



## The Old Maidstonian

The newsletter of the Old Maidstonian Society

No. 38 – Summer 2022

---

### Your Committee 2022 – 2023

**President**  
Graham Walker

**Chairman**  
John Clayton

**Secretary**  
Richard Ratcliffe

**Treasurer**  
Graham Walker

**Membership Secretary**  
Sean Scurr

**Webmaster**  
Malcolm MacCallum

- Dan Abnett (1979 to 1984)  
**(President-Elect)**  
[dabnett@aol.com](mailto:dabnett@aol.com)
- Tony Bishop (1955 to 1962)  
[tony\\_bishop@btinternet.com](mailto:tony_bishop@btinternet.com)
- John Clayton (1961 to 1968)  
[clytn4@aol.com](mailto:clytn4@aol.com)
- Alec Clews (1978- 1980)  
[alec.clews@gmail.com](mailto:alec.clews@gmail.com)  
**(Co-webmaster)**
- Sam Coppard (2005 to 2012)  
[samuel.coppard@btinternet.com](mailto:samuel.coppard@btinternet.com)
- Gardner Crawley (1955 to 1962)  
[gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com](mailto:gardner.crawley@dalsterling.com)
- Robbie Ferguson (1994 to 2001)  
**(Deputy Headmaster: ex-officio)**
- Malcolm MacCallum (1957 to 1963)  
[m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:m.a.h.maccallum@qmul.ac.uk)
- Ron McCormick (Staff to 2004)
- Nancy Powell (1993 to 1995)  
**(The Old Maidstonian Co-Editor)**  
[iamnancypowell@gmail.com](mailto:iamnancypowell@gmail.com)
- Richard Ratcliffe (1956 to 1964)  
[rbr1@btconnect.com](mailto:rbr1@btconnect.com)
- Sean Scurr (1997 to 2004)  
[oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto:oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk)
- Mark Tomkins  
**(Headmaster: ex-officio)**
- Neil Turrell (Staff, 1992 to 2009)  
[turrellneil@gmail.com](mailto:turrellneil@gmail.com)
- Graham Walker (Staff, 1981 to 2018)  
[gmwalker57@gmail.com](mailto:gmwalker57@gmail.com)
- Brian White (1962 to 1969)  
**(The Old Maidstonian Co-Editor)**  
[drbdwhite@gmail.com](mailto:drbdwhite@gmail.com)
- The current School Captain  
(*ex-officio*)
- The current School Vice-Captain  
(*ex-officio*)

## From the President

It is a real privilege and honour to have been asked to become President of this distinguished society and to maintain links with our very special school. I feel very fortunate to have spent 37 years of my working life as a history teacher at MGS, and I am now enjoying collaborating with the hard-working and multi-talented OM committee.

I would like to take the opportunity in the first newsletter as President to pay tribute to the previous President, Nancy Powell. I had the pleasure of teaching Nancy 'A' Level history; as a student she was renowned for her independence of thought, her compassion and calm approach and she certainly brought these positive traits to her role as President. Nancy made history by being the first female OM President and serving for three years rather than the traditional 12 months. She was instrumental in helping this society get through the unprecedented and difficult Covid times and I sincerely thank her on behalf of the Society for going well beyond the call of duty and fulfilling all her responsibilities with dignity and determination. As I stated in my acceptance speech at the OM supper, Nancy will be a very difficult act to follow. Nancy was in one of the early cohorts of female students to join MGS and typical of those talented and confident young women who have contributed so much to the school. It is a shame that the planned celebrations to mark '30 Years of Girls at MGS' had to be cancelled. It would have been appropriate to commemorate this important milestone in the school's illustrious history and remember the ways in which their involvement has added to the academic ethos and embellished the many clubs and societies MGS is so rightly proud of. Hopefully such an event can be held at some appropriate time in the future.

During my tenure I would like to help the society re-establish, and evolve, the important social functions and gatherings that were sadly missing during the pandemic. The 2022 Annual Supper, the first since 2019, was a successful evening. The day after, the school hosted the inaugural 'Super Sports Saturday' where many OMs returned to watch and play against the MGS 1<sup>st</sup> XV or entered teams into the 7-a-side football competition. One of the OM football teams had all left MGS in 2003 and their friendship nearly two decades on epitomises the essence of the OMS: shared experiences and long-lasting camaraderie. This event was a great occasion, showcasing the brilliant new MGS sports facilities: the all-weather 3 G pitch and the Ron McCormick pavilion. I would like to give a special thank you to the OM and current Deputy Headmaster, Robbie Ferguson, who was the driving force behind this event, and we look forward to building on this and other sports events in the future.

Due to the efforts of many, and in particular the OM Membership Secretary, Sean Scurr, there are now nearly 2,500 registered OMs. This figure incorporates such a diverse and rich pool of talent and experience which the current cohort of MGS students should be able to tap into, and benefit from. I would like to help rekindle such connections, possibly via a mentoring scheme, and to compile a list of inspirational OMs to inform and motivate current and future cohorts at MGS.

As President, another ambition is to accelerate the current trend of getting younger OMs to become actively involved and energise the society. Through the efforts of our social media officer Sam Coppard and co-webmasters Malcolm MacCallum and Alec Clews, the OMS is adopting modern technology (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and the spirit and values of our age. The fact that Alec has recently joined the committee, even though he lives and works in Australia, illustrates that in today's world geographic position does not have to limit participation.

Though we live in rapidly changing times, the sickening scenes from Ukraine illustrate that we still have to endure events that should have been condemned to history. All we can do as OMs is to practice the MGS values of respect for all creeds and cultures, and to be humble, humanitarian and help in whatever way we can.

I very much look forward to meeting many OMs at the forthcoming planned events (OM quiz, London gathering, etc.) during my period in office.

Graham Walker

### From the Chairman

Welcome to our Summer newsletter and I must congratulate our co-editors Brian White and Nancy Powell for once again compiling such an interesting issue.

At the end of March we enjoyed a very successful Annual Supper, followed the next day by a brand new event, the old Maidstonian Sports Day on the new 3G pitch. Great sport and great company made this another day to remember and hopefully this will become an annual event.

A few days after the Supper, I had the honour of presenting 'A' Level certificates to the 2021 Year 13 cohort, and celebrating their success at an event in the Hall.

The committee is now looking forward to the Quiz which will be on Wednesday 19 October. Full details will be circulated in the near future.

There will once again be a London Get-Together for OMs, on Thursday 10 November at The George in Southwark. Again, details on how to book a place will be sent by email.

The committee recently considered some very strong candidates for the Presidency of the Society in 2023/24 and it was left to the Secretary and myself to approach those on the shortlist. I am now delighted to announce that well-known comic book writer and author, Dan Abnett, has graciously accepted. More information will appear in the next issue of our newsletter, but please note that a biographical feature about Dan was published in the Winter 2019 edition.

I look forward to catching up with many of you at these events and in the meantime wish all OMs a happy and healthy summer.

JC

*(Note from the Co-editor. I was very interested in comments about Las Vegas, which were made in the speech which was given at the Annual Supper by the President's guest, Toby Davies. Another famous Old Maidstonian was at Las Vegas in 1849: Julius Brenchley, a well-known 19th century explorer, carried out an extensive journey on the trail of the Mormons, with his travelling companion, Jules Remy, and this is recounted in their important book, 'A Journey to the Great-Salt-Lake City', which is still readily available.*

*Toby might have found Las Vegas to have been less stressful in Brenchley's day, as it appeared to consist merely of a mud fort, which had been constructed by the Mormons. Brenchley then went on to Los Angeles, a place that he considered to be 'inhabited by the scum of all nations'!)*

### From the Headmaster

Hello Old Maidstonians. Since the last newsletter life at MGS has continued to blossom. I write this article two weeks before the end of the academic year, and I cannot believe that we have finished another year. The building project to rehouse Modern Foreign Languages on top of the Ron McCormick Pavilion is progressing well, our annual July activities week has returned after a two-year hiatus, and just last month we celebrated Pride Month for the first time in the school's history. It is also only two years before we celebrate the 475<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024, and work has already begun planning for it. Celebrations will begin

from September 2023 and will include a number of events that will bring all members of the MGS community together. Do look at for more details in the coming 12 months.

At the end of any academic year there are of course some staff changes, and this term we are saying goodbye to seven. Those that have already left this term are Mrs Arbin, the Learning Support and Exams Officer, who left last week after three years; and Mr Field, Head of German, who was also here for three years, left at the start of June to begin his new profession in the City of London. We also say goodbye to five other members of staff. Mr Davis, who has taught history, geography and PE here for three years, leaves to further establish his cricket business. Miss Kaye, who has taught RS and sociology here for four years and been Assistant Head of House of Corpus Christi House for this last year, leaves to become head of department in a school in Sussex. Mr Green, who has been the chemistry technician here for six years, leaves to relocate to his new home west of London. Mrs Sissons, who has taught chemistry here for 12 years, leaves us to become head of department in a school in Tunbridge Wells. She has been an excellent teacher of chemistry and a fine colleague to work with. And finally, Mrs Lawrence, our Additional Educational Needs Manager, who has been here for 24 years: she has tirelessly supported hundreds upon hundreds of Maidstonians over the years, and has made a significant difference to their lives, helping them to achieve their potential at MGS. Thank you to them all, and best wishes.

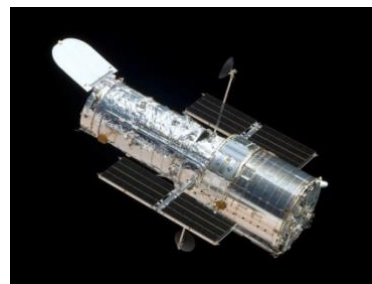
I also write this article reflecting on the last ten years of my headship. I started my journey in September 2012, and looking back on these last ten years has allowed me to pause for a moment and reflect on how MGS has changed in that time. We have been through two Ofsted inspections, a pandemic, an expansion programme taking in more students, a number of significant building projects, a complete restructure in our pastoral system, numerous personnel changes, and complete changes in how we use technology to teach. And all of this in just ten years. I certainly am much greyer than before! There have been overwhelming times, and times when the answer was not obvious, but most of the time there have been incredibly rewarding moments, providing me with hundreds of memories that I will have for a long time. However, the most significant change that I have seen in the last ten years, and the one thing that I am most proud of, is how more diverse, accepting and kinder the school community has become. We have done a lot of work in this area, particularly during this year, and I have been humbled to see how the school has valued this work. Kindness and acceptance, for me, are such important virtues, and so helping to create a kinder and more accepting school has been an absolute pleasure to be a part of. I hope Maidstone Grammar School continues on this journey, and I hope that all of you, as Old Maidstonians, take heart to know that your former school remains a very special place.

Mr Tomkins

### Musings from the Penthouse

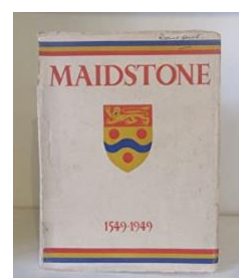
Correction – In the article ‘Secret Listeners’ there was a reference to anti-aircraft guns. These weapons were rapid-firing guns which the British army used in World War I. The official abbreviation used the pre-NATO phonetic alphabet for AA, where ‘A’ equates to ‘Ack’. Confusingly, the British Army radio-telegraphy alphabet used ‘Ack’ for ‘A’ only between 1904 and 1914 and then again between 1918 and 1956; the Royal Navy used ‘Ack’ only between 1921 and 1956; the Flying Corps/Royal Air Force did not seem to have a phonetic alphabet. Unsurprisingly, the ‘Tommys’ (the British soldiers) used sound of the guns firing to name the weapon itself, i.e. Ack-Ack. Thank you to Bill Keast for pointing this out.

Reading through the press the other day, I noticed a sad event, at least from my point of view. The super blue supergiant star, MACS J1149 Lensed Star 1 has been demoted from the furthest visible star as viewed by the Hubble Space Telescope, to second place. Its successor to that honour is WHL0137-LS (also known as Earendel, named after J R R Tolkien's half-elven character in The Silmarillion). 'Why should this be a sad event?', I hear you cry, as it is, surely, another step forward in our exploration of space. My sadness lies only in the fact that J1149 was also nicknamed as 'Icarus' for obvious reasons. My star has been downgraded. However, times change and we have to accept those changes.



Another change that has occurred since many OMs were at school is the face of Maidstone. Gone are the trolley buses that carried so many of us from town up to Barton Road. Comment has been made that perhaps they should be resurrected as they are far more eco-friendly than the diesel and possibly electrical motor buses.

My search for a photograph of part of Maidstone back in the 1800s, led me through various historical books in a vain effort to find what I wanted. However, one book in the archives, *Maidstone – Official Charter Brochure* issued in 1949 to celebrate 400 years of Maidstone's charter (and therefore of course, the start of what was to become MGS) led me to some OM names:



- Deodatus Bye – Bishop of Norwich, and sometime headmaster of MGS;
- Christopher Smart – renowned poet (see below);
- John Pond – Astronomer Royal;
- Admiral Sir Robert Calder;
- Admiral Lord Gambier;
- Phineas Pett – Archdeacon of Oxford;
- James Jeffreys and William Alexander – both poets.



Mr. G. B. Phillips, M.A.

Part of the celebrations in 1949 was an address in the town hall by one Mr G B Phillips, MA, speaking on 'The Charters of Maidstone' – ticket holders only. Naturally, as one would expect for such an auspicious speaker! 'Beta' Phillips taught History, English and Divinity at MGS from 1914 to 1960; he was second master for part of that time and was greatly respected.

It is interesting to note that according to the writers in 1949, MGS 'continues to flourish as an educational establishment of which the town may be proud'. It also notes that 'the school has one of the largest Combined Cadet Forces of any day school in Britain and the air section of the Force is the largest possessed by any school in the country.' One section of the book is entitled 'Maidstone of the Future – notes on Probable Developments'. Here one finds a solution to:

- The traffic chaos – widening the streets, a Maidstone by-pass and a town centre car park. (*In 2022, Icarus comments – all mainly constructed but useless in solving the problem as can be seen from the re-routing of the one-way systems from time to time. Not to mention the absolute gridlock that the town experiences when the by-pass (the M20) is blocked by an accident or roadworks.*)
- The bus station - moving it to the Gabriel's Hill end of Palace Avenue. (*In 2022, Icarus comments - and then on again and again. Did you know that the old ticket office from the Bishop's Palace site is now the tearoom for the Kent & East Sussex Railway in Tenterden?*)

- The restrictions of size of the Cattle and General Markets – move them near to a station. *(In 2022, Icarus comments – in other words, scrap the livestock market and reduce the popularity of the General Market. Daniel Defoe had once declared that Maidstone market was the best in England, but that was, after all, back in the 1720s.)*
- Important Industries – demolish redundant housing and build sites for light industry units. *(In 2022, Icarus comments – demolish unused units and build housing accommodation.)*
- Residential areas – buy agricultural land and build estates, such as Shepway. *(In 2022, Icarus comments – sounds like this was adhered to over the next 70+ years, leaving many villages just as suburbs of the town.)*
- Office Accommodation – desperate need for offices in centre of town. *(Seventy-three years later Icarus comments – empty office blocks standing idle with some use of empty office units for housing. Is this a merry-go-round I see before me?)*
- Open Spaces and Recreation Grounds – develop Mote Park and the County Showground. *(In 2022, Icarus comments – Open Whatman Park (great); ahh?-- What no parking for those wishing to use it?)*
- Council's Long-Term Programme – new crematorium, riverside walks, rebuild Swimming Baths. *(In 2022, Icarus comments – Well done.)*



Sorry, editor and councillors, hindsight is a wonderful thing. Many things have altered in Maidstone for the better. Those poor planners of 1949 did not have crystal balls and could not have imagined the way that life has changed today. Maidstone used to have many breweries due to the locality of the hop fields. Now it's a consumer not a producer – although pubs are closing left, right and centre; nightclubs, wine bars and gin sellers seem to be increasing. The worst news that I have seen on this front is that the Archbishop's Palace is likely to become a 'bijoux wine hotel'. Come on planners, think of the town's history!

Even MGS changes - we have just celebrated 30 years since young women joined the school – although that is not strictly correct as one of the headmaster's daughters had been taught at MGS decades earlier. I once spoke to one of our young ladies asking her how she had felt joining what was basically a single-sex school. She replied that she had some initial trepidation but was made to feel very much at ease by both students and staff. So, well done to MGS yet again. Jeff was telling me how surprised he had been when he saw a photograph of the ladies' rugby team which seemed alien to him, as someone whose school days at Barton Road had very few female members of staff and no young lady students.



I think that in the mid-1950s there were just two female school staff - Miss Herbert, the headmaster's secretary and her assistant (other than caterers and cleaners, that is). Another little bit of trivia – Miss Herbert appeared on the BBC TV panel game 'What's My Line' and I seem to remember that she beat the illustrious panel and won a certificate presented by Eamonn Andrews, the show's host.



Sadly, I hear that David Cutforth has died at the ripe old age of 98. He taught at the school from 1959 to 1967. My first memory of him was, when as part of the new intake, we were sent, individually, to him, in what is now the Bursary offices, to be assessed as to whether they were of such a standard as to join the school choir. Having sung an almost perfect 'middle C', he realised that I had undertaken some form of music lessons. What happened after that interview I am unable to remember, other than the fact that I never joined the choir nor the various orchestras. David was instrumental (sorry) in bringing to life much of MGS's renowned musical ability, which is listed in the illustrated *Gaudeamus* book (copies of which are available for £5 plus postage from the Archives).



David Cutforth (centre) with the 1964/65 1<sup>st</sup> Orchestra and the Wind Band.  
Looking quite rightfully pleased with himself.

More 'Maidstrivia' will have to wait a few months more, although there has been a little above. The Headmaster is now using past items in the Headmaster's Weekly Blog. So if you are desperately feeling starved of the trivia, log on to the school site and read his blog. There is much current news of the school to find as well.

Stay well and enjoy the summer. May the world find some peace soon.

*Icarus*

#### [A new Co-editor?](#)

Having edited *The Old Maidstonian* for over ten years, Brian thinks that it is time for him to hand over his job as Co-editor to someone else, in order to 'ring the changes' and get a different perspective on things.

If you are interested in the possibility of taking on the job (which is not too onerous and quite fascinating), please send an email to [oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto:oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk)

#### [The New York Dolls – a fusion of punk... and Latin?](#)

**John Clayton** says that as a young man, he dabbled in rock music journalism on a part-time voluntary basis. 'Most of the pieces I had published were for fanzines including *ZigZag* and *Omaha Rainbow* in the UK, and *Blitz* in Michigan, USA, along with one in British music magazine *Melody Maker*. I also wrote the sleeve notes for a few vinyl albums.

'Interest in rock and pop music has always been a major part of my life, and over the early May holiday weekend I disappeared down a Google rabbit hole researching - strictly for my own amusement - the band 'The New York Dolls'. If you've never heard of them, don't worry – they were never a big name!

'I knew that the band had formed in 1971 in the city from which they take their name, and became one of the early pioneers of the punk and glam rock scene on the East Coast, along with the Velvet Underground and The Stooges. After moderate early success, the band dissolved in 1976 and remained inactive until Morrissey of all people, (who had been president of their UK fan club in the 1970s) organised a reunion concert of the surviving members at London's Royal Festival Hall in 2004, which reignited interest and spawned a Live album, DVD and documentary film.



'Continuing my research I found online this photo of the band's 2006 album titled *One Day It Will Please Us To Remember Even This*.' (Plagiarism of Vergil and MGS? Co-editor)

### Did MGS's most famous writer suffer from toxoplasmosis?

**Christopher Smart (1722 – 1771)** is MGS's most eminent literary figure, and his best-known work is his poem about his cat, Jeoffrey. Smart died insane in a debtors' prison in 1771, and now a short science fiction satire by another Old-Maidstonian, **Christopher Badcock**, suggests that he may have done so by contracting toxoplasmosis from a cat.

Toxoplasma is a unicellular parasite which can complete its life cycle only inside a feline and causes its principal carriers, rats and mice, to lose their fear of cats so that they are much more likely to be eaten by one. The parasite does this by attacking a rodent's amygdala's, which play the same role in triggering fear reactions in rodents that they do in humans. Men with Toxoplasma infection tend to disregard rules and to be reckless, suspicious, jealous, and dogmatic. Infected people of both sexes are almost three times more likely to be involved in car accidents and have measurably slowed reaction times. Indeed, there is also some evidence that reduced activity of the amygdala's may represent a general feature of the schizophrenia-like conditions from which infected people suffer disproportionately often. Finally, and perhaps significantly in view of the tragic circumstances of Smart's death in a state of penury and insanity, infected people are more likely to be entrepreneurial and to be ready to take risks with money. And of course, they are also more likely to keep cats.

Badcock's book also notes that, while attending MGS, Smart was living on a country estate at Barming, which later became a major mental asylum and possibly gave rise to the colloquial English word 'barmy', meaning mad, and the phrase 'barking mad', a corruption of 'Barming mad'. Badcock's story, *The Mind of a Cat*, is presented as a radical translation of a novella by the Russian writer Mikhail Bulgakov (1891-1940), *The Heart of a Dog*. In the original, the testes and pituitary gland of a busker killed in a bar brawl are transplanted into a mongrel, with tragi-comic consequences. In the translated version, a cat is substituted for the dog and an operatic diva for the busker, but with similar results, thanks to the heroine contracting toxoplasmosis.

Bulgakov's transparent satire on Soviet society was not appreciated by the censors, who banned it in 1925. Only with the collapse of the USSR in the late 1980s was the work finally published in Russia, where it has since become something of a classic. Written a century later, *The Mind of a Cat* translates Bulgakov's story into something much more pertinent to modern times by drawing on the latest scientific research into autism, domestication, and language. Yet as a true translation, the moral of the story remains the same: human nature

cannot be cancelled by any kind of culture, modern Western or Russian Soviet - even if saying so can be.

*(Co-editor's note: I am grateful to Christopher for sending me a Kindle version of his book.)*



### **A View from the Gantry – Champions' Season for Maidstone United**

**By Sean Scurr**

Not only do I get to call myself the Membership Secretary for our wonderful society, I also get to commentate on match days for Maidstone United, alongside a plethora of fellow fans and volunteers, young and old; those who have been to the brink in the early 90s, to Ashford and Sittingbourne in the 00s, and those like me who only really had the chance to fall in love with the club after they came back home to the county town in 2012. After a summer where football nearly came home, again, and after being locked out of the Gallagher Stadium for 18 months due to you know what, the season began in August 2021.

'179 days since a ball was last kicked in anger in either the national league north or south: a lot has changed in the world since then. Two seasons have come and gone without completion, and countless lives have been lost and continue to do so across the world due to the ongoing pandemic, but we all look for lights at the end of various tunnels throughout our lives and one of those tunnels is sport. Fresh off the finish of the Olympics and the impending start of the Paralympics, Sport is one of those avenues that always brings hope, and we hope to complete the season, this time around, third time being the charm. We nearly all know of loved ones lost over the last 18 months, so when those balls ping into the back of the net this season, home and away, we'll be there with you on Stones Live, and cheer just slightly louder than you normally have done before and appreciate the fact that we are back out here cheering on the mighty Stones together again at last.'

To say that the opening day 4-2 home win over Hemel had an almost cathartic feel to it would probably be underplaying it in my book. The sun shone brighter than it ever had done, we had fans back in the stands again for the first time in such a long time, and the fact that the game saw constant end to end football, thoroughly entertaining and engaging, making my life as a commentator incredibly easy, when there is always time and dead air to fill. Filling time is something we all had to do for the longest time during the various lockdowns; many things that we had taken for granted were taken from us - the social aspect of attending sports was one of those that I missed thoroughly during that time. I have been a season ticket holder at Maidstone United since the summer of 2015 and a commentator since late 2017. If you had told me back then that this season just gone, my fifth one as a commentator, would be my first full season, I would want to know what Tarot Cards you had been mucking about with to come to that conclusion.

March 2020, Eastbourne Borough. Maidstone lose 3-0 away and their play off charge is faltering just as the world is coming to a halt. Pre Kick-Off: 'Afternoon Pop Pickers and Listeners, what a wonderful end of days it could be for us all, glad to be here with you all. Well, I think there's a fairly good chance of this being the last game of the season.' (Very much so, on a very downbeat tone but completely correct, unfortunately.) 'Yes, we still have a show to bring you of course in the match that's being presented to us this afternoon, so best get on with it: the show must go on...' Full Time: 'Eastbourne Borough have beaten a poor poor Maidstone United at a canter, by three goals to nil, in what could end up being the last game for a very long time...' Never ever had I said a more prophetic set of words relating to my local team.

Fast forward to October of 2021, and Maidstone are starting to wobble again after a fast and unbeaten start to the season, a few performances where Maidstone seem to have lost their way, and manager Hakan Heyrettin, who nearer to the end of the season, admits that this

period was the hardest for him personally. He is on record as saying that his own doubts had started to creep in, along with those from a section of fans who also doubted his ability to lead the team out of the division, something Hak had been brought in to do in early 2019, even before the inevitable relegation from the topflight of the National League was confirmed.

Over the course of his time at the club so far, Hakan has always made me feel welcome. He used to just know me as 'the man in the amber suit', we would exchange pleasantries and keep everything formal. During this same bad run of form where the man feared for his employment, my wife was rushed to hospital one morning, and I was fearing the worst with her, especially as she had had long covid for over a year at this point. Everything in my world stopped again, including Maidstone United. Hakan asked where I was on Saturday, and one of my colleagues who replaced me at short notice informed him that my wife had been hospitalised and that my caring duties had been ramped up several notches once more.

A few weeks later, I was able to get cover so I could come back and resume commentary duties for a huge league match at home to local rivals Dartford, who only weeks earlier, had dumped us out of the FA Cup for another year and started the Stones' downward spiral in form. By this point though, a couple of weeks before Christmas, things had started to look up both on and off the pitch again. Hakan made a point of finding me pre game and asked after my wife's health. Come 1700 hours, Hakan was walking off the pitch and up into the dressing room. As he passed the gantry, he shouted two or three times up to me and said, 'That's for your wife Sean.'



*Mathew P, Hakan, Myself and Joseph P, title winning smiles – 7 May 2022.*

Maidstone had just won 4-0. It was moments like these that made me realise we had something special at the club again this season. It was a family, and it was one that cared about everyone else within it. It therefore reminded me of our Society and our School and how we all stand together in hard times. The fact that this is another collective within our town striving for the same end goal, as well as there being many fellow OMs that I now know either play (Bivesh Gurung a recent school leaver and now an important squad member), or coach, or volunteer (Joseph Parkhouse, a fellow commentator), or just come along every week and support as the twelfth man (John Bunyard is one who falls into that category.)

Maidstone's momentum was gathering pace, Sweet Caroline was being pumped out of the changing room stereo after each victory, winning every Kent league derby in sight, a brief week in top spot to start 2022 and despite losing at title rivals Dorking in late February, the Stones were back on top a fortnight later, in no small part thanks to a miraculous 3-2 home win over Hungerford, coming from 2-0 down: a now infamous weekend for me that will live long in my memory. After helping to organise my first Annual Supper in my role, in which I amusingly compered the Raffle draw, less than 24 hours later, I had commentary duties with Joseph Parkhouse, a new starter with Stones Live this season and a recent school leaver, a

fellow OM. Having let a two-goal lead slip, Maidstone United were destined to miss out on stretching their lead at the top of the division by dropping two precious points...

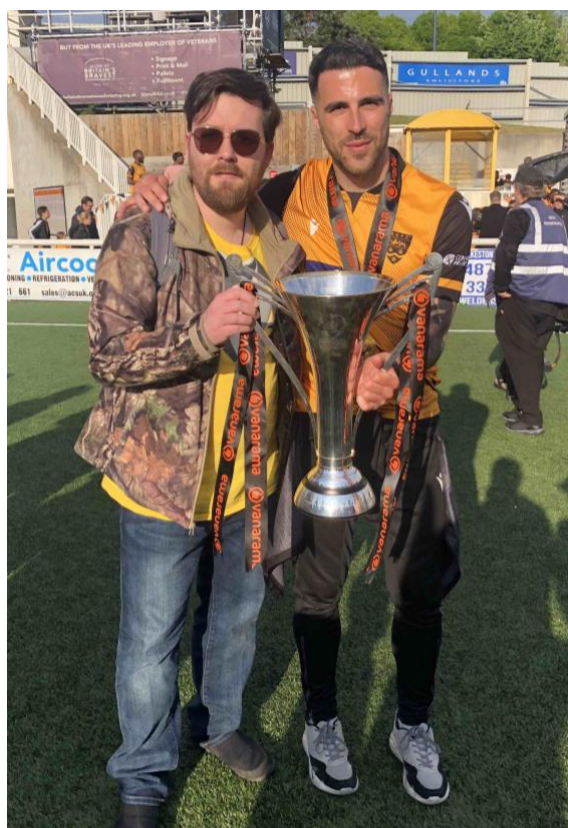
'It's headed down, Odusanya comes away with it, Pattisson out wide, is it too cute, it's not, he's got past his man, what can Pattisson do, squares it back... INAUDIBLE SCREAMS OF JOY – Johl Powell, in the 96<sup>th</sup> minute, Johl Powell has done it for Maidstone and they go four points clear at the top of the National League South, and it's gone absolutely Tonto in this place, a 96<sup>th</sup> minute winner from substitute Johl Powell and St Albans City players and staff are out on their feet and its scenes of joy and pandemonium unseen, for years, FOR YEARS at Maidstone and the Genco is alive. It's incredible scenes from absolutely everybody associated with the black and amber army. Unbelievable scenes.'



*Boy wonder Johl Powell and Sean – 7 May 2022.*

Players and staff alike at the end of the match, bringing their families on to the pitch to celebrate the win. It was a day where we felt like we had already won the league and there were still seven matches (cup finals as the cliché goes) left at this stage. But psychologically, the race felt over. Outwardly, everyone at the club remained professional and stuck to their job for the remainder of the season. 14 home wins in a row in the league: records that matched and eclipsed those of other title winning sides this season like Manchester City and Stockport County. But encapsulated in that one moment, pure joy and relief, ecstasy. The reason we go to these sporting events, the reason we keep coming back, for just one split second, where something unreal happens. 26 March 2022 was that day for me. And it was Joseph's favourite moment of his breakout season too. It caused the briefest of hashtag notoriety for us on Twitter and Joseph also reflected on the season as a whole: 'This season was the first time I've been to a game in which we've secured a promotion, it was very emotional for all involved and myself as I began commentating on games this year. Thank you to Sean *et al* for taking me under their wings and helping me become part of the journey.' And that's what being an OM and a Maidstone fan is all about. Being part of that collective journey. Oh Caroline, it sure was Sweet... roll on next season.

*Sean Scurr and Joan Luque and the National League South Trophy – 7 May 2022.*





A View from The Gantry, Maidstone confirmed as Champions – 30 April 2022.

### [More about Maidstone United](#)

When Maidstone United were promoted to the National League early in May, one elated fan asked online whether there'd be a bus-top parade through the town. It took an older, cooler head to point out that we've only won the National League South, kid. The one such celebration in the town's history occurred in 1989, when the old club uniquely reached the giddy heights of the Football League. The Stones' most recent success is actually their tenth promotion since reforming in 1993, and the eighth time they've been champions. Nor is this latest achievement ground-breaking: the club is merely reversing its runaway relegation from the National League in 2019. Historically speaking, it's no big deal.

I do believe there is a good reason for remembering the 2021-22 season, but promotion isn't it. Why not? For starters, it's a moot point whether it is even a good thing. The defining aspect of the National League is that the division is national, the clue being in the name. Away games are well out of reach for all who can't afford or don't fancy a round trip to Oldham, York, or Gateshead. What's more, there will be a dozen other former Football League clubs to compete with, most enjoying big fan bases, handsome budgets, and a determination to recover their lost status. The club already had to work miracles with its budget last season, but it will be a lot tougher in what is after all the fifth tier of English football. Losing lucrative revenues from beer sales owing to the NL's stringent rules on outdoor drinking won't help.

The problem is that many spectators in good times are not supporters, but camp-followers. Once the team stops winning, they drift away. The manager is already appealing to fans to stick by the club if things go badly next season. He'll be lucky, if history is any judge. It's easy for clubs to get into a downward spiral when the fans don't come, money dries up, and talent leaches away. Rose-tinted optimists claim that the big northern clubs in the NL will bring huge crowds with them in any event, but there's little evidence to support this. Even when Tranmere Rovers helped establish a new attendance record at the Gallagher when visiting as runners-up in 2017, the crowd didn't break 3,500; and that was when a gallon of petrol was still cheaper than a bottle of wine.

Current manager, Hakan Hayrettin, has been reining in expectations by asserting that staying up next season will be as good as promotion for anyone else. Certainly the euphoria of May needs to be tamped down before the grim reality of a wintry Tuesday night at Halifax or Wrexham kicks in.

The perennial problem for the club psychologically is the low glass ceiling set by the Football League's ongoing ban on 3G pitches. Knowing that it will actually get relegated if it doesn't

tear up its successful, socially advantageous, and profitable business model is the perfect incentive for any club to shun success. Dyed in the wool fans may follow the club through thick and thin, but the majority will fail to see the point. The same probably goes for many (maybe most) players. Until the political battle is won, striving for league success is more than pointless; it's counterproductive.

So what is there to celebrate? Let me tell you. Before last season started, I wrote in a [blog](#) that, after following the club for six decades, I was no longer that bothered about the ups and downs, but just wanted to be entertained. It was a coded plea to the club management after five years of tedium. I've no idea whether they even read it, but I certainly got my wish.

Starting with a stunning victory at Ebbsfleet, the team was transformed, thanks to a sturdy defence led by the imperious Joe Ellul, a hard-working midfield starring Corne and Booty, the talented Binnom-Williams and Luque on one wing and super-sub Pattison on the other, plus of course spring-heeled Jack Barham scoring for fun. The 2001-02 Kent League-winning campaign was arguably more exciting, but I've never witnessed a season offering such a high standard of football, and so many extraordinary goals. With commercial ugliness and hypocrisy rampant in the game today, following Maidstone United was a source of unalloyed pleasure. Even in this year of anniversaries, that's worth a special celebration of its own.

John Bunyard (John Bunyard's new website [Old Bunyard's Tour of Kent](#) is now online.)

### **Strict segregation in co-educational grammar schools in the 1950s and 1960s**

This article from *The Oldie*, at <https://www.theoldie.co.uk/blog/growing-apart-liz-hodgkinson>, makes interesting reading for those of us who were in single-sex grammar schools.

#### **The Grammar School – my moulding**



**Peter Evans (1950 to 1958)** wrote to say that he was delighted to see mention of some of his old classmates in the last edition of *The Old Maidstonian*. He mentions Robin Ambrose, Phil Wilkinson and Bill Fullager in particular. This prompted him to dig out a 'treatise' that he wrote several years ago, so that his grandchildren would have answers to questions they forget to ask him while he is still alive! He encountered the same problem himself, in not having found out before his parents died, how his mother, the daughter of a GWR engine driver, travelled Europe as an international table tennis champion in the 1920s. Peter says that he had a great time at MGS, where the staff helped to mould him into an adult.

Peter's treatise is quite extensive, so we will publish it in further sections, in the next two editions

'At the end of Junior School, in the second term of the last year to be more precise, we sat the 11-Plus examination which determined our academic futures. Secondary education was then in three streams. The most academic level was provided by the Grammar Schools, which concentrated on trying to get pupils into tertiary education and into white collar careers. Technical Schools were more "Trade" oriented and equipped the pupils for blue-collar jobs. The third category was for children deemed to be unsuitable for the other two, who would be expected to fill the lowest levels of the workforce. There was some flexibility for children, who showed they had more ability than the 11-Plus had indicated, to move upwards, but this occurred rarely. A few boys joined us at the Grammar School from the Technical School for Sixth Form and "A" Levels.



'I was lucky, as together with most of my friends I achieved a place at MGS and started there in September 1950. It was a school with a proud tradition, having been founded in 1549 in the time of King Edward VI.

'The headmaster, William Arthur Claydon CBE, MA (WAC) was a fearsome character, tall and gaunt in his long black gown. He ran a tight ship and had built a school which was an educational establishment of the highest calibre. Academically it fought well above its class, sending six to ten boys year after year to Oxford and Cambridge, as well as others to many other universities. He had an enthusiastic staff who provided a comprehensive array of extra-curricular activities for the boys, from sport through music, drama, scouts, religious groups and other "societies" including even bell ringing (campanology).

'The reader will gather from the preceding paragraph that I enjoyed my time at MGS. I milked it for all it could offer, and tried almost everything available in extra-curricular activities.'

### **First impressions of geniuses**

'I was placed into Form 3A, our Form Master being R R ("Bob") Rylands, a redhead with a trim military moustache. Like many of the staff he had served in the Second World War; some has served in the previous one. Bob had been a Captain in the infantry. As a teacher he was kind, encouraging and proved a good mentor to me throughout my whole time at the school. The first morning, I sat at my desk and nervously looked around at the 30+ classmates: a few had travelled with me from South Borough. I looked around at the others and tried to work out from their appearance how clever they would be. The years that followed almost completely proved that appearances can be deceptive, as the ones I picked out as the obvious geniuses proved to be the least endowed academically. New friends I made included **Alan Knell**, with whom I became very close through our scouting adventures, and **Derek Mitchell** who became a good sporting ally. Coincidentally, they both came from villages in the Medway valley, Snodland and Halling respectively. They were under the shadow of the North Downs with chalk pits and cement works nearby, very depressing industrial villages in a beautiful rural area.

'The closest new friend that I made was **Roger Eltringham**, and I was mortified that at the end of the year his parents sent him to Cranbrook, a minor private (or public, in that strange English naming) school only a few miles away, but one with which we had no sporting or other contact. Roger lived in Marden in a 15<sup>th</sup> century house with superb, exposed timbers, which made a big impression on even a 12-year-old. He had a Subbuteo table football game that was worth the half-hour cycle ride to play. It is interesting to note that my parents allowed me at that age to make the return journey on my own. When he moved schools, we lost contact. The next time we met was in 1963 when I was playing cricket for Headcorn against Marden. Lo and behold, there he was on the boundary with his fiancée. We immediately recognised each other. He had gone to St Andrews University in Scotland and studied medicine.'

### **Sport**

'My family genes insisted that I would be active in sport, and the school provided great opportunities, though the choice of sport was restricted. Despite WAC having been a hockey blue at Oxford, the game wasn't played at school. We were limited as far as main sports were concerned, to cricket in summer (with intra-school athletics and swimming) and rugby in winter. There was a tennis court near the dining room, but it was reserved for masters and praefects. As a senior pupil, I did get to play a few games on it in my last two years.'

### **Rugby**

'Being proud of my Welsh background, I was keen to try rugby. The first afternoon I took to the field full of enthusiasm but in the middle of a "ruck" was tripped up and banged my mouth on someone's head. As mouthguards were unknown in those days, my two top front teeth took most of the impact and were never the same again; they have cost me a lot of dentists' time and my pain.

'A boy in my class, **Robin Brenchley**, posed an unusual challenge for us. He was large, weighing the same number of stones as his age throughout his time at school. So when he was 12 he weighed 12 stones (76kg), and we ordinary mortals only about 5 stones each (32kg). When Robin got into top gear with the ball, none of us was able to tackle him on our own. A special technique was developed; one of us would kneel in front of the juggernaut, and two others would push him over the boy in front. We took turns at the kneeling job, to spread the pain on our ribs more evenly.

'Enthusiasm undimmed by my cracked teeth, I made my way into the school's Under 13 team, though I was unpopular when having caught chicken pox I quarantined the whole team for a fortnight, the statutory "punishment" of the time. Positionally, I moved around from full back via scrum half to wing forward, my favourite position as it gave an excuse to be forever involved in the action.

'I progressed into Under-14, Under-15 and Under-16 school teams, but then struggled due to slower maturing compared to fellow pupils. An 8 stone (50 kg) weakling cannot compete physically with 14 stone (90 kg) strong "men", so I had to retire from school rugby, taking solace in my House team. I did, though, spend a torrid year as Rugby Secretary. In this role I had the arduous tasks of ensuring that the teams and sports masters caught the buses to away matches, and delivering the Saturday results to the Headmaster on Monday morning so that he could read them out to the school. Woe betide me if these were late!'

### **Cricket**

'As befitted the fact that this was my first representative sport, it was the one at which I was most successful at school. I was always a reasonable bowler and fielder; only in the twilight of my club cricket career learning how to be a more competent batsman. My initial style was slow left-arm finger spinning, relying on craft: length, flight, line and spin. It worked a treat for several years. My best season was in the U-16s in 1954, when in successive school matches, I took five for six, six for 27 and seven for nine. As a result, the next season I was promoted straight into the 1<sup>st</sup> eleven. This meant changing from a smaller ball to a full sized one and playing on a 22-yard pitch where the previous year I'd been bowling on a 20-yard pitch. Despite much practice in the nets, I was smashed all over the ground in the first two matches, took no wickets, was dropped to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Eleven and lost all confidence.



'Luckily for my ongoing cricket career, South Africa was touring England that summer. In their team was Trevor Goddard, who bowled left-arm seamers. I watched him on television, studied his style and tried it out. I found a natural aptitude for bowling medium-paced inswing and seam bowling, became the meanest bowler in the team, and the next season won my way back to the 1<sup>st</sup> Eleven. I exploited the "corridor of uncertainty" on and outside the off stump to great effect and enjoyed bowling that way until I gave away cricket in 1982 on going to Australia.

More to follow...

**Les Broad** wrote to say, that after decades of separation, he met up with Geoff Emerson on the way home from the Autumn Supper and had an all-too-brief, yet hugely enjoyable, insight into his 'Guide to Midsummer' tour of Thame. Les was also interested to read, in the Winter 2021 edition, about his experiences of Restorative Justice, of which he had spoken with justifiable pride when they met.

Les was struck by **Paul Cooker's** comment in a previous edition, that he wished that he had left MGS with a greater knowledge of the world of investment. He writes, 'It's a world into which I moved from the tax planning side of accountancy in the late 1980s, just as Financial Services regulation was beginning to bite.' He found his work to be challenging and technically demanding, but he remarks on how the regulatory bodies had to cope with all kinds of problems within the sector, 'as the range of scams, swindles, corrupt dealings and outright thefts employed to part honest investors from their capital, was breathtakingly audacious and bewilderingly broad.'

Les says that his experience in the sector taught him a good deal, and was linked to a couple of changes in the law, which were important in specific circumstances. His efforts resulted in the return of significant amounts of money which had been lost by some people.

After testing positive for Covid, **Terry de la Mothe** was unable to attend the Annual Supper and the sports events the following day. However he wrote to say that he was a member of the very successful 1974-75 1<sup>st</sup> XV team, which won the Kent Sevens that year, beating arch-rivals Chis & Sid, and making the Telegraph Schools Rugby write-up, but was beaten at the quarter-final stage the next year.



The 1974-75 1<sup>st</sup> XV team

A memorable exchange trip to Beauvais saw the team play the game after a full slap-up meal, in the French manner of the time.



The 1975-76 1<sup>st</sup> XV team  
Simon Knight supplied the following photograph of the 1970-71 U-14 team



**Martin Lee** has kindly provided two videos, which will be made available on the OM website. In the first, he talks about the Russian/ Ukrainian exchange that he organised at MGS from 1991 to 1996, and which Dr Pettit led in 1992. In the second, he plays Tchaikovsky's *Song of the Lark* (dedicated to the month of March) from *The Seasons*, Op 37a.

**Graham Walker** has produced a short autobiography, to introduce himself as the new President.

'I was born in Yorkshire in 1957, to parents who instilled the values of family, friends, fun and hard work. I was the youngest of three, a sickly and hence rather demanding and difficult child. My mother, bless her, used to say "if you'd bin first, you'd have bin last" – something about which I regularly remind my brother and sister!

'Though I missed a lot of schooling, I was happy at my small Primary School and pleased to be selected to attend Harrogate Grammar School. There I was academically average, but revelled in the many extra-curricular opportunities, particularly sport. I represented the school at rugby, cricket and athletics, and sporting success at district and county level helped nurture my confidence and sense of belonging. I am still in touch with my first history and rugby teacher, who was an inspiration during these formative years, and it is not surprising that I went on to mirror his career. One of my proudest achievements was to be appointed Head Boy. This, though unexpected, was a great opportunity to develop camaraderie and a sense of identity. I look back on my time at Harrogate Grammar School with a sense of satisfaction and belonging, and I know that this is also the case for so many Old Maidstonians.

'A History degree from Warwick University and a Post Graduate Certificate of Education from Kings College, London led me in 1981 to apply for a teaching post at Maidstone Grammar School. I didn't really know where Maidstone was, believing it to be somewhere on the South coast, but Dr Pettit offered me the post to teach history and games (thankfully no geography) and the rest, as they say, is history. Initially I did not expect to spend my whole career at MGS, indeed I nearly accepted the offer to teach English in Mexico in 1986. However, buying a house, meeting my future wife, having two wonderful sons, and realising that I was very content with the ethos underpinning MGS, meant that my life became entwined with the school for a happy and fulfilling 37 years. MGS offers such a breadth of opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, to help students discover their talents and interests. Such opportunities allow them to feel part of the community and help instil a sense of self-worth. Long may this continue.

'In retirement I still dabble in my old interest of history, researching various projects, including digging into the extensive MGS archives. New hobbies of wood turning, gardening and recently becoming a proud grandparent all keep me busy. Hopefully I am still young at heart and staying loyal to those core values lovingly instilled during my early years.'

## Obituaries

### **The society offers its condolences to the families and friends of all of those OM's who have died recently**

**David Faulkner**, a former French teacher at MGS, wrote to tell us about the death of **David Cutforth**, former head of music at MGS, who died in April at the age of 98. (See also, 'Musings from the Penthouse'. above.) David's granddaughter, Katie, is writing an obituary which we hope to publish in the next edition.

**Gordon Diprose**, who left MGS in **1947**, died peacefully in Leighton Hospital on 4 July. His daughter, Sue, says that the family heard many tales of his time at MGS, and that he formed friendships throughout his life, including that with '**Steve**' (**Robert Stevenson**).

**Rigo Hallanzy** and **Pauline Glover** were both on the staff at MGS during the 1960s. They later married and had two children, and the following extract from the OMS newsletter from summer 1972 refers to this fact: 'Mrs Pauline Hallanzy is raising two children and teaching part-time; her husband, Rigo, has been appointed Head of Modern Languages at a comprehensive school near Chester-le-Street.' Pauline died recently, and a tribute can be found here: [Tribute to Pauline Hallanzy, 1943 - 2022 \(muchloved.com\)](#). Rigo predeceased her in 2021: [Obituaries by Rigobert Hallanzy | Grief & Remembrance \(rheinpfalz.de\)](#)

**Ron Dillon** reports that **Brian Hanson**, who was at MGS in the early 1950s, died on 14 February, having been in an Australian residential home for several years, suffering from dementia. His wife, Wendy, was able to be with him on his last day, in spite of Covid restrictions. Ron counts himself lucky, as he was able to visit Brian when he was in Australia three years ago. Ron says that if anyone would like to communicate with Wendy, her email address is [wendyhanson@westnet.com.au](mailto:wendyhanson@westnet.com.au)

**Martin Lee** reports that **Nicholas ('Nick') McCabe**, who left MGS in 1946, died on 11 December 2021, at the age of 94. He became Head of Modern Languages at Bournemouth School (retiring in 1988) and taught Martin 'A' and 'S' Level German. Nick's obituary and tributes can be read at [oldbournemouthians.co.uk](http://oldbournemouthians.co.uk). Martin writes that Nick's name is engraved on an MGS honours board, and that he was an accomplished viola player.

**Ben Smith** has reported the death of **Colin Wallace (1945 to 1952)**. Colin studied architecture, worked for the LCC and GLC and was responsible at one time for the refurbishment of the House of Commons. He was a life-long resident of the Watlington and Teston areas of Maidstone.

**Ron Dillon** reports the death on 3 June 2022, of **Peter J Smithers** who was at MGS from about 1951 until 1958. He died within a few days of being admitted to hospital with cancer.

**Brian Whitehouse** was born in 1929, and he obtained a scholarship to MGS, where most of his schooling occurred either during or immediately after World War II. His school reports tell of a studious, hard-working boy who generally received top marks in everything. During his time in the 6<sup>th</sup> form he was the stage manager and it appears that he was involved in many productions of one sort and another.

After school there was National Service. Brian was in ATC at MGS, and was conscripted into the Air Force. He was posted to Tripoli in Libya, and a facility with radios meant that he was employed by the Forces Broadcasting Service. He regularly presented a children's programme as 'Uncle Brian'. After the war, another scholarship took him to Bristol university to read biochemistry, with a stated intention of following his mother into teaching. That didn't happen; however, he joined the university choral society, and this confirmed a lifelong love of both choral and classical music, and he sang in many choirs over the years

A PhD followed, then Brian he began work with a company which was taken over by Unilever, with whom he worked for the whole of his career. After retirement, he continued to

work as a free-lance consultant, specialising in food additives, in which he became an international expert and gained an MBE.

Brian loved watching rugby and also had a keen interest in cricket: he was a great fan of Kent and often watched them play, whilst still at school. He was a great linguist, speaking both French and German almost fluently, and later learning both Flemish and Italian.

Brian had four children with his wife, Helen, and was a much-loved husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather.

John Simmonds (cousin) and Chris Wood wrote to inform us about the death of **Robert Wood**, who was born in 1937. Bob and his two younger brothers were all pupils at North Borough Primary School and then MGS. The family was involved in the various activities of the community based around St Paul's Church: choir, Sunday School and Scouts (all three brothers were Queen's Scouts).



Bob was a fiercely academic scholar, taking up the oboe and becoming a CSM in the Army Section of the CCF. In due course he became a praefect and Captain of the School in 1955-56. It was said, not entirely in jest, that at one stage he had borrowed almost the entire contents of the History Reference Library and it was no surprise when he was awarded an Open Demyship (what most Oxbridge colleges would have called an Open Scholarship) at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1956.

Those were the days when most young men had to complete National Service and Bob served for two years when he was commissioned in the Royal Corps of Signals, being stationed in what was then West Germany. When asked why he had joined the Royal Signals he said. 'I knew nothing about physics and this gave me an opportunity to learn something new!'

Bob went up to Oxford in 1958 where he was awarded a University prize for a history essay and cannot have been far off a First. He trained as a teacher and spent several years in Secondary schools, showing enough courage to face the problems involved in working at an Inner London comprehensive.

In 1973 Bob entered the world of administration, when he became Assistant Adviser for History in Essex, working in the pleasant surroundings of Ingatestone Hall, near Chelmsford. Subsequent posts in the Advisory and Inspectorate followed, finishing as Senior Adviser.

Family life was important to Bob. He and Anna became parents, grand parents and great grand parents. An unobtrusive Christian faith was an essential part of his personality, nurtured by his early years at St Paul's and the Crusaders Bible Class. He was licensed as a Lay Reader in 1963 in St Albans and on moving to Chelmsford in 1973 became a Team leader and later Lay Chairman of the Deanery Synod, serving on several committees of Chelmsford Cathedral.

Philately (especially older French stamps), foreign travel and choral music were lifelong interests and the years of retirement gave ample time for attending concerts. He also spent many hours researching his family history.

### **'Something for nothing' donations to our charity**

If you buy goods or services online, many retailers will make donations 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. Recently Amazon instead started its own scheme, Amazon Smile, and we are now registered in that scheme also. 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. Note that as well as making donations on your normal purchases, Easyfundraising circulates special offers on goods, and opportunities for enhanced donations.

To join Easyfundraising is (unsurprisingly) 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](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk), just as you would have used [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).

For additional information, contact the Society's webmaster, Malcolm MacCallum, at [webmaster@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@oldmaidstonians.org.uk) or visit the Society's website's Fundraising page.

Many thanks for reading!