



Old Maidstonian Society

Newsletter No.3 - Winter 2010



President: **Paul Clifford**

Chairman: **Richard Ratcliffe**

Secretary: **Anthony Hayward**

**Don't forget the Annual Supper:
Friday March 25th 2011 at 7.30 pm
following the AGM at 6.15pm
Book now using the form at the end
of this newsletter**

THE CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS

I continue to be encouraged that people on the committee seem to be reinvigorated and we have had some good discussions about fund raising, helping the School and charitable status. Of course progress should be faster – but then we are a volunteer organisation.

Another aspect of our work as a Society has been our ongoing success of getting information to members via the website. Whilst there have been a few teething problems it now seems that we are getting information “up there” more quickly and it is to be hoped that you, dear reader, appreciate this rapid 21st Century approach.

One measure of the success of the website has been shown by the number of members coming forward and asking for information (about “lost” former colleagues usually). Just recently – this week in fact – a TV production company making a programme about the success of Grammar Schools and, importantly, measuring that success by the success of those who have had a Grammar School education. We have been able to assist by writing to a number of OM's who have had distinguished careers in any number of fields to see if they would help the

producers. We'll see what comes out – screen date is scheduled on BBC4 early in 2011.

Tony Webb, our President last year, has agreed to take on the task of managing and cataloguing the “archive” which is really a joint venture with the School. Headmaster, Nick Argent, has kindly made space available for the safe storage of the multiplicity of objects and papers – some “School” and some “Old Maidstonians” – so watch this space – you will all be advised via these pages and via the website as Tony makes progress. Meantime if any member has any artefacts he'd like to donate please contact us.

We are just preparing for the Recent Leavers' function in December and then for the Supper in March (see elsewhere in this edition for details). Rumour has it that at least one “year group” will be bringing a large number of Old Boys for a reunion within the supper, so if anyone else feels similarly inclined to “get the guys together”, now is the time to do something about it: put a note in the Christmas Cards, perhaps?

Richard Ratcliffe (1964)
Chairman

2010 Leaver's Do

This will be held at 7.30 pm at the School in the refectory on 17th December 2010. If you are a 2010 leaver and can attend, please do so.

COMMITTEE MEETING

The Committee met at the School on 21st September 2010 when the main issues discussed were:

- Due to the recent death of Tony Butler, Anthony Hayward has moved to 1st Vice-President and David Leeke has become 2nd Vice-President. A 2nd Vice-President will be elected at the 2011 AGM;
- Anthony Hayward will step down as Secretary at the AGM and the Society is hoping that a member will offer to come forward and take on the position;
- There was a proposal that geographical branches be formed and David Leeke is to pilot one in London. Year branches are to be resurrected through the OM News;
- The Treasurer reported that the Current Account presently stands at £1,500 and the Awards Account at about £14,000;
- OMS Newsletters are to be published three times per year, at the end of November, March and July. In order to keep track of them, the numbering of the Newsletters has been revised and started at 1 for 2009, No 2 for the Summer 2010, and this edition will be No 3;
- Anthony Hayward attended the inauguration of 'The Philip Langridge Bursary' in London on behalf of MGS. It was decided not to do anything similar in Maidstone, but to support the national bursary.



Anthony Hayward

If you feel you might have the time to devote to this important role, please come forward.

2) Functions Secretary

We are still hoping for somebody to come forward to assist in organising functions. As we stated before, we are trying to increase the number and type of functions we hold.

We are aware that there are the occasional individual year-group functions, but we would like to bring them within the Society and assist in managing and increasing them. The role will involve working with the membership to organise reunions, annual sports events and other activities to maintain contact between the members and the School.

Unfortunately all current Committee Members are either engaged in other roles within the Society or do not have the time required to dedicate to it. If you feel you have the time, energy and desire to participate in the organisation of the Society's activities then we would be very pleased to hear from you. - Please contact the Membership Secretary at oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk or by phone on 01622 730514 or 07770 738041.

CONTACTING THE SOCIETY

The e-mail address of oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk is the preferred method and 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 forwarded to the Editor. 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.

Each member of the committee may be contacted individually using their e-mail addresses which are detailed on the website.

We urgently need two new Committee Members!

1) Secretary

With Anthony Hayward becoming President, the post of Secretary has become vacant. The work involved is not onerous. It means attending each Committee Meeting, taking notes and producing the Minutes.

But perhaps more importantly it involves liaising with all the other Committee Members to ensure that the decisions taken at the meetings are followed through – keeping everyone else on their toes perhaps is the best way to describe it.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SOCIETY

The Society holds a current account for general expenses and the profit from the Annual Supper is sufficient to maintain a healthy balance to enable the Newsletter to be posted to those who want a hard copy.

Contributions to the Awards Fund are a different matter altogether. That fund is used for the benefit of the School

and its pupils. Any contributions are very gratefully accepted.

It is the intention of the Committee to identify with the Headmaster deserving recipients or projects and to fund them from the Awards Fund, at the same time requesting contributions from members for those specific awards to restore the fund to its current level.

The Society recently made a £250 contribution to this summer's World Challenge Expedition.

MEMBERSHIP REGISTER

The Society maintains a Membership Register of Old Maidstonians. This records the contact details of each member – address, e-mail, telephone and mobile numbers – and date of leaving. It is maintained by the Membership Secretary and is available to any member of the committee. Any member who objects to their name and contact details being on such a database should contact the Membership Secretary.

The contact details of members are never released to any other member, person or organisation. If a member asks to be placed in contact with another then we pass that request on to the member being contacted, including the contact details of the member trying to make contact.

Members should keep the Society informed, preferably by e-mail to oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk of any changes to their contact details. However, it is acknowledged that not every member has access to a computer and every communication, whatever form it takes, will be answered.

FACEBOOK, TWITTER, FRIENDS REUNITED

There are several websites devoted to Old Maidstonians. Some are apparently for members of a particular year, others have more members.

We sincerely hope that younger Old Maidstonians who have joined such social interactive sites will also join the Society and that a range of events, such as reunions, will develop.

THE OMS AND MGS WEBSITES

The OMS website www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk is continually updated with the latest news, most of which is eventually published in the Newsletter. The website is seen as the main vehicle for the Society to keep in contact with the membership.

Malcolm MacCallum is the webmaster and runs the site in conjunction with James Kinsman and Simon Pain. It is not our intention to report in detail on information that is readily available on the school (MGS) website, and members should go to www.mgs.kent.sch.uk

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU

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

You may have suggestions for future events or activities; you may be looking for information or to be put in touch with another Old Boy (or Girl). 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 is preferred.

DONATION TO BRITISH LEGION

The Society sent a £25 donation to the Royal British Legion to buy a 'Cross' to be placed in a field of remembrance at Wooton Bassett. It is inscribed "From the Old Maidstonian Society in memory of Capt. Ben Babington Browne". As this field of remembrance is in specific memory of those who have been killed in Afghanistan, it was felt that was appropriate.

The field was dedicated on November 9th and, although he was invited, Richard did not attend as he felt that the occasion was more for relatives. The field is full of little wooden crosses and must be a moving sight. It is not new this year - they've done it before (there are also similar fields of crosses in the grounds of Westminster Abbey and Cardiff Castle). The Society was approached because we sent a donation to the British legion last year in Ben's memory.

OM SOCIETY RULES

The Rules of the Society have been being redrafted by Dr. Brian White to better reflect the Society's aims. This work has now been completed and the revised rules have now been circulated for final approval. The revised Rules will be posted on the website shortly. If a member requires a printed copy would they please contact the Editor.

ARCHIVES

The location and content of the archive was discussed at some length and it was agreed that there was little fundamental difference between Old Maidstonian Society archive material and that of the MGS. An archive

area has been established in the School above the gymnasium and the location is both suitable and secure.

Dr. Tony Webb is the archivist, ably assisted by John Caley. If any member requires any information from the

archives, please contact Tony.

We would be very interested if any member has any material which might be considered for inclusion in the Archives. Copies of the Maidstonian or Journals in good condition would be particularly welcome.

NEWS OF OLD MAIDSTONIANS

On Monday 30th August, 'University Challenge' featured Newcastle against Sheffield. Captain of the Sheffield team was **Tom Thirkell** – 2007. He is studying Biology. Sheffield thrashed Newcastle 315 to 70. Congratulations Tom!

Robbie Duncan was the recipient of this year's National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies art prize bursary. He was selected above all other A Level art students in the region.

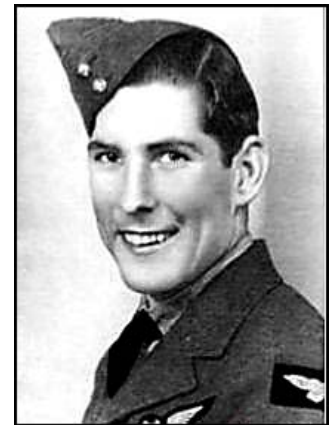
Joe Atkin-Reeves won the Kent Young Musician of the Year Award.

Jake Seeds of the Army Section CCF, gained a distinction grade in his BTEC 1st Diploma in Public Services and was awarded an army scholarship in year 12. Jake also holds the distinction of being an HM Lord Lieutenant of Kent 'Cadet of the Year'.

Flt. Sgt. Robert Sloman OBE – 1936

The Society was contacted by Rev. Kevin Davies - Diocese of Oxford. MGS 1972-1980

I am researching an Old Maidstonian for a Remembrance Sunday presentation. Flt.Sgt. Robert G Sloman was killed over Holland on 21st July 1944. He has no known grave. If you are able to find a School photo of that period with him in I would be very grateful. He was 24 when he was killed in 1944, so if that helps Tony Webb in the hunt for a photo of Bob in his youth all well and good. I have an Aunt who was a young teen when Bob Sloman visited their farm in Trottscliffe in the early 40's to go shooting with his MGS friend Alan Skinner (my late uncle) so she should possibly be able to identify Bob from a group photo. I have attached a photo taken possibly in 1943 if that will help.



Robert Sloman

Dutch woman has tended RAF hero's grave for 45 years

By Richard Palmer

A DUTCH woman who has tended a British airman's grave for 45 years has finally been honoured for her devotion.

Tiny Claessen, 78, first noticed the neglected headstone of Flight Sergeant Henry Hiscox while visiting her own father's grave nearby.

She began weeding and cleaning the grave out of respect for the fallen war hero and has returned every weekend for five decades to leave fresh flowers there.

Although she never knew him, she felt it was her duty to remember Henry for the "price he paid for my freedom". Over the years, he became like a brother to her, she said.

Henry, from Newport, Gwent, was 35 and a rear gunner in a Lancaster bomber of 75 Squadron RAF, when he was shot down over the village of Bessel, eastern Holland, in July 1944.

Stuck inside the sheered-off tail section, he survived the crash, which killed the five other crew members, and landed in a cornfield.

Despite desperately signalling for help he died of his injuries three days later because villagers were unable to reach him for fear of being shot. A week later, the Germans put



A Lancaster like the one in which Henry Hiscox was shot down

his body in a coffin and he was buried in the graveyard.

Henry's parents visited their son's grave in 1949 and his late daughter Thelma went there once but by 1965 the plot had been abandoned.

Tiny said: "When I was younger my mother told me to carry on caring for my father's grave when she was gone and then pointed at Henry's and said: 'Do that one as well'."

"He gave his life so people like me could live free and it was the right thing that he should be respected and remembered.

"Doing what I did for him meant that it felt like he became a member of my family. He was like a brother to me."

Tiny's heart-warming story

came to light after she received a formal letter of thanks for her "years of devotion and dedication" from the Royal Air Force.

Last week, on the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands, Tiny had a visit from Air Commodore Charles Clarke, OBE, a war veteran who presented her with a photo of a Lancaster bomber.

Terry Chairman, of the Imperial War Museum, said: "The Dutch are acutely aware even today of the harshness of the German occupation.

"Dutch schoolchildren used to be allocated a war grave to look after but it is very rare for someone to continue to do so for the rest of their life."

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Tiny Claessen at the grave of Flt Sgt Henry Hiscox

I am in touch with Bob's squadron association and a number of others who are also being very helpful. A friend in Luxembourg is translating the local official account of the crash (from the Dutch). There was a lot of interest earlier this year in the Dutch lady who has tended the grave of Flt. Sgt. Henry Hiscox in Holland for nearly fifty years - it turns out that he was the rear gunner of the plane of which Bob was the engineer. I've also attached a cutting from the Mail from earlier this year about this story.

Sadly Bob's body and those of the other four who died when the plane crashed were never recovered. He is remembered on the RAF memorial at Runnymede, and also at Snodland, and there is the germ of a campaign to mark the spot where the plane came down at Kessel.

My interest in Bob is firstly professional in that every year I try to present a researched account of one of the names on our parish(es) war memorials - this year I decided to remember an airman from Bomber Command who has no known grave - and secondly personal in that my aunt has been telling me something of her own wartime experiences and this is how Bob Sloman's story first came to my attention. She tells me that his father was the manager of the Nat Prudential (now Nat West) bank in West Malling.

Thank you both very much for your time - I'll be grateful for anything you can discover. Every good wish
Kevin Davies

Please let us know if you can help Kevin's research.

The Old Maidstonian Society has heard from the following members whose news is reproduced below.

Eric Haslam - 1935

I was looking through the MGS website recently as my great grandson has just passed his 11 plus and is hoping to go to MGS following in my and my son's footsteps, when I read the article by your President - Paul Clifford.

I suppose I am one of the oldest OMs (Brunswick House 1929 etc) and Mr. Clifford refers to his father who died in 2006. I think it probable that his father was James (Jimmy) Clifford who was a very good friend of mine from the time we entered Shell Form together at Brunswick House. I lived fairly close and I am pretty sure Jimmy lived in a house in (I think) St. Michaels Road, opposite the church. We frequently went to School together. At my age memory does some funny things but I think I am right.

I played rugby for the OM's in 1935 and 1936 when a bad injury to my back sustained in a match on our pitch at South Park put paid to any serious sporting activity for two or three years. I left Maidstone in 1937, joined the Army shortly after the outbreak of war, and did not return to Maidstone for another 20 years, so I got out of touch with OM affairs.

In 1972 I was invited by the then Headmaster - Mr. Pettit - to give the address and present the prizes at the annual speech day. I found it a most daunting task facing 500-odd boys two generations removed from me.

Hope I haven't bored you with these reminiscences - I am afraid verbosity is a failing in the elderly.

(Ed: Not verbose at all Eric. Many thanks. Would that we could all be so succinct!)

Aubrey Stevens – 1941

We have extracted the following from a letter from Aubrey Stevens:-

I spent 41 years working for either the War Office or GCHQ either in this country or abroad. During the war I was involved in doing direction finding for the War Office under the Official Secrets Act. Then two and a half years in the Royal Signals followed by the remainder of my working life with GCHQ. For two years in the middle 1960's I was the only civilian instructor at a Royal Signals' training establishment in the Midlands, where the young soldiers – who had signed the Official Secrets Act – were being prepared for their future work in Morse Code interception duties. While I was in the Army I passed a Board at Leeds University to go on for teacher training after demob but decided to re-join GCHQ where I eventually ended up as a senior duty officer at a station near Taunton.



I have included a photograph of MGS First Eleven, 1941. The tall chap standing behind me was C.N. le Gassick – our scorer. Later in 1943-1945 we worked together on DF duties in North Yorkshire for the War Office. Altogether there were seventy-eight of us young men who had been intensively trained in very fast Morse Code at an underground fort near Chatham – Fort Bridgewood - for intercepting German intelligence signals. Fort Bridgewood was one of five such forts built on the order of Lord Palmerston (Prime Minister) in the mid 1880's as a protection against any French invasion of the Kent coast. When those fears came to nothing the forts were known as "Palmerston's Follies". C.N. le Gassick eventually became a Colonel in the royal signals and now lives in Aberdeen. We still correspond.



(Ed: Aubrey also sent us the following ditty, which we print with suitable apologies to Bob Rylands and all those wonderful English teachers.)

Further thoughts of a Prefects Cap 1936-1941

Mr. Strauss' German class
Was cause for apprehension
For those who failed to comprehend
Their nouns of fourth declention

Mr Julier taught a range of French
For sixth form and beginners
And those who erred on verbal tense
Weren't made to feel like sinners

In Mr Hodges' "geoga" class
They learned of many a nation
And wowed him when he went on stage
For his prestidigitation

Frank Sando's many runs for School
Were done with dedication
Reflected in his later year
When running for the nation

Cricket, glorious cricket
Under blissful summer skies
And the ball which took that wicket
Stayed in mind and never dies

Rugby was the game to show
Which boys you could rely on
To scrimmage hard and tackle low
Like some aspiring lion

As a scorer logs his final run
In some remote pavilion
My memories have now begun
Approaching their oblivion

Experts in the woodwork field
Made works of show production
Less gifted showed a keen intent
In arboreal destruction

At gym it went by leaps and bounds
Enjoyed by all the boys
But upside down on wall bars
Seemed to mar those former joys

The 'chemi' lab did not explode
Though hearts at times just stood
When following a taunting goad
Some know all thought he could

Followers of fives were few
But those who did enthused
To hit that ball above the line
With hands though gloved and bruised



"Still There!"
Olim Meminisse Juvabit

Photo: Peter Weaver, LRPS

Graham Hocking – 1949

(Ed: Graham who, with his incredible memory [there are no less than four chapters of his post-MGS life available for those who would like a copy] and varied interests, never ceases to amaze. Here is another of his tales, which he has titled: “‘Aunt Emma’ or the curse of the dreaded railway modeller”.)

This is a general memo to an awful lot of people, but I think many of you may be at least mildly interested.

The Queensland Government Railways built 50 railcars during the 1920's, using old London 'B' type bus engines, gearboxes and back axles. Their frames and bodies were built locally, and they were fitted with a small version of the U.S. archbar bogie for the front wheels. I have always thought it quite remarkable that no less than four of the 50 are preserved, and in running order in 2010!



Aunt Emma

There is 'RM32' which was originally named 'Endeavour 1929' and served for many years on the long-defunct Cooktown to Laura line, it is at Normanton and may be hired for short runs along the 100 miles plus line towards Croydon (Queensland). (At a price!)

Then the Mareeba rail ambulance, which was rebuilt from the 1926 Atherton Butter factory 'rail tractor' in 1946/7, is kept in running order by the Mareeba Hospitals Board, 'just in case' it may be needed should floods prevent road access to the Cairns Base Hospital from the Atherton tableland.



Model of RM32 "Endeavour"

'Red Fred' resides at the QGR Museum and is allowed out to play on the main line now and again for the amusement of enthusiasts, he's fine, except that his original 'Tyler' 45 hp petrol engine has been replaced by a diesel motor, better than nothing.

Finally, to the best of my limited knowledge, 'Aunt Emma' the Aramac Shire Tramway railmotor was locked away in the Goods Shed at Aramac when the tramway to Barcaldine was closed. Not so, as you may see, because it has been very well restored, it is pristine, and friend Jack Shepherd 'just happened to be passing by' (Yes, now pull the other leg) and took this photo of her standing outside the shed on a short piece of track. All it needs now is for someone, or some group of interested people with local pride in their history to relay part of the tramway for her to run on, and that looks a pretty good prospect from here (about 1200-1300 miles away as the crow flies).

Oh dear, having built models of Endeavour 1929, the Mareeba Ambulance and the Atherton Butter factory rail tractor, I suppose I will have to think about a model of 'Aunt Emma' as well!

Very best regards to every one of you.

John Hyde - 1949

I am still alive and in contact with a couple of contemporary OM's - Bob Whyatt and Chris Maunder. I have given up community activities such as council etc., but run a U3A Digital Photography Group and enjoy more time to get back to my painting.

Yours 'aye

Mike Starke - 1957

Thank you for your e-mail and the Newsletter. It was a pleasant surprise to get your blast from the past. Most informative. The photo of the red brick cloister in the quadrangle brought back more memories. I am, indeed, an Old Maidstonian (I still have the silk tie to prove it). I was at the School from 1954 to 1957, in fact, my last form being Upper 4G, in the tender care of Mr Priestman, if I remember correctly. My father, who had served on secondment in Kenya for much of that time, was transferred to the Canterbury area in 1957 and I spent the rest of my grammar School career at Simon Langton Boys' School, on a partly-bombed city centre site that's now a baffling array of supermarkets and department stores. By all means use my half-century-old ramblings in the next Newsletter, if you wish. Sorry, as a superannuated journalist of 40 years, I cannot resist a couple more yarns:

I have some happy memories of MGS. There was the snowy winter when the staff and prefects challenged the School to a lunchtime snowball fight. It was an epic confrontation, carried out with a great deal of good humour. Oh, what

would the Health and Safety Executive have made of that? Mass sackings and the rest of us rushed into local authority care, no doubt. Then there was our gravel-voiced games master, “Killer” Kemp I think, who was, incidentally, the proud owner of a sleek, coffee-coloured Riley roadster.

In contrast to the snow story, one sweltering summer Wednesday, those of us on the “odds and sods”, who didn’t make the cricket team for the afternoon, were set to work rolling the First XI square with the enormous industrial-strength roller. As we sweated, we endured the haughty leers of our white-clad cricketing colleagues. We had the last laugh though, when “Killer” sent one of our number out for ice creams all round for the roller party. Perhaps there was a salutary lesson for all of us in his shrewd move.

Adjacent to the cloisters, I recall, was the gym, presided over by PT master Mr Stewart, I think. He was aided and abetted by a tall, stiff-backed accomplice, with a neatly trimmed moustache, one “Nogger” Knight.

Boxing was compulsory. I was a gangling youth, and hopeless at the sort of co-ordination required for success. However, the enforced descents to the deck somehow kindled in me a lifelong respect and interest in the noble art of self-defence. The high point of PT was the occasional game of “Pirates”, a sort of ground tag match employing all the apparatus; touch the ground and you were “out”. Of course, this was not just good fun, but ideal exercise for young limbs. Low points in PT were when a transgressor among our number (I managed to escape this fate) was pointed, usually by the unsmiling “Nogger”, to an ever-present pile of lost property plimsolls in the corner of the gym. The culprit had to select a plimsoll from the pile and hand it to the master for him to apply sharply to the victim’s posterior. “Nogger” had a fiendish side-swipe action, that, I was assured, caused more pain than the straight shot.



“Nogger” in uniform. Does anyone have a better picture him or of other teachers of this period?

“Nogger’s” main task was to instil in us the basic principles of woodwork, and my late mother loyally used my inexpertly crafted nail scissors holder for many years. I got better with practice and still use the skills “Nogger” taught us in my DIY efforts to this day. It was possibly one such victim who tried to get his own back on “Nogger” one lunchtime - with potentially disastrous effects on all of us. “Nogger” was master on duty in the dining hall, striding imperiously among the ravening hordes, scanning the serried ranks of us for any infringement of etiquette. However, his eagle eye missed the wag, apparently the son of a soldier from the Maidstone Barracks, who placed an apparently inert hand grenade on “Nogger’s” empty chair. Remember, this was barely a decade after the Second World War, and surplus or souvenir arms and ammunition made alarmingly regular unofficial appearances in public. Uproar ensued when the object of the prank returned to his seat and spotted

the “iron pineapple” and we were all ordered out of the dining hall at the double. It appeared that, although the grenade had no fuse, it was still packed with high explosive. I cannot recall the fate of the prankster, or even who it was. I suspect, though, that it was not as simple as selecting a plimsoll from the pile in the gym.

Enough! I hear you cry!

David Atkinson - 1962

Ed: David sent the following about himself and his two brothers (on later pages), all of whom attended MGS.

David (1957-1962), the eldest’s main claim to fame at MGS was as assistant stage manager in various School plays, playing the cello badly, and becoming, to his surprise, Sergeant Major of the Basic Section of the CCF. I also came 99th out of 100 in the Cross Country. I did a PhD in Chemistry at King’s London, became a Schoolteacher and then got ordained.

I was for a number of years Fellow and Chaplain at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, teaching for the Theology Faculty. Then I worked at Southwark Cathedral. I was Archdeacon of Lewisham and then Bishop of Thetford in Norwich Diocese from which post I retired last year.

I have written a number of books in pastoral theology and Christian ethics, the latest being about climate change. I am married to Sue, and have two children and six grandchildren.

Gardner Crawley – 1962

As some of you may know, one of my other interests is the preservation of heritage railways and in particular the Rother Valley Railway which was set up to complete the missing link between Robertsbridge and Bodiam, thereby connecting the Kent & East Sussex Railway to the main line. Together with Tony Hocking, I was one of the founder members of the KESR Preservation Society nearly 50 years ago. It's a bit of a busman's holiday for me as I get to use my civil engineering skills in quite a different way from my day job. The work described below was completed on time and in budget, not something I see every day.



Junction Road Halt in 1930, from the level crossing.

Recent donations and land acquisitions have enabled the company to rebuild a mile of line from Bodiam to the site of Junction Road Halt. The final two hundred yards of track now brings the line up to the B2244 road and was completed on the 9th July.

In the picture is a petrol railmotor bound for Robertsbridge Udiam Farm just visible on the right. These railmotors operated on the Kent & East Sussex Railway from 1923-1937, alongside resident steam locomotives.

Most of the route of the Rother Valley Railway meanders past fields of sheep and

hops but this section of track has been relayed on its former route straight through a comparatively recently landscaped garden and close to a fine 16th century farmhouse. The land reprofiled to accept the new line which runs mostly on a low embankment. Local people in passing cars could not believe the reincarnation when the railway emerged in a matter of days in front of their eyes.

An early visitor to the site was Greg Barker, the local Member of Parliament appropriately responsible for climate policy and he was given a guided tour by me as Chairman of the Trustees. His pledge of support was gratefully received.

In the early days of preservation, when the Ministry of Transport decreed that the restored railway could only operate between Tenterden and Bodiam, thoughts of rebuilding the whole route to the junction were the stuff of dreams.

The new Rother Valley Railway, born from the ashes of its former past, has been actively acquiring land whenever it becomes available and this has enabled the company to complete this new extension as one of several projects. It is likely, subject to necessary approvals, that Kent & East Sussex Railway will run special trains to this temporary terminus from Tenterden during 2011.



From left, local MP Greg Barker, RVRHT trustee Mike Hart, and Trust Chairman Gardner Crawley, inspect the Junction Road Halt extension on 9 July. Behind them is a ballast train headed by Class 14 D9504

Nick Ashwell - 1962

I left MGS in the summer of 1962 to go to University of Sussex, where I graduated in 1965 with a degree in Chemistry and then a Post Grad Certificate of Education – qualified teacher – in 1966. I gained a PhD in 2003 at the University of Reading. I won't bore with the in-between bits, but will let you have them should you want!

(Ed: I never turn down such offers..... I hope we will hear more from Nick in the next Newsletter)

Alan Atkinson - 1965

Alan (1957- 1965) was School Captain (and briefly Captain of Rugby until he suffered a shoulder injury). He also played in the cricket First XI. While at School he won a national English competition sponsored by the London Daily Mail - and the prize was a trip to Canada. This may have sparked his love of travel because after stints on The Scotsman in Edinburgh and The Guardian in London he migrated to Australia in 1974. There he has worked both on newspapers and as a TV journalist.

He is now a senior producer with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. His book 'Three Weeks in Bali', published by the ABC, is his account of the terror attack on nightclubs in Bali in October 2002 in which more than 200 people were killed. He was one of the first journalists on the scene, being on holiday on the island at the time.

His on-the-spot reporting has won him several journalism awards. He lives in Adelaide with his wife, Margie, and two children. Unlike his brothers, he has never come close to being ordained!

Peter Atkinson - 1971

Peter (1963 - 71) is the youngest brother (they have a younger sister who went to MGGS). His legacy to the School includes a large painting based on the Canterbury Tales (and discreetly featuring various members of staff) which hung for many years near the main entrance and is now halfway up the staircase leading to what used to be the Sixth-form Common Room. Peter reckons that if it is still there after 40 years, it is time the School bought some more paintings!

He played the oboe, possibly even worse than David played the cello. Peter went to St John's Oxford, and then studied in Cambridge and Rome before being ordained. He spent some time in parish ministry, then was appointed Principal of a Theological College, and then a Cathedral Canon in Chichester, and has been Dean of Worcester since 2007.



(Ed: The painting still hangs there today and I photographed it recently)

His hobby when he was at School was designing cathedrals, so it is suitable that he has ended up in charge of one. He has written some books and academic articles. Peter is married to Lynne and they have three grown up children. David, Alan and Peter's parents made a donation to the School when they had all left of a new lectern for the stage in the main School hall.

Adrian Rudge - 1956

I went to Maidstone Grammar School in 1949, having just scraped through my 11 plus. I did fairly well academically until it got to A levels which I found a struggle although I did win a prize for German but probably only because there were just 3 of us taking it!

I left the School in 1956 and joined Lloyds Bank in London, but found travelling and evening classes tedious so joined HM Customs and Excise as a front line customs officer. I had no nose for seeking out smugglers and did not enjoy shift work and the odd hours, so after six years I returned to banking with the Midland Bank (now part of HSBC). I rose to the dizzy heights of Branch Manager but had little ambition beyond this. In 1988 the bank in its wisdom decided to get rid of most of its branch managers who were 50 or over so found myself redundant.

However jobs were plentiful at the time and I had a selection to choose from. I opted to work in the Probate department of a firm of solicitors but after two years they hit hard times and I was again made redundant.

At this point aged 53, I decided to give up work and look after my 2 daughters who lived with me following the break-up of my first marriage. They have now grown up and moved away from home: I am happily married to my second wife and live in the most glorious countryside enjoying a large garden and the wildlife around.

Brian Varney – 1960

I was pleased to receive the Newsletter the contents of which brought back some happy memories.

I was at MGS from 1955 to 1960 and my teachers included Messrs. Manning, Gutteridge, Thompson, Caley, Wood, Newman, Cutforth, Stewart, Rylands, a woodwork teacher Mr Knight and an art teacher Mr Fawcett? who had a "liquorice stick" up his cape that would land on the back of your head when he came up behind you and caught you talking (no Human Rights lawyers then). I was never practical and had a stool with criss crossed raffia seat which I cherished for sentimental reasons, and which survived as my only piece of work that did not wobble, for over 40 years.

I was always a middle of the road boy but made an extra effort in my last year to win something - the History Essay prize - but there was no prize giving, due to building works, and it was sent through the post. What a letdown. I still have it, a book of Alfred Hitchcock's stories including The Birds, but all was well when I returned for a reunion after 50 years and took the book with me and the Headmaster kindly presented it to me properly and signed it. Has anybody else got a prize which has survived 50 years and been signed by 2 Headmasters?

I was average at sport but particularly enjoyed cross-country running which was more suited to my average height and build. We used to run around Mote Park and end up coming back across the road into School and sprint to the finish. I always remember my parents coming to support me one day and I was lying third, an excellent position for me, when we crossed the road where they had parked, when they shouted "Come on Brian" and I turned to see who was shouting in the course of which I was overtaken and came 4th!

I was in the CCF and went to camp at Crowborough with the Royal Signals where I recall laying communication cables and mucking them up. Turned out I was a typical red green shade blind boy so no chance of becoming a Navigator in the RAF then....

I enjoyed music and being in the combined grammar School choir (or was it for the girls.....) and took part in the Messiah, St Matthew Passion, etc. We used to get on the trolley bus at the end of the road where we chatted up the girls from Shernold School, a good supply of girlfriends in those days. I remember Philip Langridge in his early years and noticed his fantastically rich voice even then.

I didn't do A levels as I decided I would rather get a job and study in my own time. (How many students are thinking of doing that now but for different reasons). My O levels were good so I got a job in a Bank when it was not just being a glorified salesman for their products.....Whilst studying for my Institute of Bankers exams I became interested in the law and left to join Whitehead Thomas and Urmston, Solicitors in King Street Maidstone, a prestigious firm whose Senior Partner was the Sheriff of Kent, as a trainee Legal Executive.

This was in the days when, to qualify as a Solicitor, you had to pay for Articles, which my parents could not afford, but I remained there for several years passing exams before moving on to a City firm to expand my experience. They were a small Jewish firm but very well connected with showbiz and the rag trade and specialised in divorce in the days before it became rubber-stamped and you had to have real evidence, for example, of adultery. We acted for Ringo Starr's first wife, Hughie Green and Monica Rose, etc. Very interesting and much better paid even after paying for commuting.

In my spare time I set up a detective agency and used to trace and serve legal documents and get evidence for divorces. I had some narrow escapes from debtors with vicious dogs and even guns pointed at me. Most amusing was following an adulterous couple in a grey minivan to Luddesdown Woods in the fog. When they had parked I crept up to the van to be confronted by the wrong couple who were also there in a grey minivan which looked the same in the fog. What a coincidence (and I took down registration numbers after that to avoid confusion.....). So I didn't have to stay out all night. A trick that was used for evidence of adultery was to follow a couple home, wait till all the lights went out, and stayed off for a reasonable length of time, then put a penny on the top of the wheel of their vehicle. Returning in the early morning the lights were still off, the penny was still there, and the engine cold. Nobody would believe they had played scrabble in the dark all night.....

Whilst working in the City I became aware of law costs draftsmen who specialised in legal costs, and seemed to earn a lot more than me for doing less, so I learnt how to do it in my spare time and am still doing it 36 years later. In the meantime I helped to found the Association of Law Costs Draftsmen, to set up the Document Exchange, a membership based postal service which is now used by most solicitors, barristers, insurance companies etc, and recently with the writing of a reference book on the law of Civil Costs.

When I was younger and richer I lead the playboy lifestyle of big houses, Ferraris, Porsches, Lamborghinis and big boats on the Thames but now I have a modest house, 4.5 grandchildren (1 due on 1st February next year), and I like cruises and spending their inheritance! Not bad with no A levels or degree - just hard work and using my head. I also had my own Formula Ford racing team with works support from Reynard and a talented driver who was a local plasterer with talent and no money. Our greatest achievement was at the 1985 European Grand Prix at Brands Hatch, won by Nigel Mansell, and I have a photo of Nigel Mansell sitting on the wall with me when my private car was on pole for the Formula Ford support race and, at the Formula Ford festival, with drivers from all over the world, I have a video of my car leading Damon Hill and Johnny Herbert (now what happened to them?).

Unfortunately the previous Government ruined my private pension so I will probably work at least part time forever to have the life to which I am accustomed.

I am still in touch with several Old Boys three of which are on the Committee. I would like to know what happened to Roger Waters, Jeremy Bloomfield and Chris Impey (Wimps) and Nicholas Ashwell if anybody knows. In particular I used to go to trad jazz at the Royal Star hotel on a Sunday night with Jeremy, and Nicholas lived down the road from me in Barming.

Ed: Regrettably none of the above are registered as members – can anybody assist with tracing them?

Paul East-Raza – 1963

We have heard from Paul who currently lives in Mexico and is involved in an English language radio station in Guadalajara. He says he would be happy for old friends to come and stay.

Paul Ryan – 1972

I was a pupil at MGS 1965 – 1972 and in my last year there, Martin Passmore and I produced a film about a year in the life of the School. This was particularly poignant as it was the last year, for many years, that the School admitted 11 year olds.

I have recently uploaded the film onto YouTube and thought it might be a good idea to add a link to it on the OM website or I could arrange with your web master to have it actually part of the website.

If you want to see it go to YouTube and search for Maidstone Grammar School Film. I have had to split it into six parts because of file size restrictions on the site but if it is decided to put it on the website I can supply the film as a single file, of course. Hope you enjoy it!!

(Ed: Each of the six films lasts just under 10 minutes, and they will bring back many memories of the School and teachers to those who were there at that time)

Alan Livesey - 1981

Whilst too late for the summer newsletter, I am pleased to announce that in June I was elected to the Business Committee of the General Council of the University of St Andrews to serve a four-year term. As the number of voters who voted for me vastly exceeded the number of people I knew when at St Andrews, I can only conclude that my CV swung it for me. Perhaps the decisive point being that, for the past six years, I have sat on the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (ICAEW) representing Institute members in Scotland. I am also a Vice President of the Committee of the ICAEW's IT Faculty.

I should be pleased to hear of any issues affecting OMs who went to St Andrews or who are ICAEW members at alan.livesey@dataservices.uk.com.

Mark House – 1998

I look after the sales and marketing for a small group of companies that specialise in sending people to remote environments: Wilderness Expertise, Training Expertise, Equip-Me, Sentinel Consulting.

Ewan Campbell - 2001

I've belatedly received your reminder letter asking us to register for the newsletter by email. I would be very happy to receive the newsletters to this email account.

My reason for writing so late can double up as providing a little snippet of my news. I've been away in India, where I lead a group of undergraduate students to Mumbai for a course in contemporary Indian culture and to work briefly in local NGOs. I'm now returning to King's College London, to complete my PhD in musical composition.

Dr. David Wilson – Staff - 2002

Giles Legood was visiting Fishbourne Roman Palace with his family in August when he met (and recognised!) David Wilson who was demonstrating how Roman signalling apparatus worked. The family spent a few minutes sending improbable messages to each other.

David took Giles for Maths O Level in 1985. Giles is now serving as padre with the RAF.

Andy Beck - 2005

I left MGS in 2005 to go to Bristol University to study BA French and German. After graduating from Bristol last year, I did a bit of travelling, mostly in Berlin and around Norway, and I can only recommend both Germany's capital and the Scandinavian country very highly.

Norway is very expensive but extremely beautiful, especially in the north, and Berlin made such an impression on me when I went there as a tourist that it has become my favourite city and I am now living there with a view to staying permanently. I've been looking for a permanent position here where I can make use of my language abilities, and hopefully I am on the way to finding something. I am enjoying many aspects of life in Berlin, e.g. new and old touristic sights, the multi-cultural nature of the city, the language and the gastronomy, and I've recently got into a relationship here with a girl from Berlin. I'm also still in regular contact with my family and closest friends in Maidstone.

Simon Edmonds – 2010

Simon is on a gap year before going to the University of Leeds.

Alex Field - 2010

Alex is currently attending Keble College, Oxford, reading Ancient and Modern History.

Joe Green – 2010

Joe is now studying for a Single Honours English at Loughborough University.

Aman Pujara - 2010

Aman is now studying Mathematics at Imperial College London.

Max Williams - 2010

Max started at the University of Aberdeen in September studying Geography.

AWARDS FUNDS

The Society gratefully acknowledges a £500 donation made by Mr A K Stevens – 1941. The donation will be placed in the Awards Fund and will be used for the benefit of a needy pupil or a School project, which will be agreed with the Headmaster.

The society has several awards funds, now totalling about £14,000. Bernard Mee is the Awards Co-ordinator, who will be please to hear from prospective contributors. Details may be found in our last newsletter (Summer 2010) or on our website at:-
<http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk/Category/Awards>

OBITUARIES

It is with much regret that the Society records the deaths of a number of Old Maidstonians. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families and friends.

Andrew Vickers – 2005

Andrew fell into a diabetic coma and was found collapsed on Saturday 23rd October, just two days before his twentythird birthday, at his student home at Exeter University where he was embarking on a PhD. He had recently completed a Master's Degree in Sport Science.

He had played for Maidstone Rugby Club and a minute's silence was held at the club the weekend after his death. He also played for the Mote Colts and Hunton Cricket Club.

Tribute to a team-mate



A minute's silence is held for Andrew Vickers at Maidstone Rugby Club. Andrew, who died while at university in Exeter, played for the rugby club for many years
Kent Messenger 5th November, 2010

Ronald Forster - 1954

Ron Forster died on 8th October 2010 in Pointe Clare, Quebec after a short illness. Ron was the eldest of three children of Win & "Griff" Forster, a boat builder of College Avenue, Maidstone. He was born on 20th May 1934. He completed his schooling at Maidstone Grammar School from where he gained a scholarship to Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge. Although initially reading Mathematics he graduated in Economics.

Throughout his life he was a keen athlete and, whilst at Cambridge University, was awarded a blue for long

distance running. He served his National Service in the RAF then, after qualifying as a chartered accountant, worked in London for accountants Peat Marwick and Mitchell.

In 1964 he emigrated to Toronto, working first for Canada Steel and latterly Abbotts. Ron is survived by Janet (née Taylor) originally from Newcastle, to whom he was married for over 40 years, and their two sons, Gavin and Timothy.

Ted Edwards – 1937

We were informed by Ted's wife that he passed away on 26th August 2010, at the age of 84.

Gavin Gartshore - 1962

We have learned from his wife that Gavin passed away in January 2009.

Stephen Finnimore - 1971

It was reported in the Downs Mail that Stephen Finnimore passed away at the age of 58. After taking his A Levels at MGS, he went on to gain a chemistry degree at Bristol University, followed by a PhD.

He was diagnosed in his student days as schizophrenic but subsequently discovered that the diagnosis should have been for bi-polar disorder. His health problems affected his work and he ended up moving back to Maidstone and settled in sanctuary housing in Rocky Hill Terrace.

He began consultancy work lecturing and working directly with health service professionals helping them explore the needs of patients with conditions like his own. He chaired the local MIND group and the value of the work he did in Art Uniting People will go on in his memory.

Stephen leaves his children Pierre and Hannah.

Anthony John (Tony) Butler -

30 Jan.1945 – 13 Nov. 2010

(Ed: We have received the following notes from Richard Ratcliffe)

Tony and I met early in September 1956 as fellow “new boys” at MGS in our short trousers (as one did in those days!). I remember him as an engaging and outgoing colleague who was always prepared to “lead from the middle” – the sort of person one looked to for some “steer” when all around was a jangle of chaos. Eventually, in the third year sixth form, when he became Captain of the School and I was a senior praefect we enjoyed each other's company and many a game of table tennis. As well as being gifted academically he was a fanatic lead guitarist and singer “by night” and played with the Muskrats before going up to Oxford. (They reformed in 2007 and have been playing in Oxford and Kent off and on since) We lost touch whilst pursuing our respective careers (his was most illustrious as the notes below bear testimony) but were reunited in 2006 when a reunion of the “1956 joiners” brought together an eclectic assortment of 61 year old men who found to their amazement that they still had much in common. We have been in touch since and Tony had agreed to be President of the Society for 2011 – 2012. Sadly that was not to be and after a long battle with cancer he died in the Sobell House Hospice in Oxford on November 13th.

I attended his funeral at the Oxford Oratory Catholic Church of St Aloysius Gonzaga in company with our President Paul Clifford and with Dick Ely, Trevor Salter,

Roger Vidler, Malcolm MacCallum and a number of others. At the reception afterwards in the Margaret Thatcher Centre in Somerville College his son in law, Nick Edwards, read an unfinished obituary Tony had written a few weeks before his death. I can do no better than reproduce this below:



Tony was born in Canterbury just before the end of the war. His first home was bombed, but, fortunately, the air raid sirens had sounded and he was in an Andersen shelter in the house opposite. Life after that was on the tame side, apart from when he rather foolishly signed up for a parachuting course with the Army: his ‘wings’ were probably the proudest piece of memorabilia hanging on the downstairs lavatory walls.

Tony was both proud of, and felt intensely indebted to, his education – an excellent primary school, from which he went to Maidstone Grammar School and from there to Oxford, Cambridge and Columbia Law School in New York. At MGS he was a half decent rugby player, particularly in the lineout. At cricket, his batting had more style than success, but his bowling was extremely fast and quite dangerous. One of life's monitors (and despite his involvement with a rock and roll band and hanging out with the naughty boys) Tony became a Praefect and, to his surprise, School Captain, and was said to have brought rather more fairness and consideration to the disciplining of the boys than had been the case in previous years. He greatly enjoyed the CCF and became the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 300-strong MGS contingent. He contemplated an army

career and joined the Oxford University OTC, but nothing came of it – apart from the parachute wings.

His three years studying History at University College Oxford were to be the most important in shaping his life. Though not especially interested in JCR or student politics, he was nevertheless (or perhaps for that reason) elected President of the JCR. In his second year he was awarded a Former Scholar's Exhibition, but he never quite understood why. Irritatingly, although the exhibition carried £10 a year, it did not entitle him to wear a scholar's gown. When one of his tutors, Tony Firth, asked him what career he was going to follow he said he did not have much of a clue; Firth (whose father had been Registrar General) suggested he might try the Civil Service, which he did, and he got into what was then called the Administrative Class.

At Oxford Tony met and fell in love with Ann (the best friend, unfortunately, of the girl he was going out with); they married three months after he graduated. Catherine came along about 9 months later, at the end of the couple's year in Cambridge where he was studying for a postgraduate diploma in criminology. They proceeded, with a six week old baby, to New York where he studied some more criminology, courtesy of an extraordinarily generous Ford Fellowship about £4,000 (worth probably £100k today). Since it turned out that he was ineligible for the degree he assumed he would be studying for, the year proved academically somewhat relaxed.

I referred above to his "illustrious career" and I turn to the Order of Service for the funeral (Requiem Mass) which relates his many achievements and reproduce this below. Short eulogies at the reception by colleagues from the Civil Service left us in no doubt that Tony brought much to his work and was never afraid to challenge the status quo or the ethos of the service and I formed the impression that all regarded any branch touched by him as the better for his presence.

Career

*Joined Home Office as Assistant Principal, 1969;
Police and Criminal Depts, 1969–72;
Private Secretary to Minister of State, Home Office, 1972–74;
Principal, General Department, Sex Discrimination and Race Relations
Legislation Units and Broadcasting Dept, 1974–79;
Private Secretary to Secretary of State for the Home Office, 1979–80;
Assistant Secretary, Broadcasting, Finance and Prisons Depts, 1980–88;
Assistant Under-Secretary of State, seconded to Department of Environment
1988 as Director of Inner Cities;
Principal Finance Officer, Home Office, 1990;
Director of Personnel and Finance, then of Personnel, later of Services,
HM Prison Service, 1990–96;
Director, Oxford University Careers Service, 1996–2006.*

Public Services

*Independent Assessor, Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2000–07.
Director, 2000–06, Chairman, 2005–06, CVs.ac.uk Ltd.
Treasurer, 2002–04, President, 2004–06, Association of Graduate Careers
Advice Services.
Trustee, University College Oxford Old Members' Trust, 1988–94 (Chair of
Trustees, 1991–94).
Foundation Governor, St Gregory the Great School, Oxford, 2007–2010.
Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
Professorial Fellow, New College, Oxford, 1996–2006; Emeritus Fellow
2006–2010.*

MAIDSTONE GRAMMAR SCHOOL TODAY

A Level Results

The results were even better than last year while International Baccalaureate students were among the best in the world.

Students gained A* to B grades in 59.1% of subject entries – the second best figure in the School's history, with A*'s in 9% of subjects. Overall, 99% of students gained five A* to C grades including maths and English – a 15% improvement on last year.

Headteacher Nick Argent congratulated all the pupils and said that the achievements across the year worked out at an average of more than 10 passes per pupil at A to C grade.

MGS Times – July 2010

(Ed: We reprint the following letter to parents by the Headmaster, Dr.Argent with his kind permission)

Dear Parents,

At the end of this term we say our 'good byes' to a number of staff who are either retiring or moving on to pastures new. They leave of course, with our thanks and best wishes for the future. From among their number two warrant particular mention because they are leaving us sharing between them a combined total of 65 years teaching at Maidstone Grammar School.

Mr Chris Meigh joined the School in September 1976 and has for many years been our Head of IT and Computing. Mr David Sparkes joined us in September 1979 latterly serving as Head of Biology. I would like to take this opportunity to set down the School's thanks to both of these teachers for their service over so many years.

As the end of my first year as head draws near it is interesting to reassess my view of the school now that I have the benefit of a rather closer acquaintance. Many of my initial impressions have been confirmed; this is a vibrant school with pupils who are in the great majority highly motivated and keen to succeed. MGS has many strengths but I think it is the willingness of the staff to give freely of their time to support their pupils in both academic and extra-curricular activities that makes this School out of the ordinary.

For the staff and pupils alike it has been a long and full year; I therefore wish you all an enjoyable and relaxing break. ND Argent

Senior Speech Day – 10th September

Ann Widdecombe was the guest speaker. Needless to state she spoke at length, without notes, and caused much amusement with her down-to-earth approach.

Reference was made several times during the afternoon to her at last accepting the invitation to appear on *Strictly Come Dancing*. We have watched her progress with considerable enjoyment – if it is entertainment value you are looking for this is surely it.



Richard and Anne Widdecombe



Richard Ratcliffe and the Head at the Senior School Speech Day
Richard apparently having his glass filled from the pump...!

Matt Williams, School Vice-Captain 2009/2010, made the following speech:-

“Firstly I have been asked to pass on an apology from Tom Stapley-Bunten, last year’s School Captain, who cannot be here today as he is unable to get back from a flying course on time. However his absence allows me the opportunity to talk to you all in his place, about the fantastic school that MGS is, along with a few of my own personal memories and thoughts that I will take away and what the school has done for me.

“MGS is more than simply a place of learning; it is somewhere that allows and encourages personal development, something I believe all students who pass

through our school experience. This development stems from many aspects of our school. Just to name a few of these, the staff; they go further than purely teaching, they are a support system for their students and I can say from personal experience just how beneficial this is to the school. On top of this many of the staff aid in the running of many of our extra-curricular activities in their own time, to further benefit our student experience.

“The extra-curricular activities that the school offers from years 7 to 13 are in my opinion one of the most important aspects of the School experience, the sports, like rugby, not only bring groups of students together who share a passion for a sport but also enhance the unity of the school, which can be seen in the large amount of students that come out to watch home matches during the week.

“My own time at MGS has, without a doubt, been the best seven years of my life. My experiences through the teaching, the rugby team, CCF, prefectship, World Challenge, have all brought unforgettable experiences and friendships that I hope will last for years to come.

“My appointment as School Vice Captain in the latter stages of year 12 was, as I saw it, a perfect way to conclude my time here, while giving something back to an institution that has given me so much, personally and academically. My own appointment I know surprised many people, as I wasn’t what many would see as the obvious candidate, I have never been what you would

call a “model student” and I still to this day find it hard to imagine myself being the person I used to look up at when I was in my first few years at MGS. However Vice Captaincy is something that I have loved while putting in 100% and relishing the challenges and experiences it presents, while hopefully also bringing something of myself to the role. It has allowed me to get to know many new students and staff and has allowed me to give back to the school, and also to the community through helping organise house charities days.

“Now however it is time for me, as it is for the rest of my age group, to move on to the next of life’s challenges. Whether it be university, travelling or employment we all face starting again using the skills and knowledge MGS has given us all. We will meet new people and experience different places. I myself have begun this process by attempting to learn from my mother how to cook for myself and wash my own clothes after 18 years of apparent laziness!

“I, along with my year, will miss MGS and everything it has given us, but I am encouraged by the students that I see will follow us, I know that none of the fierce School pride that has become typical of MGS has been lost, therefore holding our traditions in place. It is also very encouraging to know that we are leaving the school in capable hands in this year’s Captain and Vice Captain, Tom Woods & Jordan Wooler, who I wish all the best and am sure they can’t wait for the challenges and fun that awaits them in the next year.

“The last thing I will say is a word to the students; make the most of your time left at MGS, it is a fantastic school, and when you get to the point my year are in now you will realise how lucky you all are, finally realising the significance of those three Latin words on our crest, now understanding that one day we will gladly remember, *Olim Meminisse Juvabit.*”

OMS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ANNUAL SUPPER

The Annual Supper will be held in School Hall on Friday March 25th 2011 at 7.30 pm. The change of format to a buffet and the use of round tables was judged a success and will be continued. All Old Maidstonians are welcome. The charge will remain the same at £19 per person. Those requiring special meals should contact John Clayton at j.clayton@hikent.org.uk.

This year the committee have decided to introduce name badges with the year of leaving MGS for each attendee.

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.

The use of the occasion for year group reunions is important and we would be pleased to see such reunions to go ahead. Special ‘date’ reunions (e.g. 25, 50 or 60 years) could even warrant mini pre-functions and we will probably be able to arrange tours of the School, given enough warning.

The Old Maidstonian Society Annual Supper - 25th March 2011

Melon & Parma Ham served with a Crusty Roll

Chicken Tikka Masala
Vegetable Dansak
Served with Pilau Rice, Naan Bread & Assorted
Chutneys
Or
Beef Goulash served with Boiled Rice & Green
Beans
Or
Spinach & Mushroom Lasagne (v)

Selection of Desserts from the Table

Coffee and Mints

Book Now

SCHOOL EVENTS FOR OLD MAIDSTONIANS

The following dates may be of interest to Old Maidstonians:-

16 th December	Carol Service – All Saints (7.30 pm)	13 th July	Sports Day
17 th December	End of Term Carol Service	15 th July	Junior Speech Day and Founders Service
5 th February	PA Quiz Night	22 nd July	Staff/Student Cricket Match
25 th March	OM Annual Supper		
31 st March	Spring Concert		
18 th June	KS3 5-a-side Football Tournament		
6 th , 7 th , 8 th July	Lower School Music Evening		

OMS AND MGS SALE ITEMS

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 Woolgar, 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

Gaudeamus: 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

MGS 1549 to 1965 – A Record (32 Pages, 6" x 9")

There are a limited number of hard-back versions of this publication, which is a revised and enlarged version of G. B. Philips's short history of the School produced in 1949, the quatercentenary year. G B Philips undertook the task in his retirement and the work was completed by N W Newcombe. The foreword was written by R R Rylands and notes that the publication, produced in 1965, also brings to an end the era of WA Claydon.

Please note that most have some sort of marking on the covers, and although in good condition, are not perfect.

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

Garments:

Ties

There is a supply of both styles of the Old Maidstonian tie and these can be ordered using the return sheet at the end 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 Maidstonian 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 one of two produced for the 450th anniversary, and was originally the tie the School 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 is for sale at £15 each.



The Old Maidstonian Society Newsletter

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We Would Like to Hear From You

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

ORDER FORM

GARMENTS

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

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

I enclose £ for the purchase of Blazer 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 'Guadearmus: A History of Music...'
at £5.00 each (plus £2.00 postage)

I enclose £..... for the purchase of copy(ies) of 'MGS 1549 to 1965 - A Record'

Total: £

YOUR DETAILS

Name: Year of Leaving:

Address:
.....
.....
.....

E-mail: Telephone:

**Please return this form to:
The Old Maidstonian Society, Maidstone Grammar School,
Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7BT.**

