

OLD MORGANIANS

NEWSLETTER No. 18, March 2018

Editor: Geoff. Marchant; NB: See bottom of page 8 for all contact details.



The picture above is from our OM archives and appears as scan 108 on our website, drmorgans.com, in the “scanned photos” picture gallery. We have Bill King, Roger Richards, and above all our website operator Greg Kett, to thank for getting all the pictures into those online picture galleries. (Also Greg again for teaching me how to get them downloaded for use in these newsletters!) As far as I know, we have no date for this picture, but it is a view of the “**Manual**” **workshop** and again as far as I can ascertain, was first published in Roger Evans's Dr. Morgan's Association Newsletter dated April 2004. If you recognise anyone in the picture, apart from a young Glyn Rees!, please do inform the editor and give a possible date. We also have a picture of what I believe to be the Chemistry Laboratory, without any pupils, which I have used here on page 6, so that both give an extended cover to the '80 years at Durleigh Road' celebrations.

Please note that a further report on our 2017 Dinner at Wembdon Green starts bottom of page 7.

I regret we also have two more R.I.P.s. to announce: That of **Bryan Chilcott**, DMS 1935-40, on 28th Oct 2017 and the passing of **Harold Palmer** on Christmas Eve 2017. Re Harold, **Mike Dodden** sent out an e-mail to myself and committee members on 28.12.17 informing us and we have the following comments:

From

Dick

Raymond:

Thanks Mike. I had the pleasure of guesting for Old Morgs on occasion (when they were really short!) so played with and against Harold as I normally played for Bridgwater United . Dear Harold ran around me more times than I tackled him in spite of my best efforts. A really nice man who I will greatly miss at our annual dinners. A great loss to Old Morgs and the wider community. Dick.

From Roger Richards:

This is surprising and very bad news, I say surprised as I knew that he had been having some medical problems but he was seeing a consultant and I guessed that he would overcome the difficulties. I spent a lot of time with Harold during 2017 and became very fond of him as well as impressed with his abilities and his charm. Vera will certainly be missing him really badly. I will of course write a letter of condolence. Best regards, Roger.

So we say goodbye to two of our oldest members. Harold was at DMS 1936 to 1941. Members may remember that our October 2017 Newsletter, Addendum 2, was an account by Roger Richards of the award of the Legion d'Honneur to Harold and the reasons why it had been awarded to him.

I now intend to catch up on some of the members' contributions on life at, and after, DMS. These have been delayed last year by the 80th year celebrations of the buildings at Durleigh Road.

The first one must be **Ray Haines'** account and this continues on from the few paragraphs I managed to find room for on page 7 of the October 2017 newsletter:

“In my 1st year at D.M.S. I befriended a boy called John Ryan who was in the year above me. Incidentally he is a nephew of the late Mike Braund, who recently died and was an Old Morganian. John became a lifelong and very close friend, and still is. Not only did we both go to D.M.S.. but also undertook teacher training together at St Luke's College and both pursued our respective careers in teaching.

The following three stories concern rugby, a lifelong passion for us. The first of these relates to House Rugby Championships and Cromwell House Archives will probably reveal that Cromwell was rarely great shakes at winning any sports trophies. We did win the Junior House Rugby Cup once and the Senior one once in my time at D.M.S. and on both occasions John was the Cromwell rugby captain. I have no recollection of how we won the Junior Cup – but we did. I do however have a couple of memories of the senior cup, particularly a few of our players. John was captain and my halfback partner playing at fly half. Malcolm Veale was our field back. One of our centres was a fair-haired boy called Marsh. In the pack we had a very tall boy called Lillycrop and another very big boy, and a good rugby player, in Graham Templeman. Our secret weapon, and a lovely chap was Mike 'Tub' Turco who was huge in stature and in weight. John put him in at number 8, in truth the only place he could have gone and the instruction he was given was to get from scrum to scrum and then push like hell! We did however have four 1st XV school players in our team and this may have helped because we succeeded in winning. Someone just recently told me that 'Tub' subsequently went on to shed a lot of weight and eventually ended up as a prop in the 1st XV. Someone reading this may be able to confirm this. What I do know is that he did go on to be a very good councillor for Burnham but sadly died at a relatively young age.

The third story concerns the school 1st XV. It was in my final year at D.M.S. (1959-60), Although having been accepted at college John was not allowed to go in that year because, as his birthday fell in October, he was not eighteen; what a stupid rule. So he was lumbered with having to do a third year in the 6th form. He was appointed 1st XV rugby captain and I was his vice captain. We were due to play Weston Boys' Grammar School and beating them was a rarity indeed. They were taught by the famous Willy Davis, a former

Great Britain rugby league player, then Head of P.E. at the Grammar School. He always produced good teams. In this particular year there were Gerry Redmond and Gus Gieve who both played for England School U/18. Gerry went on to play for Cambridge University and subsequently gained several full England caps. There were several County Schools players in that team. Several of whom I came to know very well as I played club rugby with them in Weston. Amongst them were Brian Andrews, Robin Buttery, Mike Redding, Byron Winter, John Hiles, Roger Camire and David Lodge. However we also had a few good players, particularly amongst the slightly younger talent coming through, such as Laurie Ross, Fred Psyk, Graham Templeman, Malcolm Beake, George Cossey and possibly others. These players added some strength to the more 'established' team members such as Brian Sealy, the Newby brothers, Chris Cudlipp and Tony Parsons. If you're reading this and I missed you off the list then accept my apologies and please inform the editor. We had a good team arguably the best I played with in my time at D.M..S. The game was played at home on a cold wet, windy day. Weston Grammar took an early 3-0 lead with a penalty.

Although constantly under attack we held out for what seemed an age. Towards the end of the game we paid a rare visit into the opposition's half. Against all the odds we contrived to score a try; I cannot remember how we did this or who scored it but it drew us level at 3-3 (remember a try was worth three points in those days). John Ryan usually took kicks but had injured a leg earlier in the game. Chris Cudlipp was usually our other kicker but for some reason, which Chris may remember, he wasn't called upon. Instead John gave me the ball and asked me to have a go at the all-important conversion. Although I had kicked the occasional goal this was not the norm and did not relish the prospect of this attempt. The ball was very different from those of today which retain the lightness and shape. We all remember the leather, laced balls of yesteryear which, when wet, became heavier and inevitably lost shape after a bit of use – this was one such ball. I placed the wet 'lump of lead' in preparation for the kick. Fortunately the try was scored under the posts so there was an outside chance. To my great joy the ball scraped over! We hung on for the remaining few minutes to record the rare and unexpected win 5-3. I wonder if Mal remembers this, also if any of you who played in the game remember – if so let us know. For obvious reasons it was my most memorable school game and I shall never forget it.

When in the 4th year our English Literature was taught by Mr 'Moggy' Morris, who I think was a newcomer on the staff. It was no secret that 'Moggy' struggled somewhat with discipline and control of the boys, and I was guilty on at least one occasion of being one of the miscreants.

Our literature lessons in the 4th year were in what was then a relatively new pre-cast and concrete building with exposed steel roof structures, all very basic in construction. It consisted of a classroom at each end, a central entrance area, and behind that a smaller classroom where 6th form lessons were taught. This building, no longer in existence was situated roughly where the D.T. block now stands. Immediately behind the teachers desk was a built in shelved cupboard. I was one of several boys who got into the cupboard before 'Moggy' arrived for one lesson. I don't remember how many of us were in there but we were packed in like sardines in a can. How or why 'Moggy' did not react to the fact that several boys were 'absent' from the lesson is beyond me but we could hear that the lesson had started. One by one, at intervals of several seconds, a boy would emerge from the cupboard with the pre-arranged greeting "Hello Mr Morris" before taking his seat at his desk. After a few exits and no reaction from 'Moggy' he did look into the cupboard to find some boys, myself included, still inside. We all emerged and went back to our desks expecting some sort of retribution but nothing more was done so we got away with it!

A handful of boys from the 5th year for some reason unknown to me at least, joined us for these lessons. Amongst these were John Elliott from my home village of Brent Knoll, and Mike Dew from Burnham. Both of these boys, who I knew well, had a somewhat

chequered time at D.M.S. In spite of this however both went on to become successful in adult life. John inherited his father's wholesale vegetable distribution company, travelling all over this country and Europe. Fairly recently I learned he was living in Scotland and successfully operating a fishing trawler. Mike Dew had a lot to do with the early development of Ta Kwon Do, not only introducing it to the south west, but also on a national level. Mike also became an international referee.

These two boys were involved with two particular pranks with 'Moggy', which I witnessed and remember vividly. In one lesson they proceeded, with some encouragement from others, to scrunch up paper and lit a fire in the back of the classroom. Although the fire was fuelled only by bits of screwed up paper, for a short while the flames were quite spectacular. On being questioned by 'Moggy' as to the reason for doing this one of the culprits said that the room was cold and needed warming up! Indeed I remember often being cold in that room, so perhaps the heating system was inefficient. Again there was no apparent reason for this potentially dangerous misdeed.

The most memorable 'Moggy' incident for me, and no doubt others, who may read this, also occurred in this room. Attached to the exposed steel roof supports was a frame, complete with a pulley system and suspension wires. A large globe was attached to the wire cables so that it could be lowered to eye level. During the lunch prior to 'Moggy's' lesson, the plot was hatched with Messrs. Elliott and Dew again at the centre of it. There were others involved, not myself on this occasion; however there is a strong suspicion that Wes Thorne was – only you can answer this Wes.

The equipment was an empty one gallon paint tin, which the culprit had found, and a long length of cord. The paint tin was filled with water and fed along the roof supports to dangle down at the back of the room. (I don't know how exactly this was achieved as I did not witness its construction) The final part of the plan was to slightly re-adjust the teachers desk so that it was directly underneath the globe.

With everything in place 'Moggy' arrived for the lesson and duly got things underway seemingly unaware of either the re-positioning of his desk or the cord dangling down the wall at the back of the room. 'Moggy' set us off with some sort of written task and the lesson got off to unusually ordered and quiet start. This, in some part at least, was probably due to the fact that most, if not the whole class, awaited the result of the planned operation.

The predictable happened – though not immediately. Mike Dew tugged at the cord but nothing happened. John Elliott, ever the Maverick, had a go and sure enough it worked perfectly, the aim had been spot on. The gallon of water deluged 'Moggy' his desk and the surrounding area. Elliott and Dew accompanied by the drenched victim were marched off to the Head. When they had gone we made efforts to clear up the mess. The paint tin and string were removed, and ditched out of the window; attempts were made to mop up the water using handkerchiefs, towels from P.E. kit and anything to hand.

In due course Charlie Key together with 'Moggy' returned. Meanwhile we had all sworn that we would claim ignorance of the incident. On mopping up the desk it emerged that the papers that has been spread over it were end of term reports, which were being written up. I don't know what happened on that score but the very smudged and damp paper still looked a mess. It was also that water had been spilt on the floor. Charlie Key started questioning the boys one by one. The first boy I remember clearly was Geoff Adams. He was one who wasn't that keen to comply with the sworn agreement, but he did not split, possibly because the thought of retribution from his peers posed a greater threat than lying. (Incidentally, Geoff's father was Head of Westonzoyland Secondary School at the time) Charlie continued with the inquisition but to no avail. After a while he gave up and, unbelievably turned to 'Moggy' whose hair and mid-blue suit were still obviously drenched, and asked him "Are you sure this happened Mr Morris?" At this, the victim, apoplectic to say the least, stormed off. At this point one brave boy suggesting that perhaps the roof had

sprung a leak. (It was raining at the time) Charlie looked daggers at the boy and disappeared and that just about was the end of an unforgettable lesson to all who were there.

This time there was retribution as for the following week at least Messrs. Elliott and Dew were conspicuous by their absence. John subsequently told me that his father, a big and strong disciplinarian, on receiving notification of the suspension, gave him the hiding of his life. I have no idea of Mike's parents' reaction.

My final two stories regarding 'Moggy' concern his car. The vehicle as I recall was a family sized saloon, which he parked somewhere along the front of the main building. I cannot confirm the authenticity of either story because I witnessed nothing. However, that they could have happened is not beyond the realms of possibility, and given that stories relating to incidents were being bandied around at the time, they probably did.

We had a Fives Court at D.M.S. and the first of these two stories relates to it. Our court was situated to the right of the A.C.F. hut; the structure consisted of a three-sided, roofless brick building. As will be revealed, the dimensions are not large. As I recall it the equipment consisted of a large padded glove worn on one hand and a small hard ball. The glove was for catching the ball and the gloveless hand for throwing it. The additional hazard to the court consisted of a low wall protruding partly into the court from one of the side-walls. Having never played the game I have no idea of the scoring system, but believe the game has some similarity to squash in that all three walls could be used.

The first of these (if true) stories is that some senior boys, with 6th formers and even prefects involved, somehow managed to move 'Moggy's' car and manoeuvre it so that it ended up sideways across the fives court. By all accounts the car was well and truly wedged. What possibly beggars belief is how this feat was achieved – a) How was the necessary access to the inside of the car gained unless it had been left unlocked and b) How was it achieved without being spotted by staff. On the second of the above points I can't remember ever seeing staff much in evidence during break and lunchtimes. Prefects seemed to undertake supervision duties at these times so this could possibly explain the prank involved prefects as well as other 6th formers I can offer nothing else towards any conclusion to this incident but perhaps some out there could throw some further light on it?

Again 'Moggy's' car and again the suggestion of the most senior school pupils being the culprits surround the second (if true) incident. According to the story all four wheels were jacked up one by one and blocks placed under each axle. Anything other than close inspection would fail to have revealed that the wheels just missed contact with the ground. Attempting to drive the car, if it did happen, would have resulted in the inevitable result. Can anyone out there confirm whether or not this incident did occur?

My final contribution regarding 'Moggy' is something personal and relates to my 'O' level English results. Whereas now results are graded, from 'A*' to 'E', they were then graded in numbers ranging from 1 (distinction), 2 (credit), 3 (pass), 4+5 (fail) My English Language result was a 2, due in no small (no pun intended) way, to Mr Small's efficient, if somewhat boring delivery. English Literature was a very different story – I managed to 'achieve' a 5, the worst possible. No surprise there then. Having 'Moggy' for two years was no doubt one contributory factor, but I added to this and freely admit to my own downfall. Another contributory factor in my failure were my own feelings about some of the set books we had to study. Not only did I fail to see the point of most of them but I also lacked interest; even though I do remember some of them to this day. The novel was 'The History of Mr Polly' by H.G.Wells. Out of curiosity I read this in later life and thoroughly enjoyed it, but surely the humour was above the conception of a fifteen year old. Our Shakespeare was 'Henry V' and I still find Shakespeare boring. There was poetry, which I don't remember, and Goldsmith whose work I have no recollection of. The only bit from which I did derive some enjoyment from was Chaucer – maybe it was the rude bits! On entering the sixth form

Jack Lawrence collared me at the end of a History lesson and exclaimed “Haines, you are the first boy that I can recall who managed to achieve a good grade in Language and the lowest possible fail in Literature”. This was followed by one of his well known chuckles, shoulder movements and all. On my response that this poor result might have had something to do with the teaching Jack’s response was that it was I who had failed the exam, not the teacher – quite right of course.”

Thank you Ray, and there is still quite a bit more to come in future newsletters!

Now for the picture of the Chemistry Lab which I mentioned on page 1:



The above photo is Scan 107 on our website, drmorgans.com - see page1 for details.

Memories from Phil (Burt) Williams received in March 2017:

“With regard to pictures of the masters, most of us didn’t have cameras in those days, and if we had I doubt if taking pictures of school-master would have been a high priority! The staff when I left included Percival Charles Shelley Gillard (mathematics), Bob Overy (art), Herbie Fisher (French), Glyn Rees (workshop), Jack Lawrence (history and phys. ed.), Jim Heseltine (Phys. ed. and rugby coach), Messrs. Skilton (biology), Cudlipp (chemistry), Griffiths (English), “Oscar” Breydon (physics), “Stagger” Storey (English), Uzzel (mathematics), Vaughan-Jones (latin), and Dowsett (geography). I was particularly indebted to Mr. Skilton, Mr. Dowsett, Bob Overy, and Herbie Fisher who worked with me during the sometimes turbulent year 1949-1950, when I was working on my A-level (called the “Higher” in those days), not forgetting Mr. Charles Key, the headmaster, who permitted me to do the course. The 77 years in between have been a roller-coaster ride, with slow build-ups followed by sudden rapid downs! At the instigation of the wife of one of my long-term colleagues I

am working on my own life-story. So far I am only 24 years along, so a long way to go, but of course a lot of those early years were spent at Dr. Morgans. My happiest hours were spent on the rugby field, and in (much) later years I exchanged memories with Lanky, Peter Braine, Mac Chilvers, Elmo Stuckey, Albert Orley, Mike Waddleton, and others."

Many thanks to Burt for that.

In June 2017 I received the following from Rose Kempshall:

Dear Geoff

Michael Jeffreys

A family member has recently sent me some papers relating to Dr Morgans School when clearing out her husbands things. They date from 1943 to 1946, the dates he was a pupil there.

There are several receipts from Somerset County Council for fees of £12. a year, a typed letter dated 17 Sept 1943 from the Headmaster about arrangements for the classes because of the war. Form of Agreement for Secondary School Pupils. Letter of entrance dated 18 March 1943. A school prospectus sheet. School reports for Michael Jeffreys from the Spring Term 1943 until Autumn Term 1946. The School badge and various photos. I have also prepared a summary of Michael's life as he died in 2016. Would you be interested in seeing any of these? Is there a school archive who might be interested? I see from the website you have an anniversary coming up. Rose Kempshall.

*I directed her to **Bill King** for our archives and hope Bill has received all these items.*

*On 6th June I received the following two items from **Dick Raymond**:*

Hi Geoff, Out of general interest, since putting together my recollections I have obtained from Bill the 1947 school photograph and was pleased to see that I had remembered all the teachers shown plus several ladies that taught at the School during the war and who had left before the photograph was taken as male teachers returned from their wartime duties. I think that this illustrates the lasting and fond memories that so many of us have of our schooldays. It is hard to believe that it is 68 1/2 years ago since I left at the age of 15! That is until I go up and down stairs when my knees remind me!

I have just had a telephone call from Gordon Dickinson (1943-48) saying that he had just enjoyed reading the newsletter (as he always does) and correcting something I had put in the piece you printed. viz; it was not the Poplar School in the Grange. It was the Collegiate School to which he went prior to attending DMS so can talk with total authority! Now he has told me I can clearly see the sign in my minds eye! The Poplar School was based in Westover he tells me. It was pleasing to know that the rest of my bit he agreed with and had enjoyed having the memories rekindled.

Gordon lives in Yorkshire and has not attended a dinner for a few years as he used to combine getting to the dinner with visiting a relative who is no longer around but he regularly pays his £4 so as to get the Newsletter. I was able to update him on various of his classmates current health status. It again emphasises how much your efforts are appreciated by those Old Boys who can no longer get back to the area.

*Thank you Dick for all that. **Colin Brown** added:*

Re Gordon Dickinson We had an evacuee billeted with us in Bridgwater when we lived in Chilton St. His name was Charlie Penfield and he went to the Collegiate School circa 1943. He was a prefect and if my failing memory is correct they wore a blue and silver uniform. Our other evacuee was John Dickinson and he came from Poplar. *Thank you Colin for that information.*

Our secretary, Roger Richards, sent the following account of our 2017 dinner to the Bridgwater Mercury:

Congratulations to Local Man at Old Morganians Annual Dinner.

On the 23rd of September 2017 The Old Morganians celebrated their Annual Dinner at the splendid newly built Wembdon Village Hall where an excellent evening was had by all. Over eighty members attended, who

are all ex pupils of Dr Morgan's Grammar School that was located on the Durleigh Road site, now occupied by Haygrove School. One Member travelled from Canada to attend.

Old Morganian honoured by French Government.

The evening began with a welcome speech by the President Bryan Lancaster that included a summary of the Award of the Legion d'Honneur by the French Government to one of its members, Harold Palmer, now aged 92. Harold, who still lives locally, attended Dr Morgan's School between 1936 and 1941. He heard in November 2016 that he was to receive this prestigious award 'in recognition of his acknowledged military engagement and his steadfast involvement in the Liberation of France during the Second World War'. Established in 1802 by Napoléon Bonaparte, it is France's highest distinction and is awarded in recognition of both military and civilian merit. In Harold's case, it was awarded due to his part in military operations in France between 1944 and 1945. He was a wireless operator in a Royal Air Force Mobile Communications Unit whose role was to provide communications whilst based at advance landing strips, some of which were literally fields, established so that allied aircraft could land in France.

Harold wonders whether any other Old Morganians have received the Legion d'Honneur Award? The attached photograph shows Harold being congratulated by Bryan Lancaster (President of Old Morganians).

Speech by ex-Head Boy of Dr Morgan's

After a very enjoyable meal, supplied by Windsor Catering, members were entertained by a speech given by John Palmer who was a pupil at Dr Morgan's from 1962 to 1968. He talked about his Career in marketing communications, corporate affairs and public relations. He focused on arts, entertainment and in particular sport. He has worked with many famous actors, sports stars, pop Bands, politicians, members of the Royal Family and promoted major sporting contracts including European Soccer, Rugby World Cup, Cricket World Cup. He also was a Rugby Correspondent in Wales and co-founder of the Professional Cricketers' Association fundraising company and the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust.



R.I.P. See page 1 for subsequent death of Harold Palmer.

For committee members contact details, see previous newsletters, or website drmorgan.com

Material For Newsletter. Please write, phone, or e-mail, to Geoff Marchant, 37 Mendip Road, Yatton, North Somerset, BS49 4HR. Tel: 01934 834550 E-mail: Please send to yattonmarchants2010@hotmail.co.uk Photos can be sent to this e-mail address but bear in mind that we still produce a black & white newsletter for a large number of our members who either have no e-mail address, or whose e-mail addresses are out of date on our information listing. Therefore, **please do not send large colour photos, or black & white ones of extremely high resolution, say in excess of 300kB.** Thanks for all contributions to the newsletter – **do please keep them coming.** I especially need career / life history articles and reminiscences of the old school days. Geoff. Marchant, Newsletter Editor