

OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - JULY 1979

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EDITORIAL

This editorial is the parting shot of the present Editor who, at his own request, is making way for A.N. Other. At such a time it is the departing Editor's privilege to chose his own subject for comment. My choice, 'Some Aspects of Reality', is far removed from the parochial affairs of the Society - but I make no apologies for that because Old Maidstonians, even OM's, are subject to the realities of a changing world.

Some Aspects of Reality.

All the signs are that the 1980's will be the most critical decade in the entire history of Man. As governments and peoples the decisions we make in the next 10 years will determine not only the shape of the future for generations to come - but whether there can be any worthwhile future at all.

What we are really suffering from most of all in Britain is the economics and politics of deception. How so? The underlying assumption of every policy statement and promise is that what we are suffering from is a temporary economic crisis and therefore, by definition, something to be recovered from... and that when we have somehow licked the problem of inflation we can look forward to ever rising standards of living and more and more material prosperity. This is the Great Deception.

Our real options for the future are either to carry on as we are, paying ourselves more than we are earning to go bust with all that implies - a quickening drift to anarchy, the collapse of our economic and political systems and, eventually the imposition of authoritarian rule; or to accept that most of us in Britain (and all the other nations of the industrialised world) are going to have to be content with less in the way of material prosperity.

With the exception of the really low paid it has to be emphasised that taking less will mean precisely what it says. There will be no question of holding the line to maintain our existing standards of living. If we are to give ourselves a reasonable chance of a worthwhile future, with our essential freedoms and liberties preserved, most of us will have to accept the need for planned, progressive and substantial REDUCTIONS in our material standards of living.

Are our options for the future, which we can call suicide or survival, really as limited as I contend them to be? They are: and for three main reasons which have as their linking thread the inevitability of dramatically rising prices.

The Old World Order, which we once controlled, is changing. There was a time when it was fashionable for the British to work hard. And, yes, there was a time when British goods and services were either the best or among the best. But the fact remains that we became a developed, modern and prosperous nation by exploiting, and in some instances robbing, many of the countries which today contain the poorest three-quarters of Mankind - and which are collectively known today as the Third World.

From our control of the economies and politics of other nations, we got our raw materials and other essential supplies including labour on the cheap; we were able to sell to others in captive and protected markets what we wanted them to buy, irrespective of their own real needs, and at prices determined by our domestic requirements; and the nation's coffers were swelled by the vast amounts of tax paid on the profits of the overseas operations of our big companies - revenue which helped successive British Governments to subsidise the Welfare State.

As a consequence of these and other advantages we were able to become an industrialised, prosperous and never-had-it-so-good nation on the cheap; enjoy a standard of living that we were not earning by our own efforts; and subsidise, hide, inefficiency of all kinds... with the result today that overmanning is arguably the most serious of all our problems.

In addition, and because we were living in a fool's paradise, (and are still) we were encouraged to have ludicrously false expectations for the future.

The turning point in mankind's history was the overnight quadrupling of the price of oil at the end of 1973. But the real significance of that event was not the price rise itself - it was the politics of it. Here, in the shape of the desert oil producers, was a group of former vassal states who were saying to the industrialised nations: 'The days of exploitation are over. From now on we want fairer prices for our resources, supplies and services; and we want a bigger say in how the world is managed and global priorities are determined'. What the oil producers have done, (and are rightly continuing to do) the suppliers of other resources and raw materials will do - and by confrontation if the Rich-Poor (NORTH-SOUTH) dialogue fails to make substantial progress towards the creation of the new world economic order which is being demanded by the poor.

Rising prices are inevitable because the industrialised nations are going to have to pay more for the resources they need from the countries they once exploited and robbed.

The second factor in the rising prices equation can be labelled the cost of resource depletion. Planet Earth is running out of certain essential or life-sustaining natural resources of which oil is the most outstanding and urgent example; and when there is greater and greater demand for what there is less and less of, inflation or rising prices is the inevitable consequence - with the rate of price increase gathering mad momentum as the day of resource depletion draws nearer. (The governments of the industrialised world could delay and perhaps even avert the coming energy cost crisis by adopting aggressive and very painful energy conservation policies; but conservation on the scale needed is absolutely incompatible with going for growth which, although it can only lead to bigger and better disasters in all but the short-term, is still the declared policy aim of all governments).

The third factor in the rising prices equation is that we have got to pay today for tomorrow. If our scientists and others are to be given the chance to provide, say, alternative energy supplies on time - the necessary research and development funds have got to be invested now. Government contributions to R&D will have to be paid for by substantial increases in taxation - over and above cuts in Government expenditure. Contributions from the private sector will have to be paid for by regular and substantial price increases.

Those then are three of the main reasons which explain why the phenomenon of rising prices is here to stay. It follows that if we are to maintain (not improve upon) our existing standards of living we must, as a nation, create more wealth to allow wages and salaries to keep pace with inevitable price increases. What are our chances? Very poor indeed. And here's why.

We, like our more efficient competitors in the industrialised world, create our wealth through trade - by selling abroad our goods and services in sufficient quantities to make enough profit to cover the cost of imports while leaving enough surplus income from our earnings to pay for our own development - including the financing of higher wages and salaries. Assuming we do succeed in increasing our output, itself a mighty assumption, to whom are we going to sell the goods and services that will create the additional national wealth which alone can enable wages and salaries to keep pace with rising prices?

There are two main problems on this front. The first is that the market place of the industrialised world is becoming saturated with consumer goods and products. The second is that the vast majority of people on Planet Earth are simply ^{too} poor to buy what we could provide them with.

Only two conclusions are therefore possible. The first is that for the foreseeable future we in Britain have not got a snowball's chance in hell of creating the extra national wealth needed to enable wages and salaries to keep pace with rising prices. From this it follows that if we are to give the survival option a chance we shall, most of us, have to accept planned, progressive and substantial reductions in our material standards of living.

The second is that if we allow our leaders to go on kidding us (and perhaps themselves, too) there will be one hell of a crash. War, it has been rightly said, is never an accident.

A.H.

NEWS OF OLD MAIDSTONIANS

It's a bit thin on the ground - which goes some way towards explaining the length of the above - but here's what we've got.

M. ASHE (71) reports that he is working very hard and doing, among other things, two days a week with the Scunthorpe Social Services, which he says provides an astonishing variety of jobs.

L.H. BURDGE, F.C.A. (40) has been appointed Director of Finance to the Tayside Regional Council.

P.J. BUTLER (56) is a partner with an Ashford firm of auctioneers. He lives with his wife and two daughters in a delightful house near Marden, together with their four dogs, five cats and six donkeys. (At least there's no room for the Mother-in-law, P.J.!)

GARY CARCARY (76) wrote to us from 29, Devon Road, Shepway, Maidstone. Last November Gary passed his Referee's Examination to become a fully fledged Class III Referee with the Kent County Football Association. Gary is now working as a laboratory technician with Goldwell Ltd. at East Malling. His main duty is running the microbiological section of the Quality Control Laboratory. In the same team are two other Old Boys: ROBERT DODD (67) and TERRY COLLINS (66).

P. CLIFFORD (71) is working in publicity for the Cambridge University Press.

J. CULLINGWORTH (66) is apparently making a name for himself in Bridge competitions.

A.D. DODGE (57) has for the past 13 years been a lecturer in Plant Biochemistry at Bath University. His spare-time interests are music and local history; and he has written a very attractive little history of Ditton Parish Church - a copy of which he has sent to the School Library.

J. DODGE (54) elder brother - has been appointed to the Chair of Botany at Royal Holloway College, London.

GORDON EARL wonders if it would be possible to arrange a reunion of former members of various Scout Troops with a weekend camp on the School field. Gordon says he's willing to make the necessary arrangements. Would those interested please get in touch with G.E. His address: The Gable House, Craston, Preston, PR5 7HH. Gordon has also appealed for information on the whereabouts of one J.W.S. HARRIS. Says Gordon: 'He'd be about 54 or 55 now, used to live in Holland Road, Maidstone, and was intending to become a doctor when we last met'.

R. EASTMAN (71) has been "called" as a member of Grays Inn. He has been lecturing at the Inns of Court Law School and is going into chambers this autumn.

P.D. GILES (72) has recently announced his engagement.

J. GRIBBIN (63) has published another fascinating book, "Timewarps", which examines the possibilities of travelling forward - and backward - into time. He concludes that it is by no means an impossibility.

R.W. GRIFFIN sent us an interesting letter from 48 Chipperfield Road, Kings Langley, Herts. He says he finds the Newsletter interesting but regrets that it contains little information about his own contemporaries. But he adds: "This of course is not surprising since I left MGS in December, 1932". Like many other of our correspondents, R.W.G. says he was delighted to hear that SARGE BENNETT is alive and well. Recalling the good old days R.W.G. remembers an incident when the administration of an act of corporal punishment had to be stopped in mid air. The incident took place in the woodwork shop. A certain Mr. Webb was just about to lay into a lad's backside with a plank when it was noticed, only a split-second before impact, that the punishment weapon had rather a large nail in the "business end"!

P.A.W. HOWE (School Captain 1927-28) wrote to us from "Little Twitten", Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex TN33 OEG. He, too, was pleased to read our tribute to Sarge - and has filled in some of the missing details about how and why the School Tuck Shop came into being at Tonbridge Road in 1928. "Earlier, Mr. Foster Clark of Custard fame had very generously donated the 13 acres of ground on which the present school now stands. Building started early 1928 and during the Spring Term it was decided that a suitable Playing Pavilion should be built. The Headmaster, Mr. Woolgar, suggested that as the School Governors could not provide the necessary funds - some £1,250 - these should be raised through activities initiated by the School. The Prefects suggested operating a School Tuck Shop instead of patronising the small local sweet shop in Tonbridge Road". And that's how the institution came into being.

T.J. JUDGE (74) is now working as a Consultant with Sir Frederick Snow and Partners in Southwark. He graduated from Aston University, Birmingham in June 1977 with an Honours degree in Civil Engineering. T.J.J. says he would be very pleased to hear from OM's, especially those living in London. His address is: 28, High Street, Beckenham, Kent.

A.F.T. LURCOCK (62) has completed his thesis for the award of the degree of D.Phil. His subject was "Critical Theories of Biography in England, 1800-1831". He is at present teaching at St. Clare's, Oxford. He also captains the North Oxford cricket team and has a first child on the way.

A.D. MAHONY (73) is on the Post-Graduate Certificate of Education course at Oxford and has been doing teaching practise at Bicester School, which he describes as "the archetypal comprehensive". He is attached to St. John's College.

D. MAHONY (78) is rumoured to be connected with a play being staged as part of the Edinburgh Festival "fringe".

S. MARSH (76) has been accepted, subject to gaining his degree, for the Administrative Course of the Civil Service.

RICHARD MASON (67) is working for Taylor Woodrow Construction Ltd. who are involved in Design and Project Management Services to oil companies in the North Sea. While brother DAVID (one of our most regular correspondents) finds the oil, Richard tries to exploit it. Richard was married in 1972 to a Geophysicist.

I. McAULAY (75) was married in May. His wedding was the occasion for a gathering of the clans, from which the following information on the whereabouts of other OM's has been gleaned. Source C.J. JAMES (75) who is now working in the research laboratories of Reed's..... T.I. GOODWIN (74) is with B.P. at Sunbury-on-Thames. His brother, R.M. GOODWIN (75) will shortly be going to Ireland to work and his wife is hoping to get permission to leave Poland to join him. J. STARTUP (75) has been working with the Price Commission. J. ALLEN (75) has been doing freelance stage-designing and hopes to make this his career. J.V. GOLINSKI (76) has got his "first" at Cambridge and is hoping to move to Leeds to take a doctor's degree.

M. MELLY (78) is doing a year's practical farming in Cheshire before going on to the Seale-Hayne Agricultural College in September.

P. MELLY (76) has just completed a year as "Assistant d'Anglais" at Ales in Southern France. Now returning to Oxford to do his Finals.

L.W. MOSELEY (48) has for some years been the projectionist at the Granada Cinema, Maidstone.

T. MULLARKEY (75) was recently commissioned into the Royal Artillery and has been on the Young Officers Course at Larkhill. He's now serving in Hildesheim, West Germany, with 5 Heavy Regt., R.A.

Wg/Cdr M.A.F. RYAN (54) has informed us of his new address: I64, Chesterfield Drive, Riverhead, Sevenoaks TN13 2EH.

RICHARD SKINNER (64) wrote to us from Newcastle to point out that we may in error have married him twice! (Sorry about that Richard - once is enough). He also sent news of M.J. MANNING (71) who has qualified as a Chartered Accountant and is now a lecturer with the Financial Training Company based in Leeds.

F. SPENCE (60) called on N.W.N. recently to collect a contribution to the Salvation Army's appeal and commented, in passing, that he becomes increasingly concerned by the sruuffy appearance of M.G.S. boys of today. (It's tempting to say 'and don't we all' - but is it really as bad as many of us think it is? And if so, why?)

A.D. WHITING (52) was the local candidate of the NATIONAL FRONT in the recent General Election. (Hominis est errare).

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NICKNAMES COMPETITION: THE RESULTS.

The winners are: PETER COURT.
 Brian White.....
 Philip Wynn-Owen.....

And worthy of an honourable mention, says Bob Rylands, were the contributions from: Edwin Cox, Gordon (Bruin) Earl, David Morton, E.B. Ratcliffe, Kenneth Wills and Gary Carcary.

A full list of all the nicknames will be published in the next edition of the Newsletter. Meanwhile, our thanks to Bob for devising the competition and for awarding the prizes of one year's subscription to each of the three top scorers; and our thanks, too, to all OM's who took part. (I'm sure the Committee and the new Editor will welcome ideas for other competitions - Ed.)

THREE CHEERS for last year's President, Roger Craske, who is organising a self-help group to paint parts of the School hall. Will anyone interested in helping please contact Roger - 'phone Maidstone 43662.

ERIC NEWMAN.

It was a terrible shock to us all to learn during the Easter holidays of the sudden death of Eric Newman, Head of the Chemistry Department since 1970, and a member of the staff since 1949.

Few men will be remembered with more sincere affection; his quiet geniality and his high standards of work and conduct made him everyone's image of the ideal schoolmaster. It is hard to think of an aspect of school life which he did not at some time influence. Some will best remember Eric for his many years of devoted work to the Scout Group (and to local Scouting generally) and especially for his foundation and leadership of the old Troop B, which always had so distinctive a personality and set such high standards. For others, Eric will be the man who commanded their section of the C.C.F.; or the man who gave up so many evenings and so many Saturdays to running the Under-13 cricket team; or the Senior Housemaster of the highly successful Corpus Christi House. He was a most loyal supporter of everything the School did: rarely did he miss a play or a concert, a School fete or a Sports Day; and whatever he was asked to do he did cheerfully - and well. It is no accident that his cricket teams usually won their matches, that his Scout Troop so often carried off the trophy in District competitions, that his examination results in Chemistry were always at or near the top level: this essentially modest, unassuming man was a fine leader by the sheer force of his own example. If it was not too much trouble for him - and it never was - then those under him always made the effort. To quote the final sentences of Alan Blake's tribute to him in the 1979 issue of the "Maidstonian": "Those who knew him well valued his friendship very highly indeed. He was one of the most kindly and unselfish men I have ever known, never too tired or too busy to respond to a request for help. His life is summed up in the simple tribute of a friend: 'He was such a good man'. We shall remember him with gladness and gratitude".

RECENT LEAVERS' FUNCTION.

To be held this year on FRIDAY, 14th SEPTEMBER, at "The Wheatsheaf" public house at the junction of the Loose and Sutton roads.

Subscription Form:

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO: Roger Brown,
Hon. Treasurer,
7, Greenfields,
Willington Street,
Maidstone.
Kent ME15 8ET.

I enclose £1 (£..... if for more than one year) being my subscription to the OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY for the year 1979 and/or 1980.

Signed.....

Address.....

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.....

Year of leaving:..... Banker's Order required - YES/NO.