



Old Maidstonian Society

Newsletter No.4 - Spring 2011



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President: **Anthony Hayward**

Chairman: **Richard Ratcliffe**

Secretary: **Graham Belson**

Meantime your Committee are working hard to assist students at the school financially by reinvigorating the Awards scheme. A re-launch will happen later this school year (summer term) and you may

be asked to see if you can contribute in whatever small way. Keep an eye on the website and elsewhere in this newsletter. I hope we can all respond to this call to financial arms for the good of Maidstonians all.

Richard Ratcliffe
Committee Chairman
April 10th 2011

THE CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS

I was delighted by the success of this year's supper and thank John Clayton and Graham Belson for all their hard work. Having moved last year to a "buffet style" we refined and developed it this year and all the feedback I have had was very positive.

The Society is moving forward: our membership drive, via the dropping of the membership subscription and maximising the use of electronic communication, is certainly paying off. Membership at well over 700 now, is something to be proud of.

Those who were at the supper heard the Headmaster lamenting the Government's education funding policies, which will mitigate against schools like MGS with large post-16 cohorts (i.e. sixth forms). How ironical that a bastion of English educational tradition, which was (in the main) well funded under a supposedly antagonistic Labour government, should be stripped bare of essential funding by a coalition of the centre-right. The Society is writing to the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, to express its bitter disappointment and to urge a change of heart.

FRONT PAGE UPDATE

Several projects which have been under review for some time are now nearing completion - the Society Rules, the Awards Scheme and the Archives being three of them. We are grateful to Brian White and Graham Belson who have given a great deal of time to redrafting our Society Rules and restructuring the Awards Scheme to bring them up to date and to meet current needs. At its meeting on 29th March 2011, your committee put some finishing touches to this work which will be put to a General Meeting in the near future. **Tony Webb** has taken on the post of Archivist and is making good progress with the reorganisation of the archives.

Other key issues arising at that meeting were:-

- **Anthony Hayward** was welcomed as the new President by the Committee and he chaired the meeting in absence on this occasion of Richard Ratcliffe. Richard has kindly agreed to continue in the role of Chairman..
- The position of Secretary became vacant when Anthony became President and **Brian White** agreed to become Secretary when he retires at the end of August 2011. Graham Belson kindly agreed to carry the baton until then. The Committee expressed its thanks to Anthony for his past service as Secretary.
- Due to pressure of work, **Graham Belson** resigned as Editor of the OMS Newsletter and this is his last issue. In addition to running his company, Graham also fills the posts of Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Sales Manager and he also assists with the Annual Supper organisation. As Membership Secretary, Graham offered to continue to organise the printing and posting of the Newsletters, as well as the forwarding of each by e-mail. Brian White agreed to edit the Newsletter in August 2011, and to then consider becoming Editor when he retires. The role includes maintaining the Website.
- **The President** announced his intention to visit the school during his term of office to enhance the relationship between the school and the Society. He will concentrate in particular on the activities which were his own special interests while at school: music, the CCF and the Christian Union.
- **Bernard Mee** has resigned from the Committee, who expressed their thanks for his work over many years.
- **The Treasurer** reported that the General Reserve Account now stands at approximately £2,500, and the Awards Account at approximately £12,900. He also said that the Society now has Internet banking facilities which will make managing the accounts easier. In his role as Membership Secretary he reported that membership now stands at about 730 and is increasing by about 5 members per week on average.
- **Tony Webb** gave a briefing on the current state of the Archives. It is clear that there is much archive material appearing 'out of the woodwork' from the school and that organising it all will take some effort. Tony has identified archive material, such as 450th

anniversary mementos and extra copies of 'The Maidstonian' which he intends to sell to fund improvements to the Archive. Tony has produced a document laying out how he intends to operate the Archives. The content is discussed later in the newsletter.

A full set of minutes of the meeting of 29th March is available on the website or in hard copy on request.

General Committee 2011-12

At the AGM on 25th March the following Committee was elected:-



Anthony Hayward

Anthony Hayward (1958) –
President
anthony.hayward@hotmail.co.uk

Richard Ratcliffe (1964) – **Chairman**
rbr1@btconnect.com

Graham Belson (1965) **Editor, Membership Secretary, Treasurer**
oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk, Tel: 01622 730514
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John Caley (Staff 1955 to 1998)
Tel: 01622 751801

John Clayton (1968)
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Gardner Crawley (1962)
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James Kinsman (2005)
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David Leeke (Staff 1990 to 2000)
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Prof. Malcolm McCallum (1963) – **Webmaster**
m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk

Simon Pain (2005)
simon@macrolevel.co.uk

Peter Weaver (1958) **Co-Editor**
p.weaver@iee.org

Dr. Tony Webb (Staff 2000)
dmwaww@gmail.com

Dr. Brian White (1969)
drbdwhite@yahoo.co.uk

Committee meetings are normally also attended by the Headmaster, Dr N Argent.

Functions Organiser

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.

Members occasionally hold individual year-group functions. The Society would like to assist in managing and increasing them. The role of Functions Organiser will involve working with the membership to organise reunions, annual sports events and other activities to maintain contact between the members and the School.

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 Chairman or Membership Secretary.

Contacting the Society

The e-mail address 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 above.

Annual Supper

A total of 96 Old Maidstonians and guests attended this year's Annual Supper on Friday 25th March 2011.

A slightly changed menu proved popular, with a selection of main courses including chicken tikka masala, beef goulash and vegetarian lasagne leaving many people spoilt for choice! Compliments were received from many members on the quality of the food.

Outgoing President **Paul Clifford** hosted the evening with typical affability, and his guest, the broadcaster and economist, **Andrew Dilnot, CBE** gave an entertaining speech drawing on his eleven years at

the Institute for Fiscal Studies and on his role as Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford, which he has held since 2002.

Headmaster **Nick Argent** spoke passionately about his commitment to selective education and of his concerns at the impact the coalition government's cuts to education funding were likely to have on MGS' ability to maintain its sixth form provision at its current level. He urged all those who shared his views to lobby against the cuts.

School Captain **Tom Woods** replied to the speeches, after multi-talented **Jordan Wooler** not only received the Alec Stewart memorial tankard but also deputised for David Leeke by playing the school song. The Ted Clifford memorial award for excellence in History was received by **Harry Butcher**.

Anthony Hayward was inducted as the new President of the Society.

We are pleased to reprint the Annual Supper speeches as follows:

Paul Clifford - President

Can Leo Ludgate please show, Leo you are particularly welcome - I think you earn the prize for being the member present who left school at the earliest date, in 1945 is that right? (*A round of applause for Leo.*) There are a number of other people here who left when the school was still less than 400 years old. I think you have all done extremely well. Just two other names to mention, Ken Dulson (*1947*), and Mike (*1972*) and Tim Chapman (*2008*), these are three generations, father, son-in-law and grandson-in-law I guess it is. Where have you come from? Still Maidstone - all of you! Oh it wasn't too far! Well done for maintaining the family tradition.

I have enjoyed my year as President very much, and I must say when I took it on and went to my first committee meeting I was a little nervous that the committee would be a group of people who saw it solely as their job to organise this annual supper and I was very pleasantly disabused of that notion almost straight away. I said at the AGM before this supper, I paid a tribute if you like, to the work and commitment of your committee and I would like to repeat that now. This is a committee with a vision, I think that's fair to say. A vision that stretches just beyond this no doubt very enjoyable gathering into something a bit

bigger. I think a couple of years ago it's fair to say they got a bit of a shock by what was going on on Facebook, that actually there was already on the Internet an informal Society if you like. Old Maidstonians were keeping in touch with one another - something like a thousand or eleven hundred strong when the membership of the Society was then only about 400 and they decided to take some action. The first thing to do was to decide to abolish the fee. That means that in effect, by dint of being an Old Maidstonian as soon as you left school, you become a member of the Society. Nevertheless that still needs a registration or an enrolment and that means that they were very interested in getting the e-mail addresses or other contact details of everybody and I think there are about 10 people in this room for whom the contact details are not actually available. So if you haven't given your email address or your address or other contact details, please see a member of the committee before you go. But apart from Facebook the other thing of course was the website. They made a very clever decision to commandeer the man who inspired the Facebook page to create the new website and those of you who were here last year would have seen that launch and if you haven't been on the website, do go. There is more interesting information on that all the time and the membership of the Society now stands at 726 and is growing at the rate of 8 or 10 a week. I don't know how many other old school societies can actually claim that. So this is a society that has really got momentum, led by my old matey and is going places.

Another thing and that has come up during the course of the year is to try the idea of geographical reunions. Why should Maidstone be the only place where Old Maidstonians can come and be reunited? Old Maidstonians are scattered all over the country and all over the globe, and David Leeke, one of the Committee, is going to start by holding an inaugural reunion in London for Old Maidstonians who live there. Why can this not be rolled out so that on this night, or possibly some other night in the year, in towns and cities throughout the Country, Old Maidstonians gather to remember their days at school? There is of course something else to think about and that is the financial climate; I know that the Headmaster will be saying something about this in a minute. The next few years are going to be extremely tough for this school, along with any other school in the state system, and again the committee is bearing its thoughts in how the Society can be galvanised into

supporting the school tangibly, financially in various ways. I expect you will see some innovative and creative ideas coming in the next few years how you might be able to help with that and inspire other Old Maidstonians to do the same.

There have been other things going on such as rationalisation of the awards, and the archive has been reorganised and put together with the school archives. There is now a room that the Headmaster has kindly made available where lots of old memorabilia are going to be stored and hopefully that may become open for inspection. So in future years, instead of just coming to the supper or AGM you can actually go and browse upstairs and look through a whole range of memorabilia. But there are various ways in which you can help. Some of you I think get the newsletter in hard copy, that's fine but it costs £4 a copy to produce and post. If you were able to pay for that, I know that the Committee would gratefully acknowledge that. Please see Graham Belson our Treasurer afterwards. There is increasing demand for members to make contact with the people they were at school with in their year. So if you would like to think about ways in which you could do that, talk to a member of the committee because lots of other suggestions are coming forward. But the Society is in good health. That is shown not just by the turnout tonight and the growing membership, but by your energetic committee. As I say, I would like to finish by paying a personal tribute to Richard Ratcliffe and his team who have more or less been re-elected on block at this evening's Annual General Meeting and who will continue their work in the years ahead.

Now I come to introduce my Guest Speaker. I have known Andrew Dilnot for quite a few years and he is a man who has had an extremely distinguished career. After a degree in PPE at Oxford he left and joined the fledgling think tank called The Institute for Fiscal Studies. It was so fledgling when Andrew joined it that they could only have staff meetings around two sides of a four-sided table in the local café. But its reputation gradually waxed and it became more influential and eventually Andrew became its Director. He first came to national prominence when, in the course of the 1990s, he was regularly seen on television, often within minutes of the Chancellor sitting down at the end of his budget, saying exactly where his figures were wrong and why he would need to rethink them in future budgets. The media, never slow to spot somebody with talent, picked him up.

He did a number of programmes on things like numbers and poverty and social exclusion and so on. His career was going along very steadily when in 2002 he surprised many of his friends by being appointed the Principal of St Hugh's College, Oxford. This was remarkable for two particular reasons. The first is that Headships of Oxbridge colleges are normally the sinecure of superannuated diplomats and civil servants, or academics who never really quite made it into the professorial chair that they had long coveted. Andrew was neither of those things. But the other extraordinary thing was that he was only 42 so he was one of the youngest Oxbridge Heads of Houses I think there has ever been. The second claim to fame is that he was the first Head of an Oxbridge House to have been educated at a comprehensive school and he may refer to that in what he has to tell us. His third claim to fame is that (I am almost certain about this), he is the first Old Maidstonian to be the Principal of an Oxford or Cambridge college. So he has had a most distinguished career. In fact the only part of his career that is not distinguished is his time at Maidstone Grammar School, because he only spent four terms here. I am not quite sure whether it was because his father took a second look at the school and decided that actually this wasn't good enough for his son, or whether in fact Andrew couldn't hack the academic standards here, but I like to think that at any rate we can sort of bask in the reflective glory of having an Oxbridge Head of House as an Old Maidstonian. I am looking forward very much to his account of his time here and anything else that he likes to share with us. Would you please welcome Andrew Dilnot?

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### **Andrew Dilnot – Guest Speaker**

Thank you Paul, I have known Paul long enough to know that I'll pay for that generous introduction later. Whenever one stands up in front of a group like this there's a judgement that needs to be made, particularly if one's host hasn't made the length of speech explicit and I am always put in mind of remarks that Gladstone made in his diary. Now I am sure that many of you will have read all of Gladstone's diaries, riveting and thin. During the Midlothian campaign when Gladstone was already reasonably mature, he would work pretty hard. On one particular day he records in his diary at the end of his day how in the middle of the day he had made a lengthy speech, I can't remember where now. He then had walked 15 miles

to another hamlet where a crowd was gathered and he then says 'I noted immediately upon my arrival that the peasants seemed somewhat jaded, I therefore restricted my remarks to one hour and three quarters'. So that will take us until about half past eleven! Not that you are either peasants or looking jaded. It is a real delight to be here. I have not been in this building since just before Christmas 1972. I have not been in Maidstone I think since then. In 1972 at the end of that calendar year when I had been at the school for a year and a term, I was 12 and my family moved to Swansea. So I have not been here for all that time and I arrived at Maidstone East station late this afternoon and thought that I would walk. I wasn't absolutely sure where I was going but I found my way here and I am delighted to be here.

The first thing I did when I got here was to see if I could find the part of the school which brings back the strongest memory for me. For those of you who experienced this, you will understand it particularly at this time of the year; it was the swimming pool. The outdoor swimming pool that opened at the beginning of the summer term, even when that was in April and into which we were all plunged, even though the temperature was icy. This left such a strong mark on me, that the only way that I could interpret temperatures in Fahrenheit, (this is me pretending to be a young person). The only temperature I know in Fahrenheit is 58. I know what that feels like because that was how warm the swimming pool used to be at the beginning of April or the beginning of term. That set me thinking about sport here, now I know that we will be giving out the Alec Stewart Memorial Tankard later on, I am pretty sure that it is Alec Stewart I have in my mind. I was a slightly sickly child with moderately severe asthma. Alec wasn't very interested in that kind of pathetic excuse, and I still have vivid memories outside of the pavilion of being sent off on the cross-country run by this not - you know, I am keen on not terribly tall gentleman - this not terribly tall gentleman with a very fierce mien. Sport doesn't have particularly happy memories for me here. A combination of being either completely frozen or not being able to breathe but that doesn't take much away from nonetheless that warm sense.

What else do I really clearly remember? – Now something that dates me - slide rules. I can still remember the extraordinary excitement in the first maths lesson in big school of being given out a slide

rule and thinking how jolly exciting it was. Now maybe not everybody here is quite that much of a nerd, but I had a sense then that we all thought this was a mark of being very grown up and also rather sophisticated, although we didn't quite understand how it worked. It seemed to us slightly magical but, yes, indeed that squared bar really did give you the answer. I am sure there are others here who, along with me, still know the square root of 3 is 1.78 - we won't perhaps go there. Other memories - Paul will definitely know the answer to this: is county cricket still played at Mote Park? [No the Borough Council would not fund it]. When I was a boy there was still county cricket played at Mote Park. I have vivid memories of going there at the weekend and also after school and my recollection is maybe rose tinted and is maybe false memory syndrome, but I am pretty sure that we used to be able to get in if not free at a very reduced price after school. I can remember going there after school and seeing Alan Ealham having his teeth knocked out while deputising for Alan Knott while there was a test match going on. I can't remember who was bowling but he was standing behind the stumps when a stick hit him and completely took his front teeth out, not very elegant with blood all over the place!

I also have another memory. I remember very vividly watching Alan Knott score centuries in successive innings in the very early 1970s. There - those were happy days. But the most important experience that I got from this school in the brief time that I was here was associated with the room over there, which I think now seems to be a second hand uniform shop but in my era was the tuck shop. I acquired a lifelong love of crunchie bars while here. In fact the state that my teeth got into in my early teenage years I blame Maidstone Grammar School for. You know it was the exposure to the freedom to spend one's own money or one's parents money on sweets ruined me in all kinds of ways, but exposed me to the idea of consumption. Now I was only here for four terms, and after four terms I went off to Swansea where I went to what was at that stage, I think, the largest comprehensive school in the country. There were two and a half thousand pupils in it; 15 classes in each year. It was quite a shock. Coming here from a very small primary school was a bit of a shock, but going from here to that comprehensive school much more so. I remember realising on the first day that things were not going to be as they had been when, at the morning break, I saw somebody sitting on somebody

else and hitting him over the head with a motorbike chain, and I thought, "This is going to be a different experience". There was quite a lot of stabbing, but as my friends and the teachers reassured me, it was always the girls; we were quite safe. It was a great school and in many ways it shared an awful lot that Maidstone Grammar School at that time, and I am sure still now, stood for. It really valued academic pursuits, or at least the teachers did. The boys and girls weren't so sure!

I was still quite small and moderately sickly. Although I had been born in Wales, I had moved to the South East when I was two, so I sounded then roughly as I sound now. So I was small, slightly weedy, sounded English and liked mathematics. This was not a good combination. It has turned out to be: I made my life worthwhile but at the time it wasn't a winning strategy, and although I can now do a passable imitation of a Welsh accent, (though I promise you I shan't), at the time I couldn't, and that was mildly uncomfortable. But at that school, just as here, there was a sense that working hard and doing well academically was something really worthwhile. Something that I fear that we have rather lost in our culture, certainly in England in the intervening 40 years. It is harder and harder for academically gifted young people to care about that.

One of the things that I say to students at the beginning of each year at Oxford now is that I know, like Tom, Jordan and Harry, there and students who come to us, they work very hard in the previous years to dress as they ought to dress and to speak and act in ways that are cool, but now that they are with us they can stop trying because it hasn't worked anyway and they are all nerds and that's something we can be proud of. We don't have that culture anything like as much as we ought to. There is a strong prevailing sense that values, other than distinction in all things, should be taken into account and I deeply regret that. Anyway, I went to this school and I thought I wanted to do Business Studies. I thought I wanted to be a Businessman. That is what my father had been, so I applied to various universities to do Business Studies. And then late in the day, the Deputy Headmistress at the school, who was a slightly barmy lady, decided that actually her children, the children at her school, were good enough to go to Oxford and Cambridge, and it was time that some of them applied.

In all the years that the school had been open just one

person had gone off to Oxford or Cambridge, and that was two years before my year. The year that we applied she kind of dragooned us and, in the manner of all good teachers, just told us what to do, and we said 'okay Mrs. Williams'. Seventeen of us went to Oxford and Cambridge. That told me something very important, which is that actually just deciding you are going to do something, as an institution or as an individual, can make an enormous difference, and that we very easily put up barriers that are not there. Ever since, I have had a passion for making sure that access to the most selective universities is available to all, because going to that university completely changed my life.

I thought I wanted to do Business Studies. You can't do Business Studies, or you couldn't then, at Oxford. So Mrs. Williams said: 'Oh well, do Politics, Philosophy and Economics. That's almost the same'. I thought that sounds plausible. Of course, it's not at all. They are not in any way connected. I studied Economics and I discovered that I loved Economics and I have spent my working life since then doing it. It did transform my life, completely transform my life, gave me the opportunity to discover the extraordinary power and beauty of academic study, the value of seeking after the truth and that's what those universities still do. All the great universities in this country, not just Oxford and Cambridge, by any means do that for young people. They absolutely transform peoples' lives, and that is why they are valuable and why we must go on doing it. There are all kinds of issues about access to these universities, and as a representative of Oxford I am asked again and again how we make our decisions. What it is that we are looking for, whether there is a bias in favour of state schools or private schools, or boys or girls, or people who are good at rugby or bad at rugby, or tall and short. And the answer is very simple. There are no biases, and there is only one thing that we are looking for and that is simply academic potential. It is not terribly easy to measure that. Actually it's really quite difficult to measure it. Exams can help a bit. In the university that I am part of we are lucky that we are still in interview people. That helps us a great deal because it means we are able to aim off. But all we want, the only thing we want, is people who will benefit from being a part of that institution. Oxford has now divided the country up into geographic parts and allocated a different bit of the country to each college. By pure serendipity it turns out that Kent has been allocated to my own college, St Hugh's, and so

we are doing all we can to find ways of encouraging people to think about going to these universities and helping them to understand what it is all about.

Now let me say a little bit about the debate about public funding at universities at the moment, because I can't really talk in public without doing that. My own feeling is that we have got slightly hung up on probably the wrong issue in this area. Of course people will disagree about exactly how much we should charge individual students for going to university. I think we can all see that there is a benefit to individuals from going to university and so we are not going to have tax funds for all universities, then charging people to go isn't necessarily wrong. I don't think it is necessarily wrong. I would rather we weren't doing it. I would much rather that we were willing as a society to pay enough tax for it to be free to everybody, but we are not and I can see that there is a perfectly legitimate argument that says that we should be willing to charge people to go to university. As long as we make sure that for those whose family incomes are low, we can make sure that they are paid for. And of course, Oxford and Cambridge are lucky enough to have enough money to do that.

I don't think that is where we should be having the argument. The thing where I think we should be having the argument, and it makes me rather cross, is not that we are going to be charging students more for coming to university, but that we are withdrawing all the public funding of teaching and that seems to me simply wrong. If we withdraw all public funding of teaching in the university, then what we are saying to young people and to the whole of the rest of society, is not only do we think there is a benefit to you from going to university, of course we do, but we are saying we don't think there is any benefit to anybody else from you going to university. That seems to me to be entirely wrong; absolutely entirely wrong. If we go on going down that road then we are saying to people, 'Think only about yourself because it is only the benefits to you that matter'. That must not be what a school like this stands for or what the university system stands for. We value universities, not just because of the benefits that accrue to the individuals that go to them, but because of the benefits that accrue to the wider society. That doesn't have to simply be soft or social benefits, there are also significant benefits from people who go to university and then go out and generate a great deal of wealth both in the jobs that they create and the tax that they will pay. That will make it possible to fund schools like this and hospitals and goodness knows what else.

So the thing that I want to argue with Government about is not whether the fees should be £9,000 or £6,000 or £5,000 or £12,000. That seems to me something about which people can legitimately disagree, but the fundamental category error that says it is appropriate for the state to wash its hands of subsidising university education. That seems to me simply wrong. I think that we want to assert that there is a real benefit to the whole of society from the right people going to university, and those benefits don't just accrue to the individuals themselves. We mustn't slip into a world where we see individuals as being all that matters and care less of the individual level as being that which is most important.

Take the other area that I am working on at the moment. I am the Chairman of the Independent Commission that is trying to resolve how we should fund long term care and support, both for the elderly, and for working-aged adults with disabilities. Everybody here - I think we are all men in this room now - we have a one in five chance of ending up in residential care. If we are lucky enough to have women partners, then they have a one in three chance of ending up in residential care. That is partly because in general we are older than our wives, and also partly because we are useless. So when we fall into the condition of needing care, then it is quite likely that our wives and partners, or daughters, will look after us. And when something happens to our wives, it is much less likely that we will be any use. Condition on going into residential care - there is about a one in five chance that we will still be alive two years later.

This is a huge issue and the number of people getting into this position is growing very rapidly, and at the moment the system we have in the UK fails dismally. Why am I interested in this? Why are we interested in this as a society? Is good social care provision good for the economy? It is actually very bad for the economy. It would be much better for the economy to let people die; that would be a much more efficient use of resources, much more sensible. The same happens to be true of the health service. The health service is really stupid economically. There is no point at all as far as the economy is concerned in replacing the hip of an 85 year old widow in the north east of England who none of us know. It doesn't make any sense, not efficient, won't make the economy grow more quickly, it's just right. We don't do it for economic reasons. Although I am an economist one of the things I feel most strongly about is that we

have lost an appropriate discourse in the way that we run our public lives, and we have substituted a bastardised version of economics for it. A bastardised version of economics that tells us that what economics says is that all that matters is the individual servedness. Well that is not how people behave. It is not actually how we behave as individuals. It's not how we behave in families. It's not how we behave in this kind of community; it's not how we behave as a whole community. We need desperately to recover a way of talking about what it is that we want to do communally, because if we don't recover a way of talking about what it is that we want to do communally that recognises that we are not simply individuals, that recognises that we are created to be in a relationship with one another, and it's in our relationships that we find most of our fruitful lives, then we will not be able to work out how to do the things that matter. Like pay for a school like this, pay for the health care that we all need, pay for the care and support that the young autistic adults who I have been spending time with earlier this week need. Pay for the care and support that the hospitals which are full of often elderly women need. And the way of doing that is seeing that there is intrinsic value in things that all too often our society now wants to turn into things of only economic value. We could think about whether this school is a good thing by asking ourselves the question, are Tom and Jordan and Harry, going to get a good enough education to go out and get a good job which will keep them and their families economically secure? And that's one way of thinking about this school, but it's a weak narrow minded and rather pathetic way of thinking about it. That's not what the people who founded it four hundred and how ever many years ago wanted. It's not what draws all of us here today. That's a much richer set of ideas about the intrinsic value of seeking after wisdom and understanding that abuse you of knowledge, and the value of trying to help people to be the very best that they can be.

Those are the kinds of things that we have to get hold of again: the kinds of things that for all his encouragement that we jumped into unpleasantly cold water, Alec Stewart and his ilk cared about. That is why those marvellous people who taught us here and in schools around this country, why the extraordinary people who work in residential care homes and schools for young people with learning difficulties; that is why they are doing it. Not simply to put bread on the table. That is something that these days we

can do with astonishing ease. But because they want to be better, more perfect, more full, more alive human beings. That is what I hope this school stands for. That what I hope it started me thinking about nearly 40 years ago, and that is why I would like you to join me and raise your glasses to this marvellous place - Maidstone Grammar School.

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Nick Argent – Headmaster

I am sure you will all want me to thank Andrew, particularly for giving me the poisoned chalice of following him. I echo what he said about Mote Park, I worked in the Maidstone area in the 1980s. When I came back I assumed I would be able to zip over there at the end of the school day and see country cricket after 4 o'clock for nothing. I have very fond memories of, I think 1985, seeing Deadly Derek bowl out Yorkshire after tea something like 7 for 67 on a sticky dog. It's a tremendous shame it no longer happens. I guess there is a formula for these sorts of talks for a Headmaster, that's probably to give you a quick whizz through what the last year has been like, particularly emphasising the things that have been good and quietly forgetting the things that haven't. Then say something about what the future's like; I suppose I won't vary from that formula, except the message about the future is perhaps more stark than it has been for many a year.

Academically it's been a fine year. At GCSE, if you are students of statistics and at least one of you is, you will be interested to hear that 99% of our students got 5 GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and Maths, which is the national measure. Perhaps more impressively, nearly half of all our entries resulted in grades A* or A. There was a rise in the number of students gaining five or more A*s to an all time high. One pupil managed to get 11 A*s and one A. That is a pretty remarkable achievement. Stand up if you achieved that yourself, no, okay. Even more remarkably we had a boy who joined us three years ago. He was a Chinese national and he spoke no English and he left this school with eight A*s and 3 As. Andrew talked about the capacity for institutions such as the one he runs to transform lives; I think I, as a Headmaster of a school, would argue about the capacity of schools like this to transform lives. One of the reasons that I passionately believe in selective education and in grammar schools, is because I was the beneficiary of one. I come from quite a lower

class background and I was the first person in my extended family to go to university. I got there because I was sent to a good state grammar school when they existed in Hertfordshire. They don't anymore, my school is now a comprehensive and it is not doing what my school did for me, so I believe there is something to be fought for.

We also managed to get into the top 50 nationally for the English Baccalaureate. Now if you have heard about the English Baccalaureate you may be intrigued. This was what Michael Gove decided that he would retrofit: it's not really a qualification but a measure. So he introduced the qualification after we had done it. It was great to come in the top 50 nationally. It's a fantastic achievement. But it was a bit like waking up and discovering you have won a raffle when you were unaware you had bought a ticket. Nonetheless it's nice for the school to be able to say "top 50" but few of us have any idea what it actually means.

A level and IB managed to improve on the previous year's really good results. The proportion of A* to B grades at A level was the second best in our history, at over 60%. The UCAS points per candidate, 369 if you are interested in such things, was the highest ever achieved. A new A level grade, the A* was introduced and nearly 10% of our results achieved that grade. We were very pleased because every time some new measure is introduced you are never really sure how well you are going to do. Five pupils achieved 3 A*s and an A grade at A2 level.

Also as you know we were running the IB. There were some very fine results. Three quarters of all our entries gained the IB equivalent of a B or better at A level. Remember that is with pupils taking six subjects: a very rigorous qualification. You can get a maximum 45 points on the IB tariff but it is exceptionally difficult to do so. We had two pupils with 43 points which put them in the top 2% of entries worldwide. One boy did even better - his 44 points put him in the top 1% worldwide, and remember generally it is only selective schools that are doing IB.

And all this from a school that continues to do lots of other things. Here is a quick and by no means exclusive list – the 1st XI football team won their football league and they reached the semi finals of the Kent Cup. I was there and frankly we were robbed. At the other end of the spectrum the Year 7 rugby

team played their last fixture on Friday of last week. It was a 7's tournament which they won in common with every other game they have played in a season that began in September. At the other end of the school, a group went to the Model United Nations. I believe we are the only English school that attended. It is held at Harvard and one of our pupils, currently in Year 12, won a prize for his contribution as a delegate. A Year 8 and 9 team won the local Maths Challenge; a group of pupils, mainly in the sixth form went to China on a cultural trip. The RAF CCF section have again reached the Ground Training final. I don't know if you are aware they have won it for the last three years, a remarkable achievement. If you had been in this hall a week ago you would have seen the junior production of 'Twelfth Night' and on the same day last week, the school raised over £3,000 for Red Nose Day. This school does a lot more than just educating its pupils; the stark message is that much of this is under threat.

Michael Gove, when he took over as Secretary for Education, announced in the context of 'the cuts' that no school would be worse off and Heads around the country thought 'thank goodness for that.' It's not true. If you believe him when he said that schools are not experiencing cuts, then I am afraid you have been misled. When Michael Gove said this he had his fingers crossed behind his back and what he meant was that no school would lose more than one 1.5% of their core funding for 11 to 16. Not all their funding for 11 to 16 or their post sixteen funding, but on their core funding. Schools are funded in an extraordinary idiosyncratic way with a large number of different funding streams, and the core funding accounts for probably only two thirds of what this school receives. I think that in particular we add value to our pupils outside of the classroom and where we do that best is in the sixth form. Michael Gove has said that he aspires to making schools in England and Wales "world class institutions". If there is any part of the school system in England that delivers anything resembling world class, it's our sixth form provision. It's probably the bit of schooling that nationally we do best and it is the bit that is going to see really sharp funding cuts over the next four years. It is very likely that these schools will have to reduce their curricular provision. If you know anything about current education you will be aware that many schools are already laying off staff. Fortunately we are not in that position and we aspire not to be, but there is a long journey ahead. Nationally we are living in a

time of large scale teacher redundancies, and it is the first time that this has happened for the best part of twenty years.

Those of us in the senior management of schools, and I have been a Head for 14 years in three schools, have never been through times like these. Now I know many of you will be saying "well this is just the public sector getting a taste of what it is like out there in the real world." But this is from a Government which espouses the importance of education and the idea that you build from the bottom when you are trying to recover your economy. I do think that the sad thing is that in schools like ours the sixth form provision is likely to diminish in terms of quality simply because there won't be the money; this is appalling. This school adds value to our sixth formers and not just in the classroom. That is going to change.

I am telling you partly because the debate isn't over; so please don't let the people around you believe the myth that schools aren't receiving a reduction in funding. The reduction in funding of all schools is substantial, with the exception of those few that have very high numbers of pupils on free school meals where the pupil premium will to some degree compensate. So tell the people you know not to swallow the government line that this isn't happening to your schools because it is. Secondly, I note with gratitude the intention of the Old Maidstonians to introduce their awards which will help support individual students probably in the sixth form, although not exclusively. It will make a difference, it will allow pupils to continue to access some of those things which otherwise may be hard to provide, and we have probably never needed the support more. It is like the first line of 'A Tale of Two Cities', which doubtless you have all read; "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". For this school it is a time of great achievement, of good academic standards being matched by much going on elsewhere. But just around the corner there is this threat to the very core of what schools are trying to do. Without exaggeration, I think that schools of our type face the toughest times they probably have had since the Second World War. Anything you can do to persuade people or support us will be welcome. I would like to think you are here because you gained so much during your time here. We continue to aspire to offer the next generation the same provision, but this government does not. We will fight as vigorously as we can to maintain the quality of what this school

does and I would like your support. Thank you very much.

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### **Tom Woods – School Captain**

Good evening gentleman. It is a great honour for me to be here tonight at the annual Old Maidstonians dinner. It falls at a time when the prospect of university, final exams and the end of my time at MGS and equally the passing on of the school captain baton, are ever closer. I have spent the past seven years at MGS and undeniably they have been both a great academic experience and equally great social experience, culminating in my final two years here in the sixth form. It is definitely the sixth form where a great relationship is built between the staff and the students, as mutual respect and guidance flourishes both in the classroom and in the plethora of extracurricular activities. In my time at MGS I have travelled all over the world - representing Italy at the Harvard Model United Nations, spending a month travelling around southern Africa and spending time in Paris and Barcelona whilst in the lower years, all of which have been possible due to the dedication of students and staff. However, it is not just abroad nor in the classroom that the school achieves. The Headmaster has already mentioned the 1<sup>st</sup> football team's success this year. Equally a member of the upper sixth form, George Edwardes, is announced as the British Minicross Champion. The reinvigoration of the school magazine, *The Maidstonian*, has occurred this year and can be ordered from Mrs. Friend, the Head's PA, and equally our continued charitable commitment. It gives me great pleasure to echo the Headmaster in saying that this year we have raised £12,000 for charity, of which £3000 was from the hard work of the sixth form for last Friday's Red Nose Day. As nostalgia begins to kick in for me, I am glad to say that the last year and indeed my last seven years here have been very enjoyable, and hopefully by the date of my A2 results in August I will be able to say they were very successful too. I have no doubt that this is a sentiment that my peers are sharing and equally the feelings that you had when you reached your last day at MGS be it 20, 30, 40 or even 50 years ago I think just over there..... I strongly believe that it is the students that are the most important element of the school, for whilst the Headmaster is imperative for the school to run and the teachers provide the guidance and education, it is the students and indeed the former students, you and I, that mark the true continuity and connection with

the school. It is at times like these when the school motto *Olim Meminisse Juvabit* reigns true.

### **Annual Supper Speeches CD**

*A CD is available of the speeches made at the Annual Supper from the Membership Secretary.*

## **Old Boys' Presentations**

We have received several offers from members to make presentations, either to the students at the school, or to the Society. These offers range from lectures on particular subjects in which the member specialises, to advice on entering the big wide world upon leaving school.

The Society is very keen to develop these offers and hope that the next Newsletter will give details of our plans on taking them forward.

## **Contributions to the Society**

### **General Revenue Account**

The Society holds a General Revenue Account for general expenses and any profit from the Annual Supper goes into this account and, *inter alia*, contributes towards the production and posting of the Newsletter to those who want a hard copy. (See later for an appeal for an appeal to cover this cost.)

The Society acknowledges the 30 or 40 members who have standing orders in place and who contribute annually to the Society. Although many of the standing orders are small, they are still gratefully accepted.

### **Awards Funds**

Contributions to the Awards Fund are a different matter altogether. That fund is used for the benefit of the pupils or ex-pupils of the school who need financial assistance for their personal development and to benefit the broader outlook of the recipient. In brief the Society holds funds of about £13,000 which are to be used for the benefit of pupils or ex-pupils.

The Headmaster will identify the worthy recipients from Application Forms submitted, and his selection will be reviewed and approved by the Committee.



© Peter Weaver, LRPS

Continuing the Awards Scheme will of course be completely dependent upon the generosity of the members. Any contributions are gratefully accepted and will allow the Awards Scheme to develop and assist those in need.

*(Application Forms are available from the Membership Secretary.)*

## **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 joining and leaving the school. There are currently about 750 members of the Society. Information from the Register is only 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 any 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. We now receive a significant number of such requests as the membership increases.

Members should keep the Membership Secretary informed, preferably by e-mail to [oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto: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.

The date of leaving MGS is not an ideal reference to bring members ‘of the same year’ together. Often pupils leave at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year and their contemporaries continue for another two, or maybe even three years. The only satisfactory way to deal with the matter is to have the dates of both joining and leaving the school. If you could please pass your dates of leaving and joining to the Membership Secretary it would be helpful.

From an administration point of view, it is far easier to be able to telephone a member rather than write or e-mail. We have the telephone numbers of many of the members, but by no means all. Again, if you could please send you home and mobile numbers it will undoubtedly save time and effort.

## **OMS and MGS Websites**

The OMS website [www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk](http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk) is continually updated with the latest news, all 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. It is not our intention to report in detail on information that is readily available on the MGS website, and members should go to [www.mgs.kent.sch.uk](http://www.mgs.kent.sch.uk)

## **Quiz - No Prizes**



Perhaps a test of your memory: perhaps of your powers of observation. Where will you find this? Answer on page 27.

## 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.

You can contact the Society by e-mail at [oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto:oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk), or by writing to:  
The Old Maidstonian Society  
Maidstone Grammar School  
Barton Road  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 7BT                      Tel: 01622 752101

## University Challenge

Tom Thirkell (2007) captained his Sheffield team to the semi-finals of this year's University Challenge series.

Unfortunately Sheffield lost to York in the semi-finals, but many congratulations for getting as far as they did. Magdalen College, Oxford who Sheffield beat in the quarter finals, were victorious in the final, so Sheffield can be particularly proud of their performance. (Don't ask your editors how you can be beaten in the quarter finals and end up in the final!)

### OMS Newsletter

The Newsletter is published in April, July and November. Those who have e-mail receive the Newsletter by this route, which reduces costs. Many members either do not have e-mail, or for other reasons prefer to receive a printed version. The Society is pleased to oblige. However (*there is always a 'However'*), the Newsletter costs about £4 to produce, print and post, and the Society would appreciate a donation towards those costs.

## Archives

Most of you will now know that the school has an archivist, Dr. Tony Webb, who has taken over both the Old Maidstonian Archive and the School Archive. Melding the two and cataloguing, and in some instances repairing what has been located so far, will be an enormous task. Some tolerance may be required of enquirers if there is delay in responding and if the archivist suddenly finds something more coming out of the woodwork!

The Archive has now been established in a designated room off the staff room, though some material still in the gatehouse has yet to be moved. The CCF and Scout archives also need to be moved and John Caley is kindly investigating these.

Having now established a combined MGS and OMS Archive, both organisations are keen to ensure that historical material is not lost. If, therefore, you have any material which you feel might sensibly be termed 'Archive material' then we would be very grateful if you would please contact us. The archivist will discuss the matter and where necessary arrange recovery back to the school. Old copies of The Maidstonian would be particularly welcome.

The archive has no financial support and must pay its way and if the service is to improve funds have to be raised by various means. The Archive contains a lot of surplus material which may be of interest to members in return for a small fee.

The Archivist will, time permitting, try to answer any questions a member might have regarding their time at the school. Although his services are free of charge, the Society will make a small charge for such requests in order to continue to improve the Archives. The scale of fees is as follows:

For an e-mail response to an enquiry - no charge.  
For the supply of documents, either photocopies by post or digital photographs by e-mail as necessary,

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1-2 copies/pages | £1.00          |
| 3-5 copies/pages | £2.00          |
| 6-9 copies/pages | £3.50          |
| 10+ copies/pages | By arrangement |

All correspondence and orders should be sent to:  
Dr A.W. Webb  
Archivist  
Maidstone Grammar School  
Barton Road  
Maidstone, ME15 7BT  
E-mail: [dmwaww@gmail.com](mailto:dmwaww@gmail.com)

## News of Old Maidstonians

### 2010 Leavers

|                          |                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Auger, Alex:</b>      | Exeter                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Bailey, Dominic:</b>  | Nottingham                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Beech, Philip:</b>    | Mid Kent College                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Bell, Megan:</b>      | Warwick, studying Philosophy and Spanish                                                                                             |
| <b>Chesover, Thomas:</b> | Gap year – three months in SE Asia starting in January 2011, then a job at a media company in London. UCL starting in September 2011 |
| <b>Clark, Peter:</b>     | Gap year – Thailand, Australia, New Zealand. East Anglia starting September 2011                                                     |
| <b>Davies, James</b>     | Loughborough                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Field, Alex:</b>      | Keeble College, Oxford                                                                                                               |
| <b>Graham, Luke:</b>     | Exeter                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Gunyon, Kathryn:</b>  | Stirling                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Horton, Jamie:</b>    | East Anglia                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Humphrey, Will:</b>   | Birmingham                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Jennings, Thomas:</b> | Gap year, working at PC World, then university                                                                                       |
| <b>Prior, Stephen:</b>   | Nottingham studying Management Studies                                                                                               |
| <b>Przyjemski, Alex:</b> | Leicester                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Taylor, Ashley:</b>   | Nottingham                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Weaver, Thomas:</b>   | Lincoln                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Wright, Stephen:</b>  | Warwick                                                                                                                              |

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### Cyril Foreman – 1925

*Our oldest member recently wrote:*

Dear Graham

I send my thanks for the notice of the Old Maidstonian AGM and Supper. I would have loved to have attended, but old age and long distance make it impossible (102 last birthday!)

I send my best wishes for a successful evening; but doubt whether any present members have ever heard of me.

*Ed: The next oldest member, Eric Haslam OBE, left 10 years later in 1935!*

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### Keith Mitchell - 1946

*We received the following handwritten letter from Keith:*

Dear Graham

Many thanks for your telephone call on Saturday and the letter and information that followed. I have found plenty of interest and I am glad I contacted you. Later on I'll send you a brief potted version what I've been up to since 1946 such as I notice from some people in the Winter 2010 Newsletter that you sent me.

Firstly, on your list of people who left MGS round about the same time, I knew the first nine people reasonably well and there are half a dozen others I remember vaguely. Here's a brief summary:

1. Bob Hollands – we were in the same form for four years and took the School Certificate together. I had brief letter contact with Bob in 1976;
2. Cyril (Cecil?) Horne and I were in the same form in 1939 and he stayed in a parallel form till 1944;
3. John Ould – the same as Cyril Horne and we had brief contact around 1996;
4. Brian ('Major') Smith was a good friend of my late brother, Brian, and is also a friend of someone I knew at school and in the army and with whom I still have contact – David Fisher;
5. I played in the school Cricket 1<sup>st</sup> XI with Graham Connell;
6. I knew Harry (Bean) Ellis both in and out of school. He was year in front of me and also knocked around with the same group of teenage hoodlums in the evenings for a couple of years;
7. B H Fuller is Brian Fuller (mostly, at school, known as Bony). He had/has an older brother, Stuart, who is also an OM. I played cricket with them a couple of times post MGS;

8. D R (Tony) Gosby was in the same form as Bob Hollands and I through to School Certificate. He was a very talented artist and became an architect;
9. Lennie Ludgate was a very good athlete and was Victor Ludorum while at MGS;
10. Patrick (PBH) Bailey was one of three brothers who were at MGS and was in a recruit squad two weeks in front of me at Canterbury Barracks after we were called up for military service;
11. I didn't know Michael Hasler well but he followed me from St. Michaels C of E School into MGS;
12. Messrs Clinch, Hawkesley, Honey and Lawrence I knew only by sight;

Vernon Fawcett was the art teacher and he tolerated my total lack of ability for, or interest in, the subject by allowing me to skulk quietly in the background. He was called up to the navy in 1943, and I well remember him at the school pool being given swimming lessons by Ken Sawdy, another teacher. I'm glad to know that he got back safely from his naval service.

The cricket master referred to by Mike Stork as 'Killer' Kemp was almost certainly the same man who was cricket and games master in 1939/1940 but then disappeared into the Royal Navy only to emerge in time to take up his post again in 1946. His nickname in my time at school was 'Gonbaldi'. He had played for Kent 2<sup>nd</sup> XI and before he left for the war in 1940 he had shown me (and others) how to run and call at cricket and tackle properly at rugby, for which I have always been grateful. Bill Manning was the senior maths teacher and his son, NWE Manning, was Captain of the School in 1939 – 1940. Gutteridge taught physics. Alex Stewart replaced 'Gonbaldi' Kemp when he joined the navy. Stewart and I didn't exactly hit it off and I would allocate the blame for that 50/50.

I also remember some others who feature in the Newsletter. Aubrey Stevens was one of the elite of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI when I was in the Under 14's while the captain of his team (sat between the headmaster – A J Woolgar – and the wartime cricket master H B (Marcus) Matthews was K M Gauld. The others are too shadowy to identify! Frank Sando gets a mention in Aubrey's ditty. He was a good friend of my brother Brian and, of course, came fourth in the 1952 Olympic Games 10,000 metres having lost one of his running shoes early on in the race. Mr Julier also gets a mention and was also a very talented pianist who sometimes gave recitals to the assembled school.

I won't bore you anymore. I can still remember the subjects of virtually all the masters (and a few mistresses!) who were at MGS during my time. I wasn't much of a pupil but it was a very good school.

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### **Brian Hammond - 1951**

Thanks for the reassuring Email. I'm glad to make contact again.

Yes, I left MGS in 1951 to take a degree in Biological Chemistry at Bristol. My name should be on the scholarships board in the Hall somewhere. After three years' study and hockey, I responded to a vocational call to the ministry of the Church of England, graduated with BSc., did two years in the army (with plenty of hockey) and then two years at Wells Theological College (with plenty of hockey).

You can find the rest in Crockford's but I'll expand it. I served four years as a curate at Holy Trinity Clapham Common, in Southwark Diocese. I started a Youth Club (which played hockey among other things) and was so well trained in parish leadership that I was thought able to take my own parish - in the Old Kent Road in Walworth. There I entered very fully into the Youth Club business (without hockey) and at one time ran five football teams each weekend. Here my budding family grew into the local life.

Then came a call to greener pastures in the south of Southwark Diocese, a commuter and London overspill parish of South Mertsam, near Redhill. I was there for fourteen years - in which the Youth Club flourished, including my three sons. I spent six of those years as Rural Dean of Reigate. I was honoured by being made Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral - more for long service than talent, I feel.

Then in 1987 I moved to a parish in the East of Croydon, Shirley - not the posh bit! While Youth Club featured, we had here thriving Scout and Guide companies. Here my wife Barbara was also called to the ministry and was one of the first women to be ordained. We retired after ten years to here Emsworth.

In retirement I have become a folk musician. I play accordion for Morris and Clog Dancers, for the local Folk Dance Club, and am musical director to a group of Victorian Re-enactors called the Portsmouth Festival Players. I play in two Barn Dance Bands and recently had a one-night stand in a Bob Dylan tribute band. I even find time to continue ministry helping the Rector in this busy parish and helping with vacancies nearby.

I look back to life at MGS with thankfulness for what I received - not just the academic. The depth of vision given by the Head and staff played a considerable part in my call to ministry. I have used things I learned there throughout. Life in the school Scouts (Troop2) probably contributed more to my musical career than the music we received at the expert hands of Mr. Julier, but one can never really tell! Where did the hockey come from? Another dimension of extra-mural MGS life - in Boxley Youth Club, but that's another story. To put it briefly - thanks MGS.

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### **Robin Ambrose - 1957**

*Robin wrote to the Society:*

As well as enclosing my supper booking form and cheque, I make bold to submit a possible entry which is effectively an advert for my two local history books. If that is cheeky, then send me packing! Otherwise: Robin has just written 'Penenden Heath's Story' which delves into the history and happenings of that part of Maidstone, and includes the St Paul's area. He had previously co-written with fellow Old Maidstonian David Hook 'Boxley - The Story of an English Parish'.

Both books may be obtained from Robin at 3 Faraday Road, Maidstone ME14 2DB priced respectively at £8 and £14, which includes postage.

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### **Henry Darley - 1957**

A thought occurred to me years ago concerning a 19<sup>th</sup> cent. President of the OMs, Dr. Plomley. What jogged my memory was this morning's Desert Island Discs, which was created by Roy Plomley (note the same spelling). I once had the pleasure of meeting him when he spoke at a Ladies Luncheon Club of which my wife was secretary. I was deputed to take him from Hollingbourne Village Hall to Maidstone East. We had time to kill, so he asked if we could detour down Buckland Hill where, he said, he used to come and stay with his uncle. My guess is that our Past President and the uncle were one and the same!

Interesting but useless!

*(Editor: Dr. Plomley was President in 1897)*

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### **Stuart Partis - 1958**

Stuart, who now lives in Australia, it turns out was one of Alan Bennet's original History Boys at Oxford. Alan Bennett wrote the comedy 'The History Boys', the film of which starred Richard Griffiths.

Stuart has written a book of his time at MGS called 'The Youngest Boy in the School', and which runs, in A5 size, to over 60 pages. Copies may be available through the membership Secretary.

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### **Mike Baker - 1960**

I was at the school from Sept. 1953 to July 1960. In 1960 I won the English prize, which was the Complete Works of Shakespeare, the only prize I ever won! We did not have a Speech Day that year because of building works in the quadrangle, and the book was posted to me with a certificate inside the front cover signed by the head, W.A. Claydon, universally known as Wack! Unfortunately, I lent the book out and have not seen it since but have replaced it with a duplicate bought at the RSC in Stratford. I would dearly love my grandchildren to see I did win at least one prize, and wonder if the current head could sign and send me a duplicate certificate? My best wishes to all of you at the school. At 68, I still regard my time at MGS as the most enlightening and rewarding experience a child could ever have, an exceptional school!!

*(Editor: The Head kindly signed and sent a duplicate certificate)*

### **Nick Black – 1961**

Dear Graham - many thanks, likewise good to talk to you, and much appreciated. Glad you contacted Atkinson, had no idea he had moved back to civilisation. Seems like yesterday he went oop north, but when I checked it was actually about 8 years ago. Will read the OM with interest and may indeed see you in March. Have cc'd my brother Peter Black.

*(Editor: We were able to assist in re-establishing contact between Nick and David Atkinson)*

I am pretty sure I was at MGS 1954- 61, disliked it from slightly to intensely, but of course the alternative in those days was the unspeakable Secondary Modern. Spent many Saturdays in detention - can't remember my sins, but think included refusing to wear the stupid hat. I think I was in 6a? English and History A level (rubbish grades), then the minute exams were over, like you, off to halcyon night shifts at Smedleys! Then - and goodness knows how or why - went to Beecham Group as an Apprentice (remember them?) at their vast Brentford complex. Later, did a Bsc (Hons, I smugly add) at the University of Reading and then a chartered surveyor. By the way, got married, had two wonderful children, got mortgaged, partner of a property business in St James's, etc. etc. Was seconded and then worked for 12 extremely interesting years at Imperial College London as Estates Director. It's the biggest HEI in Europe by built area.

My main claim to fame is that I probably/possibly/maybe went to a Rolling Stones bash at the Castle pub in Richmond around 1962. So basically that's what I am - a west London suburbanite!

Now you've got me into Rant Mode! Either at the time or with hindsight I particularly disliked the insularity, antiquated teaching, complete lack of any current or recent history (e.g. nothing whatsoever about minor 20C events, two world wars...., The prefect system, I really think still it was a bad system, encouraged a jobs worth mentality, licensed bullying, and presumably was set up as a copy of public school fagging etc. Reminded me of Hitler Youth.... It would be interesting to constructively debate the good and not so good outcomes of the grammar school system. Would it be farfetched to suggest (perhaps taking Richard Beeching as an example...) it maybe contributed to the mess we are in now, industrial decline/£77k debt/environmental damage/distorted housing market/rubbish post war building/car dominated culture/HEI fees etc. etc. etc.

OK OK that's enough.

I have changed a few bits of my life's pageant, but please edit as you like, but do include my dislike of the place, although I guess at the time, I just accepted it and I think, assumed everybody felt the same. My parents were quietly desperate that I passed the 11 plus.

As you said - was it really me.... did I really do that.... ?

*(Editor: Both Nick and I worked at Smedleys Canning Factory in Hermitage Lane in Barming in the school holidays to earn a few bob')*

Incidentally, you know the famous, good quality clothes made by a firm called Smedley (no link at all, so far as I know, to the pea factory) - they have a snooty shop off Piccadilly. I was very insistent that we gave my son Smedley sweaters one Christmas. Years later, I clicked on the Smedleys connection - was there some subconscious recall of happy nights boiling peas? Did I, in some Freudian way, want the lad to work night shift in Hermitage Lane?)

I love that line - My past is a foreign country, and I rarely go there.

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### **John Webb - 1963**

Don't know if you remember me. I left MGS in 1963. You may recall we swam together both for the school & Maidstone SC. I have been living in Bristol for the past 30+ years but still visit my Mum in Barming several times a year.

Due to retire later this year following 45 years in Financial Services, initially with Halifax & for the past 10 years with Bank of Ireland (previously Bristol & West BS). Still swimming competitively in Masters events both in the UK & abroad.

Looking forward to receiving future Newsletters evoking memories of friends of 50 years ago - my how time flies!!

### **Graham Kingston – 1967**

Thank you for getting in contact, and I'm very sorry that I let my membership lapse. I have nothing but fond memories of MGS and it will be a pleasure to renew my contact via the Old Maidstonian Society.

Just a bit of current info on my activities - I am employed by Royal Mail, and have been on full-time release for the past 2 years as a Learning Rep, and I run three 'Learning Centres' around the area for the Communication Workers Union in which we offer free courses to adults to try and rekindle their interest in 'lifelong learning', especially in basic skills such as Literacy and Numeracy.

I hope these details are sufficient for you, and I look forward to renewing my contact with former friends/pupils from all those years.

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### **Les Cramp, CBE - 1968**



Les Cramp, the most senior civil service insolvency practitioner in the country, has been made a CBE. Les has worked for the Insolvency Service for more than 40 years and is widely regarded as having made an outstanding contribution to insolvency law and practice.

Les Cramp was born in Snodland in 1949 and attended Maidstone Grammar School. His first job in 1968 was working for Maidstone Council restoring council property maps and records damaged in the floods which had engulfed the centre of the town that year. He joined the Civil Service in 1970. He progressed from a case examiner to deputy inspector general in 1997 and played a key role in drawing up insolvency laws and powers to disqualify company directors for misconduct. Last November he was appointed Deputy Chief

Executive in charge of the service's corporate and support services. He said: "It's a great honour, but my achievements would not have been possible without the assistance of the many people who have worked with me over the years and to whom I'm extremely grateful".

Les plays the guitar and in the 1970's was part of Maidstone band, The Bystanders, who played many venues in and around the town. He is married to Linda. They have two children, Lorna and Nick, and live in Maidstone.

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### **Ashley Philip Brewin - 1973**

Currently residing in Hong Kong - been here since 1990.

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### **Chris Harvey - 1975**

*There was an article on Chris Harvey in a recent edition of Kentbusiness.*

Chris Harvey is not your typical managing director. He runs one of the country's largest family-owned recruitment companies which was founded in Kent. A Chartered Accountant, he has become something of a turnaround specialist. He worked with EMC, corporate finance and interim management specialists, in Maidstone on troubled smaller enterprises. "I'm probably a useless accountant but I'm quite good with people and understand most things financial and legal. I ended up helping people running their own businesses".

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### **Gary Carcary - 1976**

Since last writing in 2007 a lot has passed by.

On reflection, is it really 34 years since leaving MGS (long lasting memories of "Nogger Knight", "Killer Kemp", "Hitler McCormick" - the freezing outdoor swimming pool, why I never became a prefect, having to polish the chemistry benches as part of detention.....)!

At the end of 2007 I was made redundant from Cadbury Schweppes as part of their global restructuring programme, but it gave me an opportunity to establish my own sole trader consultancy Q4Q, working with food manufacturing companies to level up their food safety standards.

In May 2008 I was offered the opportunity of going back into full time employment with Dairy Farmers Of Britain (DFOB) as their Group Technical Support Manager, accountable for delivering the food safety strategy into their nine milk / cheese processing facilities. It was unfortunate that, after 15 months in this position, the

business went into administration and, once again, I had to accept redundancy. However, I started up Q4Q again and continued to offer my professional services to food manufacturing companies within UK / Europe whilst I, once again, looked for full time employment.

In January 2010 I was offered the new interim position of Divisional Technical Support Manager - Dairies within Dairy Crest, the UK's number one dairy producer, doing a similar role as previously established within DFOB but this time supporting their seven milk-processing facilities. My contract has just been extended until March 2012 when it is hoped that a full time position will be made available to me.

I am still living in the beautiful Cotswolds with my family, my twin sons now considering their 6th Form / College options in 2011 / 2012 - how time flies by!

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### **Colin Bolton - 1980**

Thank you for forwarding the newsletter, most interesting. However, 70's students seem conspicuous by their absence!

Just for the record, I left MGS in 1980 to attend Surrey University and have spent most of my career within Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management with ICI, Zeneca and Syngenta. Currently I am living in West Yorkshire.

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### **Richard Leach - 1983**

After leaving MGS early in the sixth form (I started the wrong A levels), and following a short spell in Tesco, I went to college and obtained my A levels there. I then attended Kingston University where I got a BSc in Applied Physics with Microelectronics and Computing. I spent a year travelling, then started work at the National Physical Laboratory, where I still work 22 years later. Whilst at NPL I obtained an MSc in Measurement from Brunel and a PhD in Surface Metrology from Warwick. I now run a research group in nanometrology and specialise in surface topography measurement. I also have a visiting chair from Loughborough.

In my spare time I enjoy writing and have published two textbooks and a treatise on happiness - the result of a form of mid-life crisis! I have recently discovered Facebook and met up with lots of old friends, but have almost no contact with old buddies from MGS. I do happen to know that one of my old CCF mates is now a Hollywood director.

I would be very keen to come to MGS and give a lecture on NPL and what it's like to have a very rewarding career in science.

*(Ed: The Committee is actively looking at ways of taking up such offers.)*

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### **Jonathan Todd – 1991**

Thank you for prompting me to “check in”. Now teaching (of all things) Maths and ICT at a lovely independent school in leafy Cheltenham.

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### **Myles Chantler – 1996**

I am a member of Rother Valley Railway Supporters Association but sadly I don't get down to Robertsbridge that often as I work and run a farm, and also this year have been having health issues. We farm at Headcorn, about 450 acres, which we work in partnership with my cousin and uncle. In total it's about 1500 acres. It's mainly arable with a reasonable size head of beef cattle.

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### **David Flatman – 1996**

David left MGS after completing GCSE's and went on to the Sixth Form at Dulwich College. A professional rugby player, he first played for Saracens and then in 2003 transferred to Bath where he still plays prop-forward today. He recently signed a further three year extension to his contract.

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### **Simon Bedford Smith - 1997**

I ran into the MGS CCF on exercise in Sennybridge not long ago (as I am now a Captain in the Infantry) and it would be good to be kept abreast of things.

## **Andy Beck – 2005**

*If you read our last issue, you will remember a short report from Andy. Here is its sequel - he promises that they could "run and run".*

### **AN UPDATE FROM BERLIN**

Having left MGS in 2005, graduated from Bristol University in 2009 with BA French and German and relocated to Berlin, Germany, I am writing a few [hopefully interesting] paragraphs here on life in Berlin, intended for anyone learning German at MGS, going on to study it at university, or basically for anyone interested in the subject. It's my opinion that this country and its people have more to offer than many British people would think.

I moved to Berlin in May 2009, meaning that I've been here for just over half a year now, and while it's been a long six months settling down into everyday life in a new and foreign city, I'm thoroughly enjoying living here and learning things about the cultures and customs of the city and its people. I've slowly got myself into a permanent job, found a flat and a girlfriend here, and I've been trying to get most of the things set up that young people in England are accustomed to, e.g. Internet, mobile phone, bank account, health insurance, etc. While the insurance, Internet and bank account are all relatively straightforward in Berlin, and while the cost of living here is markedly lower than in London, any mobile phone users reading this will be interested to know that getting a good deal out here can be hard for foreigners. Most contracts that foreign customers try to get here fail to go through, partly because you're new to the country with a new bank account and therefore the Germans aren't certain to what degree they can trust you with your money. I tried in vain to get two lucrative contract phone deals (with Internet) before finally opting for a simple pay-as-you-go card. This is possibly the best that a newcomer to the country can expect until they've got a solid credit history behind them in Germany.

Another slight culture shock to me, and to a lot of other English people I work with, has been the Berlin winters. Some are not so bad, but last winter was very long and cold judging by what I've heard, with temperatures dropping to below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  at one point. This winter, they're giving it worse still. So to anyone planning a weekend trip to Berlin sometime to see the famous German Christmas markets, play safe and bring plenty of warm clothing with you, including a thick winter coat and a robust pair of winter shoes.

On a different, more political note, there have recently

been some political tensions in Berlin and across Germany that have been getting the public worked up, mostly due to three things that a sizeable proportion of the public are fed up with: 1. atomic power in Germany, 2. a train project called "Stuttgart 21", and 3. the conservative German government's plans to save money and thereby squeeze more finances out of the taxpayer. The last of these three issues speaks for itself and therefore doesn't really need detail, but anyone from outside of Germany will probably appreciate a little elaboration on the other two.

Heated debates on the environmental dangers of atomic power, and demonstrations against its use, stretch back over several decades in Germany, something that I don't think can be said for Britain. My girlfriend's persuaded me to switch to green energy out here, amidst protests across Germany that have resulted in violence from both demonstrators and riot police (not that I was ever involved!).

"Stuttgart 21", meanwhile, is a project whereby a new railway station will be built in Stuttgart, the county town of one of Germany's southern counties. Despite being hailed by the builders as a milestone in the history of architecture, many disagree with the building of the station and the associated destruction of surrounding woodland and parkland, and the public in Stuttgart has been taking to the streets in its thousands, so much so that the news has spread to Germany at large. I'd personally question whether a new railway station actually needs building in Stuttgart. If the old one would be sufficient for the needs of commuters, then a building project in the name of One Giant Leap for Human Architecture is a waste of money, time, resources and nature in my opinion.

Having said all this, it still gives me enormous pleasure to be living in Berlin, and to be enjoying the day-to-day life, the cultures and traditions, the gastronomy, the language, and not least the beautiful state of the city since its reconstruction following World War II and the fall of East Germany in 1989. I can't recommend a visit to this city too highly – it was exactly this that provided me with two fantastic months, and an ultimate decision to come back and try to settle permanently. Berlin is very different from London. I do, however, maintain regular contact with my family and friends in Maidstone, keeping in touch on the Internet and flying back to see them every couple of months.

Just before I left Maidstone, I was also in touch with Ann Widdecombe on the subject of “hate crime” and the tragic Sophie Lancaster murder case, and were it not for the fact that I now live abroad and no longer feel as influential in local politics, I would be writing to her successor on the subject as well, pushing for social change and more justice and protection for the innocent.

For those of you who have come this far, thank you for reading my ‘update’ and I hope you found it informative and interesting. Perhaps Graham will let me know if he would like more “updates”.

*(Ed: I hope that Andy will continue to provide these occasional updates – they are indeed both informative and interesting. Keep then coming please Andy. How about a few pictures next time?)*

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### **Dan Harnett – 2008**

Thank you very much for getting in touch! I apologise for not getting in touch with my details, I think I received a sheet, however I have just moved house in England and I am living in Germany for a year so paperwork at home got a little hectic!

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### **James Collins – 2008**

Thanks for contacting me. I am currently studying in Turkey so it is a good thing for me that the Newsletter is now going out by e-mail.

## **Where are they now?**

### **Bob Whyatt - 1949**

Thank you for the OM magazine. Very pleased with the new format.

I left school in 1949. My work took me to Lagos in Nigeria for 6 months. Whilst there I met up with **Stan Fitton** who left school a year before me. On return to the UK I lost touch with him. I would very much like to contact him to find out how fared after his spell in Nigeria.

Do you have any information re Stan? If so I would be very grateful if you could put him in touch with me.

*(Ed: Stan Fitton is not registered as a member, so we were unable to help. Does any member know of his whereabouts?)*

### **Bob Deakin - 1969**

If you have any news on the following OMs I'd be very grateful. **John Wells** (went to Harvard?) **John Everett** (known as Kenny and into Russian studies) and lastly **David Cater** (I believe he died in Oxford some 12 or 13 years ago from viral encephalitis – I'd love to know where his younger brother **Peter** is.) All of the above would have left in '71 or '72 except for Peter who was 2 years younger and from memory into foreign languages, alcohol and older woman but then I could be wrong!

### **Major Bernard Calladine – 1948**

The Society has been contacted by Caitriona Cantillon ccantillon@proptelelevision.com who is working on a programme for the Discovery Channel. Her message below, and our reply, are self-explanatory.

“Hi there,

I'm a visual researcher on a documentary TV series for the Discovery Channel called “INVENTIONS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD.” It is a ten-part series that looks at important inventions through the 1900's – and that combines interviews with experts, recreations, CGI explanations of the science, as well as archival footage.

One of the stories for our 1970's episode is the Bomb Disposal Unit and, in this story, we will be talking a bit about the troubles in Northern Ireland that motivated this invention. In particular, we will mention the tragic death of Major Bernard Calladine.

I am having a tricky time tracking down photos of Major Calladine and was wondering if you had any suggestions – or could point me in the right direction.

An obituary appears on your website at the following link:

<http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk/Post/190/Bernard-Calladine-1948>

Thanking you very much in advance for any assistance you can provide, ...”

“Dear Caitriona,

Thank you for contacting us. I have copied your message to the OMS Archivist. Whether or not he will be able to assist I do not know, but there are certainly a number of photographs in the archives. Unfortunately few actually name those in them.

I note that Calladine was at the school for 5 years and left in 1948. Generally a pupil stayed at the school for 7 years, so the majority of Calladine's contemporaries might have left in 1950. The OMS Membership Register has the year each member left the school, and I will forward your message to all who left between 1947 and 1950. I will also place your enquiry in the OMS Newsletter which is due to be published in mid-April.

If there is any response I will let you know. ..."

*(Ed: Are you able to assist? If so please contact the Membership Secretary or Caitriona direct.)*

## Obituaries

It is with much regret that we record the deaths of the following Old Maidstonians. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families and friends.

### **Charlie Bogg – 1976(?)**

*The following was in the Downs Mail in March 2011:*

A tribute to Charlie Bogg (53) was read out by Maidstone Mayor, Eric Hotson at the full Council meeting in February. He died of a heart attack the previous month. He joined the council in May 2004 and worked on the IT helpdesk, and then as information management officer in IT services where he was an influential member of the team. He went to Maidstone Grammar School before starting work as an apprentice car mechanic at Dutton Forshaw. Motorbikes were always his passion and he spent a few years in that line of work.

In 1995 he decided he wanted to get into computers though he knew nothing about them. So he read a book on databases and was taken on as a support engineer at Microsoft where he eventually became a team leader. There, he met Chris Woodward, who now works at Maidstone Council and who later persuaded Charlie to apply for a job. A colleague said "Charlie had an amazing capacity for learning. It was just not his ability to take in technical detail but his willingness to learn".

In his spare time Charlie renovated boats, restored bikes, did parachute jumps and enjoyed a drink at his local, The Bell, in Bearsted. He also took part in online gaming, most recently at World of WarCraft using his online name Skitz. His colleague added "we will all remember him for his larger than life character, his capacity for friendship, but most of all his innate cheerfulness and great sense of humour". Charlie leaves his Mum Dorothy, his grown up children Sam and Sara Jane, and his many friends.

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### **Bob Brown - 1956**

*We received the following message from Lucy, Bob Brown's daughter, on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> February.*

I am sorry to inform you that Bob has passed away, he had been in Medway Hospital since suffering palpitations on Sunday, in the early hours of Monday the 14<sup>th</sup> he suffered a cardiac arrest and had to be resuscitated, unfortunately he was very ill and passed away early this morning.

Bob's funeral was held at 10am on Monday the 28<sup>th</sup> February at the Garden of England Crematorium, Sittingbourne, and after at the Masonic Hall in Sheerness.

Regards, Lucy (Bob's daughter)

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### **Mahony, Antony Damian - 1972**

*We received the following from his brother, Dominic (1978):*

I am writing to let you know that my brother, Antony Mahony, an Old Maidstonian who was head boy in his final year, died from kidney cancer at the tender age of 56 on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

Antony kept close ties with Maidstone all his life and in 2009 attended the funeral of John Tresilian who had been his French teacher in the mid to late 60s. He was also close to Bob Rylands, deputy Headmaster in the 60's and early 70's and spoke fondly of many of his other teachers and of the high quality of the education he received at MGS.

His funeral was held at Aylesford priory in January and was attended by friends from all parts of his life, including some old school friends.

I attach below an obituary which has been submitted to the Guardian "other lives" section by CAFOD, the Catholic Aid Charity which was Antony's last employer.

**"Antony Mahony**

*My brother Antony Mahony, who has died aged 56, was a teacher and humanitarian aid worker.*

*As a teacher he was known for his work in helping English teachers in formerly communist Eastern Europe after the fall of the Berlin wall. In later years he worked for aid agencies in Zimbabwe and Darfur.*

*Born and raised in Maidstone, Antony always placed a high value on the quality of the education he received at Maidstone Grammar School and then Exeter University where he studied French and English. A gifted linguist he taught at Lord Williams's School in Thame where he acquired the nickname "Basil", from his physical likeness to Basil Fawlty, and showed a particular aptitude for organising cultural exchange programmes for students in France and Italy, where he set up a programme with the Liceo Poliziano in Montepulciano. He then joined VSO and taught in the Gambia for two years. This experience led to a new career in the aid sector with VSO, Christian Aid, and most recently CAFOD, the Catholic aid charity.*

*Antony supported many people and causes through his time with generosity and fund-raising, but always did so in a quiet, unassuming way. Typical of his approach was the decision to help the Bu family whom he met in Serbia just after the end of the war in the mid 1990s. Their baby son was born with a heart defect that needed surgery only available at the time in the West. Antony set about raising the funds, mobilising friends to support, and persuading Bristol Royal Infirmary to help with the operation. Young Leon Bu is now a strapping teenager and the funds raised have also helped other children to benefit from life-saving operations.*

*Antony joined CAFOD in mid 2004, four months into CAFOD's major response to the Darfur crisis. He had been approached by the aid agency as he was well known within the sector and particularly for his diplomatic skills and expertise in responding to humanitarian emergencies. His commitment to people, for justice and to serve the poor shone through in his daily work and within his relationships with others. Even during his illness he kept a close interest in developments in Darfur and offered his advice whenever he could.*

*His interests were many and varied - he loved the outdoors, cycling, and sailing and was a keen theatre and opera-goer. He helped to organise an exhibition of the work of the Serb painter Pero Mandic and was a lover of all kinds of music.*

*Antony's life was cut short by kidney cancer. He will be remembered for his humanity, unswerving loyalty and integrity. Antony was a good and loyal friend to many, old and young and was a treasured uncle and godfather, though he had no children of his own.*

*A memorial service was held at CAFOD's Head Office, Romero House London on Thursday 10th March which his many friends attended. ..."*

Incidentally I'm also an Old Maidstonian. I left in 1978 and went to Exeter University. I now live in Cambridge and am an HR director in the publishing industry. I'm still in touch with some Old Maidstonians including Julian Parish (who lives in Paris and has French nationality these days), Richard Solly who continues to devote his life to work for oppressed minorities and Nick Skinner who is a teacher in Huddersfield, specialising in teaching deaf children.

I believe Andrew Dilnot may be addressing the annual supper this year. I doubt he'll remember me, but I remember being quite friendly with him when he was at MGS - I think I sat next to him for French in 1BT back in 1971-72! He's probably one of the highest achievers of my era, though there are a few I'm aware of who've achieved fame or fortune.

Best wishes, Dominic Mahony

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**Tony Rayner - 1940**

*We received the following from Tony's son Bill:*

*Dad passed away early on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> December 2010, at Highcliffe House Nursing Home, Felixstowe. He and Mum had retired to Felixstowe, from Berkhamstead in Hertfordshire in 1983.*

*Dad, I believe, left MGS in 1940 and went to work with the Maidstone Town Council as a clerk, whilst awaiting his call up for active service during the Second World War. 'Teddy' Chamberlain, 'Titch' Goodbody, Bill*

Martin, were among his contemporaries. He also played the bass drum in the OTC band and was an active member of the unit, winning a small cup for his .22 rifle shooting. He always remarked that the first time he put a .303 to his shoulder and fired at the target, the 'kick' and loud report surprised him so much he could never shoot as straight again, as with the .22. There was always a grin and a twinkle in his eye when re-telling the tale!

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### **Barrington (Barrie) Turner – 1954**

We have been informed that Barrington (Barrie) Turner (1954) died suddenly on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2010 in his adopted Wales. He leaves a widow, Pam, and 5 children, Lee, Giles, Selana, Daniel and Lucinda.

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### **Dick Harris - (?)**

*The following was noted in the Downs Mail in early March:*

RICHARD "Dick" Harris (89), a stalwart of the old boys of Maidstone Grammar School, was still affectionately known as "Blinky" by former classmates with whom he attended dinners. Dick devoted his career to insurance, starting with Northern Assurance in Chatham after he left school and ending in Maidstone in a management role with Commercial Union (now incorporated with Aviva).

He lived almost all his life in Boughton Monchelsea. The only major interruption came with RAF war service as a wireless operator which took him to West Africa and Burma. Married for 44 years to Dorothy, Dick was father to Jonathan, Carolyn, Diana, and Anita. Carolyn said: "My father loved all sports; he played rugby for Maidstone and Cricket for Linton Park, where he served the club in all kinds of roles, everything from Chairman to making the tea".

Dick, who was widowed in 1996, leaves his children, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

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### **Derek Sayer - (?)**

*The following was noted in the Downs Mail in early March:*

Penenden Heath resident, Derek Sayer's local knowledge helped to shape books about the area. Derek (84) contributed significant information about the local area to both Robin Ambrose's books, 'Boxley – The Story of an English Parish' and the recently released 'Penenden Heath's Story'.

Derek's parents moved to Maidstone in 1937. Good at sport, he was a first XI fast bowler at the Grammar School at the age of 14 and a fine swimmer. In 1945, his spirit of adventure led him to the Palestine Police Force, keeping the precarious peace on the border with Lebanon.

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### **Andrew Venn – (?)**

*The following was noted in the Downs Mail in early March:*

Andrew George Venn (24) lived in Carmans Close, Loose, for the last six years. He grew up in Larkfield, attending schools in Ryarsh and Borough Green, before moving on to Maidstone Grammar. Aged 14, he began a 10-year battle with leukaemia, losing a year of school. Andrew recovered to pass A-levels and go to Coventry University, where he gained his degree in industrial product design.

Andrew's passion was Mini cars and he was a member of the Kent and East Sussex Mini Club. His funeral included a procession of 31 Minis to Vinters Park crematorium. He had worked locally in Halfords and at West Malling Golf Club, before landing a job after graduation with Kit for Kids, a design company specialising in play equipment.

When his leukaemia returned in 2010 Andrew began a blog. His site is now home to tributes including a message from his partner, Elliot Dunn: "I take so much pride that Andrew was a young man with morals, vision and a powerful sense of right and wrong. A gifted designer and writer". Andrew and Elliot got engaged in December. Andrew's father, Chris, said: "Andrew will be remembered for battling leukaemia without complaint. He was an inspirational character".

There were about 250 people at the crematorium, with nearly 200 meeting afterwards at West Malling golf club to celebrate Andrew's life. He leaves his parents Chris and Jackie, brother Stephen and many friends locally, nationally and across the Mini world.

## Philip Langridge - a Tribute by his Son, Stephen

From Peter Weaver:

*I have just learned that my godson, Stephen Langridge, Philip's eldest son, is putting on an event in memory of Philip at this year's Aldeburgh Festival. I attach details from the programme booklet which I thought you may like to circulate to OMs.*

Saturday 11 – Sunday 26 June

**...when thought becomes feeling...**

**In memory of Philip Langridge 1939–2010**

Designed by Stephen Langridge, this sound installation is a tribute and an exploration of the progress and process of his father's singing.

Using recordings of performances – from 1958 (while still at school and singing bass) to 2010 (his last performance) – and of private lessons on key repertoire, the installation will investigate the development of Philip's voice over 50 years, his relationship to Britten's music and allow a rare insight into the constant honing of his technique which fascinated and obsessed him throughout his career.

**Peter Pears Gallery, Aldeburgh 10am–5pm daily**

## Maidstone Grammar School Today

**MGS Times – June/July 2011**

**School Year Events for Old Maidstonians**

The following dates may be of interest to Old Maidstonians

|                                                          |                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 18 <sup>th</sup> June                                    | KS3 5-a-side Football Tournament       |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> July | Lower School Music Evening             |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> July                                    | Sports Day                             |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> July                                    | Junior Speech Day and Founders Service |
| 22 <sup>nd</sup> July                                    | Staff/Student Cricket Match            |

## Headmasters of Maidstone Grammar School

*A series of occasional articles taking us from the first Headmaster through to the present day.*

### Part 1 - 1549 to 1575

#### 1. Reverend Thomas Cole (1549 – c1552)

Monarch(s) on the throne of England:

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1547 – 1553       | Edward VI      |
| 1553 (10-19 July) | Lady Jane Grey |
| 1553 – 1558       | Mary           |
| 1559 – onwards    | Elizabeth I    |

Prime Minister: (*The first Prime Minister was not appointed until 1721*)

Notable events during the Headmaster's tenure:

1549 (August) France declares war on England

1552 Second Book of Common Prayer becomes mandatory in England

Location of School: Corpus Christi Hall

Although there is evidence that a school existed in Maidstone from around 1209, the institution that has always been known as the Grammar School was established in July 1549 when, for the price of £205 4s. 0d., the purchase from the Crown of the Brotherhood Hall took place. This was the fraternity of Corpus Christi, a non-monastic Society of men and women who maintained a Chaplain at All Saints and, in a religious form, carried out most of the functions of a modern Friendly Society. The Fraternity had received its Royal Charter from King Henry VI in 1441 and was eventually dissolved in 1547, thus leaving the building empty.

The Reverend Thomas Cole was a native of Lincolnshire and had been educated at King's College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a B.A. in 1546 and an M.A. in 1550. His date of birth is not recorded and thus his age on appointment to the headship is unknown.

It is said that on his arrival in the town he earned an unenviable notoriety by taking advantage of the unsettled state of the newly reformed Church and preached doctrines widely variant from the prevailing Genevan Theology; more in harmony with the dogmas of the Catholic Church than those of the Church of England itself established just a few years earlier in 1531. Amongst his statements was the assertion that ‘children were not born in original sin’ and ‘that Adam was elected to be saved and that all men then being in Adam’s loins were predestined to be saved.’ A commission set up to look into his beliefs found others also preaching along similar thoughts; when challenged they had justified themselves by referring to ‘Cole of Maidstone’. The affair seems to have been dropped.

Rather than concentrating on his teaching at the School, it seems that this first appointed headmaster was more interested in preaching. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1551, ‘Cole of Maidstone’ is found before the Privy Council, with others, accused of having held conventicles at Bocking, in Essex, and of having ‘refused Communion for eleven years for various superstitious and erroneous purposes and harbouring evil opinions worthy of great punishment’. They were all released on bail of £40 each on condition that they shall appear when called upon and to resort to their Ordinary for resolution of their opinions in case they have any doubt in religion.

Mercifully, the Reverend Cole seems to have availed himself of this requirement as on the First Sunday in Lent, 1552, he is found preaching before Archbishop Cranmer in All Saints’ Church during one of his frequent visits to the town. However, his term at MGS is likely to have ended later that year as he was made Dean of Salisbury. It is assumed that the School continued under the guidance of the other masters employed to teach the various subjects. In 1554, the revolt lead by Sir Thomas Wyatt marked Maidstone out for the signal vengeance of the Government. The Charter of the Town was forfeited and the School founded under it “came to an untimely end”.

On the accession of Mary as Queen of England, the Reverend Cole fled to Frankfurt where he became an acquaintance of John Knox and accompanied him to Geneva. On the death of the queen he returned to England and became Rector of High Ongar (Essex) and Archdeacon of Essex with the prebend (see note 1) of Rugmere in St. Paul’s Cathedral in 1560. He was present at the Convocation of 1562 and subscribed the original thirty-nine Articles. In 1564 he was made a Doctor of Divinity (DD) and was presented to the Rectory of Stanford Rivers (Essex). He preached before Queen Elizabeth at Windsor that year. He preached the Spital Sermon (see note 2) in 1560, 1561 and 1563, and was also asked by the Lord Mayor to undertake the duty in 1566 but was inhibited by Archbishop Parker for his unorthodox teaching. He died in 1571.

*Note 1: “prebend” equates to the stipend of a canon or member of a cathedral chapter.*

*Note 2: “Spital Sermon” was an ancient tradition referring back to the Priory of St. Mary Spittle which had been founded in 1197. The sermons were preached at Easter: on Good Friday a divine of eminence would, by appointment, expatiate on Christ’s passion at St. Paul’s Cross; on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday following Easter Day a bishop, a dean and a doctor of divinity (hence Rev. Cole) would preach at the Spital concerning the resurrection. The custom continued until the great rebellion of 1642 after which it ceased. However, after the Restoration it was revived but with St. Paul’s Cross having been demolished the Good Friday sermon was then preached within the Cathedral – the others resumed at the Spital; they continued until the Great Fire when, again, they were ceased at both locations.*

## **2. Reverend Ralph Moore (1559 – 1575)**

Monarch on the throne of England: 1559 – onwards Elizabeth I

Notable events during the HM’s tenure:

|               |                                                                   |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1569 (11 Jan) | First recorded lottery in England (drawn in St. Paul’s Cathedral) |
| 1570 (May)    | First atlas published                                             |

Location of School: Corpus Christi Hall

Following on from Sir Thomas Wyatt’s failed revolt (1554) and the death of Queen Mary (1558), the new monarch and Government soon showed favour to Maidstone and accordingly a new Charter was granted in

September 1559. It actually contained most of what had been decreed in the original document of 1549 and thus the School was re-established.

The Corporation of Maidstone appointed the Rev. Ralph Moore as headmaster. He had graduated at Oxford in June 1540 and three years later was elected Fellow of All Souls; he became an M.A. in June 1544. From All Souls he went to Great Baddow where he became a Chantry Priest at Holy Trinity Church in 1546. This was short-lived as 'Chantries' were abolished the following year. His next movements are unrecorded until his appointment to the headship of Maidstone Grammar School in 1559.

His initial salary was £9 6s.8d. but he seems to have been deemed satisfactory as in 1566 the Corporation resolved 'that he shall receive a shilling a quarter from every freeman's (see note 1) child attending the School'. A year later in March 1567, in addition to the shilling-a-quarter the fixed salary of the Master (meaning headmaster) was raised to £10 per annum. If the roll of the School contained more than fourteen scholars of non-freemen, an Usher (see note 2) was also to be provided to assist the Master. It was also decreed that no scholar could be admitted to this School (MGS) for the purpose of being taught unless he could read perfectly any common English book and write the language; even then such teaching was restricted to Grammar (meaning Latin grammar), the science, art and knowledge of Humanities, and Greek.

The Reverend Moore's date and location of birth are unknown and no record has been found of where he went in 1575 upon leaving the School and town. His death is also unrecorded.

*Note 1: The terminology "free" is misleading. In the Charter of 1559, sons from homes that came within the boundaries of the town were educated free of charge but scholars coming from outside the Corporation's boundary had to pay a termly fee, unless they were beneficiary of a scholarship. The word 'free' generally meant either an Open or Public school or a school where a free and/or liberal education could be obtained.*

*Note 2: Thus an Usher (equivalent to an additional tutor) would only be provided if at least fourteen of the students were coming to the School from outside the town boundaries.*

## And on the Lighter Side

A Mafia Godfather finds out that his bookkeeper, Enzo, has cheated him out of 10 million bucks. His book keeper is deaf. That was the reason he got the job in the first place. It was assumed that Enzo would hear nothing that he might have to testify about in court.

When the Godfather goes to confront Enzo about his missing \$10 million, he takes along his lawyer who knows sign language.

The Godfather tells the lawyer, "Ask him where the 10 million bucks is that he embezzled from me". The lawyer, using sign language, asks Enzo where the money is.

Enzo signs back, "I don't know what you are talking about". The lawyer tells the Godfather, "He says he doesn't know what you are talking about."

The Godfather pulls out a pistol, puts it to Enzo's temple, and says, "Ask him again!" The lawyer signs to Enzo, "He'll kill you if you don't tell him".

Enzo signs back, "OK. You win! The money is in a brown briefcase, buried behind the shed in my cousin Bruno's backyard in Woodbridge!"

The Godfather asks the lawyer, "What did he say?" The lawyer replies, "He says you don't have the balls to pull the trigger".

**Quiz** - Now do you know where it is?



**Another from Tommy Cooper:**

Police arrested two kids yesterday, one was drinking battery acid and the other eating fireworks.

They charged one and let the other off .....

## Past Presidents of the Old Maidstonian Society

|         |                       |         |                         |         |                 |         |                    |
|---------|-----------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|
| 1884    | Rev. S.M. Crosthwaite | 1923    | G. Drayson              | 1955    | J.F. Payne      | 1985    | D. Chater          |
| 1893    | G. Hulburd            | 1924    | Sir Edward Sharp, Bt.   | 1956    | G.G. Earl       | 1986    | G. Bonner          |
| 1894    | E. Hills              | 1925    | F.A. Wallis             | 1957    | G.E. Waters     | 1987    | G. Hosking         |
| 1895    | J. Clifford           | 1926    | J. Clifford             | 1958-60 | G.B. Phillips   | 1988    | R. Ratcliffe       |
| 1896    | R. Mercer             | 1927    | W.H. Proctor            | 1961-62 | M.H. Couchman   | 1989    | W.J.C. Caley       |
| 1897    | Dr. Plomley           | 1928    | W. Clemetson            | 1963-64 | A.A. Newman     | 1990    | R. Brown           |
| 1898    | R. Hoar               | 1929    | C.A.W. Duffield         | 1965    | P.H. Mayor      | 1991    | B. Rylands         |
| 1899    | J.P.H. Wood           | 1930    | W.J. Sharp              | 1966    | R.L. Oxley      | 1992    | H.F. Weedon        |
| 1900    | W. Hayes              | 1931    | W.C. Clifford           | 1967    | P.W. Ewing      | 1993    | H.C.H. Darley      |
| 1901    | A.J. Waterman         | 1932    | A.J. Harland            | 1968    | R.R. Rylands    | 1994    | J. Clinch          |
| 1902    | H. Day                | 1933    | T.J. Bonny              | 1969    | Lord Beeching   | 1995    | B. Mee             |
| 1903    | H. Monckton           | 1934    | A.S. Bennett            | 1970    | C.C. Haylor     | 1996    | M.F. Watts         |
| 1904    | T.R. Betts            | 1935    | F.L. Wallis             | 1971    | J.J. Burke      | 1997    | D.C. Diamond       |
| 1905    | W. Day, Junior        | 1936    | J.H. Taylor             | 1972    | P.A.W. Howe     | 1998-99 | Dr. P.A.J. Pettit  |
| 1906    | G. Smythe             | 1937    | J.G. Ambrose            | 1973    | J.A. Bergg      | 2000    | S.J. Delo          |
| 1907    | F. Laurence           | 1938    | S. Beaufoy              | 1974    | T.P. Gutteridge | 2001    | V.A. Bishop        |
| 1908    | F.W. Ruck             | 1939    | Rev. Dr. F. Streatfield | 1975    | M.A. Gibson     | 2002    | G.K. Marchant      |
| 1909    | P. Smythe             | 1940-46 | K.E. Loveland           | 1976    | A. Hart         | 2003    | P. Oldham          |
| 1910    | W.H. Day              | 1947    | J.H. Taylor             | 1977    | R.R. Rylands    | 2004    | Dr. B. White       |
| 1911    | W.H. Lendon           | 1948    | P.J. Homan              | 1978    | R. Craske       | 2005    | Dr. D.E. Wilson    |
| 1912    | A.W. Smith            | 1949    | W. Moore                | 1979    | K.E. Loveland   | 2006    | Dr. R. Parkins     |
| 1913    | A.F. Corfe            | 1950    | A.L. Ayres              | 1980    | A.A. Johnson    | 2007    | F. Sando           |
| 1914    | E. Ruck               | 1951    | E.F. Clifford           | 1981    | J. Winch        | 2008    | Prof. M. MacCallum |
| 1915    | W. Vaughan            | 1952    | J.H. Pocock             | 1982    | M. Passmore     | 2009    | Dr A Webb          |
| 1916-21 | G.T. Cook             | 1953    | N.C. Cook               | 1983    | B. Welcome      | 2010    | P Clifford         |
| 1922    | W. Day                | 1954    | M.H. Ayres              | 1984    | J.A. Blake      |         |                    |

## OMS and MGS Sale Items

The Society has established internet banking, and the facility is now available to make payment using the internet.

The Natwest Bank account details are:

Maidstone Branch, 3 High Street, Maidstone, ME14 1XU

Account: Old Maidstonian Society - Sort Code: 60-60-08 - Account no: 00051802

Please use your surname and initials to assist us in identifying who the payment is from. Would you please also advise the Membership Secretary either by post, e-mail or letter if you have taken advantage of this facility and forward a completed order form.

## 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 Society.

### 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)

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)

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 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It contains many pictures along with thirteen appendices of useful data and information. (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.)

## **GARMENTS**

### **Ties**

There is a supply of both styles of the Old Maidstonian tie. The Crested version is a Jacquard Woven Tie with all-over motifs of the crest in gold, red and blue on a navy background. It was introduced in the 1970's additional to the OMS Striped tie. The Striped version is also a Jacquard Woven Tie in navy blue with angled stripes of gold, purple and white. The tie was the original OMS tie and predates the Crested version by several decades. The design was later used on the ties for the School Captain and Deputy School Captain from about 1994 and continues to this day, although the direction of the stripes is reversed. (There is evidence that the OMS tie was black, not navy blue, around the second World War years, but there is no information as to when it changed to blue.) Both ties are of a polyester and are 54" x 3 1/8" in size.

### **Blazer Badge**

The OM's blazer badge is approximately 5" x 3" in size.

### **Archives**

Original spare copies of '**The Maidstonian**' for most, but not all years, from the beginning are available. First come, first served - when they are gone they are gone. Please check availability with Tony Webb before ordering.

**450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Memorabilia** is also available. Please see order form for details.



## **The Old Maidstonian Society Newsletter**

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Co-Editor: Peter Weaver      Tel: 01435 864541      Email: p.weaver@iee.org

### **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.