

## PETER INGRAM RETIRES AS MASTER-IN-CHARGE AT MTS



*Peter Ingram and family*

Peter Ingram has been one of the longest established and most respected masters-in-charge on the Fives circuit. He learnt his fives at Bedford School, nursery of so many good players, and won a blue at Cambridge in 1957. In January 1967 he came to teach Chemistry at Merchant Taylors' and he became Master-in-Charge within a year. He has stayed at Sandy Lodge ever since, retaining not only his enthusiasm but also his time for fives despite the ever-increasing workload common to all teachers and, in his case, running the Careers Department.

I knew Peter long before I came to have the privilege of helping him at MTS. For as long as I can remember, Merchant Taylors' has been one of the leading schools on the circuit, always likely to be among tournament semi-finalists or plate winners, if not more. In Peter's time Merchant Taylors' have twice won the National Schools' Open Doubles and the West of England Colts' Singles, as well as various other championships: many of his pupils have gone on to achieve Blues at Oxford or Cambridge, and Guy Whiting twice won the BUSF Championships while at Cambridge. The continuing strength and quality of his teams is shown by the excellent performance of the MTS first pair, Richard Price and Christian Hale, in this year's Schools' Championship.

In 1986 Peter organised a tour to the USA. With a party of eight boys, matches were played in Boston and Connecticut, and the 'après', as always with Peter, was at least as good as the fives. As a result of the tour, John Hampel became Open Singles Champion of both Massachusetts and Connecticut, a feat commemorated on the photograph of the tour group which still hangs in the school fives courts.

It is a particular tribute to Peter's skills both as coach and diplomat that MTS fives has remained successful even when competing sports such as hockey have developed mightily. And at a time when one or two of the rival school superpowers were occasionally liable to let enthusiasm get out of control, Peter's players and supporters were always immaculate in deportment and attitude; it was a pleasure being on the other side. His own attitude to the game has always reflected the high degree of civilisation which one associates with him as a person - enjoyment through doing things well, coupled with a respect for one's opponents. Peter remains a useful doubles player and he is always keen to get on court with even the more mediocre pupils.

The Dinner held in his honour on 22nd March 1996 was attended by over fifty former pupils and friends and testified to the warm regard in which he is held. To call it a retirement dinner is a bit of a misnomer, for although Peter is retiring from teaching, he will still be involved with fives at school for a few years yet. Peter's own speech on that occasion was a microcosm of the man: a blend of rigorous honesty, solid common sense and natural good humour.

Peter is in every sense both a player and a gentleman, and all who have known him will pay tribute to the immense contribution he has made to both the skills and the spirit of the game.

**Owen Toller**