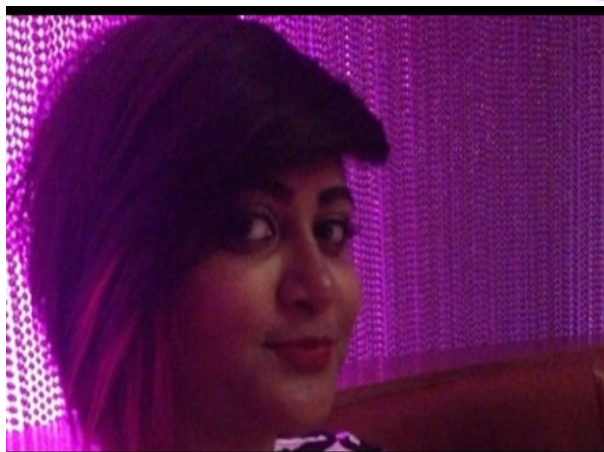
Role at Preston Manor: Biology/Chemistry Teacher (and mad scientist) and DSD for Year 10

Background:

I was born and bred in Wembley and I am still here! I studied at Preston Manor all the way through till Sixth Form. I went onto study Biology at UCL with a lot of Preston Manor Alumni (No escaping...). Following my time at university, I went travelling around the globe and did not start training as a teacher until 2006.

I wish I could say that I wanted to be a teacher for as long as I can remember but I don't believe in lying. However, I am incredibly fortunate to fall into a job that I absolutely love. Against my better judgement, I decided to apply for a job at Preston Manor as I needed the interview practise. I got the job (No escape...)

This is my 8<sup>th</sup> year here. It is honestly one of the best places to work. I enjoy it more as a teacher than I did as a student, believe it or not! I know for a fact I would not have decided to take up teaching if it wasn't for my amazing teachers, some of whom are still here. There is a reason we all keep coming back here. I feel incredibly privileged to be a part of the Preston Manor Team and can't imagine anywhere else being as much fun as it is here.



### **Zalika Dale - Class of 2002**



I started studying in Preston Manor in 1997, where I eventually left with 9 GCSE's. I then went on to study Psychology with Sociology at Middlesex University. After coming back to work at Preston Manor for two years as a teaching assistant, I decided to move on to pursue a career in Mentoring. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of working with students in a PRU setting. However, my true calling has always been teaching and five years later I decided to pursue just that.

I applied to complete my PGCE placement at Preston Manor and was welcomed with open arms. It was strange coming back in a different context, calling my teachers by their first names - but you soon get over that. I have come to the end of my placement and look forward to starting my new career as a Teacher of Mathematics in September at Preston Manor High School

## Jayna Patel

Studied at Preston Manor from 2000-2007



Went on to study History at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and trained as a History teacher at the Institute of Education.

I still remember my first day at Preston Manor, a shy and reclusive 11 year old, entering the big buildings of high school. Never did I imagine myself becoming a teacher here, or working alongside members of staff who once taught me. I have always had a passion for History, from watching Horrible Histories as a child to reading literature at University. I can honestly say that my love of the subject only grew further due to the dedicated and passionate teachers I was lucky to have. They were so influential, that I went on to study History at Uni and can now engage in fruitful and lively conversations with the very teachers who inspired me.

My personal journey with Preston Manor holds many fond memories, from laughing with my friends in the playground as a student, to now laughing with my friends and colleagues in the staffroom. Many people ask me, 'what is it like teaching at a school you studied in?' My honest answer is I wouldn't have wanted to start my teaching career any other

way. I was lucky enough to work for 2 years as a Learning Support Assistant/(LSA) after graduating from SOAS at Preston Manor, and this enabled me to see the great work all the staff do to ensure our students are supported and motivated to do their very best. This ethos is indicative of the school, as I myself remember being challenged to my limits as a student. This showed me that Preston Manor would be a great place to work, with supportive peers who foster the best out of all students.

When I walk around the school grounds it is easy to notice the obvious changes, the new buildings and different faces, but to me, Preston Manor will always be the place that taught me to push past my barriers, aim high and strive for excellence.

## Lima Davod

I am from Afghanistan and like many Afghans, my parents fled the country and came to London with hope for a better future for their children as well as more chances of education. I spent most of my childhood being an interpreter for my parents, enabling me to really enhance my English which worked well towards my final GCSE grades.

I initially attended Copland Community between year 7 to 11 and then went onto Preston Manor VI from 2004 to 2006. It was my Gran who encouraged me to move to Preston Manor and my family and I all admit it's one of the best decisions I have ever made. After completing my A Levels, I went on to Roehampton University to study Psychology. This was a 3 year course and once that was finished, I took on a Masters course in Child Development at the Institute of Education, University of London. I am currently working at Preston Manor School, assisting and teaching children with Autism. It was very awkward to share the staff room with some of the teachers who had taught me previously. For the first 6 months, I would walk the other way if I saw my teachers coming my way just so I didn't have to have an "adult" conversation with them. However, having been here for 5 years now, I am very comfortable with everyone and absolutely love my job.

Returning to Preston Manor has allowed me to repay all the hard work the teachers had put into me. The level of teaching was much more advanced than what I was used to at my Secondary School but the teachers always slowed down for me, made time for me and made sure I did well. Now working at Compass, an ASD base for children with Autism, I always look back to how my teachers taught me as that is the lead I want to follow.





## **Preston Manor School.... what can I say about this place?**

I owe my whole teenage life to this school and now some of my adult life too. Born and raised in good old Wembley,

I came Preston Manor age 11 way back in September 1999. I remember how big the school was and how little I was (I still am pretty little – commonly mistaken for one of the students!) and I also remember how lucky I was to start the school in the new millennium. My fondest memory of school was creating the mosaic wall by the art block – which is still there to this very day.

My time at Preston Manor from 1999 to 2006 saw me with two form tutors – Mrs Sawyer and Mr Wright, three heads of year – Mrs Challen, Mr Wallman and Mr Barnet and a host of other subject teachers, but two teachers in that time were and are particularly instrumental in my life.

Ms Kobel – once upon a time was my A-Level Psychology teacher (my class were her little ‘lab rats’ – teaching the course to her first batch of students!) – inspired me to go on and study Psychology at City University and now we work side by side!

Mr Graham – my year 7 to year 9 History teacher, my Government and Politics A-Level teacher and now my mentor, colleague and father figure. I came back to Preston Manor after completing my degree and returning from my world travels to work as a Learning Support Assistant. Mr Graham saw the teacher in me from the very beginning and after 2 years in the job he encouraged me to study further and become a teacher of Psychology. I applied for the course, he wrote my reference and I successfully completed my qualification at another school, but I always knew in my heart that I will end up coming back here at Preston Manor, and so I did in September 2015 to take on the position as Teacher in lead of Psychology.

I feel like I’ve done a full 360 degree circle – gone from being a former student and now coming back as teacher – teaching in the some of the same classrooms that I once studied in and working side by side with some of my very own teachers who I know call my colleagues. The school has changed in so many different ways; some parts of the school site and teachers and students have come and gone but the definition of Preston Manor will always be my school.

Falguni Upadhyaya



## 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.



**PRESTON MANOR - FACILITIES HIRE**  
Our available facilities for hire are listed below:

Upper School	Lower School (part of the same site)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main Hall (functions to include weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)</li><li>• Sports Hall (contains 4 Badminton Courts)</li><li>• Gymnasium</li><li>• Floodlit MUGA (3x5 aside pitches - AstroTurf)</li><li>• 3 x Football Pitches (2 to FA senior standard)</li><li>• 4 x Tennis Courts (Asphalt)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Main Hall (functions to include weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)</li><li>• Gymnasium (1 Badminton Court)</li><li>• Floodlit MUGA (1 x Netball court - Asphalt)</li></ul>

[www.preston-manor.com](http://www.preston-manor.com)

We can also provide catering facilities at either venue. For further assistance please contact our Site and Facilities Manager on 020 8385 4086 or email: [site@preston-manor.com](mailto:site@preston-manor.com)

Facility Hire - 10% discount available for Old Manorians Alumni Association.

### Thank You

Thank you to all the Old Manorians whose contributions and stories have helped make this Newsletter possible. Thank you also to all who have come and spoke at Careers Days, offered work experience placements to our Year 10 Students, and been guest speakers at the WOW Talk Events. Your contributions are greatly valued.

Also, a big thank you to Abigail Nokes at Future First for all her support and ideas, and for helping the school grow its Alumni numbers. And finally, to Mrs. Loreen Williams for, as always, her outstanding support.

Have a great summer!



Future First are able to support us in creating posters for display around the school. Are you willing to feature on one of these posters? Sumayya Abdul-Cader Ziaudeen has. Please contact Abigail Nokes, [abigail@futurefirst.org.uk](mailto:abigail@futurefirst.org.uk), at Future First if you want to be on display at Preston Manor School.



**I went to Preston Manor  
and now I ensure that  
every child has a right to  
education.”**

**Sumayya, Special Needs Advisor**



**Start thinking**



**Find out more**



**Get involved**

To find out more about your career options, visit  
**[www.futurefirst.org.uk/findoutmore](http://www.futurefirst.org.uk/findoutmore)**

