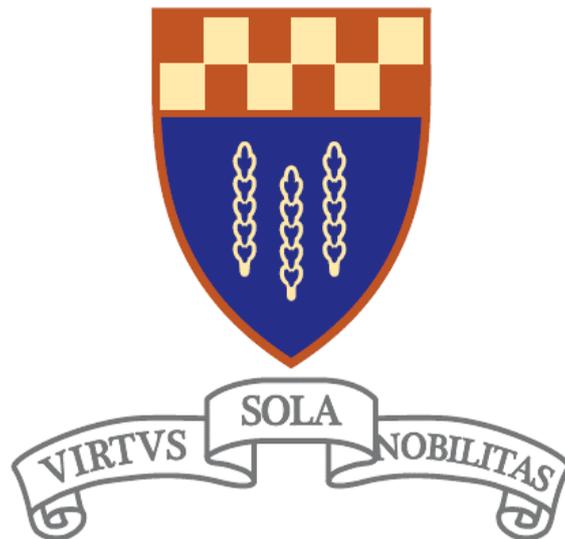


The Pavior



The Newsletter
of
The High Pavement Society
(founded 1989)

February 2020

Your Committee

The Committee Members listed below are always delighted to talk to you on any matter – particularly if you have a contribution to make to this publication!

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Faces to Remember
Keith Carlisle
Chemistry Master at HP
1955-63

Committee notices

REMINDER

From the Treasurer

Members are reminded that the annual subscription will be increased to **£15.00** with effect from July 1st.

It will be necessary for all subscribing members to **notify their bank** to change their standing order accordingly¹. Also it would be of great help if they could advise the Treasurer, Robin Taylor, once this has been done.

Those few members who have yet to adopt the Standing Order as their method of payment are earnestly requested to **make the change now** by requesting a Standing Order mandate, or be aware that a payment by cheque should be made to the Treasurer **by July 1st**. Please do not wait to be asked !

Robin

ooOoo

THE NEW HOME FOR THE OLD SCHOOL TROPHIES

Following consultations with the management of the High Pavement Sixth Form, Nottingham College (as it is now known) your Committee decided that it would not be practical to provide the trophy cabinet that we originally proposed and described in *The Pavior* last year.

It was felt that it would be a more suitable use of the available floor space to provide two locked glass cabinets which would sit alongside similar units in the foyer of the Chaucer Street premises.

The cabinets have been ordered and delivered and, at the time of writing, we are awaiting the good services of Nottingham College to assemble them and site them appropriately.

The Committee would like to express their thanks to the donors of the generous contributions which have funded the total cost of the cabinets.

ooOoo

AN APPEAL FOR HELP

Introduction by Alex Rae

*A few weeks ago, I was contacted by **Carolyn Steedman**, Emeritus Professor of History at Warwick University. She is researching into Stanley Middleton's play, 'The Captain from Nottingham', which was first performed as High Pavement's annual school play in March 1971 and was subsequently produced professionally on BBC Radio 4. Her particular views on the subject are given in the article that follows.*

She will also be telling us about the results of her research at the Annual Lunch of the High Pavement Society, to be held at The Lady Bay, Trent Boulevard, West Bridgford NG2 5DX, on Thursday 23 April.

Alex Rae

ooOoo

¹ [The lady at my bank took one minute to do this with nothing to do on my part! –Ed.]

STANLEY MIDDLETON AND 'THE CAPTAIN FROM NOTTINGHAM'

Readers of *The Pavior* will not need telling that Stanley Middleton taught at High Pavement Grammar School from 1947 until his retirement in 1981, serving as Head of English from 1958 onwards. During those years he wrote 20 of his 43 published novels—and in 1971 a play-script for High Pavement students: *The Captain from Nottingham*, about the 1817 Pentrich Rebellion. [This was a short-lived armed uprising by discontented workers led by one Jeremiah Brandreth.] The play was first performed in 1971. The script is on permanent loan to Local Studies, Nottingham Central Library, where I read it, just before Christmas 2019.

There have been many plays about the Pentrich Uprising broadcast on schools radio between 1950 and 1970. However, Middleton's radio play was not one of these: it was directed at an *adult audience* as a Radio 4 *Saturday Night Theatre* production on 22 January 1972.

One of the things in which I'm most interested is the intended audience for Middleton's play. It was written for performance by schoolchildren for an audience that presumably included them; it was promoted to adults by the BBC. Yet one of my wonderfully helpful *Pavior* correspondents (yes! I have them already!) remembers being filed into the school hall just before 3pm to listen to the repeat, broadcast the following Wednesday. I would love to talk to anyone who remembers *The Captain from Nottingham* school play in 1971: audience, performers, costume makers, stagehands and helpers. I'm interested in the way in which Middleton's play related to the curriculum in English and History in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

I can discover from other sources whether or not the Luddite Rebellion and the Pentrich Uprising were taught at O-level and A-level, but not how they were presented in the classroom.

Most interesting is what Middleton cut from his own High Pavement script when writing for the BBC. In the original, five-act High Pavement play there is, for example, a long stretch of dialogue between gloomy 'rebels' in a pub taking a break from marching on Nottingham—cursing the pouring rain—the technical errors made by Brandreth—his character—what drives him—how they're not 'Rising' but failing. Nothing like this for the BBC version. The High Pavement script is more psychologically nuanced, more historically informed, more *sophisticated*, than the BBC version. And it was written for school students to perform and understand. That's what *I* want to understand: the school that made this play possible.

If you have any memories—any information, ideas or thoughts—about the play or about the history curriculum in the 1960s—please contact me at c.k.steedman@warwick.ac.uk.

I would also be particularly interested to hear from the Manning Grammar School girls who, so my *Pavior* informant tells me, were 'bused in' to play Brandreth's wife Ann, the pub landlady, and some brave, resistant wives and daughters in the rebels' target households.

Carolyn Steedman Emeritus Professor of History, University of Warwick.

ooOoo

NOTICE

THE HIGH PAVEMENT SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION LUNCHEON

This event, one of our most important gatherings, will take place on **Thursday April 23rd 2020 at the 'Lady Bay', 89 Trent Boulevard, West Bridgford.** Personal invitations giving full details will be sent by post to all members in the usual way, some weeks before then. Put this date in your diaries, now.

REMEMBRANCE AT HIGH PAVEMENT NOVEMBER 2019

On Friday November 8th 2019 members of the High Pavement Society took part in a Joint Ceremony of Remembrance before the School War Memorial, from 1914-18. This plaque was originally in the hall of the Stanley Road building and now graces the entrance hall of High Pavement Sixth Form, Nottingham College, on Chaucer Street, Nottingham. Also present were many students of the College, who had expressed great interest in the ceremony.

Attendant on the proceedings was Antony Flanagan, wearing appropriate military uniform and accompanied on this occasion by his son. The services of Mr Flanagan, an accomplished bugler for The Royal British Legion, were secured for the occasion by Ken Kirk, President of the Society, who was pleased to be instrumental in ensuring that the soundings of *The Last Post* and *Reveille* were heard throughout the building!



Participants in the Ceremony of Remembrance

2019

(From left to right)

Rebecca Easton (student)
John Chambers (HPS)
Malcolm Pilkington (HPS)
Anthony Flanagan (Bugler)
John Elliott (HPS)
Graham Wybrow (HPS)
Ken Kirk (President HPS)
Robin Taylor (HPS)

The President of the Society, introduced the proceedings with a short explanation of the significance of Remembrance and the manner in which this ceremony would attempt to replicate the occasion when the memorial was originally dedicated.

Four speakers had undertaken to read out the names of those members of High Pavement School staff and students who had died during the Second World War, together with their ages when their lives were so tragically ended. Three of the speakers were members of the Society and the fourth was Rebecca Eaton, representing the students of the College.

After the listing of the names was completed the President recited the verse from *'For the Fallen'* written by Laurence Binyon at the outbreak of the First World War:

***They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.***

The call of *The Last Post* was then sounded by Anthony Flanagan, followed by two minutes silence, which was respected throughout the College. Bugler Flanagan then sounded the call of *Reveille* and Robin Taylor, for the Society, laid a wreath before the memorial.

The President then read the Second World War *'Kohima Epitaph'*:

***When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.***

After a long silence of reflection, particularly by the students, the gathering dispersed.

ooOoo

FROM OUR READERS
FROM CLIVE BAGSHAW



Dear Editor, I am Clive Bagshaw, always known as ‘Baggy’. In this photograph I am third from the right on the front row of the rugby group. I am quite unmistakable with one ear sticking out further than the other. The photo was taken in my first year at HP in late 1956.

My introduction to the rugby team was simply, ‘You’re a big lad—forward line for you my boy!’ However, my fondest High Pavement memory was undoubtedly of my English teacher Stan Middleton. He lived on Cantrell Road, Bulwell at that time and used to walk through ‘Marble Arch’ from Hucknall Road, down Andover Road and up Teviot Road to Gainsford Crescent and High Pavement Grammar School, which had just moved from Stanley Road to this new building. I lived on Andover Road and invariable met Stan at the junction of Andover Road and Teviot Road and would walk up to school with him.

What an incredible man he was. We would talk all the way, of many subjects. He was such an incredible encourager and he had enjoyed a most interesting life. His love of the English Language brushed off on me and I always chose to be articulate like him and to write. I have penned many poems over the years and written many articles that have won me some credit but I don’t think I would ever have done so had it not been for him.

We got on very well together and from time to time he would invite pupils to tea at his home where we were warmly welcomed by his lovely charming wife. I remember well, one such occasion on a summer’s evening, as we sat having tea, with the French windows open to his garden, lightning struck a tree in the garden, close to the patio. It was awesome. We could hear the air being rent apart with an extremely loud hissing and crackling sound as the lightning strike hit the tree. The noise, the flash and the bang were quite amazing—and quite frightening I might add. Sadly I don’t recall the name of other pupil who was with me.

Age dims the memory somewhat, but I *do* remember one of the colourful characters in our class, Ken Butt, plus of course the mischievous ones, ‘Moose’ Fenton and ‘Stevo’.

I must pay tribute to my old school as an educational institution. It was indeed an incredibly good school with phenomenal teachers of the highest calibre. Among them, I recall Mr Williams the music teacher trying to find an instrument I could play in the school orchestra. He pulled out a violin and gave it to me. I stuck it under my chin and he shook his head saying 'That's no good, it's far too small for you'. He then disappeared under the stage in the school hall and a few minutes later came crawling out dragging a *cello*.

It had two broken strings and a missing bridge and one of the string adjuster pegs was also missing. Mr Williams sent the cello off to be repaired and on its return, restored to its full splendour, I became a cellist of sorts in the school orchestra. People who heard me practising were never too complimentary but my love of music has never left me though and I still have a fondness for the rich mellow tones of the cello.

Other great teachers were Mr Doug Slater who took us for biology. I loved his outdoor lessons in the countryside and Derbyshire dales and Mr Crossland, (Old Croc), our chemistry teacher who was a lovely old guy with a naughty twinkle in his eye, a warm mischievous smile on his face and a great sense of humour. He terrified the unwary when he brought his walking stick crashing down across the bench to get attention, and who cured one pupils warts with sulphuric acid droplets, carefully applied through a fine pipette tube and carried out repeatedly over several lessons till the warts were all gone. I doubt if Health & Safety would allow that these days. Then there was Mr Murray (History), who spoke so slowly in his strong Scottish accent that he bored himself to sleep on occasions along with some of the class. Another one to remember was 'Killer' Carter (Maths) who had a heavy right hand that caught many a boy by surprise with a slap around the head to bring one to order. It always worked, it was a fair cop and no-one bore a grudge.

In my career I went into telecommunications and then electronics and feel grateful for having had the pleasure and joy of always working on cutting edge technology. I quickly found myself in technical management jobs and worked for ten years at Plessey, initially in Lenton, then the main factory in Beeston. I was test operations manager there until I was made redundant when GEC made a hostile takeover bid.

Lord Weinstock of GEC had been furious because his engineering team could never make a dent in our seven year technical lead which held over the rest of the telecoms industry worldwide. We introduced the first ever computer controlled digital telephone exchange that could not only transmit voice but, for the first time, data as well. With it, the digital era was born, bringing about emails and the Internet—and what a phenomenal resource *that* has become.

The demise of Plessey UK coincided with the time of the great recession and three more redundancies followed before I went self employed as a technical consultant. That led to an ex-patriate job in Malawi, East Africa where I stayed for twelve and a half years. Surprisingly, my last job in Malawi was with my old company Plessey.

Plessey-Malawi and Plessey-South Africa were sold off when GEC took over. (Plessey Malawi was a subsidiary of Plessey South Africa). I became the Managing Director there but I returned to the UK in 2004 when things went pear-shaped out there. I now live in Stapleford, Nottingham, retired now after a successful life in technical and executive management. I feel that the fact that I did so well in my career can only be due to my education at High Pavement for which I shall be eternally grateful.

Clive R Bagshaw

ooOoo

FROM JOHN RANDALL



[John Randall is a member resident in Sydney, Australia but who has visited us in Nottingham recently, as reported in these pages. In this article he describes the successful engagement in a sport which the school felt it did not recognise – although in the early decades of the 20th century it actually embraced it. For reasons perhaps best known to the likes of the ambitious headmaster Dr Spenser, it was dropped as a school sport in the 1920s.]

Football at High Pavement

When we first arrived at the school in 1954, I am not sure that many of the new intake were aware that it was a committed Rugby Union campus where the mere thought of playing football² was viewed in a negative, even unfriendly way.

Within this cohort were many young footballers who had demonstrated emerging skills at their respective primary school, sufficient to secure representative status through the auspices of the city team, known as ‘Nottingham Boys’. For these talented juniors, indeed for all those with either future aspirations as a professional or merely lovers of the game, they were entering a period of at least four years during which they were required, if selected, to represent their school at *rugby*. The school fielded a number of teams at each age group, so unless a capable student could claim sickness, or injury (each meticulously scrutinised) or be totally bereft of any hand/eye co-ordination, he was required to attend and represent the school, each and every Saturday, come rain or shine.

Personally, I hated playing rugby especially from the position of scrum half, buried under a pile of grunting forwards, in a sea of mud, on a wintry November morning. However, there was, hope on the horizon.

On entering the fifth form in September 1958, we learned that one could elect to take up *cross country running* on sports afternoon (Wednesday for fifth and sixth formers), providing an exemption from Saturday rugby selection, and thus delivering the opportunity to play for a football club on Saturdays.

There were few cross country competitions in that era, so selection for a school running team event was not a major impediment to those who hankered after a return to ‘the beautiful game’.

Now to the purpose of this historical story. Although banned in the gymnasium (under actual threat of punishment from PE teacher Ray Caulton) football *was* permitted in the playground, utilising a soft cloth ball manufactured by various ingenious mothers. A competitive level quickly developed and there was soon growing speculation as to how a team from Pavement would compete against the best of the *football* playing schools in Nottingham.

Interest grew, and inevitably it led to the creation of a school team. This team was not endorsed by the school, and so could only play during school holidays, more specifically in the half term breaks. The matter of playing kit was solved with assistance from a Boys Club in Aspley, a referee was engaged and a venue, normally Vernon Park in Basford, was secured. We were ready to play.

Long distance memory has dimmed my recollection of the number of games that were played, but it was probably three. We were unbeaten against (the) High School and one other team, perhaps Henry Mellish. However, our best performance was a strong victory over a team from Mundella which included two players who were England representatives at under 18

² To be quite certain, I mean *Association Football* or ‘soccer’.

level. (One of these players was to become a successful manager and long-time football commentator.) Formidable adversaries!

We won that game 5-0.

Our team for that game was:

Roger Moakes; Mick Randall; Ian Savage; Maurice Fearn; John Rutt; Cliff Knapton; George Holohan; Keith Drury; John Randall; Ian Murdoch and Peter Roebuck.

Many of the above players represented High Pavement, earning both school and external honours, in Rugby, Cricket, Tennis and Athletics. Two members went on to play football at a high Youth level and for prominent senior teams in the Nottingham area. For all that, the small successes achieved by this 'renegade' team were never formally recognised by the school.

I am sadly aware that some of the players are no longer with us but any of you that read this piece who are still alive and (mentally) kicking are invited to make contact with me either personally in Sydney or by email. [jrr0088@gmail.com]

I promised Mick Randall that I would write this and submit it to the High Pavement Society, when I last visited him in West Bridgford in July 2019. Mick has since passed away, on November 8th after a long illness.

John Randall

ooOoo

FROM JOHN KENNY

[John Kenny recently joined the Society after contacting the HPS website. He is particularly keen to contact his old friends listed below. The editor will forward any emails.]

Dear Editor My name is John Kenny, a past pupil of High Pavement, leaving in 1959 to move to New Zealand with my sister. I appear in the cricket team photograph supplied by David Newitt (1953 - 1960) standing on his left next to Peter Craven. I was a poor batsman and even worse as a bowler, my only ability being captain of the rowing team for which I was awarded my school colours.

When I left school five classmates presented me with an engraved pewter pint tanker (very appropriate) and their faded names appear to be R Skelton, D E Smith, P J L(?)atham, J(?) Gibling and C L Hinsley. Any information on those classmates would be of great interest.

In New Zealand I founded my own engineering business, which was taken over by a Public Company in 1980. I then moved to Australia where I now live in retirement on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

I have found the website most interesting, bringing back many memories of my early days in England.

Regards John K

ooOoo

FROM GRAHAM WYBROW

Not everybody knows that!

Australia Day is the official national day of Australia. Celebrated annually on 26 January, it marks the anniversary of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Port Jackson, New South Wales, and the raising of the Flag of Great Britain at Sydney Cove by Governor Arthur Phillip.... But did you know... On that very day in 1788 The High Pavement School was founded on High Pavement, Nottingham! Australia went on to a great future. We are proud to say that High Pavement matched their achievement!

FROM NEIL KENDRICK

[Neil, of the well-known Paviers Rugby Football Club, was invited to get in touch with our Society and did so in the last issue. We invited him to extend his contact. His response is below.-Ed.]

Colin, Where do I start?

I am not an Old Pavior, though often feel as if I should be!

Originally from North Wales, I came to Nottingham in 1974 and worked as a teacher until 2013 in Bulwell, then moved to Gedling (Carlton le Willows). A colleague of mine at Bulwell was a man called John Dodd - who would regale me with tales of High Pavement Boys Grammar School where he taught Languages but also coached cricket and boxing.

John played cricket for Woodthorpe CC where T.R.Bryson (Ray) was the mainstay of the First X1 and had been for many years and I played with Ray on numerous occasions.

It automatically followed that if my winter game was rugby and I was Welsh that I would be directed towards the Paviers, and so it was, hence my rugby link. The club had already gone 'open' (i.e not exclusively Old Paviers) by the time I arrived to play in 1976. Of course the 'old boys' were the mainstay of all the teams so I quickly learned all about the school (far more than John ever taught me!!!)

I last saw Ray Bryson a couple of years ago when he came with his friend Don Stirland to a sporting lunch I organised in aid of the Maggie's Centre³ at the City Hospital.

Best wishes, Neil

ooOoo

FROM JOHN HOLLIS

Dear Colin, I have just been re-reading the 2019 issues of *The Pavior* and saw In the August edition there was a photo of Mr R E Jackson, mathematics master from 1945. That reminded me how I had previously struggled with maths but then we had a new teacher whose name was Jackson (which was probably him). The point I wanted to make was that this new teacher was much easier to understand and my understanding of maths was then greatly enhanced!

The article on Inter-House Cricket Trophy in the November edition brought back memories, particularly because my house (Newstead) won the trophy in 1948. However, one of my disappointments was my inability to play in the final when Newstead were the winners because I had been summoned to report for my National Service at an earlier date than originally planned.

I was thus denied the opportunity to end my career at High Pavement with the triumph of winning that final! I still remember my disappointment after all these years.

Yours sincerely John Hollis (HPGS 1943-48)

ooOoo

³ Maggie's is an organisation that provides free practical, emotional and social support to people with cancer and their family and friends, following the ideas about cancer care originally laid out by Maggie Keswick Jencks

FROM TOMMY GEE

The New Boy



[TG's latest contribution was a photocopy of a crumpled document, now transcribed below. It was originally given to him prior to entering High Pavement as a 'New Boy' in 1936. All New Boys received one of these notices and the anxious parents would set about acquiring the items on the lists. The notes **in red** were pencilled in and would seem to be a secondary list prepared by the parents to ensure the New Boy was properly and adequately equipped.] –Ed.]

REQUIREMENTS FOR A NEW BOY ENTERING THE SCHOOL

FOR GAMES

1. A white sweater.
2. A pair of football boots.
3. A pair of navy blue shorts.
4. A football jersey in House colours.

School

5. A School blazer and badge.
6. A white flannel cricket shirt.
7. White flannel trousers.
8. A pair of cricket boots (optional)

FOR EVERYDAY USE

1. A school cap.
2. A plain medium grey or dark grey suit.
3. A School tie
4. Gymnasium shoes.
5. A belt.
6. A bag or case for his books
7. A Hymn Book (to be obtained at School).

6d

White shirt; White shorts; White vest; School magazine 6d

School caps and Badges and all other articles of School attire may be obtained from Dixon and Parker Ltd., Lister Gate, with whom special arrangements have been made for the supply of approved School suits at special prices, or from other tradesmen provided the articles are of the approved design and colour.

[Editor's note: For some families the outlay required was a substantial sum and sacrifices were often necessary where incomes could be low.

During the war years that soon followed, the list became subject to the unwritten subheading '...if you can'. Many items were then hand-me-downs, or improvised, or even omitted entirely but the school cap and tie were mandatory.

Dixon and Parker sold all kinds of school uniforms and equipment, eventually becoming D&P School Outfitters, moving to Friar Lane. They are now known as D&P Schoolwear Centre and have again moved, this time to Maid Marian Way.]

ooOoo

STAN RHODES

We have been informed by Mrs Brenda Rhodes that our member Stan Rhodes passed away peacefully on Thursday November 7th 2019 at the age of 90. His funeral was held on Thursday 21st November at Bramcote Crematorium, when the Society was represented by Colin Salsbury.



Many will remember Stan and Brenda who were regular attenders at our pub lunches and other events, often with Stan's friend and fellow member the late Don Woodward.

PETER VAN SPALL

We have heard from Michael Van Spall that his father, our member, died in Montreal, Canada on March 24th 2019 at the age of 85. His funeral ceremony was held on March 31st, followed by burial on April 1st.



Widely travelled, he was a fluent speaker of English, French and Polish and on occasion wrote to *The Pavior* in all three languages.

PETER SERPELL

We have been informed by Mrs Sally Serpell, that our member Peter Serpell died on December 8th 2019 at the age of 71.

We send our sincere condolences to the families of these former members.

ooOoo

A WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Our membership fluctuates and we occasionally lose a dear friend to the ravages of time but we are always pleased to welcome new friends, often living in the remoter parts of the globe. These names are among the latest arrivals (not in any particular order). Welcome one and all!

John Kenny	Australia
Keith Wheatley	UK
Norman Pearson	South Africa
Trevor Jones	Vietnam
Clive Bagshaw	UK
David Williamson	France

We are pleased to note that these are not the only countries in which our members are located. The HPS is represented in:

Alaska; Belgium; Canada; Cyprus; Dubai; Germany; Saudi Arabia and Spain

ooOoo

PUB LUNCH NEWS



Visit to The Ferry Inn, Wilford
We returned to this cosy pub on Friday November 15th after a two-year break and perhaps wondered why we had left it so long. This time it was on a dry-ish day after a week of heavy rain which had flooded large areas of the UK and this included the Trent Valley but

Wilford's flood defences were equal to the task. And we had no problems.

The Society members and guests numbered a satisfactory 35 persons and we fitted into their private dining room (just), requiring complex manoeuvring to achieve desirable

The pub lunchers enjoy the fare at the Ferry Inn, Wilford

1. Tony Wheadon with Elisabeth and Mike Tomlinson
2. Ken and Janice Moulds relax at the overflow table
3. The view down one of the tables.



seating arrangements. There was a distinct air of *Gemütlichkeit*⁴ which made things very enjoyable. The food was very acceptable but, as is usual on these occasions, it arrived sporadically. However, the cheerful spirit of the Spanish waitress made everyone patient until their turn came.

We welcomed several long distance visitors who had to drive for up to two hours to arrive, including John and Carol Adkin from Lincoln, Ken and Janice Moulds from near Grantham and Tony Wheadon from Stamford. Arrangements were by our appointed pub-lunch committee member, John Mason, who was complimented on his work for this visit.

⁴ (It means *genial cosiness, friendship, warmth and good cheer*. One word saving many! –Ed)

The 2019 HPS Christmas Lunch.

Mapperley Golf Club was again selected for our 2019 Christmas get-together on Wednesday December 18th. The response to the invitation was good with some 42 acceptances, slightly reduced when three withdrew due to illness. We gathered in the lounge around noon for a pre-prandial drink and then trooped into the dining room at 12.30 for the excellent seasonal carvery provided by the Club's staff, and they certainly did work hard!



After we had eaten and chatted together our President, Ken Kirk, made a short speech of welcome and reviewed recent activities by the Society which included the Remembrance Ceremony in front of the HP War Memorial at the Chaucer Street premises (see page 4) He remarked how the ceremony had impressed the latest generation of their students present on that day. He then went on to thank all the Club staff for the enjoyable meal we had just eaten.



We felt we had prepared the way for a splendid Season of Goodwill with an especially warm welcome to several members who are not often able to attend our functions. Naturally, all the Old Paviers present stood up and sang their beloved anthem *Carmen Paviorum*, this time without accompaniment, but with gusto and very little inaccuracy, bringing the occasion to a splendid close.

Compliments were again paid to John Mason for his work organising the occasion.

ooOoo



OUR END PIECE

Neville Kay's Lessons from Life - 2. The Monkey On My Shoulder

Every doctor, every nurse and every health care professional needs that little bit of luck that keeps them, and their patients, out of trouble. Surgeons in particular need a hefty dose of such luck if they are to survive in the increasingly hostile environment of medical litigation.

As trainee surgeons this was always recognised in bar discussions as '*the monkey on my shoulder*', that intuitive action that kept the trainee out of trouble...from his patients or his chief, and its perhaps worth recalling that in those days when I was a trainee, the degree of supervision was far less stringent than it is today.

My 'monkey' and I first got together when I presented myself at interview for entry to Sheffield University Medical School. Now a days, I wouldn't have got a response, let alone an interview from a medical school but having Matriculated at sixteen (Northern Universities Joint Examination Board) by some minor miracle and being the first year to sit the new-fangled A levels, Medical Schools were still interviewing and selecting on Matriculation results.

I had travelled by train from Nottingham to the old Sheffield Victoria station and walked down the incline to the bottom of the approach road and there, was a sight I had never seen before. A hot wire rolling mill.

Gradually over the years I have developed an interest in Industrial History and whether this rolling mill was the spark that was to slowly burn I shall never know, but to me, at that time, a callow seventeen year old youth, this was the nearest thing I could imagine to Hell. I had seen reproduction mediaeval pictures depicting Hell and Damnation, especially those of Bruegel but here were men, in heavy protective leather aprons armed only with six foot long iron forks and required to catch red hot lines of wire as it spewed from the rollers, turn it and send it down the next set of rollers to be flattened, squeezed and thinned, roller by roller into the required size. The noise, the heat, the danger from the flying sparks of red hot steel and sense of dicing with death wafted out of the open windows and I stood transfixed, watching in awe at this apparent Hell on earth, and stayed too long.

I was late for my interview.

Breathless and embarrassed, for I had run from the tram stop to the Medical School offices on Mushroom Lane, I paid little attention to the pretty young receptionist who gently led me into the main office to be received by the more severe senior secretary. She settled me down and assured me that, though late, I *would* be seen for happily other candidates were early. I can't remember that much about the interview. On being asked why I wanted to be a doctor I believe I made some trite comments like wanting to do good in Africa and perhaps discovering a cure for asthma which severely afflicted one of my sisters, but it was the question from the lay member of the interview panel that floored me.

'Trouble with trains?' he enquired.

What to say? I never thought it through. In retrospect I realise that had I lied he could well have been some railway official, conversant with train time tables. But I simply hadn't the wit.

'No Sir,' I ventured. 'I was watching them make steel at the bottom of the station road and forgot the time for a bit.'

'Tell us what you saw then lad. There's no steel making near stations.'

When I recount this story I say ‘lad’ but I suspect he was much more polite. Though Nottingham is only forty miles from Sheffield, the tone, the intonation and phraseology of a pure Sheffieldier was as new to me as a hot wire rolling mill.

I described in graphic detail all that I had seen, how it compared with the pictures of Hell and Damnation reproduced in books, and my incredulity at the skill of the workmen.

He, and gradually the rest of the panel, listened in quiet amusement to my description and only when I had finished, did he turn to the Dean and say, ‘I think we shall have to teach this lad something about steel making. He needs to know difference between a hot rolling mill and a furnace.’

A few days later a letter of acceptance to Sheffield University Medical School dropped through our letterbox and thus my monkey and I were first acquainted.

Now, all I needed was the money. A State Scholarship was unrealistic for me, but the forward-thinking City Council offered scholarship/grants to University Entrants, *City of Nottingham Major Awards*. The council’s examination was one single paper for scientists, classical scholars, history, geography; or any other discipline of learning and what the foreword thinking Council wanted was to support students who were ‘rounded and complete’ not super specialists. It was no problem, for I was at that age actively flirting with Communism, politically and historically aware but my monkey cemented our new relationship.

One of the three questions was a critique of a novel, and all the three choices had been made into films by Walt Disney. As luck, or my monkey would have it, only two nights previously I had seen the recently released *Alice in Wonderland*. A brief sentence explaining my rationale for a Film Critique as distinct from a book critique and I was off with a piece that would have graced the pages of the Manchester Guardian (as it then was), or perhaps the Morning Star, and must have satisfied my examiners.

My monkey wandered a bit in my student days for the one thing he detested was exams but fortunately returned just as soon as I qualified, the wheel turned half circle. By now the steel industry was in decline, native Sheffieldiers deserting the works and, as a casualty officer, I was presented with a *Yemeni* steelworker with a hot wire burn behind the knee.

Currently there is a thriving Yemeni community in Sheffield, many of them descendants of the original workers who came to do all the labouring tasks in the steel works the locals no longer wanted. He was a tall thin fellow, barely spoke English which made assessment difficult and had been caught by a hot wire burning a through-and-through hole behind the knee.

We had a small operating theatre in the casualty department, and I was there with my patient having given him a suitable sedative, cleaned his wounds and carefully probed it with a soft rubber catheter and determined that by good fortune, the thin hot wire had burnt and seared it way through the back of his knee without damaging the arteries, nerves or veins for his leg was working normally. I can still picture myself, rubber catheter in hand knowing that no vital structures had been damaged but what to do? I heard the theatre door open, and the head and shoulders of Sister Barstowe (remember her?) leaned into the theatre.

‘Do you think we should admit him Dr Kay, just to be safe?’

My monkey was there again.

She was right. The large vein at the back of the knee might just be burnt and temporarily sealed only to leak catastrophically if sent home. So my patient was duly admitted for a few days observation and my reputation enhanced.

Neville Kay