

## Old Xaverians' Association



### Newsletter 7 March 2012

*The Officers are grateful for the those who have made contact. Would correspondents remember to print their OX dates when writing?*

*Please note that subscriptions were due on 1 January. Best to do it by Standing Order:*

Barclays Bank plc Sort code: 20 51 01 A/c no: 90672653

A/c name: Old Xaverians' Association

*Otherwise send a cheque for £10 to Peter Bentley, 96 Dingwall Drive, Greasby, Wirral, CH49 1SQ.*

*It was decided at the last Council Meeting that the treasurer would in future send acknowledgements of receipt of cheques. It will help if you would include with your cheque an e-mail address to which he could respond. Otherwise enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Editor*

1. From: Dave Reynolds re Peter Ndhiro's article on SFX professional footballers. Very much enjoyed reading the latest newsletter. Could I add a couple of bits? The Football article was a great update on the recent additions to the professional ranks, just to add two more from a decade ago and more recently. **Mike Newell** has achieved distinction in all areas, player (worth checking his playing record), Manager (Luton leading LFC in the FA Cup at one stage), honest individual, blowing the gaff on corruption of agents etc. etc.

**Tony Warner**, much travelled goalkeeper, playing at the highest level over a long period, helped Tranmere stay in the Division with a series of outstanding performances last season. Both have been back to SFX in the last couple of years as speakers to various groups.

Regards, Dave <[davidandkathy10@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:davidandkathy10@yahoo.co.uk)>

2. From: Barry Evans (OX): OXA funds

I found the website very interesting but I cannot understand why the association is holding such large funds when they could be used more beneficially for charitable purposes at home and overseas. Perhaps there are other reasons for holding such funds? Nevertheless I look forward to receiving the newsletters and I shall try and attend some functions.

Barry Evans

*Can we have reactions to this? Perhaps we could move to a lower but minimum holding of funds? What should we spend it on? Any suggestions will be considered at the Association AGM on Monday 26 March 2012, 7.00pm at the College. Editor*

3. Exchange between Jack Heery (OX 45-53) and Dave Reynolds re  
The Association's future

“Hi Jack, Just a word of thanks for your contribution to last night's (College Proclamation) successful evening. The results, A level especially, were truly outstanding. I spoke with Gez Flowers today and he highlighted the point about the high number of those who returned to receive their awards. This reinforces the feeling that they must have towards SFX and those who have taught them. Which brings me to my next point, why not make contact with some of them directly (they really were a tremendous bunch) and float the idea of a year group reunion or some such, corresponding, say, with an O.X. function in 2012. Did I see that the proposed dinner is again at Anfield, in Sept? I'm sure Gez would be more than willing to provide contact details of appropriate personnel. That year group had many 'leaders of the pack'. Worth asking them for their thoughts.

Dave”

“Thanks, Dave, for your email. I haven't replied sooner because I wanted to raise your ideas with the OX Council on Monday last. We had a good discussion and everyone agreed that your suggestion could be a really good way of getting some younger people in. In fact, there were some who said that if we don't do this or something like it soon, it probably won't be worth having a dinner - or an association!

We agreed to offer complimentary invitations to the next dinner (**on 22 September 2012**) to any of this group (and other groups?) who wanted to engage with the Old Xaverians Association. I'll be the one following this up, but experience shows that there would probably not be any mileage in my just contacting people direct. Would it be possible, Gez, to get one or two of the group to express an interest and then accept responsibility for selling it on to their friends? If we get one table for, say, eight enthusiasts, it could easily snowball. We have discussed also in the past offering a table of eight to the Head Boy and the Head Girl.

Through an OX named Brian Evans (OX 45-51) contemporary of my brother Pat, we have just recruited our first female OX, Brian's grand-daughter, Rachel Evans, so that might lead to another group tagging on. We don't expect to get knocked down in the rush, but we will be quite happy to splash out a good bit of our capital on this if it looks like going well.

We are going to ask the debating teams to entertain us on 22 September by debating the motion "That this House sees no value in maintaining an Old Xaverians Association." We might have some musical entertainment as well. Thanks for helping and best wishes. Jack”

It would be useful to have some OX thoughts on these suggestions in time to incorporate them in to our plans for the Annual Dinner. Send your ideas to the editor please:  
 heery.putney@virgin.net

4. House-bound Old Xaverians (from John McCann)

"I met a friend recently (an Old Xav) who would like to receive your emails so maybe you could add his email address to your database and he can be kept in touch with what's going on - he lives in Raby Mere and is now housebound due to the ms he suffers from. - Address: Fairlawn Close Raby Mere Wirral; email: <[quinnjohn@btopenworld.com](mailto:quinnjohn@btopenworld.com)> ”

If you know of anyone who would like to receive this newsletter by email, please let Jack Heery know: [jackheery@phonecoop.coop](mailto:jackheery@phonecoop.coop)

### 5. Photo archive - Archivist required urgently!

This correspondence reveals a gap in our Archives that we should probably be addressing. Des Hardman has taken responsibility for consolidating the physical archive of books, documents, photo-prints etc. However, we clearly need someone to take over the responsibility of making electronic copies of things that many of you have and which could be lost to the Association (and posterity) if we don't do something about it pretty soon. Bill Carroll (OX 46-51) sent this letter to the College asking if he could get some old school photos of himself.

*“My name is William Carroll and I attended S.F.X. College some time ago (before the College moved from down-town Liverpool to Woolton)*

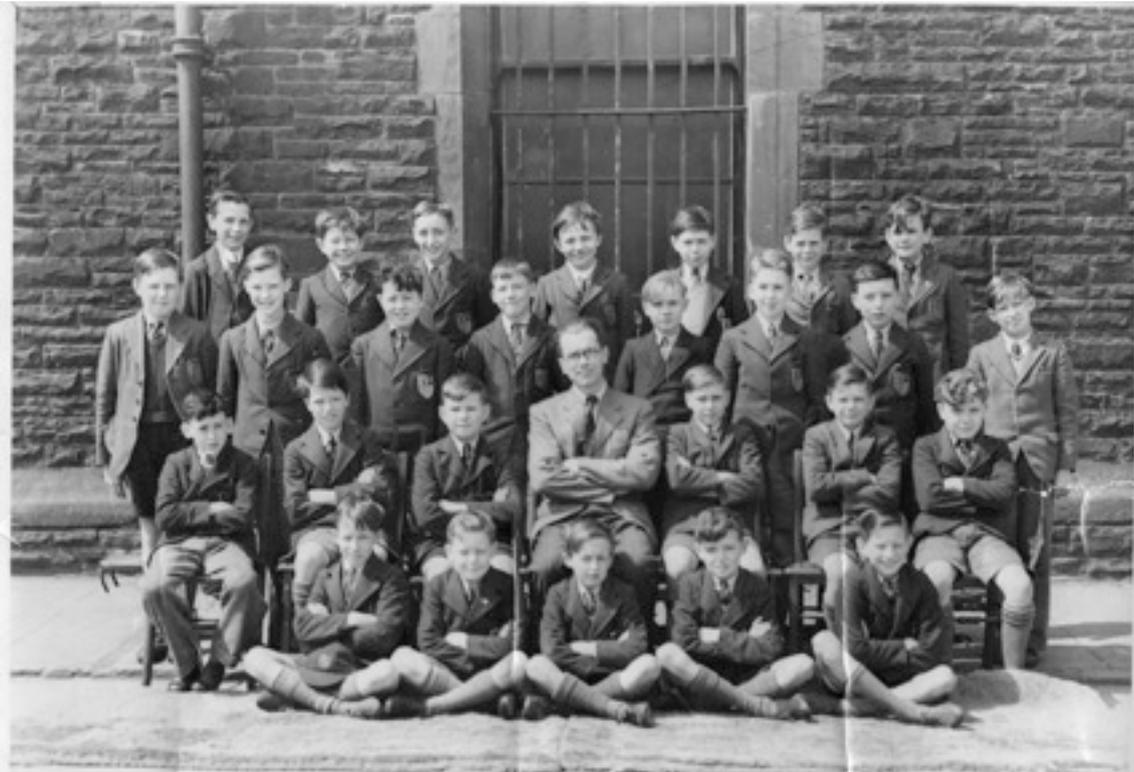
*I am now 76 yrs. old and I was searching for any photograph of myself in the S.F.X. uniform, to no avail. The classes I was in and the dates are as follows:-*

*1946-47 1A 1947-48 2A 1948-49 3A 1949-50 4A 1950-51 5S*

*Are there any school or class photos in the Archives from those years of which I might have a copy? I would be most appreciative if there was something I could have to show my family. Thank you in anticipation, W. Carroll.<[billcarroll@shaw.ca](mailto:billcarroll@shaw.ca)>”*

Unfortunately the school's archive couldn't help, but we managed to activate our email network and in no time Bill had a photo he had been looking for and a whole lot more besides! The response to Bill's enquiry led to about a dozen offers of photos dug out of attics and dusted off (and now ready for electronic storage). If any of you are interested in starting such an archive, please write to Jack Heery [jackheery@phonecoop.coop](mailto:jackheery@phonecoop.coop)

This is a typical example of the photos that we must try to preserve, 1B 1946/47:



Back row (L to R) John McGovern, John Sullivan, Brian Cole, Archie McDonald, Dave Bloom, Mike O'Hare, John Waldron

Willie Voce, Bob Flewitt, Joe McCabe, Cartwright, NK, Brian Carragher, NK, Joe Sherwin

Bernard Crean, Bob Galea, Peter Myler, Mr Vandeputt, Alan Burns, Cecil Bandell, Mike McCarthy

Teddy Faulkner, McCauley, Denis Rodenhurst, Joe Brophy, Jim Parry

## 6. OX Authors

It's been surprising - and encouraging - to find out how many OX have had their books published. Bill Carroll, mentioned above, writes:

"I had an autobiography published in 2008 entitled:- 'Death only needs to win once'. You should check it out on Amazon under either my name William Carroll or the title. Regards, Bill."

*Will any OX be interested in reading Bill Carroll's book (or any other book written by an OX) and commenting on it for the Newsletter? Editor*

## 7. Research into the blitz in Liverpool

Paul McDermott (OX 61-69) asked if anyone could help his friend's researches with eyewitness accounts of bombs dropping and buildings getting direct hits. Replies are still coming in from people old enough to have been in the thick of it, including from Pat Crean, Tony's wife, who was in St Anthony's crypt when it got a direct hit, with much loss of life. A good illustration of the value of the OX network.

## 8. The Celebration of the Feast of St Francis Xavier, 3 December 2011 Salisbury St.

The Friends of St Francis Xavier's Church marked the first anniversary of their formation with a mass at the church in Salisbury Street, followed by a 'scouse pie' lunch, drinks and literary and musical entertainment.

The newly appointed Jesuit Provincial, Fr Dermot Preston, delivered an inspired and inspiring address on the life of St Francis and the lessons we can learn today from his commitment and spirituality. The Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Mr Frank Prendergast, graced the occasion, (upping his game, as Ken Vance said, after the previous Thursday's royal visit).

Frank Cotterell Boyce (pictured), the Liverpool author and guest of honour, read from a couple of his books, told us about his recent book, "Chitty, Chitty Bang-Bang Flies Again", (a sequel written at the request of the family of Ian Fleming, the author of the original).



The Old Xaverians Association had asked to celebrate their annual mass at the same time, since attendances at recent annual masses had declined. About twenty OX and wives raised the numbers of those present to well over a hundred.

The programme of poetry and prose included Gerard Manley Hopkins' 'Felix Randall', which had been recently reviewed in the OX newsletter by Hugh Kearney (OX 35-42). The OX contribution to the musical part of the entertainment was to lead the whole audience in a well-rendered version of 'Oh! My darling Clementine' in Ancient Greek. Mike Bushell, Eric Bushell and Jack Heery found their old language skills undiminished.

## 9. Notices.

**The Novena of Grace in honour of St Francis Xavier** starts at the 10.15am Mass on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March in Salisbury St and continues daily at noon until 12<sup>th</sup> March. This year

two Jesuit novices, Joel from Guyana and Jozef from Slovenia, will be leading the reflections.

**Liverpool Week of Guided Prayer.** This used to be called a week of guided prayer. If anyone would like to take part there is an opening meeting after the SFX noon Mass on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. The week itself starts on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> and closes with a final session on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March. It consists of a daily meeting with a prayer guide and is an ideal Lenten exercise.

**The Northern Alumni Mass for the feast of St Ignatius** will take place at Stonyhurst this year. It will be on the evening of Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> July and if there are enough people the Friends of SFX will be running a coach from SFX Church. More details after Easter.

**Try to take in one of these Titanic events at SFX church** Did you know about Fr Browne's pictures? Fortunately he got off at Cobh.



*Flowers for the*  
**TITANIC**

Flower displays to commemorate the Titanic disaster  
with original photographs taken on board by Fr. Francis Browne SJ

**Friday 20th - Sunday 22nd April**  
*Open from 10am - 4pm daily*

<p><b>FRIDAY 20th ~ 2.00pm</b> <b>'West Everton Mini-Strings Octet' Concert</b> <small>Partnership between Faith Primary School &amp; RLPO</small></p>	<p><b>SUNDAY 22nd ~ 2.30pm</b> <b>'The history of the Titanic's short life'</b> <small>Talk by Marshall Morris British and Irish Titanic Societies</small></p>
<p><b>SATURDAY 21st ~ 2.30pm</b> <b>'Why did the Titanic sink?'</b> <small>Talk by David Knight Archivist, Stonyhurst College</small></p>	<p><b>Admission by programme £3.00</b> <b>Refreshments available</b></p>

**Further details: 0151 ~ 298 1911 or [www.sfxchurchliverpool.com](http://www.sfxchurchliverpool.com)**

 **St Francis Xavier's Church**  
*Salisbury Street · Liverpool L3 8DR*  
Site of the former Collegiate School near Liverpool Royal Infirmary

**10. Obituary** George Loftus (1936– 2011) O.X.(48-56) a note from David Bolton and Des Hardman

George (“Podge”) Loftus was born in October, 1936 and died on the 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2011, following a long battle against cancer. He attended St Francis Xavier’s College in Salisbury Street from September, 1948 to July, 1956, and was the second eldest in a family of nine – four brothers and four sisters – of whom six are left.

George lived with his family in Clarence Street, off Brownlow Hill, for the first five years of his life until the house was flattened by Nazi bombs in May, 1941. Fortunately, the family was visiting his grandmother, in the Fazakerley area, at the time. He was evacuated to Uxbridge shortly afterwards and attended an RC village school on the Windsor road, where he was taught by nuns. He had already started school in Liverpool, attending St Nicholas’ School, and had memories of the gravel pits and canal near by.

He returned to Liverpool in the school year 1946 – 1947 and went to All Saints School in Anfield, near the junction between Oakfield Road and Walton Breck Road. At this time, the family lived in Towson Street (now demolished, 50 yards from the turnstiles to the Spion Kop). Later they moved to the family butcher’s shop in Walton Breck Road. George recalled working in the shop after school and in the holidays, as well as occasional visits to the Gaumont Cinema in Oakfield Road (now a Community Café!!) escaping briefly from the grey drabness of those post – war austerity years into some Hollywood technicoloured dream. In the same year as George at All Saints Primary School were Des Hardman, Joe Murray, John Meskell, Terry Bolland and Maurice Forslow and John Halpin, all of whom went on to S.F.X. (Sheila O’Hanlon was also in this class - later she became Mrs Peter Smears).

As George was a year behind me (David Bolton), it was not until we played in Kevin Reade’s successful Junior Shield –winning football team that I first got to know him, when we formed a right – wing partnership which was to prove useful. On Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1951, S.F.X. defeated Prescott G.S. at Anfield by four goals to nil, George adding two goals in the second half to my two in the first. By 1953, George had established himself in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI by dint of his electric pace on the right wing and his ability to score goals, displaying a hard shot from a distance with left or right boot. He won both the 100 and 220 yards Finals on Sports Day in 1954 and in his last year at school, in 1956, he was a key member of the First XI which drew 2 – 2 with Quarry Bank in the Senior Shield final at Goodison Park, only to lose in the replay at Bellefield. As the College Magazine put it: “ G. Loftus. on the left wing, was invariably the leader of virile and enterprising attacks. His undoubted success was due largely to his fine burst of speed, his ball control and his well – timed passes...” His skills did not go unnoticed and he was selected as Reserve for the Merseyside Grammar Schools XI v I Zingari League.

Successful in “A” Level Mathematics, George left school in 1956 to do his National Service in the Army, and I understand that he “signed on” and spent much of his career there – (*some doubt about this - others may know more about these years?* Ed.). His interests included family history, music, theatre, ballet, walking and travelling and he enjoyed visits from his family at his home in Beeston, Nottingham. A quiet and modest person, George had the role of full time carer for his wife, Gillian, from the time of his retirement in 1991 until her death from Multiple Sclerosis in 1998.

One of George's last visits to Liverpool was in 2010 when he journeyed from Derby to meet two of his sisters and me (Des Hardman) for an afternoon at All Saints Church and Parish Hall. The parish was celebrating the centenary of the present church (not the original). Everyone relished the reminiscences of our primary school years. I had not seen George in such a happy, relaxed and healthy mood since his re-appearance in 1955.

George enjoyed our O.X. Reunions at the Racquet Club from 2005 onwards and even when illness prevented him from attending, he would send a generous contribution to the cost of the evening. May he rest in peace.

### **11. To The Nile by Jim Lee**

David Bolton has written this appreciation of Jim Lee's poem To the Nile (see website and Newsletter 4)

It is not surprising that the Nile has always fascinated artists and poets. The Greeks and the Egyptians both called the river "Black", from the black sediment left behind after the floods, as the Nile flowed northward. At well over 4,000 miles it is the longest river in the world, flowing through nine different countries, and the immense Nile basin alone occupies about one tenth of the continent of Africa.

As an image of "the river of life", "man's earthly journey" or "sustaining mother earth", therefore, the Nile and its fertile waters have provided the setting for the evolution of civilisations that existed in the ancient world and beyond. Poems have been addressed "To the Nile" in many different languages and have tried to probe - like this one - its mystery.

Jim Lee seeks inspiration and explanation for his own rootlessness.

"Restless is the spirit urging on this tired body  
Craving loves and wilds, from towns afar..."

and hopes to find answers in the ancient lore of the river itself:

".....wherein great secrets rest..."

There is nothing profoundly new in the central theme of the poem, nor in its structure and style - a sonnet form with a natural transition in sense between the opening octet and the closing sextet, to which is added a final closing couplet.

For a poem written - apparently - in 1952 the style is influenced by more formal versifiers from the previous century, such as Leigh Hunt (1784-1859), the Romantic poet who himself wrote a poem "A Thought of the Nile" which had some merit in its ideas, its language and its tighter structure, held together by a strong rhyme scheme - lacking in Lee's poem. There have been others too who sought inspiration from the great river, such as Henry Abbey (1842-1911) "Along the Nile", and Martha Lavinia Hoffman (1865-1900) who wrote the charming - if slightly evangelistic - "Lily of the Nile".

Lee's poem does arrest our attention, but why are we not more moved? Is it the language, which at times is florid, or the structure, which is uneven:

"Unhinge your pensive portals, then, sweet Nile,  
That I may stare into your knowing well..."

Is this a young man, searching for “gravitas” or a genuinely troubled traveller driven onwards by his.. “ inner rage.”?

The opening is promising:

“Lovely Nile, and strange, wherein great secrets rest...”

...and at once the repetition of the “l” and “n” sounds, supported by the “str” sounds invoke the swishing of the current and the lapping of the waters on the river bank - re - echoed in ‘wisdom’, ‘depths’, ‘embellished’, ‘sweetened’, ‘suns’ and ‘endless time’.

Unfortunately, this not sustained - nor does the poet’s anguished state of mind ever move us to real sympathy - perhaps because it is not effectively captured:

“ for in hardship and strife, it revels more and more.  
Nile, Oh Nile, do you know the reason why?”

However, in spite of this impression of youthful exaggeration, there is a sense of mystery in the poem and a genuine attempt to capture the loneliness - not so much of the Nile itself, but of the traveller in time, the traveller through history, the journey of each human life.

The Nile’s ‘great secrets’ might unlock the meaning of life’s journey and its ‘...encumbered depths’ and ‘knowing well...’ may yield answers to the many human questions - our origins, our purpose, our destination.

There is undoubted potential in the poem and it is interesting to speculate how much more successful Lee might have been had he chosen to observe and record the real life of the river rather than confine himself to abstract meditation. One suspects that the ‘literary’ flavour of the writing reflects the tone and colour of the teaching he received - and the reading he had experienced - in the study of English literature at that time.

David adds the Leigh Hunt poem mentioned.

#### A Thought of the Nile by Leigh Hunt 1784-1859

It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,  
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,  
And times and things, as in that vision, seem  
Keeping along it their eternal stands, -  
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands  
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme  
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,  
The laughing queen that caught the world’s great hands.

Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,  
As of a world left empty of its throng,  
And the void weighs on us, and then we wake,  
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along  
Twixt villages, and think how we shall take  
Our own calm journey on for human sake.



Thomas Leigh Hunt