



The Old Maidstonian

The newsletter of the Old Maidstonian Society

No. 35 – Summer 2021

Your Committee 2020 – 2021

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From the President



And here we are at the summer holidays. After the most extraordinary school year with its hybrid of in person and online teaching we move toward 19th July hoping for better times ahead.

The Headmaster outlines below some of the key challenges of lateral flow testing, groups of children not mixing vertically....it is such a reminder of how extraordinary these circumstances have been.

With the return of some kind of normal in September our OMS Chairman John outlines some details about a proposed get together of the OMS in September. We really look forward to meeting again as a society and hope as many of you as possible can join us.

In the meantime wishing you all the best for a fun and relaxing summer.

From the Chairman

IT'S COMING HOME* !

(* where *It* = the Society and *home* = the School)

Since March 2020 we have all been looking forward to life, in all its complexity, returning to normal, and this has sometimes seemed an elusive aspiration due to ever-discouraging statistics. Now with restrictions being lifted, and with support from the Headmaster, we are able to announce a social function at our School, for the first time since 2019!



On Saturday 25th September the Society is holding an Autumn Dinner in the School Hall as an occasion to get members and guests (spouses, partners, friends, etc) together for a sociable evening with fellow OMs. We have had to cancel two Annual Suppers both in April 2020 and this year, so this will be an occasion to catch up with fellow members but with less formality than the Annual Supper.

The event will start at around 4.00 pm and the school will be open so that members can see recent developments and major upgrades to the school's facilities; the all weather sports pitch, the new pavilion, the refurbished library as well as recent classroom and laboratory upgrades. Year 13 leavers from 2020 and 2021 were denied any traditional "farewell fling" to end their school days, so this will also be a perfect opportunity for them to get together.

Canapes will be served on arrival, followed by a two-course Buffet Dinner at the very reasonable cost of £13 per head, and a pay bar will be provided for drinks before and during the meal. President Nancy Powell and the Headmaster will say a few words of welcome (much less formal than the Annual Supper!) and afterwards members will be able to socialise and chat, with the event finishing between 8.30 and 9.00 pm. So, not a late night, but one starting in daylight so we can see how the school we love continues to evolve.

We have chosen a Saturday evening to make it easier for OMs from across the South East to get to Maidstone to meet for a Reunion with friends. You can be assured that the Hall will be well-ventilated and that any protocols that may be necessary or desirable at the time will be followed. Provided the weather is reasonable, we shall be able to mingle in the Quad over drinks and canapes. In any case, you may elect to wear a mask if you prefer.

Full details of the menu and how to book are in the covering email from Membership Secretary Sean Scurr, and I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on the night. The event will take the place of the "London Get-Together" we have held in recent years. The Committee hopes that the traditional Annual Supper will be held as usual in Spring 2022.

From the Headmaster

Dear Old Maidstonians

Since the last edition of *The Old Maidstonian*, life has returned to Maidstone Grammar School. Since Monday 8 March, students have been back in their school, enjoying being in each others' company, receiving live lessons in the classroom, and taking part in the wider life of the school. It has been so good being in their company once more.

On return in March, all of the consenting students (and there were over 1200 of them) received three LFD tests over the first two-week period in one of the biggest military operations I have ever seen in a school. The staff and parents who helped to support the operation were fantastic; who'd have known back in January that schools would be able to do such a thing? A big thank you to Miss Johnson and Mrs Cook who led us through the entire process.



In addition to this mammoth task, we opened the newly-built all-weather pitch to the students, inviting Year 13 to be the first students to use it. The weather on that day was glorious, and so watching 70+ year 13 students taking part in an inter-house football tournament was such a delight. Soon after, other year groups were invited to use it, and very quickly the whole school was using it for PE and Games, as well as at lunchtimes. It has made a massive difference to what we can offer.

But the biggest task that we have had to undertake since March, has been the organisation of the Centre Assessed Grades: the grades that we as a school are awarding to Year 11 and Year 13 in the absence of the GCSE and A-Level examinations. The process is much different from last year's. With the students being in school this year during March, April and May, we have been able to get them to sit mock examinations and final assessments that have been used to provide evidence in helping us give them their grades. All of these assessments have had to be prepared for, created, assessed, and then moderated: each requiring additional work from the staff. That entire process ended on Friday 18 June, and so now we wait for the grades that we have awarded to be shared with the students in August.

Now we look to September and the new academic year and the hope that we can return to some form of normality. The one thing that we wish to see again is verticality: mixed aged forms in each of the four houses. Vertical forms have been on hold all year, due to year groups needing to be in their separate bubbles, but with the relaxation of a number of restrictions over these last few months, the opportunity to have them back is looking very promising. Fingers crossed.

And finally, like every year, we are sadly saying goodbye to a number of members of staff who are leaving the MGS community. This year we have already said goodbye to six members of staff: Mrs Raval, a cover supervisor who supported the Cover Team for two years; Mr Chidlow who left in May after teaching business studies and economics here for three years; Mrs Wheeler who left in June after also working for three years in the Bursary and Finance Team; Mr Bishop who left this week after three years to begin his career as an RS teacher; Mrs Jones, our librarian, who left back in September after 13 years; and Mrs Barker, a teaching assistant, who left in March after 19 years' service. At the time of leaving, we thanked them for their time at MGS and wished them well in their futures. Leaving at the end of the academic year are a further four members of staff: Mr Bell, who has taught English here for two years; Mr Hathaway, who has been the director of rugby and second in the PE department retires after five years; Miss Jefferson, who has worked in the science department for seven years leaves to become a special educational needs co-ordinator in another school; and Mrs Sime, who has been the PA to the senior leadership team retires after 16 years. Mrs Sime has been integral to the workings of the leadership team, not only because she has supported senior staff in their daily work, but also because she has been a ray of sunshine on

those difficult days. Best wishes to her and to all the other members of staff who are leaving this year.

Mark Tomkins

An address entitled '**A New Chapter**', that the Headmaster gave at the first Quad assembly of the year, on Friday 28 May, is available for viewing on the OMS website.

Musings from the Penthouse

Once again, rather like a timid chick, wary about what's outside the protection of its shell, we emerge from another lockdown. Some of you have been affected by the virus, hopefully none too seriously. Now we are being told to start living life back as we were two years ago, but can that ever be? The pleasure of life and living is now being realised as much more tenuous; life is a single golden thread easily snapped when we are least aware of that happening.

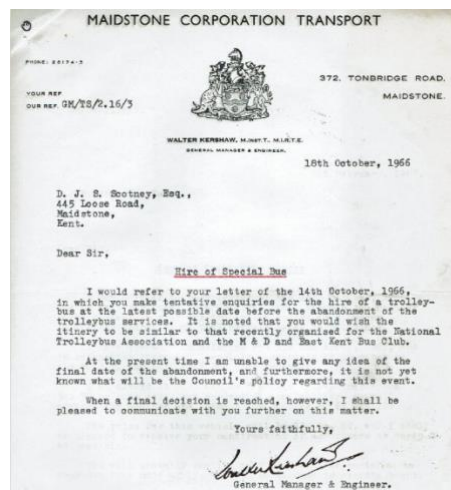


Jeff was recently asked to find any references in the archives to Aidan McElroy. He attended MGS in the late 1970s through to the early 1980s and the request originated from his mother. Here lies a very sad tale to tell. Aidan had been a sergeant in the CCF, RAF section, and had hoped to join the RAF on leaving school; unfortunately, he was turned down as he was colour blind in one eye. However, he went on to have a successful career in a firm specialising in printing. He and his wife had a daughter but before Aidan was really able to enjoy the pleasure of the little girl growing up, he died just six days after her birth, completely unexpectedly and suddenly from

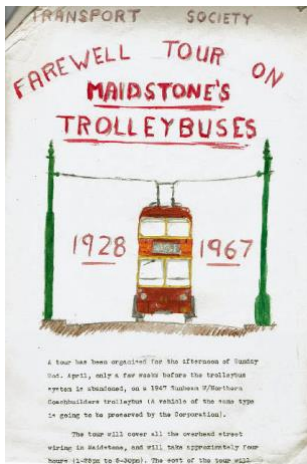
Sudden Arrhythmia Death Syndrome (SADS). That was 16 years ago, and Mrs McElroy now wishes to put together a 'memories box' for the girl who never knew her father.

Jeff was able to find a couple of references to Aidan in The Maidstonian, where he was recorded as having obtained a Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award and that he had won his 'Gliding Wings' with RAF section, so he forwarded a copy of the respective pages to Mrs McElroy. She was thrilled to see that included on the picture of the 1984 magazine, Aidan himself was there with the RAF contingent.

I wonder if any of Aidan's peers are reading this and perhaps have a form photo or memories of him from his life at MGS, a school he loved attending, to enhance the memories of his mother and bring the 'memory box' to life for this young girl. If you can help in any way, please email me at the usual address: mgsarchive@longrede.me.uk.



A trip to the past, literally, now. In the last edition of 'Musings' I mentioned Jeff's contact with Nick Pearce and the fact that the Transport Society came to the fore amongst other matters. Nick was able to send all the paperwork from his time as secretary to the society and also those from his predecessor, David Scotney. Perhaps one of the momentous trips that the society had was on the last trolley bus in Maidstone. After white-tape delays, all was arranged. Needless to say, this needed a special poster to advertise it around the school. Much more artistic than clipart and WordArt.



According to Nick, 'The tour of the Maidstone Trolleybuses was memorable but, possibly, for the wrong reason. The event included travel over every section of the trolley route including the handful of turning loops that were not used in normal service. One was at the Queen's Monument and another along the Loose Road. In order to use these oddities, the trolleybus had to travel extraordinary distances over routes that we'd already covered – the tour took forever and morphed from fun to tedium.'



However, there were a number of good trips. Nick continues: 'The one to Brighton was legendary because one of the attendees posed for a photograph with one foot about to be placed on the conductor rail! He was shouted to safety. A similar near-death occurred visiting the rail depot at Chart Leacon, where a boy was stopped moments before he put his foot on the live 'shoe' that collects the traction current from the third rail.'

Our esteemed OM Secretary, Richard Ratcliffe's eyes lit up at my mention of the Transport Society as he says he was their first secretary. Just to put the record straight, his time as secretary did not cover stagecoaches and penny-farthings. He has even more tales to tell about trolley bus trips: 'You [Nick] referred to the long runs between loops but you may recall that we did in fact do a few yards under "no wires" when the driver freewheeled the last 50 yards or so down the hill on Sutton Road to the Wheatsheaf, taking a sharp left into Loose Road and applying the handbrake as she drew to a halt, whereupon the booms were reconnected to the overhead! Several lookouts and banksmen were employed to watch over this delicate manoeuvre.'



David Scotney, who organised the trolleybus tour, went on to write the first definitive history of Maidstone Trolleybuses, whilst Nick became a platelayer on the Ffestiniog Railway with a weekly wage of just £10, before going on to greater things, but still managing to take people on trips to the Ffestiniog Railway from time to time.

Enough, or I will be losing every reader except the Transport nerds (their words, not mine).

Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall, contacted the school as they were seeking to find out as much as they could about the 900 old boys who fought in WW2. The relevant ex-pupil they were seeking information about was **Charles P Holyman**, who many Old Maidstonians will remember with affection, as he apparently taught every subject other than chemistry, for some reason. He came to MGS in 1928, aged 21, and left when he retired in 1972, with only a break for war-time service. That service was one of the problems that QMGS was having as they thought that he had been in the RA., whereas in fact, he fought with the Royal Tank Regiment in India, Malaya and Java as a commissioned 2nd Lieutenant with the 18th Indian Field Army. Problem one, solved - the next one was more difficult.

C. P. HOLYMAN: M.G.S. 1928-1972



His middle initial was most puzzling as a middle name or initial does not appear on his birth, marriage or death certificates, and any other legal documents, the census or even in *The London Gazette*. In fact, we never cracked it: whilst the 'P' does appear in *The Maidstonian* it does not appear in his entry in the *Staff Register*. So, you will have to imagine how 'P' best summarises this master, perhaps it's a shame that we can't ask the late Bob Holness from TV's 'Blockbusters'.

(Co-Editor's note: can any reader shed light on Charles Holyman's middle name? If not, as a retired school timetabler, I can suggest a possible solution, which relates to a ploy that I sometimes used. Timetablers usually want to use teachers' initials, to avoid constantly writing their full names. Most people have at least three initials and using only two will often not give enough options, sometimes leading to more than one teacher being given the same abbreviation, so three initials are most useful. If a teacher did not have three initials, I would assign a dummy middle initial; X or Z were good options, creating abbreviations which would almost certainly be unique. Perhaps a timetabler in Holyman's day assigned 'P' for some reason. I taught many school timetablers on numerous courses, so there could be quite a few teachers out there with strange middle initials.)

Having probably already expressed far too much trivia above, perhaps I should now sign off with **Old Maidstrivia**

1921

- Webbing belts in lieu of leather ones introduced for Cadet Corps. (Incidentally the school has recently received many of John Caley's school pieces including this Officer Training Corps No 1 dress belt.)



1925

- Musical Society started using new gramophone.
- Association football no longer part of school sports
- Mr. George Foster Clark made a gift of 14 acres (5.67 hectares) of land in Barton Road. (His wife would add to that in her estate, providing the school with all the grounds it has now)

1927

- Severe bout of influenza results in 90 boys out of approximately 350, and over half the staff being affected. One thousand people a week were dying in this year from influenza.
- School Tuck Shop started. (I wonder if it was because someone realised that every boy needed a split cream-filled bun mid-morning.)
- School inspectors reported that the school is 'not a school but a museum' in relation to the environments (the Tonbridge Road school). Education however was first class.
- First Old Maidstonians' Dance held
- House system changed. School and West Houses remain. East House is split into Corpus Christi and College Houses.
- The victor in the House Competition was to be given the title of 'Cock House'. (Cock House Cup still missing)

1928

- Headmaster compiles a register of all names and addresses of all living Old Maidstonians. List reached 700 by April.
- In May, construction of new school starts; completed in 1930.
- School scout troop presented with the Troop Union Flag and Troop Colours in the name of Patrol-Leader PT Fletcher.
- Disposition of funds accruing from Blue Coat Trust makes grants available for Exhibitions of £60 pa, tenable for three years.
- Capt. CAW Duffield presents a Musketry Cup to the OTC in memory of his father, the late headmaster and founder of the OTC.

(...to be continued...)

I hope that all Old Maidstonians will have received both s of their vaccinations, at least those who live in the UK, and perhaps Covid will soon be dominated. However, we will still need to take care and look after each other - not just ourselves. Keep safe and well.

Icarus

Memories of a police officer (5)

This is the fifth story from the series of articles by **Ron Dillon**. Readers will be interested to learn that Ron's previous article about Margaret Thatcher has, with his permission, been sent to the General Manager at Scotney Castle, for use in the National Trust archive. We are told that that Scotney has heard other stories about how sociable and friendly the Thatchers were to both security and National Trust staff.

After leaving MGS in 1958, I spent three years with the Westminster Bank in Maidstone, before deciding that sedentary banking was not for me. So it was that I joined Kent County Constabulary in 1962. After the requisite 14 weeks' training, I was posted to the Borough of Royal Tunbridge Wells to right wrongs and catch criminals (but only if they couldn't run faster than I could). Having spent a couple of weeks with a Tutor Constable, I was let loose on the unsuspecting Public. Not long after, I was standing proudly in the town centre, master of all that I surveyed. I still had a crease in my trousers and a shine on my boots - the epitome of a British policeman. I was approached by an elderly man who looked at me and said, 'You're tall.' 'Yes, I am,' I replied, drawing myself up to my full 6'8". 'How tall, are you?' he asked, so I told him. He looked at me and, without flinching, said, 'I didn't know they stacked s--t that high.' He then went on his way, laughing. Well, you have to have a sense of humour, don't you?

'Nogger' Knight, Woodworker Extraordinaire

Adrian Gaunt (1957 to 1963) wrote to say, 'My practical skills were sadly lacking, and that is how they have continued until the present day! I well remember spending two years making a single, dovetail-jointed, wooden box. On my more-or-less last woodwork lesson (praise the Lord, I thought!), Mr Knight came to my desk, picked up my box, and it fell to pieces on the floor! And so, my inglorious time as a carpenter came to a crashing end.'

Doug Rose (1955 to 1963) said that article about Nogger brought back happy memories of the woodwork shop and Mr Knight. He suspects that his nickname arose for no other reason than arbitrary alliteration, in which case it should probably be written 'Knogger'.

'As Paul Cooker says, he was smart on RAF section parade with his immaculately trimmed black moustache and upright military manner. In class he was stern and well-respected but never overbearing. An endearing feature of his character was his habit of calling anyone who annoyed him a "silly ass". However, he pronounced the beast's name in a very posh way, giving the 'a' an aristocratic long sound! I well remember the time when, during the first-year examination, I planed (hacked) too much off the piece of wood I was given to work on. Oliver Twist-like, I shuffled up to

his desk and asked, "Please, sir, can I have another piece?" He gave me a look of disdain, despair and resignation and said slowly, clearly and audibly, "This is a test, Rose. Of course, you can't have another piece of wood... you sssilly aaahss." Almost everyone in the class [apart from Doug, presumably] was highly amused.'

Roger Lukehurst (left 1955) wrote as follows. 'I found the mention of GCE "O" Level woodwork interesting (I passed). Ever since, I've found the training very useful in building furniture, sheds etc. I have only one painful memory about when I did not sweep up the sawdust on my bench and was bent over and delivered a blow from a 3-foot steel ruler (it did hurt!). That was compensated for when with the RAF part of the CCF, we went to camp at RAF Kinloss and flew in Shackletons of the Maritime Operational Training Unit (MOTU).

'I also remember Bruno Tailor (Maths master), who I encountered again shortly after leaving school. I joined the Territorial Army (TA) 507 Coy RASC, based in Union Street, where I quickly learnt to drive. Bruno was a Captain in the TA and I collected him every week from his house to drive him in an Austin Champ to St Mary's Bay where he was C.O. The target was to do the journey in under the hour, which we did on a number of occasions.

'In 1973 we moved to Lincolnshire, where for many years I worked in the frozen food industry, from which I retired in 2009.'

(Co-Editors note: Roger still has some contact with a small group of ex-pupils whom he met at Boxley Youth Club whilst at MGS. If anyone would like to be put in touch with Roger, to find out about them, please contact us. For GDPR reasons, we cannot publish people's names and school dates, unless they have given permission for us to do so.)

Lockdown London

One of our Past Presidents, **Sam Coppard**, has written about his experiences over the past year.



'Zoom', 'self-isolate', 'social distancing', 'quarantine', 'unprecedented' and 'furlough' - all terms that defined 2020, which was easily both the most memorable and forgettable year. With a population of almost nine million, London prevails as the biggest city in Europe and one of the largest in the world. Unwavering through the Great Fire, World Wars and terrorist attacks - yet 'cancelled' due to COVID-19.

As an Old Maidstonian who left MGS in 2012, and following a few years studying law at the University of Birmingham, I (like many others) moved to London to seek my fortune.

Within touching distance of Kent, I was able to travel home quickly whenever I wished - all until lockdown. Whilst others decided to travel home to Kent following Boris's COVID-19 lockdown announcement in March 2020, I decided to remain in London. As the reader will be aware, it is almost impossible to find a 'quiet spot' in Zone 1; however, with the strict lockdown, the centre of London turned eerily empty.



Piccadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, Carnaby Street, Embankment, Oxford Circus – all areas of London notorious for being busy, quickly transitioned into a ghost town. As a keen cyclist, I was fortunate to be able to take advantage of the quiet roads. Back in April 2020, I recall cycling out to Richmond Park (as part of my 'one daily allowance of exercise') through central London on a Saturday morning. I stopped at Trafalgar Square, parked up my bike and sat in awe of the fact that there was not a pedestrian, cyclist, taxi, or bus in sight. My day-to-day job as an intellectual property lawyer used to involve (among other things) meeting clients and attending Court hearings. However, both immediately shifted to Zoom – where I (regrettably) think they will stay for the foreseeable future. Only time will tell!



As of June 2021, the City is almost back to 'normal'. Hospitality and retail have reopened, and summer is here. I'll be keeping my fingers crossed for the (imminent) easing of all restrictions...

Information requested about Past Presidents of the Old Maidstonian Society

The Committee would like to compile a database containing information about Past Presidents. Details about some of them have been lost in the mists of time - especially those from the early days of the society.

If readers have information about any of them, we will be grateful if it could be passed to Brian White in the first instance, or left in the 'Leave a Reply' section on the following webpage, which has a full list of names: <http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk/presidents-of-the-old-maidstonian-society/>

News of Old Maidstonians

My Struggle with German

This is the second of **Paul Cooker's** reminiscences.

The second year that I attended MGS dawned with the requirement to study Latin and German. As a youth with a budding interest in history, learning the former seemed interesting, but I approached the latter with incredulity and resistance. Having been exposed to my parents' and grandparents' persistent prejudices, honed by two world wars, against anything German, I interpreted the requirement as a mere suggestion, especially as I was only expected to endure one year of it. What was the point, anyway? My mother was French born and bred and had lived through five years of Nazi occupation. My father endured the Blitz and fought with the British Army of the Rhine into the belly of the beast. I felt some duty to learn a certain level of competency in the French language, but German was definitely something to be resisted, almost as a matter of school boyish honour.

The name of the master who attempted to instil the language into us escapes my memory. I do remember that he was an affable enough person, and really tried to jolly us along in a subject that I am sure that he was all too aware was unpopular. Too much of the teaching material was aural, coupled with use of the language laboratory (very new at that time), so the subject was destined to be forgotten almost as quickly as presented, at least for me. It definitely supported the axiom that 'what you hear you forget, what you see you remember, but what you do you know. And I didn't feel the slightest compunction to do much of anything in German.

So, it probably comes as no surprise that the results of my first written examination were disastrous. I managed to rank 25th in a class of 27. The two boys who managed to underperform even my shocking demonstration of comprehension were my partners in skulduggery (that's another story), Colin and Jonathan. I think that it was not our lack of skill, so much as our total lack of effort, that then resulted in the three of us being hauled in front of Mr Newcombe, Head of the Lower School. I was expecting a good ticking off, to be soon shrugged off, but no, he picked the nuclear option, and told us that he was going to send a letter to our parents. That, for a thirteen-year-old, was undoubtedly an unfortunate moment.

I said nothing to my parents that evening about the matter, expecting a few days' grace in order to assemble a defence. The letter duly arrived the following morning, just before my father went off to work, evidently posted well before Mr Newcombe gave us a dressing down. The resulting explosion of parental ire was akin to poking a bear with a sharp stick. Former Sergeant Major Cooker had some choice words to share, but he needed to depart, saving me from the sort of corporal punishment I had seen him dish out to my elder brother for occasional scholastic failings. My failings were so frequent and so disappointing, that it is a marvel that I survived childhood, and my father didn't get a repetitive strain injury from his ministrations.

Remarkably the fallout was not as punitive as I had feared. My father stated, in no uncertain terms, that if I wanted to keep on playing rugby for the school, I had to demonstrate some effort and competency in German. This threat so alarmed Mr Melly, who was in charge of the junior team, that I distinctly remember him coming into a class while a lesson was still in progress to ask for assurance from me that all would be well. Being the largest and most thuggish member of the team my presence on the field would have been sorely missed.

It wasn't much later that I learned that Mr Newcombe's letter had triggered some consequences he had not expected. My father had interpreted the missive as being critical of his parental responsibilities, and had resulted, I believe, in a confrontation between the two men, either by telephone or in person. Mr. Newcombe came across with absolute righteousness in most things. Nothing could have been more calculated to infuriate my father. Seeing that being removed from the rugby team would not improve things one bit, he relented and actively participated in coaching me with my German vocabulary, with a certain level of vigour and thoroughness that was quite effective. This went on for weeks, even during the school holidays. I see now that my father's efforts were, in truth, a labour of love.

By the end of the school year, I managed to advance my ranking in the German class twice, first to 18th and then to 12th, if memory serves. I still remember basking in the warm glow of public praise delivered by the master in class for my outstanding improvement.

So, do you think that I learned anything from that experience? I did, but not what you'd think. I promptly forgot the vast majority of my German, and told myself, that no matter how badly I got into trouble, there was always a way out. This belief only served to provide increased confidence in pursuing reckless behaviour, a trait I have yet to fully master, but it sure makes life interesting.

Alan Coulson has sent in two photographs that he found. The first is of the School Choir from either 1964 or 1965. Alan writes, 'That's me bottom left. I'm told that the teacher was related to Arthur Lowe (Captain Mainwaring) although I never knew that at the time. I don't remember many other names, although the faces are very familiar.'



'The next photograph picture was taken in July 1965, on a cross channel ferry, when the French teacher in the photograph took a class over to France.



'I'm in Canada now - have been since 1975.'

(Co-Editor's note: if any readers would like to identify themselves as being in the photographs, for mention in our next edition, please let us know.)

In our Winter 2020 edition, we heard from **Paul East (1956 to 1963)**. Richard Ratcliffe says that Paul did the very first *Kent Messenger* 50-mile walk from Margate to Maidstone, and ran the 50 miles, completing it in some ridiculous time like six hours. It started at 22:00, so you walked through the night, and Paul arrived at about breakfast time before anyone was ready at the finish line to welcome him.

(Co-Editor's note: I once completed the 'Kent Messenger' 50-mile walk – very slowly.)

Geoff Lloyd (1959 - 1965) writes, 'As an OM who reads the newsletters (thank you for your efforts), I thought that some of your readers would be interested in my hobby.

'In June last year, I was lucky enough to buy ex-Maidstone Corporation bus no 26, and here is a photograph which was taken when I brought her to Maidstone for a day in September.

'She is a Leyland Titan PD2A/30, with a Massey 61-seater body, built in 1963. Her first day on the streets of the town was 10 October that year. I was still at MGS for about another 18 months after that, and I remember travelling to school on her, and later to work at Westminster Bank in the High Street. In 1966, she was painted in the new livery of lilac blue & cream, which was introduced when new buses were purchased for trolleybus replacement. In 1980 she underwent her first restoration, regaining her original colours of golden ochre & cream, which she still wears today.



'I am lucky enough to still have full PCV entitlement on my driving licence, and I work three or four days a week driving buses and coaches commercially, a job that I have always wanted to do. This entitlement means that I am not restricted as to the number of passengers I can carry on no 26. In September I gave several groups a ride around the town centre.

'I am hoping that, unlike 2020, this year there will be some rallies and bus running days which are able to go ahead, and that I will be able to take her along. Obviously, it will all depend upon the current Covid situation.

'Richard Ratcliffe has been particularly helpful with my enquiries into the history of the bus, but if any members have any information that they think I would find interesting, then I would be very pleased to hear from them. Also, if anyone has a strong interest in preserved buses and coaches, perhaps they could let me know.' *(Please contact the Co-Editor for Geoff's email address.)*

John Lucas, a former MGS student who returned later as a computer technician, has sent some information information about three OMs:

- **Mike Cook** was Head of Maths and then Senior Master. He was always a keen, and able, chess player. After he retired, he won the British Senior (60+) Championship in 1997 & 1998, and recently, he may have won another senior title, but we are unable to verify this fact.
- **Stephen Harvey** was also a Head of Maths and left MGS to try his hand at Drama. He had throat issues, and to teaching, ending his career as Head Teacher at Aylesbury Grammar School.
- **Anthony Lucoszevieze** was known as **Anthony Lucas** when he was a student at MGS and is John's younger brother. Anthony was a talented sportsman (particularly in cross-country and Javelin) and an exceptional musician. He has recently had Lithuanian citizenship bestowed on him by the Lithuanian president for services to music and Lithuania. Online, he is described as 'British composer, 'cellist and visual artist'. He founded (1995) and directs the ensemble 'Apartment House': clearly, he is highly successful and influential in his genre of music.

If you ever get stuck solving a crossword clue, you can pretty much guarantee that **Tim Moorey** could help. The cruciverbalist has always been a keen clue setter, regarding it as 'my main spare time activity second only to cricket!'

Tim started working for BP in 1958 and spent 32 years with the company, retiring in 1990. He met his wife, Pamela, at BP and they recently celebrated 55 years together.

Tim's interest in crossword puzzles started at MGS in 1956, with a schoolboy's rookie efforts at constructing a crossword for the *Evening News*. He sent it to the London newspaper, which published it as from 'Mr Moorey of Kent', and he was paid two guineas, a notable sum for an impoverished schoolboy. Thereafter, with a bit of help from his father, Tim set about trying to solve crosswords in every daily newspaper in the school library.



Fast forward through the financial career with BP to May 1980. Tim, then a regional London and Western Hemisphere finance co-ordinator, achieved a long-held ambition in the world of crosswords. He won an *Observer* clue-writing competition originally run by Ximenes, now by Azed, that he'd been entering unsuccessfully every month for over 25 years.

His clue, referring to a topical US rescue mission failure, was, 'Carter coup tails off in disarray - prepare for war (8)'. The answer was ACCOUTRE (Carter coup anagram less last letters). Victory meant that Tim had beaten two cruciverbal heroes: Sir Jeremy Morse, Barclays chairman and Colin Dexter, originator of Inspector Morse (named after Jeremy). Tim still competes in the Azed contest and, to date, has achieved 48 prizes, one of which was a Golf GTI Cabriolet for this clue: 'Did many a service naughtily – she would, wouldn't she! (5, 4-6)'. The answer was Mandy Rice-Davies. For crossword lovers, all winning Azed clues are available at www.andlit.org.UK/azed

Today, Tim runs a thriving business setting cryptics for *The Sunday Times* as Mephisto, *The Times* as Howzat and *The Week* and *MoneyWeek* magazines under his own name. All-in-all, he has set 2500 puzzles since retirement from BP.

A career of setting has led to Tim giving talks about crosswords to groups like the Women's Institute, and Rotary and Probus clubs. One such talk led to a suggestion from a lady in Sevenoaks University of the Third Age (U3A) about teaching the solving of cryptics in the form of workshops for adults and school children. As far as Tim knows, nobody had tried this previously. Before lockdown, Tim was giving two talks a month and he reckons to have spoken to hundreds of groups all over the country for the past 30 years. He has delivered workshops for *The Times* and others around the country, including via Zoom - the demand for which has increased significantly during lockdown. He has tutored at Marlborough College summer school for 12 successive years in a workshop for total beginners lasting five days: 'mornings only when the brain is freshest', he says. In 2021, there will two such courses in mid-July and early August.

Teaching has led to writing and HarperCollins has published two books by Tim on 'How to crack cryptic crosswords'. To find more about Tim's workshops and a whole lot more go to: www.timmoorey.com

Finally, here is another cryptic clue to show what fun there can be with the English language: 'A Cook's teammate in the country (4)'. The answer is MALI (M ALI was teammate to A Cook).



Tom Parsons said that he was honoured to write a piece for the Old Maidstonian Society, after being asked to do so by our Chairman, whose sons, **James and Nick Clayton**, attended both Sandling primary school and MGS with Tom.

'After attending Loughborough University, I had five years as a professional cricketer, stepping on the field for Hampshire, Kent and Middlesex. My career was stop-start, and I didn't reach the heights of the game that I potentially wanted to, but I wouldn't change it for the world, and it has given me a fantastic head-start into the business world. I don't talk much about the cricket, but when I'm in meetings or people find out, they take a natural interest, and it certainly allows me to reminisce on some great times I had playing the sport I loved as a job.'

'Here are a few common questions I am asked:

- Are you a bowler or batter? *Bowler. (I can barely see the ball when batting!)*
- Who was the best player you played with? *James Vince*
- Who was the best player you played against? *Tilakaratne Dilshan*
- Why didn't you play for England? *I wasn't good enough!*

'The cricket really excelled whilst I was at MGS. Back then, we had two fixtures every week, and I would walk down to the Mote CC for training twice a week. We had fantastic support from two cricket-mad teachers, who are still putting in the hard yards at MGS: Mr Holmes and Mr Wilmott, and this allowed me to flourish. I thank the school and those individuals for all their support.

'Since being released by Middlesex in what seems to be an eternity ago, I've carved out a niche in producing video content for social media. I set up my own business doing so about four years ago, and things have expanded quickly, coinciding with the evolution of social media and the importance it plays in today's society. The content is all based around sport and the truth is that I love it more than some of my days playing cricket. I know that sounds ridiculous as it's every child's dream to play professional sport, but there is a lot of rough that goes with an undeniable smooth.

'I'm fortunate enough to still visit MGS once a year to play in the MGS v MCC cricket match that takes place on the school field. It's great to see talented cricketers coming through the school and how the ever-evolving landscape and dynamic of the school changes. It's also great to see some familiar faces at the school who always stop by, watch the cricket, and have a chat.

'They say that your school days are your best days and I couldn't agree more. We've all got stories to tell. This isn't the forum for expanding those stories, but I'm always open to having a beer and remembering the good times.'

Other photographs of Tom can be found at these links:

- https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/1199035636436656129/VBphy7vV.jpg
- <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/media/img/83B40P18W5G6ZQDD6237.jpg>
- <https://www.thepca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Tom-Parsons-featured-min.jpg>

Andrew Rout was captain of the Warwick team which won *University Challenge*. Andrew is currently studying for a PhD in Maths, and he writes as follows,

'Warwick Rout! Never have two words caused me such polarising emotions. From the joy of knowing you're going to earn your team ten points, to the embarrassment of knowing you've just cost them five points, and

even the bemusement of no-one on your team having any idea. But I'm getting ahead of myself.



'My love of quizzing began at MGS. Rather than doing something useful, a group of friends and I would sit with a quiz book in the library during our free periods. From struggling not to come last at pub quizzes to being destroyed by a teachers' team at the MGS Parent's Association quiz, my interest was piqued.

'So, when I started at Warwick and saw an advert for the *University Challenge (UC)* try-outs, I had to give it a go. It did not go well. In a quiz of 50 questions, I got fewer than 10 correct. Undeterred, I joined the Quiz Society in an effort to improve. Despite now quizzing on a regular basis, I also failed to reach the second round of trials in my second and third years.

'In my fourth year I finally managed to break through the first round. The second round is a one-on-one interview with the selectors, with another 30-question quiz. Surprisingly, I made it through this stage first time, and I was on the team. Unfortunately, we didn't make it to the TV stages, failing to get past the interview with the producers (which unsurprisingly consists of another quiz).

'Since I chose to do a PhD, I had yet another chance to try out, and I made the team once again. This time I was offered the captaincy (I think on the basis that I was happiest to look like an idiot on national TV). When we found out who was on the team, we all met up in the student pub (because despite being nerds, we are also somewhat normal students). In previous years, teams had delegated things which commonly come up on the show (Shakespeare, the periodic table etc) to various members of the team, but we avoided doing this since it rather takes the fun out of quizzing. Instead, we agreed to learn about the things that interested us and to meet up once a week to practise.

'These practice sessions were primarily to practise buzzing 'strategy'. A funny quirk about the *UC* format is that you can know the answer to every question, but never get the chance to answer anything. In fact, when I said that 'Warwick Rout!' was a polarising phrase, it was always better than the small gap between buzzing and finding out if your surname was going to be the one read out. To avoid this situation, one has to master the technique of buzzing when you think you might know the answer when your name is called. This requires some practice and leads to amusing moments where you buzz and then have no idea what to say.

'So, we arrived at the first round hoping to not humiliate ourselves. The first question was read out, and since it was a maths question, I buzzed in early and inevitably lost my team five points. Despite falling to -5 to 60 after the first few questions, we managed to recover and finished 255 to 105. After the game, a few people asked if being in the studio and having Jeremy Paxman reading the questions affected our performance. Ironically, the answer is 'not really'. Our team was very good at just 'playing the quiz' and blocking out all the external factors, which served us well in later rounds.

'After round one, a global pandemic rather got in the way of our preparation. We had to migrate our practices online, and when we returned to the studio for round two, we were now separated by Perspex screens. Luckily, thanks to the wonderful production staff, it didn't affect our ability to communicate. In recent years, Warwick has suffered from a bit of a round two curse, going out in the second round three times out of the last four, so going in we had no expectations. Luckily, the game was probably the smoothest of all, and we made it to the quarter finals.

'Because of the strange *UC* rules, we knew we were now guaranteed at least two more games. Our first quarter was against Imperial, which was closely fought except for a five-minute period in the middle where we were able to break away. We then came up against the Magdalene team, and started well, before running out of momentum in the middle of the game. Going into the second picture round, we were neck-and-neck, before a lucky guess on a fashion designer got us going again. Somehow, despite expecting to lose almost every game we'd played, we'd snuck into the semis.

'In the semis, we were again drawn against Imperial. The closeness of this game meant that we were nervy throughout, resulting in an amusing moment where I managed to forget the surname of one of my teammates. Luckily, we managed to pull through to become the first Warwick team to reach the final since 2007. Ironically, we were a lot more relaxed going into the final. Despite the game being much closer than the final score suggested, a couple of unfortunate interruptions meant we triumphed 195-140, meaning somehow, we had won *University Challenge*!

'After the game, the team had a chance to reflect on the experience as a whole. Although winning was obviously a big achievement for us, I think the best part was the friends we made through the

process, both on our team and on the other teams. It's also nice when people tell me that they enjoyed watching the show, since I think we have all needed some 'light-hearted entertainment over the last year.'

'A brief history on Maidstone's 2-time Olympian Frank Sando'

*A while ago, an article about the Olympian, **Frank Sando**, who attended MGS, was published in the Maidstone edition of 'CommunityAd'. The editor has kindly agreed that we can reprint the article in full.*

Despite the slow return back to possible normality, we still await news on whether the Tokyo Olympics will take place this year so CommunityAd thought they would pay homage to our two-time Olympian, Mr Frank Sando.

Born in Maidstone on 31st March '193'1, Sando attended Maidstone Grammar School which is where his first interactions with athletics started, smashing the school mile record. Clearly talented, Frank would also join Maidstone Harriers where he won the Kent County Junior Cross-Country Championship in 1948 and Youth Cross-Country Championship the following year. Making a name for himself nationally, Frank would finish fourth in the English Youth-Cross Country Championships in 1948 and 1949 also.

Sando would then leave school to undertake his National Service where he broke the army three-mile record which had stood for 23 years. Upon leaving the army in 1951, Frank started working for Reed Paper Group in Aylesford where he met his future wife Sybil Page. The promising athlete would join the paper group's athletic club, leaving Maidstone Harriers and multi-tasking between his work, home life and athletic career.

During this period, Sando would get nicknamed the 'Maidstone Mudlark; and after finishing 5th and 9th in the National Cross-Country and International Cross-Country Championships, respectively, Frank was called up to represent Great Britain for the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games. Competing at the age of 21 in the men's 10,000 metres, Sando showed incredible ambition and desire as he lost a shoe early on in the race but continued with one bare foot, managing to finish in 5th place.

Four years later, Sando was Olympic bound again where he finished 10th in the 10,000-metre race at the 1956 Melbourne Games, a standing which he described as the greatest disappointment of his athletic career; this would be that last time Frank represented GB on the track.

Despite not medalling at the Olympics, Frank achieved a plethora of medals throughout his athletic career including bronze at the 1954 Bern European Athletics Championships, bronze and silver at the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games and gold in both the 1955 San Sebastian International and the 1957 Waregem Cross-Country Championships.

In 1957, Sando won the National Cross-Country Championships and a year later was one of the many signatories in a letter to The Times opposing 'the policy of apartheid' in international sport, defending 'the principle of racial equality',

After a glistening athletic career, Frank retired in 1960 and planned his next career, graduating with a degree in statistics from Birkbeck College in 1964. He would then resign from Reeds Paper Group to join the Civil Service where he worked as a Chief Statistician for 26 years, retiring in 1991.

Frank and Sybil have two children, Lorraine and Andrew and two grandchildren, Benjamin and Tony Abbott who were both educated at Maidstone Grammar School like their grandad.

Athletics was still a massive part of Frank's life after he stopped participating competitively as he would help organise grass-roots cross-country events as well as hold the role of President of the Kent County Athletics Association in 1980 and 2003. For one year from 2007, he also held the role of President of the Old Maidstonian Society.

Having lived in Aylesford with Sybil, Frank was always in sight of the paper mill training ground where his athletic career first began. On 12 October 2012, the former National and International cross-country champion sadly died after battling illness for some time, eventually dying of a brain tumour, aged 81. Frank's funeral was held on 25 October at Vintners Crematorium where there were no flowers but, instead, donations made to the Heart of Kent Hospice.

Matthew Hemmings, Editor of *CommunityAd*

Ron Dillon has sent us the following information about **Dr John Veasey (1951 to 1958)**, who presently lives in Sydney, Australia. Sadly, he is somewhat incapacitated after suffering two strokes last year in Vienna where he was working at the age of 79.

John arrived at the Australian Atomic Energy Commission (AAEC) on 17 November 1975 as a senior research scientist. For the previous six years he had been working on numerous projects for the steel industry at the Central Research Labs at John Lysaght in Newcastle. Previous to Lysaghts, he had worked for 11 years at the Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Harwell.

John joined the AAEC Isotopes Division, to head the group applying radioisotopes and radiation to problems in industry, the environment 'and anything else that cropped up'.

'By the first week in January I was in the Northern Territory, looking at how to apply radioisotopes in order to understand the environmental problems surrounding the operation of the Ranger and Pancontinental uranium mines. It was just one year after Cyclone Tracy, and Darwin was still quite a mess. The Ranger operations had been mothballed so we had to 'camp' in a literally mouldy caravan on the Ranger site. My initial job was to examine the area to see what would be in order to conduct some radioisotope experiments. I came back a month later and did the first of five years' work in that area during the wet season. The fieldwork was very stimulating and enjoyable.

'We began to think of ourselves as the Foreign Legion, a group comprised of staff who had arrived from disparate parts of the world but all wanting to do something "real". We became involved in a wide variety of projects, such as beach erosion in Cairns and Noosa, studies to select the best site for dredged mud from the Brisbane River, termite eradication all around the historic sites in Sydney and the efficiency of blast furnaces in Port Kembla. We first studied the Malabar sewage plume in the late 1970s.

'Our work was paraded out whenever visitors were shown around, and on open days, because our work was so obviously related to community problems. The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) review at the end of the 1994, recommended that one of its key research areas should be "Radionuclides - Environmental and Industrial Applications".

'In mid-1989, I was persuaded to apply for a position in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), although I didn't really want to put my hat in the ring, as we all thought that a Japanese candidate would get the position. Also, it was not an ideal time for me, as I had a two-year-old and a six-month pregnant wife. However, in August 1990, I left for the IAEA and spent five years and three months in Vienna. My IAEA job involved managing the Regional Cooperative Agreement for the Asia/Pacific region. It was hard work, but I enjoyed it and looked on it as an investment for when I returned to ANSTO.

'I returned to ANSTO in February 1996, after taking long service leave for two months. I was disappointed that there seemed to be no position that would utilise the additional skills I had acquired while overseas. As an interim position I worked on waste management and pollution control for six months and then returned to ANSTO and had my time divided between various projects. However, this juggling act finished in 1997, when I moved full time into Government and Public Affairs, handling bilateral and international liaison for 25 years.'

Obituaries

We are informed that **Brian Beaves** died in April. It is hoped that we will carry a full obituary in a future edition.

Gilbert Roots (1936-41), whom we believe to have been our second oldest Old Maidstonian, died on 25 March. His son, Frank, says that Gilbert was a marvellously upbeat yet stoical man, despite the limitations of his weakening health and the recent Covid restrictions. Even at the age of 95, he was great company and has left a huge hole in the lives of his family members. Frank hopes to submit some of his father's recollections for a future edition of *The Old Maidstonian*. Gilbert was the brother of another Old Maidstonian, Ivan Roots, who was a well-known historian.

'Something for nothing' donations to our charity

If you buy goods or services online, many retailers will make a donation to charity. This costs the buyer nothing, while the charity gets income. The Society and its registered charity, the Old Maidstonian Trust, has for some time participated in Easyfundraising, a scheme used by many retailers. This year Amazon has instead started its own scheme, Amazon Smile, and we are now registered in that scheme. Details of both schemes follow.

Please help us through one or both of these schemes. Funds donated go to support the school and its current and immediate past pupils, including through the Society's Awards. (For details, see the Society's website, <http://www.oldmaidstonians.org.uk> .)

'Easyfundraising' is the UK's largest charity shopping fundraising site. Over 4000 retailers participate and to date they have donated over £31 million. In our first year in the scheme, with only six OMs signed up, we raised over £120. To join is easy. Visit <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk>, and click on 'Find a cause'. Type 'Old Maidstonian Society' into the dialog box. We should come up as the first choice: click 'Support this cause' for us. Then fill in the form to create an account. It's very simple to complete. Make sure you can remember your password! To help you remember to use the scheme whenever you buy from participating retailers you can download Easyfundraising's 'Donation Reminder'.

Amazon's scheme offers a smaller percentage donation (0.5%) than almost all retailers in Easyfundraising, but it is easy to use. To do so, visit <http://smile.amazon.co.uk> . If you have an existing Amazon online account, it is also valid for Smile. Otherwise register as a new customer. When you first use 'Amazon Smile', nominate our charity 'Old Maidstonian Trust' to receive donations. From then on use www.smile.amazon.co.uk, just as you would have used www.amazon.co.uk.

For additional information, contact the Society's webmaster, Malcolm MacCallum, at webmaster@oldmaidstonians.org.uk or visit the Society's website's Fundraising page.

Many thanks for reading!