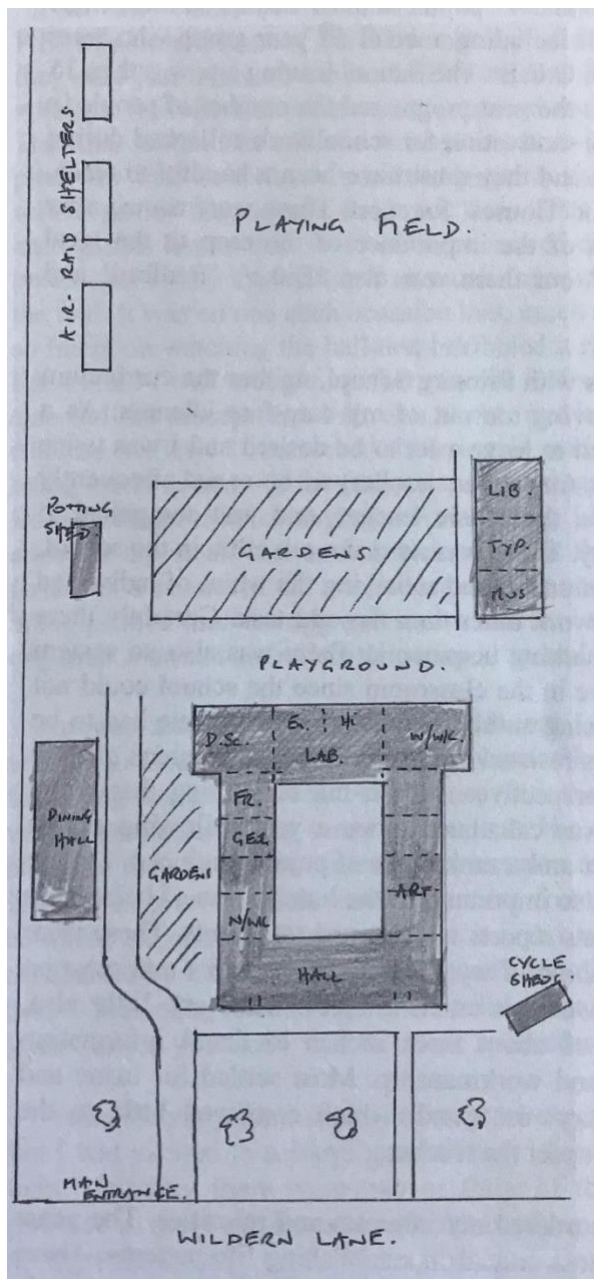


MY SECONDARY SCHOOL YEARS

I started at Hedge End County Secondary School, Wildern Lane, in September 1953. I was just 11 years old and as such I was one of the youngest children there.

Hedge End Secondary School was modern in both senses of the word. It was a white brick building set in a country lane built just before the war in anticipation of the 1944 Education Act which created the non-selective Secondary Modern School. The building was constructed around a quadrangle with a Hall, which doubled as a gymnasium, facing the road and classrooms on the other three sides. With the exception of two classrooms built above a laboratory on the farther side of the building, it was all single storey, and each classroom opened onto a covered way surrounding the quadrangle, four on one side and three on the other. There was also a set of three rooms in a temporary pre-fabricated concrete hut set apart, and a similar building used as a dining hall as well as a classroom. In all there must have been 17 or 18 rooms including specialist accommodation for Woodwork, Domestic Science, Needlework, Science, Typing, Music, Art and a Library. There was also a playground and a large area devoted to vegetable plots and a potting shed to support the study of Rural Science. Beyond was the school playing field with grass covered air raid shelters along one edge. Surrounding the school was farmland, mostly pasturage for cattle.



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The school drew children from a very wide, mostly rural, area embracing the villages of West End, Hedge End, Botley and Curdrige and all the hamlets in between. The distances were such that a large number of pupils had to be bussed in by contract coaches. The school was organised into year groups each with 3 or 4 classes streamed according to ability from the 'A' stream containing the

brightest pupils down the 'D' stream with the dimmest. I was disappointed at being placed in the 'B' stream which showed how badly I had done in the 11+ exam. Fortunately, by Easter of my first year, after exams, there were readjustments to the streaming and I was promoted to

1A. By today's standards class sizes were huge. There were between 40 and 45 pupils in most classes so there must have been around 550 or so pupils in all, including a small 5th year group who were selected to try their luck with G.C.E. The school leaving age was then 15 and most left on their 15th birthday, so as the year progressed the number of people in the school declined. As you can imagine, motivation for schoolwork collapsed during the 4th year as week by week pupils left, and they must have been a handful to teach. The school was also subdivided into four 'Houses' for sport. These were named after varieties of strawberries in recognition of the importance of the crop to the local economy. I was placed in 'Sovereign' but there was also 'Duke', 'Bedford' and 'Paxton'.

They say 'old habits die hard' and, as with Primary School, neither the curriculum nor the teaching staff succeeded in moving me out of my care-free idleness. There was no real work ethic in the school, no real goals to aim at beyond satisfying the whim of individual teachers

and little persuasion to do your best. I cannot remember any homework other than the odd task. Certainly there was no regular routine of setting and marking homework. I recall that, from my perspective, the only thing that mattered was position in class. This was calculated twice per year following exams when all the scores were added together and a rank order of pupils produced. The fear of demotion or the humiliation of being near the bottom of the class were the only things that stirred me. Even then I felt like a minnow within a shoal of larger fish and, by and large, I remained unnoticed and unappreciated. As a result, my classroom

Hampshire Education Committee

HEDGE END COUNTY SECONDARY SCHOOL SCHOOL

Class 2A
 Report on Keith Upson for Autumn Term, 1954.
 Age 12 years 5 months. Position in Class 13th (excluding maths)
 Average of Class 12.10 Number in Class 40

SUBJECT	Max. Marks	Marks Gained	Teacher's Remarks
English :			} Keen and interested. } Comprehension mark too low. R.N.
Composition	75	52	
Handwriting	25	16	
Comprehension	50	28	
Mathematics:			
4 th Set Mechanical Problems	50	28	} Steady progress has been made. R.N.
	100	46	
Geography	50	34	A very reliable boy. R.N.
History	50	44	Has worked well. Aff.
Elementary Science or Hygiene	50	31	Shows interest. R.N.
Elementary Biology or Botany	50	41	Good. Works well. R.N.
Rural Science and Gardening	50	17	A poor result compared with other boys of his form.
Domestic Subjects or Handicraft	100	63	Do not maintaining the standard. Aff.
Needlework			
Art and Handwork			
Commercial Subjects : Book-keeping			
Shorthand			
Typewriting			
Music			
French			Is not making the effort required from a boy promoted from a B form. Aff.
TOTAL ..	500	323	

Number of openings 150 Times absent 1 Times late 0
 Conduct Very Good R. Nicholls
 Head Teacher's Remarks : Keep 'pegging away' Keith H.S. Simmons
 Date 22nd December 1954 Head Teacher

behaviour continued to leave a lot to be desired and I was twice sent to the Headmaster (my piano teacher) to be caned, frequently suffered the 'beats' from the music teacher and was compelled to write hundreds of lines by all and sundry. There was no system of detentions for those failing to achieve in the classroom since the school could not interfere with the arrangements for bussing children home. Any extra time had to be made up in the dinner hour and this was resisted because it deprived teachers of their lunch break. Once again contact between school and parents was extremely limited. There were twice yearly reports following exams showing exam marks indicating strengths and weaknesses across the subjects but very little else. Teachers were offered a single line of about 3 inches to detail information regarding standard, attitude and progress. Most settled for inane and meaningless comments like 'satisfactory' or 'good' which conveyed little to the parents beyond the fact that you had not upset the teacher.

Socialisation into the new school reordered my interests and priorities. The years between 11 and 16 are probably the most crucial in establishing life patterns. These are the receptive years when you are most open to influence, when you seek role models and worship heroes. In the search for self during the adolescent years there is a tendency to hang on to every grain of acceptance, encouragement and success and to be overly sensitive about being overlooked, rejected and failing to reach norms. Relationships matter and you constantly measure yourself against the reactions of others. For me it was the relationship with teachers that determined my interest in subjects and my motivation to work. It was their recognition and value of me that lifted my enthusiasm out of the mire of the mundane towards success. Conversely it was their lack of recognition, their nonchalance, domineering and punitive approach that killed off any predisposition to a subject I might have had and stifled talent before it could reveal itself. There were for me two examples of this destructiveness and negativity.

In the early weeks of attendance at the school any perceived ability in football and P.E. was knocked out of me. I was made to feel puny and useless. My interest and motivation for football evaporated. The final nail in this coffin was routine games lessons. To preserve a decent football pitch for inter-school's competition, play on the main playing field was restricted and the school gained the use of a field next door. This was not only very uneven but before each games lesson the cows had to be moved off the pitch. The ensuing games were precarious, to say the least, and as much time was spent dodging cow pats as kicking the ball. It was on one such occasion that, much to the hilarity of my classmates I was so intent on watching the ball that I dribbled it right off the field well beyond the goal line before I was brought up sharp by the Ref's whistle. The ridicule finished me. So too did the precept that P.E. was about 'making men of you' to justify all kinds of ruthless activity. I remember shivering in mid-winter with next to nothing on and being made to box – a favourite way of getting boys to resolve their differences. Far from finding P.E. challenging and rewarding I found it belittling and humiliating. In athletics my small size and short legs meant that I was generally at the back of the field. As a result, in inter-house competition, I suffered the indignity of being pushed into the egg and spoon race and the sack race. I got the message. The experience turned me off participating in sport for the rest of my life.

Art was another area where my potential was squashed by a teacher who seemed to take against me. He was a man who had little liking for young pupils and even less patience with them. He was a strict disciplinarian with very little humanity or sense of humour. He blew hot and cold, used ridicule as a weapon and he left me confused and alienated. There was precious little encouragement from this man and I found his lessons a belittling experience. Fortunately for me, Art was either squeezed to the edge of the curriculum by the pressure of a large number of subjects on too little time, or suffered from a lack of specialist staff and facilities for Rural Science was substituted for Art in the second year and I was therefore relieved of his repressive influence.

Fortunately, my memories of other teachers are more positive and, whilst I can't say I was excited to achieve great things, I have happy memories of my contact with them. Certainly there were two or three to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude in that I can trace key elements of my life back to their nurturing care. Chief amongst these was Len Knowles, the music teacher. He was a smart, immaculately groomed bachelor in his mid-forties who worked hard to develop the musical life of the school. He was a very sound classroom teacher who had the ability to get people singing, even the shyest and most reticent. His chief claim to fame, however, was his use of a thick ruler with a metal strip running through it which he used to administer corporal punishment. Wayward pupils, including me on many occasions, were put over his knee and given a thrashing, the number of 'beats' reflecting the severity of the misdemeanour. Hardly a lesson passed without somebody getting the 'beats'. The ultimate punishment, however, was a mythical black stick which was rumoured to be hidden in his piano, which nobody ever saw, but everyone feared.

I was first brought to Len's attention shortly after my arrival at the school when the Headmaster asked me to join the school choir who, under his direction, was rehearsing the choral version of Merry England in celebration of the Coronation. He discovered I could sing and rapidly took me under his wing. A week or two later I found myself singing solo in the school carol concert. That was the start. A short while later I was joined by another boy and for the following two years Len tutored us to sing duets. We performed many times both at school, in music festivals, and concerts for O.A.P.'s. Len gave up most of his lunch-breaks to teach and practice music and also ran a very successful recorder group. He repaid our dedication with theatre trips as far afield as Salisbury, Bournemouth and Portsmouth. He was one of the few who genuinely believed in me, recognised an aptitude and nurtured it. At a crucial time, he boosted my confidence and I owe him a great deal.

Two other teachers impacted my life, though to a lesser extent. The first was a young history teacher, an odd looking man with dark brown hair, a bright ginger beard, horn-rimmed glasses and a rather worn sports jacket with leather protectors on the elbows. He was my form teacher in 1B and as such taught me Maths, English, Geography and History. His main specialism, however, was History and he was the first to awaken my interest in the subject. His enthusiasm was seductive and my contact with him proved influential in the choice patterns that followed later in my school career. The other teacher who stirred my brain cells and who motivated me to achieve was the Woodwork teacher – another gentlemanly figure

respected by all for his craftsmanship and ability to teach. My contact with him also had lifelong consequences.

Within a community of twenty plus teachers there are bound to be some interesting characters. There was a Rural Science teacher, an addicted pipe smoker, who used the school gardens to grow his own tobacco. During the autumn the leaves were strung across the potting shed to dry before being sent away for processing. The Biology teacher was somewhat 'off the wall'! It was rumoured that his eccentricities were the result of a breakdown. He certainly resorted to odd punishments. I remember one involved getting miscreant pupils to hold a coin to the blackboard using their noses – very painful after a while. Although he was prone to 'explosions' he was a jolly and likeable chap as long as you stayed on the right side of him. The French teacher was just a bit queer. His mannerisms were sprightly rather than eccentric and his speech well enunciated. French was only taught to the 'A' streams so I missed the first two terms and never really made up the ground. This was as much due to poor teaching as anything else. He was simply unable to lift the subject beyond rote learning of vocabulary and grammar which, for me, was the kiss of death. There was also a somewhat rotund Geography teacher and an infamous Senior Mistress who taught Needlework. She was well into her fifties and wore so much make-up that it was difficult to distinguish between facial lines and cracks in the paintwork! Presiding over all the Head teacher was a capable and charismatic figure. To my young eyes he had it all, He was tall, handsome, talented and genial. He cared for people and, in exchange, earned their goodwill and loyalty. I both admired him and revered him. He was very much a hands-on person who was involved in the life of the school and took an active part in many activities. Under his leadership the school pulled together and was a happy place. Not surprisingly his personal success earned him promotion and, during my second year, he left to take up a headship in Bristol of one of the first comprehensive schools

One of the activities he supported which drew staff and pupils together was the school Field Club. This existed to organise cross-country walks, both day trips around Hampshire during the half-term breaks and, more especially, one week walking holidays at Easter. The club was popular and had a considerable following. It certainly touched a chord with me and when a last minute place became available for a holiday in Towyn, Central Wales at Easter 1954 during my first year, I jumped at the chance. The holiday was the first time I had ever been away from home on my own and it made a lasting impression. The combination of physical challenge, comradeship and the first mountain scenery I had ever seen was overwhelming. I walked 12 to 14 miles a day traversing countryside of breath-taking beauty and climbed both Cader Idris and Snowdon in whatever the weather threw at us. I found it intoxicating and took advantage of further walking holidays to Lynmouth and Penzance in the following years.



During these days my bike was my life-line and my passport to freedom and adventure. During most weeks I must have cycled upwards of 40 to 50 miles. Over 25 of these could be accounted for my journey to school. Hedge End was over 2 miles away. I did not qualify for free transport and since bus fares were expensive, I cycled in all but the most inclement weather. It was also the vehicle to school friends in more distant villages and for more distant holiday adventures. In 1955 and 1956 I cycled to Bath for a break with my grandparents. This was a 5-hour journey of 69 miles. I cannot imagine anyone allowing a 13 or 14 year-old to attempt such a journey these days. Even then Mum and Dad were sufficiently anxious the first year to give me an hour or so start and follow on behind in the car. They caught me up after about 45 miles. It was then not so surprising. The average speed of cars over long distances seldom exceeded 30 to 35 miles per hour such was the narrow and twisty nature of the main roads then, whilst it was perfectly possible to maintain a speed of 12m.p.h on a bike. My grandparents owned a little grocery shop in Claverton Street. It hardly provided a living and customers for provisions were few and far between. My Step Grandmother generated a trade by cooking. She had a gift for making pastry and savouries and produced miracles from a little old fashioned gas cooker in a kitchenette no more than six feet square. On Faggot and Pasty day – regular days each week, people would queue up the street and she would be sold out in minutes. I remember accompanying her to the abattoir first thing in the morning to collect the supplies she needed. The back of the shop overlooked the River Avon and the Railway Station. It was then a hive of activity and I spent hours on the platform watching the great steam beasts thunder in. I can remember the unimaginable thrill of being transported the length of the platform on the footplate of an engine, thanks to some empathetic driver. Station life was, for me, every bit as fascinating as playing on a beach.

Another element of my developing independence which began during my Hedge End days was my paper round. I inherited this from my brother at Easter 1955 at the age of 12 earning the grand sum of 12/6d per week and continued until I was 19, by which time I was earning £2-16s. I had about 100 customers along a hilly 1 ½ mile route. My first task at 6-30am was to make up the papers in order of delivery inserting any magazines that were ordered. On Wednesday and Friday, the Women's magazines and the Radio Times days respectively, my load was too heavy to carry and the newsagent had to provide me with a bike with a carrier. At this early hour in the morning I had good fun in the shop bantering with customers collecting cigarettes and papers on their way to work. I started delivery at about 6-50 and took about an hour to empty my sack. Along the way I met the Milkman with his horse and milk-float. I used to be fascinated at how the horse followed the milkman from house to house without prompting. As he emerged from each driveway the milk-float would be waiting for him at the gate. The modern electric version might be more convenient but it cannot match the efficiency of old 'Dobbin'.

I enjoyed this experience enormously and benefitted by the exercise and the challenge. There were a number of important lessons I learned. The first was that it taught me responsibility at work and service to others, both of which paid dividends in later life. I came to be proud of providing a reliable and faultless service come rain or shine and I enjoyed the positive feedback I received from both customers and the newsagent. I delivered to a number of very large houses. In such cases I did not get off my bike but simply threw the newspapers

into the cavernous porches and rode on. One of these houses had a dog which did not like the motion of peddles and would chase me snapping at my heels. One day the inevitable happened and I landed up at the Doctor's surgery. From that point on whenever the dog was loose I threw the papers (there were 6 of them) over the gate and watched the dog chew them to pieces. They eventually got the message! I also came to appreciate the generosity of working class people and the tight fisted ways of the affluent. At Christmas I profited greatly from gratuities but was surprised at the inverse law that seemed to apply. The larger the property the smaller the tip. I seemed to profit most from the people who could least afford it and would be regularly given 2/6d and 5/- by many of them, whilst amongst the better off 2/- was the norm, and often nothing at all.

Christmas was also pay-time for us choristers in the Church Choir. During these years I took my responsibilities there just as seriously as I did the paper round and attended choir practice and 3 services each Sunday. The choir master kept a register and paid a penny for each attendance. At Christmas this was totalled and any monies from weddings added in. At the Mid-night service on Christmas eve we each received an envelope containing our earnings for the year, usually a sum of around £1-15s. Riches indeed! I remember many amusing incidents in the choir. I might have looked angelic in cassock and surplus, but true to form, I was anything but. I was never very moved by sermons which were so boring I found other things to do and was often hauled out of the front choir stalls and made to sit with the men at the back. Two very different incidents spring to mind which illustrate the breadth of experience here. The first occurred at choir practice one snowy winter's night. After the boys were dismissed at 7-30pm the men rehearsed on. The lure of the fresh fallen snow proved too much for us. After throwing a few snowballs at each other we used the vestry door for target practice. The constant thump, thump' thump on the door brought the choir master out to see us on our way. As soon as he opened the door, however, he was deluged by snowballs from every direction and had to retreat very quickly. So too did we! The other incident also occurred during a dark winters evening when I arrived for choir practice to find the vestry door locked. I therefore entered the Church through the main door and found everything in darkness. I felt my way down the length of the nave en-route for the vestry when I met an object that should not have been there. Inquisitively I felt around the obstacle to discover that it was a coffin. I certainly left the Church quicker than I entered it!

The years from 11 to 14 also saw the emergence of a number of passions, passing fancies and traits. Before my adolescent hormones began to jangle these were typically boyish pursuits – train spotting and building model aeroplanes to name but two. The aeroplanes were made from kits comprising plan, balsa wood, glue, tissue paper and dope, and I built several of them. I remember being mortified when, on a test flight in a local field, one of them crashed on its first launch and was damaged beyond repair. My ineptest in aircraft, however, went beyond modelling. Like most youngsters, for a while, I fancied myself as a pilot and I took a keen interest in the newly emerging jet fighters and the 'Comet', the first jet airliner. The interest was fuelled by 'Biggles' books and the stories and cut-away diagrams published in the 'Eagle' comic. I remember moving oddments of furniture to create a cockpit and playing at being a pilot. One item of equipment which helped and which I acquired from somewhere was a set of war-time headphones. These stimulated an interest in Morse code and I tried to

flash messages to my cousin whose bedroom window was visible 300 yards away – never very successfully. Further to this, however, for a period of nearly a year I wrote diary entries in Morse code. I guess that as adolescence advanced this appealed to the instincts for secrecy.

Secrecy was also uppermost in my mind when at the age of 13 I tried my first cigarettes. The cheapest available then were tipped Woodbines at 1/3d for 10. Then, as now, it was illegal to purchase and smoke cigarettes under the age of 16, yet there were shopkeepers who would even split a packet of 10 and sell them individually. Like most boys the habit began in the bushes with Polo mints to conceal the smell. It took a while to pluck up the courage to smoke more publicly. In those days there was more respect for adults and they would not hesitate to stop you and tell you to put them out. I recall one occasion smoking as I walked home from choir practice in the dark. Street lights were few and far between and were of the type that only created a small puddle of light. As luck would have it that evening, as I walked into the light from one direction the village Bobby walked into it from the other. I received a sharp telling off, was ordered to stub out the cigarette and was threatened that my parents would be informed. I can also remember having a sly smoke in the shed at home after returning from school to find my Mum out. In putting her bike away, she smelt the fumes and proceeded to shame me into confession by building an elaborate story about a man having been in the shed and the fear of what he might have been up to. At about this time I also began to notice girls. I was never very courageous and tended to worship them from afar but I did acquire one regular girlfriend whom I used to walk home from school. I don't think we ventured much further than walking hand in hand before my life took a serious turn and I moved on.

At Easter 1956 my life changed irrevocably. In January I sat the entrance exam for the Southampton **Secondary Technical School** for the second time and passed! This was a watershed in my life, a turning point from which an amazing success story began to unfold. From the moment I entered my new school a transformation took place.

The Technical School was Southampton's half-hearted answer to the tripartite provisions of the 1944 Education Act. The intention was to provide a training ground for future engineers and craftsmen in schools somewhere between elitist academic Grammar Schools and popularist Modern Schools. Rather than build a separate school, however, the Authority leant on the City's Technical College to open a new department to accept 13 – 16 year-olds. With an intake of just 30 pupils per term drawn from a large area of southern Hampshire it actually produced an alternative to pitifully few pupils and can hardly have measured up to government expectations.

The School occupied premises in Albert Road, not far from the Gas Works. It was in a run-down part of town and was surrounded by 19th Century terraces which were increasingly being occupied by immigrant Asian families. The building itself was a substantial three storey rectilinear building designed as a school with a playground on its flat roof and it was shared with older day-release



students engaged in apprenticeships. As schools go it was very small – about 200 pupils with only 7 dedicated members of staff. Some craft teachers shared their time with apprentices.

The basic course was 2 years in length with pupils from 13 years old to school leaving age at 15. Those who were deemed capable were offered another year to study for G.C.E. 'O' Levels. The curriculum was heavily craft orientated. In the first year, two and a half days each week were devoted to Brickwork, Metalwork, Woodwork, Painting and Decorating and Technical Drawing – a half a day each. In the second year whilst Technical Drawing was maintained, there was specialisation in one craft, in my case woodwork. For youngsters seeking a career in the trades this was an excellent opportunity for orientation. With the exception of Painting and Decorating which was provided by the College of Art and was a waste of time, the subjects were highly practical. We were taught the brickwork bonds and practiced building walls in the workshop each week, we undertook a course in Fabrication and cut, bent and soldered metal sheets into a range of useful things, and we pursued the finer point of Carpentry and Joinery ending up by designing and building a piece of furniture. The remaining part of the curriculum was necessarily restricted to 5 subjects and recreational P.E. and games. There was no Art, Music, R.E., or French and no extra-curricular activities – no football team or clubs.

The regime was highly structured and disciplined. From the outset it was made clear that workshop discipline would be insisted upon. There was absolutely no scope for misbehaviour in such potentially dangerous environments. Furthermore, it was single sex. There was no sight of a woman in the whole building and the culture was very different from my co-educational experience to date. It was macho, competitive, coarse and even brutish. It focussed the mind. Homework was given priority and was compulsory. Parents had to sign a sheet indicating how much time had been spent on each task set. Failure to behave or do homework resulted in Saturday morning school. Everything was rigorously marked and all staff kept detailed records of achievement. Each Term classwork and homework marks were totalled and an average percentage was calculated across all the subjects to define a Term Grade. At last there was something to aim at. In the 6 Terms of the 2 year course I achieved six straight 'A's having scored an average of over 80% across the subjects. This was an unprecedented result.

The complete turn-around in my academic progress was due in no small measure to 3 or 4 superlative teachers whose skill, patience and dogged determination to get me up to standard brought me ultimate success. My attitudes were transformed by the first real taste of academic success. I knuckled under and worked with a determination to achieve over 80% in everything. As time went by I invested hours trying to produce the most immaculate work I could, even going to the lengths of writing in script with mapping pen and Indian ink. It paid off. I was awarded prizes each year for progress, and I sailed on to pass 4 out of 5 'O' Level G.C.E.'s in half the time most people studied for them (1 year instead of 2). I learned quickly that hard work brought success and success fuelled hard work.

Needless to say P.E. and Games were not a priority at the school. There was a Hall/Gymnasium with changing rooms and showers where we spent our allotted 2 periods each week. The games field was, however, miles away involving a ferry and bus ride. By the time we arrived and changed, therefore, it was almost time to go back again. Perhaps my

worst experience at the school was in the hands of a P.E. teacher who joined the staff whilst I was there. He came from the army school of discipline and paraded around the Gym with a fencing sword which he was apt to flick across the backsides of unsuspecting pupils. Fortunately, I escaped him, but I saw boys with red wheels across their bottoms. How he got away with it I do not know!

COUNTY BOROUGH OF SOUTHAMPTON
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

SECONDARY TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Pupil's Record for
First Year of Course ending Easter 1957

Name Keith Upson Address 1, Lilac Collages, Chalk Hill, West End. Date of Birth 21.7.42

GROUP
E/56

SUBJECT	1st TERM			2nd TERM			3rd TERM			GENERAL
	CLASSWK	HOMEWK	EXAM	CLASSWK	HOMEWK	EXAM	CLASSWK	HOMEWK	EXAM	
Mathematics	78	81	76	91	70	77	79	98	72	Times Absent. 1st Term <u>10</u> 2nd Term <u>0</u> 3rd Term <u>0</u> Punctuality. 1st Term <u>Excellent</u> 2nd Term <u>Excellent</u> 3rd Term <u>Excellent</u> Measurements: Date..... Heightft.....ins. Weightst.....lbs. Date..... Heightft.....ins. Weightst.....lbs. Outstanding Activities: Posts Held:
English	86	90	80	90	91	68	87	79	81	
History	85	81	92	88	95	83	95	93	100	
Geography	78	-	67	82	90	80	89	98	88	
Science	82	96	82	85	98	85	94	93	88	
Mechanics	83	90	70	89	88	82	100	100	76	
Technical Drawing	81	82	90	86	86	88	89	90	91	
Art										
Workshop Practice. (Wood.)	80	-	-	90	-	-	82	-	-	
" " (Metal.)				75	-	-	80	-	-	
" " (Brick.)	77	-	-	79	-	-	88	-	-	
" " (Painting.)	77	-	-	76	-	-	79	-	-	

NOTES:—In the absence of any remarks progress may be taken as generally satisfactory. Maximum number of marks for each subject under each heading is 100. Less than 40 may be taken as a failure.

Where the spaces are lined through, homework was not given or an examination not set.

Where the spaces are left blank it may be taken that the subject was omitted from the course during the terms under review. "A" in the examination column means absence.

Term grades are based on total marks and general application to work.

A. 80% and over. B. 79% to 60%.
C. 59% to 40%. D. 39% and below.

TERM GRADE <u>A</u>	TERM GRADE <u>A</u>	TERM GRADE <u>A</u>
REMARKS	REMARKS	REMARKS <u>An excellent report.</u>
Headmaster's Signature <u>Jm. Knight</u>	Headmaster's Signature <u>Jm. Knight</u>	Headmaster's Signature <u>Jm. Knight</u>
Parent's or Guardian's Signature <u>R. C. Upson</u>	Parent's or Guardian's Signature <u>R. C. Upson</u>	Parent's or Guardian's Signature <u>R. C. Upson</u>
Date <u>9/9/56</u>	Date <u>4/2/57</u>	Date <u>4/5/57</u>

For three years then I had little or no contact with the opposite sex. Whilst people of my age were socialising, I was working. Popular culture, then Elvis Presley and Rock and Roll passed me by and, if anything, I thought 'Teddy Boys' looked ridiculous. Instead I became interested in Architecture and Meteorology. I had a fad for designing bungalows and remember giving a lecturette on the subject at school, illustrated with detailed plans. I also set up my own weather station, took daily recordings, and entered them in a big ledger for, what must have been, a period of over 18 months. For a while I harboured ambitions to become a Meteorologist until they pointed out at school that it was probably out of my league and I would need a degree. Out of School my contacts were more with adults than with people my own age. My voice broke so that at Church I was shifted into the men's section of the choir. I also joined the local Theatre group and helped back stage. In my final year at the school I also got a Saturday job at a large Department Store in Southampton. They set me to work in the 'Do it Yourself Department' where I sold tools, hardboard, timber, pelmets etc. I believe the starting wage was 15/- per day. This was a valuable training and confidence building exercise in dealing with the public. I had a naturally mischievous way and I found a bright and humorous approach was the way to win sales. After 3 years I had acquired my own clientele and customers came into the shop just to chat with me. Needless to say with the

Paper Round and a 9am to 5-30pm job on Saturday I slept most of Sunday morning and Church going took a tumble.

The only genuine mischief I can remember during these years occurred on Bonfire Night when we used to go out 'on the village' with our pockets stuffed with penny bangers. It was a miracle there were no accidents. We used to throw them everywhere. It seemed that just for one night we behaved like delinquent's. Beyond this smoking became a more accepted part of my life even though I did not smoke openly at home.

My time at the Technical School ended in the summer of 1959. I recall it was a blazing hot June when I sat my 'O' Levels at the Central Hall in St. Mary's Street. By way of celebrating my results, and my new found wealth, now that I had two jobs, in August, I bought a new Vespa Scooter. It cost £139 and was one of the best purchases I ever made. After about 20 minutes training on a rough track outside the dealership, I set off to find the most traffic free way home. It was one of life's unforgettable moments. The exhilaration of just gliding along hearing only the rush of air was marvellous. Over the following 6 six years it provided 85000 miles of trouble free motoring and saved me a fortune, but chiefly, it widened my horizons and increased my independence.

In September I started on the final leg of my Secondary education in the 6th Form of **Barton Peveril Grammar School**, Eastleigh. I did so with some trepidation wondering how the little Secondary Modern school boy would measure up to the brainy kids who has been at Grammar School since the age of 11. As it happens I need not have worried. After a few weeks and a few essays, I found I could certainly hold my own and I relaxed into 6th Form work. I found it far easier than swatting for 'O' Levels. For one thing I now only had to contend with 3 subjects – Geography, History and Economics and spent half on the week in the School Library on 'Private' Study. Furthermore, only one of the subjects yielded any appreciable work and the fact that they all played to my strengths and interest lessened the drudgery of it all.



Whilst Barton Peveril occupied new, modern buildings, the values and attitudes it espoused were traditional, if not Dickensian. As a co-educational school the culture was far less brash and altogether much more genteel. The general governance of both academic attainment and discipline was determined by expectation. As an elitist institution, pupils were expected to do their best and behave in a manner befitting the upper echelons of society. There was little coercion to achieve, little need for strict disciplinary measures. Misfits were counselled and, where necessary, returned to Secondary Modern – that, at least was the threat. There was a strong sense of belonging, enforced by a strict uniform policy, rigorously enforced. For boys, for example, it included a cap. There was no relaxation for older pupils so that, at the age of nearly 19, I still had to wear one, and, as a prefect, I had to enforce the rule for others. A strict

moral code was also enforced. I can recall visits from a Doctor, a County Medical Officer, visiting to provide sex education lectures for the 6th Form where the firm and unequivocal advice was that any contact with girls should not go 'below the neck'! The message was taken up by the staff and effectively policed at school dances to ensure the highest possible standards of decorum. Kissing, cuddling and over-familiarity of any kind were rigorously stamped on. I remember having my arm around my girlfriend and being told off for 'petting in public'!

The expectation that pupils would be self-motivated and eager to learn and achieve seemed, in my experience at least, to lessen the motivation of teachers to teach. Of my 3 main teachers only one made a real effort to press us to reach for higher standards, and he was known to me and had relocated from the Technical School. He rigorously set an essay a week and marked them scrupulously. I have a lot to thank him for. The other two were more than a little reluctant. One never left his hide-away behind his desk laden with books and his lessons comprised nothing more than constant dictation – 3 double lessons per week for 2 years. He set no homework. The only essay answers were written for mock-exams and he 'accidentally' burned the last, and most important set of those, in a fire in his garage. As time progressed it became perfectly obvious that the only way we were to ever pass the examination was to pick up the textbooks and study hard on our own. Perhaps that was the intent? The other teacher was better, but he too was undemanding and set little work. In all three subjects the group sizes were very small ranging between 6 and 12. There was, therefore, little competitive edge to drive us forward and little oversight of our overall progress.

There were a number of supplementary subjects which were technically compulsory for 6th Formers. For Art's students there was one compulsory Science lesson per week and vice versa; there were also compulsory lessons in Religious Education, Music and P.E. None of them were taken particularly seriously. I managed to evade P.E. when it became clear that the teacher in charge was only interested in Hockey, and those, like me, who preferred football were left to our own devices. So I usually went to the changing rooms to be registered and then returned immediately to the library. It appears I was never missed!

In my spare time I continues to indulge my interest in singing and music. After a lapse of about 5 years I was strangely motivated to play the piano and practiced hymns and songs from the shows until I could play them properly. My chief diversion, however, remained singing and I was pulled into a number of things to help overcome the perennial problem with amateur societies – a shortage of men. Thus it was that I was invited to join both the West End Choral Society and the Eastleigh Operatic Society. In November 1959 I took to the stage in the 'Quaker Girl' and was smitten. The following year I was in the chorus for 'Goodnight Vienna' and was even more drawn to musical theatre. Outside of school therefore, my entire social contact was not with people my own age but with adults working together to achieve high standards of performance. Back at School my interests and abilities did not go unnoticed. I was persuaded to perform at a Christmas Concert and was seized by the music department to play the title role in the School production of 'Dido and Aeneas'.

By the time I started the 2nd Year of the 6th Form I had decided what I wanted to do with my life. Deterred from University by my own lack of confidence and barred from most of them by my lack of a modern foreign language at 'O' Level, I plumped for Teacher Training College, drew up a short-list, and applied. I was invited for interview at St. Luke's College, Exeter, and on a damp November day I met the Deputy Principal for about 15 minutes. Two or three weeks later I was offered an unconditional place at the College which I readily accepted. The prospect of a career in teaching strengthened my resolve to achieve 'A' Levels and throughout April and May I shut myself away to study and swot. The ruse paid dividend,s and when I was called to the telephone whilst at work in the Department Store in August, my mother opened the brown envelope and read me the results. I had passed them all, one of only a very few who had achieved passes in all three 'A' Levels. I later discovered that I had achieved the highest grade for the worst teacher and was awarded a School Prize!