



The Old Maidstonian

The newsletter of the Old Maidstonian Society

No.15 - Autumn 2014

President:
Gardner Crawley

Chairman:
Richard Ratcliffe

Secretary:
Brian White

HEADMASTER REPORTS TRAGEDY

The 2014-15 academic year started sadly, with the School acknowledging the tragic news of Terry Shambler (OM 2014) who died in July. He was on holiday with a group of other MGS students in Ayia Napa, celebrating the end of the examinations, when he was involved in a road traffic accident. Our immediate thoughts were with his family and friends, but, for the School, it was very upsetting not to be able to support Terry's friends and his year group, and to provide them with opportunities to support each other. Many had left the school before the tragic event and had already become Old Maidstonians. So, at the assembly on the first day of term, and at the annual Senior Speech Day the following week, the School community paused for a moment to remember Terry.

In teaching we have a phrase, 'a loveable rogue', and Terry was most definitely one of these. He was



full of life, lived every day to its full, and was on many occasion a handful for his teachers. Despite this, he was never rude, was amenable when asked to be, and to his friends, was

always there for them. At the time he may not have completely valued school life, but Terry was one of

those students for whom grammar schools were created. He may have battled with, and resisted, the MGS regime, but MGS was the right place for him.

A permanent memorial will be made in order that we go on remembering Terry, and to commemorate his time at the School.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

It's the same newsletter with a new name. "*The Old Maidstonian*" reflects the fact that we have come a long way from the typed sheets of a few years ago, and the 'Newsletter' would be more appropriately called a magazine. The new name also complements that of the School magazine, "*The Maidstonian*" - still going strong since before any of us can remember.

We hope you enjoy us in this new guise and will continue to send us your anecdotes and support our activities. How about some 'letters to the editor' to give us your views about *The Old Maidstonian* or anything else about MGS or The Old Maidstonian Society. (But please note the 'copy date' on page 21!)

THE MENTOR SCHEME TAKES OFF

I gave a short talk about the Mentor Scheme to a Sixth Form Assembly and we now have 40 students asking for mentors, and there are more on the way. The scheme has obviously won some appeal with the students and now we have to come up with the goods!

In order to provide mentors whose experience matches the wide-ranging interests of the students we urgently need far more mentors. The scheme only provides good value if there is a strong match. We urgently need the help of OMs, especially in the following fields:-

Medicine and Dentistry
Chemical Engineering
Environmental Sciences
Pharmacology
Software Sciences
Law
Film Production
Journalism

Please become a mentor. The commitment is not a heavy one, and it is a valuable way in which OMs can give something back to MGS. You will find a simple form attached to this newsletter or on our website. Please complete it and e-mail or post it to me as soon as possible. These students need some help NOW!

Peter Weaver

This year's Carol Service is at All Saints' Church on 17th December at 7.30 pm. Please join the school for this important event.

OTHER SCHOOL NEWS

At the end of the summer term the School said goodbye to five long-serving members of staff: Mrs Tiina Sanfourche, Dr Keith Derrett, Dr Brian Callaghan, Mr Brian Simmons and Mrs Naomi Lumutenga. I acknowledged these members of staff in the July Newsletter, but some of their colleagues, who spoke about them at the Staff Leavers' Farewell Party, have written a few things about them. We wish them all well in their retirements.

Paul Smith, Deputy Headmaster, writes about Dr Keith Derrett, who joined MGS in January 1980 and taught here for his entire career of nearly 34 years: a remarkable achievement for anybody. Therefore MGS and generations of its students have cause to be very grateful for his skill as a biologist and his care and concern for the welfare of literally thousands of sixth formers in his role as a Year Head, Division Head, and Learning Manager in the Sixth Form, and finally in the last few years as Head of Sixth Form. Keith was a key figure in the lives of the MGS Sixth Form for three school generations and more.

'Keith was one of the first members of staff I came into contact with at MGS, as he was a candidate for the job that I was successful in gaining – the post of Head of Sixth Form. Many lesser men would have given me a hard time when I started but not Keith. The first conversation I recall having with him after my appointment was to discuss whether he could become my deputy. I was grateful for his support and so began a team, later joined by others, that headed the leadership of the Sixth Form. Those were good years, when much was done to improve academic performance in the sixth form, increase recruitment from external students and encourage more girls to join the school (there were only three in 1993). Every nutty suggestion I came up with was embraced by Keith as an interesting idea and then he started to talk about practicalities and how to make it work. His role was to ensure that the nutty ideas ended up in the bin where they deserved to be and that the one or two key nuggets were preserved, developed and made good use of. I will always be grateful for that support over those years. Keith was always the sane, balanced individual sitting there quietly asking the same question – how does it benefit the students? When it did there was no greater enthusiast for change. For example, Keith embraced the roles of Creativity Action and Service Co-ordinator for the IB when we introduced it, on top of his other responsibilities, and later followed Tony Webb as IB Coordinator. I know that the loss of the IB was a bitter blow to Keith as it was to many others of us who believed in it and wanted to make it work. However Keith got on and did the job – supporting students through really difficult times and some colleagues in difficulties as well. He took on new challenges like the Harvard Model United Nations Trip and escorting language trips.

'Foreign travel has been a key part of the Keith's role in the school. He told me recently that he has visited 27 different countries, with MGS picking up the costs of his travel. Not many will ever beat that. Most of that travel has been through World Challenge: this is the scheme that he introduced in 1995 and has led throughout the years, allowing students the opportunity for month-long overseas experiences in challenging parts of the world. On all of these trips he has helped students to widen their experiences, to learn more about themselves, to develop resilience and self-reliance, and to be able to lead and work as part of a team. What a fantastic legacy for anyone retiring from the profession.

'Keith is a modest man who does not enjoy the limelight and therefore few realise what a high-quality biologist he is. His subject knowledge is phenomenal and he is a real authority on birds, so much so that he was for many years employed by the Department of the Environment in his spare time as an avian expert, often being out in the small hours checking on birds and then into school, fresh and bright for another day. Our students have been fortunate over the generations to have such knowledge available to them, to allow them to develop real expertise in their subject.

'His time at MGS ended fittingly by spending the last two weeks of term on a World Challenge expedition but typically, I found him in school early one morning the week before he went off on expedition, meticulously setting cover for his classes so that colleagues would not be inconvenienced in the last ten days of the term. That's Keith: professional to the last, quietly getting on with the job. However, that was not Keith's last official duty as we were pleased to welcome him back to read the Prize List at Speech Day in September for "his Year 13" – the last cohort he would see through the sixth form and weren't they pleased to see him doing it!

'Keith will certainly spend much of his well-earned retirement travelling, and we wish him and his wife Trish much pleasure from it. We thank him for all that he has done for MGS and its students over the years, and we hope that he will consider sending us a few postcards from wherever in the world he is, to remind us how much we are missing him.'

Paul Smith also writes about Dr. Brian Callaghan:

'Brian Callaghan, taught in the English Department at MGS for 23 years, retiring in 2014. As an Old Maidstonian (he was at MGS in the 1970s as a sixth former) he returned, having taught for some years at Oakwood Park Grammar School, and quickly established himself as part of the MGS family. He was an excellent sixth form tutor, being both demanding and caring of his students. Such was my regard for him in this respect that when my own step-son reached the Sixth Form I asked Brian to be his tutor.

'Brian is a real academic, fascinated by his subject and extremely knowledgeable. Over the years, he has kept up-to-date with the most recent criticism and analysis of literature: something that few of us in the profession manage to do. He brought this knowledge to bear for the benefit of his students in lessons that were detailed and challenging. Always good at every level of the school, he was at his very best with the Sixth Form, teaching A Level English Literature. He taught both my step-children at A Level and when they talk about school, Dr Callaghan's "Golden Notes" is a topic that often occurs. Only recently, when I was with Alex (my step-son) and some of his Old Maidstonian friends, the comment was made that 'Dr Callaghan would love the irony of that', and they left school 12 years ago. Other Old Maidstonians who went on to read English Literature at university have been known to comment that the first year was easy if you had been to MGS, as Dr Callaghan's lessons were far more demanding than first-year lectures. However, Brian was not just an academic: his understanding of syllabus content and of the nuances of assessment objectives, were legendary as well, and thereby he combined his subject expertise with good pedagogical skills, to secure strong outcomes for students.

'When Laurence of Mar retired, Brian was appointed Head of English, a post which he served with distinction, trying to pass on his expertise and encouraging colleagues by his own extraordinary work, ethic and understanding. Although a retiring man, he cared deeply about the job he did, and as his line manager, I always appreciated his desire for the department to do well and to see the students achieve their potential. Following ill-health he decided to step down and teach part-time in his last two years. However Brian's view of part-time was that it gave him even more time to prepare his Sixth Form lessons, as he seemed to be at school for nearly as long as he had been when full-time. In addition to his work in the English Department, Brian was, in the IB years, the Extended Essay Co-ordinator. He brought to this role a keen eye for detail, ensuring that students knew what they had to do to score well and keeping a close watch on essay supervisors to ensure that they provided the support necessary to secure top outcomes for students. As an essay supervisor myself in most years of the IB, I appreciated the support that he provided and his meticulous administration of the paperwork.

'As Brian retires we lose from the staff a really expert student of English Literature and a devoted servant of the school. We wish Brian every good wish for his future retirement and hope that it will be long and happy and that he will retain close links with *his* school.'

Finally, the 2014-15 year sees the launch of the Development and Alumni Fund. I have mentioned this already in a previous newsletter, and more will be spoken about it at the Old Maidstonian Annual Supper, but essentially it is being created to foster, in all of those who care about Maidstone Grammar School, a lifelong interest in sustaining its values and developing its future. The Fund will have two limbs. As the name suggests, it will specifically support the School's developments: those ongoing building projects which will enhance the School's learning environment for both students and staff. Its other role will be to establish, nurture and maintain relationships with our alumni, whether they left in 1950 or in June this year, and this work has already started, with very positive results.



The Fund will rely on the goodwill, commitment and generosity of the entire school community: governors, staff, past and present students, parents and other friends of the school, both individual and corporate.

Mark Tomkins
Headmaster

Ed: Please have a look at the School website (Development Fund tab) for more information about the Development and Alumni fund. See URL:

<http://www.mgs.kent.sch.uk/>

THE CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS

By the time you read this the new school year will be well underway and Mark Tomkins will be into his third year as Headmaster. Mark's plans for raising capital monies for school building projects are well advanced in the planning phase and a new charitable trust has been set up to accommodate this fund-raising initiative, which is being launched between now and the spring of 2015. There will be more to be said about this at the 2015 Annual Supper on Friday March 27th but I'd like to think that this Society will play a major role in generating funds for our old school. It is a fact that high quality education in the secondary sector (i.e. from Grammar Schools) will be sustainable in future with financial inputs from sources other than HMG. The Government's re-alignment of secondary education funding - albeit from a supposedly constant pot of money - will disadvantage the likes of MGS. So - watch this space - and please give thought to what you might be able to do, not necessarily only in a personal sense but also in leveraging monies from your wealthy contacts! A brochure is available from the Headmaster now and will be generally available at the Supper.

The other thing your Committee has been doing to support the school in recent weeks has been to mobilise support for the CCF. The Ministry of Defence has consulted (in a lowish profile way, it has to be said) regarding the concept of all members of school cadet units paying a subscription capitation fee in order to fund the setting up of additional cadet forces in the wider community. This mad plan would militate against schools such as MGS. The stretched school budgets would not be able to fully fund the requirements and it would be iniquitous to place the burden on to the shoulders of parents. The end result would be a threat to CCFs continuing as we know them. Your Society has written in strong terms to Members of Parliament and influential dignitaries, such as the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, and, of course, so has the school. We await the outcome, but it would seem that the outcry from schools such as ours will probably result in at least a watering down of the proposals. Watch this space - again!!

We are approaching Christmas; the clocks have changed and another year is racing to a close. The School Carol Service will be held in All Saints' Church on Wednesday 17th December. All OMs living within driving distance of Maidstone will be hugely welcomed at this event. The Headmaster and your Committee want to see the church full! (Remember the end of term services and how we all squashed in? Well let's fill the old place up and relive that experience!)

Warm wishes to you all.

Richard Ratcliffe

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

The membership currently stands at over 1300, a significant advance on the 150 active members that the Society had in the Register five years ago. There have been 250 members joining during the course of 2014, of which over 150 are 2014 school leavers. Nevertheless, 100 new members have learned of the existence of the Society from friends and colleagues, and from the Internet in its various forms, so this is a very satisfactory achievement. With the initiative just beginning by the school to communicate with more old boys and girls in the expansion of the Development Fund, we anticipate that the membership will increase significantly over the coming years.

With the changes in the publication date of the Newsletter to Spring, Summer and Autumn editions, the Membership Register will now be sent by e-mail in January of each year after it has been brought up to date up to the 31st December. It will be included with the Spring Newsletter for those receiving their copies by post.

There are many members who communicate with other ex-MGS students who have not joined the Society. We would be grateful if the existence of the Society were to be brought to their attention, (reminding them that it is FREE!). A simple e-mail, either from them or a current member to oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk, giving a contact e-mail address will suffice, and we will take it from there.

THE TREASURER'S REPORT

Several years ago the decision was taken to make membership of the Society subscription-free. That was a sensible decision and it allowed the school leavers, not all of whom could afford membership, to join the Society free of charge. The membership has subsequently increased significantly, but an obvious and inevitable result has been that income, such as it was, has reduced. At the same time, the printed Newsletter is produced in glossy colour, replacing the previous photocopied version. Again, that decision was a good one, but has incurred additional expense.

The cost of producing three Newsletters and the Membership Register, including printing, envelopes, labels and postage, amounts to approximately £800 annually. There are 60 members who receive printed copies of these publications, and therefore the cost per individual is just under £15 per annum. In the past the Society was fortunate that there have been several significant donations which have deferred the costs of producing the Newsletters and the Membership Register; indeed, several members who do not receive posted

Newsletters contribute annually. However, of the 60 who receive the Newsletter by post, only a handful contributes to the full cost. Obviously this cannot continue and in the next posting a letter will be included for those who do not contribute advising them that unless they do so then the Society will be unable to continue to provide printed versions. Unfortunately, the members involved are those who do not have e-mail, and they will therefore cease to have effective membership if they do not respond.

During the course of 2014, the Society contributed £250 to the restoration of the military college honours boards from the General Reserve. The honours boards are all now hung on the stairway between the upper and lower main corridors next to the lobby.

The Society has several OMS garments for sale –

scarves, ties and a badge. The sale of these brings in little or no income and they are simply a service the Society provides. We have just introduced a cheaper version of the woollen scarf made of warp-knit acrylic: it is of the same design and colours. We also have a few publications and once these have been sold it is not intended to have them re-printed.

The Society still has £10,000 at its disposal in the Trust Fund. This money was donated years ago by benefactors, and the purpose of it is basically to assist students in need. This year no student came forward to request assistance and the sum has remained virtually unchanged except for £250 each to the MGS World Challenge and the MGS Rugby Tour of Portugal. In fact the take-up has been very limited indeed for several years, and we have been unable to establish exactly why that is the case.

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## **THE WORLD CHALLENGE EXPEDITION TO THE SILK ROAD, 2014.**

The Old Maidstonians have been supporting the Community Project of the biennial World Challenge expeditions over a number of years now: this has allowed us to spend money in-country, thus helping the local communities as well as supporting the community tasks. This year, the project was within northern Uzbekistan. Here, the Kyzyl-Kum Desert abuts the chain of Nuratau Mountains and the only place where life can exist is within oases which follow the banks of the occasional river flowing out of the hills.



These have been planted with trees, especially walnut, to provide shade and to reduce drying out of the soil in summer. The valleys are occupied not by Uzbeks but by Tajiks for whom there is evidence suggesting that they have been living here for over 2000 years - since escaping from Alexander the Great.

Despite having two schools within this community of 900 people, neither school has had running water to date. It was our project to install a water supply by pip-

ing water from a local well for 700 metres through orchards, under roads and along pathways until it reached one of those schools.

The first job was to create a bed for the pipe to be laid in and protected from winter sub-zero temperatures as well as from animals and cars. This necessitated a trench about 25 cm deep being dug out for the whole 700 metre run – in some places the soil was friable and easily dug but in others, where it crossed roads, for instance, it was hard work to dig especially where there were underlying rocks: the tools which were available were rather basic, too e.g. mattocks,



Hand dug well, about 20 metres deep

a pickaxe and hoes. We did send people into the local market to try to buy more tools but they were unavailable, unfortunately.

Once the trench was dug the pipe, which had been purchased with funds from the Old Maidstonians,



needed to be laid within its protective trench – and tested. It worked!

There were cheers of glee from the adults associated with the project, including the school's Principal, as water began to flow. Children darted in to taste the water as if they had never tasted water before. The male teachers were 'forced' to celebrate with tea-cups full of vodka – at 10:30 in the morning!

During a celebration at our home-stay that night, many of the local dignitaries of the village arrived

to present each student and teacher with a decorated plate for Plov (a national dish of the area, with rice, vegetables and lamb), plus a water-tap with a painted sign to be cemented in place at the school the very next day. Dancing followed, some Tajik folk singing – and, of course, a rousing rendition of the School Song!

The work was hard for student's hands (lots of blisters); the temperature was 40 °C plus; it was dirty and thirsty work, yet the students persisted and made sure that the job was completed to a high standard, to produce something which would be so useful for the local school community and would last for many years.

Incidentally, the students were well looked after by the local community and pickings from the orchards of mulberry fruits were offered as a small thank you to our students. They were welcomed.



## THE OLD MAIDSTONIAN WEBSITE

The website continues to evolve, and our webmaster, Malcolm MacCallum, would appreciate more posts from members, so please visit the website at [www.oldmaidstonians.co.uk](http://www.oldmaidstonians.co.uk) or [www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk](http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk) and decide whether you can contribute anything by creating or adding content. The software is fairly intuitive and easy to use. Don't worry about making a mistake: the webmaster will look at new entries in case of problems. The two website names were registered to prevent other people using them and purporting to be the OM Society.

The site has both online and printable membership forms. All those who join and give an e-mail address may be contacted from time-to-time. If members are keen to keep up with new postings as they appear, they could subscribe to the RSS feed which can be accessed at [www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk/feed](http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk/feed) or via some of the best known RSS directories. (RSS is said to stand for 'Really Simple Syndication' or 'Rich Site Summary'.) We can submit to other directory sites if a member has a favourite.

As well as the website and email, there are Old Maidstonians groups on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/groups/OldMaidstonianSociety](http://www.facebook.com/groups/OldMaidstonianSociety)), LinkedIn and Friends Reunited, which you may wish to join if you are a member at one of those sites. We are grateful to Sam Coppard and Alex Rolfe for re-energizing and moderating the Facebook group. The LinkedIn group is co-managed by the Society's webmaster. The Society does not have a Twitter account. Each posting at the main site has tags for cross-posting to some social media, though these have not yet been thoroughly tested (please try them and let us know if they work!).

## CHARITABLE DONATIONS THE EASY WAY

The OM Society is registered with Easyfundraising, which enables supporters to donate, at no cost to themselves, when doing online shopping. All money received will go the OM charitable trust (for details of this see our website). We hope that OMs will join Easyfundraising: amounts raised per transaction are small, but the cumulative value could be considerable. Many major online retailers participate: for example, Argos, Amazon, Apple Store, John Lewis, M&S...

The effort required after initial signup can be minimised by using the special software that Easyfundraising provide. If you have an iPad or iPhone, there is now an Easyfundraising app in the App Store. If you use any other device, you can download a toolbar for your browser from <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/raise-more/find-and-remind/>. The toolbar (which I use myself) automatically tells you when you are accessing a retailer which participates in the scheme and enables you to make your donation by just clicking a button.

Here's a bit more detail. EasyFundraising is a shopping portal in which goods ordered on the internet through EasyFundraising result in donations to a charity – in this case the Old Maidstonian Society. The donations come from the retailers and indeed, the unique selling point of EasyFundraising is that it enables people to shop online and receive donations to their charity at no cost to themselves. To date over £7,000,000 has been donated to U.K. good causes.

The site is: <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>. The unique EasyFundraising link which you should use to register is <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/oms>.

For some fuller information see the following page of the OM website:

<http://www.oldmaidstonians.co.uk/fundraising/>

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NEWS OF OLD MAIDSTONIANS

James Burt (1974 to 1979) reports that after 30 years working in the rail industry, most recently as Service Delivery Director with Southern Railway, he has taken early retirement on his 53rd birthday. So far, he has enjoyed gardening, swimming, walking, travelling and learning to play the ukulele. He intends to do a bit of consultancy work this winter.

He was amazed to learn that Tiina Sanfourche is only now retiring, after 41 years. He thinks that she taught him in 1974 when he was in 3Pk (his first year at MGS). He was terrible at French and thinks that she won't remember him! (Ed: If he was *really* terrible she might!)

Mike Clark (1956 to 1963) 'retired' from his post as Director of Corporate Services with the charity *Operation Mobilisation* in the summer of 2013. He has been with them for just over 26 years, following 17 years as an accountant in the public sector. He continues to work two days a week as Treasurer to another charity – *Freedom Network International*, also known as *Dalit Freedom Network UK*. The plan is to finally retire fully in February 2015. Mike and his wife Judie (married for 44 years) live near Welshpool in Powys and have a daughter and two sons, plus one granddaughter.

Roger Crittenden (1950 to 1958) was one of the winners of the 2014 Teaching Awards of CILECT (The World Association of Film and TV Schools). This scheme aims to recognise and reward excellence in film, television and media pedagogy within its member schools.

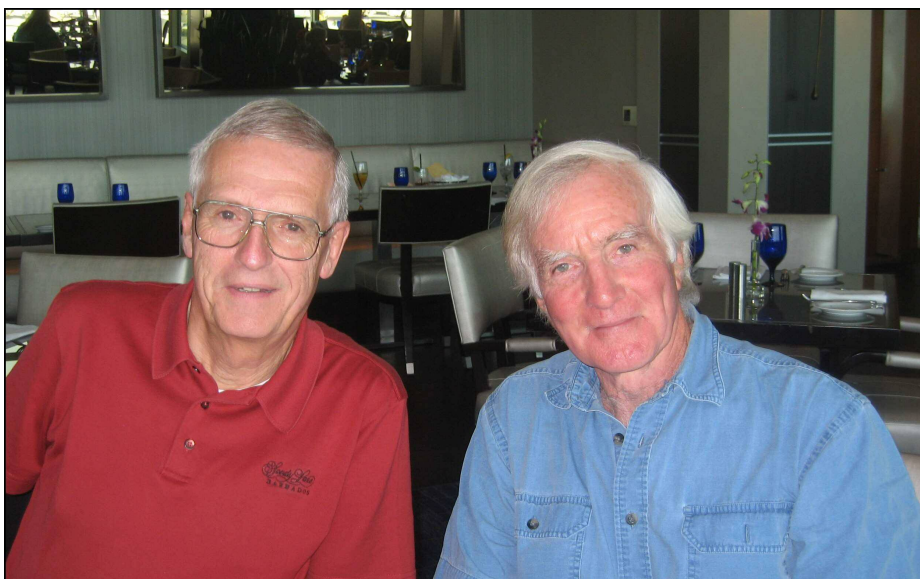
Alan V. J. Eley (1951 to 1959) writes: 'Thanks for keeping me up to date with MGS and OM business and news. Living in Lichfield, Staffordshire makes it difficult to attend your events on a regular basis, but I wish you all well and remember my schooldays with gladness *Forsan haec olim meminisse juvabit* (Virgil's *Aeneid*) was translated for us by 'Killer' Kemp as 'One day you will look back on these sufferings with gladness' , and he was right!

'With MGS about to commemorate the First World War, I would hope due mention is given to Sergeant Bennett, whom I remember with much affection from my years at MGS, when he was the head caretaker, leading light of the CCF (and supplier of iced buns for hungry lads at break time every morning). He taught me to shoot with .22 rifles on the indoor firing range upstairs near the school's entrance gate and was an inspiration to many of us. I discovered only later that he was awarded the Military Medal during his service in WWI and I believe that he died in 1972. Have you got any further information about this amazing man?'
(Ed: *Can anyone provide more information about Sarge?*)

Barry Evans (1953 to 1960) recently spent a month in Bangladesh as a volunteer with the 'Nobo Jibon' (New Life) programme of Save the Children. Some one million people in the flood-prone delta region of Bangladesh benefit from this five-year US-AID assistance programme, which provides maternal and neonatal health services, agriculture assistance and (the part which Evans was documenting) reshaping the low-lying land to create vegetable plots and aquaculture ponds. All the work is done manually by local workers, mainly women, who are paid in wheat, peas and vegetable oil from the US. He comments, 'Most of them I spoke to told me that this was the first time they had ever been paid for their labour.'



Barry and his wife live in Eureka, California and Guanajuato, Mexico.



Richard Ratcliffe met **Chris Foster** (1956 to 1963) when in Vancouver. After his degree in Geology from Imperial College London (1966), Chris worked in London and then in Maidstone as a partner in the A.Weekes Civil Engineering Consultancy. In 1989 he emigrated to British Columbia and established a business in timber framed houses from which he is now more or less retired.

Andrew J Gibbons (1974 to 1979) was in the first year of intake into the third year following the 13+ reforms. On leaving school he read Dentistry at Guy's hospital and undertook jobs in the NHS. He joined the RAF in 1986 and then read Medicine at Cambridge. He completed his training to become a Consultant in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery in 2002. In 2012 he was appointed an Associate Fellow of St John's College Cambridge. In 2013 he was appointed as Defence Consultant Advisor in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and in 2014 was promoted to Group Captain. He writes as follows:-

'In 1975 I remember an English class with "Froggy" Newcombe when he read a Wilfred Owen Poem. Half way through reading the poem he stopped. Slowly he took off his glasses and wiped a tear from his eye. After a few moments that seemed like an eternity, he said "My grandfather died in this war and my grandmother never got over it". The room of 30 boys was silent. Bravely and deliberately he completed reading the poem. An odd boyhood memory that for anyone who was in that room, connects us to 100 years ago.'

George Granycome (1956 to 1963) has written as follows. 'On requesting of the Editor a copy of the photo of the Third Fifteen of '62 or '63 in the last edition, he informed me quite politely that the bargain was that if I were to write a couple of lines for the newsletter, he might, just might, send me the photograph. Here goes. I came to MGS in 1956, having passed the eleven-plus examination at Loose County Primary School. Without a doubt it was the most important examination of my life, being the ticket to a grammar school education and all its advantages. The headmaster of Loose, "Dickie" Waldron, was fully aware of this and coached his brighter pupils in examination technique. His work bore fruit that year when some seven of us from the same class gained entry to MGS; me, Ian Burrell, Jeremy Hindle, Alastair Macfadyen, Peter Rolfe, Keith Brown, and John Tapscott.



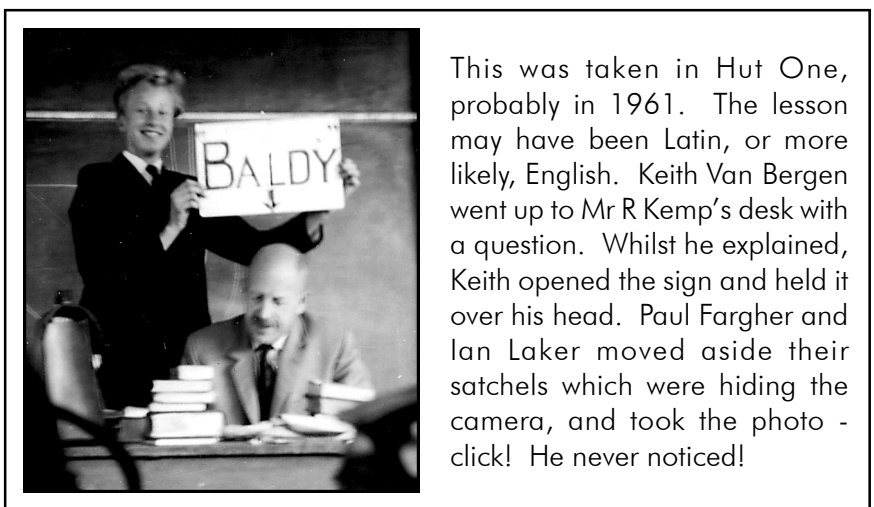
Cpl Granycome - 1961

'My seven years at MGS were wonderful and thoroughly enjoyable – mostly – although we should never as a class have been left for two years in succession with Nigel Dodd, when we stayed in Hut Five with him for two successive years in Upper 4L and Remove L. (In fairness there were others who thought this to be a

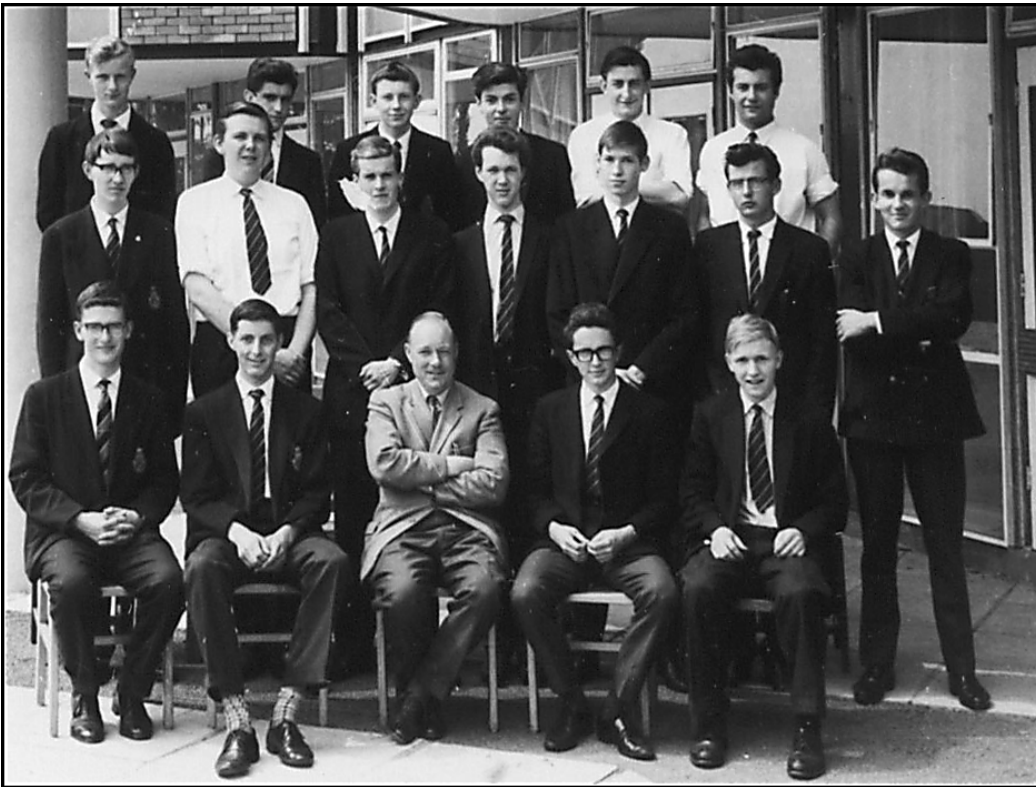
good thing.) There are so many of the staff whom I remember with huge affection and admiration: Bob Rylands, John "Chocs" Caley, "Ichabod" Johnson, K E Yorke, "Nogger" Knight, Alex Stewart, "Willie" Fawcett, George Keast, and many others, and above all the sainted Eric Newman, my form master when I joined the school as one of the brightest in 3A, and again when I was under a cloud in the Second Year Sixth.

'(A note on year and form numbers: Year One was the Third Form, Year Two the Fourth Form, Year Three was the Upper Fourth, Year Four was the Remove, and Year Five the Fifth Form. This was all entirely logical in the eighteenth century, when boys began at MGS at a much younger age than nowadays.)

'Undoubtedly, we were on the whole taught well, but I have since found woeful gaps in my education, especially with regard to English, wot I have always had to struggle with, particularly in written work. Those of us in the science stream were left with huge gaps in English literature which are still there. French was a useless waste of time and has left me with a lifelong dislike of that language, of France, and of most of the French nation. Two years in the "science sixth" studying, or rather becoming very bored with, maths, physics, and chemistry, was not good for the soul. Basic maths and physics have been mildly useful, but the chemistry less so. History, geography, art, music, divinity even, have all proved to be



This was taken in Hut One, probably in 1961. The lesson may have been Latin, or more likely, English. Keith Van Bergen went up to Mr R Kemp's desk with a question. Whilst he explained, Keith opened the sign and held it over his head. Paul Fargher and Ian Laker moved aside their satchels which were hiding the camera, and took the photo - click! He never noticed!



MGS - Form 6S2(b) summer 1963

Back Row: L to R: Victor Downes, David Black, Peter Scanlon, Hugh Robinson, David Hopper, Richard Dunnill

Middle Row: L to R: John Gribbin, George Granycome, Jeremy Hindle, Geoff Shand, Michael Thorndycraft,
David Canning, Michael Greenop

Front Row: L to R: Richard Ratcliffe, Robert Birch, Eric Newman, Brandon Broadbent, Bernard Gilbert

valuable, and very surprisingly Latin, as it is so very useful in comprehending English. I am now of the opinion that a couple of years of classical Greek would have been useful (although I could never have thought that at the time), together with much more time on woodwork and also some basic metalwork.

‘Nowadays, it seems strange that as MGS schoolboys, we wore short trousers, school caps, and carried satchels. Most of the schoolmasters wore gowns, and on speech days they wore their hoods. It was apparent that the older the university the

more subdued the decoration of the hood. Those from Oxford or Cambridge had a narrow edge of dark red, but the newer the university the gaudier the hood. When I went to the graduation of a daughter a year or two ago, I seem to remember that her hood was edged with pink fur, silver tinsel and had flashing fairy lights. Many of the schoolmasters who officered the CCF had actual experience of fighting in WW2, and some still limped from their wounds. It is appropriate here to mention RSM Bennett, “Sarge” an ex-guardsman who lived in the gatehouse and who was the caretaker, sergeant-major to the cadets, and who sold sticky buns in the tuck shop which we washed down with our one-third-pint bottles of free school milk.

‘The Combined Cadet Force, especially the wonderful summer camps, gave me a taste of armed force life and a growing ambition to join the Royal Navy. But upon being caught smoking whilst at the same time as skiving off a games period, I was busted from acting praefect, passed over for promotion to CCF sergeant, and my form master, an ex-naval officer, told me in very direct terms that in his opinion a layabout like me had no chance whatsoever of gaining entry into Dartmouth. This was a disappointment, and when my local vicar, an ex-Royal Navy padre also quietly advised my mother that it was inconceivable that a boy who lived in a council house could ever gain entry to Dartmouth, I began applying to universities like everyone else. Here came the second turning point in my life. At an interview at Exeter University I was amazed by the very high standard and the huge amount of crumpet all around, and so my mind was changed; I did not want to join the navy any more, I wanted to go to university and get amongst it! So when I went to the two-day Dartmouth naval interview, with little hope and faded ambition, mainly to practise my interview technique, I was fully relaxed and so, perversely, was accepted!

‘I had a wonderful career in the Royal Navy, both as a seaman officer and also flying as an Observer in anti-submarine helicopters, with lots of travel and excitement, including three years married accompanied in Gibraltar, and on leaving, found that my thirty-five years’ service was excellent preparation for doing nothing at all in retirement. I can also mix a pink gin to die for.

‘Home is in Weymouth, and Rosemary and I seem to remember that we had two daughters. If you google my surname you get nobody else other than the girls and I, together with my two first cousins and their children. There is nobody else. If you google my surname for images you mostly find pics of our eldest daughter, sometimes with her clothes on. I am also on Facebook, and would welcome OMs as friends, although it is my sad experience that many of my vintage have been left behind by the PC and internet revolutions.

Simon James (1984 to 1989) has recently become Head of English Studies at Durham University, where he is Professor of Victorian Literature. He is the author of *Unsettled Accounts: Money and Narrative Form in the Novels of George Gissing* (2003) and *Maps of Utopia: H. G. Wells, Modernity and the End of Culture* (2012).

Keith Mitchell (1939 to 1946) says that our mention of Williams Golding's wife, Anne Brookfield, rang a bell with him. He believes that she was probably the elder sister of **Richard Brookfield**, who was in the upper reaches of MGS in 1939/ 1940. He was in West Borough house and bowled left arm spin for the 1st XI; he was also an embryonic poet and had pieces published in *The Maidstonian*.

Keith Perkins (1977 to 1983) runs a company called Aero Legends, which arranges flights in vintage aircraft from Headcorn. Recently, it was reported in the press that Neville Croucher, a former WW2 Hurricane pilot, who had always wanted to fly in a Spitfire, would get his chance to do so, thanks to Keith's company, whose website address is www.aerolegends.co.uk.

Graham Petty (1960 to 1967) regrets that he has too few memories of it, and has not kept in contact with anyone from his schooldays. He goes on: 'But I have some memories, which may amuse or interest your readers, or indeed stir the old grey cells of some.

'My first recollection is of my first church service, for which we tramped down to Maidstone. I was trying to be enthusiastic in singing some hymn, I remember not which one, when the Deputy Headmaster, Mr Rylands I think, strode purposely towards me from his seat, and announced to me, and others close by, that he never wanted to hear that noise again, and that I should mime at all future services. This has blighted my singing career, and I still mime when I find myself somewhere where public singing is required.

'There are no more memories, other than a very happy general feeling, until 1965, when I joined the RAF section of the CCF. I enjoyed the shooting, and was quite good at it, but I hated marching, because I had no natural sense of rhythm. But what I really couldn't abide, was what I thought to be the childish competition between the RAF and Army sections over who could march the best. Slightly older boys who had a stripe or two on their jackets, would drill their platoons up and down the car park, hurling abuse at platoons of boys from the other section as they passed. This often ended with the two opposing corporals, sergeants or whatever, swapping and drilling the other's platoon, to prove that they couldn't march.

'After what I thought to be a reasonable period, I decided that I no longer wished to be part of this experience, and towing the school glider on long rubber bands around the school field didn't seem to be adding to my education either, so I convinced my father that I must resign from the CCF. We wrote to the Headmaster with my resignation, and were both summonsed by Mr Claydon. We were told that one doesn't resign from the CCF, but we pressed our case, and he threatened that if I insisted on resigning, he would make sure that his report in my UCCA application for a future university place would be such that he could guarantee that no university would want me.

'In the face of this threat, my father and I went outside and reviewed the position. I decided that my point of principle was not to be given up under such a threat, and my father said he would continue to support me, so we went back in and I confirmed my resignation. I was proud of my father: it couldn't have been easy, he had been a pilot in the war, and had been very pleased when I joined the RAF section, and first showed him my new blue uniform.

'Looking back on this, I am still surprised, and rather pleased, by this display of rebellion, and of having a very strong conviction, because it came out of the blue, to me and everyone else. Before then I had always been very obedient and non-controversial. I put it down to the character developing skills of MGS.

'There are some other memories of school, some more hazy than others. In no particular order they are as follows. How awful we in the Science Sixth were when we met the Arts Sixth in the ritual war of the Arts *versus* Science Rugby matches. We weren't awful in terms of our rugby skills, but awful in the things that were done in the scrum! The horror of the regular cross-country run around Mote Park is another memory, with "Tish" following the stragglers, on a bicycle I think, trying to land a thwack with his swagger stick on

any boy who could not outrun him. Some of us managed to find short cuts which he never seemed to find.

'I remember one time as a praefect, when responsible for a corridor of classrooms at break time, that I stormed in to a classroom where there was a terrible din occurring, with shouting, scuffles and two boys standing on their desks. I screamed, "Silence!" and demanded that everyone sit down and wait in silence for their master to arrive. The form returned to their desks, but some bright spark did politely inform me that their master had already arrived and was in the back corner, struggling with some piece of equipment. I shouted, "Quiet!" and left as quickly as I could!

'I have gone on for too long, but I am sure you want to know what happened to me. Well I didn't join the Forces, but I did get to university, after I took the precaution of applying myself by writing to the Admissions Tutors of the universities that I thought might accept my uninspiring A levels. The best careers advice that the school could offer was to take a degree in your best A level subject, and worry about a job once one had "B.Sc. Hons." after one's name. With a degree in botany and zoology I naturally embarked on a career in Local Government, and was doing rather well until it was cut short by enforced early retirement as result of too many heart attacks. I was also enjoying being a JP on the Sussex Bench.

In 2004 my wife and I decided to start a new life in the South of France, and we are still here ten years later, very happy and with no regrets. We intend to stay here for ever! This is interesting in the context that I failed my French O level twice, and the school gave up on me as a hopeless language student, refusing to teach me further or pay for another resit. A French master (I have forgotten his name) took pity on me and offered private lessons. I passed a few months later. Some may say that my French hasn't improved much since then!

If anyone thinks that I have misremembered, or worse, exaggerated any of my memories, I assure you that it wasn't deliberate. After 50 years, one's memory can sometimes plays tricks on one. Now I have just remembered (I think I have) the name of my favourite teacher, it was the Biology teacher, Mr Palmer. Great teacher: nobody even thought of trying to disrupt his class, as he had our respect. We also respected him because when Mr Claydon was stalking the corridors during class time, he would with a great flourish close the curtains along the biology lab. as soon as he saw him staring in the window from the corridor, adding, "We don't need an audience do we boys?". We would chorus, "No Sir!"

SENIOR SPEECH DAY

One of our Honorary Vice-Presidents, the former Vicar of Maidstone, Revd Canon Christopher Morgan-Jones, was the speaker at Senior Speech Day on 12 September. He spoke as follows.

'I am immensely grateful for the 21-year association I have had with Maidstone Grammar School. The heart of what I wish to say today to everyone is: "for the rest of your lives read, think and vote."

'As I have seen it, at its best, Maidstone Grammar School is a community where all its members, students, teachers and support staff, with all their great diversity, are respected and give of their best, together, for the formation of good citizens. As the 2013 Ofsted inspection report said, "Students' attainments equip them exceptionally well for Higher Education and careers of their choice. They mature into thoughtful and considerate young adults, able to think for themselves and express themselves eloquently."

'The variety of what is offered here is so very good: academic study to a high degree, sports, CCF, music, art, drama, service, formation of character and more. It is so good to see students and staff, growing and flourishing. Saying this is not being complacent; for we all know of areas where, over the years, we all could have done better. Today, I especially congratulate all the prize winners.

'I think that the founders of Maidstone Grammar School and most of its subsequent leaders have sought to help form useful citizens. At the beginning it was providing for the professions: then the law, medicine and the church, as well as providing for government service and the well-running of agricultural and commercial businesses, and to do this in a way that served the community of England. Now the list of careers is vastly expanded and indeed many in the years ahead will follow more than one career in this rapidly-changing world. In this, then and now, studies both directly relevant to future careers and wider issues are required to produce useful citizens. Overarching all of this is attention to the formation of moral character.

'We live in a world in which there are many distractions: if we are not careful the vast array of electronic devices at our disposal can take up our time and energy. I want to make a plea that we all set aside time and energy for reading, whether on little screens or in fine and beautiful books. Reading alone gives us space to gather ourselves and to consider. What we read will depend upon our interests but I hope it will be for enjoyment and will equip us to be better citizens. If we are not scientists, we do well to read some science; if we are not followers of the humanities we do well to read of art and music. We all, I think, do well to read literature, history and biography and some of the fine recent British nature writing. Literature assists our emotional intelligence, our ability to broaden our sympathies and deepen our understandings of our fellow men and women. History gives us vital perspectives: things were different in the past; they can be, if we learn thoughtfully, be different in the future. Biography does both of these.

'Consider two brothers who flourished in the 20th century. Sir Geoffrey Keynes was a great pioneering surgeon and medical administrator at St Bartholomew's Hospital. He was also a great William Blake scholar and he encouraged many younger poets. His profession and his interests mutually enriched each other. His older brother, Lord Maynard Keynes, wrote his first book on probability theory, became a brilliant financial administrator and economist, and all the while he rejoiced in art, music, drama, ballet and literature. He was responsible both for the immediate post-war international financial arrangements and for the foundation of the Arts Council.

'Besides reading, I want to advocate continuing to think. It is so easy in particular areas of life to leave our brains at home. What we read and hear in the media is so often plainly wrong and fails to do justice to the complexity of the situation. Yes, we need enthusiasm, drive, entrepreneurship, and we also need critical thinking.

'To obtain a true perspective on our world is not easy. Many distractions in life keep us from attending to vital elements of life. Different people will see things differently. I do not expect everyone to share my perspectives. I am horrified that we are still living in a world in which a billion people do not have even a basic diet, and far too many have no access to clean water. In our own country far too many people, through no fault of their own, live in demeaning poverty and their humanity at work is not valued and respected. The world is still failing to take the challenge of caring for our environment seriously, and violence and war are far too prevalent. Other people will have other lists. But this is why it is so important to vote thoughtfully.

'I am full of admiration for all that staff and students here contribute to establishing good foundations for good lives, and I hope that Maidstone Grammar School and all those persons associated with it will continue to grow and to flourish; and that we all continue to read, think and vote.'

NEWS FROM OUR ARCHIVIST. LOIS BIRRELL

My prayers were answered! Or, more accurately, the appeal for help was successful. Two wonderful gentlemen, Jeff Wilkinson and Roger Birchall, have very kindly offered to help with the preservation and restoration of the newspapers, photographs and other paper documents we have in the archive. I look forward to working with them.

So, whilst 'on a roll', I would really quite like to meet a silversmith who would be willing to have a look at a trophy. This is the Swimming Challenge Cup for the House Relay event and was presented to the School by S. B. Fletcher in 1926. It was won by West House in its first year and was last awarded to Corpus Christi House in 1970.

A few months ago, we received a telephone call from Mr Sadler, who had just moved into a bungalow in Folkestone and had found a cup in his loft which once belonged to the School. He wondered if we would like it back. It was filthy, very battered and bruised, and had definitely seen better days but beneath all the tarnish and sticky stuff is a small, beautifully-crafted, silver chalice. I have polished it as much as I dare but it really does need some attention to bring it back to its former glory. This picture definitely shows its better side!



There is a reference in a 1992 letter to some of the trophies having been stolen 'a while ago'. Perhaps this was one of them. I hope those of you who were recipients of this cup will be pleased to hear that it is back where it belongs.

I would also love to meet an architect or surveyor, or anyone else, who has a spare plan chest that he or she would be willing to donate to the School. A1 would be fine! We will arrange collection. A chest would allow us to store the many larger plans and items that really need to be kept flat and which are currently folded into origami-like parcels. Any other ex-shop or office display cases could also be useful!

And just in case there are any bookbinders or picture framers hiding their lights under bushels, please do get in touch! I know there are more Rogers and Jeffs out there. You may not think you have any skills which will be helpful but I can put anyone and everyone to good use. Perhaps not right now but I am sure your time will come! Please don't be shy!

I have always believed in 'the kindness of strangers' but people like Mr Sadler, who could simply have thrown the very tarnished trophy in the dustbin, and Mrs Horrick who purchased some MGS OTC buttons and badges at a boot fair simply in order to, as she put it, 'return them to their home' really do restore one's faith in human nature.

Visitors to the Loft have included Stephen Foster (he may have taught you geography), who is engaged in a project to identify trees of significance around Kent, especially memorial trees, and he has had a look through the archive and around the School site. We will find out as much as we can but if anyone knows anything about our memorial trees, could you please let me know, just in case it's new information.

Two members of the Harrietsham Historical Society have paid a visit, in order to research local boys who served and died in WW1. As a result of the research we carried out for the Memorial Service in August, we were able to furnish them with a lot of information and hope it will be of interest to members of their Society and the local community.

May I also thank Peter Weaver for photographing every honours and commemorative board in the School! This register of boards will be incredibly helpful for our record keeping and a very useful addition to our archive.

Even the small displays at the Year 6 open mornings have proved to be of interest to visitors but students who have seen them have also been fascinated by the items. They have begun asking questions about the School's history and, for me, this is one of the aims. I showed a group of Year 7s a photograph of the 1909-10 football team and we talked about the haircuts, the boots, the leather ball, kit and all things 'football'. We then started talking about the boys in the photograph and when I said that the captain, Harold Tupper, had died just 8 years after the photograph was taken, the boys suddenly realised that there was more to this picture than first met their eyes. If we can help them understand that behind every single one of our items is a story, then perhaps they will develop more enquiring minds and use those wonderful letters, 5 Ws and 1H, more often! So, if you have any questions, please ask!

We are very hopeful that the renewed interest in the archive will enable it to be thought of as a valuable resource for students, teachers, Old Maidstonians and, eventually, the local and wider community.

One of the best things about this 'job' is the people I've spoken and corresponded with, and met. They have been unfailingly helpful, interesting, informative, kind and, above all, generous with their time. Being able to return files has also been a great pleasure and, I suspect, a source of some amusement for many of the recipients. Hopefully, some of the more 'cutting' remarks will feel less sharp with the passage of time!

Ed: Our thanks go too to Lois. Her infectious enthusiasm for dusty old relics (like some of us) has inspired many of us to take a renewed interest in the school's history. A visit to her 'loft' is highly recommended - not just because she makes a good cup of tea! Incidentally, it would be good to know how that swimming cup got into a loft in Folkestone. Can anyone help? Own up boy! - P.S.W.

REVEREND FRANK STREATFEILD

Part 2, by Lois Birrell

I went to a wedding in the spring and was very excited to discover the name 'Streatfeild' all around the church. Much to everyone's amusement, I spent more than a few minutes taking photographs of brass memorial plaques in the church, as one does at a wedding! Chiddingstone is the ancestral – and spiritual – home of the Streatfeild family but, unfortunately, this is a distant branch of Frank's family so, whilst interesting, didn't bear quite as much fruit as I had initially hoped for. Generations later, Streatfeilds are still living in the area and, coincidentally, owned the reception venue.

However, I have spoken with Mark Aston, who is married to one of Frank's grand-daughters. He came across the OMS article having Google'd 'Streatfield' and has given me some interesting additional information.

'Frank was ordained at Cuddesdon on 20 September 1908, served his first curacy at St Philip & St James Oxford and his second at St Nicholas Newbury. He spent his pre-war holidays bicycling round the country looking at cathedrals and working on the family tree. He visited Switzerland in 1912, Rome and Naples in 1913, and Paris in 1914. In July 1914, he took the role of Chaplain at Christ Church Oxford.'

(Lois's note: the Maidstonian magazine notes his ordination being conducted by the Bishop of Oxford on 29th September 1908.)

'His wartime commission as Captain in the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry appeared in the Gazette on 10 October 1914, although he had been with them as a territorial for some years before that. He went out to France on 7 July 1915, and returned to England in April 1916. He became Rector of Carleton in Craven in 1920 and visited the Holy Land in 1924. In 1928 he moved to St Peter's Accrington. He remained there until 1937, when he began work as Rector of Colden Common near Winchester. In later years he was a member of the General Synod.'

Mr Aston also put me in touch with his sister-in-law who, in response to an email about Frank's schooldays, sent me a most amusing and insightful snippet of information:

'He was never very sporting, but he did love swimming and often reported this in his diaries. He also loved looking at ladies in swimming costumes and describes these in great detail.'

Judith, the archivist at Christ Church, Oxford, and ex-Tonbridge Grammar School student, very kindly sent me some additional information about Frank's time at Oxford. He took a 2nd in history in 1907 and 2nd in theology the following year. He won a fourth-class Classical Honour Mods. For those of you unfamiliar with this class, Oxford did not distinguish between upper (2:1) and lower (2:2) second-class until the 1970s, so this is the equivalent of today's third-class. Frank was officially employed as a chaplain at Christ Church until 1920 and went on to receive his DPhil in 1921. The last contact he had with Christ Church was in 1937 when they had a 'push to update their alumni records' and he filled in a form.

Lastly, two interesting letters in the archive perhaps shed a little light on Frank's change of surname. They are from different sources but both attribute it to a little bit of snobbery and this might well be the case, as in those instances where the 'correct' spelling might be expected (birth certificate, and army and university records), it is definitely 'i' before 'e'! However, whether or not this is simply an affectation, it is clear that Frank remained extremely fond of Maidstone Grammar School. In 1928, 25 years after leaving MGS, Frank very kindly donated nearly 100 copies of his book to be sold in aid of the Pavilion Fund, in addition to his donation of £5. When you consider that an Oxford graduate appointed as a teacher at MGS in 1928 was paid the princely sum of £234 p.a., £5 probably equates to about £600 in today's money: a not inconsiderable amount. He was obviously a generous man, for whom 'Olim Meminisse Juvabit' was quite true.

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## OBITUARIES

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

Gardner Crawley writes about Dr John Arthur Bergg MA, BSc(Eng), PhD, FICE, OBE (1940 to 1951), who was Head Boy of the school in 1950. (Also remembered as a 'fine upstanding young man' by Peter Sampson.)

'John was a distinguished civil engineer, retiring as County Engineer of Surrey County Council. He had previously been Deputy County Surveyor of Kent County Council and Director of the Kent office of the Southeastern Road Construction Unit, set up to implement the construction of the A2, M20, A21, M25 and M26 roads.

'John was one of my predecessors as President of OMS, holding office in 1973 and his service to the society is much appreciated.

'I got to know John when he was Deputy County Surveyor to Henry Bowdler, and I was a recently-qualified

civil engineer working for our family construction company. He was able to sort out a problem we had on a road contract at Horton Kirby and I found him to be very fair. It turned out that he had also read civil engineering at Queen Mary College, so we had that in common as well as Maidstone Grammar School.

'His bridge designs were very fine, in particular the two arch bridges over the A2 at Swanscombe (sadly demolished when the road was widened), and the A21 at Sevenoaks. The latter still inspires me whenever I drive under it, as I designed several of the bridges over the M5 motorway, although none as dramatic as John's.'

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John Woodger (1949 to 1953) writes about Dr Alan Dodge (1949 to 1957), who came to MGS from Ditton Primary School in 1949, joining his brother John, who was by then in the Remove. He was a member of the Natural History Society, and preferred spending his Wednesday afternoons either in a science lab or weeding the Headmaster's precious iris bed, rather than with the CCF. He did well at school, even though modern languages were more than foreign to him. He went from school to Queen Mary College, University of London, where he studied botany, and followed his first degree with a PhD in a study of photosynthesis.

Virtually all of Alan's working life was in academia at the University of Bath. The following is an extract from the university's notice of his death:

*'Alan Dodge was a notable expert on herbicides and their mode of action, especially those that interfere with photosynthesis through the production of reactive oxygen species, notably the very widely-used agricultural and horticultural chemical, paraquat. He published prolifically in this area, including some very highly-cited reviews. A related interest was the natural product, hypericin, found in plants of the St John's Wort family, which acts in a similar way to paraquat as a herbicide.'*

Alan was very interested in the environment and the world around him, and particularly in local history. He wrote a book about the village of Freshford, where he lived for almost 50 years, and another on Ditton, where he grew up. He was a talented, self-taught organist and presided at the organ in Freshford for over 40 years. Allied to that was a firm Christian faith, which was nurtured during his early days in Ditton. He was a gentle and kind man with a genuine smile, a welcome for everyone and always a good friend. In recent years he regularly attended the annual OM Supper and maintained an interest in the school.

Alan died on 26 March leaving a widow, Margaret, and four grown-up children. The Service of Thanksgiving at Freshford was attended by over 300 people, standing in the aisles and outside. At the service the congregation sang a magnificent hymn that Alan had written about the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 6:22/23). He was a man of many talents, loved by his family and highly respected within his community and academic life.

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The death in August of **Mark Geadah**, the headteacher of Allington Primary School, came as a great shock to local people, many of whom were very upset by this tragic loss.

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**George Granycombe** (1956 to 1963) wrote as follows, to tell us about **Jeremy Hindle** (1956 to ?), who died on 29 April.

'Jeremy Hindle and I joined Loose County Primary School on the same day at the age of five. As we moved up through the school it became apparent that he was the brightest in the class, and he must have passed the eleven-plus examination with ease. Thanks to the efforts of the headmaster in coaching his pupils, six other boys also passed: a record achievement for the school.

'Jeremy lived just off the main road on the long hill south of Loose, almost on the border with Linton, just a mile away from my house and, when not playing chess or "Tri-Tactics", we explored on bicycles the highways and

hidden byways of that part of Kent, something that is just not possible today with so much traffic. I had not been his way for many a year but have just walked past the house where he lived, using a Google Internet map, and it gives me a most peculiar feeling.

'At Maidstone Grammar School he was bright and successful, if not the quite the very top of the class, and gained a place at Birmingham University. I know he enjoyed university, but returning to the Maidstone area, he did not find teaching fulfilling and turned his talent to buying and refurbishing houses, assisted at first by his father who was a carpenter. He was always politically aware, but by the time he became a ward councillor, and subsequently mayor, I had lost regular touch with him - he was never a person for correspondence, not even by Christmas card!

'Here is an obituary from the *Downs Mail*, drafted by Paul Oldham, who latterly knew him better than I:-

*Jeremy Hindle (68), who died near Whitstable on 29 April 2014, was a local businessman and Conservative councillor who served as Mayor of Maidstone from 1988-89. He lived locally on the Tonbridge Road, then for ten years in Lower Fant Road, and for 20 years in Collier Street. Educated at Maidstone Grammar School, Jeremy had a degree in mining engineering and went on to teach in Bexley and Borden Grammar School in Sittingbourne before embarking on a business career.*

*'His interests included property development, a fireplace business and the Woodskill timber business on Milton Street, Fant. Jeremy had been a member of the Young Conservatives and was an elected member of Maidstone Council, serving Heath ward from 1976 to 1990. His fellow Conservative and friend Paul Oldham said "Jeremy had a strong commitment to Maidstone and his work on the Arts and Recreation Committee, which included its chairmanship, was exceptional. At one point he gave his own collection of bright and fashionable clothing from the 1960s to Maidstone Museum, where it was a popular exhibit for a number of years. He was highly principled and broke with his party over the implementation of the poll tax.*

*'Jeremy went on to stand as an independent councillor. He served as a governor of Maidstone Grammar School and also served as a trustee to a local charity.*

'Even after our careers took us down different paths he was always a friend and, through others, we kept aware of each other and met from time to time at reunions. Sixty-eight years is not man's natural span of "three score years and ten", (although nowadays we all want four score). He was taken from this world too early, and there is now no opportunity of ever catching up with a good friend from a long time back.'



**Robin Ambrose** (1950 to 1957) sent us an obituary for **John Larking** (1940s), who died at his home near Kendal in August, aged 83, after a long illness. He was a scholarship boy and was to find employment at Balston Paper Mill and then follow a lifetime career in the paper industry, which took him to the Lake District. While still based in Maidstone, his activities included rugby, singing with the Operatic Society, and his National Service.

Like many of his contemporaries, John left MGS aged 15 to find employment, but continued to study with a correspondence course which led to a degree, and then in 1963 he obtained a B.Sc. With skills and qualifications, he rose up high on the management ladder.

Always a keen sportsman, he was founder of a successful dry ski slope. He was chairman of the Wakefield Music Festival and an active Round Tabler, who in 1969 led a humanitarian trip to Yugoslavia. Also, he was a prison visitor and took part in many other activities.

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**Robin Ambrose** also sent us an obituary for **Ronald Stanley Thresher**, which was published in the *Kent Cricket Annual*. Full credit is given to that publication for the following information.

*'Ronald, who died in Dover on 2 May was a right-arm bowler of genuine pace who might have gone further but opted for a lifelong career in banking with Coutts & Co. Born in Tonbridge on 31 December 1930 and educated at Maidstone Grammar School, he often terrorised schoolboy batsmen, and success with the Private Banks Club resulted in 1952 in the first of six caps for the Club Cricket Conference. In 1957 he was selected for Kent Seconds against Middlesex at Lord's where figures of 4-36 & 4-30 led to a first class debut, a tough baptism against Yorkshire at Tunbridge Wells. Kent lost by an innings but Thresher's 25 overs cost only 70 for the wickets of Brian Stott, Ray Illingworth and Jimmy Binks. His second and last, appearance, v Somerset at Taunton was less happy, 3-145 from 33 overs, but he headed the Second Eleven bowling averages with eleven wickets at 11.45.*

*'He played one other first class match in 1957. for Douglas Jardine's Eleven v Oxford*

*'University at Eastbourne where his haul of 4-29 & 4-42 included five of the university's top six but, picked twice in 1958 against both universities, he failed to take a wicket. Further appearances for Kent Seconds in 1958 and 1959 brought his haul in Second Eleven matches to 31 (avg. 21.54).*

*'He continued in club cricket throughout the 1960s.'*

**James Clayton** (1998-2005) has written: On Tuesday 21 October, **James Gaskell**, 1998-2001), sadly passed away at the age of 27 along with his wife, Alexandra Gaskell, 24, in Agra, India. The couple, who lived in Manchester, had been dating for five years before they married in November last year. James had a first-class degree from Manchester Metropolitan University in English and taught English as a foreign language at Manchester International College. At the time of his death, the newlyweds were travelling through Asia with the purpose of teaching English abroad.

I was a form-mate of James during his spell at MGS and whilst only knowing him for a short period of time, I always admired his lively personality and good humour. He was a practical joker who also happened to be a very good sportsman and I had the pleasure of playing with him for a local football team for over a year.

## WW1 REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

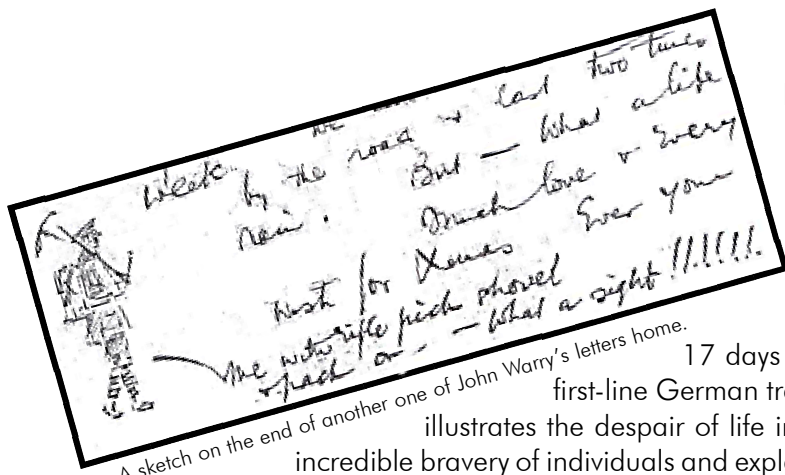
by Lois Birrell

Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> August arrived with an expectant hush. The School's hall was a hive of activity but somehow the mood was distinctly different. There was real sense of purpose: a feeling that everything had to be 'right'. It was hard to know what the tone of the day would be but the feeling of respect was palpable, even before the guests started arriving.

We were very honoured to have some relatives of the WW1 boys, including Mr Chris Cruttenden (the grandson and only direct descendant of Valence Cruttenden) who had travelled from Scotland to be with us, Mrs Duncanson, Mr Julian Hale (who had travelled from Brussels) and Messrs. Peter and Andrew Hills. The Hills family has a long and distinguished connection with the School and this is continued even today with Peter's grandson in Year 10 (the 'old' 4<sup>th</sup> form). We have also made contact with numerous other relatives who were, unfortunately unable to attend but, nevertheless, sent their best wishes from as far away as Canada, Australia and Wales!

The memorial service, conducted by Mr Tomkins, was a poignant mix of old and new. He reflected on the sheer scale of the Great War, the reasons why it remains so embedded in our memories and the sacrifice made by so many of our 'old boys'. Lindsey Evans, the Chair of Governors, and Ben Johnston, the School Captain, repeated the words of the 1921 dedication service by the then Mayor and Headmaster respectively, when the honours boards and windows were first unveiled, which concluded with, 'The School will not, the School cannot forget.'

Mrs Evans then read Lewis Blunden's obituary which was carried in the December 1916 edition of *The Maidstonian*. A more moving piece of writing would be



A sketch on the end of another one of John Warry's letters home. illustrates the despair of life in the trenches and on the battlefield, the stoicism and incredible bravery of individuals and explains perfectly how the weather affected the men's moral.

'It rained, snowed and a cold wind blew. It gives one a feeling of all hope lost.'

hard to find; it manages to convey Blunden's character, and urges us to remember him fondly, without sorrow but, above all, with pride. There were lumps in many a throat as the waste of Lewis's life was brought home in such a simple, yet eloquent and elegant, way.

A letter from the front was then read by Ben. It was written by John Lucas Warry on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1917, just

17 days before he was killed in action, leading an attack on a first-line German trench near Hargicourt, France. The letter to John's aunt

Two parents, Dan Taylor of the Kent & Sharpshooters Yeomanry museum and Rob Davis, a collector of WW1 memorabilia, had generously agreed to set up displays to supplement the School's archive material. The School displayed numerous photographs, records, books and various other items but, undoubtedly, the highlight of the display was the table of posters produced in Extended Learning Week by nine students and the Head of History, Graham Walker, on each of the forty-five boys and one teacher who made the ultimate sacrifice.

The CCF was out in force and put on a splendid display out in the quad, proving that the traditions of the OTC carry on today. It also reminded us just how young so many of these young men were when they went off to war, some only a year or two older than those in uniform at the Service.

Despite the solemnity of the morning, there were many lighter moments; most notable was watching Mr Taylor trying to dress a tailor's dummy in a WW1 uniform, a job ultimately delegated to Mrs Taylor! Lunch, too, was a lively and chatty affair with different ages, backgrounds and memories all talking about their common histories; the War and MGS.



This Service gave the School, its current students and staff, its alumni and relatives the opportunity to reflect on the past and pay their respects to our Old Boys – and it did them proud. We shall not forget them.

### Death of Mr. Percy Smythe.

[Reprinted from the "Kent Messenger," December 15.]

The physical infirmities resulting from his experiences while serving his King and Country in France terminated fatally in the case of Mr. Percy Smythe, of "Sanbury," Bower Mount Road, on Saturday. Born in Maidstone some 39 years ago, Mr. Smythe was the youngest son of the late Mr. John Smythe and a Freeman of the Borough. He was educated at Maidstone Grammar School, and became an active member of the firm of Messrs. J. and A. S. Smythe, timber and slate merchants, Bridge Wharf. Keen on all kinds of sport, he played for the old Rugby Football Club, and, with his cousin, Mr. Bernard Smythe, was a familiar figure at the Maidstone Lawn Tennis Tournaments. He also served in the West Kent Yeomanry, and was a frequent prize-winner at the sports. He filled the office of President of the Old Maidstonians' Society, and was at one time a prominent member of the Maidstone Anglers' Society. After war broke out he was engaged in buying horses for the Government, and then was given a commission in the Royal Field Artillery. About Christmas, 1914, he went to the Front, where he rendered gallant service. Unfortunately, he sustained an accident which brought on paralysis and necessitated his return in May, 1915. Mr. Smythe was well known in Maidstone and the district, and in his misfortune he had the sympathy of a wide circle of friends, whose condolence is now being extended to the widow and other members of the family.

But, whilst finding out about the 'old boys' who died in WW1, it became evident that, for some reason, two names had been forgotten, and left off the honours boards (now in the Hall). One in particular, that of Percy Smythe, was particularly intriguing as he had been a prominent member of the Old Maidstonian Society (including being the Society's President for 1908) and we know from *The Maidstonian* magazine that his name was specifically mentioned at the boards' unveiling service.

Percy was born in 1879 to John and Laura Smythe. John was a successful timber and slate merchant, with his own business in Maidstone, and Laura had children – 13 of them! At Maidstone Grammar School, his academic career could best be described as 'could do better', and the number of mentions for sport can be counted on one hand. The most significant reference to Percy was when he knocked Master Jewell off his bike in the One Mile Bicycle Handicap Race. Even having done that, Percy lost the race as Jewell simply remounted and went on to win!

Percy went into the family firm and played for Maidstone Rugby Club and in the past v present students' cricket match in 1902.

His military service is detailed in his obituary, but one year after returning from the front, Percy married Charlotte Bailey. However, his happiness was short-lived and he died on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1917.

The other 'old boy' was Herbert Stonehouse Coles, the son of James Readman Coles, a farmer, and Lucy Coles. Herbert was living with them in Hastings at 26 Eversfield Place in 1881 but, having boarded at Cranbrook School, joined Maidstone Grammar School on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1891, at the age of 14 years. He went into Mr Priestley's 'Modern Fifth' where he was placed 5<sup>th</sup> out of a class of seven boys but managed to improve his academic performance the following year, coming 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in a class of six. However, it should to be noted that two boys were absent from the exams, perhaps putting Coles' performance into perspective. Statistics!

In 1892, *The Maidstonian* describes Herbert's cricketing skills as 'Very good field when he likes, but slack. Hits with more spirit than judgement.' There are also references to other sporting achievements; including winning the Under-15s 100 yards race by 5 yards in a time of 13.2 seconds, and a prize for best batting average. He also played football for the School, being described as '... not so careless as he looked'!



Herbert began work as a brewer in Surrey and is listed in the 1901 census as boarding with a Mr and Mrs Brown in Guildford. He joined the 1<sup>st</sup> (Cumberland) Volunteer Battalion, his promotion to 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant being reported in *The London Gazette* on 17<sup>th</sup> June 1902. He fought in the Boer War and rose to the rank of Captain in 1905, before retiring from the army. Herbert emigrated to Canada in 1908 but returned to volunteer, again with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers, when the War broke out. He was promoted to Captain on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1915 but was reported as missing and presumed 'Killed in Action' just four months later, on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1915, aged 38 years.

Herbert is commemorated at the Le Touret Memorial in Pas De Calais, France.

Percy and Herbert's names were put on the honours board in time for the service and they are now, as they should be, reunited with their fallen comrades.

Julian Hale wrote the following tribute to his great-uncle, **Garrett Saveall** and his fellow countrymen who fell with him in the First World War. He has added information about Trones Wood and the regiment as he thought that others from his regiment might have been Old Maidstonians and could therefore be interested. He has accumulated a lot of detailed information that he could send to people if they are interested.

*'Some 30 years ago, my grandmother, Ruth Saveall, told me and my family that she had lost her brother in the First World War. If there is one thing that I have always remembered it is how young he was – just 21 years old – and how many young men must have had their lives cut short so tragically. About ten years ago, I went on a WW1/WW2 tour with two good friends of mine. We visited various cemeteries where I looked to see if I could find a record of my great uncle. By chance, I did, looking in a book of remembrance at Thiepval memorial. When I returned home, I saw that I could easily have found the record of where his name was written on the Commonwealth Graves website. I also realised how little I knew about WW1 and increasingly feel how important it is to have as objective an understanding of history as is possible. Since then, I have read a number of books; I read articles regularly and attend debates about WW1, in order to learn more and listen carefully to other viewpoints. It seems to me that this is the kind of thing our political leaders across the world should be doing with great care (in particular listening to the different national perspectives), to learn the various lessons of how the world, to borrow from historian Christopher Clark, "sleepwalked" into this war.*

*'As for my great uncle, here are a few details that historian Nick Thornicroft very kindly obtained for me. Each time I look at them, they bring tears to my eyes. My great uncle's name was Garrett Saveall and he was born in Maidstone, on 9 October 1895. An official record of his enlistment for the army, dated 11 May 1915, says that he spent two years in the Officer Training Corps at Maidstone Grammar School. He was commissioned on 21 May 1915 and was Second Lieutenant in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) 7<sup>th</sup> battalion. He was killed in action in a heroic stand against the Germans in Trones Wood, on the Somme battlefield in France, on 13 July 1916.*

*'The Allies saw the occupation of Trones Wood as a key part of an offensive on the German positions in the vicinity and as a prelude to a big offensive on the Somme on 14 July. The wood was relatively small*



## YOUR COMMITTEE 2014-15

Gardner Crawley (1955 -1962) - President  
[gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com](mailto:gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com)

Richard Ratcliffe (1956 -1964) - Chairman  
[rbr1@btconnect.com](mailto:rbr1@btconnect.com)

Dr. Brian White – Secretary; Co-Editor (1962 - 1969) [drbdwhite@gmail.com](mailto:drbdwhite@gmail.com) Telephone 01622 756660 or 07828 925609, or write to 26 Little Buckland Avenue, Allington, Maidstone, ME16 0BG

Graham Belson (1960 -1965) Membership Secretary, Treasurer  
[oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto:oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk), Tel: 01622 730514 or 07770 738041, or write to 22 Plantation Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME14 4BH.

Lois Birrell (Archivist and staff)  
[archivist@mgs-kent.org.uk](mailto:archivist@mgs-kent.org.uk)  
[lois.birrell@mgs-kent.org.uk](mailto:lois.birrell@mgs-kent.org.uk)

Tony Bishop (1955 -1962)  
[tony\\_bishop@btinternet.com](mailto:tony_bishop@btinternet.com)

John Clayton (1961 -1968)  
[j.clayton@hikent.org.uk](mailto:j.clayton@hikent.org.uk)

Sam Coppard (2005 to 2012)  
[samuel.coppard@btinternet.com](mailto:samuel.coppard@btinternet.com)

Gardner Crawley (1955 to 1962) - President  
[gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com](mailto:gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com)

Ben Johnston (MGS School Captain)

James Kinsman (1999 - 2005)  
[james@macrolevel.co.uk](mailto:james@macrolevel.co.uk)

Prof. Malcolm McCallum (1957 - 1963) – Webmaster  
[m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk)

Ron McCormick (Staff: - 2004)

Alex Rolfe (2006 to 2013)  
[alex.j.rolfe@googlemail.com](mailto:alex.j.rolfe@googlemail.com)

Lydia Ross (MGS School Vice-Captain)

Peter Sampson (1950 - 1955)  
[pjesampson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:pjesampson@tiscali.co.uk)

Simon Pain (1999 - 2005)  
[simon@macrolevel.co.uk](mailto:simon@macrolevel.co.uk)

Peter Weaver (1950 -1958) Co-Editor  
[p.weaver@iee.org](mailto:p.weaver@iee.org)

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

26th to 29th Nov. School Production of 'Oliver'
17th December Carol Service, All Saints' Church at 7.30pm
27th March 2015 The Annual Supper



The Old Maidstonian

Co-Editors: Brian White Tel: 01622 756660 Email: drbdwhite@gmail.co.uk
Peter Weaver Tel: 01435 864541 Email: p.weaver@iee.org

We Would Like to Hear From You **Copy date for next edition: 3rd April, 2015**

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.

OLD MAIDSTONIAN SOCIETY SALES

The Society has ties, blazer badges, scarves, and several historical books about the school for sale. All the proceeds go to the Society Awards Fund to support the students.

The items should be ordered using the attached Order Form, and payment may be made either by forwarding a completed form and cheque to the Society at the School, or by internet transfer and sending an electronic copy of the form to oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk



Ties

The striped tie is the original Old Maidstonian Society tie with bands of navy blue, white, purple and old gold. The stock of these ties has been recently replenished, and the new ties are polyester and slightly larger than the original at 58" in length, and 3½" wide.

The crested tie is a Jacquard Woven Tie with all-over motifs of the crest in gold, red and blue on a navy background.

Both ties are £8.50 each including post and packing.

Scarves

A completely new design is now available based upon the Society colours of navy blue, white, purple and old gold. The scarves are of pure wool or acrylic fibre and are 70" in length and 10" wide.

Cost including post and packing: £30 wool or £18 acrylic.

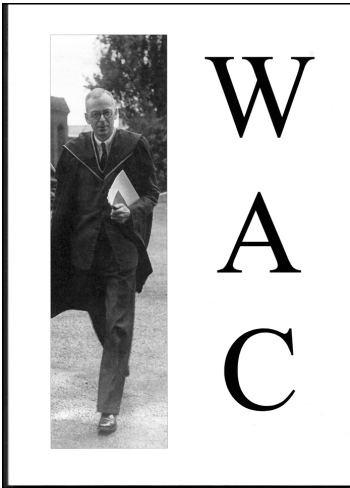


Blazer Badges

The Old Maidstonian Society woven badge is approximately 5" x 3" and is designed to be sewn onto a blazer.

The badges are for sale at £15 including post and packing.

Books



WAC: Trials and Triumphs of a Grammar School Headmaster

A history of Maidstone Grammar School from 1925 to 1941 through the final report of Headmaster Alfred John Woolgar, MA, and from 1942 to 1966 in the Speech Day Reports of Headmaster William Arthur Claydon, CBE, MA. The book was researched and compiled by James Clinch (OM 1936-46, staff 1974-91)

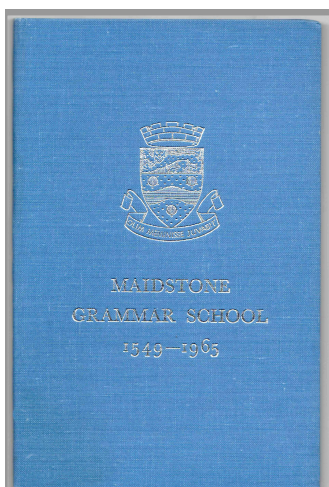
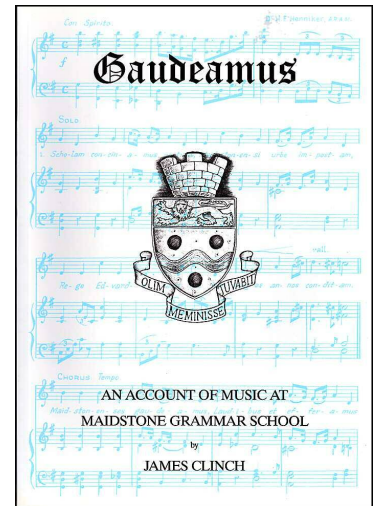
Cost: £6.50 including post and packing.

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, OM Society President 2012-13).

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

Cost: £6.50 including post and packing.



MGS 1549 to 1965 - A Record

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, originally produced in 1965, also brings to an end the era of WA Claydon. (Please note that most have some sort of marking on the covers, and although in good condition, are not perfect.)

Cost: £6.50 including post and packing.

Payment

Facilities are 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

Account no: 00051802

Sort Code: 60-60-08

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. Alternatively payment may be made by cheque to: **"The Old Maidstonian Society"** and sent to the school.

