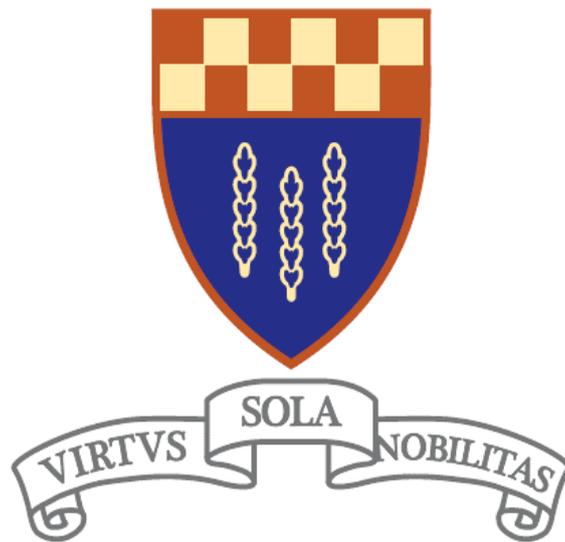


# The Pavior



The Newsletter  
of  
**The High Pavement Society**  
(founded 1989)

**November 2021**

**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!

**President: Ken Kirk**

Committee Chairman: Ken Kirk 07885 739981

Deputy Chairman: Vacant

Secretary: Colin Salsbury 01509 558764

Treasurer: Robin Taylor 0115 9609483

190 Kenrick Road, Mapperley, Nottingham NG3 6EX

[\(robinatnottm@aol.com\)](mailto:robinatnottm@aol.com)

Registrar: Alex Rae

Editor: Colin Salsbury 01509 558764

Archivist: Graham Wybrow 0115 9626249

Committee Members:

Malcolm Pilkington 01623 491260

Barry Johnson

Noel Gubbins

Copy for *The Pavior* may be sent to:

Colin Salsbury: [colin.salsbury@outlook.com](mailto:colin.salsbury@outlook.com)

**116 Leicester Road, Loughborough, Leics. LE11 2AQ**

The HP Society website address is: [www.highpavementsociety.org.uk](http://www.highpavementsociety.org.uk)



**Faces to Remember**

**Alfred Wilson**

**Classics Master 1951-67**

**(Head of Timetable Planning)**

## **COMMITTEE NOTICES**

### **New members**

Rex Davies; Tia Duckmanton; Paul Dudley; Chris Eggleshaw; Emily-Grace Helliwell; Thomas Menghini; Mrs Jean Nutt; Rachel Ollerenshaw; Liam Pearce

### **The High Pavement Society EDUCATION FUND Appeal**

The Committee would like to thank those members of the Society who responded to the appeal in the last issue of *The Pavior* to help maintain the finances of the Education Fund which provides annual awards to the students of High Pavement 6<sup>th</sup> Form who, generally, have achieved high results in their chosen academic subjects.

Your generosity means that we will be able to keep the same level of support that we have achieved over recent years. To date the appeal has raised £1645 with contributions from; John Chambers, George Heywood, Ken Kirk, John Mason, Colin Salsbury, Gerald Taylor, Robin Taylor, Keith Woolley, Graham Wybrow and two anonymous members.

Two of these members have also opted to make an additional contribution along with the standing order for their annual subscription. This is a thoughtful gesture which will go towards maintaining the level of the Fund in the future. **Robin Taylor (Hon. Treasurer)**

### **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021**

It had been a difficult two years since the last AGM in 2019. Our obligation to hold such a meeting each year had been prevented by the Covid 19 pandemic regulations, only recently relaxed enough for us to foregather in the Poppy and Pint Inn, West Bridgford, venue of the 2019 AGM. It was feared that we would have insufficient people present for either the AGM or the Annual Reunion Luncheon which was to follow immediately afterwards.

However, following a general invitation to all members we had sufficient responses to go ahead. Alex Rae took the helm and delivered the meal bookings to the P&P.

On the day people started to arrive in 'dribs and drabs' and took a morning coffee in the bar. New members bought up the secretary's complete stock of those green and red ties. Then at about 11.45 am members shuffled into the meeting room. Meanwhile the several ladies who were accompanying their menfolk stayed in the bar to take a little light refreshment until the dust had settled.

The organisers were agreeably surprised to find we had assembled some 23 voting members and the meeting went ahead with great dispatch, ably chaired by our president and committee chairman Ken Kirk. (It is not true that Ken has completed an AGM in the past in 5 minutes but he did not waste time.) The business was briskly conducted, and the new Committee elected, i.e. the same as the old one, except for the resignation on health grounds of John Mason. Ken thanked John for all his work and mentioned the co-opted new member Barry Johnson who unfortunately could not attend on this day but was nonetheless a valuable recruit to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm to be followed by...

Cont/

## THE 2021 ANNUAL REUNION LUNCHEON



The photos were taken in a hurry! with no names recorded but most people knew who was who! Sorry we didn't fit in everybody



Immediately following the AGM all members and their guests assembled in the Meeting Room which the P&P staff had hurriedly converted into a Dining Room. Once seated, Ken Kirk bid us all welcome to the social side of our event.

We had been assured that the food would be served promptly but in true P&P style we waited about half an hour before it began to arrive. It was good stuff when it

came and the chatter subsided slightly as our molars got to work.

We were very pleased to have among us several members making their first visit to one of our functions, among them Clive Bagshaw and Rex 'Pyrtle' Davies<sup>1</sup>, aged 91½, sporting a head of hair (see above) with which his male dining companions could not compete.

A slight hiccup in the admin left Mick Gladwell without his fish and chips when all about him were enjoying theirs. Prompt complaint to the management produced

Our President with his feminine entourage ▶



the dish after a 10 minute delay, Mick showing great fortitude and good humour.

Conversations among the groups began to develop into a roar as reminiscences and renewals of friendship took place. Though relatively few in number our thirty or so members and their guests made this a genuine reunion in the HPS manner.

Gradually, as time passed, the party had to break up and we paid our bills and departed. But how we had all enjoyed it!

By 2.30 pm the room was empty of the Pavior folk. It was then prepared for a funeral 'wake'. Such a contrast but all part of the P&P working day.

**Colin Salsbury**

<sup>1</sup>Rex is a former schoolmate of your editor. I asked him why he was called 'Pyrtle'. He replied that his Scout leader Ivan O'Dell (member of the school language staff and creator of exotic neologisms galore) once urged Rex to 'Stop pyrtling about.' The name stuck for some 70 years! –Ed.

## AIDEN NEILL

We have received the news from Kevin Neill that his father, our member Aiden Reginald Neill has passed away, aged 94, on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at Plymouth Hospital, after a short illness.  
We send our sincere condolences to the family in their sad loss

## THE 2021 REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

This took place in the spacious foyer of High Pavement Sixth Form, Nottingham College, Chaucer Street, Nottingham on Friday November 12<sup>th</sup> (by kind invitation of the College.). The original WW1 memorial plaque from High Pavement Grammar School is permanently housed in this enclosure making it the ideal location for the Ceremony.

Assembled were members of the High Pavement Society and many, many members from the Students and Staff of the College. The ceremony was led by Ken Kirk, President of the Society, conscious that many of the HPS alumni had survived the Second World War

Five students from the College assisted by three members of the Society's Committee read the one hundred and eighty two names on the complete **Lists of the High Pavement Fallen** in both Wars.

The Society's Chairman then performed the '**Act of Remembrance**', reciting the verse from *For the Fallen* by Laurence Binyon:

*'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 last line was repeated by all present)

The bugle call of *The Last Post* was sounded by Sarah Emblen of the British Legion, followed by the two minutes silence.

The call for *Reveille* was then sounded, after which the Chairman recited the *Kohima Epitaph*:

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

The ceremony terminated after this.



### Participants in the Ceremony (L to R)

**Back row:** Alex Rae (HPS)  
Caroline Kaplan (HPColl)  
Paul Evans (HPS)

**2<sup>nd</sup> row**  
Colin Salsbury (HPS)  
Malcolm Pilkington (HPS)  
Chris Eggleshaw (HPS)

**3<sup>rd</sup> row**  
Barry Johnson (HPS)  
Adam Beazeley  
(Head of HP Coll)  
John Chambers (HPS)  
Daniella Clarke (HP Coll)

**Front Row**  
Howard Green (HPS)  
John Astill (HPS)  
Jegan Jatta (HP Coll)  
Robin Taylor (HPS)  
John Mason (HPS)  
Dawn Ashley (HP Staff)

Also participating but not shown were the students **Ibrahim Atiq** and **Molly Norman**

## FROM OUR READERS

### FROM BARRIE LINGS

[Old Pavior Barrie Lings is not a member of the Society but has sent us this interesting memoir of his time at HP, especially on the holiday expeditions led by Eric Shepherd, the school's long serving senior geography master, a quite unforgettable character.]

#### An appreciation of 'Shep'

**Hi Colin,** I have lived in Derby since the age of 21 so keeping in touch with old school friends has not always been easy. However, I am an Old Pavior, at HP from 1947-1952, and a member of Sherwood House.

During the 1988 bicentenary anniversary celebrations I was among those who managed to see Stanley Road again where we sang the school song (with gusto of course). I also attended the commemoration service in St Peter's Church. A group of us then met at a later date for a dinner to mark the occasion of the 50 years since we left HP.

The reason I am writing now is because I recently saw the great article by Richard Maslen in the August 2012 *Pavior* about 'Shep' (Eric Shepherd) and the wild high places he took us very young teenagers. How *brave* he was to tackle this, together with other teachers and some sixth formers—no health and safety then, they just used plain common sense.



Our rather solemn photo does not really do justice to the man who was full of life and good humour.

So it was during our expedition to the Lakes that I remember first of all an ascent of Great Gable. This was going to be followed by Helvellyn but the snow conditions were against us so, dressed in our army surplus gear (all that was available in those days), we spent the rest of our time sliding down and then climbing back up a steep snow slope (as one does) for an hour or three.

In contrast, when we reached the valley below we met up with the Mountain Rescue Group, sadly bringing back the bodies of two girls who had been caught by the hostile weather conditions. Indeed it was a salutary lesson for us all and one which has always been in my mind whenever difficult conditions have arisen in wild high outdoor places. Mountains, so wonderfully uplifting can be, and often are, extremely dangerous places.

Our next time with Shep was when he took us to Arran and some of the best ridge mountaineering in Scotland. I have since been back to Arran many times, once with some classmates from HP and also with the family and other groups. Even on my most recent visit I managed one of the ridges but only by making a very slow walk up followed by a very *very* slow walk down. What memories it brought back of our group of young teenagers, some scared witless by the huge drops on either side; others revelling in it by going over as many pinnacles as possible.

So I give many, many thanks to 'Shep' for really introducing me (and no doubt many other Paviors) to a mountaineering hobby which I have since enjoyed so much in the UK and other countries.

**Sincerely. Barrie Lings.**

ooOoo

## FROM JOHN ASTILL



### An enigmatic photo of 4<sup>th</sup> Form Athletics 1955

*[John Astill has sent us this interesting photo (see page 8) of a winning athletics team in 1955, presumably all in the fourth year. We know they won because four people are clutching silver trophies, one shaped rather like a teapot (can anyone identify it?) and three more conventional trophy cups.]*

**John** (3<sup>rd</sup> row down, second from right wearing a big smile) **writes:**

I have no idea **where** the photo was taken; **1955** seems the most likely date. We had several county athletics competitions and it was most likely to be immediately following one of them. We had a good athletics team at that time.

I have shown the photo to several friends. Some recognised various people but could not help with the missing information on when and why the picture was taken. That is why I have sent in the photo, to find out at what event it was taken and where. **John Astill**

*Can you help? Contact the editor by email.]*

ooOoo

## FROM REX DAVIES

*[Rex 'Pyrtle' Davies has sent us this cheering note after attending his first HPS gathering] Colin, 'Regrets I have a few, but then again, too few to mention.' So sang Frank (Sinatra)! But I have to mention **one** great regret. I found the High Pavement Society a little too late in life (at the age of 90). Although in my defence I must say I was busy commuting between*

home (in Worksop), working promoting golf for T.A.P (Air Portugal, though T.A.P. is rumoured to mean 'Take Another Plane') using my colour video equipment with which I had recorded anything or everything that moved, from weddings to funerals. In other words I was *very* busy, even at my time of life.

I had, with the Director of Education's blessing, left his service and eventually I arrived in Lisbon with the hefty sum (in 1980) of £8000. As a single figure golfer, I was, while there, able to do a good job videoing golf contests. In fact T.A.P were so pleased with my work that at weekends they flew my wife and mother-in-law out to join me! This was before colour TV arrived over there and they actually had to reserve a seat especially for *my* colour TV monitor to be delivered in order to see the results.

About High Pavement...(Hey! That's when I knew a little Chivas Regal would do the trick and so I'll refill my glass).

Before I forget I must confess I had an uncle and two older cousins at HP (both went off to war) so I fitted in as an 11-year-old fag and just as easily joined the school Scouts. In 1941 I set off with my cousins to the Walesby Scout Camp to attend a rally where, in the Chapel in the Pines, I listened to our new Chief Scout relaying B-P's last message to the movement. I have hazy recollections of something to do with Peter Pan<sup>2</sup> and how later the Rover (18+) Group took me to the Carpenters Arms in Walesby village. As I was not allowed in (I was eleven!) they sent out a flagon of cider which I consumed forthwith (my first ever taste of alcohol).

I have just remembered that my mother-in-law and present wife were both Manning School girls. Earlier, in a schoolboy/schoolgirl romance, I was 'engaged' to a Manning School girl to whom I was introduced by 'Bacca' Buxton. Ah! the names and faces come flashing back. Those photographs taken on the school roof outside Bill Benner's art room.... Buxton, Lowe, Charnley, Tonkin, Freund, 'Stick' Tarbox etc. etc.

I think we were well known as the 'Sixth Form Smoking Club' and that reminds me of the other memory: Mr. Crossland of HP. He and Mr Page (of PE fame) taught both my uncle and my mother-in-law. How's that for continuity?

Well, I've rambled on too long but I could say much more, for the 7 years I spent at High Pavement were without doubt amongst the happiest days of my life. These days have guided me through the rest of my 80 years.

So now to the future and I must say I enjoyed my first HPS meeting (on September 29<sup>th</sup>). Within 5 minutes of entering the room our worthy treasurer had sold me a tie! I hope to come to many more of these meetings and get to know more of you. I'm keen to form a golfing group and hope that a special Golf Day would raise a lot more money for the Society to distribute. The three of you with whom I managed to speak about such a Golf Day, to raise monies for the Education Fund, were most encouraging. May I therefore suggest that at our next meeting we spend some time discussing how best to bring about this Golf Day. I suspect Ken Kirk will be invaluable in assisting in our deliberations. In the meantime anyone with any ideas on the subject can contact me at: [rexdavies1930@gmail.com](mailto:rexdavies1930@gmail.com) or on 07792902275. I await your calls.

**Rex**

---

<sup>2</sup> Yes Baden-Powell who realised he had not long to live used the story of Captain Hook in Peter Pan, who was always making his last speech in case he was devoured by the crocodile which had bitten off his arm (hence the 'Hook' name) and, relishing the taste so much, it persistently hunted him down. You probably read it as a kid! I was also there in 1941-Ed.

## FROM KEN OLISA

*[We recently learned that our distinguished member Sir Ken Olisa was to celebrate his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and your committee sent suitable fraternal greetings from the Society. His reply, addressed via the secretary, was most interesting to receive and with his permission we show it below for a wider readership.]*

**Dear Colin**

Thank you for your kind message.

It was a truly wonderful day which demonstrated the best of the Olisa clan. Julia, our daughters and my E.A. collaborated to persuade all of my generous chums that rather than giving me a present, they would make a contribution to the 'Kenneth Olisa Bursary' which will provide small sums (£50 - £200) for disbursement to Fitzwilliam undergraduates in urgent need or distress.

The provenance of this dates back to my own time at Fitzwilliam College when I had my car and all of its contents stolen. An experience which left me facing my second term with almost no clothes or other possessions so, unsolicited, the College gave me £10 (which was a lot in 1972 – a pint of beer cost 14p!) enough to buy the essentials until my next grant cheque arrived.

It looks as if the 2021 bursary will be 'north of' £3,000 and the Master was so grateful that she, the Bursar, the Senior Tutor and the Development Director treated us to a rather up-



### **The birthday lunch party**

Sir Ken seated with Baroness Morgan, Master of Fitzwilliam College on his right and Lady Olisa on his left.

Standing in the centre is the Fitzwilliam Bursar, Rod Cantrill, a former student of High Pavement Sixth Form College.

market private lunch in the Parlour.

All rather overwhelming and very, very satisfying. Suddenly, entering my eighth decade doesn't feel so bad!

Best wishes to you and all Old Paviers.

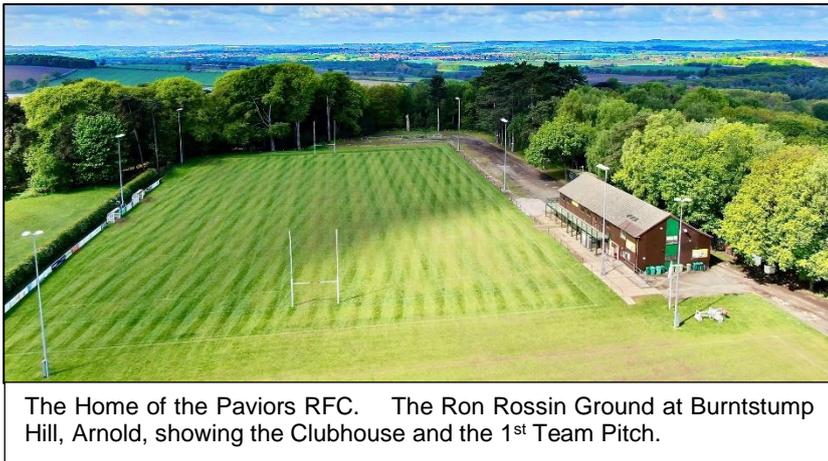
**Ken**



## FROM GRAHAM WYBROW AND CHRIS EGGLESHAW

### Paviors Rugby Football Club Centenary

This Season 2021-22 the Paviors Rugby Football Club is celebrating its centenary. The Paviors RFC is today a well-established and successful Nottingham Rugby Club with an



The Home of the Paviors RFC. The Ron Rossin Ground at Burntstump Hill, Arnold, showing the Clubhouse and the 1<sup>st</sup> Team Pitch.

excellent Sports Ground and Clubhouse. The Men's 1<sup>st</sup> XV currently plays in the Midlands Premier League, but the Club provides facilities for Rugby enthusiasts of all ages.

However, the Club had its origins at High Pavement School in 1922, when the school founded their 'Old Boy's Rugby Club'. Although membership is no longer restricted to former pupils of High Pavement

School the Club still carries a close association with the old School.

'Rugger' was first introduced to High Pavement School in 1921 by the then new headmaster, Dr Harry Joseph Spenser. Dr Spenser had been appointed Headmaster in that year and immediately set about making radical changes to the school. He was himself a former pupil of Nottingham High School and had a keen and active interest in Rugby, Boxing and Rowing.

In 1922, when the School founded the Old Boy's Rugby Club, its intention was to allow former pupils the opportunity to continue their interest in Rugby after leaving school. This Club affiliated to the Rugby Football Union in 1929 and in 1930 changed its name to the 'Old Paviors Rugby Football Club'. Then, in 1976, the Club changed its name once again to its present name, the 'Paviors Rugby Football Club'.

It was at this time that the Club removed the restriction on membership and became open to all. The Grammar School, with its strong Rugger background, was then in the process of converting to a Sixth-Form College and it was recognised that there were likely to be fewer opportunities for Rugby in the new institution and consequently fewer opportunities for recruiting new Club Members.

In the fifty years since the Club opened to all it has thrived. It currently provides opportunities for the whole family to experience rugby in a family friendly environment with excellent facilities. It currently supports the following teams:

- Men's: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th XV
- Ladies: Ladies Senior 1st XV (18+)
- Juniors: Colts (U18J), U16J, U15J, U14J
- Girls: U18W, U15W, U13W, U11W
- Minis: U13, U12, U11, U10, U9, U8, U7, U6, Little Ruggers (2-4)

The first XV team currently plays in the Midlands Premier League (a level 5 semi-professional league in the English Rugby Union). This is the highest regional Rugby Union



A Junior Player wearing Club Tie & Badged Shirt. Does that Tie look familiar?

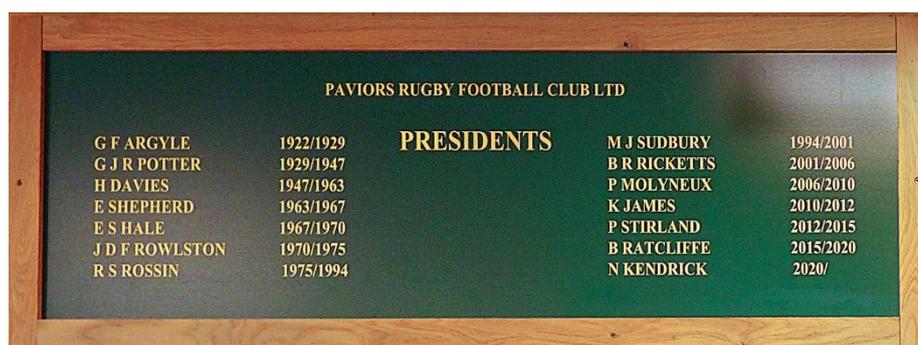
League in the English Midlands. The first XV team were Midlands 1 (East v West) play-off winners in the season 2018–19.

High Pavement School itself had no dedicated playing fields until 1955 when the School moved to its Gainsford Crescent, Bestwood, site. Despite this, the School Rugby Team earned a reputation for outstanding performance and even had difficulty finding suitable opponents.

The Old Paviers RFC has had a similar history of homelessness. The Club put down some roots in 1958 at Dale Road at the top of Carlton Hill, which served until 1972 when the land was sold and the club was required to move. For a period, they made use of the playing fields at the School’s Bestwood Site.

In 1976, the club eventually moved to their present site at Burntstump Hill, Arnold. Pooling resources, they were able to purchase the site and so acquire, at long last, some security and stability. Since then, the club has worked hard to develop facilities. This Centenary Year finds the Club approximately 25% of the way through the major task of raising £150,000 for the next major development of the Clubhouse / Pavilion.

The Club has indeed come a long way in the 50 years of open membership. However, clear links with the Old School can still be found. The Paviers Club Colours are Green and Red (the ‘old’ colours of High Pavement School) and their Badge incorporates the ‘Checker’ pattern reflecting the paving theme of ‘High Pavement’ on the School Badge. A plaque in the current Clubhouse lists the past Presidents. For 67 of the first 72 years, the Presidents were all either masters of the School or, later, former pupils.



This Plaque hangs over the Bar in the Paviers RFC Clubhouse and records the names of those who have served as Presidents of the Club over the 100 years. The long association with the School is clear in these names.



Details are provided below for any readers wishing to contact the Club.

The Men’s 1<sup>st</sup> XV Home Fixtures for the remainder of the Centenary Year 2021-22 are shown in the Table.

Admission is usually £5 by Programme paid at the gate with Kick-Off at 2:15pm.

Web-Site: [www.paviorsrfc.co.uk](http://www.paviorsrfc.co.uk)  
 Address: Paviers RFC, The Ron Rossin Ground,  
 Burntstump Hill, Arnold, Notts,  
 NG5 8PQ,  
 Phone: (+44) 115 963 8527  
 Email: [graham.turner11@btopenworld.com](mailto:graham.turner11@btopenworld.com)  
 Enquiries: (0) 7817 105590 (Graham Turner)

Month	Date	Opposition
Nov 2021	27	Broadstreet
Dec 2021	11	Burton
Jan 2022	8	Newport
„	22	Oundle
„	29	Syston
Feb 2022	19	Scunthorpe
Mar 2022	12	Bridgnorth
Apr 2022	2	Bromsgrove
Pavior RFC 1 <sup>st</sup> XV <u>Home</u> fixtures remaining for Season 2021-2. Please note fixtures are subject to change - check Web-Site for current information.		

Graham Wybrow & Chris Eggleshaw

ooOoo

**FROM ALEX RAE**  
**Fraternal Relations with Paviors RFC**



◀ L to R:  
Chris Eggleshaw (HPS); Alex Rae (HPS);  
Barry Johnson (HPS); Ken Kirk (HPS);  
Phil Molyneux (Paviors RFC)

Photo by courtesy of Diana Turner, Paviors

The Society has been developing a fraternal relationship with the Paviors RFC and on Saturday October 23<sup>rd</sup> a delegation of our members attended the Paviors' **Vice-Presidents/Past Players Luncheon** when plans for their Centenary celebrations in 2022 were discussed. **Alex**

**ooOoo**

**FROM TREVOR JONES**  
**Viet Nam Letter**

**Colin,** Just checking that you and yours are all still healthy and as well as can be expected.

Over here in Viet Nam, we're still in total lockdown but signs are emerging that the government have realised that this Delta variant isn't going anywhere soon and that we've got to learn to live and operate within it.

Down here they're allowing certain businesses to open up, but in a very carefully monitored way. Up in Sai Gon (Saigon), the epicentre of this outbreak, they're working on a plan to start opening up certain franchises from September 15th, so hopefully things will be better in the near future.

We're still woefully short of vaccine doses, although on the news we see aircraft flying in bringing in vaccines - but nowhere near enough. The government haven't stopped trying to obtain deliveries, but the west are still hoarding hundreds of millions of doses so the chances of getting doses in large numbers are nowhere in sight yet. Up to the present we have only received enough doses to vaccinate 2.9% out of a population of 98 million people (i.e. about 3 million), so at this rate, it's going to be a long time before everybody can be covered.

So we carry on in our very pragmatic way and do what we can do—at least it's always hot here, albeit with some mega thunderstorms almost every day over the last month. The weather patterns are certainly changing where we are - I tell everybody that it is Mother Nature teaching mankind to realise that money might talk for a while but you can't eat dollar bills or drink oil! As Ghandi once said - The Earth can provide for all of man's needs - but not man's greed.....

**Stay safe and take care my friends.**

**Trevor**

**ooOoo**

## Railway Ramblings

### FROM JOHN BARLOW

#### Life at Templecombe Signal Box

At my new job in Templecombe Ticket sales and travel advice were part of the signaller's role, and I was sent on a four-week course, run by South West Trains, at Basingstoke. In those days, the computer based ticketing could only give a few prices for destinations from the home station, and no timetable information was available automatically. Fares and timings had to be gleaned from huge manuals and hand written for the customer. Details of fare restrictions had to be deduced from the said manuals (e.g. When does a cheap day return become valid? What restrictions are there on routing?). This could be most time consuming, but had to be fitted in with signalling duties. The overall aim was to keep the trains running by putting signalling first, but still try to give the best possible customer service.

But what a lovely place to work! All three of the resident signallers loved their work and took great pride in looking after Templecombe customers. Passengers had to cross the line to gain access to the trains, by either a footbridge or a pedestrian gate (controlled by the signaller). They would have to climb the stairs to arrive at the ticket office, made by partitioning off half of the original signalling area. I would alternate between the two zones, for signalling and ticket sales. Service was typically one train per hour in each direction, with signalling to switch the trains on to the double track which started immediately west of the station. Life at Templecombe was a joy and I would always look forward to my work. (What more could anyone want?). Well, here are a few encounters I experienced.

1. Picture this: Around 9.00 pm on a murky November evening, with no trains in the neighbourhood and not a soul to be seen. I was sitting in my comfy chair, enjoying a cup of coffee and reading a library book, when I suddenly heard the click of the pedestrian gate opening. This was most unusual, for I controlled the electronic lock from the signal box. I looked out of the window, to see a shadowy figure turning to close the gate and then cross the tracks. He was dressed in a long overcoat and was wearing an old fashioned flat cap. I decided to apprehend this character, for crossing the line without permission. I rapidly descended the stairs to the platform but on arriving there, no trace of this person could be found. The night was so still that anyone moving would have been heard – most strange!

I related this tale to an elderly friend who had worked at the station from 1944, and he said that this apparition had been seen regularly and was believed to be the ghost of a shunter killed on duty many years ago. I am very sceptical about the supernatural, but I honestly believe that I saw *someone* that night. (Would a ghost need physically to open the gate to pass through? Or have known how to release the electronic lock?)

2. One very wet day I received an 'up' train and signalled it to the next box at Gillingham (Dorset, not Kent!). This is around 6 miles away, with a journey time of 7 minutes. Off went the train but it took quite a bit longer than 7 minutes before I received the '*Line Clear*' indication that it had arrived. The Gillingham signaller phoned me to say that the driver had encountered a small landslip immediately after leaving Buckhorn Weston tunnel, with some soil coming over the track. However, it was a negligible amount and trains could pass through with no danger. The next train was another 'up' and would encounter the same problem. Rain was till lashing down and I was concerned that the situation could have worsened since the previous train passed through. I elected to stop this train at Templecombe and have the line

examined before allowing another passage through the tunnel. This I did, telling the driver to pull forward into Templecombe station but to proceed no further. The delay in sending a *line examiner* was considerable, for limited staff numbers meant long travelling times in our rural situation. Eventually I received word that the line was *completely blocked*, with tons and tons of earth covering the tracks to a considerable depth. My train then had to go back to Yeovil and proceed to Waterloo via another route. The line was closed for several days, as a considerable length of embankment had collapsed!

3. Whenever a road vehicle collides with a railway bridge, safety regulations mean that the bridge must be examined before trains can run normally. We were therefore trained as ‘Bridge Bash Nominees’, because the busy A357 passes under the eastern end of the station. This bridge was regularly hit, as the low headroom of 4.0 metres (just over 12 feet) and the large number of commercial vehicles made a toxic mix.

One day I was walking along the platform and heard an almighty crash from the direction of the road bridge. On looking over the parapet, I saw an articulated lorry slowly reversing away. It had a curtain – sided trailer which was obviously slightly taller than 4 metres (to begin with!). The whole trailer was bent backwards, with the curtains flapping in the breeze. The driver continued reversing, made a 3-point turn and then drove away (but not before I had taken his registration and details of the owner from cab-side advert!).

As the saying goes, all good things come to an end. All signalling was now to be concentrated at Basingstoke. I was invited to apply for one of the new signalling positions at Basingstoke, at a much higher grade and therefore with a much larger salary. At 64 years of age, the prospect of a 60 miles (each way) commute, to an electronic signalling centre where the workers cannot even see their trains, was hardly appealing and I elected to take redundancy. I live within 50 yards of Templecombe station and frequently call in to see how things are going. They have a new ticket office, but it is only



◀ Issuing my very last ticket March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012

open from 6.00 to 11.00 am on weekdays (originally, against South West Trains’ wishes, we would keep the ticket office open until at least 8 pm). The signal box is still there but not used. However, thanks to the efforts of a group of volunteers, the station is looking wonderful and has won numerous prizes. I still consult my watch every time that I hear a train entering or leaving the station, to see if punctuality is being maintained – not up to our standard, of

course.

Saving the best for last, the station gave me the chance to meet my new wife. Ann was a frequent customer, travelling to the village of Wool to see her daughter on a very regular basis. Using my expertise in finding low fares, I was able to reduce her ticket costs considerably, using a system which, although strictly legal, verged on the ridiculous (now banned). We became friends and married in 2017. Thank you Templecombe Station! **John**

ooOoo

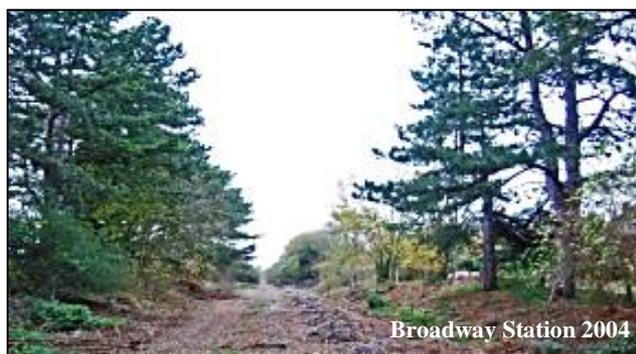
## FROM MIKE SPEAKE

*[We have now left the West Somerset Railway having moved to the Cotswolds]*

I had always felt admiration for the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway, because, unlike the West Somerset Railway who took over a complete, if rundown, railway from British Rail, they (the GWSR) had started from virtually nothing in 1981. On taking over part of the Great Western line between Stratford and Cheltenham the new owners inherited no track, no signals, very few buildings and a complete wilderness along the track bed. Yet by 2004 an army of volunteers had managed to clear the track bed, find and restore locomotives, carriages and wagons, build stations, signal boxes and workshops. This last even included a Great Western station at *Monmouth Troy*, transporting in pieces to Winchcombe and re-erected there. The teams gradually laid track further south from Toddington until they had reached Cheltenham Racecourse.

Finding myself living less than a mile from the site of Broadway Station, I wasted no time in joining the group in their work of attempting to rebuild it. Having started just a couple of years earlier, they had cleared the site and built part of Platform 1. My initial task was cleaning reclaimed bricks—we acquired them from such places as Wisley (Surrey!), Taunton, Avonmouth, and many more places all over the country. Some of our platform walls contain bricks from Honeybourne station, five miles up the line, which was made redundant when Network Rail restored the former double track of the Cotswold Line. As time went on I did a succession of jobs but eventually became part of the painting team, (when there was something to paint!). Work proceeded slowly at first (we were all volunteers, remember) but by 2018 the station was ready to open. Track having also been laid by our Permanent Way Department north from Toddington, the first public train left Broadway on 21 April 2018.

We still have to construct a second building on Platform 2 and there is also a footbridge to complete. However, the pandemic hit us and our income dried up almost completely so, we are very short of funds. Mind you, we are almost completely volunteer-run, so at least we don't



have a great wages bill to contend with.

In the intervening years, I also became involved with the railway's catering services, and once again I talked Sue into joining me. Together we have worked on the trains, serving in the buffet cars, serving cream teas to parties, serving drinks to race-goers for the Cheltenham Festival (a very lively atmosphere on the trains at the end of the day!) and in the refreshment rooms at Winchcombe and Broadway. We are all looking forward, as are so many people, to resuming normal operations which, hopefully, will have happened by the time you read this.

**Mike**

ooOoo

**OUR END PIECE**  
**FROM TOMMY GEE**

*[In our last issue we mentioned a moving account of the bond between Tommy and his wife Anne. She had been a wonderful partner in his life as a professional Civil Servant, especially in his work establishing and developing higher education institutions up to university level.]*

**Some memories of the 1960s**

During my time as a colonial civil servant I had become involved in setting up what was then thought would be the last ‘colonial’ University to be located in the South Pacific in one of the more populous islands (Fiji). I was talked into spending a further two years helping to deal with the practicalities of this project, so Anne and our young daughter sailed out through the Suez Canal to join me in Fiji.

New Zealand had built a Sunderland flying boat station in Fiji which they were now abandoning, and it provided the land, buildings and services to enable us to get our project off to a ‘flying start’. At the first opportunity staff and their spouses were assembled for a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor who expounded his philosophy, stating that he did not want us to become an ‘ivory tower’ cut off from the people. The 49 officers’ quarters on site, which staff would occupy initially, *would not be increased in number*, and when the available space was exceeded, they would either have to rent or buy a house in town, or even build one.

As Fiji independence was looming, foreign missions were already searching for suitable houses, and the market was becoming unfavourable for the expanding numbers of foreign incomers. The university were concerned that their future colleagues would be so busy devising a new relevant curriculum they would have little time to worry about where to live. Moreover, it was said that national law in Fiji prevented land ‘alienation’ to foreigners.

So the day after her arrival Anne went to see the Secretary of the Native Land Trust Board and came home saying she had obtained a 99 year lease on a three acre site, in the hills 5 miles from the university with a view of the Pacific! What’s more, she had also found an architect who would design us a house costing about £20,000, money we had managed to save during the first 25 years of our marriage, thereby exploding the VC’s ‘impossibility myth’.

She then sent for the Habitat catalogue by air mail and ordered furniture which was despatched to us by sea. It was an early Terence Conran series of designs called ‘Campus’!

The house was not completely built and furnished until just before we returned home to the UK two years later but diplomats arriving were soon followed by UN and then EU reps so there would be no problem selling our house to one of them, perhaps making a small profit.

Well, our tropical white Morris Minor collected from the works at Cowley sold easily—but not the house whose sitting room and verandah were apparently not big enough for diplomatic entertaining. It eventually sold *after* we arrived home, with a capital gain of just £1,000, sufficient for us to build an outdoor pool at our new address in England.

Anne, an accomplished musician, had also organised a local choir in Fiji, giving vocal performances for charity, and she sailed for home with an award from the Fiji Prime Minister of the *Order of the Whale’s Tooth* (which can be worn round the neck)<sup>3</sup> **Tommy Gee**

---

<sup>3</sup> A *tabua* or Whale’s Tooth is a type of Fijian cultural valuable, made from a polished whales’ tooth (or teeth) attached to a braided cord. They were originally taken from the lower jaw of sperm whales found stranded on beaches. Because whale-strandings are relatively rare in Fiji, whale teeth are highly valued. In Fijian society *Tabua* are objects that have a spiritual value that far outweighs their market value. The Order is an award of great social distinction.