

## Chairman's Report

*C.O.X.A.*

*A.G.M.*

*November 1997*

Those of you who, like me, were blessed with the advantage of a classical education, will understand when I say that this year's annual report is of a valedictory nature. (The rest of you will have to look it up when you get home!). While an annual report is, by definition, concerned with what has happened in the last 12 months, I cannot resist the temptation to look back, briefly, over the period during which it has been my privilege to be chairman of this Association, and to record, with a mixture of regret and relief, now that that period is drawing to a close, my impressions of the way the Association has functioned during that time. Inevitably, I find myself returning yet again to two themes which have dominated my reports in recent years. The first is of immense gratitude, which I express on behalf of the whole Association, to those members whose untiring efforts, week in week out, month after month - in many cases, year after year - have insured that our Association has not merely continued to function but has indeed prospered during what might have been a very difficult period in its history. The second theme, which has to be considered along side the first, is the worrying lack of new faces in positions of responsibility in the Association and particularly on the main committee, with one or two exceptions. As I am giving this report, there exists already or will shortly exist five major vacancies on the committee. Talk of "crisis" is perhaps a little pessimistic, especially when we have seen most of such vacancies filled and very ably filled, in the 70 years that this Association has existed. I hope and trust that among those of you listening to or reading these words, there will be some who feel willing and able to serve their Association in a very practical way.

I must, however, end this, my last report, on a positive note and this year in particular, it is so easy for me to do so. A year ago I looked forward to our Centenary celebrations. I could never

have hoped or dreamed that they would have gone so well. Over 100 people attended our Mass ;f Thanksgiving, concelebrated by 10 Old Xaverian priests, and 200 sat down at the dinner./ The superb catering, the wonderful atmosphere, the witty and thought-provoking speeches and the beautiful booklet all insured that the weekend of September 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 1997 will never be forgotten by those who were privileged to attend. But much has happened on other occasions throughout the year. Our inaugural lunch at the [Oval was an enormous success and I have no doubt that the similar event planned to bring our Centenary celebrations to a close will be no different. Other functions such as the Quiz Night and the vets' football match, planned in the context of the Centenary, were much enjoyed and could well become annual events. Our roll of honour plaque is now in a prominent position in the College Chapel. Perhaps most significant of all, as far as the future of our Association is concerned, annual football and cricket matches between C.O.X.A. and the St. Francis Xavier College are now firmly established. Indeed relations between us and S.F.X. have never been better and we are hoping to build on this to raise our profile in the other feeder schools.

All in all a truly memorable year and another vote of thanks is due, I feel, to the members of the Centenary working party who did so much to make the year a success. My final hope is that we continue to build on this success and establish an Association that will flourish for many years to come.

I move the adoption of my report.