

Angus was awarded the MBE for services to journalism, having provided the centre spread of The Evening Standard with his 2,000 words of wit and fun - as well as his cartoon strip of 'Augusta' and 'Clive' - for 17 years. He absolutely loved his school years and couldn't wait for holidays to end!

His friend, Brian Angel (at school 1938-1947) writes:

Old Russellian Angus McGill (school years 1935-1943) has died. His journalism and humour lightened the lives of "Evening Standard" readers for over thirty years, winning admirers for his columns and comic strip cartoons. His awards included 'Descriptive Writer of the Year' and the MBE for 'services to journalism'.

As a young writer he proved popular with his boss Lord Beaverbrook, who'd fly him to stay a day or two in the South of France. Here McGill might find himself dining with Somerset Maugham, Aristotle Onassis, Maria Callas, Jack Kennedy and Michael Foot. "This is a fun writer for me," Angus heard as Beaverbrook introduced him at dinner. "Come on, McGill, now tell us all something funny!"

For many years, Angus ran the Standard's Pub of the Year competition, a kind of upmarket chauffeur-driven pub crawl around London. His judges included Tim Rice with whom McGill later collaborated on the musical "Jeeves" and the Private Eye cartoonist Willie Rushton, plus Carol Thatcher and Nigella Lawson. For the Standard's Girl of the Year competition McGill found a very willing judge indeed in Dudley Moore.

Born in 1927 in South Shields, Angus McGill was the youngest of three children. His father Kenneth had run a tailor's shop where high local unemployment and the Great Depression was taking its daily toll. He died suddenly. His widow Janet, herself a primary school headmistress and now without support, appealed to the Warehousemen, Clerks & Drapers' School - and the three children were accepted as boarders. Angus especially loved the school - and couldn't wait for the holidays back in South Shields to end.

"Git yerself fell in, McGill!" screamed the fearsome drill sergeant from Caterham Barracks. But McGill was having none of it. While the rest of the Cadet Corps at Russell Hill Purley paraded twice weekly, McGill said he wanted to become a 'Conscientious Objector'. "No conchies 'ere, mate!" cried the sergeant. But McGill - and three others he had 'recruited' stood firm. As punishment they had to line up in front, facing the parade, then set to work digging holes, tending the pigsty or running round the field, a 303 rifle held high above them. Angus

enjoyed this hugely. Headmaster Mr Madden approved of the procedure but urged the drill sergeant "For heaven's sake don't let McGill near any live rounds!"

At other times on the sports field McGill was usually missing. No good at soccer, hockey bored him, at boxing he crumpled at the first blow. He did like cross-country runs, said it got him out a bit. Which it did. He'd disappear into Wilson's Tea Rooms on the Brighton Road, snaffle their copy of "Time & Tide", a literary mag, for later reading and then selling on to the highest bidder. He'd then jump on the Purley tram for a quick ride, remembering to return breathlessly to the finishing line.

At cricket he was a daunting umpire, renowned constantly for bad decisions. These drew slow handclaps from the Head, "Oh, well done, McGill, another another wrong call. You really are hopeless!" But utterly unfazed, he continued to enjoy school life to the full, especially on stage as a Little Maid in Mikado, Peer in Iolanthe, Policeman in Pirates. And when it seemed War would never end, with its privations of one orange a term, never a banana and a once-a-week bath of 4 inches' tepid water, it was McGill who forecast world peace, something historians have seemingly overlooked. What happened was this :

Headmaster Mr Madden, like the sea captain on a sinking ship, was always last to enter our underground air raid bunker. One night he caught the full blast of a bomb which flung him tumbling into an ugly heap, clothing torn, upside down. "You just can't do that to the Head, of all people," McGill wrote in his diary, "This will really bring about the end of Hitler". And some time after, so it was. McGill - at his most obsequious - boasted of his wisdom and foresight to a nodding Mr Madden. "I'm sure the world is grateful to you, McGill. Foretelling war's end can save many lives. Pity you couldn't save all the poor batsmen you sent in droves back to the pavilion."

Years later Angus devoted a Standard feature to the school he had loved all along. There were paeans of praise for Headmaster Madden and "Tombo", Christopher Tombleson, the English teacher who had encouraged his early interest in literature and writing. In the same feature he declared his support for fox-hunting, following the demise of Russell, the goose at his country retreat near Lingfield.

Among tributes received :

OR Sir Peter Thompson at Angus's funeral : "He recruited me as a third cadet Conscientious Objector, but I tired of the boring alternative chores, so slipped back to being on parade!

Many, many happy memories of a great classmate."

Carolyn Mulcahy, Evening Standard : "Exceptionally gifted, witty, full of fun and warmth. Everyone loved him."

Sir Tim Rice at Angus's funeral : "When Andrew Lloyd Webber and I were working on our first song, it was Angus who gave us our vital first boost. We then became great friends. Superb writer, delightful companion, he will be sorely missed by the world he graced with humour and style."

Peter Crookston, Guardian and Observer : "A great deal of my cultural education and some of whatever social graces I possess are due to Angus's benign influence. The kindest, sweetest man I could ever have had as a friend and mentor."

Sir Simon Jenkins : " I enjoyed his company and hugely admired his work in the golden days of the Standard. I am so sorry he is now gone."