

Old Maidstonian Society

Newsletter Winter 2009



Secretary

Anthony Hayward

President

Tony Webb

Chairman

Richard Ratcliffe

Front Page News Update

The committee recognises that the Society needs to move forward into the electronic age, and also needs to attract younger members to become involved. In addressing that, there are a significant number of changes to report in this edition of the Newsletter following a committee meeting on 17th November.

These are:

- A new contact e-mail address;
- Subscription free membership;
- An association with Facebook;
- Improvements to the **Old Maidstonian Society** website;
- The future promulgation of the Newsletter by e-mail.

Would you please take note of the request to provide an e-mail address for the forwarding of future electronic versions of Newsletters, and important updates. Newsletters will not, in future, be sent by post unless you specifically request so.

Contacting the Society

A new e-mail address of oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk has now been established. This address should be used by all those who wish to contact the Society to advise of any news, or have any questions regarding membership. Messages to this e-mail address are immediately forwarded to the editor, Graham Belson, who is also membership secretary and treasurer. He can also be contacted by phone on 01622 730514 or 07770 738041. For those who still prefer to use snail-mail, the school's postal address should be used.

The existing e-mail address of treasurer@oldmaidstonians.org.uk still remains and may be used for specific messages to the treasurer. Each member of the committee may be contacted individually using their e-mail addresses which are recorded later in the Newsletter.

Subscription Free Membership

The committee has taken the decision to make membership of The Old Maidstonian Society free. There are several reasons, one obviously being to attract more members, another the anticipated reduced postage costs if members agree to receive the Newsletter by e-mail.

At the end of each school year the leavers will be invited to join the Society free of charge. Any other Old Maidstonians who are not currently members but wish to join the Society may do so free of charge.

There will still be some expenditure, but we anticipate that this can be recovered by making a small profit from Society functions, such as the Annual Supper, and by voluntary contributions.

There will be no further need to pay annual subscriptions. Members who pay by annual standing order should, if they so wish, cancel them. However, voluntary contributions to the Society will be most welcome and will enable us to improve the Society as a whole. Should any member wish to make a voluntary contribution to the Society then of course we would be unlikely to return it! The more income we have the more we can put into the Society, and if, as we hope, the number of functions increases, then such additional contributions will be of much assistance in making those functions more agreeable.

The committee acknowledge there are members who have paid for life membership. The Society would of course be willing to refund a part of any life membership fee that has been paid, but would obviously be pleased if current members could see their way to waiving any refund. The society incurs

some costs and will in the future have to rely on the profits from functions to fund the various activities, including the distribution of the Newsletter to those who would prefer a hard copy.

Membership Register

The Society will continue to maintain a Membership Register of Old Maidstonians, even though the Newsletter and other Society information will, during 2010, become freely available on the website.

Essentially the membership register is simply a spreadsheet with the contact details of each member - address, e-mail, phone numbers - and date of leaving. This spreadsheet is maintained by the membership secretary and only another member of the committee, should they request it, has access to it.

Members should keep the Society informed, preferably by e-mail to oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk, of any changes to their contact details.

Any member who objects to their name and contact details being on such a database should contact the membership secretary.

Facebook

There are several websites devoted to Old Maidstonians. Some are apparently members of a particular year, others have more members. But one overshadows all the rest and has over 1,000 members - the site operated by James Kinsman (2005) and his colleagues. The Society is very pleased that following a meeting with James, broad agreement was reached on a co-operation between us.

We sincerely hope that younger Old Maidstonians will join the Society and that the range of events, such as reunions, will develop.

James attended the committee meeting and was co-opted to it. He has very kindly agreed to assist the webmaster, Malcolm MacCallum, in developing the Old Maidstonian website.

The Old Maidstonian Website

There was a very detailed discussion at the committee meeting regarding the website and the committee members all agreed that there was significant room for improvement in the provision of more detailed, 'live' information which is updated regularly.

We anticipate that in 2010 all material currently promulgated in the Newsletter bi-annually will be placed on the website. In addition, news from, and of, members will be placed on the website shortly after it is received by the Society.

We hope to significantly expand the content, but more of that in 2010 when we have commenced the re-development. Updates on important new website content will be provided by e-mail to those who have submitted their e-mail address.

The Old Maidstonian Society Newsletter

We anticipate that by the time the next Newsletter is due to be published, the website will be well into its redevelopment and that all the Society news will be available on it. **Therefore please note that this will be the last issue of the Newsletter to be posted to each member.** The costs of printing and posting the Newsletter, not to mention the time involved, is quite significant and if all the news and information is on the website there is much to be said for our making a contribution to saving the planet.

However, we do appreciate that there are those members who have not yet mastered the intricacies of a computer and that there will undoubtedly be members who would prefer to receive a copy by post. **If you wish to continue to receive the Newsletter by post then it will be necessary to contact the editor either by e-mail at oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk, by phone at 01622 730514 / 07770 738041, or by writing to the school at Barton Road.** We will be pleased to continue to send a hard copy to those who have requested it.

Once the redeveloped website is fully up and running, the Society will be pleased to continue to forward a digest to those who have requested it and the website content will be formatted into a hard copy and posted bi-annually.

If you wish to continue to receive a posted copy of the Newsletter in a larger font size, then we would be very pleased to accommodate you. Simply contact the editor.

Annual Supper and Annual General Meeting

The Annual Supper will be held in school hall on **Friday March 26th 2010** at **7.30** pm. In order to reduce costs the committee has decided to change the format and this year it will be an experimental self-service buffet. Tables and seating in the Main Hall will be provided as has been the practice in the past.

The menu for the supper can be found at the end of the Newsletter. The main course and desert will be self-service. The cost of the supper will be £19 per person.

The **Old Maidstonians Annual General Meeting** will take place immediately before the supper at 6.15 pm and all members are very welcome to attend.

All **Old Maidstonians** are welcome. Please use the form on the back page, or e-mail the society at oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk to confirm your attendance. The Society requests that payment be received by the end of February in order that numbers can be finalised with the caterer's.

This will be **Nick Argent's** first Supper as Headmaster of the school.

Leaver's Reunion

The Leavers Reunion, for those who left the school in July 2009, will take place on Wednesday 16th December at 7.00 pm in the refectory at the school. For further details please contact either the school or oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk.

We Would Like to Hear From You

The Society is always pleased to hear from its members. Please update the Society as to your post-school history, and we will publish it on the website.

If you have suggestions for future events or activities, if you are looking for information or to be put in touch with a fellow Old Boy (or Girl), or if you would like to share with us some anecdotes about your time at the school then please do contact us. E-mail is a particularly convenient method of reaching us and as such is preferred.

You can contact the Society by e-mail at oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk, or by writing to:

The Old Maidstonian Society
Maidstone Grammar School
Barton Road
Maidstone
Kent
ME15 7BT

Tel: 01622 752101

The MGS and OM Websites

The **Old Maidstonians Society** website is www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk. The **Maidstone Grammar School** website is www.mgs.kent.sch.uk. Both sites contain a wealth of information about the school.

The Old Maidstonians Society Newsletter

Nick Argent - Maidstone Grammar School Headmaster

The Old Maidstonian Society is very pleased to welcome Dr. Nick Argent as the new headmaster. We hope he has a long and successful tenure at MGS. Nick comes to the school from Elizabeth College, Guernsey where he was also headmaster. He has kindly put pen to paper for the Newsletter:

“Old Maidstonians - as a Head only recently in post I am conscious of writing about a school that you all know rather better than I. However, I both value your interest in the school and understand the place that MGS holds in the local community.

As a former grammar school pupil (sadly it is now a comprehensive) I am keen to ensure that comparable opportunities are offered to the present generation. I attended a “boys only” school but have managed single-sex and coeducational schools. I strongly believe that educating boys separately until the end of GCSE allows us to tailor our teaching to their needs. Equally I value the educational and social enrichment afforded by admitting Sixth Form girls.

Our academic ambitions must continue to be the fulfilment of potential and the pursuit of standards. We must have high expectations of our pupils, offer equality of opportunity and promote pride in achievement. Our system of pastoral care must provide an environment where the individual is valued and where we produce young people who are a credit to us.

A cornerstone of my educational philosophy is that our pupils must aspire to do more than simply gain paper qualifications. This means that the pupils’ pursuit of academic success needs to be complemented by caring pastoral care and an encouragement to be involved in at least some of the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer. In encouraging pupils to grasp opportunities outside the classroom the breadth of school’s extra-curricular provision and the enthusiasm and commitment shown by pupils and staff is impressive. Every member of this community contributes to the school; moreover, the opportunities offered, not only in the academic sphere but also in areas such as sport, drama and music further define our ethos.

Any Head must acknowledge the need to address changes in academic provision to ensure that every pupil is equipped to meet the challenges of their examinations. It is also clear that MGS must meet the wider social challenges of the 21st Century. I could write at length about the initiatives schools face but I will simply reassure you that this school is well equipped to handle the challenge of the future.

Despite this also I believe we must acknowledge those traditional values which help to define MGS. It is therefore my aspiration that we continue to offer a strong combination of academic standards, quality pastoral care and extra-curricular opportunity. To realise these goals we must review our achievements, understand our objectives and plan for tomorrow. Indeed, the challenge and excitement of my new role lies in the unseen nature of the future and in our ability to direct and shape it.

In closing it would be remiss of me if I were not to pay tribute to Neil Turrell’s achievements over 17 years of service. I would also like to set down here my thanks to him for his legacy to me in the form of the current health and success of the school.”

Neil Turrell

The Society wishes Neil Turrell all the very best in his new position as head of Tanglin Trust Senior School Neil at 95 Portsdown Road, Singapore. He would be very happy to see any OM who happens to be in Singapore. The Tanglin Trust school website will give them all the necessary information. We wish both him and Trish, and their family, all the very best for the future.

After working as a radar engineer in Europe and North Africa, much of it during the Cold War, Neil opted for a teaching career. His first job was teaching maths at an inner city school in Newcastle. He progressed to Head of Maths at Mascall’s School in Paddock Wood, and then a headship in Staffordshire. Neil has seen some 3,000 pupils through MGS.

There were several events held for the departure of Neil. One was a lunch hosted by Richard Ratcliffe on behalf of the Old Maidstonian Society committee and past presidents, at the school. There were also two opportunities for old boys to meet with Neil before his departure and a surprising number took the opportunity to come and say farewell.

Neil wrote the following article, entirely interesting and occasionally thought-provoking, for the Newsletter:

“A few thoughts on MGS:

Now that the dust has settled following my departure from MGS, I felt that OMs, in particular, would appreciate a few words from the person who was charged with leading the school from 1992 to 2009.

The first thought that comes to mind is that of length of service. Looking at the list of Headmasters from 1549, either side of the stage in the Big Hall, one is struck by the fact that very few served short periods of office. I interpret this to signify that being the Headmaster at MGS was regarded by most incumbents as a sufficient end in itself and not simply as a stepping stone to elsewhere. Although I have moved on to a completely different position, the challenge and experience of MGS, intellectually and emotionally, was the high point of my professional life and I shall be forever grateful to Richard Ratcliffe and his fellow governors who asked me, a person with no experience of selective education, to take the school forward.

I should also like to record the debt of knowledge and feeling about the school I owe my immediate predecessor, Philip Pettit, who is sadly no longer with us. In my first years at MGS, our families enjoyed enough time together to allow me to gain, from Philip, a fuller understanding of the history of the school, a deep and abiding affection for the 'boys' and a shrewd analysis of the political context in which we operated.

While I'm recording debts, of which I have many, I ought to mention the splendid support I received over the years from my SMT and PA. I tried, not always successfully, to operate on the basis of *primus inter pares* with my senior colleagues. Often taken for granted, always the first on call in an emergency, frequently treated to the rough edge of one's tongue when matters are not proceeding as planned; they were a great source of strength to me, especially in troubled times. The same, too, may be said of many individual members of staff whose council and support was invaluable to me and the school.

One of the highlights of my time at the Grammar School has to be the 450th anniversary in 1999. This presented us with a splendid opportunity to celebrate our longevity and look forward with purpose and ambition. This we did with gusto, producing a range of memorabilia for OMs and current pupils. Personally, the high point for me was addressing the whole school, gathered in the car park below, from the Gate House steps. What sticks in the mind, too, was the inventive decoration some boys applied to their anniversary ties! I suppose this fell under the heading of personalisation, part of the new agenda for schools which has always been a feature of successful teaching but not, of course, trumpeted in the prescribed pc form. We also managed to find from our slim resources sufficient funds to build a new entrance and reception office to the school which is probably one of the more attractive additions we have been able to make to the buildings.

Buildings, ah buildings; it is nothing short of remarkable that, against a funding regime which is not favourable to the grammar schools, we have been able to replace most of the rotten (and rotting) accommodation with decent facilities for our pupils. We've had to do this in a piecemeal fashion, as funds became available, rather than stick to the ambitious and inspiring plan we developed during the middle 90s. It came as a stark reality check to me that Grammar Schools enjoyed a unique status at the ministerial level, even under a Conservative government. That status you ask? Non-existence I'm afraid. We are simply a nuisance in policy terms and regarded as irrelevant in the grand scheme of things. The next government, probably Conservative unless Mr. Cameron and his team really mess things up at the hustings, is unlikely to be any more sympathetic to our needs than previous governments have been. It is utterly frustrating to work in a country which pays lip service to the needs of our most able pupils. They are significantly under-funded compared to other pupils and I fear that we are already paying a price for this neglect. Why, one wonders, do we have this fixation with deficit models, as opposed to an inspiring message to reach greater heights? When has simply throwing large amounts of money at a problem brought a solution to that problem? One could go on!

On to happier thoughts; the Big Hall probably looms large in most OM's memories of their old school, and deservedly so. It is the most impressive school hall I have ever seen and is a constant reminder of our ethos and traditions. Lying close to the centre of the school, especially with the new buildings to the West, it is also at the centre of that which constitutes MGS. Academic excellence, service to one's country, a formidable list of former and serving Headmasters; all serve, together with the gravitas of the place, to remind us of our predecessors and urge us to emulate their achievements. Routine assemblies seem all the grander for their beckoning by a vigorous ringing of the ship's bell of HMS Maidstone. I set great store by the communal singing at all manner of assemblies and it is one of the things I miss most, especially when accompanied by the organ; of which, at one time, we had two! Great fun, too, was had in the Big Hall, especially on Charity Days, and not least at the expense of staff who were brave enough to appear on stage 'dressed' for the occasion. Leavers' assemblies, plays and musicals, open evenings, results days, special events...all come flooding back. Were I allowed to pick a few events from the hundreds which took place in the Big Hall during my time at MGS, I would choose one of the many Y13 Leaving Assemblies, which were always highly charged affairs, the magnificent mounting of *Les Misérables*, the Drumhead Service celebrating the Centenary of the CCF at MGS, the Y11 Leaving Assembly when I allowed myself to appear as Darth Vader (there were two Lukes in the audience would you believe), and, most gratifyingly, my daughter's wedding reception at what was her old school.

Mentioning my daughter brings to mind one of the most significant decisions I made as Headmaster, which was to allow the recruitment of girls into the 6th Form. There was much debate about this in the early to middle 90's and I know that some of my pupils had strong concerns about the nature of the school and how it might change with a greater female presence. Personally, I feel the change has wrought much good in the school; not only in those subjects which naturally benefit from a female voice, or in those areas where women are most likely to make their presence felt, in caring activities such as mentoring for example, but also in leadership roles within the prefect teams and CCF. Some have deservedly become School Vice-Captain and served their school with distinction. The transition to a mixed 6th Form was not without the occasional local difficulty, some of which one now looks back on with a mixture of incredulity and humour about the way we act in unfamiliar circumstances.

The main purpose of the school, as it was in 1549 when it was established to teach the Latin grammar, is to allow our youngsters to move on successfully to the next stage in their lives. For me, it comes as something of a shock to realise that early pupils are now heading towards their 40s! Of more comfort is the fact that around 3000 or so will have gone on to University or College, often of their first choice, and that many will be making a significant contribution to the communities in which they now live. That is a source of strength and encouragement for all of us who have helped them on their way. One hopes the lessons of tolerance, respect, self-discipline and leadership will have borne fruit in their lives.

During my time in education, outcome measures have become the primary means by which individuals and schools have been judged. Time will tell whether this emphasis has had real benefits for pupils, as opposed to the process of teaching and depth of knowledge which have undoubtedly been compromised in the headlong rush to demonstrate that certain hurdles, some quite superficial, have been cleared. However, one is obliged to ensure that one's school passes muster in the currency of the day and we set out, from the middle 90's, to establish an approach to teaching and learning, coupled with assessment and target setting, to enhance the reputation of the school. Every inspection we had was an improvement on the previous one and culminated in the award of outstanding at the last one completed before my departure. Simultaneously, pupils' outcomes improved. The last few years have seen "best-ers", not just in the results themselves, but in the progress pupils make during their time at MGS.

However, the ink dries quickly on such indicators of achievement, and it is to the abiding personal attributes we must look for evidence of purpose and strength. I attempted to maintain, even strengthen, the ethos and traditions of the school. I thought it was through this that we could encourage the personal development necessary to prepare our pupils for future careers, where the demands and responsibilities of leadership would surely fall on many of them.

The extra-curricular activities of the school are generally regarded as healthy, and they certainly are compared to most schools. The reality is rather more troubling. The bungled handling of a written national contract for staff in the 1980s, combined with rapidly increasing demands on their time, has resulted in far fewer teachers participating in events outside the classroom. There is a relatively simple solution here. Fund our pupils at the same level as others and we could provide more sport and other extra-curricular activities for them. For example, debating societies, political issue groups, master lectures on the great ideas which have shaped our society, and many other activities, physical and otherwise, which could stimulate and challenge our pupils. It's not rocket science!

The achievements of the CCF, in particular, have been a source of great satisfaction to me. One only has to look at the record of the RAF section (best in the country on many occasions) and the rapid improvement of the other sections to see from whence the satisfaction arises. Given that this performance is mainly against the might of the public schools with their richer endowments, that achievement is all the greater. Ironically, given the success of the CCF, it was a CCF incident of bullying, reported nationally, which must rank as one of the lowest points for my time at MGS. Such was the strength of feeling at the time that I felt the future of the CCF at MGS was in question. However, we prevailed, and out of that adversity my emotional attachment to the school deepened considerably owing to the support of the school community, in particular the senior prefects who were a tower of strength at a troubled time.

I look back on my relations with staff, pupils, parents and governors with a warm regard for what most brought, or tried to bring, to the school. However, societal changes now place greater pressures on schools than ever. Teaching, even in a Grammar School, is not a sinecure and has become significantly more demanding over the years. The balance between crowd control and depth of knowledge has shifted significantly towards the control end of the spectrum. There are a number of factors here which would only be of incidental interest to my audience, so I will mention the one which has had a bearing on their lives and has, in my opinion, downgraded teaching to the role of facilitator and left our pupils with little appetite for academic work. I believe our pupils to be the most tested in comparison with other modern societies. It cannot be an accident that the rising number of tests, combined with a rise in the number of incomplete and simplistic measures of accountability, coincides with rising levels of dissatisfaction with and disengagement from the educational process. We ought to be playing to the strengths of our teachers and pupils, not forcing them into a superficial straitjacket which brings satisfaction to neither party. Again, this is a policy driven by a deficit model based on the challenges of inner city life and a lack of trust in local communities to find solutions to the problems which beset them.

It seems to me that the nub of the matter is, nationally, that we keep on thinking about things to do for or to our young people, rather than an expectation that we could demand something from them. I think we show a lack of leadership and a lack of understanding the psychology of challenge when we persistently ignore the needs of young people to feel that they are doing something worthwhile. It seems that for many in our society we ask little of our children except that somehow they are happy and they manage to behave as if they get some pleasure from their lives.

At MGS, I believe that service, duty and achievement are firmly established at the heart of our ethos. Many of our pupils selflessly participate in supporting their school. Head boy, School Vice-Captain, senior prefects, prefects, mentors and coaches, pupils who support others pupils within the school, pupils who support children in the primary schools. We have a thriving Interact group who use the Rotary motto "Service above Self" and that typifies much of what goes on at MGS.

It is inevitable, finally, that one's thoughts settle on individuals to see where the compass is pointing. Sadly, but with immense pride and humility, I think of our precious Bens; Ben de Garis and Ben Babington-Browne. Short though their lives were, they were an inspiration to all of us. Their cheerfulness and courage in the face of greater adversity than most of us will have to face was an example that will live with me for the rest of my life. That we at MGS might have touched their lives in a way which helped them to cope with the challenges they faced should fill us with profound gratitude for what we have and a determination to build on that for future generations of Maidstonians. Progress is not inevitable in this troubled vale, but in our own small plot at MGS, let us, through what we do now, enable Maidstonians of the future to intone with conviction:

"Haec Olim Meminisse Juvabit"

The General Committee of the OM Society: 2009 - 2010:

Committee meetings are normally also attended by the Headmaster.

Dr. Tony Webb - President

Tony graciously accepted the presidency of the Society in March 2009 from Professor Malcolm McCallum. Tony has been an honorary life member of the society since 2002. He joined the staff of MGS in 1971 as teacher of history, one of the last appointments of the outgoing headmaster Mr B J Moody. Head of History 1975, Deputy Head 1981, serving first Dr Pettitt and then from 1992 Neil Turrell. Ended up teaching almost everything except history and holding many titles, among them IB Co-ordinator and Head of Special Needs, before retiring in August 2000.

Tony has this to say on the Old Maidstonian website:

“Olim Meminisse Juvabit. As I pass through my 65th year and draw my old-age pension from HMG (a sign I suppose that one has reached years of discretion and should therefore keep quiet), I am indeed pleased to remember an acquaintance with the school going back over almost forty years - more than most, I dare aver, but less than some, I am still happy to say.

My years of association with the school are all adult years. I had not heard of Maidstone Grammar School until I was 25. Raising a young family and being moderately ambitious, I did not think I would stay long. I was wrong, for I rapidly discovered that there was no obstacle to a teacher getting into the classroom and teaching students who wanted to learn and who could laugh with me and sometimes at me, in the nicest way, as I bounced and burred round the room. This was heaven indeed.

And then for twenty years as deputy head I had the pleasure of serving not one but two great headmasters - very different in their approach to the job, but demonstrating by that very fact the richness in diversity of the ways to meld a successful school. The late Philip Pettitt gave me confidence by first of all telling me that he wanted me to be his deputy and then by tolerating my idiosyncratic behaviour and dress. “Now what's my faithful hangman been up to now?” Philip loved his students as Neil Turrell did, and there is no need to adjudicate who loved them more. From Neil I learned many more skills as the senior management team expanded from the four of the 1980s. He taught me confidence in facing change and how to come to terms with computers instead of wrecking them.

And so to the point. If a school gives its students (and staff) confidence to be themselves and to tolerate and listen to others, it is not doing much wrong, and the learning will follow. A school can be no better than the best of the society that produces it, and this school was indeed the best of society. May it continue to be so.”

If you would like to contact Tony, you can e-mail him at homobonus@btinternet.com.

Richard Ratcliffe - Chairman

Richard left MGS in 1964 and took a degree in Food Technology at the University of Reading. He joined Unilever upon graduation and held management positions with that company and later with Cadbury Schweppes and Tate & Lyle. He has been a freelance food technologist, through his own practice RR Services, since leaving a senior technical post in Tate & Lyle at the end of 1992.

He advises companies around the world on quality systems and business development issues. In 1994 Richard took on the part time role of Communications Consultant to the Food Additives and Ingredients Association (FAIA) and in 1996 became its Executive Director.

Richard is also involved with technical controls at food factory level and carries out audits of operations for compliance with technical control protocols. He has been involved with technical guidance to food manufacturing operations in Kent. Richard has been involved throughout his career with the Institute of Food Science and Technology of which he is a Past President and Honorary Fellow.

He was Chairman of Governors at MGS between 1989 and 1998 and has been involved with the OMS committee since he returned to live in Maidstone in 1981. He is an active Rotarian and a Past President of Maidstone Riverside Rotary Club.

If you would like to contact Richard, you can e-mail him at rbr1@btconnect.com.

Anthony Hayward - Secretary

Anthony, who attended **MGS** from 1951 to 1958, gave us this potted history:

1958-59: Medway College of Technology

1959-63: University of St Andrews[Dundee Campus]

1963-66: Junior Secondary teacher, Dundee.

1966-78: Sales Representative for various companies in the Pharmaceutical Industry.

1978-2005: Self-employed sales agent for Stationery and Printing. Active in Tonbridge, West Kent and Kent Chambers of Commerce.

2005: Retired, involved in public affairs with Baptist Church, NHS trusts and U3A.

If you would like to contact Anthony, you can e-mail him at anthony.hayward@hotmail.co.uk.

Professor Malcolm McCallum - Webmaster

Malcolm had this to say:

"My father, who taught Maths at MGS until 1980, and I joined the school in 1957. In 1963 I went as a Mathematics Scholar to King's College, Cambridge, ending in 1976 as a Fellow and Tutor there, and then moved to Queen Mary, University of London, where I was Professor of Applied Mathematics until 2009, and for a while Vice-Principal.

For information on my research in relativity and computer algebra see my web page at www.maths.qmul.ac.uk/mm. From 2009 - 2012 I will be the Director of the Heilbronn Institute in Bristol.

With Andy Hosking and Gardner Crawley I organised reunions in 2005, and was OM President in 2008-9. I now act as OM webmaster."

If you would like to contact Malcolm, you can also e-mail him at m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk.

Dr. Brian White

Brian had this to say:

"I left MGS in 1969, went to Portsmouth Polytechnic and took a B.Sc. in Zoology. After returning to Kent, I started teaching in 1972, and have done so ever since. However, I had the opportunity to pursue my research interests in the scientific aspects of singing, and took an M.Phil. and then a Ph.D. At the same time, I developed my knowledge of both education and singing techniques, and then took an M.A. and a music diploma. This strange combination of interests has allowed me to sing at a professional level, and supervise Ph.D. students in my spare time, so I keep pretty busy.

Although I drifted academically at school, for a variety of reasons which I was able to analyse only much later, I recognise the fact that MGS was probably the single greatest influence on my life. The school gave me the ability to delve into many subjects; in particular, I became a passionate environmentalist through my membership of the Natural History Society. My liking for such 'clubs' (a very male attribute, my wife says) has led me to join four scientific learned societies, through which I try to keep at least a superficial grasp of what is going on across the vast range of biology.

I am married to Dianne, who is also a teacher, and our three grown-up children have all pursued academic studies, albeit in very different fields. They attended MGS or MGGs, and I am intensely proud of them. When I look back over my life, I realise that my opportunities all stemmed from the amazing education that I, as a working-class boy, received at MGS. I just wish that this had been fully evident to me when I was at school, but hindsight is a wonderful thing."

If you would like to contact Brian, you can e-mail him at drbdwhite@yahoo.co.uk.

John Caley

John wrote the following (on an Imperial typewriter, as he has not yet gone electronic!)

"After two years National Service, three years at Cambridge and one year at Durham, I joined the staff at **MGS** in 1955 to teach History and English. The latter soon took over entirely.

During my career I became involved in numerous activities - Scouts with Troop A 1955 to 1961, Stage Manager of junior and senior plays 1955 to 1966, CCF from 1959 and in command from 1965, Careers Master for 13 years, followed by organising 6th Form General Studies and then being in overall charge of public examinations. I was also Common Room Secretary for several years.

I retired from teaching in 1998 but remained with the CCF until 1995. Since then I have done various voluntary jobs for the CCF and the school in general.

I married in 1961 and have three daughters, one of whom is a teacher."

If you would like to contact John, you will have to phone - 01622 751801

David Leeke

David had this to say:

"I was born and grew up in Shropshire and studied at the Royal College of Music where I principally studied the organ. I have for most of my life been involved in church music, and that is what I do now for most of my gainful employment. I did, however teach for twenty years in Kent, both in maintained and independent schools. The last ten and a bit were spent as Director of Music at MGS. I was

appointed in the spring of 1990 by the then Headmaster, Dr Philip Pettit. This post was to be my last teaching post, and was the crowning glory of my achievements in the schoolmastering profession, and as such, MGS has a very important place in my affections.

I was privileged to continue a fine musical tradition nurtured by several wonderful musicians who had held the post before me. Many of my former students have become firm friends and some are now active in the musical profession. During my time I believe we accomplished much, and particularly memorable were the many musical activities we held to commemorate the schools 450th anniversary in 1999. All my predecessors came back on one occasion during that year and took part in a concert with the then current boys (and girls), and this was a very special event indeed.

Since leaving MGS I have pursued a varied career, principally back in church music and also as an examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music which affords me travel all over the world. When not in some far-flung corner of the globe, I live in Shrewsbury with my partner, Kathryn Burningham - also a musician, and am Organist and Director of Music at St Chad's, Shrewsbury - a pretty much full-time job as this is the main church of the county (in the absence of a cathedral) and music is highly valued and well funded there.

If you would like to contact David, you can e-mail him at david@leeke.org.uk.

John Clayton

John was an MGS pupil from 1961 to 1968 and then attended Holborn College of Law and the University of London. He became a Chief Officer in Local Government, then worked for eight years in the European Parliament. He has been Chief Executive of Hi Kent, the county of Kent's registered charity for deaf and hard of hearing people, since 2004. The charity won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2007.

His twin sons James and Nicholas both attended MGS, and both studied the International Baccalaureate in the sixth form, which he commends to all.

He has been an MGS Governor since 1999.

If you would like to contact John, you can e-mail him at j.clayton@hikent.org.uk

Gardner Crawley

Gardner had this to say:

Married to Diana and living in Biddenden in the Weald near Tenterden. Three children Alistair - farm manager, Jonathan - acoustic engineer and Nicola - therapeutic radiographer.

After a degree in civil engineering from Queen Mary College, London I have spent my life in the industry as a chartered civil engineer. Over the years I have designed and built a variety of civil engineering projects in Kent and other parts of the UK. Currently I am operations director for Leslie Crawley & Partners Ltd who specialise in construction problems, generally the time and money sort, on major projects worldwide. This has given me the opportunity to travel the world preparing contractor's claims or defending them on behalf of owners.

After leaving Queen Mary College London, I went to work for my Father's civil engineering construction company as site agent on a sewage disposal works contract at Sellindge. To get design office experience I trained with Freeman Fox and Partners in Westminster working under Oleg Kerensky (son of the last democratically elected Prime Minister of Russia before communism). Travelling down to the west country I used to bore the kids showing them the bridges over the M5 motorway that I had designed. I must admit once you've seen one concrete bridge you've seen them all.

Over the years I have worked for contractors John Howard & Co and Amec Civil engineering as a site agent on flood prevention, road, sea defence and bridge contracts. After a spell in marketing, in 1989 I decided to join Dal-Sterling Plc as Operations Director to specialise in the time and money sort of construction problems, before taking over the family business earlier this year.

In between work, I manage to do a bit of sailing and am gradually sailing round the world, in easy stages that is. Having been a founder member of the Kent and East Sussex Railway Preservation Society at MGS with Tony Hocking, I am still involved with the railway as chairman of the Rother Valley Railway Heritage Trust which is re-building the line from Bodiam back to the main line at Robertsbridge.

If you would like to contact Gardner, you can e-mail him at gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com.

Tony Bishop

Tony attended the school from 1955 until 1962, then left and took Articles, qualifying as a Solicitor and initially practising in The Strand in London before returning to Kent in 1971. He practised thereafter for 32 years in West Malling.

He said "I did a spell as a Consultant and gave it all up in 2007. My father, Dick Bishop and his brother George, attended in the 1920s, leaving in 1929 & 1928 respectively. Dick saw the move to the new buildings in Barton Road in his last year. My brother, Tim Bishop, attended from 1974 until 1980.

I am a Past President of the Society (2001) and therefore my family's direct connection with the school and the Society spans nearly 90 years."

If you would like to contact Tony, you can e-mail him at tony_bishop1@btinternet.com.

Graham Belson - Editor, Membership Secretary, Treasurer

In brief:

"After the first year of Grammar School in Singapore - as it happens at Tanglin where Neil Turrell is currently head - I came to MGS in 1960, and left in 1965. I joined BP as a deck apprentice immediately after leaving the school, eventually becoming Master of BP tankers, and then into the off-shore industry in the North Sea, Canada and Brazil on various types of service vessels from supply boats through pipelayers, trenching and air and saturation diving.

At one stage I was the Department of Transport representative on the vessel recovering gold from HMS Edinburgh, sister vessel of HMS Belfast in the Pool of London, sunk in 850 feet of water in the Barents Sea during the Second World War. At that time it was the deepest saturation dive ever carried out, and involved cutting through four bulkheads to reach the bomb room where the gold was stored. A fascinating experience and certainly had the edge on driving oil tankers around.

I am now involved in Marine Consultancy, providing shipping companies with the expertise to pass through the rigorous inspections which the oil majors and chemical companies impose on the vessels they charter.

My sons Alastair and Damian both attended the school in Neil Turrell's time, which retained the association. Alastair has been coerced into writing a few words below, no such luck with Damian so far. My daughter went to Invicta in the days before Neil allowed girls in, then to Oxford.

I joined the committee earlier this year after the last AGM and Supper, and rapidly found myself somewhat heavily involved in the Society."

If you would like to contact me, you should use oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk, or phone 01622 730514 or 07770 738041.

Bernard Mee

Bernard submitted the following:

"I was at the school from 1955 to 1960. Rejoined Old Maidstonian Society in 1979; became secretary in 1980 until 1995 when I became President. Organised the OM Supper for 10 years. I have been a committee member now for thirty years. I was a parent governor from 1986 to 1992."

If you would like to contact Bernard, you can e-mail him at bandj_mee@yahoo.co.uk.

The Old Maidstonian Society President 2010 - 2011

The next president will be Paul Clifford. The name Clifford has a long association with the school. J. Clifford (great-great-grandfather) was president in 1895, J. Clifford (great-grandfather) in 1926, W. C. Clifford (grandfather) in 1931, and E F Clifford (father) in 1951. An admirable tradition of supporting the school!

If you would like to contact Paul, you can e-mail him at clifford@lakeside14.fsnet.co.uk.

Old Maidstonian Society Awards

The following details the various awards available to current or previous members of the school.

1 Old Boys Award

This award is may be made on the recommendation of the Headmaster to a present or former pupil to enable him to continue his studies at the school, or to take up a place or continue at a recognised institution for higher or further education.

(The original source of the fund was the original scheme of life membership subscriptions dating from the 1920's and 1930's)

2 G B Phillips Award

Geoffrey Phillips was a long serving History master at MGS serving over 40 years until his eventual retirement from part-time teaching in 1958. For much of that period he was Second Master (Deputy Head).

Geoffrey was President of the OMS in 1958 - 1960. Upon his death in 1973 he made a bequest to the Society of £500, the investment income from which was to be used to augment the value of the Old Boys Award and/or be used on behalf of pupils at the school or Old Maidstonians receiving higher or further education to undertake projects considered by the Committee worthy of support. *(The original bequest does not restrict the capital sum from being distributed).*

3 T P Gutteridge Award

Tom Gutteridge was also a long serving master at the School over a similar period of time to Geoffrey Phillips, retiring in 1963. He taught physics for a considerable period.

Tom was President of the OMS in 1974. In 1974 he made a gift to the Society of £250, the investment income from which was to be used for the assistance of sixth form science students to pursue course or activities designed to broaden their cultural horizons *(The terms of the gift do not restrict the capital from being distributed)*

4 Dicker Trust

David Dicker was a boy at the school, leaving in the early 1960's. Upon leaving he joined the RAF. David was sadly killed in a military aircraft accident whilst on service with the Air Force. Some years later (1993) his parents decide to honour his name by setting up a Trust Fund to be administered by the OMS which would make awards to current and former pupils of the School and to Old Maidstonians for educational projects or such materials deemed necessary for the recipient's continuing education.

(The original gift does not restrict the capital, £2000, from being distributed).

5 The Special Distribution Fund

A Trust Fund to be administered by the OMS which would make awards to current and former pupils of the School and to Old Maidstonians for educational projects or such materials deemed necessary for the recipient's continuing education.

(The original gift (1993) does not restrict the capital, £3000, from being distributed).

6 J F Payne Bequest

J F (John) Payne, an OM who left the school before WW2, died in 1998 and made a bequest to the Society in his will of £500.

The terms of the fund require administration by the OMS which "shall form part of the Society's Award Fund and be distributed for the benefit of both current and former pupils of Maidstone Grammar School". The award is made on the recommendation of the Headmaster or by direct application to the Committee. Funds awarded shall be for educational projects or such materials deemed necessary for the recipient's continuing education.

There shall be no restriction on the amount of any one award, no limit to the number of awards made to an individual or group, and no limitation on the amount distributed or awards made in any one year. The award may be for a part or the full sum required by the applicant. An award may be made solely from the Bequest or jointly with monies from another of the Society's schemes.

7 General Awards

General awards may be made of undistributed income from all the awards except the Gutteridge where this excess is added to the £250.

8 E F Clifford Gift

E F (Ted) Clifford was a boy at the school in the 1920's - 1930's and was President of the Old Maidstonian Society in 1951. His father and Grandfather had also been President of the Society (in 1895 and 1931 respectively) and his son Paul Clifford will be President in 2010 - 2011.

Ted was a member of the Committee for many years.

Upon Ted's death in 2006 his family chose to recognise his long service to the Society and the strong family connection by the generous setting up of an award for "excellence in history", the Ted Clifford Award for Local History to be awarded annually to a boy at the school in year 8 or 9 by way of an inscribed silver gilt Victorian tankard and a silver plated memento. The winner attends the Annual Supper at which the presentation is made.

9 Alex Stewart Memorial Tankard

Alex Stewart was a boy at the school in the 1930's who joined the school staff after war service as Head of PE. He died in service in 1972. A memorial in his name was set up by the Society to perpetuate his memory by the award of a tankard annually to the member of the Senior School contributing most during the school year either on the field of play or in the administration of sporting activities. The presentation takes place at the Annual Supper to a candidate nominated by the Senior Sports Master and approved by the Headmaster. This was originally set for not less than 20 years and in 1992 the Committee decided that this should continue indefinitely. This award and the engraved tankard is provided out of Society funds.

Footnote: The information given above is a summary of information about each of the awards extracted from the Rules of The Society and from the original bequests, letters and minutes of the Society's General Committee meetings. It is not a full statement as to the legal status of each fund or award and is for guidance purposes only.

Maidstone Grammar School Today

2009 - 2010 School Year Events for Old Maidstonians

The following dates may be of interest to **Old Maidstonians**

19 th to 21 st November	School Production
26 th November	Autumn Concert
17 th December	Carol Service at All Saints
18 th December	End of Term Carol Service
19 th December to 1 st January	School Xmas Holiday
5 th April to 18 th April	Easter Holiday
12 th July	Sports Day
26 th July to 31 st August	Summer Holiday

An Update on the School - The Year Ahead: By Heather Cook - Bursar

New Applied Learning Centre

At the end of July the new applied learning centre was officially opened. For all you old boys and girls who have fond memories of the cedar hut which housed rooms 78 and 79 - it is no more. Instead we have a new two storey, three roomed specialist building which accommodates Business and Finance, Applied ICT and Applied Film and Media. Neil Turrell, who departed these shores in August for Singapore officially opened the new building.

For the first time MGS has started to teach one of the Government's new diplomas - Business and Finance. The Local Authority supported us by purchasing some of the equipment for the new building.

Where Now

Well, by 1st September 2011 every KS3 student must be taught Food Technology. The school, via the Local Authority, has been successful in securing £300,000 from the DCSF to build a food technology room. Where to put it though..... A few feasibility studies have been carried out and in the near future a decision will be taken on another building project which we hope to have completed by early 2011.

Academic Matters

We hope to start a two year KS3 soon so that KS4 will spread over a three year period. This will enable more courses to be offered which could not be accommodated because of the already packed content in years 10 and 11.

This year's A level results were the best in the school's history.

Pastoral Care

The restructuring of the Pastoral System, as a result of Workforce Remodelling, has been very successful. We now have Learning Managers who are responsible for the academic and pastoral well-being of the students in their year groups. They are now supported by Assistant Learning Managers.

They, along with a Deputy Head, Behaviour Manager, Student Support Manager, SEN Manager, SEN Teacher and an Attendance Officer make up the Student Services Department.

Language College

We are now completing our fifth year as a specialist Language College and we continue to make a significant contribution to promoting languages in the community.

We have supported local Primary schools in Languages (with the excellent support of our Foreign Language Assistants and Year 12 & 13 students) and have organised a series of meetings to train and advise Primary teachers of French, Spanish and German.

We have operated 27 evening classes at a range of levels in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Turkish. We are very pleased at the number of students who have taken GCSE and A level examinations from evening classes this year. Please look on the website www.mgs.kent.sch.uk for details of next year's programme.

We have continued to support community languages in Urdu and Bengali and have now initiated Gujarati classes as well. We hope to extend the programme further in September. For details please contact dee.morfey@mgs-kent.org.uk

We have also worked closely with Canterbury Christ Church University to support their Language trainees and to promote the teaching of Languages.

We look forward to the new academic year and are delighted that we will welcome a Spanish assistant under the Comenius EU programme, who will work with our Key Stage 3 students as well as in the local community.

Teaching Staff

The following teaching staff left at end of the last term:

Terry Edwards - Classics

Ian Wilson - Science

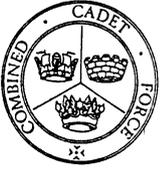
Ian Pickard - Maths

Janet Mardel - Languages

Tom Young - Geography

Juan Garde-Fernandez - Maths. He has been covering on a supply basis and also left in July.

The school also said goodbye to the five GTP teachers: Matt Carter - PE, Emma Skinner - English, Sam Orchard - Music, Alexander Simpson - Science and Thierry Maillard - Languages.



Maidstone Grammar School Combined Cadet Force

Commanding Officer: Lt Col L. Smith

OC RN: Sub Lt P Tismer

OC Army: Capt T Dovey

OC RAF: Flt Lt J Coltella

An update of news from MGS CCF as at Nov 2009:

I am delighted to accept this opportunity to update old Maidstonians on the 'state of the nation' situation with your Combined Cadet Force. The CCF at Maidstone Grammar School has continued to provide a valuable opportunity for the education of our young people in terms of developing leadership, teamwork, and comradeship (in particular looking after fellow cadets) as well as developing self confidence and transferable life skills over the last two and a half years.

Some evidence of the qualifications gained in the last two and a half years can be gleaned from the facts that officers have obtained 25 qualifications over a range of disciplines, whilst cadets have attended 24 courses involving 105 cadets. The BTEC Diploma in Public Services completions over the two and a half year period number 22 with over a further 25 cadets working towards a qualification. Two candidates have achieved the prestigious Distinction * grade.

Contingent Competitions & Successes Mar 2007 - May 2009

Tri-Service National Signals Competition Easter 07 - 3rd place.

Army 4 Div Military Skills Competition; Best CCF & Overall Winners
3 x 1st, 2 x 2nd & 2 x 3rd places in 12 events

RAF National Ground Training Competition - 10th appearance in 11 years

RAF International Air Cadet Exchange Scheme - CWO Tom Stratton to Ghana (only 8 CCF places awarded in the UK)

RAF Flying Scholarship, the John Cunningham Scheme - CWO Tom Stratton (only 4 awarded in the UK)

RAF Best CCF (RAF) Cadet in the UK - CWO Tom Stratton who is awarded the Sir John Thompson Memorial Sword

Tri-Service National Signals Competition Summer Whine 1st place

Army Summer Camp 07 (Longmoor) - Overall 4th place out of 27 schools. Winners of the Obstacle Course Competition

RN SE Area regatta - Coronation Cup - 3rd place. Pharos Cup - Winners, best competitors Navy Section CCF

Army CADSAM 07 (Cadet Skill at Arms). Team awards: - Under 16 team 2 X silver, 1 X bronze; Over 16 team 1 X gold, 1 X bronze

RAF HM Lord Lieutenant's Meritorious Service Certificate - Fg Off I A Deadman

Lord Lieutenant of Kent Cadet of the Year Award - CWO Tom Stratton

RAF Ground Training Competition 08 - SE Region - Winners

RAF National Ground Training Competition - National Champions. 11th appearance in 12 years. Recipient of the Air Squadron Trophy for 7th time & presented with an Outstanding Achievement Commendation awarded by HRH Prince Phillip

Tri-Service National Signals Competition Easter 08 - 1st place

Army 4 Div Military Skills Competition 08; Best CCF (A Team) & Runner Up (B Team). Overall 3rd & 5th places out of 18 teams. 3 x 1st, 1 X 2nd & 2 X 3rd places between both teams in 12 events

Army Summer Camp 08 (Wathgill - Week 3). Drill - 3rd overall 4th. Orienteering - 4th overall 6th. March & Shoot - 1st overall 2nd. Obstacle Course - 2nd overall 2nd. Best Contingent on Camp for Leadership

RAF Ground Training Competition 2009 - SE Region - Winners (8 Feb 09)

RAF Ground Training Competition - National Finals - Winners - this is the 8th time in 13 years of the competition that MGS has won this award. The RAF Section will be presented with the Air Squadron Trophy in June 2009.

Army Not to be outdone, the Army Section took part in the 4 Division Military Skills Competition in 2009 and were placed overall second across all disciplines, in competition with other school CCF teams and Army Cadet Force teams selected from the talent of whole counties. The

real triumph however was to be the overall winners of the March, Obstacle Course, and Shoot Competition Shield – a much coveted award.
Tri-Service National Signals Competition Easter 09 – 3rd place.

Some details of more recent successes follow later in this article.

Staffing Changes

Since the Biennial Inspection in March 2007 (carried out by a former MGS cadet; Wing Commander Andrew Rolfe MDA BSc (Hons) CMILT RAF) and the Biennial of 2009 (carried out by Maj Gen (Retd) Murray Wildman CBE, Chairman of the CCFA) there have been significant changes in the staffing situation - mostly due to retirements or moves to other teaching posts. New members of staff who join the school seldom take on the commitment of a commission in the CCF due to the demands of the teaching profession not leaving time for other activities. We lost seven experienced officers overall; some of you will remember:

- Lt Cdr C Stratton-Brown
- Sub Lt J Pidoux
- Capt J Tyler-Cole
- Lt S Wingvist
- Flt Lt R Brown
- Fg Off T Hodges
- Fg Off M Skew

On the positive side we have gained six young members of the school staff. Three have joined the RN Section and one of these (Lt P Tismer) has been appointed OC RN Section with a hand over period and help from the retiring former OC Lt Cdr C Stratton-Brown. Two female members of staff have opted to join the RAF Section, and one male member of staff has joined the Army. Whilst much is positive, staffing problems do remain and the Army Section is in need of Officers from the school staff whilst the current OC RAF Section is due to leave the school in December 2009.

Currently, two out of three service sections have OC's who are on the school staff but the OC Army Section is currently being covered by an officer outside school.

Of our total of 14 officers on strength, four are relatively new to commissioning and consequently their services are limited until they gain qualifications. Additionally, we still have to make use of 5 adults who are not employed by the school. These officers help with training outside school hours but all 5 of them are limited in the time that they can give. The Contingent Commander and the SSI attempt to cover the day to day role of OC Army Section as well as covering their own tasks.

Some young members of staff will not remain at the school long term as moving on is a feature of gaining promotion in the teaching world. Incoming new, young, members of staff usually have little or no experience of military service and what it can offer to the youth movement today unless they were previously members of the cadet force. There can be difficulties with officers being allowed time out of school to attend essential courses but the school management where possible tries to be supportive, with a very positive input from the Headmaster. Despite the problems, the commitment of the adults and the enthusiasm of the cadets have enabled the CCF at Maidstone to perform well in terms of cadet training and achievements.

Recruitment

Recruitment of cadets has been extremely successful for a voluntary activity run outside school hours.

The academic year starting Sept 2007 saw a large intake of recruits with approximately 50% of the year eight students opting for the CCF. In 2008 the intake rose to 120 recruits from a year group of approximately 180 (67%); this was the highest known figure on record. September 2009 matched this intake! When stabilised, this number represents a healthy, successful, and increasing section of the school community. The students joining the school in the sixth form still offer a small but dedicated "fast track" group of cadets and provide our female cadets.

Training and some recent successes

Training has once again remained very active and competitive with keen, but friendly, section rivalry. Progress through the Training Syllabuses of all three Sections has been very good. The years 2007 – 2009 have witnessed a lot of varied activities. Field Days remain very popular for training exercises or visits. Participation in local and national events, competitions, courses and camps over the two and a half years since the biennial inspections of 2007 and 2009 has been maintained at a high and successful level. In 2009 the RAF Section was triumphant over 11 other schools in 7 different disciplines emerging as Champions in the National Ground Training Competition in March after winning a Regional Competition earlier in the year. This was the eighth time in the thirteen years of the competition that Maidstone has won this award and our twelfth

appearance in the thirteen years of the national finals. The section was presented with the Air Squadron Trophy in June 2009. Unexpectedly in 2008, the school also received a special citation for its achievement signed by HRH Prince Phillip. This was presented to the Head Master on Air Squadron Day at RAF Cranwell in June 2008. Cadets were also given the opportunity for flights in a variety of aircraft owned by members of the Air Squadron.

The Army Section achieved notable successes at annual camps at Longmoor in 2007, Wathgill in 2008, and Penhale 2009 (see later) as well as in the 4 Div Military Skills Competition in 2007 (Best CCF Contingent and overall winners), 2008 (Best CCF Contingent and 3rd overall after two ACF teams). A second (junior) team that was entered in 2008 to gain experience was awarded the 2nd best CCF position!. In 2009 MGS was placed 2nd best CCF Contingent, 2nd Overall, and Winners of the March & Shoot Competition - winning a shield the size of a cupboard door that the average year nine cadet could hardly lift. The RN Section entered teams that were successful in regional sailing competitions. The Army Section participation in three National Signals Competitions per year has produced a very high level of success considering the relatively small amount of time devoted to Signals training in the Contingent. Cadets of all three sections have attended a large and diverse number of courses; this is particularly true of the RN cadets who enjoy the wide variety of courses available through the RN (CCF). Adventure Training and NCO MOI courses have been attended with very pleasing results.

The Contingent continued its contribution to a presence in the local community with its significant voluntary representation at Remembrance Day in Maidstone town centre. Old boys may be proud that the Contingent's presence at this parade continues to be maintained. The Contingent was involved at the annual Kent County Council Poppy Appeal Launch held in the County Hall in 2007. The event involved all the Mayors from the County, war veterans and families. Maidstone CCF cadets were invited to present poppies to the war veterans and widows of war veterans. For the past three years, members of the Contingent have given up their evenings to contribute to the running of Poppy Appeal Charity events at Aylesford Bulls Rugby Club helping to raise thousands of pounds for The Royal British Legion.

The Contingent's BTEC in Public Services cadets in the academic years of 2007 - 2009 have been very successful with the award of 2 distinction star grades along with many other distinctions and merits. One of our distinction star cadets, SSgt Jake Seeds, has been publicised as an example of achievement in the BTEC world as well as being awarded an Army Scholarship. Subsequently this November he has been awarded a Lord Lieutenant of Kent Cadet of the Year Award.

Premises

Those who remember the former CCF huts and stores located near the old canteen and technology workshops will be surprised to see that these buildings have all been demolished in the programme to provide a modern refectory and a purpose built new teaching block for Maths, History and Art. The CCF is currently housed in three former temporary classrooms (Rooms 75 - 77) built in 1947! The .22 range and the former Signals Room remain in use.

The Future

The RAF Section continues to experience problems with the non availability of local powered flight facilities and the difficulty of obtaining Air Experience Flights for cadets further afield. A lack of gliding opportunities in this area exacerbates the problem when cadets have expectations of this exciting activity. I am pleased, however, to report that the RAF Section continues to offer many other activities that are practical, maintain interest, and retain cadets enabling them to bring out their leadership & teamwork qualities. Despite the difficulties, a significant number of RAF cadets have gained gliding and powered flight qualifications over the last three years.

The Army Section flourishes with many opportunities available for the cadets although the officer situation is a cause for concern. The Contingent Commander and the SSI are rapidly approaching retirement so if there are any Old Maidstonian cadets with the time and the desire to lead our CCF into the future.....contact the Contingent Commander!

Finally a Bit of Army Section Nostalgia

Former members of the CCF Army Section, both officers and cadets, will surely remember Penhale Camp near Newquay in Cornwall. It has not changed! This was our annual camp for July 2009. Bedded down in a two tier bunk in a barrack room for eight with one adjacent wash basin and toilet, and one shower that could loosely be described as 'en suite', listening to the rain and wind - awaiting the arrival of the next severe weather warning - brought back memories of a previous century. And this was the adult accommodation! The cadets had a slightly better deal! Despite this it was a great camp with very good, demanding and stimulating (but fun) training packages and professional performances by the Cadet Training Team staff. On the one day that the sun did shine and there was no rain all day the Contingent enjoyed a beach package including surfing lessons - it was a great day. How fortunate was that? We left camp as third week runners up in the Orienteering competition (including an individual silver medal for James Robinson) - despite the fact that orienteering is not a widely practiced component of our training. Even better was being overall winners of the week three Penhale Challenge Cup at both over 16 and under 16 level. In addition, a scratch team of mixed age and mixed sex (allow we all knew who was which) allowed our two female cadets to participate and this team narrowly missed medals by coming in fourth. Brilliant!

Why not write in with your memories of the great and humorous events of your time in the CCF? There are lots of people out here who will enjoy a nostalgia bash and love to be reminded of memories from those memorable events of the past that may have just temporarily slipped out of mind!

The updated history of the CCF covering the 100 years up to 2006 is available from the school for the small sum of £5; please apply to the Contingent Commander at school.

This voluntary CCF remains very popular and demonstrates a great spirit of purpose and achievement amongst the cadets and the adults. Overall we are privileged to see the development of character, leadership, comradeship, and personal skills within the cadets of this CCF. Hopefully in the years to come MGS CCF cadets will continue to be enriched in their development for life in the world outside school and look back with fond memories of their times spent in the CCF.

Lt Col L Smith
Contingent Commander

News of Old Maidstonians

David M Evans - 1981

We have heard that Colonel Evans was promoted to this rank in the Royal Marines in the summer of 2008.

Captain Simon Bedford-Smith

Simon was commissioned in 2005 and is currently serving as a platoon commander with the Royal Welsh Regiment. He was sent on operations in Iraq in 2007 and was Mentioned in Despatches in the Operational Awards List for his bravery under enemy fire in Basra.

His father stated: "In Basra, during a period of intense fighting the like of which has not been seen by the British Army since the Second World War, his platoon frequently braved rifle fire, mortar bombs and rockets, but he always led his men to respond in kind, sending a clear message to would-be attackers. Simon's role in Iraq was on the frontline and was guarding convoys and ammunition at Basra Palace and Basra Airport. He loves the army life. His proudest achievement was bringing all his personnel back safely without loss."

Simon is now in Canada training with his platoon for further operations in Afghanistan.

Cyril Foreman

Cyril wrote to the Society in June:

"I am an Old Maidstonian, though not a member of the society. I am just over 100 years old and feeling nostalgic. I would like to be reminded of the words of the School Song. Will you please be kind enough to oblige?"

We of course did, and have included the Latin and English versions later in the Newsletter.

David Lane - 1978

David is Reader in Management Science at the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London. He is also an Academic Governor of the school. David is based in both the Operational Research and the Managerial Economics and Strategy groups of the Department of Management and his research and teaching specialism is System Dynamics Modelling.

In 2007 David was awarded the International System Dynamics Society's Union Teaching Excellence Award, for the staff member "Who has inspired you, helped you get to grips with complex or challenging ideas, encouraged your learning, changed your view on the world or helped you to 'understand the cause of things' better."

He says "I was delighted to see that Malcolm MacCallum is our new President - I was lucky enough to have his father as one of my teachers and he was superb."

Wayne Vidler-Green - 2000

We are delighted to record that Wayne married Rebecca Pantony at All Saints Church on 15th August 2009 after 8 years of courtship. The wedding was an excellent event, James Le Grys being the best man. The reception was at Salomons in Tunbridge Wells and the wedding was an opportunity for several old school chums from Wayne's year at MGS to meet up.

Wayne attended Worcester University to study Business Management and Sports Studies, graduated in 2004 and went straight to work for Black and Veatch, a Multinational Engineering Company, in Tunbridge Wells. He started out as a Project Accountant and over the past 5 years has progressed to Senior Project Accountant for Scotland and the North of England Business Units, as well as being the manager of the Europe Billing Team.

He is currently working through his CIMA studies and has completed 13 of the 15 exams required to become qualified. Wayne has continued his interest in rugby, having played for the school, and now plays for Tunbridge Wells.

Alastair Belson - 2000

After leaving in 2000, Alastair attended the University of Leeds and studied Geophysics and then followed on to complete a Masters in Research of the Earth and Atmosphere in 2004.

Alastair said: "After such scientific degrees, the obvious choice was not to get varying jobs in marketing and banking. However, following a then impeccable 'new year, new job' policy and a 20 minute chat with an Italian girl in a bar in Dublin, I upped and went to live in Milan in 2007, which is where I still am, with that same said girl."

After two years teaching English and adjusting to the gesticulating, fast-talking, 'why fix it when it works occasionally' Italian culture, I have finally found a job into which I have settled and enjoy - back in the field of marketing for an Italian geophysical company, based in Milan. There are many advantages and disadvantages in living abroad. Obviously, it's not home and Italy is by no means perfect, but everywhere I go I have tried to absorb something new from my surroundings which I hope makes me a more rounded person." My new job involves a lot of travelling which I hope will present me with many new opportunities."

He went on to add: "If anyone is thinking about making the step to live abroad it is well worth the risk...you never know what it could introduce you to."

A J Simpson - 2000

After leaving AJ graduated from Plymouth University with a Bsc (Hons) in Environmental Science. He says: "I went travelling to Australia for 3 months, which was brilliant, and then worked as a classroom assistant when I returned. Next on my life's journey was working as an asbestos surveyor for 4 years. I then decided I wanted to do something worthwhile and enjoyable so I decided to retrain as a science teacher. My training year was at MGS in 2008/09. It was good going back, and nice to see the old teachers again and to see Neil Turrell off."

AJ now teaches at Folkestone School for Girls and lives in Hythe with his partner Kerry and beautiful daughter Isobel. He plays a lot of tennis and still throws the javelin, for which he had something of a reputation at the school and was one of the best javelin throwers in the country. His best achievement was 3rd in the country in 1996 at the English schools. AJ says: "I was best known at MGS for throwing the javelin into the headmaster's garden on sports day, which was unable to be measured, so my record for year 10 that stands today was my 2nd best throw. I was Kent champion from 14 - 18 years old."

AJ also continues to enjoy cricket and rugby.

Adrian Marsh - 2000

Adrian has written to the Society:

"The only real plan I had after leaving MGS and having decided that academic work was definitely not for me, was the perhaps rather ambitious idea of joining the Royal Marines. An injury picked up from playing rugby while at school turned out to be quite serious and knocked my plans for six. As it happened I had applied and secured a place at Reading University on a degree course in Mechanical Engineering as a back-up, started in October 2001, and graduated with an honours degree in 2005. I had perhaps the best time of my life, made some great friends and had plenty of new experiences. (Editor's note: We won't go into that...)

After university, having been scared off by talk of becoming an office-based Design Engineer or similar, and not liking the idea of a 9 to 5 job, I decided to literally expand my horizons as the saying goes, pack up and go to sea. I joined P&O Cruises (which now operates under the Carnival UK banner) in January 2006 and completed a 15 month training programme which led to gaining qualification as an Engineer Officer. I worked in the engine rooms on cruise ships for 3 years in total, where it was work hard, play hard on a whole new level! I travelled all over the world, saw some amazing sights and ate some fantastic food!

Eventually, there is only so much sight seeing and jet-setting one can take so this year I hung up my life jacket and came ashore where I've recently moved and started a new job in Plymouth on a graduate scheme with Babcock Marine at Devonport Royal Dockyard. They provide Engineering and Support Services for the Royal Navy. The plan now is to become a Chartered Engineer in the next 3-4 years."

James Le-Grys - 2000

James has written to the Society:

"When I left in 2000, I did not have the best A levels by a long shot, so I travelled to New Zealand for a year out, with the goal of trying to decide what I wanted to do with my life. When I got there I travelled

the length of the country ending in Queenstown at the bottom of the South Island. I worked as an Adventure Sports instructor for six months until I received an invite to work in the wine region of Marlborough. Initially, I thought it would be a simply good fun, the last thing I expected to happen was to find a career in wine.

It was not long after that trip to Marlborough that I enrolled to do a wine making and viticulture degree. During this time I travelled around Europe making and tasting different wines and loving every minute. I soon found myself back in New Zealand as a wine maker working for my families' winery, 'Le Grys and Mud House Wines'. I was both making and selling wine, spending time in Australia, China and the UK working with wine agents to promote the wine. When I was not wine making I was a volunteer on the Marlborough and Tazmin Search and Rescue team as a rock and rope specialist, mainly rescuing lost hikers in the mountains or in the Marlborough Sounds.

In total I spent over four years abroad but missed the UK, so returned home where my love of wine has continued to grow. Working in both London & Devon, where I also enrolled in the Territorial Army in order to gain a commission, I am now based in Bristol living with my girlfriend of 3 years and looking after the South West as a Wine Consultant for the UK's largest wholesaler, Matthew Clark. It is not all a drinking session, it is lots of long days but I get the perks, like travelling to Europe blending house wines and learning more and more about wine from each region I visit.

So what next? The wine industry is constantly changing and evolving with a mixture of tastes and opinions. You can never stop learning and this is why my sights are now set on gaining my Master of Wine and become a wine buyer within my company. Not bad for a dyslexic with a few, less than average A Levels."

Kevin Loader - 1976

These notes are kindly provided by a contemporary of Kevin Loader, Tony Webb.

"According to a site I found on the Internet, he was born in Bournemouth in 1956. The board in the Big Hall which implies that he went up to Cambridge in 1975 is a bit misleading. He was a seventh-term candidate, offered a place (or a scholarship?) in December 1975, but actually went up the following September. When I arrived at MGS in 1975, I was given time during the autumn term to do more or less what I liked with Kevin and another Oxbridge candidate called Neil Sammels. I wandered round the school field during one of our sessions when we talked about almost anything except English Literature, which was what they wanted to read and later did. (Tony Webb says they had nearly opted for History.) I haven't had any contact with either of them since. In interviews, Kevin is recognizable and, if he is donnish for a big-time producer, so much for stereotypes. With television and then feature films, he's often gone for literary adaptations. His current project being filmed for release in 2010 is *Nowhere Boy*, which doesn't ring any bells, but this may merely reflect a very patchy knowledge of modern fiction. He's probably in line for an award. When I looked him up on the Internet in July, his 'popularity' in a poll had risen to 41% the previous week.

In 1991 I spotted Loader's name as producer of a BBC adaptation of *Clarissa*. With the two episodes lasting more than three hours, it's a short back and sides when Samuel Richardson's novel runs to over 1500 large closely printed pages in the Penguin edition. The aristocratic seducer, *Lovelace*, was played by a young unknown called Sean Bean. It seemed a natural piece of casting, so it was surprising to see him as *Sharpe* a couple of years later. Loader produced quite a few plays and series (not *Sharpe*) in the mid-90s. I remember watching *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* though for some reason, the producer's name didn't register at the time. His big screen break-through came with *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* in 2001. Though he's listed as one of four producers, he seems to have been the main mover and acquired the rights to Louis de Bernieres' novel before it became a best seller. His friend and North London neighbour, Roger Michell, was going to direct but dropped out because of temporary health problems; John Madden took over. *To Kill a King* followed in 2003 with Dougray Scott as *Fairfax* and Rupert Everett as *Charles I*.

Coincidentally, they were both potential post-Brosnan Bonds. (Everett was a rather outside possibility admittedly.) In 2004, Loader produced *Enduring Love*, from Ian McEwan's novel, with Daniel Craig in the lead; most of a small budget went on recreating the balloon accident at the beginning. The novel wasn't slavishly followed but, as Bill Nighy can do no wrong, creating a supporting part for him can't be bad. *The History Boys* (2006) brings us almost full circle, since the central character is an old grammar school master called *Hector* (Richard Griffiths) who prepares Oxbridge candidates. If he looked a bit like Norman Newcombe, this must have been a coincidence because Loader took over Nicholas Hytner's stage production *lock, stock and barrel* with the original N.T. cast.

Of his most recent offerings, the only one I've seen is *Brideshead Revisited* (2008). Particularly in the voice-overs Matthew Goode never quite got away from Jeremy Irons but, for my money, Ben Whishaw as *Sebastian* was an inspired piece of casting. Again, he wasn't an obvious choice but it worked. By chance, they used my old college, *Lincoln*, as the backwater invaded by the *Bullingdon* guys, whose

actual successors as unpaid (?) advisers amused or bemused the actors. As ever, Christ Church refused to co-operate with the film-makers when some grander settings were required.

No insider information in any of this I'm afraid, but DVD bonus material can be informative. Though I might seem like a film buff, this has been a limited selection from a growing body of work. I've never been clear what producers do but I get the impression Kevin is at the proactive end of the range and would usually have a major input in casting."

Giles Philips

Giles wrote to us:

"I read with interest the obituary of Sydney Willsher Coats in your online newsletter. In it, his daughter mentions that he was a distant relative of the cricketer Edgar Willsher, whose life I am researching. I wonder if there is any way that I could be put in touch with his daughter or other family members, as I am very keen to trace as many of his descendants as possible."

Dr. Brian White is trying to contact somebody who may be able to assist.

John Gribbin

We have been informed that John, who is currently visiting Fellow in Astronomy at Sussex University, received a lifetime achievement award from the World Conference of Science Journalists in recognition of his scientific writing. We offer our heartiest congratulations.

Obituaries

It is with much regret that the Society records the death of Old Maidstonians. We extend our deepest sympathy to their family and friends.

Jean-Marie Sanfourche - 2008

Tony Webb worked with Jean-Marie, and wrote the following:

"French civilisation arrived at Maidstone Grammar School in the early 1970s in the person of Jean-Marie Sanfourche first as French assistant and then, after a brief sojourn at one of the local secondary schools, as a permanent member of the modern languages staff. He had in the meantime married Tiina, who was busily engaged in bringing her own kind of civilisation into the MGS environment, where the staff room had hitherto been a male preserve. Thus began a love affair which has entered into the folklore of the school, which took this first husband and wife team to its heart to a degree given to few.

Then in 2008 Jean-Marie was so 'untimely ripped' from us, tragically short of his 60th birthday. One cannot begin to express the pain for Tiina, who remains at the school, and for Richard and Alice, but I will say, on my own behalf, and that of my wife and of my children, who went to school with the young Sanfourches, that something has gone AWOL from our lives.

Jean-Marie was gentle yet firm. He ran the school detention for years and somehow contrived to make boys feel it was a privilege to be there. His very Gallic courtesy could turn away wrath - I have seen many a parent come in like a lion to argue with JMS that their son should be excused detention, only to go away like a lamb, for how could you not accept that an argument put with such politeness was entirely reasonable?

Similarly, he was a form tutor of the old school, knowing his students, whose well-being was at the forefront of the creation of the happy atmosphere so essential to learning. He could get angry, but it was never uncontrolled. One always knew there was a problem when the eyes flashed. Many were the occasions when I for one appreciated the pearls of wisdom which fell from his lips, direct from the shop floor, delivered peacefully, with absolute integrity and without special pleading.

But I appreciated much more in Jean-Marie than that - whether as teacher, horn player, medal collector, raconteur, imbibor and critic of wine and food, rugby fanatic and much more besides. (I never could get him to understand cricket, however hard I tried.) We do not often see his like - we shall miss him. May he rest in peace."

Former MGS pupil Grant Simmonds carried out a sky-dive in memory of Jean-Marie on September 12th, in aid of Kent Cancer Trust.

More than 1,000 students contributed to the Facebook page in his memory, describing him as a wonderful man, a rare breed of gentleman and a true legend.

Arthur James Forknall -1941

The society has been notified by Peter Forknall, his nephew, that Arthur passed away on 25th December 2008 after a fall at home. The funeral was on 22nd January at Medway Crematorium.

Raymond Oxley - 1943

We received the following from Gill Harland:

"I would like to advise you that my father, who was president in 1966, passed away on 2nd March 2009. I don't think my step mum thought to contact you and as usual with these things I was thinking about his school days and that he had been an Old Maidstonian. I am now a resident of Manchester having moved here when I married, but Maidstone is still very much part of my life"

John Tresilian - 1989

The society has been notified that John, who was a teacher at the school until 1989, passed away in January 2009. The following from Tony Webb:

"My introduction to John Tresilian occurred nearly 40 years ago at a beginning of term staff meeting. The deputy head, Bob Rylands, was asking what should be done about the youth of MGS, who were given to passing through the town wrapped around the young women of MGGS. A tall thin man rose from his seat and asked smilingly whether it would not be a bigger problem if the boys were wrapped around young men. Perhaps there were other things of more moment to be considered at the beginning of term.

I was not the first or the last to be struck by John's personality. He would intervene decisively to move things forward when he felt the time was being wasted, but he could do it in such a manner as to disarm offence. He had a sharp tongue, which he used without fear or favour against management, colleagues and students alike if he felt they were being perverse or foolish, but also a great compassion and understanding for those who were doing their best even if they couldn't quite get there. He possessed great scholarship and a fine attention to detail, along with the utmost courtesy in both pressing an opinion and listening to others.

Over many years I got to know John on the cricket field, at the chessboard, in the common room, seeing all these qualities in action. An illustrative story from the cricket field.....A big appeal, the finger raised, the victim complaining afterwards: "Sir, I couldn't have been out LBW, I got an inside edge." "I know boy, I gave you caught out at the wicket." John's insistence that the scoreboard should be altered accordingly was typical. On the other hand, he rejected with indignation suggestions that he gave batsmen out with greater alacrity when the tea interval was approaching.

When I entered management I acquired a deeper appreciation of John's qualities. One could always reckon to receive an opinion when he felt one had got things wrong, but he was one of the very few who delivered praise and courteous thanks when he felt one had tried and done the best that could be done in the circumstances. One valued both criticism and praise from him because it was always considered and therefore valuable. He was not a man to pretend that things were other than they were. On one of his many exchange visits to Beauvais, the staff party were at a momentary loss as to what to do. A young teacher brightly suggested: "Let's go and see the cathedral." John's response was: "I've seen the bloody cathedral."

To Jean and to the family we extend our sympathy and our best wishes for the future.

Len Smith - 1939

Len passed away on December 19 2008 at Pilgrims Hospice, Ashford, aged 87. He had many friends and acquaintances in the society.

We received the following from Mike Smith, his son.

"Dad was born in Maidstone on St. Valentine's Day 1921, an only child loved and indulged by his mum and dad (Arthur and Alice) and local extended family. His close life-long friendships with his cousins more than made up for his lack of siblings.

He won scholarships to Maidstone Grammar (a school he remembered with great affection all of his life) and then Southampton University where (judging from his book) the extracurricular dominated, which makes me feel rather less guilty about my college days! At these places he met Reg Fancourt, John Fulljames, Michael Tillet, John Stroud and Ken East all of whom became life-long friends. They or their families have over the last few days shared memories of Dad that add greatly to ours.

He was an outstanding pianist (concert, panto, home) and cricketer (20 centuries including 166 n.o. for Maidstone YMCA against Lenham).

He broke off his studies in 1942 to join the RAF, finally coming home from Singapore in 1947. He met mum in 1958 and married her on 22 May 1964 - starting a family tradition of long courtships and late marriages. A friendship lasting 50 years and a marriage of 44. Together they raised three splendid children without troubling social services or the state penal system. A work-life (including as a

Managing Director, a Technical Secretary & a co-owner of a shop) which he never let over-shadow his family.

A long and happy retirement surrounded by cats and scrapbooks and a growing family, writing his book and indulging his passion for photography, walking, bird-watching and a little painting and gardening. Above all, dad was a family man – always pleased to spend time with us, providing the soundtrack to our frequent get-togethers with his piano playing (more recently with a grandson ‘accompanying’ at either end) and drawing the quieter ones of us into telling him what was going on in our lives. Dad described his parentage in his book and I think it describes his approach too - “Physical care without cossetting. Early education without cramming. Time and availability without saturation. Variety of toys and pastimes without overwhelming. Information whenever sought. An early introduction to the countryside. Ample exercise. Encouragement to draw and paint and to make music. Curiosity. Acceptable level of behaviour. And as years pass, unlimited support in their son’s endeavours.”

I’m sure I wasn’t the only teenager to have put forward occasional suggestions for improvements to his Dad’s parenting style. But now, as a Dad myself I’m learning (alongside the incredible feelings of love and pride) what a full-time, long-term and often daunting commitment fatherhood is, and how well Dad negotiated the role – with less luck and more judgement than I’m managing I should add. Specifically his nurturing, his encouragement, his tactful diversion, his provision of mentors, his love and compassion, his criticism, his humour, his adventure, his mischief, his balance, his resilience, his sponsorship and his interest and love for our families. Kathy, Andy and I can only marvel at his (& Mum’s) ability to feign coolness, patience and understanding when we think what each of us put them through from time to time (from time to time Mum thinks!).

Dad had a stroke in 2001 and was diagnosed with liver cancer in 2007 (despite a lifetime of moderation) and carried-off both with great dignity and little fuss and right up to the last gave all the energy he had to his family. Dad died peacefully at 10.20am on Friday 19th December aged 87.

We are so proud of Dad, so sad to finally lose him but happy knowing that he is now resting in peace. And lastly a message to Dad and to quote Phillip Pullman - “All the particles that make you up will loosen and float apart...into the air and the wind and the trees and the earth and all the living things. They’ll never vanish. They’re just part of everything ...out in the open... alive again in a thousand blades of grass, and a million leaves...falling in the raindrops and blowing in the fresh breeze...glittering in the dew under the stars and the moon...”

Graham Hughes

The society has been notified that Graham Hughes has passed away. We regret we have no further information.

Ben Babington-Browne - 2000

It is with much regret that we have to report that Ben died on 6th July 2009 whilst serving in Afghanistan. He was killed with two Canadian servicemen in a helicopter crash taking off in Zabul Province.

Ben joined MGS in 1993. He achieved excellent exam results and is remembered by Neil Turrell: “Ben was an outstanding person – a member of that rare breed of men who seem to be good at everything, never get flustered under stressful conditions and behave always with sensitivity and good grace. He always behaved with sensitivity and good grace.

Thanks to his friendly and outgoing nature he quickly settled in and became involved with many school activities. His excellent GCSE results gave him a very free choice of A Levels, and he decided on a mixture of Sciences and English Literature.

Ben’s teachers praised him for his organisation, his perceptiveness and sensitivity to subtle variations in meaning. His readiness to discuss anything and his obvious enthusiasm for his work drew high praise from all who met him.

This is a grievous blow to us, and one that I feel deeply and personally. I taught Ben and thought him to have enormous potential. So good, in fact, that I selected him to be school vice-captain in a year of very strong candidates. We are not surprised that Ben became a successful leader in the Army; it was very clear indeed in our large sixth form that Ben commanded respect and affection as a leader, organiser and participator. He was always well to the fore in running fund raising discos at school and was joint director of the school pantomime. He was also a very effective Vice Chairman of the school Debating Society.

That he should die in the service of his country in the prime of his life is an enormous loss. We know that his mother Nina is devastated by the news and we send her our deepest condolences at this dreadful time."

After a gap year, Ben went to University College, London, where he graduated with a B.Sc in Physics with Medical Physics, in 2005. He then entered the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, from where he was commissioned into the Corps of Royal Engineers in August 2006. In April 2007 he was deployed as Troop Commander in 5 Armoured Engineer Squadron in Iraq. Upon his return, he was selected to run the Regimental Junior non-commissioned Officer's Cadre. Most recently he volunteered to carry out a tour of duty in Afghanistan and he was working for the International Security Assistance Force HQ as a member of the Engineer Branch as Staff Officer 3 Engineering Intelligence, when the accident occurred.

Many tributes were paid by his fellow comrades. Brigadier Chris Tuckett, Royal Engineers, Deputy Commander British Forces said "Ben was a rising star who stamped his mark early as a Troop Commander. Bright, personable and bursting with energy he had the world at his feet."

His commanding officer, Lt Colonel Andrew Noble said: "I have rarely met a man who was so widely liked and respected in the regiment. His humility and selflessness were palpable; he carried his rank lightly and the officers' creed of 'Serve to lead' could have been written for him."

There were numerous other tributes, too many to record here. His funeral was held at All Saints Church Maidstone on Tuesday 28th July 2009, and the service was conducted by the Reverend Canon Christopher Morgan-Jones, vicar of Maidstone. There was a firing party tribute at the end of the service.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his mother Nina, and brother Daniel, on their loss.

Yuri Roovet - 1957

The society has been notified by Nicholas Walters (1957) that Yuri Roovet passed away on 10th September 2008. He attended Lincoln College Oxford where he was an open scholar.

Flight Lieutenant Nigel Morton - 1983 to 1985

Nigel Morton joined the sixth form of MGS from Vinters Boys School in 1983 and studied Physics, Mathematics and Computer Science until leaving in 1985. He demonstrated real ability in the field of Computer Science.

Nigel had a keen enthusiasm for the world of aeronautics and whilst at school, completed a project on the BA146 which demonstrated an imaginative and acutely critical approach. On a visit at the time to British aerospace he showed a perceptive and mature interest in the administration rather than the usual school boys excitement which was limited to the aeroplanes themselves.

Nigel was a pleasant and mature young man who was more reliable than many boys of his age. Because of this he was made a prefect with responsibility for computing, where he shared responsibility for the organisation of books and equipment. At school he showed himself to be independent of mind, serious in carrying out his duties and responsibilities, self confident and efficient. He got on well with his peers and his teachers here, being sociable and having a wide range of activities outside school.

Neil Turrell wrote the following:

"Nigel was killed on Tuesday 2nd July when his Tornado F3 crashed into a hillside on a training flight from RAF Leuchars in Scotland. A few of my longer serving members of staff remember him from his time at school. He was very good at computer science and showed an interest in all matters aeronautical immediately on entering the school. I do not know if his mother or father are still living in the Maidstone area, but I send them my condolences, as I do to his wife and son who will be devastated at his loss in the service of his country."

Hugh Weedon - 1944

The Society learned of the death of Hugh Weedon at the end of October 2009, having been admitted to hospital following a fall at his nursing home where he had been a resident for the past couple of years. Hugh was a stalwart member of the committee for many years, and coordinated the Annual Supper arrangements. The funeral was held at Vinters Crematorium at 10.15 on 15th November, and was attended by Richard Ratcliffe on behalf of the Society.

Richard said:

“He was a smashing old guy with a fund of stories about his days in the RAF.” He was 82 and had been suffering from Alzheimer’s for the past 3 - 4 years.”

Our sympathies go to his wife Brenda.

Did You Know? - Some Facts about the School from the Archives

Its foundation

For those who do not have access to the internet, the following is taken from the school website:



The foundation of Maidstone Grammar School in 1549 was really a rescue operation. There had been a school in Maidstone at least since 1348. This was probably housed in the old Grey Friars at the top of Gabriel's Hill, and then after 1395 in the college of All Saints. By 1547 the Reformation placed the school in jeopardy.

When Henry VIII broke with Rome, there was no immediate threat, even when the monasteries were dissolved. By 1545 however he was desperate for money and proposed to seize the property of the colleges, guilds and chantries. When he died in 1547, the new government was Protestant and had the added motivation of objecting to chantries on principle. When the College of All Saints was dissolved, Maidstone's school was homeless.

Before 1537 the town of Maidstone had been the property of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The then Archbishop Cranmer was bullied into a series of land exchanges which gave Maidstone to the crown. In the new reign the town's leaders pressed for a borough charter to make them self-governing and to establish a grammar school. Unlike Canterbury, Maidstone had not been an early hotbed of Protestantism; but now it was the would-be Protestant reformers who took the lead in lobbying. The government of Lord Protector Somerset was, even by more recent standards, exceptionally ideological, corrupt and incompetent.

By July 1549 when the town received its first charter, Exeter was under siege by Devonians protesting against the new English Prayer Book and there was serious agrarian unrest elsewhere. The July 1549 charter gave to the Mayor, Juratts and Commonalty and to their successors full power and authority to set up a Grammar School in Maidstone.

With All Saints College, the Corpus Christi fraternity in Earl Street had also been closed and the fraternity hall, now crown property, was empty. So the town authorities asked to have it for their school. The Mayor and Jurratts of Maidstone were told firmly that if they wanted Corpus Christi Hall they would have to pay for it. They could sell the ornaments of All Saints Church, which were no longer needed for the new Prayer Book services. The sale raised £205, £5 more than needed.

The school was thus installed in Corpus Christi Hall under its first master, the Rev Thomas Cole, a keen Protestant reformer.

There was soon a setback with the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary. In 1554 Sir Thomas Wyatt of Allington led a rebellion to dissuade her from marrying the King of Naples, later better known as Philip II of Spain. Wyatt had strong connections with the town and in sympathy with Wyatt the town forfeited both charter and school. However with the accession of Mary's half sister, Elizabeth, England became Protestant again and on 29th September 1559 the town received its second charter and the school re-opened.

Ralph Moore, an Oxford graduate, became master at a salary of £9 6s 8d. He was to teach the 'Science, Art and Knowledge of Humanitie or Grammar'. (Grammar School of course meant originally a school at which Latin grammar was taught). Hours were from seven to eleven in the morning, when the scholars went home to dinner, and from one to five in the afternoon. Scholars had to attend service at the parish church on Sundays and festival days.

The scholars were supposed to be 'freely taught', but in 1566, Ralph Moore was authorised by the corporation to receive a shilling a quarter from every freeman's son attending the school. Though entry to the school was restricted by this, it never went up market in the way Tonbridge School did in attracting the sons of the parish and county gentry. Maidstone Grammar School was from the first genuinely a 'town' school.

Olim Meminisse Juvabit

"A joy it will be one day, perhaps, to remember even this."

This beautiful passage is taken from Book I, line 203, of Vergil's **Aeneid**. We find Aeneas trying to console what's left of his troops as they lay shipwrecked on the shores of Carthage. There have been many translations of this line from many different scholars, but it is Robert Fagles' most recent translation that truly captures the gravity of what Aeneas and Vergil are trying to say.

The word 'perhaps' leaves the reader recognizing that it **may not** be pleasing to remember even this.

The School Song

The school song, Gaudeamus, was written in 1908 by music-master Dr H F Henniker, ARAM, to Latin words by the Headmaster at the time, the Rev C G Duffield, MA, headmaster from 1898 to 1913.

It remains very much in use today, although in an abridged form. The modern use is to sing verses 1 and 5, with the chorus. Most Old Boys are surprised to find how easily it can be recalled, though a crib sheet is always available for those who left the classics behind years ago.

Gaudeamus

**Scholam concinamus nostram
Maidstonensi urbe impostam,
Rege Eduardo, ante hos tam
Longos annos conditam.**

1

**Let us sing together of our school,
situated in the town of Maidstone,
and founded in the reign of King
Edward, so many long years ago.**

Maidstonenses gaudeamus
Laudibus, et efferamus
Scholam nostram, quae oramus
Sempiterna floreat.

Chorus

Let us rejoice, Maidstonians, and
let us uphold with praises our
School, which we pray may flourish
for ever.

**Musa vocat nos ad montem
Qua doctrinae celat fontem
Persequamur ut insontem
Virtus vitam decoret.**

2

**The muse calls us to the mountain
where she conceals a fountain of
knowledge. Let us follow, that
virtue may adorn an innocent life.**

Maidstonenses gaudeamus...

Chorus

Let us rejoice...

**Indies campum petamus;
Pilae, folli, studeamus,
Robur mentis ut colamus
Cum robusto corpore.**

3

**Every day let us seek the field,
let us study ball and leather, so
that we may cultivate strength of
mind with a strong body.**

Maidstonenses gaudeamus...

Chorus

Let us rejoice...

**Sic legendo, ediscendo
Sic jubentibus parendo,
Diligenter et ludendo
Fit juvenus cultior.**

4

**Thus, by reading, by learning, by
obeying those who order us, and
by playing diligently, the young
are made more cultivated.**

Maidstonenses gaudeamus...

Chorus

Let us rejoice...

**Forsan olim meminisse
Nos juvabit, et vixisse
Dignos illis quos fuisse
Gloriamur socios.**

5

**Perhaps one day it will be pleasant
for us to remember, and to have
lived worthy of those men we
boast to have been our friends.**

Maidstonenses gaudeamus...

Chorus

Let us rejoice...

**Apud Indos quot caletis,
Juxta Boream quot frigetis,
Universi extolletis
Domus vestrae gloriam.**

6

**However much you burn in the
Indies,
however much you freeze in the
North, one and all you will extol
the glory of your foundation.**

Maidstonenses gaudeamus...

Chorus

Let us rejoice...

Some Fun

Fascinating word facts

Stewardesses is the longest word typed on a keyboard with only the left hand;

Lollipop is the longest word typed with your right hand;

No word in the English language rhymes with **month, orange, silver** or **purple**;

Dreamt is the only English word that ends in the letters 'mt';

The sentence: **The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog** uses every letter of the alphabet;

There are only four words in the English language which end in 'dous': **tremendous, horrendous, stupendous** and **hazardous**;

There are two words in the English language that have all five vowels in order: **abstemious** and **facetious**;

Typewriter is the longest word that can be made using the letters on only one row of the keyboard;

A **Jiffy** is an actual unit of time of 1/100th of a second.

One from Tommy Cooper:

Two aerals got married. The wedding wasn't up to much, but the reception was brilliant.....

Past Presidents of the Old Maidstonian Society

1884	Rev. S.M. Crosthwaite	1955	J.F. Payne
1893	G. Hulburd	1956	G.G. Earl
1894	E. Hills	1957	G.E. Waters
1895	J. Clifford	1956-60	G.B. Phillips
1896	R. Mercer	1961-62	M.H. Couchman
1897	Dr. Plomley	1963-64	A.A. Newman
1898	R. Hoar	1965	P.H. Mayor
1899	J.P.H. Wood	1966	R.L. Oxley
1900	W. Hayes	1967	P.W. Ewing
1901	A.J. Waterman	1968	R.R. Rylands
1902	H. Day	1969	Lord Beeching
1903	H. Monckton	1970	C.C. Haylor
1904	T.R. Betts	1971	J.J. Burke
1905	W. Day, Junior	1972	P.A.W. Howe
1906	G. Smythe	1973	J.A. Bergg
1907	F. Laurence	1974	T.P. Gutteridge
1908	F.W. Ruck	1975	M.A. Gibson
1909	P. Smythe	1976	A. Hart
1910	W.H. Day	1977	R.R. Rylands
1911	W.H. Lendon	1978	R. Craske
1912	A.W. Smith	1979	K.E. Loveland
1913	A.F. Corfe	1980	A.A. Johnson
1914	E. Ruck	1981	J. Winch
1915	W. Vaughan	1982	M. Passmore
1916-21	G.T. Cook	1983	B. Welcome
1922	W. Day	1984	J.A. Blake
1923	G. Drayson	1985	D. Chater
1924	Sir Edward Sharp, Bt.	1986	G. Bonner
1925	F.A. Wallis	1987	G. Hosking
1926	J. Clifford	1988	R. Ratcliffe
1927	W.H. Proctor	1989	W.J.C. Caley
1928	W. Clemetson	1990	R. Brown
1929	C.A.W. Duffield	1991	B. Rylands
1930	W.J. Sharp	1992	H.F. Weedon
1931	W.C. Clifford	1993	H.C.H. Darley
1932	A.J. Harland	1994	J. Clinch
1933	T.J. Bonny	1995	B. Mee
1934	A.S. Bennett	1996	M.F. Watts
1935	F.L. Wallis	1997	D.C. Diamond
1936	J.H. Taylor	1998-99	Dr. P.A.J. Pettit
1937	J.G. Ambrose	2000	S.J. Delo
1938	S. Beaufoy	2001	V.A. Bishop
1939	Rev. Dr. F. Streatfield	2002	G.K. Marchant
1940-46	K.E. Loveland	2003	P. Oldham
1947	J.H. Taylor	2004	Dr. B. White
1948	P.J. Homan	2005	Dr. D.E. Wilson
1949	W. Moore	2006	Dr. R. Parkins
1950	A.L. Ayres	2007	F. Sando
1951	E.F. Clifford	2008	Prof. M. MacCallum
1952	J.H. Pocock	2009	Dr A Webb
1953	N.C. Cook	2010	P Clifford
1954	M.H. Ayres		

The Old Maidstonian Society Annual Supper

26th March 2010

Starter

Prawn & Champagne Smoked Salmon Roulade

Main

Chicken Supreme in White Wine Sauce served with New
Potatoes & Fine French Beans

or

Beef Lasagne served with Fresh Salad & Garlic Bread

Dessert

Apple & Sultana Crumble with Cream

or

Cheese & Crackers

Coffee & Mints

Books

There are several books which have been produced either by the school or by the **Old Maidstonian Society**, and which can be obtained through the school.

WAC: Trials and Triumphs of a Grammar School Headmaster

A history of **Maidstone Grammar School** from 1925 - 1941 through the final report of Headmaster **Alfred John Woogar**, MA, and from 1942 - 1966 in the Speech Day Reports of Headmaster **William Arthur Claydon**, CBE, MA

The book was researched and compiled by **James Clinch** (OM 1936-46, staff 1974-91)

Cost £10.00 (*postage an additional £2.50*)

ISBN-10: 0-9552145-0-5

ISBN-13: 978-0-9552145-0-9

Guadeamus: An account of Music at Maidstone Grammar School

Published in 1997, this book is the definitive history of music at the school from the early-1900s with a prelude by Michael Tillet (Old Maidstonian 1932-29) and postlude by David Leeke (staff 1989-2000)

The book was researched and compiled by James Clinch (OM 1936-46, staff 1974-91)

Cost £5.00 (*postage an additional £2.00*)

ISBN-10: 0-9530861-0-0

A History of Maidstone Grammar School Combined Cadet Force (1906 - 2006)

Researched and compiled by Diana and John Caley, the book was produced to commemorate the centenary of the Cadet Force at the school. It brought up to date the original history that the authors had written in 1981 at the 75th anniversary.

It contains many pictures along with thirteen appendices of useful data and information.

Cost: £5.00 (*postage an additional £1.50*)

Not published with an ISBN

Garments

Ties

There is a supply of both styles of the Old Maidstonian tie and these can be ordered using the return sheet of this Newsletter or by e-mail.

The **Crested** version is a Jacquard Woven Tie with all-over motifs of the crest in gold, red and blue on a navy background. This is the correct Old Maidstonina Tie.

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. The tie was produced for the 450th anniversary, and was originally the tie the Schoolk captain wore. It is now worn by all senior prefects.

Cost, including postage, £6.50.

Both are of a polyester Rep and 54" x 3 1/8" in size.

Blazer Badge

The Society has obtained a large version of the OM's badge (approx 5" x 3") which are for sale at £15 each.

ORDER FORM

GARMENTS

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

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

I enclose £..... for the purchase ofBlazer Badge(s) at £15 each

BOOKS

I enclose £..... for the purchase of copy(ies) of WAC: Trials & Triumphs....
at £10.00 each (plus £2.50 postage)

I enclose £..... for the purchase of copy(ies) of A History of MGS CCF....
at £5.00 each (plus £1.50 postage)

I enclose £..... for the purchase of copy(ies) of Guadeamus: A History of Music....
at £5.00 each (plus £2.00 postage)

ANNUAL SUPPER

I enclose £..... for the purchase of ticket(s) to the Old Maidstonians Annual Supper (at £19.00 each), being held on Friday 26th March 2010.

If buying more than one ticket, please give the names of the other persons in your 'group'.

.....
.. ..

.....
.. ..

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

YOUR DETAILS

Name: Year of Leaving:
.....

Address:
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

E-mail: Telephone:
.....

Please return the form to:

The Old Maidstonian Society, Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7BT.