

OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - JULY 1981

Hon. Secretary

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104, Forest Hill,
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Tel: (0622) 676020

President

John Winch.

Hon. Treasurer

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Annual Supper 1981

This year's annual supper was again held in the School Hall on Friday 3rd April. The meal with a truly international flavour and a choice of six main courses was provided for a meagre £2.50 by the endeavour of a small band of OM's wives marshalled by Inga Mayor. I'm sure that the 150 OM's and guests who came this year would agree that the food was excellent. The evening was well conducted by our outgoing President, Alfie Johnson, who presented the Society with a beautiful wooden case for the President's chain. This chain has been valued at £3 000 but, as Alfie said, to the OM's it is priceless! Thank you, Alfie.

OM's heard some interesting and amusing speeches including the speech for the toast of "The School" proposed by Malcolm Farley and replied to by the Headmaster and Paul Extance, one of this year's two Captains of the School. The formal evening closed with Alfie Johnson inducting John Winch as President for the forthcoming year. We thank all those concerned in making the evening so successful. We would like to hear from any OM with compliments or criticisms.

Bryan Welcome.

Old Maidstonians' Oxbridge Reunion

On Saturday May 9th, twenty Old Maidstonians and staff gathered for an Oxbridge Reunion. For the first time, the event was held in Cambridge, in the spectacular setting of King's College. The College laid on a lavish buffet lunch with wine, and we were all able to eat and drink our fill as we exchanged reminiscences, renewed old acquaintances and caught up on the news. Julian Parish came across to wave the banner for Oxford, and the party of staff who travelled up from Maidstone included the Headmaster and Mr Newcombe. We were also honoured with the presence of Mr John Winch, the President of the Society.

All present had a most enjoyable time, and it was a good day out in spite of the overcast skies. Let us hope that we can have a similar event next year.

Jonathan Hill.

Staff News

Several members of the Staff are leaving the School in July.

N.W.Newcombe is retiring after 35 years at the School, of which the last few have been spent as Second Master. In this post he is being succeeded by Dr D.E.Wilson, who remains as Director of Sixth Form Studies; Mr Newcombe's duties as Master of the Middle School are being taken over by Dr A.W.Webb, who becomes the second Deputy Head. Mr B.Langston becomes Head of History.

Mr N.A.L.Norman moves from the post of Head of German at M.G.S. to become Head of his own Modern Languages Department at the Ridgeway School, Swindon.

Dr T.J.Tur will be moving to a new post at Ashford School, Kent.

Mr T.A.Phillips is to take up a post as master in charge of Sixth Form Studies in Bishops Stortford.

Mr M.V.E.Andrew has been appointed as Head of Modern Languages at Cheltenham Grammar School, where he will be working with OM R.D.Beale, who is Deputy Head there.

Mr P.A.Brennan is going to Sandown High School, where he will be a Housemaster in the school run by our former Headmaster, MrB.J.Mcody.

We have also lost, or are about to lose, several members of the ancillary staff of the School : Mr A.Watson, the Groundsman, who has prepared such marvellous pitches for School teams over the years ; Mrs L.Perkins, who was for some years Physics Laboratory Technologist ; and Mrs Stone, who has been for 27 years one of the senior cooks in the Canteen. There will be many OM's who have cause to be grateful to some or all of these.

News of Former Staff

The Rev.G.I.F.Thomson has been appointed Chaplain of All Souls' College, Oxford.

Mr J.D.Nunn is the current British Chess Champion.

Obituaries

There are sadly a number of deaths to record.

Mrs Rosemary Moody, wife of the former Headmaster, died in January after a cruel illness, which she bore with unflinching courage and cheerfulness. We extend our sympathy to Mr Moody and to Catherine, Sarah, Edward and Richard.

Mr E.Chapman, who so gallantly held the fort during an interregnum in the Music Department some years ago, was killed in a road accident - characteristically, he was cycling to a choir practice at the time.

We were shocked to hear of the appalling tragedy which robbed A.B. Atkinson (1961) of his wife and children, who were killed in a car accident in the U.S.A. in February.

W.S.Nichols (1910) died in January.

Two young OM's died, sadly early, in the same week as a result of accidents : Neil Chapman (1976) was serving with the R.A.F., and Bernard Manser (1975) died in a road accident while on holiday in France.

We have also learned of the death of Andrew Gambell (1970) from illness, in Australia. He was 28, and had been married for less than a year.

News of OM's

R.D.Beale (1960) was on the phone to N.W.N. recently as one Deputy Head to another. He sounded in very good form.

P.Clifford (1971) is rumored to be something fairly powerful in the Cambridge University Press.

D.Coleman (1978) reported recently that he is being sponsored by his regiment, the Queen's, through pre-R.C.B. and R.C.B. No, I don't know what R.C.B. is either..... it's the Regular Commissions Board.

M.Downs (1980) is working in London for the Prudential Insurance Company.

J.P.Perry (1976) is also in London, as Assistant Secretary to the Social Sciences Research Council.

M.J.Fuller (1958) has recently published a scholarly study of the Watermills of West Malling and Wateringbury - not to be missed by anyone interested in local history.

B.R.A.Jenner (1962) is now teaching at Christ Church College, Canterbury. He stood

for the Kent County Council as a Liberal.

C.J.Kitney (1979) passed through his Officer's course at Sandhurst with some distinction, and is now commanding a field squadron of the 21st Engineer Regt. near the East German border. He has also represented England in under-19 judo.

P.Langridge (1958) continues to be in the news as one of the country's leading tenors. Reviews of his performances or records invariably praise them, and he seems to have an astonishing versatility in the range of music he sings. In his own field, surely one of our most distinguished O's ?

L.Ludgate (1945) has recently announced his forthcoming second marriage: his wife-to-be is herself one of the family, as it were, being Mrs P.Cammies, our Assistant School Secretary.

F.G.Lusted (1946) is Headmaster of a Primary School in Uckfield.

M.A.H.MacCallum (1963) still thrives at Queen Mary College, and recently attended a Cosmologists' Conference in Russia. (And we didn't even know we had any Cosmologists amongst our OM's.

"News from Ambridge"... C.Milsted and S.Milsted are both rumpured to be helping their father in the running of his farm. Any farm run by three OM's ought to be good!

R.Peel (1977) works for Petpro, Larkfield, in their Quality Control department. We are informed that the raison d'etre of this firm is the manufacture of chocolate exteriors for ice-creams!

M.W.Pollock (1973) received a complimentary write-up from the critics of the "Daily Telegraph" after a performance by members of the Welsh National Opera, for which he works. He married Miss Cheryl Edwards, also a member of the company, and a soprano singer of quality.

T.J.Robinson (1965) has been awarded his Ph.D.. He is Head of Department in the Printing College near the Elephant and Castle; lecturing in Journalism there.

J.R.K.Sayer (1949), Headmaster of the 2 000-pupil Banbury School, continues to be widely quoted in the press on educational topics.

D.M.Sayer (1955), his brother, is an Insurance Broker, and has his office in Lenham.

G.Shaw (1964) works in the Oriental Languages department of the British Library, and is married to a Chinese girl.

A.A.Stanley (1948) wrote from Botswana recently asking about Mr Julier, of whose death some years ago he was not aware. Mr Stanley's postal address is PO Box 69, Gaborone, Botswana.

D.P.Stretton (1965) is Head of Economics and Business Studies at Alleyn's School, Dulwich.

A.Tomlin (1971) and his wife Shirley have two children, Lise, almost two, and Matthew, born about Easter this year. He is now employed by Corben's, the builders, having transferred to them from his previous post with Larking's.

N.Wood (1977) has been accepted by the Metropolitan Police.

Late News

Terry Fowler (1976) has just got married.

Simon Knight (1976) has become engaged; we are told that his fiancée is the daughter of an OM, John Harrison.

Robert Hey (1978) has commenced a four year course at the University of Newcastle. He is studying Naval Architecture and has met Sean Cafferty (1978) and Dean Tanic (1980) there.

H.F.Weeden (1944) has written to say that G.B.Phillips was known as "Beta" not "The Beater". The reason, says R.W.Griffin (1932), was that Mr Phillips was the Second Master and beta the second letter of the Greek alphabet. Mr Griffin refers to the letter from Bill Longley (1928) and says that he remembers a sixth form of about 12-16 pupils in his time. These few were, of course, divided between upper and lower sixth and between Arts and Sciences. He thinks that Lewis Godden was in the sixth at the same time as Bill Longley and that Richard Beeching may also have been there at that time.

Ronald Griffin retired from the Hertfordshire Social Services at the end of May, 1980 and points to the decline in parental and scholastic discipline and the increase in juvenile criminality as the major change he has noticed in his working life.

Captain L.C.(Binks) Darling O.B.E. has moved from Scotland to Jersey. He is very much involved with the Jersey Sea Cadet Corps as President. He also takes an interest in the Jersey Yacht Club.

Mike Gibson has left his job as Contracts Manager at British Anzani. He has founded his own company called Mycon Construction.

Norman Newcombe

One of the most loyal recruits to the Staff at the end of the War was Norman Newcombe who retires from the Deputy Headship this year. His war service reflected his aptitudes and character. He had proceeded from Wyggeston School, Leicester, to Jesus College, Cambridge. Properly he was then assigned to the Intelligence Corps, learnt Rumanian, and was posted to the Middle East - but was not the most martial of soldiers.

At M.G.S. he has demonstrated himself to be a man of surprising varied interests and talents - in addition to being an effective and cultured English teacher. He ran the School Scout Troop during its heyday. He reorganised the School Library, produced drama, played in the orchestra, edited "The Maidstonian", been photographer at large, and even umpired cricket. After W.A.Claydon appointed him Master of the Lower School he showed his pastoral concern for boys with many adolescent problems. More particularly he became closely involved first in the 11+ selection procedures - and subsequently in the reception of the Thames-side transferees. In his allocation of boys to forms and sets and in his assessment of their progress, he showed an unexpected command of statistics. However, his linguistic aptitudes were not neglected. He taught Spanish, was Chairman of the Education Sub-Committee of the Beauvais Twinning Committee and - in 1973- took a grace term to study education in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Germany; his book "Europe at School" has even been translated into Japanese. Norman's foreign holidays ranged from Spain to Istanbul, but have also taken him widely round Eastern Europe to pursue another of his passions - steam railways.

We shall all miss Norman Newcombe - his emotional explosions, his administrative meticulousness, his addiction to work, his traditional professionalism, his imaginative humanity. Whatever our memories of this living legend, we wish him a satisfying retirement as he searches for warmer climes.

P.A.J.Pettit.

Norman Newcombe writes

Dear OM's,

I'm retiring after 35 years in the School, a period which may not quite equal such legendary service as that of G.B.Phillips or C.P.Holyman, but nevertheless does span immense changes in the School, from its recovery after the war, through various rebuildings and extensions, through the period of its

establishment beyond doubt as a powerful academic force under Arthur Claydon, through the brief but crucial period when Bernard Moody was bringing it into line with new needs and new purposes, and through the era of 13+ reorganization under the present Headmaster. It has been an interesting and exciting job, one that I have enjoyed all the time (well, almost all...). In a way I am sorry to have missed enjoying just one year of the amenities the new block will offer to next year's pupils, but I think I am right to retire while I'm still fairly sane, and before people begin to notice too many of my senile mistakes! May I express my sincere good wishes to all OM's whom I have known, - a few thousand of them! - and say that when I finally decide where I am going to spend my retirement, I will ask the Editor of the Newsletter to publish my address in the hope that at least a few of you will be able to drop in for a chat.

Norman Newcombe.

OM Sport

Annual rugby match - result: The School 9pts OM's 10pts. A close run game with the OM's lucky to hold on.

Cricket match The annual cricket match will be held on Wednesday, 22 July. Those interested in playing should contact Mr McCormick at the School. There may be the possibility of two teams.

Dates for your diary

Thursday, 23 July at 7pm:

Speech Day: Guest of Honour is Field Marshal Lord Carver. OM's interested in attending should contact the School.

Friday, 11 September

Recent Leavers' Function. Look at the notice by the A-level results for details or telephone Trevor Hayes on Maidstone 38262.

Saturday, 12 September

Casual Country Evening. Details below.

Friday, 2 April 1982

Annual Supper. Details in January Newsletter.

The Newsletter

Mr Newcombe has collected news for the Newsletter since the retirement of Bob Rylands. Now that Mr Newcombe has decided to retire, all items for inclusion should be sent to Dr Webb at the School. (Dr A.W. Webb).

Casual Country Evening

The President of the Old Maidstonian Society invites OM's and their Ladies to their home (late Medieval and Queen Anne style) for a Casual Country Evening on Saturday, 12 September 1981. It is hoped for a pleasant evening so that we can cater for varying ages and tastes - from dancing to walking around the grounds and conversing with other OM's.

Tickets, priced £2.50 will include refreshments and drink - and will also give the directions to Mr and Mrs Winch's home near Biddenden. Tickets must be purchased by 7 September to facilitate catering arrangements. A form is provided for this.

Are you artistic ?

If you can paint, Dr Pettit would like to use your talents in redecorating the pavilion. Offers of help to him at the School (Maidstone 52101). Please do not give this appeal the brush off.....

OM presentation to Norman Newcombe

After 35 years at M.G.S., it is, I am sure, the wish of many OM's to record their thanks to Norman Newcombe by sending a donation towards a retirement gift from the Old Maidstonian Society. Hopefully, we can present the gift to Norman at next year's Annual Supper. Please send your donations to Roger Brown, Hon. Treasurer, 7 Greenfields, Willington Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8ET.

I enclose £.... as a donation towards a retirement gift for Norman Newcombe.

Signed..... Address.....

Year of leaving.....

Casual Country Evening - Saturday 12 September 1981.

To Roger Brown, 7 Greenfields, Willington Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 8ET.

Please send me tickets at £2.50 each for the Casual Country Evening.
I enclose £..... Cheque/Postal Order.

From: Name..... Year of leaving.....

Address..... Tickets may also be purchased from
Mayor's Men's Outfitters, Gabriels Hill,
Maidstone.
.....
.....

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 1981 and/or 1982.

Signed.....

Address.....

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Year of leaving.....

Banker's order required - YES/NO.