I was honoured to be installed as OM President at the last Annual Supper. Taking over from Richard Ratcliffe seemed particularly appropriate as he was the Chairman of Governors when I was appointed as Headmaster in 1992. Richard has made an outstanding contribution to the wellbeing of the School, both as a Governor and in his various roles with the Society. We offer him our gratitude for his wisdom, acumen and steadfast loyalty. It is a comfort to know that his long and beneficial association with the School continues. What is true of the School, that continuous service by outstanding staff adds greatly to the ethos we experience and the standards achieved by students, is no less true of the Society.

I had intended, on stepping down in 2009, to ease myself into retirement by engaging in a modest amount of educational consultancy work while improving my golf handicap and attending to a number of other interests. Fate intervened and I could not resist the challenge of leading and developing the Tanglin Trust Senior School, based in Singapore. What started as a short-term contract extended to six years and I returned to the UK at the end of the last academic year. I could not have wished for a better end to my working life. Being able to apply the lessons of leadership, development and aspiration gained from MGS to a dynamic and ambitious setting in a first-world city was a wonderful opportunity. I feel enormously privileged to have had that experience. Moreover, sited where it is, Singapore is a great hub for travel and I took full advantage of that. Given the significant growth of Asian economies and a generally positive outlook for the future, I am sure many OMs, especially those at the younger end of the spectrum, will be able to enjoy the exciting travel and cultural opportunities that abound in the region.

Looking ahead to the coming year, I am very keen to support both the Society and the School. Membership of the Society has grown encouragingly in the recent past, but we still have a long way to go given the large number of OMs who remain detached from the Society. We believe that, by creating a range of additional events (to the Annual Supper), we can increase the opportunities for fellowship and encourage more OMs to sign up for that. An early sign of this endeavour is the Neil Turrell Reunion Day on September 3rd, when I hope to meet students and staff from my time (and others of course) at the School. I look forward to that occasion and urge you to attend if at all possible. There will be other events during the year that will be publicised on the OM website. I am also very supportive of the ambitious Development Fund introduced by the Headmaster – I am sure more will be said about that in due course, but from my perspective it boils down to the proposition that we should be able to offer current and future students of MGS the opportunities and experiences that will develop them to the point where they will be able to make a distinctive contribution to society in the future, much as many have done in the past.
Having now retired – for the time being anyway – I am now able to pursue some of the interests I referred to above. Students who were at MGS in my last year or two may be amused by the evidence (left) of one such interest! See you in September! Sempiterna Floreat!

‘It has been an enormous pleasure to be President of this August Society this year, for the second time – the previous occasion having been in 1988 – 1989, when the school was under the stewardship of the late Dr Philip Pettit. That was an interesting evening which some of you will recall, in that due to roadworks on Stone Street – and we had outside caterers in those days based at Barming – the food was delayed and so we actually had the speeches before the meal. Flexibility is the name of the game! Lampards did us proud and we all got well fed, albeit later than planned.

‘Before I get into the usual Presidential ramble – the long-drawn-out session of tearful reminiscence, there is one most pleasant duty I should now like to perform. Lindsey Evans, who has been a stalwart supporter of this Society, stood down as Chairman of Governors in the autumn. The Society is honouring her and recognising her support by making her an Honorary Vice-President of the Society.’

Richard then went on to introduce his special guest, Roger Crittenden, who is the former Director of the National Film and Television School at Beaconsfield and is still active as a world-renowned expert on film editing and a visiting lecturer at NFTS. Roger gave an interesting and amusing resumé of his career which we will be printing (well most of it!) in our next edition.

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Since the Annual Supper in April a lot of planning has been going on for the year ahead. Your committee has also been looking at the way in which the Society operates in the 21st Century environment, and our priorities in providing opportunities for old boys to socialise alongside our activities in supporting the school and supporting boys in need. Support for the School becomes more important in the present schools’ funding environment and we can best help the Headmaster and his team through the school’s Development Trust Fund. You can read more about this elsewhere in this issue. Our President, Neil Turrell, has ambitious plans for events throughout the year and the first of these will be a ‘Meet the President’ Day at the school on Saturday 3rd September. Again there is more about this on these pages and I do hope members will support it.

Later in the year we hope to run an evening event in London about which we’ll have more to publicise in the next issue.

Lastly, can I flag up that Brian White, who has been our stalwart Hon. Secretary for the past eight years or so, wishes to stand down, so we are now seeking a successor. I’d like to thank Brian (who will continue as editor of The Old Maidstonian) for his tremendous efforts over the past eight years. Don’t be shy in coming forward to do this job!!

Warm wishes to you all.

Richard Ratcliffe

FROM THE HEADMASTER

In the history of Maidstone Grammar School there have been many changes. For example, back in the late 1920s, the School decided to move from the Tonbridge Road site to this site – a massive change. In 1944 the School changed its status from being a fee-paying school to a state one, and in the early 1990s the School returned its entry from a 13-18 school to an 11-18 one, increasing in size by over 350 students. The school has clearly evolved immensely over the last 100 years, and yet we all value it for what it is now, just as Maidstonians did when they were here during those last 100 years. The traditions of this school are still cherished and they will go on being cherished. No one likes change, but it would be wrong not to evolve for fear of change.

Last year I shared the vision that we had for the School and how we would like to see it evolve further over the next few years. Three particular aspects of that vision we were wanting to see:

- all members of the MGS community being proud to be Maidstonians.
- a better resourced pastoral structure that forges positive relationships between and across year groups.
House structures at MGS are not new. For many years in our long history a House structure has been the backbone of the culture at MGS, but it was lost at some time in the 1980s. I am personally pleased that Neil Turrell, the Headmaster of MGS between 1992 and 2009 re-introduced them back in 2007. The current House structure exists because of him, and is predominantly organised to reflect the six forms of entry that we admit each year.

Maidstone Grammar School, to much of its community, is like a second home. The feeling of being ‘at home’ at MGS is unique and special to those who are Maidstonians. For me the feeling of ‘home’ means being safe. What makes us feel safe is the outstanding pastoral structure that we currently have; and one of the biggest features that make it outstanding is the continuity of care that it has. Continuity of care is so important, and the fact that every student is known, and more importantly every student knows that they are known, is vital. As the school grows in size from September 2018, it is essential we maintain that feeling of being part of a home. With an extra 30 students each year from 2018, the likelihood is that the school will have nearly 1500 students by 2025, and so it is vital that we begin to lay the foundations now to support this growth.

In order to really embody the House structure into the School, it must become part of our day-to-day work, and the biggest way that this can be achieved is for the House structure to become the Pastoral structure. Horizontal pastoral managers will no longer exist, being replaced with vertical ones: one Head of House overseeing the welfare, tracking and development of a group of students as they move through the school. When a student arrives at MGS in Year 7, he will join a House and remain in that House for seven years with one Head of House watching over him for that time.

Not only will this provide a strong sense of identity and belonging to the House, but the continuity of care as the student grows will not be broken at all, and in fact will be strengthened compared to now. In that time the Head of House will get to know so much of that student and his family. Getting to know a fraction of a year group each year is much easier than getting to know the whole year group at once.

As the school grows in size it is vital that students do not feel lost in a larger organisation. Not only will such a structure ensure continuity of care, but also provide a sense of belonging to a smaller family within the much larger MGS family, and one important element of being part of a family is the coming together as one.

Currently, we have six houses, as we are a six-form entry school. We considered introducing a seventh house when we take a seventh form but agreed that we would in fact create four new Houses. Creating four such Houses would allow the whole House to come together as one: four Houses work when having inter-house competitions, and an even number generally works better than an odd number; but creating four new Houses would mean losing the Houses we have now. The need to create new Houses and the renaming of them is, I think, the saddest element of the restructure.

Now, the concept of belonging to a House is the important element of any House system, and under the new structure students will still do that, in fact do it better, but there is something special in a name. The names of the Houses are important, and whatever they become they will need to symbolise the essence of MGS. Yes, some will be sad that they are no longer in one of the current Houses, but students will quickly forge new allegiances in the new Houses, just as the students here did nine years ago when the current structure was introduced.

The final big fundamental question with this restructure is how we will allocate students from a six and soon to be seven-form of entry structure to four Houses? So to do this we are going to introduce vertical forms; essentially, having different aged students in each form. This is called ‘verticality’. It is very hard to develop an understanding of vertical forms when imagining them in an abstract way. You must experience them at first hand, but we do already and we don’t even notice it.

One example is the Extended Learning Week; something that we introduced here four years ago, with boys of different ages enjoying activities that they have chosen. I have just returned from the Ardèche region of France, accompanying 44 students from Years 8 to 10. Apart from the physical differences, you would not have known who was in which year. And this is seen across many of the other activities. The CCF, which is integral to MGS, also illustrates the many positives of verticality. Essentially the CCF is a vertical structure. It has three vertical communities: Army, Navy, Air Force, with different aged students in each one all working together. As the CCF is already ingrained into the MGS psyche, we would all jump up to support its existence if there were any suggestions of removing it or creating more of a horizontal structure to it. Do we just celebrate the CCF just because it is what we have done for years? No. The opportunities it provides, the cadets it produces, the qualities that the students develop are all tremendously important and valued by everyone involved. It is so easy to underestimate the impact that different aged groups of students can have when we have not experienced it.

So from September 2017 we will introduce these four Houses into the school and each year will be divided
into four: 45 students per year group per House. This will increase to about 52 students per year group per House as we take more students from September 2018. There are currently now 48 forms in the school; so each new House will contain 12 forms, each form having about 4/5 students from each group. Just imagine now each form tutor having 4/5 students per year group in their form. At different times of the year the form tutor could focus their attention on those 4/5 students and their families: the welcoming of Year 7 boys into the school, the transition from Year 8 to Year 9 when boys choose their GCSE options, the transition from Year 11 to Year 12 when boys choose their A-Level options, the support required for Year 13 students as they apply to university or the world of work; older students who have experienced these things could help their younger form members; younger boys would see positive role models each day; older students would lead by example; different aged students would forge positive relationships with each other; there are so many advantages.

Mixing with different aged people can be at first a little scary, but we do it all the time within our families and places of work, and we think that it is such an important skill to have. We must not have the same frame of mind as we would when faced with a plate of new food in front of us. How many times have we heard, ‘I won’t like that!’ You won’t know until you have tried it. I believe that this school is ready for this change; yes, there are going to be challenging times, and there will be concerns, and these concerns will be addressed, and solutions will be found; but it is also going to be very, very exciting.

This restructure, and taking an additional form of entry, leads me to another exciting development seen since last year: the progression that we have made with our building projects. The Pavilion project will be starting soon and we hope that it will be finished sometime next year.

You also may remember my mentioning in previous newsletters the 10-Year Building Plan that we have for the school, and that Phase 1 of it was the Pavilion. To support this refurbished Pavilion project and complete Phase 1 we will be taking out a loan to help pay for it; but loans need to be repaid. At the same time, when we launched the 10-Year Plan, we also launched the MGS Development Fund. This Fund has now grown during its infancy to a point where it can now help us to achieve Phase 1 and contribute to the loan repayments. Thank you so much to those of you who have donated kind financial gifts; but it is now vital that we see this Development Fund grow, to ensure that it continues to support this and other building projects of the future.

The 10-Year Plan also had Phases 2 and 3. Phase 2 was to re-develop Performing Arts and Phase 3 was to improve facilities for Science and ICT. With more students coming to this school, the Local Authority is helping us in the form of a cash lump sum of basic need funding to facilitate the teaching of all these extra students – essentially money for a new building, or in our case two new buildings; and so we can progress on to phases 2 and 3 much earlier than planned. Very soon we will be knocking down the old Scout hut and replacing it with a two-storey block housing Performing Arts: Music and Music Technology, music practice rooms, recording studio and drama and performance space. Once this is built, we will move straight away to the next building, knocking down the current music block and replacing it with another two-storey teaching block, housing additional science laboratories and ICT rooms and linked to the main building. All of this should be finished by September 2018, we hope. During that time, we hope to have enough money left to complete an extra phase: something that is essential for a school like MGS, but not seen in many other schools - an all-weather pitch.

By taking additional students in the next few years we will not only support the need in the town of Maidstone but we also complete our 10-Year Plan in five years. We are not there yet, and there is still a lot to do, but this is yet another exciting development for the school, which can only benefit the students who come here. As you can see, there are a few exciting years ahead of us; we are not sitting still, but, just as when the school made the decision to move sites in 1930, or no longer to be a fee-paying school, we will always have one foot firmly planted in the past, as it is our roots that have shaped this school into what it is today, and when all else fails we will always look to our past to shape our foundations.

**School Events**

**MGS 2017 Extended Learning Week**

Since the 2012-2013 academic year MGS has run an Extended Learning Week during the summer term; essentially a week full of different activities that the students chose themselves. The activities range from trips abroad and elsewhere in the UK, rowing, fishing, golf, learning how to play bridge, school of rock, MGS Bake Off, gardening, and the MGS pantomime, to name just a few. All the boys in years 7 to 10 and all the staff get involved and thoroughly enjoy the week.

The success of the week relies on the hard work from the staff and the support we receive from parents and former students who generously offer their time to help out; and this is the reason for this note. This year, as in every year, a number of Old Maidstonians have taken
part in the week, including two former students who are currently at university, who accompanied one of the overseas trips. Not only do the staff value the support of Old Maidstonians but the younger boys relate to their fellow Maidstonians well and enjoy their company.

We are now looking for any Old Maidstonians who would like to accompany next year’s Extended Learning Week which is taking place during the week beginning Monday 3rd July 2017. If you are able to spend the whole week, or part of the week, supporting one of the many activities that will be offered, then please do make contact with the Headmaster’s PA, Mrs Friend, via denise.friend@mgs-kent.org.uk, as soon as possible as, like a lot of big events, we have already begun planning next year’s week.

Other events:

OMS / MGS Quiz – Wednesday 19th Oct., 2016
Further details will be forwarded by e-mail later.

Christmas Get-together – Wednesday 14th December 2016
We are going to have a Christmas get-together before the Carol Service; this is likely to be at a pub in Maidstone. We are investigating a suitable venue, and will send details later. Recent leavers have in the past tended to meet in a pub beforehand anyway, so we can perhaps combine to make it a quasi-official event, with Neil attending.

MGS Carol Service at All Saints Church – Wednesday 14th December 2016
This annual event will start at 7.30 pm.

SCHOOL CONTACTS
The school can be contacted on 01622 752101, or by e-mail to school@mgs-kent.org.uk. Further details of all events are available on the school website http://www.mgs.kent.sch.uk

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

The effort required after the initial sign-up can be minimised by downloading a toolbar for your browser which automatically tells you when you are accessing a retailer which participates in the scheme and enables you to make your donation, once you have logged into your Easyfundraising account. You can find the download at http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/raise-more/find-and-remind/

For more detailed information see the following page of the OMS website:
http://www.oldmaidstonians.co.uk/fundraising/

MENTOR SCHEME – EXTENDED TO OMS
Your committee has recently agreed that the Mentor Scheme should be extended to include mentoring requests from OMs as well as current students. It is thought that OMs in the early part of their careers might find having a mentor particularly valuable. So, if this is you, please contact Peter Weaver. (p.weaver@iee.org)

The Headmaster of Maidstone Grammar School warmly invites you to an Old Maidstonians’ Reunion to celebrate Neil Turrell’s Presidency of The Old Maidstonian Society

- Coffee on arrival at 11.30am
- Headmaster’s welcome at 12 noon
- BBQ from 12.30pm
- Neil Turrell’s talk at 2.00pm
- Tours of the school will run throughout the day
- A special display of old school photographs and memorabilia will be available to view
- Prefects will be on hand to answer questions
- Wine, beer and soft drinks will be available

We hope you understand that we politely request a donation of £10 per person towards costs either in advance by cheque or in cash on the day.

RSVP to: Denise Friend, Maidstone Grammar School, Barton Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7BT, or e-mail denise.friend@mgs-kent.org.uk by Friday 26 August 2016.
Some candid shots from the Annual Supper (Names withheld to protect the innocent!)
**Musings from the Penthouse**

My first item today is to say, with deep regret, an obituary.

A dear old lady who has served the school through many decades appears to have been laid to rest. Some may say that she should have gone long ago but I, along with many others I am sure, am sorry for her demise.

She has served under no less than 12 Headmasters, 688 members of teaching staff and countless students. She has been of invaluable service to an unknown number of archivists. Quite an achievement for a lady of 128 years of age. She is, of course, the school magazine, *The Maidstonian*. From 1885 through to 1941 three editions per year were normally published; this was then reduced to two editions, partly because of the lack of printing ink and paper during WW2, until 1976 when the school produced just one edition per year. Since the last one in 2012, which was produced mainly by the administration staff, there has been none at all.

For many, many years the magazine was used to list all staff and boys starting at the school (Salvete) and all those leaving (Valete), naming the achievements of each boy in the latter. Speech Day messages were often included verbatim. School sports reports were very detailed for cricket (giving batting and bowling achievements per match), tackle-by-tackle rugby match details again for every match played, swimming events, cross-country, etc. Each report was reviewed by a master who did not mince his words over bad achievements, being harsh in ways which would not be acceptable today.

The school houses, drama productions, Scouts, Officer Training Corp and Combined Cadet Force all received the same type of treatment, along with other school groups. Whilst much of the content was boring to new students (in Year 7, for you modernists), it gave a sense of competitiveness and achievement to see their names in writing for those who had taken part.

The magazine has been a great source of help to those seeking the history of the school and its students. Led on by possibly a sense of progress, the format changed mainly to students’ items on their thoughts, artistic abilities (some entries showing the lack of that attribute, in my humble opinion) and musings, including recording some quotes and, I suspect misquotes, from staff members which were far from being politically correct. For many years the editors seemed to struggle with the balance of items and in encouraging pupils to provide items, sometimes reverting back to an older format of content and at other times rushing into something new.

I suppose that with the digital age looming greater and greater in our lives and with sixth-formers’ lives being so busy, it was fairly reasonable to expect that the time and effort in producing a lasting paper magazine should be sacrificed for other things. It does seem a shame that future researchers will have very little to work on relating to the early 21st century.

Is this the partial death of ‘Olim Meminisse Juvabit’? Are there any volunteers out there to take it over?
Perhaps in future ‘Musings from the Penthouse’ we may peruse some of the articles from the older issues. Let me know if you would like to see any particular year/entry. I will do my best to satisfy the flood of requests that will no doubt come in. Please do give me an indication of the year it appeared in, if possible – we have an awful lot of magazines in the Penthouse!

On a much brighter note –

I occasionally receive requests from Old Boys, their families or researchers seeking information about the school and/or its pupils. These range from asking whether ‘my great-grandfather played cricket at school’ (He did and we were able to provide a photograph of him in the school team) to a rather rarer one recently asking if the Archive had a recording of the St. Matthew Passion by J. S. Bach that was performed jointly with MGGS in 1957. The enquirer, an Old Maidstonian, Peter Evans, said that he had spoken to another OM some time back who had mentioned he had a vinyl record of the event. Unfortunately he had lost the contact’s details. I looked through the archive but could find very little in the way of recordings. Fortunately Peter’s contact, Raymond, is a member of the OMS so I was able to make contact with him and after some effort on Raymond’s part we now have a CD to send to Peter. I have also been able to find a spare original programme for the event to send with it.

What makes this request worthy of being included in the Musings? Peter was one of the singers at the performance (which also included the late, great Philip Langridge, Old Maidstonian’s Lindsay Heather and Ian Stamp as soloists). At the rehearsals for the Second Choir Peter met a girl from MGGS, Margaret Chapman, and Eros sent his arrow into Peter’s heart. As a result of this school performance, Peter and Margaret are now celebrating their 54th wedding anniversary. Congratulations to them and thank you Raymond for your help in adding to the couple’s happiness.

I mentioned in my last article about a cine film of the school in 1938 that we were hoping to digitise and make available on DVD. Well the good news is that digitisation of this film is being done even as I write this article. We are also having another film that was recorded in 1971 included on the disc. I will keep you informed as and when DVDs are available.

You have seen above how the Archive can help, so if anyone has any requests, wishes to make comments or wishes to give items or record articles for the school archive, please contact me at mgsarchive@longrede.me.uk or archivist@mgskent.org.uk

Icarus
Norman encounters the electricity company

(Norman lived in a property in the Calle Sancho Panza in Vélez-Málaga, which he bought from a Mrs Hadgkiss. Everything seems to have gone well, until he tried to take over the electricity supply in March 1982.)

“Electricity is administered by the Seville Electricity Company, and I had to go down with the ex-owner to register the change of name from Hadgkiss to Newcombe. You might think that would take about two minutes. Not so …

“First, they said I must have my meter changed, and a thing called a Rele Térmico (which apparently means a ‘contact breaker’) installed. For this I must go to a nominated shop two streets away and arrange for their staff to call. I did so, and the men duly turned up… at about 8:15 in the evening of the following day. Now, it is dark by 8:15pm, so, of course, when they turned off the power to avoid being electrocuted, they couldn’t see to unscrew the doingses. I had to go upstairs and bring down a hand torch and hold it for them while they fumbled around. Eventually they got the things fixed, and charged me something over £60 for the job; this I had to pay to them on the spot, and got a receipt. A day or two later I went back to the electricity company’s office and presented my papers, now, as I supposed, all in order. Once again, not so …

“The curmudgeonly old so-and-so in the office pointed out that I had shown him only one receipt: I must have two, one for the meter, and one for the other thing. I said that the one receipt was for both, as the amount in fact made clear; he admitted that the sum paid did in fact prove that I’d had both, but he must still have two pieces of paper. So I had to go back to the other shop and ask the lady there to give me a second receipt. She was at the time coping with two crying children, so we rather had to yell at one another, but eventually we communicated, and she kindly gave me the precious piece of paper. Again I went back to Old Father Time. Surely, now? But again, not so …

“Where, he now demanded, was my receipted bill to prove that Mrs Hadgkiss had settled her account before leaving the house? At this point, I blew a small gasket. ‘Are you, I asked, ‘employed to help clients or to make difficulties for them?’ He seemed surprised to be asked this, and said, ‘But I must have proof that she has paid her bills before I can cross her name off.’

“‘How the devil,’ said I, ‘do you expect me to produce evidence that somebody else, whom I have only recently got to know and who lives miles away, has paid a bill?’ This aroused several other employees from their desks, and a small conference took place, as a result of which one bright lad (they’ve probably sacked him) suggested that reference to the ledger kept in the accounts department in the next room would probably settle the matter. So they fetched the ledger in, and found that she had paid, and that all was well. Not, mind you, until we’d had another couple of problems: first, that the streets have only recently been named, and they’d still got Calle Sancho Panza down as ‘Fifth Street, new estate’, and second, that the sheets for the individual houses were arranged up one side of the street and down the other - i.e. they ran as follows: 20-22-24-26-25-23-21-19… This subtle system was too much for the Old Buffoon, and eventually I had to point out the correct sheet for him. So, all-in-all, the process took the best part of a morning. And even then they hadn’t finished with me, because later that day two more men turned up to set the meter at zero. So who pays for the few units that I used between the settling of Mrs Hadgkiss’s account and the setting of the new meter at 00000, I have no idea. But that’s Mediterranean bureaucracy seen to perfection! The Italians can do it even better, because they seem to do it with greater verve and enjoyment.”

Norman settles into Spanish life

(By 1983, Norman was mentioning potential visits by Geoff and Olive Knight and the MacCallums. Later, he was to write about actual visits from Donald and Miriam Scott, Alan Blake, Barry Langston and S W Johnson. Also, he was teaching again.)

“I teach (quite unofficially and unpaid) at the local Comprehensive on Fridays, and at the Grammar School alternately on Mondays and Thursdays. There is something very relaxing about the pace of things, and I keep making plans to do this or that mañana. I am, in fact, getting almost as bad as Alan Blake for producing lists of things to do and then not doing them.”

(In Part 3, which will be our final extract from Norman’s Spanish memoirs, he deals with gas cylinders, plumbing, residency, cats, mothering and medicine.)
The move from Corpus Christi Hall to Tonbridge Road by James Clinch

Mr Gould, on being appointed as Headmaster, had agreed to conform to the rules and regulations of the school and these included the right to charge a capitation fee for each boy. Mr Leney was not prepared to let the matter rest and at a full Council meeting on 11 February 1863 he proposed that there should be a committee of inquiry. After a short discussion the motion was put to the meeting and lost by 5 votes to 8. Regardless of the fact that a vote had been taken, the Council immediately continued its discussion on the subject with some of the aldermen and councillors explaining their reasons for voting one way, or the other, or not at all! There was some confused guidance to the Council as to whether the Corporation could change the rules and regulations of the school, the Town Clerk averring on the basis of the Commissioners’ letter that they could not. But it became clear that changes could be made and it also became clear, as the Charity Commissioners had told Mr Leney, that if they reduced the capitation fees then recompense would have to be made to Mr Gould in return. A Committee of Inquiry was then set up to consider the rules adopted by the Council for the regulation of the Grammar School, its endowments and their application. One of the local newspapers devoted a leader to the arguments in Council; the editor thought that the charges made for education at the school were exorbitantly high and comparisons were made with the fees charged at similar schools in the south of England. Perhaps it was by chance that the schools and fees mentioned were identical with those quoted by Mr Leney in his letter to the Charity Commissioners. It is also interesting to note that no complaint was offered about the position of the school by the public quay or about the age of the buildings.

The Committee reported to the quarterly meeting of the Council on 11 May 1863 as follows:

“At the quarterly meeting of the Town Council held on the 11th of February last, this committee was appointed to consider the rules adopted by the Council for the regulation of the Grammar School and the endowments thereto, and the application of the same.

“The Committee further report that the endowments of the Grammar School enjoyed by the master are as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Stipend from the Corporation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent charge of land under the will of William Lambe 1574</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rent of 16 acres of land at Newchurch in Romney Marsh under the will of John Davy MD dated in 1648, now let at</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The redeemed land tax of Hoo, granted by Mrs Rice in 1806</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The occupation of the Grammar School, house, buildings, and premises, free from rent, rates, and taxes which are paid by</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The garden, adjoining, hired by the Corporation at the rent of</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Footnotes)

1 Maidstone & Kent Journal of 17 February 1863 has a full report of the Council meeting of 11 February 1863.
2 See above
3 Maidstone Telegraph of 14 February 1863
4 Extracted from Maidstone & Kentish Journal of 19 May 1863. There is a shorter report in Maidstone Telegraph of 16 May 1863
5 Centre for Kentish Studies Maidstone Council minutes under ref. Md Acm 3/3
“The Committee generally report that the number of boarders now in the school is 18 and the number of day scholars 46 and that the school is much more numerous and steadily progressing under its present efficient head master.”

Following a short discussion, the report was confirmed, Mr Leney being the sole objector on the ground that the capitation fee was not reduced or abolished.

The complaints against this endowed grammar school were part of a national disapproval at the way that some schools were conducting their affairs; boys receiving free education were sometimes badly treated in comparison with fee-paying boarders. Charles Dickens’ *Nicholas Nickleby* of 1839 is an early reminder of the problems facing the education system. A Royal Commission headed by Lord Clarendon looked at the Public Schools between 1861 and 1864 and recognised nine schools as being first grade in the Public Schools Act of 1868. The endowed secondary schools were examined by the Schools Inquiry Commission under Lord Taunton from 1864 to 1868. All the endowed schools in Kent came under the scrutiny of Mr Charles I. Elton, a graduate of Balliol College, Oxford in 1861. His final report shows that he visited the school in the first half of 1866, and in its first section he covers similar ground to the Charity Commissioners Report of 1818. He, too, came to a similar conclusion regarding the sale of the lands surrounding the school. He examined the boys’ work and was not pleased with what he found:

“I examined several of the classes in their school work. The two or three elder boys construed Cicero, Virgil and Greek Testament fairly, but the remainder of the highest class did not do so well. I may add that the pronunciation of Latin and Greek was remarkably bad throughout the school. The junior boys did not succeed very well in their classical examination, although there were some whose grammatical knowledge was good. In the upper class the Latin prose was defective. The boys were not practised in Latin verse composition, which may account for their defective pronunciation. In modern subjects the work was more satisfactory. The upper class answered a hard set of questions in arithmetic very well. In history and geography the younger boys especially passed a good examination, and showed an unusual interest in the subjects. The elder boys did not show a sufficiently accurate knowledge of English history.”

By the Rules adopted in 1650 and carried forward to the 1860s, it was laid down that the scholars should be examined ‘on the first Wednesday in the month of June yearly or oftener if it be thought fit’. Mr Elton found that there was an examination at Christmas by the Master and at midsummer by the clergy of the neighbourhood. In 1866 the annual distribution of prizes took place on 13 June in the Town Hall. There was no mention in the press that the School had been examined by Mr Elton during the previous six months. The Chair at the prize-giving was taken by the Mayor, a practice still observed at Speech Day, and after the Head Master’s report, Mr Crawford (one of the ushers) read the reports of the examiners. There is clearly a difference between Mr Elton’s opinion of the boys and the opinions of the various local clergy who acted as examiners; Mr Elton was concerned about the classes as a whole whereas the examiners picked out the best pupils as possible prizewinners. Perhaps the clergy were unwilling to be critical of the School or of the Master which is not surprising as they lived and worked together in the same town. The Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission was not published until early 1869 and an editorial in the *Maidstone & Kent Journal* in February of that year strongly criticises Mr Elton’s opinions.

There continued to be dissatisfaction with the School and again a Committee of Inquiry was set up to investigate the desirability and practicability of removing the Corporation Grammar School to a new site. In their Report received by the Council on 9 November 1866, the Committee appeared to have made considerable progress and they were encouraged by a substantial monetary donation from Mr William Peale, an Old Boy:

“That in compliance with the instructions of the Council your Committee have proceeded to enquire as to the desirability and practicability of removing the Corporation Grammar School to a new site.

(Footnotes)

* Parliamentary Papers 1868 xxviii
* Maidstone Telegraph of 16 June 1866 gives the reports of the examiners.
* Maidstone & Kentish Journal of 15 February 1869. Subsequent editions carry Mr Elton’s comments on all the endowed schools in Kent.
* Centre for Kentish Studies Maidstone Council minutes under ref. Md Acm 3/3
* Maidstone & Kentish Journal of 10 November 1866
They are of the opinion that it would be desirable to remove the School to a site on the border of the Town. That a good site can be provided on the London Road containing 2 acres of land for the sum of £800. That your Committee have not incurred any expense in ascertaining the costs of erecting a School House and proper building, but they estimate the same at £4,200 making a total of £5,000. That this sum must be provided if at all by three means: the sale of the present Grammar School, the handsome donation of £1,000 offered by Mr Peale, the amount to be realised by private subscriptions.

William Laurence (Chairman)"

There is no evidence as to the whereabouts of the site on the London Road. Maps of the period indicate the possibility of a wide range of choices in the area of Buckland Hill and beyond, Somerfield Terrace (the present Somerfield Hospital) being one of the few buildings along the road. Mr William Peale was well known in Maidstone for his philanthropic work having given £2,000 toward freeing the West Kent General Hospital from debt; his munificence is remembered today in the Peale Ward in Maidstone Hospital. His offer of £1,000 towards a new School was further increased in following years both publicly and anonymously.

NEWS OF OLD MAIDSTONIANS

Cyril Ralph (1943) wrote as follows from his home in Bath: ‘I do not suppose that it is every day that you receive an application to join the OMS from someone of nearly 89 years of age. I have become a ‘silver surfer’ to help with my family history, and during a search came across your society’s website. I looked through some of your newsletters, and talk about ‘a blast from the past’! I well remember Ralph Kemp, who taught me to play a straight bat and shouted when I tended to hang my bat out to dry. I played cricket with Derek Sayer as well as being a team mate.

‘After I left school in the summer of 1943 I worked for KCC Supplies Department and in 1944 joined the Royal Marines. Derek joined the Palestine Police, and the next time I saw him we were sheltering in the same shop doorway in Haifa, from a sniper who had shot three policemen. Our reunion did not last long, for my section sergeant shouted for me to go with him and deal with the sniper. I never saw Derek again.

‘I also played cricket with Maurice Fenner’ (His death was reported in the Summer 2015 edition, and more information appears in the current edition) ‘and Keith Mitchell (1939 to 1946). Keith also ran a soccer side in the local minor league called ‘Cornwallis Park’. I played a few games for him before I joined up. I have seen Keith mentioned a few times in your newsletter and am glad that he is still going strong.

‘I am enclosing a cheque for a striped OM tie. Mine last saw service holding up cricket flannels in Singapore in an emergency in 1961. I served in RM until 1967 and then gained employment at Bristol. Later I was appointed manager of a food depot in Gloucester for UYC (a part of the old Distillers Company).

NEWS OF STAFF

The following members of staff will be leaving the school this summer:

Marco Colciago (MFL) from September 2009
Tony Froud (Head of English) from September 2011
Alexia Lang (Biology) from September 2008
Bethany Mead (English) from January 2016
Ashley Moorey (PE) from September 2014
Paul Saunders (Classics) from September 2009
Les Smith (Technician) from September 1979 (Technician since April 2013)
Mark Welch (ICT) from September 2010
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.

Richard Ratcliffe writes that we heard on the Monday after our Annual Supper about the death of Nigel Dodd (Staff - 1960). He had died earlier in March after a fall at his home in Bristol and a brief hospitalisation. He had been suffering from Parkinson’s disease for a number of years but didn’t let that get in the way of an active life in the musical and literary fraternities in Bristol.

‘Nigel was our Guest Speaker at the Supper in 2012 and he was delighted to be asked back to the School, having taught at MGS in the late 1950s, leaving to take up a position at Clifton College in Bristol at the end of the school year in July 1960. He taught English at Clifton, as he had done at MGS along with music, but he will be mainly remembered for his energetic input to the musical life of the school whilst he was with us. My own recollection was of having him as our form master in U4L and RL between 1958 and 1960. I remember saying to him when he came back for the Supper that I didn’t know who was the more astonished or for whom that was a greater ordeal – himself or the year group! What I also said to him (and I’ll repeat that here) was that he had 30 boys at their crucial formative years aged 13 – 15 in his care and I look back on those days with considerable affection and good memories of his moulding us with kindness and discipline to go forward as mature young adults.

‘For his part, the letter from Alison, his wife, telling me of his demise referred to how he remembered his days at MGS with great fondness and that he owed a great deal to W A Claydon as Headmaster and to the support of colleagues in the common room. Nigel said to me when he was last in Maidstone that to have worked under such a giant of the education world (Claydon) didn’t do any harm to your CV as you moved on through the world of the teaching profession! Alison writes “MGS gave him a most positive and rewarding start to his teaching career, which he never forgot.”

‘After Clifton College, Nigel moved into the university sector and spent the rest of his career in Bristol in Higher Education. Throughout that time he was heavily involved in music in the city and was a stalwart of the Bristol Music Club. In Maidstone he had been a leading light in the Old Barn Orchestra. In his retirement he taught piano and guitar to youngsters at his home in Coombe Dingle. The Bristol Music Club website refers to concerts at which he played his own compositions on the piano.’
Robin Ambrose (1950 to 1957) has sent us more details about Group Captain Maurice Fenner’s cricketing career. Maurice’s death in April 2015 was reported in a previous edition, and Robin has provided the following extract from this year’s Kent County Cricket Club Annual, to which full acknowledgement and thanks is given.

Group Captain Maurice David Fenner
Born: 16 February 1929, Linton, Kent
Died: 5 April 2015, Ashford, Kent

Maurice Fenner will perhaps be best remembered by Kent members as Club Secretary from 1977 to 1982 but he was a talented wicketkeeper who deputised for Godfrey Evans in fourteen matches for the county between 1951 and 1954. Coached by his father George, who was on the Kent staff and later became Head Coach at Lord’s, Maurice Fenner was given a trial by Kent in 1946 and judged ‘a useful bat and Wicketkeeper’. After three Second eleven matches in that first post-war season he was invited to join the staff but decided to continue his education. In the end he opted for a career in the Royal Air Force.

Educated at Maidstone Grammar School, Fenner had already played four first class matches for Combined Services when he made his first-team debut for Kent against Derbyshire at Derby. His best season in Kent colours was 1953 when, in seven matches, he caught six, stumped five and played two valuable innings, both in Dover Cricket Week. Against the Somerset spinners on a turning wicket, he was top scorer with 55 and against Yorkshire he was the only batsman to reach double figures (22) as Kent collapsed in their second innings to 47-7 (Illingworth 6-29) before rain ended proceedings. At the end of the season when the Australians totalled 592-4 declared against Combined Services at Kingston-upon-Thames, Fenner allowed only seven byes.

Occasionally playing as a batsman, for Kent Seconds he hit three half centuries including 73 v Wiltshire at Marlborough in 1952 and 51 v Buckinghamshire at High Wycombe in the same year when he captained Kent in the Minor Counties Challenge Match.

Most of Fenner’s cricket was for the Royal Air Force and for Combined Services. His first-class debut was for Combined Services at Edgbaston in 1950 while still an officer cadet and he played his last game for the Royal Air Force as a Squadron Leader in 1969. When hitting 77 for Combined Services v Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge in 1961 he added 162 for the first-wicket with Gerald Tordoff (131). He retired from the Royal Air Force as a Group Captain.

Thanks to National Service, Fenner was able to hone his wicket keeping technique to the likes of Fred Trueman, Terry Spencer, Ray Illingworth, Fred Titmus, David Allen, ‘Bomber’ Wells, etc., although he often relinquished the gloves to future England wicketkeepers Keith Andrew and Roy Swetman.

Officially Royal Air Force vice-captain to Alan Shirreff, he captained both Royal Air Force and Combined Services teams.

First Class Career Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BATTING &amp; FIELDING</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Runs</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>50S</th>
<th>C/st</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Kent</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other matches</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15-85</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>15-39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have been informed that Anthony Holmes (1981 to 1983) died during the summer of 2015

Mark Williams (1978 to 1984) wrote to tell us about the death of his friend, Philip James Thompson, whilst climbing in the Caucasus. It appears that he fell whilst descending Mount Elbrus.
Mike Goodfellow (1951 to 1958) wrote to tell us about the death of his brother, John Goodfellow (1949 To 1956). They were neighbours of Henry Darley when they grew up in Maidstone in the 1940s and 1950s. Although Henry and John had been good friends as children, they had virtually no contact since leaving MGS, so Mike agreed to write something about John. He says that this is a personal view of John from his younger brother, and that as neither ‘Froggy’ Newcombe nor SW Johnson had any great opinion of his literary skills, he hopes that it will be of acceptable quality. (Editor’s note: it certainly is Mike, so thank you!)

‘John Goodfellow entered the A stream at MGS in September 1949. He toyed with the ‘cello for a year and decided it was not for him. He escaped having to learn Latin by getting into the G stream for his second year and stayed there until his Sixth Form years. He joined B troop of the MGS Boy Scout group (as I think they were called at that time). At the appointed time he joined the CCF and moved to the air section as quickly as he could. Yes he was interested in flying! He managed to get the school’s glider (an amazing contraption moved by a huge elastic band strained up by the efforts of a significant number of fellow cadets), off the ground for a couple of metres he assured me recently. He moved on and really learned to glide at Detling aerodrome – now the Kent Agricultural Showground I believe. (I live in Australia).

‘At the end of his final year at MGS, the Senior Scouts planned to canoe down the River Wye for their summer expedition. I was allowed to be the second person in John’s canoe and we set to on our back lawn to construct it – a wooden frame covered with canvas and then smothered with waterproof paint. John did not make it down the Wye. He gained a Flying Scholarship and went off to learn to fly in a Tiger Moth instead.

‘Academically, John was, first and foremost, a mathematician and gained first class honours in Maths and Physics as an external student of London University. National Service loomed and John opted for a short-service commission, which he later extended to a permanent commission, in the education branch of the RAF.

‘While in the RAF, John attended Cranfield Aeronautical College and gained an MSc in Propulsion. On leaving the RAF John joined the Civil Service and eventually found himself in Munich – something to do with the Typhoon (the Eurofighter) project we were advised – retiring in 1998. There were two pictures of Typhoons on the walls of his home, and in John’s study a huge picture of the internals of the EJ200 engine from the Typhoon.

‘After retirement, John and his wife Sylvia travelled extensively. They visited us several times in Australia and a small incident on one of our trips together gives some insight into John’s character. I was driving us in the outback where services are few and far between. I had misjudged the distance to the next fuel stop and we were in danger of running out of fuel. I said nothing and hoped for the best. We just made it and after we had filled up John quietly said to me, “how much fuel did you have left?”

“Not a lot,” I replied.

“Yes, I thought you were driving rather slowly,” he continued in his normal unconcerned voice.

‘John was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumour in the autumn of 2015 and died at home with his family around him on 7th November. His passing was greatly eased for both him and his family by the assistance and service provided by the Dorothy House Hospice.

‘We came to the UK for his funeral. The house was swamped with cards with a very clear message. John is clearly remembered as a gentleman. St. Patrick’s Church in Corsham was packed, as was the church hall after the committal. Among the attendees were several ex-colleagues from John’s time in Munich. In a short speech I described John as “cool, calm and collected, knew where he was going and usually got there”. Later the chap, who had been his boss in Munich, came over to me and said, “yes, that was John”. A special lift, on a very sad day for me.

‘I gained an extra insight into John in the church hall. To his colleagues from Munich the EJ200 engine was “John’s Engine”. My brother John had been the leader of the team writing and managing the requirement specification for the EJ200 engine. So, “something to do with the Eurofighter”, really was Quite Something.’
Your Committee 2015-16

Neil Turrell (1992-2009) - President
turrellneil@gmail.com
Richard Ratcliffe (1956-1964) - Chairman
rbr1@btconnect.com
Dr. Brian White – Secretary; Co-Editor (1962-1969)
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, Tel: 01622 730514 or 07770 738041, or write to 22 Plantation Lane, Bearsted, Maidstone, ME14 4BH.
Frederick Barker (2007-2014) frederickjbarker@gmail.com
Tony Bishop (1955-1962) tony_bishop@btinternet.com
John Clayton (1961-1968) j.clayton@hikent.org.uk
Sam Coppard (2005-2012) samuel.coppard@btinternet.com
Gardner Crowley (1955-1962) gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com
James Kinsman (1999-2005) james@macrolevel.co.uk
Prof. Malcolm MacCallum (1957-1963) Webmaster
m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk
Ron McCormick (Staff: - 2004)
Simon Pain (1999-2005) simon@macrolevel.co.uk
Alex Rolfe (2006 to 2013) alex.j.rolfe@gmail.com
Peter Sampson (1950-1955) piesampson@tiscali.co.uk
Hugo van Mol (2007-2014) hugovanmol@hotmail.co.uk
Peter Weaver (1950 -1958) Co-Editor
p.weaver@iee.org
MGS Headmaster
MGS School Captain
MGS School Vice-Captain

We Would Like to Hear From You

Copy date for next edition: 31st October, 2016

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 Old Maidstonian 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.

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

~+++++++~

Dates for your Diary

3rd September Neil Turrell Reunion Day
19th October Quiz Night
14th December Carol Service
31st March, 2017 Annual Supper
**MERCHANDISE**

It has been agreed that the school will in future handle the sales of merchandise, adding our stock of items to their own. If you would like to purchase any of these items then please contact Mrs Sandy Smith in the School Office via email sandy.smith@mgs-kent.org.uk. Packages are available for multiple purchases; a small delivery charge will be added to items that require posting.

- **Large Umbrella** - £22  
- **Small Umbrella** - £18

Packages available: Cufflinks, large umbrella and Parker pen £35, (£30 with small umbrella)

- **OM ties crested or striped** - £7
- **OM Acrylic Scarf** - £16
- **OM wollen scarf** - £28
- **OM ties crested or striped** - £7
- **Parker pen** - £7
- **Cufflinks** - £10