

140th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service

Recollections of the 1940's

IAN MURDOCH - Truro School 1942 - 1948

"I was a pupil at the School in the 1940s. I joined the First Year in the middle of the Second World War - yes, I'm that old!

I've been asked to share with you something which particularly stands out to me from my time at the School.

One thing, which I think everyone will be able to relate to, is that when I was in the Junior part of the School, a person who subsequently became the most famous Actor to have been at this School, was in the Senior part of the School, and became Head Prefect. (The nearest position today to this is perhaps Head Boy and Girl, but in those days the Head Prefect was much more powerful and scary).

That person was Robert Shaw: so imagine me being a little Junior and having the Captain of the Shark hunting boat in the film 'Jaws', or the Russian 'baddie' in the second James Bond film 'From Russia with Love' (remember the fight inside the train compartment?), or the German Tank Commander in the film 'Battle of the Bulge', being Head Prefect and in those days handing out punishments!

The Head Prefect was so important that he had his own room (when the rest of us pupils had to share Dormitories, 6 of us all in one room!). Robert Shaw's room was underneath what is now the Medical Centre and I can still see Robert Shaw leaning out of his window when he saw a Junior whose tie wasn't straight and shouting 'Boy, come here!' and scaring the living daylights out of the poor boy!

I'm sure that times have changed here for the better!

Frederick ROBERT Andrew

Truro School 1940 – 1948

My apologies that I am unable to be with you today.

In September 1940, Dunkirk had been evacuated and the Battle of Britain was at its height. Penhale Army Camp had been bombed and Falmouth was often targeted. The RCI in Truro was bombed in August 1942. My contemporaries would have had such experiences.

Transport problems were common with train schedules and overcrowding.

Food shortages were common and school dinners reflected this. A typical would be a meal of Liver and cabbage; bread but no butter unless one shook up the one-third pint milk at break-time. No doubt produce, from the Epworth allotment, enhanced the meals. There was a school tuck-shop run by Mr S H Read - my house master, maths and chemistry teacher.

We had to be economise with stationery and used our exercise books upside-down for extra notes. Also a writing pad for repeated use was supplied with erasable pen and duster. Brown house shoes had to be worn and kept in a bag on the pegs of the day-boys cloakroom

The name on my School Certificate indicated I was a member of 'Truro School and Kent College', whose staff we shared.

We enjoyed sporting activities, though rugby was my favourite. I was in School House and Robert Shaw was captain. He 'encouraged' me to get more House Points.

Recollections of the 1950's

GERALD CHEGWIDDEN

Truro School 1950 - 1958

On this 140th Anniversary Assembly several of us have been asked to give our thoughts on fond memories of our days at Truro School, I have been asked to cover the fifties which is when I was here. Having returned to the fold as it were when I returned to Cornwall I see many changes. Gone are the times when associating with High School girls on a Sunday afternoon in the lanes at the back of the school could lead to one being gated from the town, apparently now you even sit next to one another during classes. I happened to mention this a little while ago when I was out with some friends, it led to the comment from an old girl of the High School "you do not know how difficult it was to organise those accidental meetings". That is the amusing incident of which there were many, when successful they can be viewed as a fond memory.

On returning to Cornwall I have renewed my contact with the school through the Foundation and Truro School Association, this has given me the opportunity to see what things are like now. You have vastly improved and increased facilities which is excellent. But my fond memories of the school are of my alma mata which helped found my way to achieving what I did in life, that I hope reflected our motto **Esse Quam Videri**.

Recollections of the 1960's

PETER STETHRIDGE

Truro School 1960 – 1967

My apologies that I am unable to join you today.

Truro School in the 1960's was still a boys only school and all the teachers were men. Change was in the air but had not yet arrived.

O level English literature lessons were taken by the legendary Mr Watson Weeks. An inspirational teacher with a loud Shakespearian voice. To get 14 year- old boys, who were often more interested in other things, engaged and enthusiastic about Shakespeare was a great achievement and testament to his abilities.

A highlight at the end of the Autumn Term each year was a play put on by the staff, known as 'The 'Masters Play'. The gym (now the Heseltine Gallery) was transformed into a theatre and we were held captive seeing our teachers, (including Watson Weeks) play their parts. The title and cast were always a closely guarded secret. The most memorable one for me was the 'Ghost Train', complete with special effects to give loud bangs and flashing lights. I think the year was 1961.

Other highlights were; playing rugby under the leadership of the Head of Games, Mr Peter Lang, a kind and patient teacher who got the best out of everyone; and, taking part in the Inter-House Public Speaking Competitions organised by Mr Aldwinckle. Both great preparation for life, as was the school motto, **Esse Quam Videre**

Recollections from the 60's & 70's

TIM TALL

Truro School 1966 -1972

I arrived at Truro School in September 1965, from a small local primary school. I had passed my 11 plus exam and my mother and father had put me forward for the entrance exam, which to my surprise and their delight I had also passed. I got a free place, a scholarship. How good was that??

Well after all the uniform buying and fitting me out with sports kit, more about that later, up the lane I came, not knowing too many pupils other than a few local boys who I had got know along the way.

I have to be honest, the place scared me to death. It appeared to be full of rather stern, aloof men, many in gowns, and I felt so insignificant. Having been used to being called by my Christian name at primary school, the use of surnames only added to that feeling. And the constant moving around from lesson to lesson. It seemed to be raining all the time too.

I remember being so upset one night that my dad sat with me until I got off to sleep.

Then, something happened, gradually at first, then accelerated, and I suppose, getting used to the new and making friends with other boys, many of who were more at ease in this vast place, I began to enjoy it, well except for the games and PE. Standing around on a wet and windswept field in the middle of winter just didn't do it for me. How could I avoid this regular punishment then? Well in those days, long before word processors and printers there were things called typewriters and I had one at home. Creative writing, off games notes Dear Mr Lang/Johnson, Timothy is suffering from....Now, no disrespect to my games teachers, both who became lifelong friends, surprisingly, you'd think, but they either never guessed what was going on, or more likely were glad to have me out of the way, but I "suffered" from lots of colds and ailments. The effect being that often my games kit came back home at the end of the term barely worn. My woodwork/DT teacher rumbled me I know, as I would appear at the workshop getting the comment "Games again, Tall? Best get your table out and get on then!"

The stern faces did smile, jokes were made in lessons, not so bad after all. Some even called me Tim! That same DT teacher eventually lured me back here in 1980 to teach alongside him, and I stayed for 34 years!

The teachers worked us hard, we had Saturday morning school which I only realised later that a lot of the teachers too disliked, but hey it was the posh school in Truro,

you got on with it. Bonus, it had an outdoor swimming pool that we could use, every morning, unsupervised during the summer holidays. Hardly anybody ever drowned!

What had also become apparent to me was the intellect I was exposed to, from the staff and my fellow pupils. Gradually my education became more of a partnership, to the point that I even lent the then headmaster Derek Burrell my newest Beatles album Abbey Road, which he used for an assembly.

I cannot say I was ever an A grade pupil, but certain subjects did “float my boat” as the saying goes, and Art and DT, it was called woodwork in those days. I sat my O levels (GCSE’s to you), and like a lot of pupils back then, I decided to leave.

Oh my, what a fuss, “You are A level material”, what me?

So I stayed and did A levels, best decision I ever made, and really the rest is history. I came here as a boy, and worked here as a man. What a place it was and still is, even though I left a while ago now.

Recollections of the 80's

MARK VANSTONE

Truro School 1981 - 1988

The One Hundred and First anniversary of the school in 1981 was a momentous year for me. I joined 1J with Miss Pattison in room 22, which is now C2. Many of the boys in other years still wore the centenary ties.

That year we witnessed the opening of rooms 44 and 45 and I discovered an enduring love for sciences and computing. Room 29 housed a suite of Commodore Pet computers and it was packed out for programming club. But swimming lessons in the unheated outdoor pool were a character-forming experience.

My fondest memories of the school were from the sixth form. Teachers moved to using our first names and girls joined us. I enjoyed all of my subjects, but especially A Level Physics, partly because Dr Allen was an inspirational teacher, but mainly because I sat with the girl who is now my wife.

Recollections of the 90's

NANCY KENWARD

Truro School 1994 – 1996

I joined Truro School Sixth Form as one of only 25 girls in the year group. At that point, it was still a very male dominated school and I was the only girl in some of my lessons. It also meant that the girls were all encouraged to partake in as many activities as possible- my younger sister was a fantastic sportswoman who had started in the first cohort of girls in the First Year when the school became co-educational, so I fear I was something of a disappointment to the PE staff; I put in some pretty dismal performances representing the School in athletics and cross country! The Sixth Form was well known for its excellent A level grades, fantastic (sometimes eccentric) teachers and for the astonishing number of Sixth Form School Balls which took place- at least 3 every term.

I took History, Geography and Geology at A level and have had the honour of working alongside some of the brilliant teachers who taught me, such as Mrs Rainbow and Mr Kenyon. They were passionate about their subjects and certainly gave me an idea of the sort of teacher I wanted to be when I went through my own teacher training.

I had an amazing time in the Sixth Form and still regularly see the group of friends I made there. Even though we live in different places and have families of our own now, they remain my closest friends. Returning to Truro School in 2006 as a teacher was initially a very surreal experience, but although many aspects of the school have changed, the essential feel of the place remains the same.

RACHEL VAUGHAN

Truro School 1991 – 1998

When I arrived here in September 1991, I was part of only the second ever intake of girls to join Truro School from the first year. My four female classmates, Ann, Lian, Caroline, Anoushka and I were definitely seen as curiosities, not only by the 20 boys in our class, but also by many of the long-standing male teachers who were quite clearly flummoxed by our presence in their classrooms. Take French teacher Mr Johnston, known as WAJ, for example, who called all boys by their surnames only but us girls by our Christian names. On one memorable occasion, my friend Ann and I were sent out of our lesson in room 33, not because we were naughty, but because the boys were, and he wanted to shout at them. He was, however, worried that he would make us cry so thought it best if we took a little walk. Little did either of us suspect back then that, 30 years later, I would be the one doing the telling off in room 33.

My happiest memories of my schooldays, aside of course from meeting my future husband, Guy, centre around music. Then Director of Music, Derek Spedding, saw enough of a spark in the 10-year-old me to offer me a music scholarship and to nurture, in his own rather bonkers way, my talents. Like so many of you sitting in front of me today, I was given opportunities to perform in orchestras, choirs and bands every day of the week and I seized every opportunity I was given to sing or play. The seemingly endless rehearsals and concerts and just the times spent hanging out with friends and teachers in the music department were fundamental to my happiness back then and continue to be so today. For them and for the many other good times and wonderful friendships I forged at Truro School, I will always be grateful.

CLAIRE TRESIDDER

Truro School 2003 – 2010

What stands out for me the most when I reflect back on my time at Truro School were the opportunities that were available to me outside of the classroom, whether it was representing the school sports teams, attending talks or going on trips. There were however a number of opportunities that I was afraid to take advantage of in fear of failure, you would have never seen me in the Theatre or involved in any form of public speaking.

With that in mind, the one memory that I hold most fondly from my time at Truro School was the opportunity the Rev gave me in my final year at the school when he asked me to speak at the 6th form leavers assembly and reflect upon my time at Truro School. I was truly terrified, I had always avoided standing up and presenting both in class and publicly. Within my friendship group I was a very confident person but I was never one to step outside my comfort zone. So when it came to it, I said yes, it could be because I'm not sure there is one person who could say no to the Rev. I realised that I couldn't go through life avoiding new experiences just because I hadn't done them before or because I didn't know if I was good enough. When it came to it the Rev was amazing, we went through my speech in the chapel on 3 occasions, he reassured me, told me how I could get better and although I was terrified. I did it.

So why is that my fondest memory of Truro School, well it reminds me that there are plenty of opportunities here at Truro School to take yourself out of your comfort zone, to try something new, to reach your full potential, you just have to say yes to an opportunity when all you want to do is say no because the support network around you will enable you to become the very best version of you.