



## The Old Maidstonian

The newsletter of the Old Maidstonian Society

No. 39 – Winter 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

We are certainly living through turbulent times, epitomised by the rather shambolic comings and goings at 10, and 11, Downing Street! Also, since the last OM Newsletter we have mourned the passing of Queen Elizabeth the Second; her historic 70 years of selfless service is a beacon for others to follow. It is worth remembering as the second Elizabethan era closes, that MGS was formed even before the first one started!

As President, I was privileged to represent the OMS at the Lower School Speech Day in July, and at the Upper School equivalent in September. Such occasions, recognising achievement and outstanding service, are important to help inspire students to realise their potential. Both were very enjoyable occasions show-casing the wide array of talent within MGS. It was very appropriate that in the year that the school celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of girls into the Sixth Form, MGS invited female Guests of Honour for these occasions: **Dr Lydia Ross (2013 to 2015)** and **Mrs Naomi Lumutenga (1991 to 2014)**. Lydia spoke about her time at MGS as a student and Deputy School Captain, and Naomi highlighted how during her time as a teacher at MGS, the teaching community itself became more diverse, with female teachers becoming the norm and being more widely accepted into positions of responsibility. Their positive reflections of their time at MGS and perceptive observations of societal progress and issues still needing to be addressed, were well received. Thanks go to both of them for attending the occasions and for inspiring the current school community to go on breaking boundaries with equality, diversity and inclusivity.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the staff and students of MGS for coping so admirably with the difficulties associated with the recent pandemic and resulting pressures and changes. The impressive academic results attained in the first public exams since 2019 are testament to the positive attitude and adaptability of the MGS community.

In August, the OMS launched its 'Inspire and Inform' programme to assist MGS students with their subject and career choices. Over 50 OM's have already offered their assistance by completing the online form ([OMS Inform & Inspire Form](#)). It would be much appreciated if more members were willing to give their details and get involved. We are currently liaising with the MGS Careers team to discuss how the OMS, with its vast array of experience and expertise, can best assist them. I sincerely hope that this will become a valued initiative. (Further details are given below in the newsletter.)

The OMS, like society in general, is striving to return to pre-pandemic levels of social interaction. For many, the long bouts of lockdown led to relative isolation becoming their 'norm', and for some it is difficult to regain the confidence to mix and mingle freely again. This is to a degree understandable, and possibly helps to explain why the proposed OM Quiz Night in October had to be cancelled due to a lack of numbers. In contrast however, over 40 OM's signed up for the London gathering at the George Inn, Southwark. I look forward to meeting many familiar faces and greeting new ones as well.

As we approach the festive season, I wish all OM's health and happiness, and let's hope for greater political vision and economic stability in the new year.

Graham Walker

### From the Chairman

Yesterday, 10 November, saw the Society's first London get-together for three years, and after the privations of the intervening time, it felt particularly enjoyable. On an unusually warm evening, The George in Southwark looked inviting with many people seated outdoors early on.

It is typical of Maidstonians to find workarounds when faced with obstacles such as London Transport Tube strikes, so, undeterred by transport problems, 42 people

attended and a good time was most certainly had by all. The buffet food provided was outstanding and plentiful, excellent value for £10 per head.

President Graham Walker's brief speech was warmly applauded, as he set out some of the Society's plans for the year ahead. Thanks are due to Sam Coppard and Sean Scurr in particular for their tireless work in making the event a great success. We shall of course repeat the London event next Autumn, and our Annual Supper will be on Friday 24 March 2023 at the School.



Your committee has been busy progressing a number of important matters, including the Mentoring scheme, succession planning for the Presidency, two Autumn events, and finding a way to fulfil an order for OMS memorabilia from a member resident in the People's Republic of China. It was a shame that we had to cancel the planned Quiz but we shall try again next year and hope more bookings will be received. I had the honour of taking part in Lower School Speech Day on 15 July, deputising for the Chair of Governors who had contracted Covid. It was a privilege to celebrate the achievements of so many students on a very warm summer's day, superbly organised by the school.

Best Wishes to all Old Maidstonians for a Happy and Healthy Christmas and New Year.

John Clayton  
Chairman



### [From the Headmaster](#)

Hello Old Maidstonians.

The 2022-23 academic year is well under way and has seen significant developments already. The new floor to the Ron McCormick pavilion was completed in September and now houses six new classrooms for the Modern Foreign Languages Department. Both the students and staff have been delighted with the new premises, and it is hoped that they will add to the raising of the profile of the subject. This new project attracted interest from one Old Maidstonian in particular, and so I thank him on behalf of the School for his support.

In addition to the pavilion expansion, we are now looking at two projects: to refurbish the school lecture theatre and to convert classrooms above the War Memorial Library into additional sixth form study space. For those of you who remember, the lecture theatre was built back in the 1980s and has witnessed a lot of wear and tear from numerous Maidstonians; and as for the classrooms above the library, they need a complete overhaul to bring them to a point of being fit for purpose. We hope that both projects will be completed by Easter next year.

At both the Lower School Speech Day in July, and at the Upper School Speech Day in September, we wanted to acknowledge 30 years of girls being at MGS. Graham Walker has already written about the inspiring talks which were given by former female members of the MGS community.

As also mentioned, MGS and the Old Maidstonian Society are in the process of relaunching the OM Mentoring Scheme (Inform & Inspire). The membership of the Old Maidstonian Society has a wealth of experience and expertise that can and should be shared with current students. Thanks to Graham Walker, the current president of the OM Society, we are very soon going to be in a position to relaunch the initiative of former students supporting current students with their career aspirations. I also wish to thank the membership for its support, as well as the original promoter of the scheme, OM **Peter Weaver**.

Mark Tomkins

Headmaster

### **MGS and OMS EVENTS**

Carol Concert is Wednesday 14 December at 7pm at All Saints Church.

If necessary, the school can be contacted on 01622 752101, or by e-mail at [school@mgs.kent.sch.uk](mailto:school@mgs.kent.sch.uk)

### **Maidstone: United in Football – Director's Cut**

**John Bunyard (1965 to 1972)** says that he must be a wicked man, judging by how little peace he's getting in retirement. He spent two years working solidly on the '*Maidstone: United in Football*' exhibition at the Museum that ran for four months in 2019 to 20220, attracting over 20,000 visitors and extraordinary media coverage. As soon as it was over, he was invited into talks about setting up a permanent Kent sport museum, but they were halted by Covid. Now that relative normality has returned, however, he's back in action again.

As from 5 November, Maidstone Museum Friends are running a sequel to that landmark exhibition at their pop-up shop in Fremlin Walk. John was persuaded to curate the new show by a particular factor: a wish to set right his one great disappointment of the original exhibition. 'I put together a huge number of exhibits,' he says, 'but the Museum told me I'd have to cut the content by nearly half. It broke my heart to see so many great stories on the cutting-room floor. When the Friends offered me the chance to give the pick of them a good airing, I couldn't say no.' All of which explains why the new show is called *Maidstone: United in Football – Director's Cut*.



Fortunately, John is an old friend of Ben McGannan, who owns the collection of Stones memorabilia put together by former chairman Jim Thompson between 1971 and 1992. Mr McGannan gave him free access, and he has pulled out several dozen objects with interesting stories attached to them. 'One of the Friends' objectives is to get visitors coming back from time to time, so we'll be progressively refreshing it. In particular, I'm creating a series of centrepiece displays in chart form that will each major on a different facet of Maidstone footballing history. I think I can promise some good chewy material.'

Interestingly, the first of these displays concerns the legacy of the original show, which already looks more impressive than anyone might have imagined. It spawned a similar major exhibition at Reading, and a centenary book at Watford that was also accompanied by an exhibition. Football historians from those two clubs joined John to set up *The Great Save*, a campaign to preserve the nation's football memorabilia for posterity and use them for



education and entertainment. This in turn has already led to an antipodean *The Great Save* being launched, which plans, among other things, to run a display on Maidstone's footballing links with Australia. Most impressively, *The Great Save* catalysed the opening of a national football library at Sheffield this year.

Even John is amazed how fast things have moved on, especially given the malign effects of war and pestilence. 'When the Museum asked me to do a talk three years ago, I chose as my theme *Kent: A Cradle of World Sport*. While I was doing the research for it, I was astonished at how much of today's world sport has roots in Kent – so much so, in fact, that I even built a web page about it. It's funny that our hometown now looks like becoming a pioneer in sporting heritage, too.'

*The Maidstone Museum Friends shop in Fremlin Walk is open from 10:00 to 15:00 every Friday and Saturday. Admission is free.*

### [Musings from the Penthouse](#)

How the world has changed since my last musings: we have had UK summer temperatures soar as never before, the verge of world nuclear war and annihilation as close as ever before, and we have lost a Queen whose reign was of a quality not seen previously, and the like of which may never be seen again.

The heat of summer is nothing new; I have referred to the 'Great Stink' in past articles of Musings. However, in September 1899 the *Illustrated London News* reported that due to the weather,

'Miss Edith Armitage, a respectable-looking woman, was struck with the strange hallucination that Lisson Grove, Marylebone, was the Garden of Eden, and at midnight, a policeman found her in a state of attire closely resembling that worn by her famous ancestress, tranquilly promenading between lamp posts, which she evidently mistook for trees. It was a delightfully cool costume, but at the same time she carried her other garments under her arm. The constable suggested that she should utilise them in the ordinary way, but Miss Armitage declined on account of the heat. Thereupon the discreet and modest officer proceeded to robe the lady with the skill of a fashionable costumier, to the admiration of a large crowd, who rewarded his deftness in adjusting the hooks and eyes with unstinted applause. So completely did the policeman discharge the duties of lady's maid that Miss Armitage was able to appear before the Marylebone magistrate just as she left his hands. His Worship bound her over to keep the peace for three months!'

The paper did have an illustration, drawn in a strict Victorian manner, of the young lady and her captor but I won't concern my readers with it. Imagination is always better than fact! I feel that I should highlight the artistic wording of the article which many reporters of today's press could learn from. For my younger readers (I do hope that some younger OM's read my *Musings*), I would explain that very small hooks on the underwear of a lady's undergarments were fitted into small stitched or metal eyes.



In relation to the war reference one would think that the Russian leadership today would have learnt from the original Crimean War when some 12,000 of their men died against about 2,500 British and 1,700 French soldiers. The Russians lost mainly due to the temerity and dogged determination of the Allied ground troops (infantry). Does this ring a bell about the stoic Ukrainian soldiers? Perhaps Mr. Putin and his advisors should get out the history books and think

twice about their situation now, and before invading a sovereign country ever again. It seems an horrendous thought that whilst thousands of soldiers died in the Crimean war, now the whole of the world's population is at risk by the selfish intentions of basically one man.

And now to the loss of Queen Elizabeth II. As far as I have been able to ascertain, she only visited the County Town on two occasions, one of which was when she boarded a train at Maidstone East station having opened a new building in the Royal British Legion village at Aylesford. It is Maidstone's great loss that there was never any real opportunity for her to be made aware of the town's environment.



In the Easter edition of *The Maidstonian*, 1901, came the report of Queen Victoria's death, with pages edged in black, and I quote from that edition:

'As the Headmaster (The Revd C G Duffield) said in making the formal announcement to the School on the morning of January 23rd, to speak of Her greatness and goodness, is almost an impertinence. But when we reflect on the meritorious example of such a life as Queen Victoria's, we shall feel, as time goes on, that to have lived in Her reign and experienced Her beneficent dominion, was in itself an inestimable privilege, while the memory of Her surpassing virtues will live and flourish for all time.'

May I suggest that those words can more than easily be applied to Queen Elizabeth II? The Headmaster went on to say that he prayed that those characteristics would be embodied in Britons for the coming century. I also pray that somehow humankind will learn to live in harmony not just with person to person. but also with Nature.



At the invitation of the Mayor, the whole school was invited to attend All Saints' Church for the Mayoral and Corporation's service on the day of Queen Victoria's funeral: a memorable occasion for many of those who attended. The school also subscribed for a wreath which was deposited on the pedestal of the queen's statue at the top of High Street. The wreaths were left in place for the one-week period of mourning.

A flash of memory has just come to me (quite a rarity) – when I was attending MGS the monument had a water drinking trough for animals near the base of the plinth as well as the working drinking fountains, one of which can be seen in the photograph. The latter are now for aesthetic purposes only. There are also four decorative cast-iron lamp standards, one on each of the four projecting buttresses. The statue is a Grade 2 listed monument, as are many of the buildings in the immediate locale.

I am sure that there was something else that has changed since my last writing. Oh, I remember now – three Prime Ministers, but the less said about that the better, so perhaps a quick return to an old favourite...

## Old Maidstrivia

### 1932

- A short-lived magazine as a sister to *The Maidstonian* was published: *The Occasional*, with original contributions from pupils and recent OM's. There are a few copies still in the Archives I believe.
- The Fives Court and the Scout Hut were built, possibly whilst the 35 scouts attended the Kent County Scout Jamboree, which was held in Mote Park. I wonder how many took the newly-introduced Mars Bar with them.

- Praefects had gold braids added to their velvet caps. As an aside: by the 1960s praefects did not wear any caps but were noted by their own special ties.

### 1933

- Scouting was removed from the curriculum and made a purely voluntary activity. Probably some previous scouts played the newly-invented game of *Monopoly* instead.

### 1934

- The cross-country course was changed to include two water jumps.
- 60 Boys visited Portsmouth at the invitation of OM Admiral Laurence DSO, viewing the submarines of which he was in charge, and also HMS Victory.
- The summer OTC camp had to be cancelled due to the local epidemic of mumps.

Wishing you all well during the coming months and, of course, a very Happy Christmas.

*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 Lord Beechings in Aberystwyth



During a recent visit to Aberystwyth, **Brian White** was stuck by the ironic location of the 'Lord Beechings' pub right opposite the railway station, from where the line to South Wales was axed following the famous report by our fellow OM, **Richard Beeching**. This resulted in travel remaining difficult and slow in that part of Wales.

**Jeff Wilkinson**, our intrepid researcher, has found some interesting facts about the Beeching family, which may be of interest to our readers. Richard Beeching himself is well-documented on the Internet, but his family roots are less well-known. Richard's great-grandfather, William, was a master cordwainer and shoemaker in Maidstone. Both he and his brother were staunch Wesleyan

Methodists and officers of Union Street Methodist Church, Maidstone, where they were preachers for 50 years. A plaque in the church commemorates their faithful service.

Richard's grandfather, Josiah, was editor and proprietor of the *Kent Times and Chronicle*, which was published in Maidstone every Tuesday and Saturday. He and his wife Eliza (née Gascoigne) had seven children, two of whom, Hubert and Cecil, worked as cub reporters on his newspaper and steadily worked their way up to senior positions in the local press. After completing his training, Hubert worked for the *Maidstone and Kentish Journal* and the *Kent County Standard* in Tonbridge, and the *Croydon Advertiser*, and afterwards was appointed acting editor and chief



reporter of the *Sheerness Guardian* (forerunner of today's *Sheerness Times Guardian*, part of the KM Group).

During 11 years in Sheerness, Hubert married Annie Twigg, a local schoolmistress, and covered many WW1 incidents, including the arrest of a naval spy (whom he spotted boarding a train at Sheerness station), Zeppelin air raids, and the Battle of the Falkland Islands, based on a log of the action given to him by a warrant officer from one of the cruisers involved.

In 1916, Hubert and Annie and their four sons - Geoffrey, three-year-old Richard, Kenneth and Ivan - moved to 100 King Edward Road, Maidstone; Hubert was returning to his parents' home town to become chief reporter on the *South Eastern Gazette*, where for the next 20 years he covered major news in the area, including the construction of the Boxley Hill water reservoir, descending the gigantic wells from which more than 15 million gallons a day would be extracted. Hubert completed his career as a sub-editor on the *Kent Messenger* from 1937 until 1945 and died in 1956, aged 78.

**Graham Walker** says that **Kenneth Roy Beeching** MA (Cantab) was one of the 72 MGS students who died serving the country during WW2.

### [Inform & Inspire: New look Mentoring at MGS](#)

MGS is keen to set up a mentoring scheme, whereby the experience of OM's can help inform and inspire current MGS students *via* careers talks, careers mentoring, sharing employment experiences, further education experiences, etc. If you are interested in participating in such a scheme, please complete the form HERE: [\(OMS Inform & Inspire Form\)](#).

The questions with a red '\*' are required to be answered and will give you further options depending on the choices you make. All other questions are optional but the more information you give, like A Level/International Baccalaureate results, the more MGS can help to inform the students of subject choices for 'A' Level and beyond.

The information which you give will be shared between the OMS and MGS. It will not be passed either by MGS or the OMS to any other third party or organisation. This includes all existing information that we have collected in previous years before COVID postponed the scheme until now.

All details are treated in the strictest confidence. Contact details are not published but will be used by MGS and OMS if you agree to be part of the mentoring scheme.

### [The progress of the Duke of Edinburgh Award at Maidstone Grammar School](#)

Over the last few years Maidstone Grammar School has been delighted to witness a significant increase in the numbers of students wanting to take part in the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. While much has been achieved by young people in those years, particularly those who have successfully carried out volunteering projects online or taken part in expeditions modified for Covid restrictions, completion rates were still not quite what we would have hoped for out of such large cohorts. We also reintroduced the Gold Award several years ago, but despite initially enrolling many keen candidates, only a very small number of students were completing their Gold Award while still in school. We have been eager to change this for some time, but were hampered by the pandemic. Finally, last academic year a new model was finally introduced, which will allow students to progress through all three levels, with the hope that more will be motivated to finish their Bronze Award, and a higher number of Gold participants will complete their Award before the end of year 13.

In order to achieve this vision, we adapted our enrolment programme so that the Bronze Award would be completed in year 9, the Silver Award in year 10, and the Gold Award completed during years 11, 12 and 13. Therefore, during a very busy academic year 2021 to 2022, we had two Bronze cohorts; the usual sign-up for year 10, and an additional sign-up



for year 9 - a total of 161 students. In addition to this, we enrolled our first Silver cohort for many years. Though the group was very small, their achievement was great and they proved to be an excellent trial group as they braved sub-zero temperatures in the Ashdown Forest and some heavy downpours in the New Forest! After a tiring year we are very proud that, as of the start of September, over half of these participants successfully completed their Bronze Award and have recently been invited to sign up for Silver. We are hopeful for a larger intake as a result of this.

To run our expeditions, we work in partnership with KCC DofE, who have a team of well-qualified supervisors and assessors. There are also a number of school staff who volunteer to facilitate these events and have played an important pastoral role. The Bronze training, practice and assessed expeditions take place locally in Kent, and the Silver expeditions slightly further afield and with the added challenge of navigating woodland paths. Gold participants still currently organise their own expeditions with an external provider, but next academic year when we have enough students wanting to progress to Gold from Silver, it will hopefully be possible to organise a school event with KCC to Wales. Such participants who did successfully organise and complete their own Gold awards this year are four Old Maidstonians: Ethan Bowley, Joe Crawford, Rachel Hoe and Shivam Patel. We congratulate them on their excellent achievement as they await their invitations to Buckingham Palace to formally be recognised by HRH Prince Edward.

If you would like to support Maidstonians in completing their awards, we are often in need of suggestions for volunteering opportunities in the local community. Please do contact the school for the attention of Miss Alloy and Miss Adams if you think you can help.

### Gaudeamus

An enquiry from **David Mason** about the words and sheet music for the MGS school song has prompted a small flurry of activity. As a result of this, both words and music, and a mp3 recording, will be available on the OMS website. Here is some more information, and a translation.

The school song was written in 1908 by the Headmaster, The Revd C G Duffield, with music by Dr Henry F Henniker and the words were first published in *The Maidstonian* in December 1908. Most OMs may be unaware that there are more verses than the two which are traditionally sung, but when the *Journal* was first printed in its present form in the early 1920s, these were the only two verses chosen and the tradition carried on with each reprint.

*Scholam concinamus nostram  
Maidstonensi urbe impostam,  
Rege Eduardo, ante hos tam  
Longos annos conditam.*

1

Let us sing together of our school,  
situated in the town of Maidstone,  
and founded in the reign of King  
Edward, so many long years ago.

***Maidstonenses gaudeamus  
Laudibus et efferamus  
Scholam nostram, quae oramus  
Sempiterna floreat.***

**Chorus**

**Maidstonians, let us rejoice and  
with praises let us lift up our  
School, which we pray may flourish  
for ever.**

*Musa vocat nos ad montem  
Qua doctrinae celat fontem  
Persequamur ut insontem  
Virtus vitam decoret.*

2

The muse calls us to the mountain  
where she conceals a fountain of  
knowledge. Let us follow, that  
virtue may adorn a life free from guilt.

**Maidstonenses gaudeamus...**

**Chorus**

**Maidstonians, let us rejoice...**

*Indies campum petamus;  
Pilae, folli, studeamus,  
Robur mentis ut colamus  
Cum robusto corpore.*

3

Every day let us seek the field;  
let us attend to ball and leather, so  
that we may cultivate strength of  
mind with a strong body.

<b>Maidstonenses gaudeamus...</b>	<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Maidstonians, let us rejoice...</b>
<i>Sic legendo, ediscendo Sic jubentibus parendo, Diligenter et ludendo Fit Juventus cultior.</i>	4	Thus, by reading, and by studying, by obeying those who give orders, and by playing diligently, the young are made more cultivated.
<b>Maidstonenses gaudeamus...</b>	<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Maidstonians, let us rejoice...</b>
<i>Forsan olim meminisse Nos juvabit, et vixisse Dignos illis quos fuisse Gloriamur socios.</i>	5	Perhaps one day it will be pleasant for us to remember, and to have lived worthy of those men whom we boast were our comrades.
<b>Maidstonenses gaudeamus...</b>	<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Maidstonians, let us rejoice...</b>
<i>Apud Indos quot caletis, Juxta Boream quot frigetis, Universi extolletis Domus vestrae gloriam.</i>	6	However much you burn in the Indies; however much you freeze in the North, together you will extol the glory of your foundation.
<b>Maidstonenses gaudeamus...</b>	<b>Chorus</b>	<b>Maidstonians, let us rejoice...</b>

For those who are not aware of the fact, the standard work of reference on music at MGS is *Gaudeamus*, by James Clinch this contains a great deal of information about Henniker, who was a musician of some significance, having been a personal friend of Sir Arthur Sullivan. As he died in 1931 (at the age of 92), the school song is well and truly out of copyright!

### [The consolations of bridge](#)

When **John Bunyard (1965 to 1972)** was in the Fifth Form, the School's cheery chess captain, Steve Edwards, advised him to also take up bridge. 'You'll love it!' he said; so John promised he would – and so he did, 45 years later. Examinations, work, marriage, and running a business had always got in the way. It was only when illness forced early semi-retirement that John got his act together.

Since it's now a twice-weekly treat (Tuesdays at Little Chart, Thursdays at Lenham), John can only regret his tardiness. More gallingly, the twin prejudices which he always harboured – that it would be fiendishly difficult, and that bridge players would be frightfully serious – have proved rather silly.

John says that anyone wanting to play bridge socially, as opposed to professionally, can pick up the basics surprisingly quickly. Although it might take years to perfect your skills, it's possible to acquit yourself among seasoned players in no time, provided you're prepared to invest in a teach-yourself book or even better – as John did – a handful of lessons.

Apparently, you do meet bridge players who take it very seriously, but the vast majority regard it as easy-going entertainment. Though most players are over fifty, bridge is genuinely unisex, and players come from a remarkable variety of backgrounds, from farmhands to finance directors, mechanics to musicians. All are united by a desire to socialise around a card table instead of a coffee table.

As bridge is a two-person team game, every player needs a partner. This might appear to be a difficulty, but clubs are particularly adept at pairing up newbies, or finding partners for players whose regular partner is away. John met his partner at the first trial game arranged for his benefit, and they have stuck together ever since. It's certainly a tidy way of bringing a solid new friendship into your life.

Beyond camaraderie, there's the added dimension of friendly competition being provided by this ingeniously designed game, which is an addictive test of skill and luck. That rare blend accounts for much of the game's enduring appeal. Whether you think of it as an excellent

Bridge has its origins in whist, going back half a millennium. Its one slight disadvantage compared with, say, chess is that there are different rules around the world. The form which John plays called Acol – which ultimately got its name from the village of Acol in Thanet – is pretty well standard across Britain.

## A bridge hand that delivered a real-life grand slam.

## The Grammar School – my moulding

## Scouts



I was first put into the Hawk Patrol, and the leader of our troop was the one I grew most to respect. He was J Allan Blake, a Quaker and bachelor whose dedication was outstanding. He was also my form master in year 2, and my maths master for several years. He was a very neat and precise person. On his desk in the classroom everything





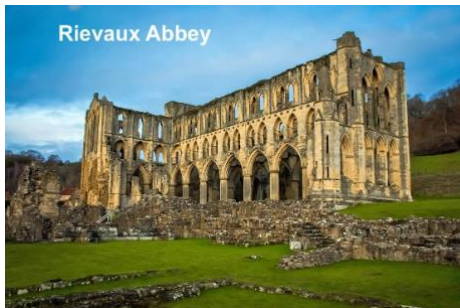
As well as the normal Scouting activities and passing of tests to get badges, we went on great annual camps in distant parts of the country, brilliantly organised by the same dedicated Scoutmasters, and later, with the Senior Scouts, challenging expeditions.

My first camp, and the first time I had gone on holiday not with or to family, was to the North Yorkshire moors, to a small village called Sleightholmedale. The journeys in those days

were mainly by train. Before the Beeching cuts of the 1960s the British rail network reached into the most remote corners of the country. Once across London we boarded the night express to York from Kings Cross Station. Our compartments were reserved, and the 'Reserved' stickers on the windows were prized souvenirs. At York we got on a local train up the Vale of Pickering to the village of Kirkby Moorside and then finished by walking the five miles to the farm where we camped. All our heavy gear was taken by lorry, with a couple of the seniors on board.



I have mixed memories of that camp. Only a week before, our family had been visiting the Festival of Britain on the banks of the Thames. Mum had to be taken by ambulance from the Festival of Britain site to St Thomas's Hospital. Her stomach ulcer had started bleeding



which caused a minor panic. It was a thrill to drive in a Daimler ambulance with the bell ringing, but the circumstances could have been better. I nearly didn't go to camp, but Mum insisted. A highlight I recall was a hike across the moors to see the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey.

The second year, **1952**, was a great thrill for me as we went to North Wales, camping in a valley about six miles from Harlech Castle. Again, a great overnight train, including threading through the mountains of mid-Wales through a station called Ruabon, and then up the coast across long bridges over river estuaries, particularly that of the Dovey at Aberdovey, which I would not see again till 2007. We detrained at the local station, Llanbedr, and were trucked to the campsite five miles up the valley. We were all loaded on the back: no seats, no belts, no accidents!

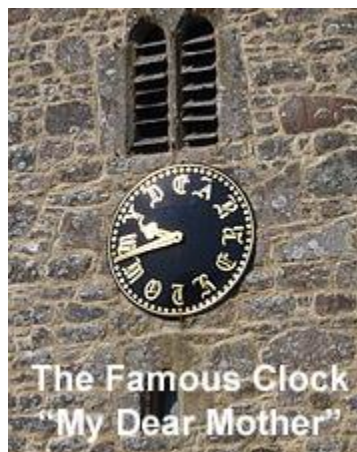


The campsite was next to the river Artro, a typical fast-flowing mountain stream. We climbed the two mountains nearby, Rhinog Vach and Rhinog Fawr, and went on a great day's hike to Harlech across the mountains. We stormed the castle ramparts, then set out to the seaside across a golf course, the Royal St David's course which I would be thrilled to play in 2007.



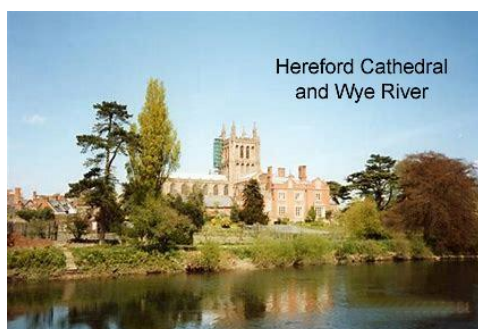
One memory is of being on morning milk duty which involved going to the farm dairy with a large pail each and having them filled with foaming warm milk literally straight from the udder.

No pasteurisation or homogenisation, and the only milk I really enjoyed drinking. The only problem was trying to communicate with the farmer and his wife, who spoke little English.



The next year, **1953**, it was off to Dartmoor and the little village of Buckland-in-the-Moor near Ashburton, right on the edge of the moor. Outstanding memories include the wasp-killing contest between my fellow patrol members in which four of us got to more than 300 each without one sting. The wasps still seemed to reproduce faster than we could kill them. The clock on the tower of the delightful small church in the village had as its numbers the words "My Dear Mother" round the dial in memory of a previous squire's dear mother. There was also a pretty carillon which greeted the hour.

I went on an overnight 1<sup>st</sup> Class Badge hike with Alan Knell. We climbed several tors, came across the remains of Stone Age huts in a hill village, visited the village of Widdecombe, home to the fair immortalised in the Tom Pearse song, and camped in a farmer's garden, to be given a jar of Devon clotted cream to go with breakfast by the farmer's wife. She bears the responsibility for my lifelong serious addiction to the delightful substance.



My last junior camp was in **1954** at How Caple in the Wye Valley, upstream from Hereford. It was by comparison with the previous ones quite placid and unmemorable. We did visit the 'cute' Hereford Cathedral, and I was to see the area two years later from the river itself. I was Patrol Leader for this last year.



To be continued...

## News of Old Maidstonian

**Les Broad (1962 to 1969)** wrote as follows:

'Back in July I was at the School to drop off a couple of hundred more books for the Library; it was a remarkably well-organised visit, including being able to take the car very close to the Library building. A cart and a chap to pull it were laid on, which I thought was a nice thing to do for an old relic from the sixties with a clapped-out back.'

Les then went on to relate the details of a storytelling event with which he was involved near to his home in Wales. After delays necessitated by the Queen's funeral, a Prestatyn-based writing group to which he belongs, sourced a small group of actors from Rhyl's Little Theatre, who, they reasoned, would be better than the writers at presenting their own work. They lost one of the four actors, but the other three rose to the challenge rather well. There was much applause and even some sharp intakes of breath at some of the tales that were told. To a great extent it was an experimental event, to gauge public reaction and the writers learned a lot; in addition, a modest profit was donated to some local charities. Les thinks that the next event, in Spring 2023, will be bigger and better, and plans are being hatched to record some of the scarier stories and release the recordings for sale. Les wonders whether there is an OM somewhere who knows his or her way around marketing recordings, by using the technological means which are currently available. If anyone can offer advice to Les, they can contact him through [oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk](mailto:oms@oldmaidstonians.org.uk)

**Steve Pearl** won a voucher in the raffle at the Annual Supper, which enabled him to take his wife and 12-year-old daughter (who is an accomplished rider) to the Season Finale fixture at Epsom Downs Racecourse. As expected, his daughter Amy loved seeing so many beautiful horses, and the family all really enjoyed the day

Here is Amy watching a race, but probably also wishing that she was riding in it!



Sadly, Steve had no big wins on outsiders, but he much appreciated the fact that **Robbie Ferguson**, the Deputy Headmaster donated the tickets as a raffle prize. This was in addition to Robbie's amazing fund-raising effort in the London Marathon for Racing Welfare, the charity that supported his sister after she recovered from life altering brain injuries following an accident while racing as a flat jockey.

**John Pitcher** (1959 to 1967) says that he joined the OMS last year, and reconnecting with an old MGS friend, Chris Jones, whom he was lucky to find in the membership list, he started digging into his box of 'English Nostalgia', having lived in Canada since 1970. In the box were his old MGS *Journals* and a number of issues of *The Maidstonian*. One article in the January 1965 issue, the *Blue Cap Letter*, caught his attention. He thought that it would amuse any graduates of the Blue Cap *alma mater* so he has sent us a copy. The article appeared in the 'Old Maidstonian Section', which typically contained letters from MGS graduates now attending universities. This one, for instance, appeared alongside the Oxford Letter.

Blue Cap was a canning factory, and a popular place for students to get a decent-paying summer job. John worked there for two or three summers while attending East Anglia University undertaking the gruelling night shift, from 20:00 to 08:00, which was mostly run by students, alongside a few regular workers, including the officious green-cap supervisors. Peas were the main product at that time of year, so the white issued overalls were also typically green.

One night shift there stands out in John's memory: it was the night of the moon landing in 1969. 'It was a clear moonlit night. All was quiet out in the yard after the fork lift had gone

by. I remember gazing up at moon, transfixed in thoughts of awe and wonder. For a few moments the hopper full of peas awaiting my attention had to wait.'

The *Blue Cap Letter* has been made available on the OMS website.

### Obituaries

#### **The society offers its condolences to the families and friends of all of those Old Maidstonians who have died recently**



We are grateful to **David Ecroyd Cutforth's** family for providing this biographical information.

David died on 8th April 2022 at the age of 98; he was a widely-respected classical conductor and teacher, and a much-loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. In his final years, David distilled his remarkable life and career into a memoir entitled *Music, Mountains and Memories*. Those first two Ms were undoubtedly David's passions in life, and where he chose to dedicate much of his time.

The second child of Alizon (née Ecroyd) and Sir Arthur Cutforth, David was born on 31st May 1923 in Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire, where he spent the first six years of his life. He grew up in Hertfordshire and Essex with his sister and two brothers, before being sent to boarding school in 1930. Unlike many of his generation, David was lucky enough to spend the Second World War years at university, rather than being called up to serve, owing to his status as a scientist and his extremely poor eyesight. He gained a degree in Natural Sciences from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and later a first-class BMus from the Royal Academy of Music. Following graduation from the Royal Academy, his first professional appointment was as Director of Music at Strathallan School near Perth in Scotland, a boarding school with around 200 pupils. During his time at the school, he developed the music department a great deal, establishing a chapel choir, choral society, and staging *HMS Pinafore* and *The Mikado*.

David was then appointed Director of Music at MGS, where music already played a central role in the ethos of the school, allowing David to deploy his talents and those of the students and staff to the full. This included the recruitment of many leading and promising soloists who regularly performed alongside students and staff. Particular highlights included the annual Choral Society concerts, with performances of the *St Matthew Passion* (1957), *Messiah* (1959), *The Creation* (1962) and the *B Minor Mass* (1968). (His school dates were given incorrectly in the Summer edition, and we can confirm that he was a member of staff between 1954 and 1968.)

During his time in Kent David also played a lead role in the formation of the Maidstone Opera Group, including several performances of Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte* in 1959. This was a hugely collaborative venture, not just because of the artistic demands, but also due to the complex logistics involved in staging such a large and much-loved opera in the town. Feedback was universally positive, including this from Michael Tillet, future Director of Music at Rugby School, who said: 'The first production of the newly formed Maidstone Opera Group gave cause for rejoicing - Kent should take pride in this new venture.'

David's next career move in 1970 took him to North East Essex Technical College in Colchester, initially as a music lecturer, and later as deputy head of department. During his time in Colchester, he taught many students preparing for careers in teaching and on the BA (Hons) Music degree. He also took charge of the college orchestra for several years as well as staging annual opera productions involving college students and talented musicians from the surrounding area. Performances included *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Così Fan Tutte*



(again!), *The Consul* and *The Telephone* (Menotti), *Sir John in Love* (Vaughan Williams), *The Bartered Bride* (Smetana) and *Gianni Schicchi* (Puccini).

Following the retirement of the head of department, the opportunity for promotion presented itself, an opportunity David decided to forego, partly because, at his own admission, he would have found it difficult to lead the introduction of more progressive forms of music (electronic, pop, etc.) which were emerging at the time. This was a decision that he never regretted. David retired completely in 1987.

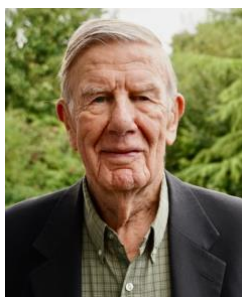
The Lake District was a hugely significant place for David; he spent many happy summers there from early childhood. It was here that he discovered his lifelong passion for mountaineering; in addition to reaching many peaks in the Lakes, he later conquered the Matterhorn in Switzerland and Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak. During the 1970s, he enjoyed several walking holidays in the UK with his sons Nicholas and Christopher, including The Pennine Way, Offa's Dyke and the Coast to Coast Walk.

David and his wife, Margaret, raised three children, Nicholas, Sonya and Christopher, and after Margaret died in 2011, David spent his final years enjoying the pleasures of reading, music and watching sports, and spending time with his eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



**Ron Dillon**, who was frequent contributor to this newsletter, died on 22 October. At school, he was called 'Matt' after a character in the American television series, *Gunsmoke*. This turned out to be an appropriate nickname, as Matt Dillon was a US Marshall, and Ron became a policeman himself.

Ron lived in Hawkhurst, and his funeral took place on 21 November.



**Colin Honey** died on 26 July 2022, just short of his 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. He and his wife Gill moved to Rowledge in the early 1980s, shortly before he retired from a long and successful career in the Prison Service. They were deeply involved with the church, where he was a church warden, and with many village activities. He served on the parish council and was heavily involved in Farnham Rotary. He undertook much charitable work, and in recognition of this, he was made an MBE in 2007.

**John Sayer** died peacefully in Oxford on 10th August, two days after his 91st birthday. His brothers, **Derek** and **David**, also attended MGS.

**The Revd Canon Alan Watson** attended MGS in the 1940s, and subsequently became Rector of Allington parish, where he remained for 30 years. He retired to the West Country, and died there on 31 October, at the age of 88.

### [‘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 OM's 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!