

OM NEWS



Simon Lewis (1982-89) studied art, but wound up working as a guidebook researcher in China and India, before becoming a novelist and screenwriter. His first novel *Go*, a travel thriller about runaways, was written in 1999 in a village in the Himalayas. His second novel, *Bad Traffic*, published in 2008, is a crime thriller about people smugglers, featuring a jaded Chinese cop, Inspector Jian. The book has been published in the UK and the US and translated into German, French, Swedish, Italian, Japanese and Turkish. In 2009 it was nominated for the LA Times Book of the Year

Award and for the French SNCF prize for crime fiction. A sequel is due to be published this year. Simon's third travel-related thriller, *Border Run*, was published in April 2012 in the US and the UK.

He has written many screenplays, including *The Anomaly*, *Tiger House*, *Jet Trash*, and *Four Kids and It* - a fun family film, based in Cornwall, which was released in 2020. Currently, Simon has feature and TV projects in development with Films of London and the Forge, among others. Simon lives in London, but spends a good portion of each year in Asia.



Hallam Amos (2006-13), 18 months after his last game for Wales and seven years since his debut, made the starting line-up for the first time, in Wales' Six Nations opening match against Ireland, on February 7th. Hallam is one of only three Welshmen - the other two being Shane Williams and Gareth Thomas - to score Test tries against New Zealand, South Africa, Australia and Argentina. Two other OM's were involved: **Wayne Barnes** refereed the game and **Eddie Butler** was the match commentator.

NEWS OF OTHER OMs

George Cook (2000-2007)

“I have been a relatively active member of the OM Club, both through Sport and London Socials. I wanted to reach out to see if there are any affiliations with the Club and OM Property professionals? I am a Junior Investment Agent with RIB Group of Companies, based in Central London, and it would be great to connect with OMs in a similar field.”

Mobile: 07880 722557

Email george.cook@rib.co.uk

Terry Coleman wrote: “I am doing some family research on my wife’s grandfather who was a boarder around 1920. His name was William Herbert Witchell. He was an accomplished sportsman and also won a prize for Latin. I was hoping you would have some information and photos of his time there.”

Editor’s note: So far, the School archives draw a blank but if anyone can assist, please contact omc@oldmonmothians.co.uk

Elton Williams (1962-69) was a member of Mon House. After 31 years in Midland Bank then HSBC, 19 of those in managerial posts, he left in 2000 and set up a successful gardening business with his wife. They retired in 2018 and moved to North Devon, but have recently moved again to Somerset.

Their new address is :

“Roseneath,” Biscombe, Churchstanton, Taunton, TA3 7PZ

Stuart Rowlands (1950-57)

is a second generation OM; his father, J.L.P. (Leslie) Rowlands and his uncle, Peter P. Rowlands, were also at Monmouth.

Stuart moved to London in the early 1960s, where he worked with his brother, Jonathan, managing publicity and public relations for music acts and record companies including Rod Stewart, Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck, Helen Shapiro and the BBC Television’s International Cabaret. In 1965, Stuart opened *Vital Publicity*, representing such clients as Spencer Davis, Jimmy Cliff, Traffic, and Island Records, before branching out into corporate PR. Among his many prestigious clients he lists Honda Racing Corporation, Bridgestone Tires, IMG, and Colgate-Palmolive. Stuart has represented such athletes as Freddie Spencer, Arnold Palmer, Muhammad Ali, Greg Norman, Nancy Lopez and Jack Nicklaus.

In 2000, he returned to IMG as Vice President of Global Public Relations where his work included PR, publicity and production for the annual Peace Concert television special surrounding the Peace Prize awards to United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and former US President Jimmy Carter. He conducted interviews for the A&E international broadcast with Nobel Laureates, including Northern Ireland’s John Hume, South Africa’s Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and Polish President Lech Wałęsa.



In addition to his PR duties, he is a writer of magazine articles. His interviews with Michael

York, Patrick Macnee and Juliet Mills and others have appeared in such diverse publications as Cyprus Airways Apollo Executive Review and Florida Tennis Magazine.

Today, his offices are based in the Hollywood Hills, with corporate sports clients that have included Lucas Oil Products Inc, MAVTV Motorsports Network, and Duke University’s the Nicholas School of the Environment. In partnership with TV and movie director Francis Megahy, Stuart is the Executive Producer of the SRPR classic motorsports movies, including the award-winning 6-part “Motorsports Explained” series, that aired on ESPN for 7 years and sold in 17 countries.

He is a current member of the Motor Press Guild and the American Auto Racing Writers & Broadcasters Association.

More info at:

www.stuartrowlandspr.com.



Harry Beach (1958-63) sent in this great photograph of the CCF in camp, summer 1962. The Editor remembers it well. In the front row, centre from left to right, are Sgt Major Tratt, Captain Archer, Major Park and Lieutenant

Elgood. The contingent underwent a night exercise, where several people got lost, despite being only 100 yards from a main road; Lieutenant Elgood was put in charge of a Verrey (flare) pistol with which he managed to set fire

to part of the tank training ground on Salisbury Plain; the majority of cadets enjoyed the experience of a helicopter flight; and, on a rest day, we were bussed to Southsea, where most headed for the funfair and were very sick!



Dai Davies FRCS (1959-65) "In response to your email with photo* I am 12th from the left in the back row.

I was going to go back to school for another year, as having rowed in the first eight and been in the school play and intellectually challenged, I was unlikely to pass three A Levels but I did, so I went to Barts Hospital a year early. There I completed my growth spurt, learned to drink large volumes of beer, captained the boat club, and played rugby for cup-winning teams. I also qualified

as a doctor and met my wife. I then trained as a surgeon and ten years later was appointed consultant plastic surgeon to the Royal Postgraduate Medical School at Hammersmith Hospital and later at the Charing Cross/Imperial.

My wife and I had three children: one is a surgeon, one a GP, and our daughter is a teacher. They have given us seven grandchildren. My wife died from Cancer and so I retired a little early and have taken up small-scale farming, with a flock of Welsh

Black Mountain sheep, outside Malmesbury. This year I went to the Carwardine/Worsnip meeting at Haberdashers' Hall and met up with David Hodges, who is also in the photo.

I am now in no position to help people's careers but am living testimony that with hard graft and knowing the rules of the game(career) you can, by taking advantage of some luck, achieve almost anything."

**The photo actually appears on the OM website and is from 1965 (Ed).*



Steve Norris (1985-92)

Familiar to many OMs for his terrific organisation of the London Dinners, Steve's business success will perhaps be less well-known.

In early 2013, Steve joined forces with Chris Arrigoni; between them, they had 30 years' experience with some of the biggest names in the drinks industry. They identified a gap in the market for fruit-flavoured health drinks and incorporated Get More Vits. They ploughed their redundancy money from

their previous company, where they'd met, into the first drinks production and sold their first bottles 5 months later.

Over the last eight years, they have developed a range of drinks based on vitamin content, health benefits and natural flavours – sugar-free and using spring water.

In 2013, they launched into Tesco and the following year began distributing through Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Spar. They were finalists in The Grocer New Product Awards, won the IGD Health and Wellness Award, and were highly commended in the World Beverage Innovation Awards.



In 2016, the company started exporting and by the end of 2017 they had sold more than 10 million bottles. At the time of going to press they were on the brink of going past the 30 million bottle mark.

Always dreaming up innovative ideas, in 2018 they were finalists in the World Innovation Awards with their Get More Vits Multivitamin Chewing Gum. They won 'Best Functional Drink' in the Zenith Innobev Awards in 2020 and their continued range expansion was recognised with their new Fibre Water being shortlisted for 'Best Range Extension'.

Steve acknowledges that they definitely didn't know what to expect but they were prepared to learn along the way. Top of the advice list to budding entrepreneurs would be take risks, enjoy the ride and be resilient. Oh, and don't run out of cash!

Roger Atkins received an email from **Bob Coombes** (49-57). This is his restaurant in Bangkok.

Bob wrote, "I'm still running my food importing business employing about 30 people! Thought the video might give you and anyone else who remembers me a bit of a laugh!"

<https://youtu.be/HmvGUhMPxNU>



Thomas Gwillim (1969-76) is a Lead Business Analyst who holds a BA(Hons) in Business and Administration from the University of Salford, and an MSc/TOPS in Business Analysis. He has held senior posts with Sony(UK), TSB Trust, Lloyds TSB Bank, Halifax Bank of Scotland, Eversheds, Nationwide, Barclaycard, HSBC and Co-operative Bank.

Tom lives with his family in Cardiff and lists as his interests walking Offa's Dyke and Ridgeway, cycling, rugby, soccer, drama and house renovation.

OBITUARIES

Stuart Bradley (1953-58) late of Llandenny.

Christopher Alan Brain (1977-84) passed away unexpectedly in February 2018. We received this sad news from his father Jon (J E) Brain (1953-59).

John Hartland (Staff 1964-1996) passed away on 20th January, four days short of his 85th birthday.



In addition to being Master in Charge of Rowing at Monmouth School for Boys, John founded Monmouth School for Girls Rowing Club in 1992. He also taught Economics and was a Housemaster of Town House.

Along with his brother, Brent, John first developed his passion at Southampton Amateur Rowing Club, going on to row at Loughborough University. His first post as rowing coach was at Whitecross School and he rowed at Hereford RC, before being appointed by Monmouth School for Boys.

His talent as a coach was incomparable. As head of Welsh Rowing, he led the team to the 1986 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

His knowledge, skill and enthusiasm inspired several generations of boys and girls at the Haberdashers' Monmouth Schools, many of whom went on to the highest levels of their sport. Olympic, world and European medal success was achieved by Robin Williams, Charlie Wiggin and Lord Colin Moynihan, World U23 medallist Rob Hollis and Oxford Boat Race Blue Paul Marsden, all of whom paid tributes. Lord Moynihan said, "Monmouth School has lost not just a great coach and teacher but a great Ambassador for the school, the town and for the world of rowing."

John was greatly involved in forming The Welsh Amateur Rowing Association and, in the early Sixties, he worked tirelessly at resurrecting the Home International. In 1966, the event was staged at Monmouth, though only Scotland accepted the challenge invitation.

For a number of years, John was Chairman of Monmouth Rowing Club and was instrumental in its expansion and the development of a first-class Club facility and Boathouse. He was also Regatta Chairman/Secretary and helped build it into one of the largest one-day river regattas in the country.

Away from rowing, he loved his garden at the house in Hereford Road, and was also quite a keen amateur actor. In the mid 1980s, he played Billy Liar's father in a school production directed by his wife, Ann, and then joined Off Centre Theatre. Here's John, back row left, as an upright Victorian husband in Priestley's 'When we are Married'.



Photographs courtesy of Off Centre Theatre

In any production, other cast members always needed to be on their toes for he was notoriously bad at learning scripts: on one memorable occasion, during a public performance, the cast went round in circles for several pages before Ann, who was directing and prompting, stopped the show and loudly enquired if they were ever likely to get it right!

There is no doubt that John got pretty much everything else right, and he leaves behind a host of great achievements and an extraordinary legacy. In April 2019, Ann christened a fabulous new boat, named John W Hartland, in honour of her husband, at Monmouth School for Boys Rowing Club - a fitting tribute to a remarkable man.

John Marshall (1943-48) died on 26th September 2020, peacefully at home, aged 88. He was born and brought up in Cinderford and followed his older sister to school in Monmouth. He played rugby for the school being a member of the 1947 team.

Qualifying as a quantity surveyor, John used his professional skills mainly in the academic world, lecturing to and mentoring young people. He would often go the extra mile during his evenings to help, and because of this he was very popular with his students. He also later qualified as a professional arbitrator, bringing together his grounding in construction, costing, understanding of contracts and the psychology of construction professionals.

John was a proud, lifelong OM, who is survived by his son, daughter and four granddaughters.

Lindsay Morgan died on 31st December 2020. He attended Monmouth School during the early years of WW2 and left in 1942 to join the RAF, with whom he served in the Far East.

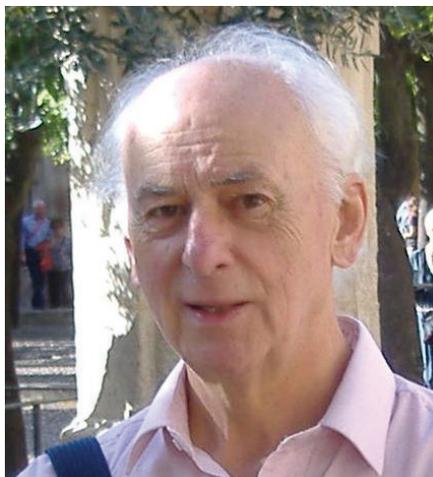
Glyndwr Roberts (1936-43) known as Glyn, died on 18th January 2021, peacefully in his sleep at home. He was 95 years of age.

Glyn won a scholarship to Monmouth School and was a member of New House. He appreciated the opportunities



given to him by the school. In his late eighties, his daughter Yasmi joined him at a few of the annual lunches for old pupils and he very much enjoyed the gatherings. At the last meal they attended he was the oldest pupil there.

Trevor Rutter (1945-52) died in May 2019, at the age of 85. His father was an ex-miner who had been given a horticultural smallholding after an industrial accident. Opportunities offered by the Education Act 1944, and an enlightened teacher at his village Primary School, enabled Trevor to secure a scholarship at Monmouth Grammar School.



His cultural interests were developed at Monmouth where the Headmaster

engineered a further scholarship, which allowed him to stay beyond school leaving age until he completed Sixth Form and found a place at Brasenose College Oxford where he read PPE, graduating with a First. It was during this time that he developed a loyalty to the Labour Party, once listening to a rousing and passionate speech by Aneurin Bevan. At school he stood as the Labour Candidate in mock elections.

He discovered literature through books read first at Monmouth and then as an undergraduate, music through a school expedition to a Hallé Orchestra performance in Gloucester Cathedral; he developed a passion for the countryside, instilled by his boyhood experiences and also a Monmouth headmaster who encouraged self-led expeditions into the Brecon Beacons; and a life-long love of buildings and architecture through the churches and market towns where he lived, reinforced by the beauties of the Oxford colleges.

It was National Service that first gave Trevor his love of Germany and his first acquaintance with Jo, who later became his wife of 50 years. Germany was his second posting in the British Council after the birth of his son, Orlando, in Indonesia, and he and Jo regarded it as a second home for the rest of their lives. He spoke German fluently and was dazzled by the airiness,

colour and exuberance of South German Baroque. He took enormous pleasure from the memories of his contribution to the mending of relations between Britain and Germany following the War, and he recalled often his luck that he and Jo were posted back to Germany at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

His 30-year career in the British Council saw him involved in many aspects of this organisation's work in cultural diplomacy and English language teaching with time spent as representative in Singapore, Thailand and Germany. His last longer stint at headquarters in London saw him rise to become Assistant Director General. He was awarded the OBE in 1976 and a CBE in 1990 for services to 'cultural diplomacy'.

After his retirement from the British Council, Jo and Trevor lived in many different

countries: the UK, Spain, Portugal and Germany. But eventually they settled in Totnes, with Trevor taking great advantage of everything offered by the cultural richness of Dartington Hall nearby. He continued to search out architectural gems all over Britain and Europe, and was always busy planning his next jaunt.

Trevor was gregarious, sociable, interested in the lives and views of others. He read and thought widely and deeply. He was happiest sharing his life and his enthusiasms and gave encouragement and respect to others' views, and his many friends responded to this. His empathy came, I believe, from a grounded self-confidence without a trace of arrogance - a combination not often encountered, but so satisfying to experience when found.

Written by Trevor's son Orlando

Ernest Graham Watkins (1943-49) passed away on 14th April 2020. He was always known as Graham. He died of kidney cancer, peacefully at home, at the age of 88.

He was proud to have attended Monmouth School and often spoke about it - such a good school he always said - and enjoyed attending the OM events. Graham was a keen cricketer and rugby player whilst at school and was pleased when the front row reunited for a photograph at one of the Club's events!

On leaving school he did his national service in the RAF and then joined Gloucestershire Constabulary, where he served for 32 years. On retirement he joined the Royal British Legion and was the standard bearer for his local branch. He was also a keen golfer. His family were proud of him and miss him very much.

YOUR OFFICERS

PRESIDENT Simon George (1982-89)
VICE PRESIDENT Steven Raikes (1975 - 82)
HON SECRETARY Andy White (1996 - 2001)
HON TREASURER Steven Raikes (1975 - 82)
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER David Evans (1957-64)

FUTURE EVENTS

In our last news we advised that the impact of the pandemic had obliged the Committee to cancel or postpone traditional events in our 2020 calendar.

At the time of writing, it seems probable that this year's OM Day will also not be staged but discussions are ongoing about the organisation of our normal regional dinners later in the year.

LONDON DINNER - 19th November

Please keep checking the website for updates.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Over the last ten years, the Club has awarded £231,958 to Fund 400 & Charity, and in response to Sports requests and student enrichment, with a further £34,000 pending.

An additional £112,105 has covered such things as a contribution to the cost of School publications; the refurbishment of the Sutherland sundial; and a plaque to honour Angus Buchanan VC MC.





Charlie Walker is still working hard to attract younger OMs into becoming more involved with the Club and its activities. He has established a working group and would appreciate any comments or suggestions, or to hear from anyone interested in joining the group.
charliewalker1@icloud.com

OM MERCHANDISE

Please email orders to:

omc@oldmonmothian.co.uk

along with a mailing address so that we can calculate a postage price. We will respond with a total price and details of how to pay.

We aim to despatch goods, subject to availability, next working day after receipt of payment.

***Post & packing extra to published prices**

THE OLD MONMOTHIAN CLUB



OM Club Ties – **£25.00**



Bow Ties - Silk **£30.00**



OM Scarf **£20.00**



Cufflinks, featuring the school crest – **£30.00**



Stainless Steel Parker Jotter, engraved with OM Club - (while stocks last) – **£10**

We're keen to hear from and publish news of Old Monmothians around the world; about careers, hobbies, achievements - indeed, anything of general interest to other Club members.

Please send your stories and any photographs to
omc@oldmonmothians.co.uk publications@oldmonmothians.co.uk
www.oldmonmothians.co.uk

Please follow us on **FACEBOOK** and **LINKEDIN**