

### 1. The function of the "The Log"

Here's a memory test for the boys. Where was "The Log" and what was its function". No clues!

Dave McKenzie



Geoff Graham

Hi Dave,

This "test" really stirred something deep, deep in the most turgid regions of my memory. I feel like the stereotype depiction we see of clairvoyants when they are deep in mystic thoughts. I can just see this tenuous image..... It was a fallen tree trunk - I see areas where the white timber shows through where the bark has been totally worn away? Boys' fields, deep down past a practice Rucker pitch? Close to the boundary where we used to dash from our school 'bus to get a glimpse of the 0830 "Streak" hurtling along the railway line with its harmonious, wheezing steam whistle? I got a Hamilton carpeting and backside caned for being caught out of bounds down there on two consecutive days! Day one I received a warning. Day two I had a lookout posted but he ran for it when he sighted the fuzz in the guise of the pair of teachers who patrolled at - was it - lunchtime? They caught me red handed, betrayed by my scout and it was a mandatory appearance before the "Boss". I can still feel it more than 50 years on. Romanticism is taking over. I'm struggling. Was it close to a coppice of mature trees and used as "Cock o' the midden" game? It was in a shallow, grassy dip? Help me! You must come clean now because I will not sleep easy until the memory has been totally refreshed.

### 2. Country Dancing



the ones immediately before and after us. However we were not as clever as we thought because on the fourth walk back to Dos I heard Mr Tate's voice in my ear "Say goodbye to Doris, Poskett!"

Frank Poskett

Do you remember when the weather was bad we had to do country dancing with the girls? No doubt they dreaded it as much as we did.

The rules were:

1. Form a line of girls and a line of boys opposite each other.
2. If you did not fancy the one opposite you could push, kick and elbow your way to a better one. Survival of the fittest.
3. In the reel, dash into the middle, link arms with the girl, spin them as fast as possible, then release them to propel them towards the wall bars.
4. In the Gay Gordon you had to allow them to spin on your finger in the hope that they then staggered about like drunken sailors. I can remember once carefully lining myself up to "dance" with Doris (Dos), who I admit to having a crush on. I must have miss-counted because some pratt from 3D finished up twirling her around. Then came the Progressive Barn Dance! Doris was finally mine! Instead of progressing, we managed to stay together for 3 progressions causing chaos to

### 3. Cross Country Running

You will all remember the cross country in those wafer thin black pumps that you could feel every pebble through. Down the hill into the park and then back up the hill to the road at the back of the school. Once you reached the bottom you turned out of view of the teacher stood on top of the hill. 3 or 4 of us (I think Pawson was one of us) found a short cut. All you had to do was run through 20 yards of a stream of icy cold water, crawl under a barbed wire fence, climb over a brick wall, outrun a farm dog, climb over a fence and scramble through some brambles. You then waited 2 or 3 minutes for the leading pack to go by and rejoined the race. We did allow an occasional "guest" to join us but for some reason few ever asked to come again.

As an aside to this story, the farm dog eventually started to look forward to our game and would lie, ears pricked as though rounding sheep up.

Frank



Dear Dave,

I hope the old newspaper cutting which I have sent is clear enough for your viewers to recognise some of the participants in the 1954 Senior cross-country. I can make out the following; Ardron, Dillon, Riding, Peter and Alec Wall, Hudson, Poole, Secker, Trueman, Ward, Johns, Thacker, Thomas, Allsop, Long, Chivers, Donaldson, Holder, Shaw, Farnsworth and Longden. All ran along the North Walk, down the hill, under the railway bridge and round Sally Walsh's Dam.....or did they?

Les Thomas

#### 4. Mr. Hamilton's Science Challenge



There was a practical part to the 'A' level Chemistry examination in which candidates were required to analyze a mixture of Inorganic compounds to identify the individual components. Naturally, the 6<sup>th</sup> form Chemistry pupils practiced doing this all through the year. Former pupils will no doubt remember the rotten egg smell of Hydrogen Sulphide which was used in this analysis and which enveloped the corridor and the outside adjacent to the Chemistry lab. In the summer of 1953 after all the exams were over the headmaster, Mr. Hamilton, set the U6 Chemistry an exercise to analyze a powder which he passed to our chemistry teacher Dudley Taylor. The only thing we could detect was salt (sodium chloride). We were unable to identify anything about the bulk of the powder. Afterwards, when we knew what it was, it was obvious why we had been unsuccessful. It was an Organic substance for which we were not qualified or equipped to analyze. The powder turned out to be his beard cuttings out of his electric razor.

Terry O'Marr

#### 5. Options



As I look at the form photos of our years, Dave, I see that the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years have a definite Arts to Science/Technology split. At one time it could be argued that this was a stereotyping of the roles of girls and boys in society. Now we know that the right and left side brains of boys and girls develop differently. The girls being more adaptable to languages and arts and the boys more adaptable to logical problems. There is, of course, an overlapping that makes people adequate in the "weaker side". However, in my case, I think there was a brick wall between the two sides. I could be top of the class in Maths and bottom in French. At the end of year three we had to choose our options for the fourth year. Our French teacher, a very pleasant young lady, had tried her best to help me to master the language. To be fare to myself I had also tried my best. After getting 31% in the annual exam I knew I had to drop French and take the alternative, Religious Knowledge. Being a gentleman, even at that early age, I knew I had to break the news gently to Miss. I approached her desk and told her that it was with great sadness that I had decided to drop French. She amazed me by saying "Let us get this perfectly straight, Poskett. You are not dropping French, French is dropping you!" A bit sad that 'ey?

As an aside to this story, in the 44 years since, I have never needed the French language. However, at my age, the RK might come in useful when I get to the Pearly Gates. I can say "Hey, Peter, stop worrying the cock crowing business. We all have off days, and tell the boss...great story about the Samaritan!"

Frank Poskett

#### 6. Rolls Royce Kestrel aviation engine.



The Rolls Royce Kestrel engine was a precursor of the famous Merlin engine used in so many aircraft in WW II including some notable American designs such as the North American company's P51 Mustang. The Schneider Trophy aircraft used a powerful "R" series development of the Kestrel. Even German WW II prototypes were powered by Kestrels! During my time at HGS, which was 1949/54, coke for the school boilers was stored between the P.E. hut and the back of the Dog 'ole building. As the coke pile was reduced, an RR Kestrel engine used to be revealed until the next delivery buried it once again. At 64 I still enjoy a love affair with flying machines and it began in my early teens so this engine fascinated me. It was a very important milestone in aviation history. If that HGS example of the Kestrel were still around today it would be a prized relic and possibly one which would be restored. I wonder what happened to it? Why was it there in the first place? I think I can answer that one. The school had had an "Officer Cadet Corps" but it had been wound up before my time at HGS. The Kestrel was I believe associated with that.

Geoff Graham



I can answer Geoff Graham partially regarding the RR engine. When Ernie Atack retired, at his leaving speech, he gave us (staff colleagues) an insight into his career etc. He told us that during the war there was some form of training going on for RAF types. The engine I believe he said was used in that training, for servicing. He also said, if my memory serves me, that wooden parts for aeroplanes were built at the school (possibly wing struts etc.). The engine, I presume, went when new buildings were being set up.

Terry McCroakam

## 7. Who's who on the Staff 1962



I don't want to name names, but in our Upper Sixth Year, some of my friends collaborated in the creation of a list of apposite quotations which could be attached to individual members of the Staff of that time (1961-62). I don't suppose any of them would have expected to see that list again after 40 years! See if you can identify the initials with the phrases/verses.

Mr. RWH	"Brevity is the soul of wit." <a href="#">Shakespeare</a>
Mr. LNC	"Great wits sometimes do gloriously offend." <a href="#">Pope</a>
Miss. MS	"I have forgotten your name." <a href="#">Swinburne</a>
Mr. GP	"I see no objection to stoutness, in moderation." <a href="#">Gilbert</a>
Mr. JAS	"O whistle and I'll come to you me lad." <a href="#">Burns</a>
Miss. E	"Her voice was ever soft, Gentle and low, an excellent thing in a woman." <a href="#">Shakespeare</a>
Mr DH	"He stands abune them a' ." <a href="#">Burns</a>
Mr. CMB	"The rose Growing on's cheek (but none knows how); With these, the crystal of his brow, And then the dimple of his chin." <a href="#">Lyly</a>
Mr. DWB	"He was indeed the glass wherein the noble youth did dress themselves." <a href="#">Shakespeare</a>
Mr RGH	"This great dust heap called History." <a href="#">Birrell</a>
Mr. JR	" .....while words of learned length and thundering sound Amazed the rustics ranged around." <a href="#">Goldsmith</a>
Mr. DBK	"Much may be made of a Scotchman, if he be caught young." <a href="#">Johnson</a>
Mr. DAH	"Through and through the inspired leaves Ye maggots make your windings; But oh! respect his lordship's taste And spare his golden bindings." <a href="#">Burns</a>
Miss. KW	"Roll up that map; it will not be wanted these ten years." (?)
Mr. AD	"And all your fortune is beneath your cap." <a href="#">Oldham</a>
Mr. DC	"Must we sing for ever more?" <a href="#">Kipling</a>
Mr. GK	"Thou sly devourer and confusion of gentil woman, tendre creatures." <a href="#">Chaucer</a>
Mr REP	"Who calls me villain....Plucks my beard and blows it in my face?" <a href="#">Shakespeare</a>
Mr JHW	"Mortality, behold and fear." <a href="#">Beaumont</a>
Mr. CO	"To teach vain wits a science little known." <a href="#">Shakespeare</a>
Mr. RGP	"Take physic(s) pomp." <a href="#">Shakespeare</a>

Signed - the LV1A English Group.

[Sheila Kelsall](#)

### An answer and a memory



I assume Miss. KW is Miss Ward. In Geography and possibly History lessons, weren't outline maps done for us by using the "Mapograph" tool? It consisted of a spring-loaded roller with a map of a country or region. Significant lines (physical and political boundaries, rivers, lakes &c) were raised. The roller was passed across a pad soaked in ink and then rolled out into our Geography book. We then had to colour the lines according to a logical key such as blue for [rivers](#), brown for [mountains](#), red dots for [towns](#) etc. The full key had to be shown, as did the scale of the map. Larger scale sketch maps had to be done by hand and were quite an art form. Some pupils became very good indeed and even annotated the sketch maps to highlight particular points of interest. The annotations and map labels had to be printed rather than written longhand.

[Dave McKenzie](#)



**Richard Hancock** writes:

On Geography—I remember Miss Couperthwaite once confusing me when she wrote, in red ink, “Darling?”, on my geography homework. My 13 year old ego soon deflated when I realised that my map of Southern Australia had completely missed off the River Darling from the Murray Darling Basin!

### 8. Elastic Band Catapults



Most of the boys had catapults with which we fired paper pellets. On one occasion I remember, Eddie spotted Brian’s leg (with his socks down as usual) stuck out in the aisle just asking to aimed at. He landed a real “pinger” on his calf. Brian let out an involuntary cry and started to rub his leg. Mrs Podmore turned from the board and asked Brian what was wrong. With 32 pairs of eyes on him Brian was getting redder and redder. He could hardly say he had been shot, but could not think of any other reason for the interruption. One of the girls (knowing that Gail went into nursing, it may have been her) suggested “It might be cramp, Miss.” Miss obviously thought that was an excellent diagnosis and suggested Brian walk up and down the classroom a few times to cure it. So now we had Brian parading in front of the class, an even brighter shade of red, looking for his assassin to give him the bullseye sign. Revenge would be sweet. Brilliant, Gail, if it was you!

**Frank Poskett**

### 9. “Let’s Make An Opera” by Benjamin Britten



It struck me the other day, after I’d sent an email to Dave, that it was fifty years ago since I was at Hemsforth and it was certainly a different way of life. One incident that I find amusing maybe you will too and just maybe someone can fill in some of the gaps when my memory fails me. Anyone remember school plays? I mean the old ones from the late Forties and Fifties. I’m sure someone will read this and say “Good grief, boy, they’re not old. Let’s really go back!”, but the ones I forget are far enough back for me. OK back to mine. I am thinking of when the school play was not the usual Shakespeare, but something by Benjamin Britten called “Let’s Make an Opera”. I believe that was a departure from tradition! So far so good. I know that’s right, but what year was it produced? I don’t know who starred in it - Peter Wall comes to mind? I am just about sure Mr. Walker was Stage Manager. I worked behind the scenes making flats and painting them with the help of Mr. Combs. The

Domestic Science Room next to the Assembly Hall was used as dressing rooms. After and during the performance it was a good place to have some refreshments by kind permission of Miss Metcalfe and some members of the DM classes.

One of my jobs during the performance was to wait on a small platform. It was a minute ledge! There happened an amusing but unfortunate incident. A member of the cast had to climb up the inside of a chimney, or rather appear to climb up it, all the time talking and moving higher. He had a rope tied round his waist. He stepped up a few steps behind the flats out of sight of the audience and I pulled on the rope which we hope made it look as if he was really climbing up. Well there’s many a slip between rope, ledge and top of chimney. Something went wrong. I’m not certain what the problem was, but problem there was. The rope stuck perhaps on a cleat and I still had to pull because he was talking and still climbing. So it seems that the whole chimneybreast and the flat next to it were in danger of falling down and revealing to the audience our little rope trick. I had somehow to hold the rope and pull with one hand, a bit less vigorously perhaps, and to hold the set up with the other!!!! This is a cliff - hanger! Does anyone remember what happened? I hung on so the show went on. It would have anyway. That was the end of my stage or should I say backstage career?

Apart from an appearance in a pantomime which was put on for the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth forms for Christmas one year. I can’t remember the name of that one but I know it was written by myself and five or six others, helped by Mr. Taylor - or should that be the other way round too? Well that’s a story for another time.

**Peter Fisher**



I was chosen for a part in “Let’s Make and Opera”, Peter, but my voice broke during rehearsals and, to my total chagrin, the part was taken over by my younger brother, Alec.

**Peter Wall**