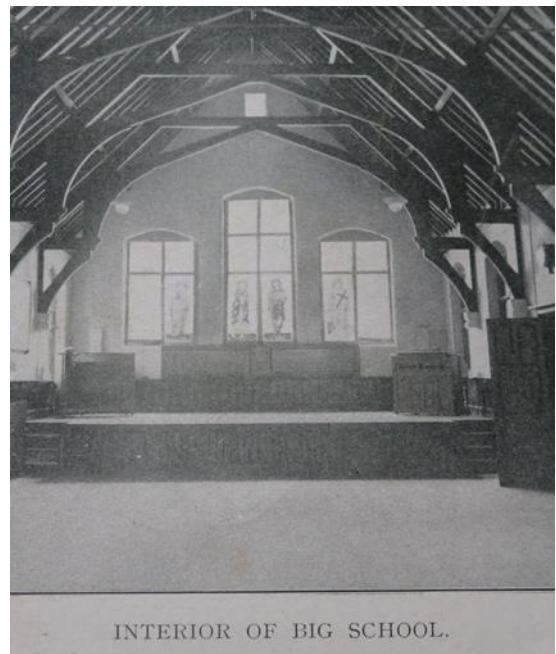


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INTRODUCTION

The Big Hall at Maidstone Grammar School is an impressive, and for many, even an iconic building. It is the focal point of the School's community and it helps to establish and embed the School ethos and tradition. The wood panelling engraved in gold letters with the names of previous Head Masters, as well hundreds of notable scholars, are, on a sunny day, illuminated in a beautiful, even divine, light because of the beautiful six stained glass windows. These windows reflect both local and national events between 1894-1918, commemorating personal tragedy, national sacrifice and monarchical jubilees. All six of the windows were eventually in the 'Big School room' at the Tonbridge Road site. However, the photo (right) was taken prior to the Great War and therefore those two windows were not yet in situ. Since 1930, all six have taken pride of place in the Barton Road Big Hall. For all those who have, like me, looked in wonder at these works of art, I hope to shed some light on the origins and stories behind their creation. A particular thank you to Andrew Toley, Latin Teacher at MGS (1977-1998) and who kindly translated the Latin inscriptions on the windows.



Though I have endeavoured to ensure the following information is correct, I apologise in advance for any errors.

Graham Walker, MGS History Teacher, 1981-2018



Window of Samuel 1894

5



Window of Queen Esther 1897

9



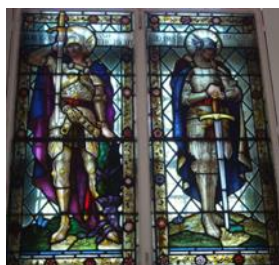
Window of Timothy 1897

11



Boer War Memorial Window 1902

12



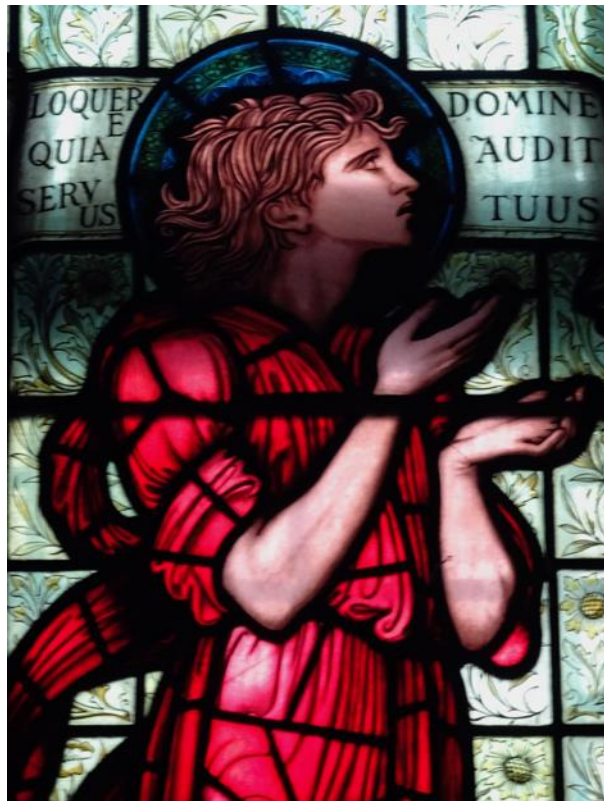
**Great War (1914-18) Commemoration
Windows 1921**

15

Window of Samuel in memory of Percy Le Clair Hills who was tragically killed on November 5th 1894

MGS experienced one of its most terrifying and saddest events on Monday November 5th 1894; an expected evening of fun and fireworks to mark Guy Fawkes Night, ended in the death of one of the students, Percy Le Clair Hills.

Percy Le Clair Hills, from 'Lenworth', Ashford Road, joined MGS in January 1891 and showed wide-ranging interests and talents before his school career was tragically cut short: he came second in the 1891 Sports Day Bicycle Race (1 mile); he was second overall in Mr Williams Third Form of 20 students, being 2nd in French and 5th in Latin and Maths; in 1892 he was awarded the Old Boys' Scholarship for Modern Languages; he achieved 3rd Class, 3rd Division in the College of Preceptors' Examination and at the 1893 Speech Day he performed in two scenes from 'The School for Scandal', playing Joseph Surface. He was the oldest of six brothers who attended MGS, three of whom started after his death.



The obituary in the Christmas 1894 Maidstonian, gives a an insight into the terrible event:

"On the night of November 5th, the boys, according to a long established custom in the School, held their annual display of a bonfire and fireworks. Owing to the liberality of those people who subscribed to the boys' fund, the display was of a more gorgeous description even than usual. Everything was going off well, and the large company of visitors and children assembled to see the display in the playground were enjoying themselves to the full, when it was discovered that one of the elder boys, taking part in the letting off of the fireworks, was in flames. In the darkness, for the bonfire was by this time nearly extinguished, it was impossible at first to find out definitely what had happened. Many gentlemen rushed to the assistance of the poor boy, among them Mr Hills, whose son, Percy Le Clair, as was afterwards discovered, was the victim of the accident. After a few minutes they managed to secure him, and tear off his overcoat, from the pocket

of which a Roman candle in a burning condition was discharging itself full in his face. He was borne into the School House in an unconscious condition, and Nurse Brockway, the School matron, immediately came to his assistance. Drs. Hoar, Ground, Shaw and Monckton were quickly in attendance, and everything was done promptly and carefully to restore animation. After some time he partially recovered consciousness, and the next day, thanks in great measure to the unremitting care of Nurse Brockway, and Nurse Bullock of the West Kent Hospital, he rallied considerably; but the shock proved too much for the system, and the next day he rapidly sank, and passed away peacefully between 11 and 12 on the night of 7th of November, the immediate cause of death being suffusion of the brain.

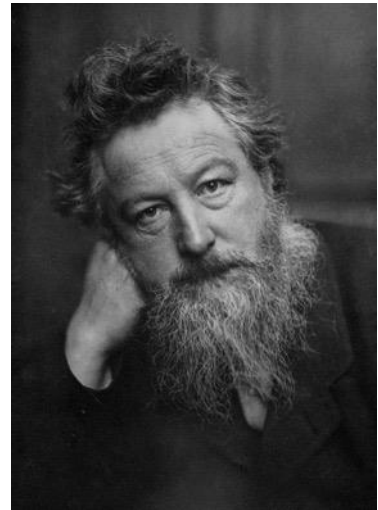
At the inquest, the evidence seemed to show that he had lighted a Roman candle, and then, remembering possibly that the Head Master had arranged that the fireworks should not begin till the signal was given, hastily extinguished it and put it in the breast pocket of his overcoat, when it suddenly burst into flames.

Percy Le Clair Hills [aged 15] was deservedly popular and beloved in the School, and his death will long be remembered as a personal loss to his many friends among the Masters and boys.

The funeral took place on Monday November 12th and was attended by the whole school. The first part of the service, a beautifully simple and impressive ceremony, took place in All Saints, where only a few days before poor Hills had sat with his school fellows listening to Mr Glazebrook's sermon on Founder's Day. The coffin was entirely covered with wreaths and crosses of white flowers sent by his school fellows and other friends, and conspicuous among them one sent by the Head Master in the School colours, violet and gold, resting on the top of which was Percy's School cap. Canon Dyke and the Rev S Priestley said the service at All Saints, and the Head Master the closing portion at the Cemetery."

At the Coroner's Inquest, the Coroner, Mr Tatham, gave a verdict of 'accidental death'. Following the tragedy, a fund was raised, subscribed to by the pupils and Masters of MGS to commemorate his memory. Donations came in and it was quickly decided that a memorial window would be organised, to occupy one portion of the East window in the Big School Room: "the design, chosen from among those submitted by Messrs Morris & Co, to whom the work has been entrusted, represents the figure of the youthful Samuel. Such a design, carried out by a firm of artists so eminent as Messrs. Morris, should be a proud possession to the School. We believe that we are correct in stating that this will be the only 'Morris' window in Maidstone."

William Morris was an English artist, poet and politician, who became the leading light in the English Arts and Craft Movement. He produced decorative art in a range of different forms, including: textiles, furniture, wallpaper, stained glass windows, book design and tapestry. He was friends with the painters Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.



In 1861 William, and his wife, Jane Burden, started their own fine art craft work company, called Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., making handcrafted furniture, tableware, soft furnishings and wallpaper, and in 1875 William started a new company, Morris and Co.

A famous William Morris quote is:

"Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

Edward Burne-Jones, the designer of the Samuel Window, was born in Birmingham in 1833, and after studying at Oxford University, he turned his back on a planned career in the church, and dedicated himself to art.

Enthused by the work of the new Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Burne-Jones briefly acted as an apprentice to one of its founder members, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In time, Burne-Jones himself would form part of a so-called 'second wave' of Pre-Raphaelites, frequently depicting scenes from Arthurian legend and medieval romance. Like William Morris, his lifelong friend, Burne-Jones sought to re-enchant a world that he felt had been sullied physically by the Industrial Revolution and morally by the unchecked capitalism of the British Empire. He thought art's job, far from capturing modern existence, was to offer an escape from it:

"I mean, by a picture, a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be — in a light better than any light that ever shone, in a land no one can define or remember, only desire."

Burne-Jones started out making pen-and-ink drawings and watercolours for a circle of friends and



Edward Burne-Jones with William Morris 1874

private buyers. He supplemented his income at this time by producing (usually unsigned) designs for the decorative arts firm, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., like the one of Samuel (below).

The tribute window to Percy Le Clair Hills, was duly completed, and on Friday November 1st, 1895 just less than one year after the tragic accident, a ceremony was held. *"In the presence of the Masters and boys, and Mr, Mrs and Miss Hills, the beautiful window in the School Hall, to the memory of Percy Le Clair Hills was unveiled by Mrs Watson. The window is a fine example of Morris' perfection of form and colouring; it represents the child Samuel. The figure is in a ruby garment, the background being of a diamond pattern in pale green. At the head are the words: 'Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus' [Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening – 1 Samuel 10v9." There was also a brass plaque below which stated: 'In memorium Percy Le Clair Hills huius scholae scholaris a.d.VI.Kal.Jun.MDCCCLXXIX.nati A.d.VIIId.Nov. MDCCCX CIV moruii Cognati praeceptores, aequales officio pio fenestram hanc posuerunt.'* [In memory of Percy Le Clair Hills, scholar of this school, born 27th May 1879, died 7th November 1894. His relatives, teachers and fellow pupils put up this window in an affectionate act of service.]



Also the July 1898 Maidstonian stated: *"A Mural Tablet has been put up in the Large School Room under the Memorial window, bearing the inscription: 'In memoriam Percy Le Clair Hills filii dilectissimi pater materque dolentes hanc fenestram posuerunt. Intellexit quia Dominus vocaret puerum.'"* [In Memory of Percy Le Clair Hills. The grieving father and mother of their dearly beloved son put up this window. He was intelligent and the Lord called their son.]

The Brass Plaque and Mural Tablet are currently in the School Archives.

Window of Queen Esther to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee 1897 (cost £21 2s4d)

The Christmas 1896 Maidstonian stated: *"One of the most attractive features in it [School Hall] is the exquisite window designed by the firm of the late Mr William Morris, and put up by the School in the memory of Percy Le Clair Hills. The window will never look at its best until we have a pendant window to fill in the empty space by its side.*

What more fitting memorial of affection for the Queen could the School possess than a window to supply this deficiency, and to be at the same time a perpetual reminder of our loyalty and patriotism? Such a window – designed, of course, by the same hand that designed the figure of Samuel in the present window would cost, we are told, about £25.

A trifling donation from every boy at present in the School, and from a corresponding number of old boys, amounting to 2/6 per head, would do the thing. Is it too much to hope that this suggestion will not be allowed to fall to the ground, and that before the Jubilee Day of 1897 the work will not only be in train, but a veritable fait accompli?"



However, the April 1897 Maidstonian informed of a change of plan: *"A proposal has been made that the money subscribed for the Diamond Jubilee Memorial should be used in enlarging the present Sixth Form room, which is at present very inconveniently over-crowded, to form a School Library and Museum, as well as a Class Room. Anyone who has used the Class Room in its present cramped condition will appreciate the benefit of such a change. Since the subscription was first started, Mr Hills has generously undertaken to put in the window corresponding to the present Hills Memorial, it is therefore felt a third window can for the present be dispensed with, and the money expended in a way more permanently useful to the School. Subscriptions from old boys for this object will be most gratefully received by Mr Blackhouse, secretary to the Old Boys' Society."* However, the original idea took precedence and the July 1897 Maidstonian states that two more windows were being crafted: *"A further gift of a second window, in addition to the original one subscribed for by past and present boys*

has been made to the School by Mr & Mrs Hills. It is to be a companion to the window put up in memory of Percy Le Clair Hills, and is intended as a completion of the memorial. The subject is to be Timothy; and the subject of the Jubilee window will be Queen Esther. The designs are, as in the case of Samuel, by Sir Edwin Burne-Jones, the work of Messrs. Morris. It is hoped that both windows will be in place by Speech Day, which, we suppose, will as usual be held in October."

The Christmas 1897 Maidstonian proudly informs its readers that: *"The second Hills' memorial window and the Jubilee window, are now both of them in their place in the Hall, where they are an object of admiration and, we might add, art instruction, to all who have pleasure of standing in front of them every morning at prayers."*



The motto on the Esther window is:

"Nun-quam laetata est ancilla tua nisi in te Domine Deus."

[Never did your servant rejoice except in you, Lord God]

Window of Timothy (to go alongside the window of Samuel) donated by Mr & Mrs Hills

The motto on the Timothy window is:

"Dabit tibi Dominus in omnibus intellectum." [The Lord will give you insight into all things. 2 Timothy 2v7]

The design is, as in the case of Samuel, by Sir Edwin Burne-Jones, and the original cartoon (below) is held in the Art Institute of Chicago. The glass is the work of Messrs. Morris.



Fig. 2 – TIMOTHY

*(part of a three-light window,
with figures of St James and St Mark) – 1911*

H.145 W.45 cm - H.57 W.18 in

Burne-Jones's original cartoon for this figure (now in the Art Institute of Chicago) was drawn in 1872 for a window in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford. His account book records a charge of £12 for 'Big Timothy' (to distinguish it from a smaller design of Timothy and Eunice for the same Oxford window). The cartoon, numbered 'BJ 23' by Morris & Co., was used for a number of windows in schools, including: William Morris's own school, Marlborough College (1877); Forest School, Walthamstow, where Morris's brothers had been pupils (1881); and Maidstone Grammar School (1897).

Memorial Window to the four Old Maidstonians who died in the Boer War

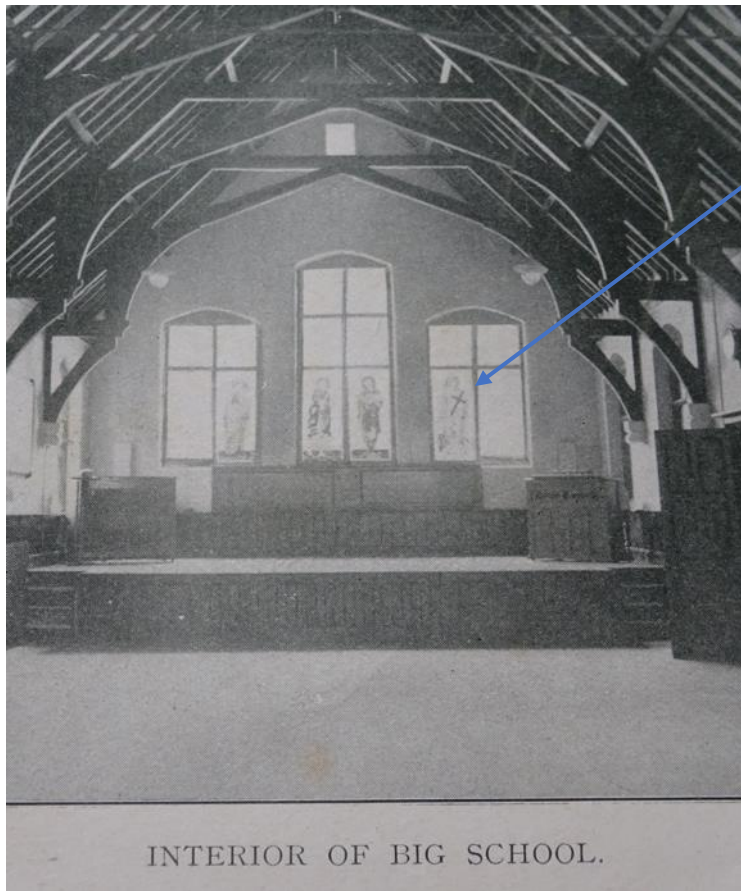
The long reign of Queen Victoria is often viewed as the zenith of the British Empire, which covered over 12m square miles, one quarter of the worlds land mass. Just two years after her Diamond Jubilee a war in South Africa against the Boers erupted and sadly four Old Maidstonians would die while serving in the conflict.

As early as the Christmas 1900 edition of the Maidstonian the idea of a commemoration to the two OMs who had already died, Crawford and Hulseberg, was being mooted, and at the Old Maidstonian Supper, held at the Star Hotel on Saturday December 15th 1900, it was suggested that *"they should put in the Grammar School a memorial window"*. It was believed it would cost about £20 (equivalent to about £2,500 today) and the Old Boys passed round a paper to obtain promises of subscriptions. *"He (Mr HJ Day) hoped they would obtain the whole amount that night and it could be then handed over to the Head Master (Reverend CG Duffield) to carry out the scheme as he wished"*. In reply, the Head Master preferred that the OMs carried out the memorial scheme and suggested *"that if they had enough funds they should also put up a plaque in the school bearing the names of all those OMs who fought in the War"*. That evening £15 5 shillings was raised for the project, and the shortfall was quickly accrued by further fund raising, and plans by the elected OM Committee went ahead. Unfortunately two more OMs died in the conflict, but by April 1902, the memorial window (see above) was ready.



The window was designed by Messrs. Burlison and Grylls, of Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, a firm with the highest reputation for artistic workmanship. The figure is that of St George, and the colouring and general treatment of the design was arranged so as to harmonise as much as possible

with the stained glass windows already in position which were the work of the late Mr William Morris' firm. The July 1902 Maidstonian quoted an article from the South Eastern Gazette about the unveiling of the window:



INTERIOR OF BIG SCHOOL.

"The School Head Master stated how the figure represented in the window was that of St George, the Patron Saint of England. St George had been chosen by Christian nations as the symbol of Christian fortitude. Since the 8th century he had been looked upon as the Patron Saint of soldiers, and since the 13th century he had been honoured as the Patron Saint of England. His name was used as a battle cry in the Crusades; and he was chosen by Edward III as the Patron of the highest Order of Knighthood in England. The cross he bore on his shield was

the foundation of our national flag; it was carried on every battleship in the British Navy; and that day, April 23rd, had for nearly 1,000 years been associated with his name. Our soldiers had fought bravely and had cheerfully endured the greatest hardships; they had been merciful in the hour of victory and most patient in the hour of defeat; they had shown the utmost tenderness to the women and children of their foes; and they had kept the Red Cross Shield of St George, the escutcheon of British honour, bright and unstained. Battered and bruised it had been on many a stricken field, but, raised as it was to defend the cause of justice and equity between man and man, it would be laid down, when peace reigned once more, absolutely unstained and untarnished. In this work they were proud to think that some 30 of the Old Boys of that school had taken part in various capacities (applause), and four of them, alas, had sealed their devotion to their country with their lives. It was those four they were commemorating that afternoon." The article went on to give a summary of Major Cornwallis' speech at the unveiling ceremony which included: *"The four boys who had given their lives for their country ... were simple, brave, honest men in their lives, and they were glorious in their deaths, not only to themselves and to their country, but to the school which reared them (applause).*

They were often told that they had faults in their education system; they all knew that no system was perfect, but at any rate their education system had brought out in England one thing, and that was love of the School. That love never weakened but it rather grew in strength as the years passed by. He knew of no picture that came back to one with more tender recollections than the picture headed 'Floreat Etona', which was a regular tradition of the school at which he had the honour to be educated, and he was sure they had the same at Maidstone which appealed to them with equal force ... Of the Old Boys who had died, Major F Crawford was a County cricketer, who had served in Africa, Ireland and India, and who was taken off by disease, and they deeply deplored his loss. Corporal F Smith was one of his own men in his own Squadron, a kind friend and neighbour, and a son of his old brother Churchwarden, Mr F Smith of Loddington – a true Englishman and a man of Kent. Harold Hulseberg was a son of a late and gallant officer in the country's territorial Regiment, and his skill was very useful in the engineering line. The last of the four was Reginald Blake. They knew that by his bravery he saved the hill which it was the object of his General to take and saved many lives besides. Captain Gilmour wrote that he could only say he died as a brave man should, doing his duty and facing big odds. (loud applause) ...



The inscription at the bottom of the windows reads: 'In memory of Major FF Crawford, AVD, Lance Corporal FW Smith, 36th Company Imperial Yeomanry, Trooper HE Hulseberg, BSA Police and Trooper R Blake, 69th Company Imperial Yeomanry, who died in the service of their country in South Africa 1900-1901; this window was given by the Old Boys of the School. '

Windows commemorating the Old Maidstonians who gave their lives in the Great War (1914-18)

At least 324 Old Maidstonians served in the Great War, and sadly 46 gave the ultimate sacrifice. Clearly there was a national clamour to remember the nearly ¾million British servicemen who died, which culminated in the formation of the Commonwealth War Grave Commission which coordinated the massive programme of designing, constructing, and maintaining the Cenotaphs, tomb of the unknown soldier, memorials and cemeteries, led by Fabian Ware and inspired by



the designs of Sir Edwin Lutyens. Discussions were also being held at MGS about how to commemorate their lost comrades. The Christmas 1919 Maidstonian edition states that: *"A Representative Meeting of Old Maidstonians was held in the Town Hall last Term to consider the steps to be taken to raise a suitable Memorial to the Old Maidstonians who have taken part in the war. Mr Frank Fremlin was voted to the Chair, and he asked for suggestions from those present. Mr W Day suggested a handsome Lych Gate, and Mr Ruck showed a design for it. There is no doubt that it could be a distinct ornament to Tonbridge Road. Another suggestion which found support was that of a New Library. In the end the meeting elected a special Sub-Committee to deal with the matter."*

The Easter 1920 Maidstonian gave an update, including the following: *"It was unanimously decided by Committee of Old Maidstonians that the War Memorial should take the form of a School Library. For this purpose at least £2,000 (nearly £100,000 today) is necessary. The Committee are confident that all Old Boys and Parents will generously subscribe to a fund for this purpose. As the matter is urgent the Committee would be glad if all intending subscribers would kindly reply to the Secretary before May 1st, stating the amount of their subscriptions. All replies are to be sent to AJ Crouch, 56 London Road, Maidstone."*

However, the July 1920 Maidstonian stated: *"The form of the Memorial is not yet definitively decided upon, but most Old Boys are agreed that the Old Boys Scholarship shall be placed on a permanent footing, and that part of the fund shall be allotted for that purpose."* Then the Christmas 1920 edition adds: *"On Friday, December 10th, a meeting of the subscribers to the War Memorial took*

place at the Grammar School. There was not a large attendance, but the meeting was very unanimous. It was decided that the memorial should be two stained glass windows in the Big Schoolroom, costing about £100, and in addition two memorial boards, containing the names of those who gave their lives. Messrs. Clayton and Bell, the well-known London firm, have the matter in hand, and it is expected that the windows will be erected about Easter next. There will also be left a sum of about £150, which is to be invested in the names of the Mayor, the Town Clerk, and the Head Master, the income to provide two annual prizes for the two boys who bring most distinction to the School during the yearly Public Examinations."

The ambitious Library project had been dropped, possibly due to a short-fall in donations, or even because there was already talk that the growing School would have to move in the short-to-mid-term. The School did move to the Barton Road site just 10 years later, and clearly the stained glass windows could be moved and stand majestically in the new building.

The July 1921 Maidstonian proudly announced the unveiling of the Great War stained glass windows:

"Unveiling and Dedication of the War Memorial Windows"

[The following is reprinted from the South Eastern Gazette on June 21st 1921]

"The beautiful stained glass windows erected in the Maidstone Grammar School by Old Maidstonians and present boys to commemorate the heroism and self-sacrifice of former scholars of the School who 'gave their all' in the Great War, were unveiled by the Rev CG Duffield, MA, Head Master of the School from 1898 to 1913, assisted by the Rev S Richards, a former Master, on Thursday afternoon, in the presence of a large number of present and past scholars, with their relatives and friends



The windows, which are situated at the east of the main hall, are of stained glass, the one showing a knight with outstretched sword and carrying a laurel wreath, going to the war, with the words 'For God and the Right' just above his head: the other showing a knight resting upon his sword after battle, with the words 'Who dies if England lives?' above his head.



Below are two oak panels bearing the following inscription and the names of the fallen: 'Olim meminisse juvabit'. The two outer lights of this window and these boards were erected, and two annual prizes for distinction in public examinations, were established by the Governors and past and present members of the School, in glorious memory of the Old Maidstonians who fell in the Great War, 1914-1918 [list of 43 names given].



The mayor, prior to performing the unveiling ceremony, remarked that they were gathered there that afternoon to honour to the brave. It was a peculiar pleasure to him to take part in those proceedings as he was an Old Maidstonian himself, and looked back upon his connection with the School with the greatest interest. It was a pleasure to them all to have amongst them that afternoon their old friends, Mr Duffield and Mr Richards, both of whom were very largely responsible for the training of most of those men they were honouring that day

It had been freely claimed during the past century that the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton. The idea underlying that claim was undoubtedly true, and he thought that we of the present generation had equal claim to the truth of the statement that the German was beaten on the playing fields of our public Schools. The grand tradition of our Schools to play the game and play it all the time doubtless saved the Empire again. They were all proud to hear time after time during the war of the marvellous spirit of the young subalterns fresh from School carrying on in the worst places and under the worst conditions, with only a thought of their side. Surely the future of the Empire was safe so long as those traditions endured ...

The Head Master said the memorials would become an intimate part of the School as a beautiful gift of adornment and as a remembrance of great sacrifice and a high example of those who gathered there, and to those who would come after them and who would gather there day by day and year by year."

The hope, and expectation, that the Great War would be “the war to end all wars” sadly did not materialise. Just two decades later MGS was having discussions on how best to commemorate another generation of Maidstonians who gave their lives during World War II. This time the idea of a War Memorial Library would come to fruition and paid for by the monies raised by subscriptions organised by the Old Maidstonians. This paid for the furnishing of a larger School Library, with a Roll of Honour (to the 70 who died) to be permanently displayed there. This was the project finally decided on, but others had been discussed by the relevant committee such as:

- The purchase of premises suitable for the formation of a club
- The purchase of a Sports Ground
- An Avenue of Remembrance
- Provision of an organ
- A Memorial in the Quadrangle
- An endowment for an annual prize etc
- Seats around the playing field

And most interestingly,

The purchase of Corpus Christi Hall, site of the School from 1549-1870

After World War II over £950 was raised in donations (Over £36,000 in today’s value) and the unveiling of the Commemoration Boards in 1949 occurred as part of the 400th Anniversary Service, at All Saints on Sunday 3rd July led by the Archbishop of Canterbury.



The oak panel (which cost £69) was designed by Mr Yabsley of Beckenham and bears in the centre a large cross and at the two upper corners the arms of the School and the Corpus Christi emblem. At the foot is the inscription *“Remember those who came not home from war.”*

The War Memorial Library had a major extension, refurbishment and modernisation, in 2019 with the help of donations from Old Maidstonians. It was also appropriate that a new Commemoration Board was unveiled to recognise the OMs who have sacrificed their lives while in service for their country since

1945. Though OMs will undoubtedly continue to play significant roles in the nations Armed Forces, let us hope that no further names will need to be added, and no new memorials will be necessary.