

Old Morganians

NEWSLETTER No. 32, OCTOBER 2022

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

TIME TO SAY GOOD-BYE!



Our “Old School” on Durleigh Road has been demolished after the clock was first removed from the tower, hopefully to be found a new home on-site or elsewhere in Bridgwater. Plans are in place for the 300 year anniversary of 'Dr Morgan's School' in Bridgwater on at least three different sites to be suitably celebrated next year, 2023.

Your present Newsletter editor has been saying for many years now that he felt a change of editor to someone of later years than my 1951 to 1956 at DMS might attract more younger members! We need some-one who can put together all the news and pictures of the 'DMS year 300' celebrations and then go on to produce newsletters into the 300+ era.

If there is an OM prepared to do that, do please contact our secretary Roger Richards or treasurer Mike Dodden.

With the completion and Mike's 'send-out' of this October 2022 newsletter I shall have edited 32 editions of the OM's Newsletters and, before those, another 21 newsletters for the Dr Morgan's Association, i.e. **53 in total. I think therefore “The Time Has Come” (the walrus said!) for me to bow out (while I still can – just about!).** Most of those newsletters are on our website drmorgans.com thanks to Greg Kett (son of the late OM Clive Kett).

The production of each edition has been great fun and interesting, but sometimes highly frustrating when the finished document wouldn't transfer successfully to Mike for distribution. It has been a job which I could still do when I could no longer get about easily.

Now, though, I begin to find each edition harder to concentrate on, and any such worry increases my Parkinson's shakes and other related problems, so it is time for me to call it a day and also say 'Goodbye'. **Please offer to carry on this task if you possibly could do so.**

As promised in the June 2021 OM Newsletter, we can now start on the more detailed '*Life after DMS*' memories of Jim Forsythe (see picture). Jim had seen the OM website and had contacted Roger in October 2020 as follows:



"Dear Roger

I am Jim Forsyth, a past student at the school during 1950-1957. In the Gallery of school teams on the website my picture is in the Rugby 1st fifteen in the year 1955-56. My photo is in the middle row , third from the left.

I understand there may be a 300th anniversary in 2023 which if I am alive and kicking I could endeavour to attend. In 1957 my mother decided to emigrate to Australia with myself, brother and sisters. My father passed away in 1950 and is buried in Reading. I live in Melbourne Victoria married with three sons and four grandchildren. One grandson studied at Edinburgh University in Economics and lives in Reading and works in Bracknell. A second grandson is studying software engineering at university in Gothenburg, Sweden. I continued playing rugby firstly in Western Australia and then Victoria from 1958 to 1977. I qualified as an industrial chemist and over my business career founded and owned three computer companies, one in telecommunications and one electricity retailer. Look forward to hearing from you, Regards, Jim. 7/3 St Ninians Road Brighton 3186 Victoria, Australia."

Roger sent this on to your editor together with his (Roger's) reply to Jim Forsyth:

"This is by no means my CV, I have just picked out some pieces that might be interesting to Jim, mainly about my connections with Australia and rugby. If and when he replies I will forward you a copy. Best regards, Roger."

To Jim. he wrote:
Dear Jim,

Great to hear from you and also that you were able to find yourself in a rugby team photo, presumably you found that on the Old Morganians web-site. I am overdue to update the Members section of the website but that will be the place to check up on developments for our intended celebrations of the 300th Anniversary of the founding of the School.

I have scanned through our spreadsheet which has all the current members of Old Morganians and that produced the following names of people who started at the School in 1950, although some of them left in 1955, presumably at the end of the 5th form: Graham Addicott, Mike Coombs, Eddie Crane, Clive Grant, Jeremy Savill and Edwin John Summerhayes. Hopefully at least some of these will have overlapped with you and you will be able to recall them? The Editor of Old Morganian's Newsletter, Geoff Marchant, was a year ahead of you at the School (1951-56). I will of course forward your message to him.

You may remember him as my experience was that I remembered many of the boys older than me but not those who were younger.

You and I didn't overlap at Dr Morgan's as I was there from 1958 to 1963. One of my sisters emigrated to Australia about the same time as you, initially to Exmouth in the north west then after about 10 years down to Perth where she and her family still live.

I am interested to read that you worked as an Industrial Chemist as I also qualified in Chemistry. Initially I did research in Universities for about 7 years but then joined the UK Ministry of Defence at the Royal Ordnance Factory that was based in Puriton, just outside of Bridgwater. The site made virtually all the UK's military explosives and propellants but is now closed. They recruited mostly Chemists to manage the place but essentially I did no

Chemistry, just management. I did get moved around in the company including 5 years at a site in Lancashire.

I worked at an Australian explosives plant just outside of Melbourne for about 3 months. A UK design of a plant to make TNT was installed there and I went to assist with the commissioning of the plant. I stayed in a suburb called Sunshine and used to walk to the plant daily. It was closed a few years afterwards I believe because the local council allowed housing development to impinge on the safety limits (due to the explosives on the site). I came very close to emigrating with my family to Australia in about 1980.

The plant near Melbourne was closing and the facilities moved quite some way north and I would have worked for the Australian Government at the new site. Sadly when it came to the crunch time of going both of my parents were in hospital with cancer and I felt I couldn't go.

I really liked Melbourne and visited there in 2012 while on a holiday to Australia and New Zealand that also included staying with my Sister and her family in Perth.

I was also very keen on rugby and kept going until I was about 35 years old. I played for Bath University which is where I obtained my BSc and PhD. It sounds as though you had great entrepreneurial skills that I never had. I am sure that running your own businesses took a lot of nerve at times. I was always in the much 'safer' option of being employed throughout my working life. Covid-19 is getting a grip here again so we are all in a pretty miserable situation. I play quite a bit of golf and that has been allowed to continue, thankfully! Best regards, Roger Richards, Secretary Old Morganians."

Editor's comment "While Roger says that is not his CV, it does give quite a few insights into his career after DMS and I would like to get his full account! Perhaps one day, he will have time to fill us in on the remainder!"

In November 2020 Jim replied to Roger: Dear Roger, Thrilled to receive your email!

I have much enjoyment reading it and for you to know it is my first contact with any past student at Dr Morgans Grammar school in 64 years.

I have two photos from my school era. One which is on the school teams gallery as mentioned and a second one in the large concrete play area of all the then pupils preparing for a cross country run. A few names I remember who I associated with are Bert Walsh (standing next to me in the rugby photo) and also in the photo Dick (forgot his surname on the other side of me). Kent (*editor's brother-in-law!*) and Evans, and one other all in the photo.

In the mid 1950's communication between Australia and England was by letter sent by sea. Telephones were either scarce or too expensive to call. So all communication lapsed. Interested to know your sister and her family live in Perth. Which suburb does she live in as I spent three years there and my brother and sisters are in Scarborough and Sorrento and surrounds.

My mother's wish was to have her ashes placed into the waves out from Sorrento surf club, which we did. It is near to Hillarys.

I played rugby in Perth and was selected in a WA team to play a few games in NSW. This is how I eventually got to live in Melbourne. You know the story... boy meets girl and so I married and settled in Melbourne.

As you spent time in Sunshine we live in a Bayside suburb called Brighton. Most fortunately our place is on the waterfront so we have lots of activities watching the yachts and water sports and people with children and dogs on the beach (dog friendly area).

Noted you worked in the munitions industry and at one time in Puriton. We lived in a cottage in a row of cottages called Downend in Puriton. So going to school was either by bicycle or walking some half a mile to the bus stop. Small world. A colleague I did chem with worked in the explosives division in Maribyrnong. My mother also worked in a factory making bomb warheads in or near Bridgwater. Her task was soldering the wiring in the bombs.... amazing to think of now.

Commencing in 2002 we have travelled the length and breadth of Australia for up to four months each year for some 15 years. We prefer to be off the bitumen and onto the sand tracks or unmade areas in the deserts. We went in a 4 by 4 off road Toyota land cruiser packed to the gills with camping equipment and lived in a tent. We also had an off road motorhome which enabled a more enduring adventure. One trip lasted 6 months and some 36,000kms, travelling around Australia.

In a more sophisticated way we have cruised several parts of the world including on the Queen Elizabeth ship. Trains have also been a goer with The Ghan from Adelaide to Darwin and Indian Pacific from Adelaide to Perth.

Although Australians are for the most part free-spirited we have pretty well all knuckled down to control the virus spread. Restrictions are easing and access to food and grog has not been suspended. All in all, everyone's well being is the number one priority.

Shall break here for a coffee - and I still like Liquorice Allsorts from childhood.
Kind regards, Jim."

All these preliminary e-mails have given us over 2 pages of information and brought us to a suitable place to stop this time before we even get onto Jim's detailed memories, so "To be continued, if a future editor decides to do so!"

It has been a long time coming, but at last I have room for news of the...

John Biffen Award Ceremony 2021

Bridgwater & Taunton College (BTC) A Level student Euan Barton has received the prestigious John Biffen award, presented in association with Old Morganians in memory of the former cabinet minister to mark outstanding educational achievement.

The John Biffen award was established in 2008 by former students of John Biffen's alma mater, Dr. Morgan's Grammar School (now Haygrove School), and is presented to an outstanding student in History, Politics or Economics. John Biffen was born in Combeville near Bridgwater, and earned a scholarship to Cambridge University, graduating with a First Class Honours degree in History. He would go on to serve as MP for Oswestry for more than 35 years, holding high offices in Margaret Thatcher's administration. He became Lord Tanqueren in 1997. The John Biffen award winner receives a cheque for £100, as well as a copy of Lord Biffen's autobiography as part of the prize.

Euan, of Mark, studied A Levels in Economics, Maths and Physics at BTC, achieving A*A*B grades before progressing to the University of Exeter to study Economics.

BTC A Level Economics lecturer Sabrina Schmidt said

Euan was an exemplary student and always engaged in discussions. He confidently led revision sessions and demonstrated a great sense of humour.

Course Leader Matthew Smith said

Euan is the twelfth recipient of this prestigious award. I would like to thank Old Morganians for their ongoing commitment to celebrating student success, and I wish Euan well in his future endeavours.

*Many thanks to Matthew, Course Leader, A levels, Business & Computing, **Bridgwater & Taunton College**, Bridgwater Campus, Bath Road, BRIDGWATER TA6 4PZ UK for providing this information and the picture on page 5 to our secretary Roger Richards way back in November 2021.*

See picture:



The John Biffen Award Ceremony 2021, Left to right: Euan's dad, OM President Bryan Lancaster, A Level student Euan Barton, OM Committee member Bill King, Euan's mum, OM Committee member Brian Scott.

In January 2021, Peter Warren told me of the passing of his father Alan Warren on 27th December, age 87, and kindly gave me a short account of Alan's life for publication:

Alan Warren (1934 – 2021)

Alan Warren was born on 23 September 1934 at West Huntspill before moving to Highbridge in 1939. He started at Dr Morgan's in 1946, leaving in 1953 to read Geography at Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge. He enjoyed rowing, winning 2 oars in the bumps, and the Wesley Society, where he met his wife, Rachel. After national service with the Royal Signals he returned to Fitzwilliam House for teacher training before taking his first job at Borden Grammar, Sittingbourne. His next move was to Sandbach Grammar then in 1970 to Alderbrook School, Solihull, as head of geography then head of humanities, leading the faculty through the transition from grammar to comprehensive.

Two years after Rachel's death from cancer in 1985, he took early retirement and lived a full life including learning to bell ring, chair of school governors, Christian Aid collection organiser for the village, producer for Solihull Talking Newspaper and regular reading for a blind lecturer. As probus club walk organiser, the recce trips often involved one of his grandsons to check out the pub. He enjoyed foreign adventure travel, especially South America, as well as walking holidays in Britain, and kept meticulous photographically illustrated records of these trips. Being a good geographer, part of his legacy is 43 years of continuous daily weather observations. His last mountain, Merrick, was at the age of 80, but activity became increasingly curtailed during the final few years of his life due to heart failure and low blood count, and he died on 29th December in Warwick Hospital aged 87. He is survived by his three children and seven grandchildren. *Many thanks to Peter for that.*

In the March 2022 Newsletter, I also recorded the death of my brother-in-law, Brian David Kent (DMS 1952-6 and at that time, of Woolavington). David's funeral had been at Norton Fitzwarren where he had lived towards his end in a small flat. The service leaflet had a picture of the DMS 1956 1st. XI ghosted onto the central page (see photo below) and with a eulogy from his son Dawari. which mentioned his DMS and Redhill, Surrey, cricket experiences. Suitably, the reception after the service was held at the Somerset Cricket Club, Taunton.



Back row L to R: Peter Solbe, ?? , ?? , Gerald Pople, Dave Durston, ?? , ?? , Mr. Uzzle.
 Front row L to R: Brian David Kent, ?? Steve Berry (Capt.), ?? , Richard Hiseman.
 Please let editor know the other names if you can, but suffice it to say you were all there at that service even if only in ghosted picture format!

Brian David Kent – Eulogy by son Dawari.

Firstly, I'd like to thank everyone for coming today, it means so much to us.

Brian David Kent is the first born of four children; himself, Elaine, Alan and Eleanor.

To his wider family he was simply David.

To us, his children we called him **DD** – I never actually knew what it stood for, but I found out last week that it apparently stands for **Dearest Dad**.

To his wife he was also **DD** – which stands for **Darling Dave**.

We have called him DD for so long that Tokini (*his daughter – Ed.*) didn't even know his name was Brian till she was almost in her teens.

DD can best be described as a quintessential English man. Born in Woolavington, here in Somerset with some roots in West Pennard near Glastonbury. He attended his primary school in Woolavington where he excelled academically. He passed the 11+ examination that gave him the privilege of entering the then prestigious Dr Morgan Grammar school in Bridgwater where he completed his secondary education. He started his adult working life in the accountancy department in the Clark's shoe factory in Street. After which, his career path took him into the construction and engineering industries. He worked on several highway construction projects across the UK and overseas. He subsequently moved into the petrochemical industry, working largely abroad in places such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Russia, and a number of African countries including Nigeria.

DD was a keen sportsman. There were a few tenpin bowling trophies littered around the house, but the sport closest to his heart was cricket. His 'go-to' opening sentence in any situation was "Did you see the cricket score?". He was an excellent batsman playing for Puriton Cricket Club,

Burnham-On-Sea, Bridgwater, C. J Clarks, and also becoming Captain for Redhill in Surrey for a couple of years.

He was a huge lover of nature in the UK and would always announce at the first sign of Spring : “Spring has sprung, the grass has riz, I wonder where those birdies is”. Most likely followed by a quick rendition of ‘The Blackbird’ by the Wurzels. But he also adored Africa, with its effervescent climate and luscious vegetation – it was hardly surprising he ended up marrying our mother.

DD was very much a family man. Although his work took him all over the globe, we felt safe and secure that he would always return when able and was never far away at the other end of the phone. Whenever he did return from one of his trips abroad, not only had he updated his vast stamp collection, he always returned with a new remote-controlled toy or gadget in hand for us to play with. Comprehensive evidence that he was just a big kid at heart.

He shall be sorely missed, and the void will be hard to fill. We love you dearly. Rest in Peace DD.

Richard Hiseman has since added: “ Thank you so much for sending me all the “Big David” news and pics. I was so sorry to hear he is no longer with us. He really was one of the very good guys and one of the mainstays of our team. I think our lads out in Australia at the moment could have done with him in their team! If Eleanor is from the same mould as David you managed to find one of the best. I was so surprised, and strangely pleased, to learn they were brother and sister.”

Dick Raymond: Roger Richards sent this to Dick's family



Dick’s contribution to Old Morganians was truly outstanding. He was a member of the Committee when it was known as the Old Morganians Society that restricted its membership to older ex-pupils of Dr Morgan’s, typically those who started at the School prior to 1958. Later, an Old Morganians Association was set up for younger ex-pupils and the two organisations agreed to merge in 2012. Dick became Secretary of what was then simply known as Old Morganians. One of the major tasks of the Secretary is to arrange the Annual Reunion Dinner that Dick always did very successfully. Even at short notice Dick could deliver a really good speech that would be concise and appropriate to the topic. Although I formally relieved Dick of the Secretarial role in 2013, he remained a member of the Committee and he patiently taught me what was required and continued to help me even into 2021. However, Dick’s contributions to Old Morganians were only a relatively small part of what he contributed to society generally.

He achieved a senior role in British Cellophane, was a member of the Woolavington Parish Council and did a lot to raise funds for charities. When we both worked at the Royal Ordnance Factory in Puriton, Valerie would tell me about his latest exploits doing marathon and half marathon runs. Valerie was Dick's first wife.'

In early 2017 Dick sent me a photograph of himself and a friend on the Somerset Levels where they went on a weekly basis working to tidy up unwanted plant and tree growth (see enclosed) (*see addendum*). I know that he went for many years, on a weekly basis, to visit his brother Bill in a Care Home in Bridgwater. I can only guess that Dick did his work on the Somerset Levels under the guidance of Natural England.'

Friends of Quantock Newsletter Spring 2022.

This year's Spring edition of the FoQ newsletter had a couple of articles which I thought would be of special interest to Old Morganians. The two reports were repeats of contributions by the late **David Worthy**, a past editor of FoQ newsletters and author of several books about the Quantocks which he had bequeathed to FoQ. The first article was about the Tilbury statue of Jupiter which stood for many years at West Bagborough until felled by storms in 1994.

In the summer of 2000, however, it was restored and secured to its plinth by a contractor working for FoQ and with a generous donation by Edward Cavell in memory of his wife, Heather. While, unexpectedly, I could not find any reference to this statue in **Berta Lawrence's** 'Quantock Country', she does refer to it on p.30 in her booklet 'Discovering the Quantocks'.

OM **Peter Haggett** refers to it at the bottom of p.140 of his 'Quantocks' book, as does Gillian Powell on p.17 of her 1985 'The Quantocks' and with a picture, by Julia Davey, of it before it was toppled, on the rear cover. It is well covered after being toppled in 'Somerset Follies' by author Jonathan Holt (Akemin Press ISBN 9780954613877).

David Worthy said "The figure, sculpted perhaps by the (Thomas Slocombe of Tyrhil House) estate mason, is a naïve representation of the chief Roman deity Jupiter – the giver of victory in war and justice in peacetime, the god of lightning and thunder.

It is first recorded in a valuation by Christie's of 1792 – 'A large Jupiter with sceptre and Thunder boulds and a carved dog by his side.' - *the latter two lost at it's toppling it would seem by the very things he was supposed to be peacetime god of!!* - OM Ed.FoQ newsletter also shows DW's photograph of the statue in its original state. I have been unable to find anything about it in any of the OM's **Roger Evans'** local books, but I don't have all of them so may well be mistaken.* David's other article was "Who's for Fives?" and as **DMS** had built a fives court in the late 1950's or early 1960's, I thought it most appropriate to seek permission to quote from that also. The game was often played in olden times against church walls or towers.

David quoted Broomfield, Bishop's Lydeard, Holford, Kingston St. Mary, Bicknoller, Fiddington, West Monkton and my own old home of Durleigh as having evidence of these former games on their churches; and also on other places at Bagborough, Bishop Lydeard near the Lethbridge Inn (he provides a photo of that), the Old George Inn at Nether Stowey, and at Bridgwater near the Valiant Soldier and old cattle market. He says "At Combwich a (Five's) wall still stands near the Anchor Inn. There are several versions of the Fives game and it may have originated as the 5-a-side hand tennis once demonstrated to Queen Elizabeth 1 by ten Somerset men."

Many thanks to FoQ Secretary & Editor, Mary ter Braak, for permission to quote from their Spring 2022 newsletter – OM Newsletter Ed.

* The HTV/ Channel 4 book 'Exploring the Quantock Hills with Chris Chapman', Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd. 1994/5, shows a picture of a couple sat in the seat under the statue as its Frontispiece and a description on p.76 which repeats John Page's 1890 view that it is 'of an unexpressively hideous and inartistic nude figure'!

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE OLD MORGANIANS Website Address is drmorgans.com and it has been totally updated by its producer, Greg Kett - son of DMS Old Boy, the late Clive Kett. Greg runs Ravenswood Media.

Old Morganians President: Bryan Lancaster.

Old Morganians Committee:

Treasurer: Mike Dodden 01278 423890 **mob: 07540052982** e-mail: mdodden@aol.com ;

Secretary: Roger Richards, 3 The Crescent, Corsham, Wilts, SN13 9FT. 01249 716263

roger47richards@btinternet.com

Minutes Sec: Tony Wilkins.

Chairman: Bill King 01278 456405;

Colin Brown; Brian Scott; Ralph Sealey; Alan Hurford.

NB: Contact Mike Dodden if you require a 2022 membership/dinner application form.

Material For Newsletter. Please write, phone, or e-mail 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. 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