

Sir Peter Lampl and Open Access

Some parents may have heard philanthropist Sir Peter Lampl saying on BBC Radio 4 this morning that the Government should provide funds for children from less wealthy families to allow them to attend academic independent schools. He also wrote a short article published in today's *Times*. Sir Peter, head of the Sutton Trust, wishes to encourage open access to academic education on merit. He mentions MGS, together with several other major academic schools, as supportive of his views.

As parents will be aware, when the Assisted Places Scheme came to an end following the election of the Labour Government in 1997, MGS began the process of raising significant bursary funds so that we might remain as socially diverse as possible. We now support some 250 families. However, even with funds for bursaries now close to £20 million, we still have to turn away many able applicants for bursaries each year. Because our funds are limited, we also cannot help as much as we would like to do the many families make great sacrifices to pay part or full fees for their sons at MGS. This is why our efforts on behalf of the Bursary Fund will continue as we approach our 500th anniversary so that we might provide even greater assistance.

The Assisted Places Scheme was an initiative established in no small way through the efforts of a former MGS High Master (Peter Mason). Its removal was politically rather than educationally (or even financially) motivated. If Sir Peter were able to convince the present Government that it should commit at least some funds to pupils who, having demonstrated their academic potential, might benefit from a highly academic independent education, I would welcome this – so long as our freedoms as an independent school would not be constrained. This would not diminish our own fund-raising efforts in the slightest, but would help us to provide additional support for families of boys at MGS.

Listen to Sir Peter at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9678000/9678580.stm

Year 7 Parents: Forum

The second forum for parents of boys in Year 7 will take place in the Theatre at 6:00 pm on Monday 23rd January. Please email highmaster@mgs.org if you would like to attend.

Entrance Examination

The School will be closed on Wednesday 25 January: this is the day of the annual 11+ entrance examination for external applicants.

Special Lectures and Visits

On Thursday 26 January:

The Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Stephen Twigg, will be visiting MGS. He will tour the School and meet a number of our students.

On Friday 27 January, a very busy day is planned:

Andrew Bingham is the Conservative MP for High Peak. Mr Bingham has a keen interest in the world of business. He will talk to a number of our boys from his constituency and also meet the sixth-form students who have formed Young Enterprise companies this year.

Former Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lamont, will give a lecture to sixth-form students. He will speak about his career and the current economic situation.

A team from BAC, the Cheshire-based Briggs Automotive Company, will visit the Junior School to present and talk about their Mono Car which has been featured on BBC television's *Top Gear*.

Old Mancunian Martin Sixsmith will deliver the inaugural Ian Leverton Lecture. Ian Leverton taught Russian and German and was the Head of Modern Foreign Languages at MGS until his early retirement in 2006 owing to ill health. Sadly Ian died in 2009 and this annual lecture has been established in his memory. Martin Sixsmith was a BBC foreign correspondent, most notably reporting from Moscow during the Cold War, and is one of Ian's former pupils. The lecture will be attended by all boys learning Russian as well as others with a strong interest in Modern Foreign Languages.

University Success

So far our sixth-form students have received 11 offers from Cambridge and 11 offers from Oxford. Four of the Cambridge offers are for Mathematics. My congratulations to all these boys and also to those who have already received offers from other leading universities. Many are still waiting anxiously for decisions from Cambridge and elsewhere.

Finally ...

I know that parents will join me in welcoming former Lancashire Cricket Captain and Old Mancunian Mark Chilton to the staff of MGS.

Good luck to the Year 6 junior boys who will be singing in the MEN Arena in two weeks' time as part of the Young Voices Concert.

Congratulations to Aaron Goldman who has been selected for the U15 England Independent Schools FA Football team.

As always, these and other items of news appear (or will soon appear) in the Latest News section of the website www.mgs.org.

My very best wishes

Dr Christopher Ray