

**MERCHANT TAYLORS' SCHOOL:  
A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE FOR FIVE CENTURIES**



Founded by Merchant Taylors' Company, the cutting-edge businessmen of the Sixteenth Century, in 1561, Merchant Taylors' School has 400 years of tradition and excellence in innovation to offer as a school for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Merchant Taylors' Company itself is older still, having been granted its charter in 1503 by King Henry VII as a bringing together of the guilds of the tailors and linen-armourers of St. John the Baptist. These guilds are known to have been in existence in 1300 and in 1347 they established premises in Threadneedle Street. Merchant Taylors' Hall stands on this site today, adjacent to the Bank of England.

The school is located in beautiful grounds, 10 minutes from the intersection of the M1 and the M25, 30 minutes from Heathrow and 25 minutes from central London via the Moor Park Metropolitan line station, a five-minute walk from the school. There is extensive car parking. The facilities and setting are outstanding: 250 acres of lakes and woodland, of which 55 acres are devoted to sport. This field is a magnificent stretch of level ground, with room, according to the season, for 10 cricket squares, 16 rugby pitches, 4 hockey pitches, 4 soccer pitches, 24 tennis courts, a full size athletics track, an all-weather floodlit hockey pitch and a floodlit training ground for rugby. It also enjoys a fully equipped sports hall, a fitness gym and a 25 x16 metre heated indoor swimming pool. There is a fencing *salle*, and boys can learn to sail and windsurf on the lakes within the school grounds: the school has its own lakes, boat shed and boats. Nearby there are courts for squash, fives, tennis, basketball and badminton, and an indoor rifle range. Other sports include judo, canoeing, cross-country, clay-pigeon shooting and croquet, played by the Sixth Form in the cloistral Inner Quad each summer. The school uses Sandy Lodge golf course, which is next to the school field, with lessons offered by the professionals at the adjacent Moor Park course, one of the best golf clubs in the UK. Plans are presently underway to bring the school's old boys (OMTs) onto the site with a superb new clubhouse.

For four hundred years, the school has proved capable of re-inventing itself, adapting its curriculum, and technology to meet and master the newest challenges. The school rose like a phoenix from the ashes of the Great Fire of London of 1666 when it was destroyed on the first day, as it was only two streets away from Pudding Lane. The Head Master John Goad rescued the school library: the Goad Library exists at the school to this day. The school's motto, that of the Company, "Concordia parvae res crescunt" ("Small things grow through harmony") emphasises the long-term vision of a school breeding great oaks from small acorns in an atmosphere of harmony. As the school song puts it, *Homo plantat, homo prodit, prudens, irrigat custodit*: Man plants, labours and waters carefully so that the best may prosper. Academic results bear this out. In 2004, the school was the third boys' school in the UK in the *Financial Times* "Top 100 schools" index, in 2005 it was second, in 2006, we were fifth in the *Independent's* "Top Schools" table. The Institute of Biology named it "Top school in the UK" for Biology. Sony branded the school its "Digital Centre of Excellence" for being the first school in the world to deploy its Language Lab solution. Typically, up to 65% of all "A" Levels are passed at Grade A, 85% at AB and one in five pupils goes on to Oxford or Cambridge, a figure more like one in four if one includes other outstanding universities. Insistence upon the highest quality has



*John Goad*

always been at the heart of the Merchant Taylors' ethos and unless otherwise stated, all of the famous names mentioned below are old boys of the school.

Yet the school maintains a relaxed atmosphere completely at-odds with the media caricature of independent schools as snobby. We work closely with maintained sector schools from whom we learn as much as we teach. Head Master Stephen Wright and a majority of his Senior Management Team have taught in the state sector and the school is committed to the charitable mission that it has sustained for almost 500 years, working for the under-privileged and disabled. The school considers itself a "global village," a model for 21<sup>st</sup> Century society,



*Lancelot Andrewes*

with boys representing the cultural heritage of the whole world within our student body. This formed the keynote of former-Head Master Jon Gabitass' speech at the 2003 Feast of St. Barnabas. Citing the words of the 2002 Inspection Report on the school: "The atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect amongst the pupils is remarkable and permeates the whole school. Issues of race and faith are discussed openly. The pupils value and celebrate difference to the extent that it is the norm and therefore no issue", he went on to remark that, "Merchant Taylors' School is a multi-cultural community, and not only proud but delighted to be so. Varying cultural influences shape our outlook and produce prismatically far more interest and fizz than is possible in many other schools. I like to feel that our community represents in microcosm, in the way we

share a common culture, what the global community will eventually become. I hope so. It would be a harmonious world, for sure, if that were the case". The school does not compile figures of ethnic groups, but figures for the students' family religions show the incredible diversity of the school. 35% of the students are from Christian backgrounds, 27% from religions originating in Asia (Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Shinto), 23% are of Jewish origin are 5% are Muslims. However, the school retains pride in its historic association with Christianity, counting amongst its old boys Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, the most eminent theologian of his day and translator of the *King James's Bible*. His tradition was sustained by William Juxon, who attended Charles I on the scaffold, and later became Archbishop of Canterbury. Donald Coggan, who died in 2000, followed him in this office more recently. The school is one of four schools privileged to hold its Triennial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral.



*The school at Suffolk Lane*

The largest day school in England at its foundation, the school originally occupied buildings in Suffolk Lane in the shadow of St. Paul's, with its pupils boarding at The Manor of the

Rose, a fourteenth century building, also destroyed in the Great Fire. This is why the first building one sees on entering the school today is named the Manor of the Rose. It is why the recently refurbished school Undercroft has cloisters, in imitation of the re-built Manor of the Rose in the City of London.



*The undercroft of the Manor of the Rose*

Even before the foundation of the school, the rowdy street brawls between the young Merchant Taylors' and the Skinners on the streets of London in 1484 forced the Lord Mayor to declare that the two crafts should occupy sixth and seventh places in the civic processions in alternate years. This practice is followed to this day and gave rise to that most English of sayings, "at sixes and sevens".

For four hundred years the school prospered in the City of London before moving to the leafy suburbs of Moor Park in 1933. This was perceived at the time as a bold and ambitious move. Spencer Leeson, the driving force behind the move, was a visionary. He saw the potential of this outstanding site for the creation of a great, modern school. The statue at the end of the drive is of Sir Thomas White, the far-sighted businessman who, with Richard Hilles, financed the original foundation of the school in 1561.



*The school at Moor Park*

W. E. Newton, architect of the school buildings, mixed "cutting edge" 1930s 'art deco' simplicity with more traditional elements: "my eyes have seen a vision of buildings lean and clean and purposeful, a sheer wall; a glimmer of steel and glass, a bravery of singing colour". The school buildings are shaped as a pair of compasses, the Lamb and the Company's letters, MTS, appear on the rainwater heads, the Dining Room is enriched by a stained glass of the 'Lamb in Glory', which, against a gilded sun, overlooks the playing fields. The architecture is a thoughtful and symbolic enrichment of the natural environment to create a space naturally conducive to creativity, meditation and the outdoor life.

Despite its modern buildings, there is a strong family spirit at Merchant Taylors', not just in terms of external symbols like the school crest, the school flag, the (still Latin) school song, the ties and the uniform, but, most importantly, in terms of its friendly ethos. Pupils are



treated courteously, as young gentlemen and respect for teachers is therefore genuine. There is little snobbery in the school and frequent sports events pitch the teaching staff against the groundstaff; at the heart of the school's philosophy is the importance of caring, not only for the pupils, but also for all the school's employees without distinction. We all eat together in the Dining Hall and school lunch is included in the school fee to foster this family spirit and corporate identity. The Head Master takes lunch with a small group of boys every day. This family spirit is embodied in a unique tutorial system. Every boy is given an individual tutor from the moment he enters the school and this tutor oversees his entire passage through the School, helping him to choose a rich, rewarding life outside the classroom, and taking a particular interest in all he does. Because of its long history and foundation, Merchant Taylors' has strong links with those other schools in the UK founded by the Company, their "family of schools", ranging from other great public boys' schools to leading girls' schools, maintained schools and a kindergarten. The school also has a strong relationship with St. Helen's Northwood and the boys and girls work together in drama, music, the Cadet Corps and work with the disabled (PHAB). The school's links therefore transcend boundaries of gender, class, status and political fashion.

Its first Head Master, Richard Mulcaster, was the visionary educationalist of Shakespeare's day. He added Literature, PE, Music and Drama to the traditional classical curriculum and taught through the medium of English. He also introduced the concept of a referee to the school's sport, which has now become a world-famous game: soccer. Many see him as the model for Shakespeare's pompous schoolmaster Holofernes in *Love's Labour's Lost*. His boy actors, "Mr. Mulcaster's children", were seen as serious competitors by Shakespeare's company at *The Globe* which is why Hamlet himself ridicules this company of boy actors in the most famous play ever written. Mulcaster felt that joy, creativity, fun and physical exercise should be central to the experience of learning. The superb amenities enjoyed by the school after its move to Moor Park in 1933 bear witness to the vibrancy of this tradition. It would have pleased Mulcaster, who "wished that schools were planted in the suburbs of towns near to the fields."



Holofernes in  
*Love's Labour's Lost*



Edmund Spenser:  
'Sweet Thames run  
softly 'til I end my  
song'

The school has always excelled in drama, literature and the arts. Edmund Spenser, author of *The Faerie Queene*, was one of the first pupils to enter the school. He became poet laureate to Queen Elizabeth I and central in Irish politics in the Elizabethan period: an involvement in Irish politics sustained into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Reginald Maudling had responsibility for Northern Ireland as Home Secretary in the early 1970s. Conn Iggulden is the latest OMT to become a world-famous writer with his historical novels about ancient Rome.

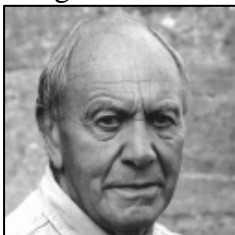
The seeds of recent outstanding performances like *My Fair Lady* were sown almost 500 years ago. Thomas Kyd, who later shared a room with Christopher Marlowe wrote *The Spanish Tragedy*, which was even more popular than Shakespeare's plays, and continued to be performed throughout the Elizabethan period. John Webster, whose father was a Merchant Taylor, has always been associated with the school: his *Duchess of Malfi* and *The White Devil* are classics of world literature.

Taylor's has made outstanding contributions to all the Arts.



*Samuel Palmer, Harvest Moon*

Samuel Palmer, the great British landscape artist, attended the school in the early nineteenth century and is thought to have influenced Turner. Dennis Flanders followed the same tradition in the Twentieth Century, while Lynn Chadwick was amongst Britain's most distinguished sculptors: one of his largest and most striking works is an ornament to the school and can be seen in front of the Recital Hall. The school has produced many actors, but probably none more famous than William Pratt, who found fame under the stage-name Boris Karloff. Music has always been strong. The school has a jazz band, a concert band and a full orchestra as well as participating in a joint orchestra



*Lynn Chadwick*



*William Pratt in his most famous role*

with its sister-school St. Helen's. The strength of this tradition was perhaps best exemplified by the stunning Millennium Concert given by the family of Merchant Taylor's Schools at the Barbican in March 2000.

Distinguished contributions to the sciences and social sciences have been made by James Jeans, the outstanding mathematician and astronomer who was Secretary of the Royal Society in the 1920s; the famous populariser of science, Nigel Calder, also attended the school. More recently, Sir John Sulston was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2002, for his distinguished work on the human genome. In the social sciences, Alfred Marshall became the founding father of modern political science and Ionwerth Edwards, classical historian and archaeologist became the author of the standard works on the Pyramids (an old boy was also present at the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun). The great historian E H Carr, whose history of the Soviet Union and provocative *What is History* are classics of Twentieth Century History was also an OMT.



*Sir John Sulston,  
Nobel Laureate,  
2002*

Distinguished contributions to the sciences and social sciences have been made by James Jeans, the outstanding mathematician and astronomer who was Secretary of the Royal Society in the 1920s; the famous populariser of science, Nigel Calder, also attended the school. More recently, Sir John Sulston was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 2002, for his distinguished work on the human genome. In the social sciences, Alfred Marshall became the founding father of modern political science and Ionwerth Edwards, classical historian and archaeologist became the author of the standard works on the Pyramids (an old boy was also present at the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamun). The great historian E H Carr, whose history of the Soviet Union and provocative *What is History* are classics of Twentieth Century History was also an OMT.



*E H Carr*

Journalism has also been a great strength within the school. In 1788 John Walter changed the name of his newspaper to one that has become known throughout the world. It was to be called *The Times* and for the first time published gossip and scandal about famous people,

Journalism has also been a great strength within the school. In 1788 John Walter changed the name of his newspaper to one that has become known throughout the world. It was to be called *The Times* and for the first time published gossip and scandal about famous people,

foreshadowing the tabloid journalism of our own day! More recently, John Timpson, the well-known broadcaster and journalist (*The Today Show*, BBC Radio) is an old boy who sponsors a school prize for journalism.



*Sir Robert Clive*

The tradition of political involvement in the British Empire initiated by Spenser was continued by Robert Clive, the despair of his teachers at Taylors', who went on to found the British Empire in India. (He reminds one of another famous Taylors' scoundrel, Titus Oates, whose creation of a "Jacobite Rebellion" to overthrow the government had far-reaching consequences in the seventeenth century). Another OMT, William Hailey, played a highly influential role in the government of British India during the 1920s when the challenge of nationalism was growing. The legacy of such imperial conquests has come full circle and today there are many teachers from Ireland and boys from the sub-continent in the school who welcome our confidence in appraising and confronting the legacy of our imperial past.

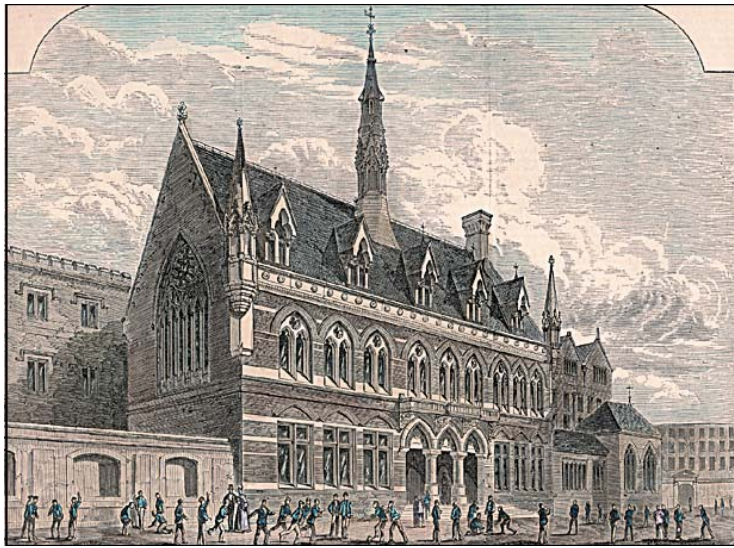


*The Queen Mother at  
Taylors' in 1962*

During the 1920s, Merchant Taylors' provided the head of the British legal and judicial system in the person of George Cave, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain. This tradition of public service extends to the European dimension. Kenneth Christofas directed the European Council of Ministers from 1973-82 and Vincent Evans sat on the European Council of Human Rights. Two of the school's current governing body, Sir Geoffrey Holland and Sir Michael Partridge were at the very top of the British Civil Service during the rapid changes of the Margaret Thatcher years.

The school is proud of its convenient location and superb facilities. It is proud of a tradition of creativity, fun and joy in learning that has lasted almost 500 years. All boys today belong to Houses named after Andrewes, Clive, Hilles, Mulcaster, Spenser, Walter, White and the Manor of the Rose. It is proud of the traditional emphases it places on hard work, discipline and dedication to learning. It is cautious about losing touch with such core educational values. It is proud of its role as a pioneer in every epoch and of its ability as a school to re-invent itself in every epoch as a school for the future. It is proud of its family atmosphere. It values above all else quality and imagination and as it faces the future "infotainment" age, it is resolved to translate those values into a 21<sup>st</sup> century spirit, open to the outside world of commerce and politics, but cautious in forming strategic relationships. Over 500 years, the school has formed only a very few select relationships with commercial concerns. Without exception, these have been companies that share the school's essential vision: its family spirit; its mission of care; and its vision that harmony and creativity are the touchstones in creating products of the highest quality and excellence.





*The school at Charterhouse Square, 1875*



*The refurbished Undercroft*