

OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - JULY 1985

HON. SECRETARY:

Bernard Mee
51 Spot Lane
Bearsted
MAIDSTONE
Kent ME15 8NX
Tel: (0622) 30716

PRESIDENT:

David Chater
4 Chalcot Square
LONDON
NW1 8YB

HON. TREASURER:

Roger Brown
7 Greenfields
Willington Street
MAIDSTONE
Kent ME15 8ET
Tel: (0622) 57508

During the past six months a number of Old Maidstonians have expressed a wish to make a one-off life membership subscription.

The present annual subscription of £1 has been in existence since 1976, and there are no plans to increase this amount in the foreseeable future. The monies you pay are used to cover the cost of producing and despatching the two newsletters each year, but very little other expenditure occurs. The Annual Supper is a self-financing event, although any unexpected loss does have to be absorbed.

After a period of time a healthy balance is built up, and the Society is able to make donations to various school activities. In 1981 we gave £4.00 towards the redecoration of the pavilion, and this year £150 was contributed to the school rugby tour of Portugal.

The committee is considering the request to reintroduce the option of an Old Maidstonian taking out life membership, and hopes to put a proposal to the next Annual General Meeting. In the meantime, your comments on the matter would be greatly welcomed. If you feel bold enough, perhaps you would like to indicate an appropriate rate - possibly on a reducing scale depending on age! Also, should the fee include a copy of the school magazine (which at present costs over £1 to produce)?

Editor.

ANNUAL SUPPER 1985

The Annual Supper, held in the School Hall on Friday 29th March, was a well-attended and enjoyable occasion. In welcoming the guests, the President, Alan Blake, extended special greetings and congratulations to the Society's two most senior honorary members, Tom Gutteridge and Sergeant Bennett, and invited the company to drink their good health. After this toast, a framed print of the Quadrangle was presented to each of them. Tom celebrated his ninetieth birthday last December, and 'Sarge' will be ninety next May.

The toast of The School was proposed by Dr. Alan Knell, now Consultant Physician to the South Warwickshire Hospital Group; it was followed by the traditional rendering of the School Song, which was sufficiently rousing not to need an instrumental accompaniment. The Headmaster and the Captain of the School, Mark Azzopardi, made brief replies.

This year's Alex Stewart Award was given to Roger Taylor, who has already had a very distinguished career on the rugby field.

After commenting briefly on the role of the Old Maidstonian Society and thanking the officers and committee for their work throughout the year and others for their additional help with the Supper, the President introduced his successor, David Chater, and handed over the chain of office to him. The formal proceedings having ended, the bar remained open for over an hour, and members stayed to chat and exchange news. Interest was aroused by two showings of a film of life at Maidstone Grammar School in 1938, which Jim Clinch had kindly arranged.

Attendance at the Annual Supper has been increasing recently, and this year 135 tickets were sold. The Record Book, signed at the table by 118, shows an interesting spread of leaving-dates, as follows. 1920s: 10; 1930s: 11; 1940s: 22; 1950s: 33; 1960s: 7; 1970s: 13; 1980s: 15; Staff: 7. If you come next year there is a reasonable chance that you will meet people you know; especially, of course, if you arrange to come with a group of friends.

THE PRESIDENT

David Chater was at Maidstone Grammar School from November 1965 to February 1972. Immediately after leaving he took a Short Service Limited Commission, and was attached to a Gurkha Regiment in Hong Kong, Brunei and Sarawak. He read Experimental Psychology at St. John's College, Oxford, from 1972 to 1975. After a short period with the Kent Messenger he joined I.T.N., becoming a script-writer and chief sub-editor. He now travels the world as a reporter, and is often to be seen and heard on 'News at Ten'.

NEWS OF OLD MAIDSTONIANS

STACEY ASH (1983) has left the army and is now training as an accountant in Maidstone.

DAVID BAKER (1957) was recently appointed as the Area Trading Standards Officer for North Kent. Based at Gillingham, he has day-to-day responsibility for the administration of all Trading Standards functions in an area stretching from Gillingham to Dartford. His interest in the theatre, which blossomed at M.G.S., has continued, and he is often to be seen either treading the boards or as a director of plays at the Hazlitt Theatre. In 1983 he won the 'Best Director' award in the Kent Full Length Play Festival for his direction of "Whose Life Is It Anyway?".

MICHAEL BELLAMY (1974) is now fully qualified as a G.P., and is living with his wife and family in Jersey.

GRAHAM BOX (1982) is captain of the Oxford University Football Club, and has been awarded a blue for soccer. His good work in midfield was praised in the press.

SAM BRIDGE (1935) has retired and moved to Brixham in Devon. However, he still acts as an Engineering Consultant and is Chairman of a British Standards Committee.

JULIAN BURTON (1980) is taking up a post with G.K.N. in Birmingham after graduating at Trent Polytechnic.

CLIFFORD CASEY (1982) has successfully graduated in Business Studies from Trent Polytechnic.

MICHAEL DARLEY (1965) is in the Kent Constabulary and is now stationed at Rainham Police Headquarters.

GARY DAVIES (1984) has successfully passed through Cranwell.

JOHN DODDS (1978) has come top of 130 students in his first year examinations at Columbia University, U.S.A., where he is doing Business Studies.

RICHARD DOWNEY (1966) has been in New Zealand since 1971 with a variety of jobs, mainly in sales (advertising, accounts, houses, other property) and has been sufficiently successful to 'give up working for a living'. He is currently touring England, but would welcome visits from O.Ms. next year when he is back home at P.O.Box 39301, Auckland West.

RICHARD FIELD (1968) runs his own solicitor's practice in West Malling. He is married and has one son.

ROBIN GARDNER (1951) has spent his time since leaving M.G.S. with the Civil Service, and is currently Principal Scientific Officer with the duties of Regional Energy Efficiency Officer for the North West. He lives in Steokport.

STEPHEN GILBERT (1983) is in his second year at Leeds Polytechnic studying for an honours degree (B.A.) in European Studies in Finance and Accounting. He says that this is basically finance and accounting with German. As part of the course, Stephen will be attending a college (Hochschule) in Bremen, West Germany, for a year, before returning to complete his degree. He hopes to do a further year's study abroad at Toulouse in the south of France.

JOHN GLEDHILL (1976) was recently promoted to the rank of Sergeant in the Kent Constabulary and is now stationed at Gravesend.

CHARLES GOODRICH (1966) has worked for British Caledonian Airways during the past twelve years. In 1983 he was posted to Dubai for three years as Marketing Manager, Gulf Region, for the company.

THOMAS GOODWIN (1974) is now working with computers for B.P. and living in Basingstoke.

PETER GOW (1973) completed the New York marathon for the second year running (for charity). He and his wife Jane are hoping to make time for more chamber music this year, though young Elinor keeps them busy.

RICHARD JENNINGS (1982) is currently in his third year at the University of Toronto, studying International Relations and Economics, with French and Spanish minors.

SIMON JONES (1970) runs his own insurance broking business in Deal.

MICHAEL JOSEPH (1974) is now working for I.C.F.C. in London, and living with his wife Judy at 5 High Ridge, Godalming, Surrey.

NICHOLAS LEA (1984) reports from Zimbabwe that he is teaching electronics and physics to senior boys and English and computing to juniors at Peterhouse School, Manondera. He has taken the opportunity to travel in Zambia and Malawi during the school holidays, and will be returning to Christ Church, Oxford, next year to study Mathematics and Computing.

KEVIN LOADER (1975) directed the end-of-year special programme for 'Saturday Review' in addition to his regular activities with 'Did You See?'. His wife Andrea has had a busy year as a singer, including a season with New Sadlers Wells Opera.

ANDREW MAYERS (1982) is currently at the University of Ulster and now holds a Northern Ireland Under-23 weight-lifting record with a weight of 1155 lbs.

PETER MAYERS (1978) who left school after doing his O-levels has now obtained a B.Sc. in Building at Brighton Polytechnic.

SIMON MILSTED (1975) is a qualified accountant with Price Waterhouse and has recently moved to Bristol.

PHILIP H. H. MOORE (1960) has recently been appointed an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. He also played the organ at Rochester Cathedral in May for the Service of Thanksgiving to mark the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

KEITH NEWMAN (1974) is an accountant working with Clark Whitehill. He lives at East Grinstead but still plays rugby for Maidstone.

MARTIN PASSMORE (1972), who teaches at the King's School, Bruton, Somerset, wrote and produced 'Dick Whittington' for the staff end-of-term pantomime. Command of the C.C.F. also keeps him busy, with training in Snowdonia and at Penhale, and a 75th Anniversary in June. He is also involved in drama, music and Radio Wiltshire.

ANDREW PERKS (1982) is this year's mid-Kent winner of the Wiltshire Shield for Leadership. He also obtained three distinctions in his City and Guilds examinations.

RON PRIOR (1970) is in partnership as a solicitor in Gravesend. We congratulate him and his wife on the birth of their child.

RICHARD RATCLIFFE (1964) is the new chairman of Maidstone Round Table. He follows in the footsteps of his father, ERIC RATCLIFFE (1930), a former chairman, who is now director of the Maidstone Chamber of Commerce.

JOHN RICKERBY (1974) is completing the final stage of his training as a G.P. and living with his wife at Northampton.

RENNY RYE (1966) received the B.A.F.T.A. Award for the best children's programme for the B.B.C. production of 'The Box of Delights'. He was presented with his award by the actress Jenny Agutter, an interesting M.G.S. coincidence of which, probably, neither party was aware - Miss Agutter's brother Stuart was at the school from 1971 to 1973.

ADAM SAMPSON (1978) has been working as an Assistant Probation Officer.

MARK SAMPSON (1980) has taken up a post as a catering officer with the D.H.S.S., and has been considering what size portions of potato are most economical!

NICHOLAS SHARPE (1980) obtained a First Class Honours Degree in Chemical Engineering from the Polytechnic of Wales. He is now working for Rio Tinto Zinc at Tring.

JOHN MULLARKEY (1979) is to start as a Modern Languages teacher at Wellingborough, The Weavers School, in September.

DUNCAN SNELL (1980) completed his degree in Surveying and Urban Land Administration in 1984. He has spent the last year travelling round the Far East.

ANDREW SWATLAND (1977) completed his Ph.D. thesis last year, his subject of research being the House of Lords in the reign of Charles II. He hopes to publish this thesis and other essays on Stuart parliamentary history. He has recently completed the course for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education at London University, and has decided to teach in the primary sector, an age-group of children which he finds stimulating and challenging. In September he takes up a post in a primary school in Croydon, where he and his wife Rosemary - a London University history graduate - are now living.

SIMON TAYLOR (1983) is active in college affairs at Oxford. He was in the Magdalen Players' productions and captained the college rugby team. He hopes to work at a children's camp in the U.S.A. this summer.

SIMON WAKEFIELD (1972) has been elected a County Councillor in West Glamorgan. He is a lecturer in Chemical Oceanography at Swansea University.

SIMON WATKINS (1974) is working as an engineer with B.P. and living with his wife at Horsham, Sussex.

DAVID WELLER (1983) joined Barclay's Bank when he left school, but in February he changed jobs and is now with the Kent County Constabulary at Dartford.

PETER WHITEHEAD (1970) was appointed to the post of British Vice-Consul in Montreal in April 1985.

KURT WITWER (1978) was ordained priest in the Church of England at Canterbury Cathedral on 30th June 1985. He is to serve in the parish of St. Mary, Kennington, Ashford, Kent.

OBITUARIES

It is with regret that we have to report the deaths of the following Old Maidstonians during the last eighteen months.

RICHARD BEECHING (1931), later Lord Beeching, who was President of the Society in 1969, died in April this year. He had a very distinguished career in industry and public affairs, and is probably best remembered as the former chairman of British Rail who cut nearly 100,000 jobs and closed hundreds of stations during the 1960s.

LIONEL CHARLES CROSS, T.D., C.Chem., F.R.S.C. (1936) died on 7th June 1984. He had retired from the Royal Society of Chemistry where he was Director of Publications. Much of his time was spent travelling between universities throughout the world.

GEORGE EDWARD GRIFFIN (1919) died on 6th June 1984 at the age of 81. He was well known in musical circles in Kent; while he was at school his main connection was with the O.T.C. band.

ANDREW MICHAEL TRUMPER (1978) was killed in a car accident at the end of June. After leaving school Andrew worked for a time with Lenham Storage, before moving with his wife to a new job with T.N.T. near Luton.

RONALD BENJAMIN BARHAM WATERS (1932) died in the early part of 1984. Many of his school colleagues will remember him as an excellent bowler, for which he gained his cricket colours in about 1931. He had been unrecognised in his early school years as a player, but enjoyed a considerable reputation as a village bowler in the Wrotham Hill area where he established a regular place at the age of twelve.

NEWS OF FORMER STAFF

Miss E.F.HERBERT (Headmaster's Secretary in the 1950s) has recently moved to 1 Norfolk Court, Cromer Road, Sheringham, Norfolk NR26 8RP. She welcomes news of the school and of Old Maidstonians.

Rev.G.I.F.THOMSON (Head of Divinity in the 1950s) has recently resigned as Chaplain of All Souls', Oxford.

SCHOOL NEWS

This term sees the retirement of Mr. E.T. Melly after twenty-five years at Maidstone Grammar School. 'Chips' came to Maidstone shortly after his return from teaching in Canada (where he was born). Old Maidstonians will remember him warmly - as a stimulating teacher of history, as a Fifth Form Master, and, more recently, as Year Master in the Fourth and Fifth Years. Older ones will remember him in his role as House Master; and, for everyone who knew him, 'Chips' will be synonymous with the Book Room, over which he presided, first in its old location on the top corridor, and later after its move to the present dungeon on the bottom corridor.

In addition, 'Chips' has always been fully involved with the sporting life of the school, for many years having charge of junior rugby and cricket teams. Indeed, until a serious accident, incurred in a School v Staff hockey match, unhappily put an end to his active career, he was himself a fine sportsman. 1st. XI members of the late 1960s will have particular cause to recall the undefeated stand of over 100 runs in which he shared, and which deprived the School of apparently certain victory in a hard-fought Staff match.

A particular pleasure to 'Chips' during his time at M.G.S. was to see his two sons passing successfully through the school. Paul (1976), after a distinguished career at Oxford, is now a journalist in London; Mark (1978) is farming in the West Country.

All who have known him, pupils and colleagues alike, will remember 'Chips' as the kindest and most courteous of men, and will join in wishing him and his wife Ruth a long and happy retirement.

* * * * *

Other staff who are leaving this term include Mr. P.S. Wicker, who has been appointed Head of the History Department at a school in Crawley, and Mrs. S.M. Henderson (probably better known as Miss Gerrard) who is taking up a post with British Gas.

The Annual Speech Day is on Wednesday 24th July at 7.00 p.m. Old Maidstonians are welcome, but should contact Dr. David Wilson at the school before the day. The speaker this year is Mr. W. McNeill, Chairman of the Kent County Council Education Committee. There will be refreshments afterwards.

* * * * *

The recent industrial action has not affected the school severely, but Old Maidstonians may like to know of some factors behind the dispute:

1. A teacher's starting salary (before this year's pay award) is now £5442.
2. There is, because of falling rolls, minimal opportunity for promotion, so that the maximum for the majority of teachers is £9201 per annum after 13 years' service.
3. Recent advertisements by M.G.S. for Mathematics, Physics and Computing teachers on this scale produced two, one and no applications respectively.
4. Money available for ALL books, stationery and apparatus, including overheads for the office, etc., is now less than 3p per pupil per lesson.
5. Maintenance is now reduced to the level at which, when the Staff Room ceiling fell down, it was replaced but all consequent redecoration had to be done by the teachers themselves.

SPORTS NEWS

RUGBY: 1st and 2nd XVs Tour to Portugal P 3 W 3 D 1

In the spring half-term twenty-eight boys accompanied by Messrs. Diamond, Andrew and Langston travelled to Lisbon, Coimbra and Oporto to investigate the rugby-playing standards of this most westerly of European countries. With a very successful season behind them the boys were confident that such an outpost of rugger could contain no menace - and indeed for the most part their assumptions were correct.

Whilst the Portuguese played with vigour and passion they could not match the technical expertise or withstand long periods of pressure. However in the game in Coimbra our 'A' XV came up against a most formidable unit and only snatched an equalising score in the closing minutes. In the excitement their prop punched ours, and the referee, making his

only positive gesture during the whole game, promptly sent the offending prop off. Now to explain the playing record I have to point out that in a drawn game if a team has a player sent off they are deemed, by local laws, to have lost. So although we drew 4-4 we did in fact win!

In all aspects the tour was a huge success and boys and staff conducted themselves in a way that brought credit to M.G.S. Our thanks are particularly due to the Old Maidstonians for their generous donation, which together with the fund-raising met over half of the tour costs of £8000. Some copies of the tour brochure are still available.

RUGBY: 1st XV v Old Maidstonians

Wednesday 3rd April 1985

Victory for the school came in the most appropriate way - a push-over try. This was the nineteenth (or was it the twentieth?) try of its kind this season, and showed where the power of the school team lay.

Because of R.F.U. advice it was unfortunate that the O.Ms. became in fact the Y.Ms. (Y for young!). The powers-that-be recommend that Old Boys' sides should not have players over twenty-one years of age. As a result the Y.Ms. looked to be far too fit and fast for even a very successful school side.

However, as the game progressed it became evident that the most important ingredient that was missing from the Y.Ms. was guile - something that can only be gained over a number of years. Thus with magnificent defence and strong counter-thrust the school denied those recent leavers the victory they had expected and eventually proved worthy winners.

CHESS:

Playing in the British team which came second to Russia in the Chess Olimpiad, John Nunn (who taught at M.G.S. in 1975-6) was awarded the gold medal for the highest score by any player in the competition. Family ill-health prevented his competing in the interzonal stage of the World Championship. He was considered to have a good chance of qualifying for the final stages.

OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY AWARDS

It is several years since the newsletter carried details of the awards that the committee administers. Hence many new members may not be aware of their existence, or of the conditions for their award, which we set out below.

The Old Maidstonian Award may be made to a present or former pupil to enable that person to continue his or her education at the school, or to take up a place or continue at a recognised institution of higher education. The tenure of the award is for one year and runs from the beginning of the academic year. The committee sets the value of the award, and may augment it by income from the investment of the G. B. Phillips Bequest.

The income from the G. B. Phillips Bequest is used to help to increase the amount available for distribution as Old Maidstonian Awards.

The T. P. Gutteridge Award is made out of the income from a fund, set up by Tom Gutteridge, to assist sixth form science students to continue or undertake activities designed to broaden their cultural horizons. Again, the committee sets the amount of the award, and bases each case on its own merits.

If any members of the Society feel that they or someone they know who attended the school qualifies for one of these awards then please write to the Secretary. The committee will be pleased to consider the applications.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO Mr. Roger Brown, 7 Greenfields, MAIDSTONE, Kent ME15 8ET.

I enclose my subscription of £..... to the Old Maidstonian Society for the years

(NOTE: The subscription is £1 per annum, with the year from January to December)

NAME YEAR OF LEAVING

ADDRESS