

OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2003

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*To find out a lot more about what is happening
at the School you can get the information from the
Maidstone Grammar School Web-Site at
www.mgs.kent.sch.uk*

Having made comment in the last newsletter about the media and political interest in the education system it is regrettable that the saga of funding and shortfalls is actually true and, indeed, hitting M.G.S. as hard as anybody. Yes, each school will claim its' plight is worse than everybody else but when the new school year starts in September it will be interesting to see what stories appear about teacher "reductions".

There are various reasons for the cash shortage most of which for large schools comes from the change in funding for post-16 students. For M.G.S. this has coincided with the small year-group entering the sixth form. Of course, the academic and financial years do not match so it is the term starting this autumn that will begin the period of belt-tightening. Standing by his word to the staff, the Headmaster vowed not to go down the route of redundancy and come the end of the summer period the 'natural' changes in personnel meant nobody would be given their brown envelope. On the evidence available the matter should only be short lived with large numbers in the Key Stage Four years.

At the end of the summer term the School says good-bye to twelve members of staff whilst only nine will be joining the common room. But the next year will be exciting with two major events hopefully beginning at Barton Road...*details inside.*

See inside for...

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 13TH FEBRUARY 2004

ANNUAL SUPPER - 2ND APRIL 2004

What are these events...?

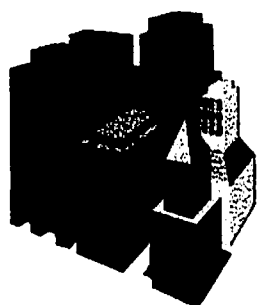


Language College Status

The opportunity for schools to apply for specialist status means that M.G.S. has another opportunity to become a focal point for the teaching of modern foreign languages.

If the School can raise £50,000 (and complete a small amount of paperwork) then the government will provide an additional £100,000 which can be used to improve/enhance the facilities. For each of the following four years there will also be an additional £120 per student on the roll; this is on top of the normal funding and can be used for any purpose.

The timetable is that application is made this autumn and a decision made in May 2004. If successful, status commences the next academic year.



New Teaching Block

Planning permission has been granted for a new block to be constructed on the land behind the Sports Hall, the area nearest to Loose Road. This will allow the mobile classrooms to be demolished and see the CCF relocated. All being well building should start in May 2004 with completion by Easter 2005.

From the President...

A year is a long time but many of us see each other only at the Annual Supper. Perhaps we should meet more frequently, especially if we want to attract new members to our ranks.

With these facts in mind the committee has decided to initiate some social gatherings in the convivial surroundings of a public house! Please join us and do ask other Old Maidstonians to do the same, including those who are not already members of the Society. If we can encourage more people to participate, especially those who have left school recently, we may be able to expand our activities.

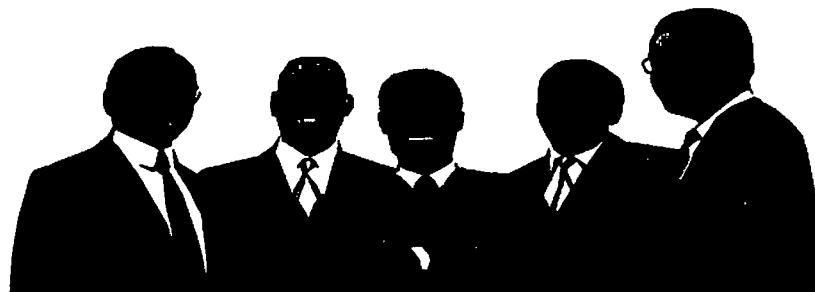
The Chequers Inn (Loose)

Wednesday 24th September 2003

8.00pm onwards

I am heartened by the knowledge that there are so many others who shared similar experiences in their formative years and whenever I meet Old Maidstonians, I am always surprised by how much we still have in common. I look forward to the opportunity of meeting old acquaintances on a more regular basis.

Dr Brian White (1969)



School uniform not required!

Can you help, please?

The last newsletter included an enquiry about the Memorial Board commemorating the names of the those who died in World War II.

To date nobody has come forward with any suggestions for when it was made and whether there was ever an obituary book written about the persons shown thereon. If anyone has any information then it would be most gratefully welcomed.

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Do you know where...?

Does anybody know the whereabouts of JOHN McK GARNER who left MGS in 1956? After completing his national service he went on to St. John's College, Cambridge.

Any information to the editor, please.

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Do you recall...?

The editor has received an enquiry from New Zealand that, hopefully, the more senior O.M.s may be able to help with in terms of an answer.

It is about a place of learning called St. Paul's Boys School which was located in Fisher Street in 1919 but had been on a previous site at the turn of the 19/20 century.

Any information or details about this school would be appreciated - even if it is only to say that it closed in a particular year (decade?) The enquirer states that his father attended the school between 1895-1906.

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GARMENTS

TIES

The Honorary Treasurer has a supply of both styles of Old Maidstonian tie and these can be ordered using the Return Sheet of this Newsletter.

The 'crested' version is a Jacquard Woven Tie with all-over random motifs of the crest in gold, red and blue on a navy background. It is of Polyester Rep and 54" x 3 1/8" in size. Cost, including postage, £8.50

The 'striped' version is also a Jacquard Woven Tie with a main colouring of navy blue containing angled stripes of gold, purple and white. It is of Polyester Rep: 54" x 3 1/8" in size. Cost, including postage, £6.50

O M SCARF

The Honorary Treasurer has a supply of scarves that cost just £9.50, including postage. Measuring 54" by 9", the Acrylic Scarf is made with two sets of stripes of silver, mauve, gold, navy, silver on a navy background.

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DOT COM

Looking for a former classmate or member of staff?

If the Society doesn't have the details then you could always try: www.friendsreunited.com

There are now nearly 1,800 former MGS students listed (by year of leaving) plus a series of pages for "memories" and links to the school information.

The OMS committee see the site as a companion to the Society - not a rival.

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NEWS OF OLD MAIDSTONIANS

ANDREW BECKETT (1984) says "I have been working for Cadence Design Systems in Bracknell, Berkshire, for the last eight years, as Senior Technical Leader for Europe, Custom IC Solutions. Cadence produces CAD software for use in the design of electronic circuits on Integrated Circuits (a.k.a. Silicon Chips), and is the leader in this field. I spend my time providing customer support and training in these tools as well as managing a team of engineers who help me out. This makes extensive use of my previous experience as a designer Analog integrated circuits. It also means that I have to travel quite a bit, so I've managed to see a fair bit of the world (mostly Europe, but also India, Israel and the United States) in the process!

I am married to Helen (daughter of OM *Tony Simms* - 1952) and have a son, Edward, aged four. The family lives near Wokingham.

NIGEL DODD (staff 1950's) taught English and Music at the School before moving on to be Head of English at Clifton College, Bristol. Is now retired, in good health, and still very active in the world of music in Bristol - composing, conducting, etc.

JOHN HALL (1978) obtained a BA from Sussex and then a D.Phil in History at Oxford. Was a history professor for a decade in Michigan (USA), "got bored and quit", and went to Stanford Law School where he graduated with a J.D. in 2000. Has worked for Legal Aid of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, and Public Interest Law Centre in Manila, and is currently in-house counsel for Southern California Edison in Los Angeles. Married with one daughter, Sophie, aged two.

"My strongest memory of MGS is being told by one teacher, when I came bottom in my class in the first year, 'Sonny, you will never amount to anything in life.' Also, being so terrible during my French O level oral that the examiner actually burst into laughter."

John would be delighted to hear from any of his contemporaries and can be contacted by e-mail at: john.a.hall@excite.com

BRUCE KAUFFUNG (1996) left MGS and joined the U.S. Navy where he spent the next four years. Changed his surname to *SEARS* a couple of years ago and is now pursuing a BA in Psychology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

DAVID LAMBERT (1960) was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours. The recognition comes for the work he has done in Mongolia since 1992 developing English studies as a volunteer with VSO. Initially he taught at the University of the Humanities for six years working on a project developing Literature studies and training two Mongolian counterparts to teach and develop the courses. Since then he has worked at a NGO institute that runs intensive English Language courses, and from there directing a national In-Service teacher training project with the Ministry of Education and the Soros Foundation.

ANDREW LARMAN (1970) writes:

"Ceased practice as a solicitor in 1995. Worked in a selection of law-related jobs and at the same time set up a small business selling old books. Decided to train to teach and enrolled as a (very mature) student at APU Chelmsford in 2001. Got a PGCE in English in 2002 but ageism is at work and so far I've only picked up a couple of short-term contracts, so consequently I have continued to sell books. Also currently employed running a castle for English Heritage while also marking GCSE papers for Edexcel - which all at least enables me to avoid premature senility as a result of an enforced 'early retirement'.

I see *Ron Prior (1970)* now and then - he practices as a solicitor in Gravesend in association with *Dick Field (1969)* and tells me that *Tony Jepson (1970)* is

also a solicitor, in Bromley. I see various articles by *Fred Pearce (1970)* - with whom I went 'on the road' in our gap year - in glossy magazines like 'Country Living'.

JONATHAN MANUEL (1982) went to Warwick University after MGS where he obtained a BA in Economics & Politics. He worked in a couple of accountancy practices and on the way qualified as a Chartered Accountant. Then joined Grand Metropolitan and has been with the company in its various incarnations (at the moment called Diageo) ever since. Currently working on the spirits side of the business and focused on Venezuela, spending about 50% of his time there. He has been married for seven years and has two young sons.

TERRY McHATTIE (1963) works as a Training Captain for British Airways. *Earlier this year found that the First Officer on one of his flights into Gatwick was an OM - Adam de Save (1993).*

PAUL YOUNGS (1984) writes: "In August 1984 I got my A-Level results that enabled me to go to Medical School (much to my form tutor's surprise). Almost eighteen years later, to the same week, I secured my Consultants job in Derriford Hospital. I am a Consultant Anaesthetist with a special interest in Obstetric Anaesthesia. Derriford Hospital is a big hospital, short of money, beds, nurses and car parking spaces. There are plenty of patients and we usually hit the national headlines at least once a year. Most recently it was 'Surgeon given canteen spoon to operate with' and 'Woman dies after operating table breaks during heart operation'.

Better news is the new medical school, based at Plymouth and Exeter Universities. The initial intake of students are in their first year; so far, no disasters or scandals.

I love my job and, with some reservations, would recommend medicine as a career. I must say that eighteen years ago I had no idea what I was letting myself in for!"

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Advance notice is given that the
Annual General Meeting
will be held on Friday 13th February 2004
in the Headmaster's Study
commencing at 7.30pm

In recent years the numbers attending this meeting have been low - indeed, just the existing committee members.

Subject to a change in the Society's rules the committee are looking at the idea of holding the meeting on the same evening as the Supper. This would hopefully attract a few more OMs whilst not trying to get people out for an evening where the event last not more than 25 minutes!

If you would like to express comments, favourable or otherwise, then please drop a line to the editor.

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OBITUARIES

It is with regret that the Society records the death of Old Maidstonians and our sympathy goes out to their families.

ROGER JAMES BURGESS (1959) died suddenly at the end of June (2002), two months before his 60th birthday, whilst on holiday in Portugal with members of his family. On leaving school, he worked for Reed International for a time and then TH Contractors Ltd before setting up his own business, Roger James (Civil Engineering) Ltd, whose maroon lorries with white lettering were well known throughout Kent, East Sussex and beyond. He sold the business and retired some ten years ago and took up farming for a while. However, he soon realised the difference between retirement and farming so opted for living in Spain for much of the time but still retained a home 'base' in Dorchester.

ROBIN H E CARDEN (1950) passed away peacefully at Maidstone Hospital in January 2002, aged 67.

PAUL COLTMAN (1930s) was the author of several children's books and passed away in April.

DUNCAN EYLES (staff 1999/2000) who taught Mathematics died after a battle with cancer in January 2003.

MICHAEL YORK MILLER (1954) who went on to the Army's Welbeck College and subsequently Sandhurst, died in July 2002.

KENNETH SCRASE (1937) passed away peacefully on 10th March, 2003, aged 82.

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The H.M.C.

The question was raised to when Maidstone Grammar School ceased to be a member of the Headmaster's Conference group of schools.

Several dates have been put forward and most seem to relate to Headmaster Mr W A Claydon. Some have suggested that membership ceased at the outset of his term at MGS whilst others say that it was on his retirement. So that's 1941 and 1966.

Still willing to consider other options!

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## ANNUAL SUPPER - 2004

The date to put in your diary  
for the next Annual Supper is  
**FRIDAY 2ND APRIL 2004**

*Full details will be included in  
the next newsletter*

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Back to "Pop"

Reference was made in the last Newsletter to the first school band. The correct name of the band was KnightHawks with Pete Rolf as lead guitar and vocals; Richard Ely the drummer; Tony Butler on bass guitar; the fourth member probably being Rolf's brother (not MGS).

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## You write...

L. J. Basden (1948) says:

"I read with interest in the Winter 2002 Newsletter the memories of Old Boys of the female members of staff during the early 1940's.

The Art Teacher, whose name Brian Whitehouse had forgotten, was my Aunt *Dorothy Cook (nee Walters)*. She was married to O.M. *Norman (Bill) Cook* who had been curator of Maidstone Museum before the War. She lived in Florence Road and had a lodger *Miss Rita Haman*, another female teacher at MGS. Norman was to become curator of The Guild Hall Museum and latterly Director of the Museum of London. He was President of the O.M.S. in 1953. On his retirement they moved to Wells, Somerset, where they were curators of the Cathedral Museum.

After '*Willy*' *Fawcett* joined the Navy I was taught by Aunt Dot and I thought I was quite good at Art (favouritism, no doubt); Miss Cook found that I was colour-blind - so that was the end of another career possibility!

*Mrs (Slosher) Sayward* went on to teach Maths at the Girls' Grammar School and taught my wife there. We both benefited from her excellent teaching and sound discipline.

I joined the School in 1941 in Form I. Forms I & II were accommodated on top of the Air Raid Shelters in Huts 1 and 2. We were taught by *Bunyard* and *Webb*. I have always been impressed by the 'two young ladies' especially Mrs Webb who was a keen sailor and could walk on pebbles, in her bare feet, without any pain. From where I gained this irrelevant fact I do not know!"

ANTONY J C HEARD (1938) writes:

"...I served in the RAFVR during World War II from 1940-46, four years of which was spent in the Middle East and the Western Desert. On Saturday 26th October, 2002, I took part in the Desert Veterans Reunion Parade in Perth (Scotland), this

being the 60th anniversary of the Battle of El Alamein."

John Naylor (1952) writes:

"Some more memories - Dickie Byrde (is that the correct spelling?) initiate us in to the game of rugby. Standing around in a group listening to him was not sufficient to retain attention when there was a game in progress further over. I suddenly received a hefty prod in the chest from the rubber ferrule of his stick accompanied by 'pay attention boy!'

In 1951 or '52 I was doing A-Level Biology under Mr Gibbard (?). He had a neighbour whose cat had to be put down and Mr Gibbard volunteered to handle the matter. The cat was brought in to the lab, anaesthetised with chloroform and then finally terminated with gas. A totally painless end. Then it was offered to us for dissection. It was such a large animal that two people could work on it together. *Peter Poole* started at one end and I at the other, but being an old tom it whiffed a bit!! However, I did learn one thing from this exercise: if someone tries to sell you the skinned and headless body of a rabbit and the kidneys are directly opposite each other it is more than likely a cat. The rabbit has one kidney higher up the body than the other.

In 1944 there was the tank trap between the huts and the playing field. On each side there was a ridge of clay that had been deposited when the 'trap' was constructed. Sometimes during the lunch hour we used to mould the clay into 'snowballs' and throw them across the trap at people on the other side. Did I really do that?

Due to the shortage of teachers there was at one time an Austrian scientist taking chemistry. He was demonstrating how to make oxygen or hydrogen when the apparatus blew up and I think that some of those in the front row were injured. I was in one of the classrooms along the corridor when we heard the bang. Not likely to happen these days with all the Health and Safety Regs."



*Please return this form to:*

**ROGER BROWN THE GATE HOUSE BARTON ROAD MAJDSTONE KENT ME15 7BX**

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS

I enclose the sum of £..... being my subscription for the year(s).....

I enclose the sum of £..... to cover the cost of Life Membership

(Rates: Up to 30 years of age = £60, 31 to 50 years = £40, Over 50 years = £20)

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## GARMENTS

I enclose £..... for the purchase of ..... crested tie(s) at £8.50 each

I enclose £..... for the purchase of ..... striped tie(s) at £6.50 each

I enclose £..... for the purchase of ..... scarf(ves) at £9.50 each

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## M.G.S. INTERACTIVE

I enclose £..... for the purchase of ..... copy(ies) of the MGS Interactive CD-Rom

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## YOUR DETAILS

Name:..... Year of Leaving:.....

Address:.....

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*(Cheques should be made payable to: Old Maidstonian Society)*