

One of the first pupils to enter the school: Rod Dallimore[1955-9] reminisces.

When Roundwood Park School opened in 1956, Rod was one of the very first pupils to enter the school along with his three school mates Chris Woof, Roy Abbott and Kenneth Brett. Soon after entering the school premises all the school coaches from Redbourn and Wheathampstead turned up and all the other pupils from the villages where there were no secondary schools also entered their new school for the first time. The Harpenden Free Press were there to take photos of the new school day.



Rod entered the 2nd year at Roundwood, having spent his 1st year at Manland School [now Sir John Lawes] He remembers the Head Teacher, Mr. Foxwell, who he recall as being very strict. Apparently an entire class was caned when none would own up to some misdemeanor involving smoking. Fingers were inspected for nicotine stains! Mr. Foxwell was also rather keen on football and after losing a number of matches to Manland he proudly announced in assembly one day that he was pleased to be able to say that at last Roundwood had beaten Manland at football. Rod scored

the winning goal in a 2-1 victory. Rod remembers Sports Days being held at the National Childrens' Home and involved Markyate and Manland schools.

1958/9 RPS football team. Michael Fletcher, Robin Hunt, Roy Hebb, Roy Bozier, Raymond Walsh, Kenneth Brett, Terry Winch, Robert Winch, Rodney Dallimore, Michael Tompson, Ian Brown, Kenneth Schue



Can you help? Hockey team. We think [L to R]: Robin Lee, Robin Hunt, Peter Hall, Linda Webb (dec.), Jeannie Ashton,

.In 1959 Rod was the Discus champion, Robert Winch (Javelin) and Peter Hall (shot). As a keen sportsman, Rod was also part of a successful 4x110yd relay along with Roy Hebb, Robin Hunt [moved to Toronto in 1969], Rod Dallimore, and Terry Winch.

During Rod's time the school had about 200 students and Mr. Foxwell had just one secretary', Mrs. Leaf. Rod also recalls that a girl was expelled for pushing a PE teacher down some stairs

Whilst at school, like many schoolboys, he had a job as a paper boy and also worked for the local butcher, Tom & Mark Garderten and delivered turkeys etc. at Christmas but he had to pluck them too! He was able to use his butcher boy bike to enable him to do his paper round.

Since leaving school, Rod had many jobs all in the area. He recalls that whilst working in the stores at RH Coles Plastics in Southdown they had an hour for lunch when he often played football and they were paid 'time and a half' on Saturdays. Next he was in furniture removals for Spacey-Nugent. From there he worked for Anscobes [Closed in 1982 on the site where Waitrose is now] in the furniture dept. Next he spent 11 years helping out at Holly Lodge 'a retirement home on Clarence Road. He then moved to work at Croft Farm [still going today] which kept a thriving cattery & kennels as well as 800 chickens, mostly Rhode Island Reds, where he was involved in collecting, grading the eggs as well as testing the chickens for salmonella. Harvest time on the fields was "a killer". From 1984-94 Rod combined working at the farm with working from 4-6 pm at Roundwood Park on the premises staff, often in the staff room. In this position he was able to recall many instances of the teaching characters he encountered including Mr. Woodhouse, Miss Gott and Miss Lucas who was the daughter in law of John Lucas [deputy head], also Miss Clubley, Mr. Surtees and many more.

We all remember him for his avid interest in football and MUFC in particular.

These are the recollections taken during sunny lunchtime meetings at the Carpenters Arms in July 2014.

The CHRISTINE HOOD interview ***** [Biology Teacher from 1975 to 2008]

1. You studied Biology [?] at University – what made you study science and biology in particular?

It was my favourite subject at 'O' level, I did well at it and carried it on into 'A' level where I also did well so it just followed on. Having been brought up in a very rural area, I always showed an interest in the plants and animals so it was a natural progression. I actually studied both Zoology and Psychology at university and at one time (about mid 1990s), I even thought about doing some psychology teaching but the subject had moved on considerably.



2. Do you have any fond memories of your time at university?

Oh yes! It was at University where I really got interested in politics – socialism, anti-apartheid and rights for women all fired me up. In addition, it was the start of the environmental awareness movement and as there had been considerable industrial pollution in South Wales (I was at Cardiff University) there was a massive amount being done to alleviate the problems left by industrial decline. Also, just being away from home was good and with only a once a week phone call being required, growing up and independence all developed. Thank goodness there were no mobile phones and text messages then so I could be totally separate from home!

3. What made you go into teaching?

The vast majority of my final year cohort went on to do the PGCE or go into research and I just decided that teaching would be preferable – I think I was also keen to start earning some money!

4. Did you or have you ever considered any other career path?

For many, many years I wanted to go into the Police! I was keen to go through the uniform stage and become a detective but this was at the time when you had to reach a certain height and I never grew tall enough.

5. Why did you choose Roundwood Park School and have you ever worked in another school or any other industry?

I started off at Sir Frederic Osborn School over in Welwyn Garden City where I got to know Don Mackean the author of Introduction to Biology and many other student books. I moved to further my career and never looked back. I was

lucky in that during my time at school and university, there were many openings for holiday jobs and I did many – waitressing, postal delivery, typing and secretarial, admin work in the civil service etc.

6. What aspects of your job at RPS did you especially enjoy and if you have to pick one thing that you most enjoyed what would it have been?

I think the camaraderie amongst colleagues was brilliant (pre National Curriculum – that killed off having time to really discuss what we were doing). Being a Head of Year was a privilege and I enjoyed meeting most of the parents.

7. You have been linked with the NUT for a number of years. What was your involvement there and why did you take on this role?

From my early days at University, I recognised the vital role that Trade Unions play in representing working people – many of whom don't always have the knowledge, expertise or confidence to speak out for themselves. I was happy to take on this role and do my best to ensure that teachers could have their voice heard in a fair way – for if teachers are treated fairly they will then be in the best position to get on with their teaching role well. If teachers feel under-valued then their morale falls and the students don't always get the best deal.

8. Are you planning to give up at any time in the future?

I gave it all up 4 years ago! However, I have recently been asked to be a Community Governor of one of my local Junior Schools and have taken it on as I still have much of the necessary expertise. It is quite interesting seeing how it is all done at a younger age although I am already somewhat disturbed by the increasing amount of reporting, recording and re-inventing the wheel that is going on.

9. What aspects, if any, about your life/career at school do you miss?

The camaraderie of colleagues and the sheer enthusiasm shown for life by most of the pupils. I certainly don't miss the excessive workload that has developed recently and all of the pointless bureaucracy that bedevils the job. I often wonder how much of the seemingly endless recording, target setting, listing etc., would take place if excel spreadsheets had never been developed as even teachers would surely have rejected it if it had all to be done manually!

10. Do you have any moments that stand out that you are willing to share about your experiences at RPS?

When I was Head of Fourth Year (Year 10 as it now is) there was quite a 'challenging lad in the year group. One day, there were rumours about him and something he had in his bag. I went to investigate sometime after break and he brought his bag out of the lesson to show me a beautiful (but dead) male pheasant. I suspect that he was hoping I would scream or shout but when I merely remarked on how sad it was that such a fantastic bird had been killed, I think he was a bit disappointed!

11. Students often said you mentioned your cats in conversation. Have you always 'kept' cats and what appeals to you about felines?

We always had cats when I was a child but having my own only started after the 1987 hurricane when Frisby (named by Adrian Hughs) was found in the playground and I took him on.

Cats are quite independent but also very beautiful. They can be quite funny (but don't ever laugh at one). It is really amazing that they have become such great internet stars and one of the most looked at subject on you tube etc.



12. Did you also take part in extra-curricular activities such as visits or concerts/plays etc. with the students?

Visits/trips were my favourites and I recall many school trips with considerable fondness. Going to the USSR twice and then Russia were all fascinating as was the Berlin trip. I always enjoyed the ww1 Battlefields trip with Mr Nichols, Mr Curran and others. Biology Field Trips to Barton Turf were also enjoyable – although very hard work for most of the time – as it was good to try and share my enthusiasm for the natural environment with the students. I also used to do the scoring for athletics matches (something I started when teaching at SFO) and absolutely loved seeing the students doing well in a totally different context. The atmosphere of such situations was so different from academic classrooms/laboratories and in so many ways so much nicer.



Do you recognise any of these students – if so please email in their identities

13. How do you spend your time since retiring from teaching?

I run a stall at Antique Fairs a few times a year; with an old friend from my school days I run film shows about historic motor racing; I have a full size allotment and a garden; I go walking with friends; I meet old colleagues; I do a lot more reading and I frequently wonder how I found time to go to work. The historic motor racing film shows require quite a lot of research and we also have special guest speakers – I have now met Murray Walker three times and when Paddy Hopkirk came, he had to be collected by helicopter as he had another talk later on near Southampton. I have also met Robert Sparshott (the father of Robert, Genevieve and Richard) through the motor racing films and wish I had known back in the 70s/80s that he was a mechanic for Lotus!

14. Do you keep in touch with other RPS staff now that you have left?

Definitely – when you consider that Mr Nichols, Ms Dowson and myself were the last staff who had been at RPS long enough to have been there since the last years of the original Headteacher – Arthur Foxwell – we have a lot of shared memories. There are several others with whom I am in contact going back to some from the mid-1970s and several of us go out for a meal regularly.

15. You have known a lot of students over the years. Do you enjoy keeping in touch with any of them?

This is an area where I do not have anything to report. I am of the era when staff kept what was called 'a professional distance' from the students so I never kept in touch although I do look at the alumni site with considerable interest ... thank you BMLS for doing it all! Whenever I go into RPS and have a chat with BMLS I really love hearing about some of the ex-pupils whom I remember.

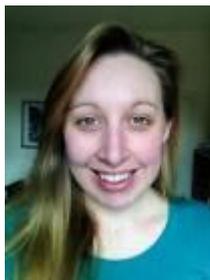
16. Given the changes in education over the year would you, given your time again, go into teaching or another profession?

This is difficult. I thoroughly enjoyed most of my time in teaching – especially up to 1987 when all that National Curriculum rubbish came in. If I did 'come back again' and I chose teaching, I think I would be far more outspoken about the excessive bureaucracy etc. Even in my last few years, I felt that we were being forced to train the students to pass exams rather than educating them so I would try to do more to halt that tide.

17. When students look back on their time at RPS how would you like to be remembered?

No idea! Perhaps as someone who sparked off an interest in plants and animals, conservation and the environment – all with a degree of scientific scepticism?

The Wednesday Tour - Two more visit the school for a trip down memory lane.



Dr Ellie Brand [class of 2008].

Ellie came into school in July to look around and see all the changes and to remember her times in some of the labs and also to meet some of her 'old' teachers including her biology teacher, Mr Barnett, who also studies at Sheffield.

Ellie studied Biology, Chemistry, Psychology and General Studies in the Sixth Form and took a year out working as a teaching assistant at the school. The following year she went up to Sheffield University to study medicine and graduated with an MBChB [1st class hon] in July 2014. She is now a qualified medic and after her summer break will take up her placements as a house doctor in Rotherham and Sheffield for the next two years.

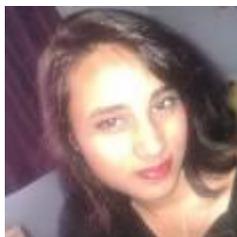
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Karen West (nee Orford) [class of 1989]

"I was at Roundwood Park from 1982 to 1989 and then studied BSc (Hons) Environmental Science at the University of Plymouth. After graduating, I joined MAFF/Defra and I am still there now - it was only supposed to be a summer job! During my Civil Service Career, I have held a number of excellent roles including: government scientist; international relations promoting agricultural exports to the Far East; business adviser helping farmers understand their customers better; Private Secretary to a Ministerial Adviser; and, most recently, developing Defra's graduate talent and social mobility programmes i.e. offering apprenticeships and work experience to under-represented groups. I moved back to Harpenden about 10 years ago with my husband and now have two primary aged children. Karen studies at the University of Plymouth and joined IGD as the Communications Manager for the Food Chain Centre before moving to work for Defra as a programme office manager and then onto her present role as Fast Stream Grade Adviser. Karen had lots of ideas and advice for our students which hopefully we can put into practice".

Alumni Grapevine – More literary giants in the making!



Nikita Sataram [class of 2009]

Nikita gained a degree in Computer Science Networking from the University of Hertfordshire. She has since written and published a novel called Zatheria – The hidden truth.

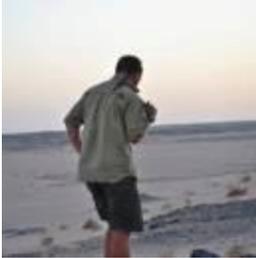


Penny Avis {class of 1986}

Penny with Joanna Berry Co-authored a series of books called 'Never Mind the Botox' is a series about four professional women all working on the sale of high profile cosmetic surgery business the Beau Street Group.

Whilst at school Penny was a keen member of Harpenden Ladies Hockey Club...

Alumni Grapevine – A few more recent contacts



Caedmon Marriot [1989 -1996]

After gaining an MA MSci (hons) in Natural Sciences from Cambridge, Caedmon moved to Oxford to gain a DPhil in Earth Sciences. His early career was in the financial sector before moving to Australia where he is currently the Managing Director of Hanno Resources [mining & metals] in Perth.

Caedmon was also a keen hockey player (forward) for Harpenden HC.



George Kerridge [2002-9]

George studied architecture at Leeds and gained a B.Arch.

He is currently Director at Betfeed where he is also

Head of web and mobile design.



Mayank Karbal [2003-10]

After recently gaining a 1st class honours degree in Accounting & Finance from the University of Leeds, Mayank took an internship at Pan Euro Equities and is currently an Associate Relationship Manager at the Lloyds Banking Group.



Holly Lloyd [2003-10]

Holly has recently graduated with a BA in digital Media from the University of Brighton. She is currently a marketing Executive at Intelligent Positioning.



Jack Mawhinney [2003-10]

After his A levels, Jack did voluntary work in a small village in Fiji as part of a team to complete community, youth and sports development aims directed by the Ministry of Health. He then went to Nottingham Trent University and gained a BSc in Psychology with Sociology. After graduating in 2014, Jack is now a teacher at the Yueyang Vocational & Technical College.



Amy Clark [2002-9] Amy gained a BSc in Geography from the University of Southampton. From there she accrued considerable CRM experience and Amy has recently been appointed as CRM Campaign Manager at Lastminut.com.

Staff changes & news



Paul Barnett, as the longest serving full time member of the teaching staff, has now relented and gone 'part time' and works 3 days a week.

Phil Myers [2000 -14] left in the summer to take up a Deputy Head's post in Bedfordshire.



Nan Maxwell, teacher of history and 6th form geography, is alive and well and enjoying her well earned retirement.

There are currently a lot of new teachers that have joined in the last year or so. Details of these can be found on the main RPS home page.

ALUMNI OF THE MONTH

Each month in the school newsletter 'Roundup' we feature one of our alumni. This month it is Omar Shahryar. *See more by scrolling down on this link to the newsletter...*

http://235adq41x1na422mqmg7h0opti.wengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Roundup_041_20141003.pdf

STOP PRESS

Liverpool ladies FC have retained their Women's Super League championship on the last day in dramatic circumstances. *Read more about how **Natasha Dowie** [2006] and her team mates did it.*

<http://www.roundwoodpark.co.uk/dowies-liverpool-retain-super-league-title/>

News & Views, comments and photos, welcomed from all Alumni. Please email alumnioffice@roundwoodpark.co.uk