

Bricks & Stones

The Newsletter of Maidstone Grammar School's Alumni and Development Office

Issue 1

July 2017

A Little Bit of History

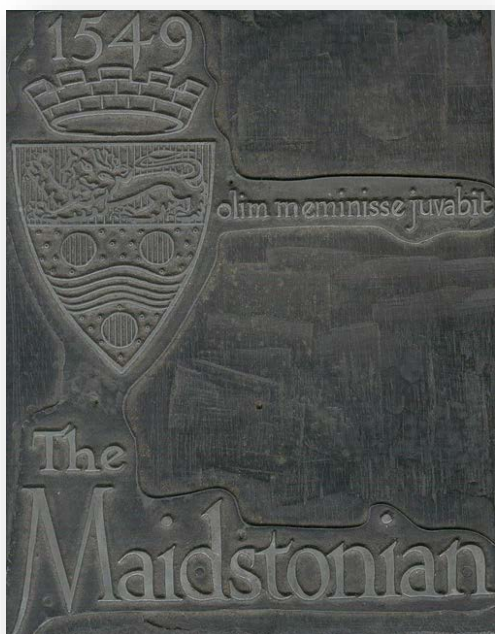
When Maidstone Grammar School needed to expand in the late 1920s, George Foster Clark, a local businessman, donated the land on which the School now stands. Many of you will not realise that several iconic parts of MGS, including the pavilion and the beautiful stained-glass windows in the hall, are there solely because of previous fundraising efforts by staff, parents and OMs.

But even before then, in 1871, when MGS moved from Corpus Christi Hall to a site in Tonbridge Road, parents, OMs and 'local worthies' raised a huge amount of money (over £1,500!*) enabling a brand new, state-of-the-art school to be built. Some thirty years later, a new 'chemical laboratory' and gymnasium were added, again through generous donations.

These generous individuals were instrumental in helping our school become what it is today. They are, and will always be, part of our history. We hope that you will be the next generation to become part of that history.

If you have any ideas as to how we can now shape our future, or would like to be involved, please do contact us. We would love to hear from you.

*About £850,000 relative to average wages and £2.5m comparing to a share of GDP



An original printing block for the School magazine c. 1952



Olim Meminisse Juvabit

Looking at old editions of *The Maidstonian*, dating back to 1884, it is a pleasure reading about the lives of students after they have left school.

The sporting achievements, graduations, jobs, promotions, marriages and deaths of Old Maidstonians are all faithfully recorded for posterity. The many sad obituaries of the 'boys' who gave their lives in both World Wars are beautifully written and lament the loss of such young men but many are also uplifting, heart-warming and a celebration of their short lives.

There are also proud birth announcements, as OMs go on have their own children, many of whom then follow in their father's, grandfather's and, in some cases, even, great-grandfather's footsteps by becoming pupils at MGS.

The Maidstonian gives a fascinating insight into the life and times of our 'old boys'. Before the 1980s, 'old girls' did not exist although, contrary to popular belief, there were female teachers even before WWI. We know that for our leavers, the words 'Olim Meminisse Juvabit' really are true.

Stay in Touch! is our new initiative. Read all about it on the next page.

"Once a Maidstonian, always a Maidstonian"

Stay in touch!

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Stay in Touch!

We know that once our students leave MGS, most go on to university, they secure jobs, form new relationships and lead full and busy lives - and that is exactly how it should be. A number do stay in contact but, over the years, we have lost touch with far too many of our OMs.

This is a great shame, as we genuinely enjoy hearing about their chosen career paths, sharing their news and celebrating their successes. We would encourage all leavers to remain members of the Old Maidstonian Society and stay in touch.

Most 6th form leavers become members of the OMS on their last day at MGS (unless they opt out) but not all realise the benefits of that membership.

Ex-staff and other leavers (once over 18 years of age) are, of course, eligible to become members and can do so by getting in touch with either MGS or OMS.

We may have lost contact with some of you over the years but are determined not to let this happen again. We will be giving all leavers a card with our contact details on it, as a reminder to stay in touch and that "Once a Maidstonian, always a Maidstonian".

We hope you come back to visit us whenever you can and let us know how you are getting on, even if it's only at Christmas!

If you are an Old Maidstonian and would like a 'Stay in Touch' card, contact developmentoffice@mgs-kent.org.uk.

..Newsflash....Newsflash....News

Planning permission for the new pavilion was granted on Friday 14 July.

If you have not yet seen the large plans and elevations, which are available for viewing at School, please do look out for them when you are next visiting us.



Proposed front elevation

Read more about the pavilion, our plans for a 3G pitch and how you can help us to achieve our ambitious projects on the next couple of pages.

We will keep you up to date with any more news but if you have any questions, please to contact the development office.



The headmaster describes MGS as an extended family, so let's just see how far it extends!

Please tell us where you are now and, if possible, attach a photo, especially if you are wearing or using something either MGS or OMS related! We'll even put your photo in our next edition.

Sport and the Pavilion

Sport may have played a huge part in many of your lives and it continues to play a very important role for students at MGS today. Sport is known to bring academic, health and psychological benefits to young people; boosting confidence and well-being, building character and self-esteem, promoting self-discipline and developing teamworking skills.

We are all justifiably proud of our architectural heritage at MGS and recognise that the big hall, quad and pavilion remain etched in many Old Maidstonians' memories. Unfortunately, nothing lasts forever and even nostalgia cannot save the pavilion from the ravages of time.



Additionally, this will be a valuable resource for the local community and provide another income stream for MGS. The Development Fund is helping to fund this project but we shouldn't stop there.

Owing to financial constraints, our proposal is that the pavilion will initially be a single-storey building but the design allows for a second storey to be added in the future, giving us both flexibility and time. Watch this space!

The Development Fund will help provide MGS with the opportunity to become an even finer school, offering superb facilities to our students, staff, OMs and the local community.

Thank you to our fabulous donors!

Regular donations are an ideal way to save for the future and these have already helped enable us to apply for a loan to build the new pavilion. We cannot thank our donors enough for their incredible generosity, which will allow us to get the pavilion project both off the drawing board and off the ground!

The new pavilion will provide modern facilities for our students, helping them to enjoy sport and develop as sportsmen.

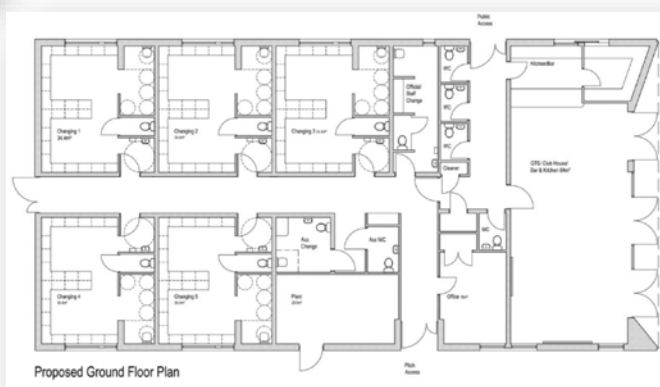
It will also give visitors and spectators a place to gather for a cup of tea and shelter from the rain whilst watching the match!



Architect's impression and proposed floor plan (below) of the new pavilion

Sadly, the pavilion, the construction of which was funded by Old Maidstonians back in the 1930s, is now beyond economic repair and we need to look at replacing it in the immediate future.

A site for the new pavilion has already been identified and, alongside a new building, we are wanting to include a full-size 3G all-weather sports pitch, suitable for rugby and football. The advantages of this type of artificial surface will be obvious to those of you who remember matches being rained off because of soggy, waterlogged pitches or going home with a bag full of muddy sports kit. Hopefully both these experiences will become just a distant memory!



Thinking of becoming a donor?

If you would like to become one of our wonderful donors and contribute towards our new pavilion, please look at the information on the next page or call the alumni and development office. Every donation is important and even small amounts build up surprisingly quickly. Each and every penny really does count.

With so many resources being provided by volunteers and MGS (premises, services, IT, etc.), our administrative costs are kept to an absolute minimum. This means that almost every penny you donate will go directly towards our projects. At the moment, it's almost 98p in every pound!

How it Works



MGS's state-of-the-art physics laboratory c1871

The idea of an MGS Development Fund was conceived by the headmaster, Mark Tomkins, who had seen one working very successfully at his previous school.

Basically, all monies donated and raised will go into a 'pot' that is specifically for use on capital projects. A capital project is just one that is a long-term investment requiring a large sum of money to acquire, develop, improve or maintain a capital asset, such as a building. The first money out of the pot will go towards the new pavilion.

Being a charity allows us to claim Gift Aid on all qualifying gifts, meaning the pot increases by an additional 25p for every £1 you put into it. You will need to fill in a simple form for us but it's as easy as that.

Apart from charitable donations from Maidstone Grammar School's friends and family, we will also be looking at various methods of fundraising and other funding streams to help us achieve our ambitious goals. It is important to remember that every penny really does count. Whether your donation buys just one brick or the whole building, it will be greatly appreciated and put to good use. Please **get in touch** if you would like to help!

*" We shape our buildings;
thereafter they shape us"*

Winston Churchill

New Gift Aid declaration form

If you signed the old form, please don't worry! It is still valid. However, things have changed slightly and we do need to advise you that if the amount of Gift Aid claimed by ALL the charities to which you donate exceeds the amount of income or capital gains tax you pay, then you will have to pay the difference to HMRC. For example, if you pay £100 to 10 different charities (and have signed a Gift Aid declaration form for each one), they will each be able to claim £25 in Gift Aid. You must therefore have paid at least £250 in either income or capital gains tax. If you have only paid £200 in tax, you will have to pay £50 to HMRC.

We should also advise you that, although the School's bursary acts on our behalf, Gift Aid is actually being claimed by the Maidstone Grammar School Development Fund and not Maidstone Grammar School, as previously stated on the Gift Aid declaration form.

Ways to Donate

Regular donations

This is the most popular way of making a gift as donations can be made by monthly, quarterly or annually by standing order.

One-off donations

You may prefer to give a lump sum either as a one-off gift or just donate as and when suits you.

Payroll Giving

If your company operates the Payroll Giving scheme, you will be able to donate directly from your earnings or personal pension before income tax is deducted. We do not claim Gift Aid.

For further information, please do visit the following website www.hmrc.gov.uk/businesses/giving/payroll-giving.htm.

You may also like to check if your employer has a matched giving scheme.

Legacy Gifts

Please do remember that it is also possible to remember Maidstone Grammar School Development Fund in your will.

For further information on legacy donations, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/donating-to-charity/leaving-gifts-to-charity-in-your-will> or speak to your solicitor when making your will.

Other ways to get involved

You may think you have nothing to offer but if you have any skills (professional, technical and/or practical) and would be happy to help, even for just a couple of hours, please let us know. Just contact us on developmentoffice@mgs-kent.org.uk

Gift Aid

As a registered charity (No. 1158329), Maidstone Grammar School Development Fund is able to reclaim basic rate tax on your gift, if you pay either income or capital gains tax.

This means that **for every £1 you donate, we receive £1.25** and if you are a higher-rate taxpayer, you can claim extra relief on your donations.

Just request a Gift Aid declaration form from the alumni and development office.

See www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/giving/gift-aid.htm



MGS⁴ - The MGS Family

Maidstone Grammar School prides itself on its traditions, ethos and standards. It is a family where we all work together, in the best interests of the whole family.

Maidstone Grammar School Parents' Association actively fundraises for those items which are not capital projects but which would not normally be purchased from the School's budget – the niceties of life! The Association has recently purchased another minibus and lighting for the quad, and holds various events through the year, including the fireworks display and an annual quiz.

The **Old Maidstonian Society** plays a pivotal role in co-ordinating OMs once they leave MGS. It produces an excellent magazine three times a year, organises events and holds an annual supper. The Society also hosts reunions, which are a wonderful opportunity for OMs to come together, meet old friends and teachers, and reminisce about the 'good old days'!

The **Maidstone Grammar School Development Fund** is the newest member of the family and has come about out of necessity. The need to modernise and replace some of our buildings has required an imaginative and long-term approach to fundraising. Like Capability Brown and his trees, we are planning (rather than planting) for the next generation of students.

The Office – 2b or not 2b?

The alumni and development office's aim is to ensure that all members of the school community, past and present, staff and student, continue to feel an affiliation with MGS throughout their lives. This will involve strengthening and nurturing existing relationships, and establishing and building new ones, so that each and every individual feels a valued and valuable member of the MGS family.

It is also the home of the Maidstone Grammar School Development Fund, a registered charity (No. 1158329), which is helping to re-establish a culture of supporting Maidstone Grammar School through charitable donations. These will fund or help fund MGS's capital projects, primarily but not exclusively, new-build and refurbishment projects, for which funding would not normally be available from the local authority.

The office will also keep you up to date with any new ideas, events or items of interest and is here to help you get back in touch - and stay in touch!

And the title? We are currently working in room 2b but are hoping to move over the summer holidays. Watch this space!

“The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life. Rarely do members of one family grow up under the same roof “

Richard Bach



Maidstone
Grammar
School

