

Letter from the Chairman

Dear Members

Future of the Association

On the website you will find the draft minutes of our 37th AGM held on 26th September 2015 and I commend them to you.

In recent months your committee has given much thought to the future of our Association, in particular, how long we should continue to maintain it in its current form. As you all know the school closed in 1968 and now all our members are over 60, I left in 1964 and am therefore among the youngest at 68! Unfortunately, among the committee, there have been some serious health issues in recent times and this has been a major factor in prompting us to look closely at our future. Unfortunately we have also found it impossible to recruit new blood from the membership to strengthen the team. Despite its problems the committee remains steadfast and I am just grateful, as I know are all of you, for the on-going hard work undertaken by my colleagues on your behalf.

At the last AGM, with the support of the committee, I proposed that we should begin to plan our last formal reunion to ensure that we go out in style rather than simply fade away. I further recommended that the last formal reunion should take place in 2018 to mark the 50th anniversary of the school's closure and 40th AGM of the Association. With great sadness, this was unanimously supported. The following year, 2019, will see the publication of the final edition of the printed magazine, which will include reports on the 2018 events. This timing also enables us to make adequate planning arrangements for the ephemera, remaining records and funds.

Importantly I need to stress that formal closure the Association in its present form will certainly not mean an end to keeping members in touch. Our intention is that, after circulation of the final magazine, our website news and Facebook group will continue to keep you in touch, for as long as possible. Furthermore, if there is enough interest, lunches, or informal dinners can be arranged for members at various locations. Perhaps consideration could be given to sharing these with old boys from the Conway and Worcester. In the meantime, I will do all I can to perpetuate the memory of Mercury.

I am sure this decision will be disappointing but in the circumstances, I feel it will be understood and supported. Over the next three years I can confirm that our next reunion will be in Southsea on 24th September 2016. For 2017 we are looking at holding a penultimate reunion at Chatham to include an event aboard HMS "Gannet." The last reunion will almost certainly be held around Hamble, our spiritual home. I am hoping that members will take advantage of these three final reunions and see them as an opportunity to celebrate with our Mercury shipmates.

David Parsons (4709), Chairman