



O.M.A.

Newsletter No. 84 January 2018
President: Colin A R Cutler BSc FPRI
Website: www.oldmaidonians.org.uk



The Newsletter of the Old Maidonians' Association

OMA Committee News

Annual Dinner – 24th March 2017 Attendance of 90 was the highest for some years due to the presence of 21 new members who had left the school the previous year, thanks to the initiative of new Committee member, Bernadette Eaves. The Mayor of the Royal Borough, Cllr Sayonara Luxton, attended with her husband Ian Luxton, Mayor's Consort, and proposed the toast to Desborough College and to the Old Maidonians' Association. **Dr David Hight FREng FRS (1955/62)** was presented with the Wilfred Upson Prize (for bringing most honour to the College during the year) for being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in recognition of his status as a world expert and world leader in the field of geotechnical engineering. David was happy to donate the prize, a cheque for £100, to the OMA.

Changes of address/email address: Please remember to let us know if you change your address or email address. After each issue we lose contact with a number of our members, with Newsletters and emails being returned as undeliverable.

Overdue subscriptions: If you have received notification that your subscription is due for renewal or is in arrears, we would ask you to please give this matter your attention before it slips your mind.

Email addresses: If you have received this Newsletter by post and are now on email, we ask you to send an email to omanewsletter@aol.com so that we can send future issues by email.

Annual Dinner

Friday 23rd March 2018
at 6.30pm for 7.30pm
at Maidenhead Golf Club

Booking form on back page



Chairman: Grahame Fisher, Bramleigh, Shoppenhangers Road, Maidenhead SL6 2PZ (01628 625555)

Hon. Sec: Mrs Betty Collin, 18 Badminton Road, Maidenhead SL6 4QT
(01628 626349) e-mail: bettycollin@oldmaidonians.org.uk

Hon.Treas: Andrew Bond, 60 Ray Park Avenue, Maidenhead SL6 8DX (07879 426442)

Committee: Colin Cutler (President), Mrs Helen Duncombe Mrs Bernadette Eaves (Senior Assistant Principal), Paul Frazer (Principal), Tony Lehain, Daniel Lister, Christopher Nunn, Robert Weston.

News of the College

We thank Paul Frazer, the Principal, for the following article.

Almost 124 years ago, on 19th May, 1894, the first of Desborough College's predecessor schools, Maidenhead Modern School, was incorporated as a Limited Company and "conducted for private profit."

On 1st March 2018, after a number of changes in name, designation and sites our school will once again be registered as a Limited Company, although definitely not for reasons of private profit. Indeed, we will become a registered charity with two tiers of governance: Members who "own" the academy trust and Governors who set the strategic direction of our school and ensure accountability and financial probity.

We will be funded directly by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, a branch of the DfE, and, like the Maidenhead Modern School of 1894, be largely in control of our own destiny because we will no longer be a part of The Education Fellowship Trust, the Northamptonshire-based organisation that has controlled our finances since November 2013. Old Maidonians interested in learning of my views on this "partnership" will have to wait until my memoirs are published and should not have an aversion to "strong" language! You can take the Headteacher out of Yorkshire but you can't take Yorkshire out of the Headteacher.

Since my last report many positive things have happened: we have, thanks to the generous support given by The Spoore, Merry & Rixman Foundation, opened an Innovation Centre that offers state-of-the-art IT facilities that most schools in this country, independent or state-funded, can only dream about; we have introduced the teaching of Mandarin Chinese and Latin into the curriculum; we achieved improvements in examination outcomes at both GCSE and A Level for the fifth year in succession; we have increased the number on roll from 597 in 2015 to 808 this year and 940 in September 2018; we have successfully re-launched the house system; we have expanded our extra-curricular offer and run more sports teams with greater success than at any point in the last 5 years; we enter national competitions for chess, debating and young enterprise; we have trips planned to Honduras, Ecuador, the USA and Iceland as well exchange visits to Germany and China, and more familiar trips to France, Austria and Belgium.

The boys here continue to surprise me with their range of talents and achievements: we have boys who compete at national level at swimming, triathlon and ice-skating and internationally at chess and sailing; we have many talented mathematicians, writers, computer programmers, musicians, vocalists, actors and artists; we have boys who give up their free time to look after people with disabilities and boys who run their own businesses.

The staff, too, continue to surprise me with their ability to sustain a level of professionalism that goes above and beyond what any Headteacher can reasonably expect. Their enthusiasm, commitment and determination to encourage, support and inspire the boys does them all great credit and, of course, the results are there to be seen.

Having read "100 Not Out", Dai Evans' excellent history of our school, and marvelled at the memories of their teachers cherished by Desborough pupils over the past century I rather fancy that some of the present staff will take their place in Desborough folklore, Martyn "Nico" Nicholas in particular who reaches his 80th birthday this year and who remains an outstanding and much-revered mathematician.

This is my sixth year as Headteacher at Desborough College and the time has passed very quickly. I have enjoyed a number of professionally fulfilling roles throughout a career spanning over thirty years but, when the time eventually comes for me to retire from school leadership, I will look back at my time here as being very special.

18th Maidenhead Scout Group was formed in September 1941 as one of the first acts by the new Head Teacher, Mr Eagling, and soon had 60 members who went to camp the following year. The formal registration of the Group did not occur until 1943. The Scout Group is still going strong and will be celebrating its official 75th anniversary at a family Scout camp in May 2018.

Old Maidonians' Sport

Golf

43rd Competition for the Brooks Cup 2017 took place on 24th July with a field of 14 players. The winner was **David Cooper (1972/79)** who had won previously in 2015 but had not been available to defend his title in 2016. These were the only times he has entered the competition, thereby establishing a record in itself of winning the only times he has taken part. The leading scores were:-

		Handicap	Stableford Points
Winner	David Cooper	27	34
Runner-up	Michael Clyde	14	33
3rd	Peter McNicoll	23	32
4th	Chris Jones	13	32
5th	Roger Keys	17	31
6th	Robert Afia	8	28

Fixtures for 2018

Match v Desborough

Wednesday 28th March 2018 at 11.30 am

(depending on whether Desborough can raise a team. The Principal has proposed that this match should be held in term time, as more convenient to pupils and staff).

Brooks Cup competition

Monday 23rd July 2018 at 2pm

Both events will take place at Maidenhead Golf Club. If you are interested in taking part, please contact Colin Cutler (01628 629130): colinarcutler@aol.com

Rugby

Because of the comparatively young age of Desborough's 1st XV and of RFU rules, the OMA v Desborough could not take its usual form. The teams were therefore mixed and an enjoyable game ensued. After the match some 40 sat down for a meal.

The match in December 2018 will be the 50th in the series and there are plans to mark the occasion in an appropriate manner.

Wedding Bells



Rajpal

Singh Bahra (2002/2009) married Gurpreet Kaur Sondh in September 2017. Their civil wedding at Northbrook Park, Surrey, was followed a month later by the Sikh wedding at the Sikh Temple (Gurdwara) in Southampton. The colourful, vibrant wedding brought two families together and was celebrated with great joy, with family and friends coming from the UK, Kenya, Canada and India. Their honeymoon was spent in Fiji and Los Angeles.

Gurpreet and Rajpal are both pharmacists and received their MPharm degrees from Portsmouth and Kent universities respectively. They are both currently living in Maidenhead.

Whilst at Desborough Rajpal enjoyed playing the Tabla (Indian Drums) and the violin at the David Roberts concerts over the 7 years. He was awarded full colours as part of the school hockey team from Year 7-13. He was pleased to be in the first Desborough team to win the U16 county cup at Wellington College. Rajpal is also a golfer and has taken part in some of the Brooks Cup events.

News of Old Maidonians

The Association is always pleased to hear from Old Maidonians, acknowledges with thanks the news they have provided about themselves and about other Old Maidonians, and invites members to send in their news. Please give dates of joining and leaving School in all communications, to assist in identification.

Rob Barker (1977/84) is currently President of Precor, a world leading fitness equipment and services company, based in Seattle, with a turnover of \$400 million. He is also a member of the board of the parent company, Amer Sports, with a turnover of \$3 billion. In March 2017 he returned to Desborough to address the Lower School assembly and then the Upper School assembly. He recalled that when he started at Desborough, teachers wore academic gowns and shoes had to be taken off before entering the new Hall to preserve the shiny floor, which was ideal for sliding on, in socks.



While at School he became a life saver at the Magnet Leisure Centre and after reading Sports Science and Business Studies at Nottingham, he decided to seek a career in the Sports and Leisure industry. Being a keen rower he decided to try to get into a GB team at the Olympics in Barcelona and was successful in becoming a member of the 1992 Olympic rowing and also the triathlon squads.

At the start of his career Rob delivered a number of capital projects in the Maidenhead area, including the Magnet Leisure Centre. He later became the Indoor Leisure Manager for Slough Borough Council, responsible for multi-sports centres, an ice area with a professional ice-hockey team, and indoor tennis centre, a swimming pool and community centres.

In 1995 Rob joined Precor and in 2005 became Vice President for their businesses in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific before becoming President of the company.

In addressing the Desborough assemblies Rob described the scope and philosophy of Precor's business. Among the pieces of advice he gave to the assemblies were:- learn how to be the best you can in whatever you are doing; learn to work well with others, be a good team person; learn to work well on your own; be an active listener; be happy and creative; keep active; do something kind to two people a day; try to be more confident; be humble if you do well. After his talks he was besieged by pupils with their questions.

He considers himself fortunate to be working in an industry dedicated to helping people to get the most from an active life style. He now lives in Seattle with this wife and two young sons.

John Caton (1946/52) has written a thriller *Death in an Evil Place*, under the name of Anthony Norman. It was published by Matador in January 2017. The following is a review by his friend **Dr Alan Tricker (1960/67):-**
'Death in an Evil Place' is a powerful and thrilling read. The main character is Ken Hardy - an engineer by training - who makes an unscheduled business call at Fellbeck, an isolated and seemingly deserted Victorian farmhouse, then walks into an unsettling experience.

Why is the farmer living in the past and what is the air of menace about the place? When he leaves, Ken tries to put the memory behind him, but six years later it all comes back to haunt him when a woman he knows - Caroline Enderby - is brutally murdered at the same house. Her lover, Chris Berry is charged with the murder, but Ken is convinced that he has been framed. He undertakes a quest to try and prove Chris's innocence, using his scientific skills developed during his career in engineering in order to assist the police.

It is certainly a gripping read and I particularly like the style. The reader is let into the thoughts of Ken as he tries to piece together what really happened at the house. I could envisage him appearing in future novels - he is the sort of character that you feel you get to know and you are on the journey with him. Initially the book has all the feel of a ghost story, but develops into a memorable thriller that would make great television.

John will be coming to the OMA Annual Dinner on 23rd March and copies of *Death in and Evil Place* will be on sale at an advantageous price. He says that becoming an author has altered his life to some extent in that he has almost succeeded in backing out of a life in website design for the Internet, not without a sense of relief. He says that there is a second book on the way and that he is currently 90 pages down the line with a lot of research work still to do. Target date: late 2018.

John is a regular actor and occasional director with the local drama group, St Andrews Play Club, Edinburgh, of which **Alan Tricker** is a leading member as actor and director. John says that his career on the amateur stage started in a school play, in the title role of Androcles and the Lion, by George Bernard Shaw, performed at Maidenhead Town Hall. He later realised that he had not necessarily been selected because of his superior acting talent but because of his Yorkshire accent. In the play, Androcles is a Greek whilst the rest of the cast are Romans (except the Lion). Evidently Mr Eagling decided that a Greek with a Yorkshire accent would contrast nicely with Maidenhead Romans.

Michael Devlin (1955/62), who resides in Nova Scotia, has published an account of a car journey that he and a friend from Toronto to Key West in 1971. The book is entitled 'Key West or Bust' and describes the many changes in climate, geography, cultures and food, etc they encountered 46 years ago. Michael has sent a copy of the book to Desborough for the School Library. He is also a prolific poet.

At School Michael was in the 1st XV Rugby team and also rowed as stroke for the West House Four, as well as sculling and skiffing. He started work in the Sales Department of ICI Paints Division, in their offices in Manchester and Glasgow and later had careers in banking and the building industries. In 1974/45 he took a 2-year sabbatical and toured the world.

Michael emigrated to Canada in 1969 and became a Canadian citizen in 1974. He is currently recovering from a near fatal car crash, having been saved by his seat belt. Michael says he is bipolar, a condition that he feels gives him greater empathy and understanding of people. Michael's address is RR1, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, B0J 2C0.

Rory Geoghegan (1995/2000) was appointed Head of Criminal Justice for the Centre of Social Justice in 2017. He read PPPE at Trinity College, Oxford, and then joined PricewaterhouseCoopers, focusing on the finance services industry, before moving to the Institute for Government where he worked on the restructuring of the Criminal Justice system. During this time he served for 3 years as a neighbourhood officer in South London with the Metropolitan Police, gaining frontline experience. In August 2017 The Daily Telegraph published an article by Rory supporting the policy of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Home Secretary regarding the use of stop-and-search powers. In the article Rory argues that stop-and-search would be welcomed by families of young people in the poorest and most vulnerable communities.



W (Bill) Jay (1952/57) In our December 2009 issue No 76 we published the obituary of Bill Jay who died in 2009. Bill was an internationally recognised leader in photography. As the first Professor of Photography at the University of New Mexico he taught for over 25 years, during which time he wrote over 200 articles and published more than 20 books on photography. Some of his photographs can be found on the website www.billjayonphotography. A film has recently been made, entitled 'Do Not Bend – The Photographic Life of Bill Jay'. Details of screenings will be published on our OMA website.

Peter Johnson (maths teacher and Head of Computing 1977/2000) tells us that he has moved with his partner, Sue, from Courtlands to 6 Berkeley Close, Maidenhead SL6 5JP. He says that he no longer does any coaching as he has many other things going on, including plans for several holidays.

Mark Nicholls (1973-78) As reported in our last issue, Mark, who edits 'Railways Illustrated', published a several articles in the magazine in 2016 describing journeys with the Desborough Railway Society, organised by biology teacher, **John Williams**. We thank Mark for this account of the impact that his experiences with the Railway Society has had on his life. We are also pleased to publish below John Williams' account of his starting the Railway Society and of his lifelong love of railways (see **John Williams**, below).

*I look back on my time at Desborough, where I was part of the first comprehensive intake, with generally fond memories. With a keen interest in railways it didn't take me long to join biology teacher **Mr John Williams** on many of the Railway Society's trips around the UK. This helped me to decide on my initial career path and on leaving in 1978 I joined British Rail as a driver's assistant (previously known as a secondman or fireman in steam days). I was based at Old Oak Common in West London and for the next five years I learnt the footplate trade, travelling as far afield as Exeter, Cardiff and Birmingham.*

I qualified as a driver in 1983 and was initially a 'passed man' at Old Oak, enjoying several driving turns covering for drivers on leave or sick. I successfully got my first fulltime driving job at Selhurst Depot near Croydon on the Southern Region and spent the next four years whizzing around on electric suburban units in South London. A transfer to London Waterloo followed in 1987, but the Clapham crash the following year, caused by a wiring mistake made by overworked signalling technicians in the rush to modernise before privatisation, made me reconsider my career path. I left the railway in 1991 and joined the newspaper delivery industry working permanent nights in Peterborough, where I then lived with my wife.

All was well until 1994 when the marriage broke up and I was diagnosed with cancer of the spinal cord. A scary few months later and some pretty major and pioneering surgery saved the day – and everything still worked meaning I wasn't confined to a wheelchair. By this time I'd joined Key Publishing in Stamford as an archivist. My other passion was aviation and Key was the leading UK producer of aviation magazines (and still is). Key is a small family-run business that looks after its staff, and I was really enjoying myself. Fellow enthusiast Alan Warnes had got me the job in the first place, and when he was promoted to editor of Air Forces Monthly I became his assistant. That only lasted a year and I was promoted to special projects editor in 2000, producing one-off bookazines and contract publications.

One of the bookazines, Airports of the World, proved so popular that we made it a bi-monthly magazine from September 2005 and I continued to run it for the next ten years. Things could have been much different as around the same time I was diagnosed with a rare and terminal liver disease. I continued to work, although travel became more difficult as my condition worsened. I was selected for a liver transplant in December 2009 and luckily had the operation in March 2010. So far so good and seven years on I feel great – thanks to the donor and the excellent NHS staff at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. I could travel freely again, and my time on the airport magazine saw me visit such places as Ekaterinburg in Russia, St Maarten in the Caribbean and Fairbanks in Alaska.

In 2015 the opportunity to take on my current magazine, Railways Illustrated, arose and as you can imagine I jumped at the chance. My interest in railways had never faltered, so it was more like a busman's holiday really. I'm still happily producing the title, but I left Key early this year to follow the freelance self-employed route, still on the railway title, but under contract. I've lived in Lincoln since 1994 and the 100-miles a day round trip to work was becoming so tedious and stressful. Working from home has a lot to be said for it! All-in-all I can't complain. Life has a funny way of working out sometimes and when I left school 39 years ago I'd have never dreamed I'd be doing this. But I guess my interest in railways and the encouragement of Mr Williams had a stronger effect than I could ever have imagined.

Simon Ramskill (1974/81) writes:- *I left Desborough to study Computer Science and have stayed in IT throughout my career, which started on the Mars Management training scheme as a programmer. When I left Mars I went to work for a small software business based in the North East, where I lived in Hexham for several years. I rekindled my love of rowing and spent many happy (and cold) hours on the Tyne. When I moved back south I worked in consulting with Ernst & Young, where I spent time in Holland, Belgium and the US (and Croydon!). From there onto running IT programmes in Centrica and Marks and Spencer and now to Whitbread where I am Group CIO (Chief Information Office), across all our brands (Premier Inn and Costa). I live in Twyford with my wife Emma and two children (Imogen 18 and Toby 16). I have rowed and coached for many years at Maidenhead rowing club and still (just about) manage to compete. I took up my other passion flying about 7 years ago and now own 1/9 of a plane based at White Waltham. I am still in touch with a few ex class mates - in particular Pete Leng (who is now a policeman in New Zealand).*

Martin Ridgers CPCU (1977/82), a Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter, has the insurance industry in his blood as his father was an insurance broker and his uncle was Chairman of Lloyds. In over 30 years of providing insurance to a range of clients there are few risks that he has not covered. Among the high-risk events he has covered are the Olympic Games and the World Cup. He founded MKR

Speciality Insurance Brokerage Inc., a retail broker located in Long Island City, NY and had previously founded Entertainments Insurance Brokers Consultancy, Leadership, Underwriting and Risk Control Expertise (EBI), based in California, New York and London. EBI



grew to over a \$100 million premium base, with clients including the Presidents of the USA, the UN, Chelsea FC, Formula 1, Warner Brothers, Disney, etc. Martin is the founder and former board member of the North American Contingency Association (NACA). He has just been voted to be the President of CPCU NY in 2019. He has created educational material for the industry and many of the policy forms and rates used nationally and globally in a number of risk areas. In the voluntary sector, Martin has worked with projects to help homeless teenagers and to help children to read.

Neil Spiers (1981/88), a former Secretary of the OMA, has provided the following update for which we thank him.

It has been some years since I wrote an update for the OMA Newsletter. The last 5 years have found me living in Los Angeles, USA, where I moved with my wife, Linda, and our two children, Ben (16) and Anya (12). Our move here was prompted by a job opportunity with Herbalife, my employer of 18 years. I moved to the US to take up the role as Vice President of Global Strategic Planning, a role which I occupied for 4 1/2 years. Following that I took on the position of Vice President, Global Business Services – heading up the company's shared services operations around the world.



The move to the US has worked out very well for all the family, and after a short settling-in period both children took up the unexpected sport of Figure Skating. Our son Ben, having previously been a Rugby player at Marlow Rugby Club, particularly surprised us with this move but turned out to have some talent at the sport, and in 2016 competed at the US National Figure Skating Championships at the Juvenile Pairs level. Injury cost him the 2017 season, but he is back in full flow now trying to better his result in the 2018 season. In the unlikely event that this note is read by an OM with a child considering figure skating, I strongly advise them to research the cost of the sport before agreeing - something I wish someone had mentioned to me a few years ago!

We have been fortunate in being able to take advantage of our time in the US to do a considerable amount of travelling, and have taken in the beautiful Big Sur coastline of the Californian Pacific coast, visited the Grand Canyon and too many national parks to mention (each amazing in their own ways), a few ghost towns, a bit of route 66, and the obligatory skiing available in the locality. Of the more bizarre tourist spots visited was Lake Havasu City, now the rather sad resting place of London Bridge... which (as we explained to our children), still stood across the Thames (just) when we were young. The area was having a heat-wave at the time, so standing in 116F (47C) temperatures while viewing the bridge seemed all a bit surreal.

I have been fortunate in being able to return to the UK reasonably frequently and very much value the long term friendships of many fellow Old Maidonians with whom I stay in touch including Richard Copeman, Andrew Young, Paul Bestford, Justin Radford (all of my years at the School).

My return to the UK in May of 2017, to attend to the funeral arrangements for Bob Stanley, was a little more sad. Bob had a major impact and influence on me for a large portion of my life (probably more so after I left school than before) and I would like to thank all the former staff and pupils who sent me their memories of Bob. Every note and recollection, however brief, was passed on to Bob's nieces in Australia, and I know that they very much appreciated hearing of the positive impact that Bob made in so many lives. Even if the circumstances were sad, it was a great pleasure to be able to meet up with those former pupils and members of staff who were able to attend Bob's memorial service.

hear from contemporaries, especially if they find themselves visiting Los Angeles for any reason and might like to meet for a beer and natter!

John Williams (member of staff 1971/81) We are grateful to John for providing this description of his career and of his leading role in the establishment of the School's Railway Society during his time at the School. In September 2017 the *Maidenhead Advertiser* published an interview with John about the activities of the Railway Society and highlighted the fact that the Society cleared the rail embankments of rubbish each year.

The Railway Society: 1971-1981

I graduated in the Summer of 1970 and decided to pursue a career in teaching. Thus, I found myself in the Education Department at the University of Wales, Cardiff studying for a PGCE. Tutors there recommended that we begin applying for teaching posts towards the latter half of the Spring term. Following this advice I applied for teaching jobs in the run up to the Easter vacation. I didn't tie myself to any particular part of the country, but before the schools closed for Easter I went for an interview in a large comprehensive school in Grimsby. I'd never been to this part of the country before, so went for the job because I fancied the train ride!

By this time in my life I was well and truly interested in all things British Rail, spending many hours train spotting on Cardiff General station whenever I had the time. The journey to Grimsby was not straight-forward because of a strike on the Eastern Region, and even though I was offered the job I decided not to take it. Not to worry, there was a perceived shortage of Science teachers in the early 70s, and I had not heard from the other schools who had put adverts in the Times Educational Supplement

It was only a week or two later while spending the Easter holiday with my parents in Essex, that I took a phone call from the Head Master of Maidenhead Grammar School for Boys inviting me for an interview. I agreed to call in at the school while on my way back to Cardiff at the end of the Easter break. To my delight, the school was right next to the Great Western Railway main line and I wanted that job. Len Reynolds gave me a whirlwind tour of the school before he interviewed me in his study. There were no pupils in school and I met no future colleagues, but I was so keen to have the job that I accepted on the spot.

While waiting to be interviewed by Mr Reynolds, I read a copy of the TES that he had given to me. To my delight, there was another Science vacancy in the Girls High School which I thought would be suitable for Jackie (my wife to be), who was also looking for a job. She got the position and in September 1971 we started our teaching careers in Maidenhead. I managed to get digs in a house in Grenfell Road which was only a short walk to and from the school, but, equally important, I could just see the railway line from my room.

In September 1971 I started my probationary year teaching Biology and Lower School Science (Chemistry and Physics). At this time there were thirteen other new appointees starting at the school, including David Wallace (Geography), David Hymers (History) and Roger Durston (Music). I was assigned Room 14 as my teaching area, it being converted into a laboratory from an ordinary class room in the Geography/History corridor where Dai Evans and Clive Hart also used to teach. John Honey was my Head of Department, but he left at Christmas for a job in a teacher training college, so Alan Labrom took charge of the Biology D.

Meanwhile, I got involved straight away in all aspects of school life, helping to manage rugby and then cricket teams for Head of PE, Dai Griffiths. In addition, I volunteered for lunch time supervision organised by Arthur Lee. Knowing my interest in railways, he had the foresight to allocate my duty to the BR car park fence where I had to look after the boys who went out of school to train spot on Shoppenhangers Road. For a free meal, all I had to do was to make sure that the boys behaved themselves and that any Form 1 and 2 boys wore their caps out of school. To me, this was sheer bliss and indicated at the same time that there was a huge interest in train spotting which I could foster by organising formal visits to BR installations up and down the country. Thus was born the Maidenhead Grammar School Railway Society .

Within two months of joining the school, the Railway Society made its first trip using scheduled train services visiting depots in Derby, Chesterfield and Nottingham on 23 October 1971. This was the catalyst that triggered a huge surge of interest by many other pupils of all ages in the school. Nearly everyone wanted to be included on the next trip which had been scheduled for 27 November to Eastern Region London Depots, and there was an even bigger demand for places on the 11 December trip to Leeds and York. Thus, after only one term in school a pattern was established whereby at least three trips were made every term on a Saturday, with additional visits during half term. Very quickly, a smallish nucleus of hardened train spotters was to metamorphose into a large number of boys of all ages that loyally joined me on formal Railway Society trips to all corners of the country.

When a trip was being undertaken, my school party would meet at the railway station at around 6.00am and not return to their parents until nearly 11.00pm, although one or two trips a year were undertaken over-night for the boys to experience BR during the hours of darkness. Usually, 16, 20, 24 or 28 persons (dependent on the terms for permit acquisition) would be on the trip, knowing that it would be an arduous day out but, nonetheless, an enjoyable one enabling them to visit obscure and sometime extremely remote regions of the country in order to acquire loco numbers! At the same time, their knowledge of geography would improve, together with their social skills, because to be herded into railway carriages for nearly 15 hours on a day with other pupils would make them more compassionate individuals through the sharing of resources and knowledge.

I loved working at the school. The pupils in my classes were earnest and hard-working, and the parents whose sons I took on Railway Society trips were very grateful for their safe return. Mr Reynolds was very complementary about all of the time I was giving up to organise the trips, and my wife (Jackie) got used to being on her own every fourth Saturday of the month. In my first year I had organised ten trips, but of course these extra-curricular activities could only take second place to my main role in school – that of being a teacher. I got a scale increment at the start of my second year, but had to take on extra responsibility in order to qualify for the pay rise. Thus I had to take charge of allocating lockers and pegs in the cloak rooms for every form when the pupils returned in September. Being an organised person, this was a doddle.

Teaching Nuffield Biology at all levels and supplementing these lessons with Lower School Chemistry and Physics was extremely fulfilling. Alan Grimsley, Head of Physics was very caring and helped me a great deal with advice on how to teach my Physics classes. In return, I used to repay his kindness by helping him to organise the CSE entries, a responsibility that I was to eventually take over under the overall leadership of Deputy Head Frank Shaw.

At the start of my third year I was given another promotion, that of being in charge of the maintenance and repair of the wooden lockers situated in the corridors. I used to organise working parties to identify lockers with broken doors or missing handles, etc and then endeavour to keep them in working order. The team had its own box of tools and we became very proactive in getting maximum use out of the lockers which were in short supply, with most being shared by pupils.

Meanwhile, the Railway Society was proving to be very popular with increasing numbers of boys wanting to participate in its activities. Even though the Grammar School became comprehensive in September 1973 this made no difference, the society simply changing its name to Desborough School Railway Society. The many and varied visits to railway installations up and down the country continued as normal and was supplemented, as usual, by film shows, careers visits to BR sites and community activities such as litter picking. I was also nominally in charge of the Model Railway society, and even organised trips for its members.

The tried and tested formula of about one trip per month by scheduled rail services continued unabated for ten plus years. Towards the end, in the last year or so before I left Desborough, additional visits to railway depots were made by minibus in order to accommodate the large number of boys who wished to satisfy their train spotting urges. David Hymers and Peter Johnson were kind enough to drive the minibus, with James Ward helping out with supervision on many trips. Some of the senior pupils were also especially helpful in the supervision of younger pupils, with most of the early trips being undertaken by myself with no help whatsoever from another adult. In this respect I would like to acknowledge the help received from individuals such as Brian Rowe, David Miller, Brian Dalrymple and Mark Nicholls. Mark became a BR driver on leaving Desborough, but came on some trips which coincided with his days off so that he could help out. But, all good things must come to an end. So it was in December 1981 that I left Desborough after more than ten years as a teacher and person in charge of the Railway Society to begin the next stage of my career as Head of Biology in an Upper School in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. At this time my first born was 2½ years old with a brother on the way. Moving house a few days before Christmas in a raging snow storm was not ideal, but I was looking forward to the challenges of my new post.

My interest in all things railways never waned with the move even though I chose to take charge of a Pets Club in my new school which met every Friday at lunchtime. In addition I also volunteered to organise a Collectors Club where students who collected anything would meet in my class room to talk about their collections. The usual articles such as coins, stamps, fossils, football programmes, etc were common, but one day I took my collection of platform tickets to the club meeting and explained their history, use, etc. Members were intrigued as to how I had acquired them. Indeed, some of the boys soon realised that I was a real train enthusiast and asked me to organise some trips for them. Some of these boys helped out with the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway whose track ran parallel with the school for 100 metres or more. The main line from Euston to the north ran through Leighton Buzzard to the west of the town two miles away from my school.

Unlike Desborough, therefore, there was never going to be any spotting activity at lunch times. Nevertheless, I realised that there was a healthy interest in train spotting in the school, so I did organise a number of trips over the years, particularly to Open Days and Steam Centres. However, I was never able to access cheap fares and eventually the trips were to fizzle out. There were two other teachers in my school who were interested in railways, so together with my two sons we did travel regularly and extensively across the BR network. In this respect I have never lost my interest in railways and even though I don't collect tickets any more, I still visit antique shops, car boots and auctions in order to enhance my railway artefacts such as station names, shed plates and cast-iron line side signs.

During my career in Bedfordshire I gained various promotions, including Senior Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher and Acting Deputy Head. Three years after leaving Desborough, and while Head of Biology, I became Exams Officer, a post I held for more than 25 years. I gave up all teaching and learning responsibilities in 2004 to become the full time Exams Officer as the role was so huge due to the myriad of qualifications which had materialised over many years.

After my sixtieth birthday, with retirement on the horizon, over a three-year period, I gradually trained a non-teaching colleague in the intricacies of the Exams Officer role, becoming a part-time Associate on the Exam Team. Meanwhile, I began teaching again, covering lessons for absent colleagues and setting up BTEC and C&G courses in Horticulture. Finally, in the Summer of 2013 I retired completely having worked in two schools over a 42-year span. Now, nearly every afternoon I spend my time tending the allotments I have acquired. Luckily for me these are situated next to the West Coast Main Line and I can clearly see all the trains that speed past on their way to and from London.

My career in education was very enjoyable and rewarding and I feel sure that, over the years, unknown numbers of young people have been inspired by me in some way. But, when I look back at my early days in the Grammar School/ Desborough, I am so grateful for all the help, support and encouragement I received from colleagues in the early 70s. Those years remain very memorable and represent a time in my life when I was a very happy and contented person. The staff were very sociable. Tony Lehain used to organise cricket matches against staff teams from other schools, with Brian Wells (Latin) and Phil Bradshaw (Physics) being star players. I also represented the staff team when playing rugby, cricket and basketball against the Sixth Form. I remember dislocating my shoulder one lunch time while playing basketball for the staff team, and Alan Labrom had to take me to Wexham Park Hospital to have my shoulder put back under general anaesthetic. Alan also used to organise 5-a-side football matches in the gym after school. I also joined Maidenhead Rugby Club, but couldn't play regularly for them because of my commitments to the Railway Society and the fact that on most Saturdays when I wasn't on a school trip, I was off somewhere on a trip of my own.

I have never been back to Desborough since I left in December 1981. However, I have kept in touch with a few ex-colleagues and former pupils, and drafting this account has brought back very fond memories for me.

Neil Woodford CBE (1967/75) visited the College in September 2017 to speak to the members of the 6th Form. He is the founder of Woodford Investment Management Ltd, where he is head of Investment. He was accompanied by Jonathan Smith, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility of the company. He described how his investment policy has been to concentrate on companies with potential to expand in new technological areas that would make significant contributions to the UK economy.



Prior to 2014 Neil had spent 25 years with Invesco Perpetual successfully managing £30 billion of funds. In 2014 he left Invesco to found Woodford Investment Management Ltd which already manages some £18 billion of funds.

Asked how he relaxes he said the he had taken up horse riding and now participated, competitively, in point-to-point events. He also has a young son who takes up some of his time.

In Memoriam

We regret to inform the deaths of the following and extend our sympathies to the families.

Fergus Corrie (1974/81) died in 2016 at the age of 53. He had read Theoretical Physics at Queen Mary College, London, where he was President of his hall of residence and publicity officer for the physics and astrophysics societies. He was a lecturer at East Berkshire College from 1992 to 2011 after which he became a tutor with GT Tuition and Winchmore Tutors.

His brother, **Edwin (1975/83)**, who is working in France, has published books on Origami.

Frank Crozier (member of staff 1983/88) died in November 2017 at the age of 82. Born in County Durham he went to Bishopshalt School, Hillingdon, where he became Head Boy and where he became the Schoolboy Champion of England in the shotput. He gained an honours degree at Southampton in Geography and Economics after which he did national service in the army, during which time he was picked for the army athletics team. He was accepted for officer training and duly commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant. He enjoyed the change of status, with the Regimental Sergeant Major addressing him as 'Mr' and 'Sir', along the lines of 'Mr Crozier, you're marching like a bloody seal, sir'. His main motivation had been to enjoy the superior living standards in the officers' quarters. It also gave him his lifelong love of fine dining and fine wines.

After teaching for a year in Uxbridge, he and a friend spent a year touring the USA. He then joined the Shell organisation for a year before deciding to return to teaching. He took his PGCE at Jesus College, Cambridge, gaining a Blue in soccer and playing in the intervarsity match. He taught at a school in Slough before being accepted for an appointment in the Bahamas with the Ministry of Overseas Development, helping to set up secondary education in Nassau. During this time he played soccer for the Bahamas and became a good golfer.

On his return he came to Desborough where he stayed for 5 years. A teacher recalls him speaking to her in 'received' English when, on being phoned by his father, immediately lapsing into Geordie. On leaving Desborough Frank married Elizabeth whom he had first met at university. With their mutual love of travel they lived in France, then twice in Spain, Devon, Cornwall, North Yorkshire and finally in North Lincolnshire.

Colin Edwards (1946/52) died in March 2017 at the age of 82. He was elected a Vice-President of the OMA in recognition of the unfailing support to OMA Golf by providing golf balls and other golfing accessories for all competitions for over 25 years. These were invariably delivered by his wife, Roni, after a long drive. Remarkably, Colin was a non-golfer. He rarely missed coming to the OMA Annual Dinner. His brother-in-law, Michael Willoughby (1958/64), was also later to be elected a Vice-President in recognition of remarkable service to the OMA and the school in finding the names of 17 former members of the School who had lost their lives in World War 1 and whose names have now been added to the War Memorial Board.



At School. Colin played the role of Androcles' wife, Magaera, in 'Androcles and the Lion', with Androcles being played by **John Caton** (see above). He also became a keen rower.

After leaving school he played guitar in a skiffle group and joined the civil service, before leaving to set up his own businesses, Chinghall and KEMAST, eventually becoming the leading manufacturer of Carbon Black dispersions in the UK. During this period he and Roni entertained clients at Silverstone race meetings and other locations. The businesses came to a disastrous end when the factory was destroyed by fire.

In retirement, among other things, he was an enthusiastic Steward at his church.



David Good (1944/49) died in January 2017 at the age of 83. He was the youngest of three brothers, his siblings being **Anthony (1941/47)** and **Dudley (1942/48)**. He was born with only one arm but nevertheless led an active life. In his youth he liked climbing trees and playing cricket. He later developed a love of amateur motor racing, taking part in events across the UK and Europe. In 1958 he came third in the RAC British Hill Climb Championship and was runner-up the following two seasons before becoming the British Hill Climbing Champion in 1961.

After leaving School David joined a London brokerage firm before joining the family's dairy business in Holyport. He joined Express Dairies when they bought the family business and later moved to Grand Metropolitan where he was in charge of their hotels in the Far East. He later became a director of Beacon Garden Centres, owned by his brother, **Dudley**, who now owns Stubbings Garden Centre. David is survived by his wife, Camilla, three children and three grandchildren.

John Keys (1945-1950) We thank John's brother, **Laurie Keys 1949-1954**, for the following:-

My brother John died in November 2016 after suffering with pulmonary fibrosis for a couple of years. John started at the School in 1945 when Mr Eagling was head master. He and I overlapped by a year so we didn't really spend much time together at school. He played football for the school team and we both played for the Old Maids together after leaving.

His career started with a summer job at Andrews the boat builders in Bourne End helping to build slipper launches. He never lost his woodworking skills which became very useful for maintaining our old Thames skiff in later life. His first proper job was with Wilmot and Co., solicitors, in Slough. He stayed there until it was time to do his National Service joining the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry when he was 18 yrs. He was posted to Oxford for basic training but was discharged after just a few months on medical grounds. Just a minor problem which he was completely unaware of beforehand.

On return to civilian life he joined Dynatron Radio in Maidenhead and became a service engineer installing and servicing upmarket radios and radiograms. This experienced was invaluable for what was to become his main career. After a couple of years with Dynatron he joined Fairey Aviation Ltd in White Waltham to work on radio and radar on the Gannet aircraft. Fairey was bought out by Westland Helicopters and John moved down to Yeovil with his family to work as an engineer in the flight test department. both on fixed wing and rotary aircraft, specialising in radio and radar for the anti-submarine functions and supporting the sales team. He flew extensively in Wessex, Lynx, and Merlin helicopters and Gannet aircraft. He became Deputy Chief Flight Test Engineer and was manager of several cold weather 'icing' trials in Canada and Denmark on the 'Merlin' Helicopter.

He married Ruth Lovegrove with whom he had three children, Pamela, Roger and Martin. He lived with his second wife Rosemary in East Chinnock, Somerset for many years.

In his spare time he was a keen dinghy sailor, enjoyed playing golf and became a civilian instructor for the air cadets.

After his retirement from Westlands he moved to Denmark for a couple of years then came back to the UK and moved to the Isle of Wight where he spent the remainder of his life.

Robert (Bob) W. Stanley (member of staff 1960/84) died in April 2018 having spent the last years of his life in a nursing home in Cookham.

Bob will be remembered by several thousand former pupils of both Maidenhead Grammar School and Desborough School, whose lives he touched in his roles as Head of English for many years and later, as Head of Upper School. Bob was an outstanding teacher, known for his high standards, discipline and integrity and had a lasting impact on many of his pupils as witnessed by the many tributes that were paid to him, such as:-



'an enormous character in many ways, extolling the love of the English language and English literature', 'loved and feared but always respected', 'spoke to us as adults', 'a great teacher and a great man, one of my major influences', 'one of the few to make me knuckle down during my disruptive period', 'an inspirational teacher and mentor'.

Many former pupils have recalled the lines that he gave for talking in class – ‘*My natural verbosity is in direct antithesis to the successful consummation of my academic career*’.

He was a very generous man of great sensibility and those who knew him regarded him with great affection. During his time at Desborough he produced several plays and musicals to a high standard. In October 2016 he was able to attend the 50th reunion of the cast of the ‘Pirates of Penzance’ which he had directed in 1966.

A graduate of St. Catharine’s College, Cambridge, Bob invested a great deal of time in assisting members of the Sixth Form with their further education ambitions, working tirelessly to help them achieve their choices through the writing of countless reports and letters of recommendation in a bygone era when all such things had to be done by hand.

Bob was succeeded in his role as Head of English by a former pupil from his previous school, **Barrie Williams (member of staff 1973/99)**, who also produced a number of outstanding plays and musicals, including *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *The Long and the Short and the Tall*, *Journey’s End*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*.

When Len Reynolds retired as Head Teacher in 1981 Bob took over as Chairman of the OMA and the editorship of the OMA Newsletter, roles he held until retiring in 1995. He was also an active member of All Saints Church, Marlow, and edited the parish newsletter for a period.

Bob’s funeral service took place All Saints Church, Marlow and was attended by a number of his former teaching colleagues and former students. Much of the organisation of the funeral had been handled by Bob’s executor, **Neil Spiers (1981/88)** from his home in Los Angeles, on behalf of Bob’s nieces in Australia, Sarah and Catie, before returning to be present at the funeral. The 2017 edition of magazine of the St Catharine’s College magazine pays tribute to his success in helping a good number of his pupils to apply to Oxbridge, specifically a number to St Catharine’s. The magazine mentions his regular attendance at College reunions and acknowledges a significant bequest he made to the College.

David Tayler (1974/81) died in September 2017 at the age of 53. He was both a former pupil and a former teacher at Desborough. The following obituary by his friend David Sharrod appeared in the 1st October 2017 edition of The Guardian.

My friend and colleague David Tayler, who has died aged 53, was a geographer, geologist and passionate conservationist who devoted his life to connecting people with landscapes. Through this he changed countless lives. Most of his career was spent in the Yorkshire Dales, running conservation, education and outreach projects.

Born to John, a local government worker, and his wife, Margaret (nee Tyler), a teacher, in Maidenhead, Berkshire, he attended the local comprehensive, Desborough school (now Desborough college). There, particularly on geography and geology field trips, he developed a lifelong affinity with landscapes, wildlife and botany. He never lost that early sense of joy and wonder at the natural world and a desire to inspire it in others.

He studied geography at Sheffield University and, to his own surprise, returned to Desborough to teach geography and geology. Now leading field trips himself, he embarked on his vocation of instilling into new generations an understanding and appreciation of how landscapes are shaped.

It was a natural step to become an instructor at the Field Studies Council centre Slapton Ley in Devon. He then moved north to become deputy director of Malham Tarn FSC centre, where he fell in love with the Dales. At any opportunity he would drag anyone to hand on long hikes across this countryside, enthusiastically pointing out everything from orchids to limestone pavement.

For the latter part of his career he was deputy director for the charity Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. This put him at the heart of conservation activity in the Dales, from woodland creation and restoring wildflower meadows to introducing new generations to the environment he cherished.

In 2009 he set up People and the Dales as part of the trust to give opportunities to those who would not otherwise experience what he loved: countryside walks, farm visits, dry stone walling, path laying and woodland management. Planting trees or exploring with groups new to the Dales, be they a Sikh community group, Syrian refugees, people with disabilities or urban school children, gave him such pleasure.

In spring 2016 Dave was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumour. He bore his illness with courage and characteristic optimism, and was always more concerned about others.

He is survived by his wife, Liz, and her daughters, Bella and Jade, and by his father, John, and sister, Helen.

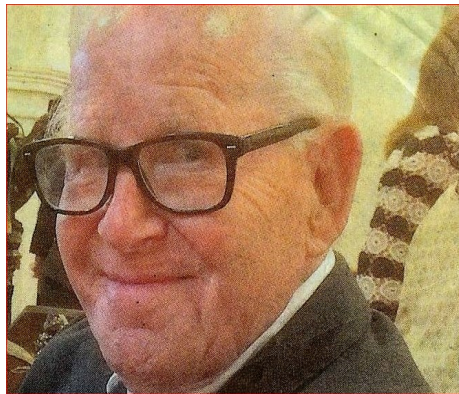
S Jack Tomlin (1940/44) died in March 2017 at the age of 88. He was a noted sportsman at school and sport has played a major part in his life. He and his friends formed Cookham Dean Minors Football Club which led to him joining Marlow Minors where he was discovered by Charlton Athletic. He might well have become a professional footballer but National Service in the RAF intervened and he remained an amateur, joining Maidenhead and later Wycombe Wanderers, playing with them for 9 years in the Isthmian League, scoring 71 goals in 226 appearances.

Jack also joined Wycombe Cricket Club with whom he played for 24 years. During this time he played for Buckinghamshire County Cricket Club for three years in the Minor Counties championship matches. He later became a keen golfer, playing at Winter Hill Golf Club.



Jack in his Wycombe Wanderers days

At the OMA Annual Dinner in 2011 Jack was presented with the Wilfred Upson prize in recognition of his being President of the Wycombe Wanderers Ex-Players Association and also President of the Buckinghamshire County Cricket Club.



Jack joined Lintafoam in Loudwater, becoming quality control manager. He later worked for the Institute of Marketing at Moor Hall, Cookham, before retiring, after which he was a voluntary helper/driver with Elizabeth House, Cookham, which does valuable work with the over 60s in Cookham and the surrounding area.

Jack's wife, Shirley, died in her 30s leaving two young daughters, Jane and Caroline, whom Jack brought up on his own with the help of his and Shirley's families. At his funeral service at St John the Baptist Church, Cookham Dean, the church was full.

Carl Watson (2001/08) died in November 2016 as a result of a road accident. He had worked as a barman at Norden Farm for 8 years where he was very popular with customers and staff, with his warmth and sense of fun. Carl had a twin brother, Sean.



Table Plan for the Annual Dinner 18th March 2017

Table 1

Colin Cutler
Bernadette Eaves
Grahame Fisher
Paul Frazer
David Hight FRS
Cllr Sayonara Luxton
Ian Luxton
John Sparks
Andrew Wyles

Table 2

Jackie Carr
Debbie Hillier
Will Jamieson
Martyn Nicholas
Roma Kahlon
Stella Neal
Nicolas Jones
Christina Sansom
Monty Teeder
George Weston
Jane Weston

Table 3

Olive Bendal
Nick Burt
Katrina Clarke
Lisa Colley
Betty Collin
Helen Duncombe
David Evans
Dawn Hughes
Tony Lehain
Lucy Lesniak
Chris Nunn
Hilary Seth
James Ward

Table 4

Andrew Bond
Charlie Cooper
Barrie Cornes
Trevor Didcock
Gurinder Gill
Peter Jacobs
Quentin Manley
Simon Ramskill
Rob Weston

Table 5

Peter Brown
Malcolm Cutler
Tony Johnson
Tony Leaver
Derek Woolford

Table 6

Graham Bridges
Bob Heaver
Dave Horton
Glyn Jones
Ken Pragnell
David Revell
David Scott
John Smith
Geoff Strawbridge
Chris Thirkettle
Mike Willoughby

Table 7

Ray Clark
Michael Clyde
Colin Funnell
Derek Harris
Fred Hearman
John Moss
Graham Moule
John Nash
John Powell
George Stewart
Barrie Woolford

Table 8

Hassan Akhtar
Lawrence Eaves
Chris Gill
Edward Hill
Jack Hillyer
Benjamin Hopkins
Sam Hoxley

Table 9

Laurence Jones
Tom Judd
Rasvinder Mahil
Oliver Malik
Manos Mantaropoulos
Frazer Marchant-North
Malique Maynard

Table 10

Shane McKenna
Joseph Moore
Benjamin Page
Curtis Piper
Ross Taylor
Alex Thame
Joshua Worsfold

OMA Annual Dinner – Booking Form

Friday 23rd March 2018 at 6.30 pm for 7.30 pm

You are warmly invited to come to the above event in the cordial surroundings of Maidenhead Golf Club. As in recent years there will be no guest speaker and other speeches will be kept to a minimum to give those attending more opportunity to converse with other members present.

The ticket price will, as last year, be £27 for paid-up members and £29 for Old Maidonians who are not members of the Association. Those joining on the night will be refunded the £2 difference in ticket price. For those who would like to visit the School there will be an opportunity of making a tour at 5 pm, starting at the School Reception. Please mark the form below accordingly. If you or any members of your party require a vegetarian meal, please indicate on the form below. The bar will close at 11.30 pm and the Club will close at 11.45 pm.

Tickets will be available only from Mrs Betty Collin, although orders may be left at the School Office, care of Mrs Read. **All orders must be accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope.** Tickets will be issued only for named Old Boys. Members wishing to make party bookings must name those on whose behalf they are purchasing tickets. Please use the booking-form and complete all requested details. **Bookings cannot be accepted if they arrive after Monday 19^h March 2018.**

To: Mrs Betty Collin, 18 Badminton Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 4QT (tel: 01628 626349:
e-mail bettyncollin@gmail.com

Name* Address.....

..... Tel.....

Email address.....

At School from.....to.....

I wish to attend the Annual Dinner on Thursday 23rd March 2018 and I shall be in a party which includes the Old Maidonians whose names and addresses are listed below. I enclose a cheque (endorsed a/c payee only) drawn to the Old Maidonians' Association, **together with a stamped and addressed envelope**, for tickets as follows:

..... tickets at £27 each, ... tickets at £29 each. The total value of my cheque is £.....

(Signed)..... Years in School From To

Names* and initials of party

Address

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

*Please include first name (or name known by) and initials

Numbers of vegetarian meals required

Names of those interested in touring the school at 5 pm

.....

.....

Continue on a separate sheet, if necessary

