

# Alexander Road High School

## Reunion of the Class of '71



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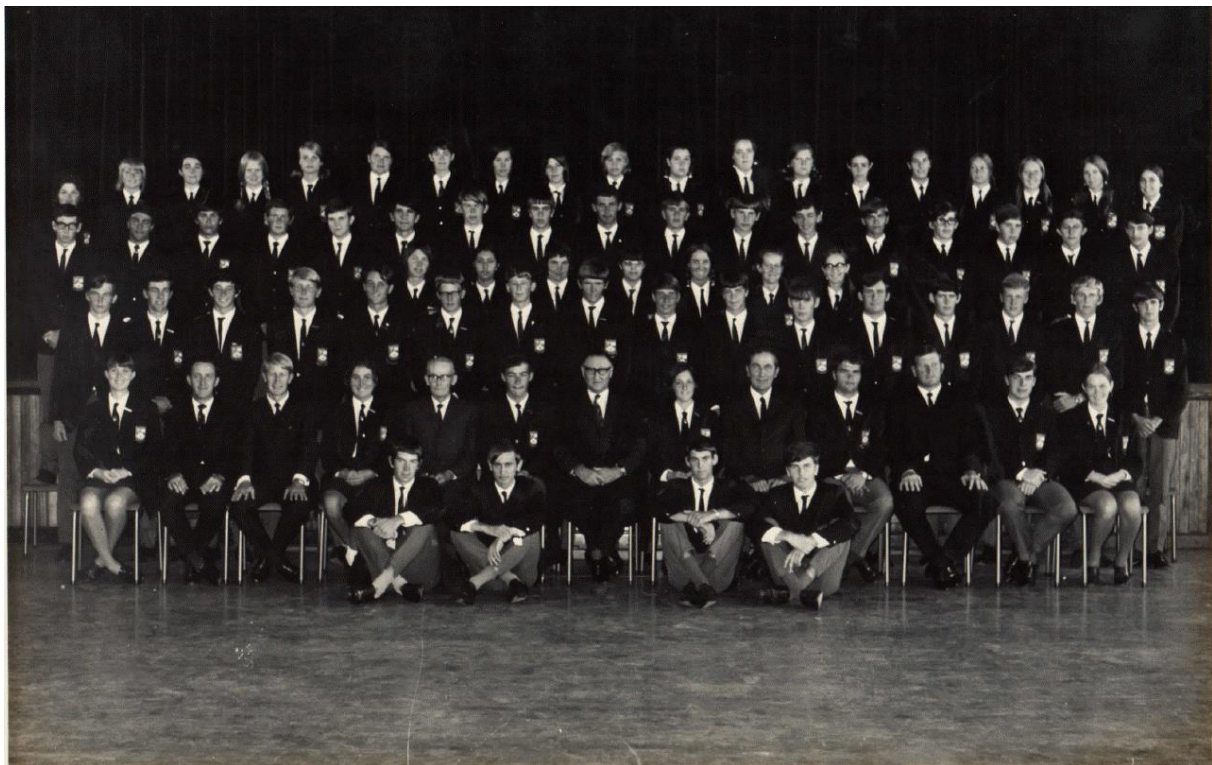
## Introduction

Only in retrospect does one realise that one's school years are the most significant and most memorable time of one's life. Decisions taken at this stage could materially affect one for the rest of one's life. For me notification by Margie Rudman that a 50-year reunion of the class of '71 at Alex would be held, created a sense of incredulity. A realisation dawned that half a century of my life had passed as if in a flash. In an onrush of reflection, one remembers the good old days.

I hope that you will indulge me because I have included two sections which do not strictly relate to the class of '71 viz **Alex: The Formative Years** and **Alex: Look what they did to our School**.

It has been most enjoyable reading what happened to the class of '71 as they spread their wings and made their way into the world. For some it seems as if their destiny was already set when they were at Alex as if they were preordained for great things. Others had to still find their direction. A profound thanks to all of you that contributed by sharing your life's byways, joyous trails and rocky paths with us. To all those who shared their life stories, I extend a warm thank you for doing so.

Lastly, I am deeply saddened by the premature death of a number of our colleagues, all taken before their allotted days.



**Above:** Matric class of 1971



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## Alex: The Formative Years



Having lived in Joburg for 41 years, when I told my friends that I was writing articles on the history of Alex, they were perplexed. Their worried scowl told of their concern for my mental well-being. When I nonchalantly added that it would involve numerous interviews, their suspicions were confirmed. Days later when I explained that Alex refers to my Alma Mater and not what generally springs to mind: Alexandra, a squalid township in Gauteng their relief was palpable. I had not lost it. Yet!

With few exceptions, what one most vividly recalls of one's schooling, are various incidents involving fellow pupils or teachers. This series of blogs will mostly cover these experiences. It also goes without saying that certain teachers will definitively be covered, and their quirks and idiosyncrasies exposed.

**Main picture:** Alexander Road High School from the fields

### **With academic gown flowing**

The principal throughout the whole of this formative period was Mr Cordingley, or Waco, to the pupils. Cordingley's tenure commenced in 1955 when ARHS opened as a school using prefab buildings at the Andrew Rabie School and it terminated in 1972.

It was at his final address to the school in 1972 that he elaborated in detail on the history of the school during his seventeen-year tenure. During that time, he had left an indelible mark on the school. As a tribute to his leadership, I have used that address almost verbatim as the basis of this blog on those early years. In effect, this is a Cordingley eye-view of Alex during its formative years.

### **Principal's address in 1972**

#### UNIFORM AND BADGE

*When I received the appointment to start the Alexander Road High School, I was principal of a small country school, the Cathcart High School, and many of the ideas about uniform and badges were formulated there. At that time, I imagined that Alexander Road High School had been named after General Alexander of 1<sup>st</sup> Army fame, and I had visions of getting Lord Alexander of Tunis as he was later known, out to South Africa to open the school and to ask him to allow us to use his coat of arms for our badge.*

*Imagine my astonishment when I arrived in Port Elizabeth and found out that Alexander Road was named after a local citizen and not after the famous general. The General's coat of arms did however have red and green in it and did give us the idea for the strips in the blazer. The colour brown was*

*chosen because it is a colour that suits most complexions and no other school in Port Elizabeth at that time had a brown uniform.*

*It had always been a belief of mine that if pupils are proud of their uniform, they will be proud of their school and here my wife did a very good job designing a uniform both girls and boys would be proud of. This has been altered from time to time because of the dictates of fashion.*

*As we could not make use of General Alexander's coat of arms, we had to design our own badge and the badge finally decided on was due to the inspiration of two people, our architect Mr Berger, a Jew and a Methodist minister, the Rev. Garrett who at that time was Chairman of the School Board committee responsible for the school's well-being. The motto NIL SINE LABORE was suggested by the school's Latin teacher, Mrs Davies.*

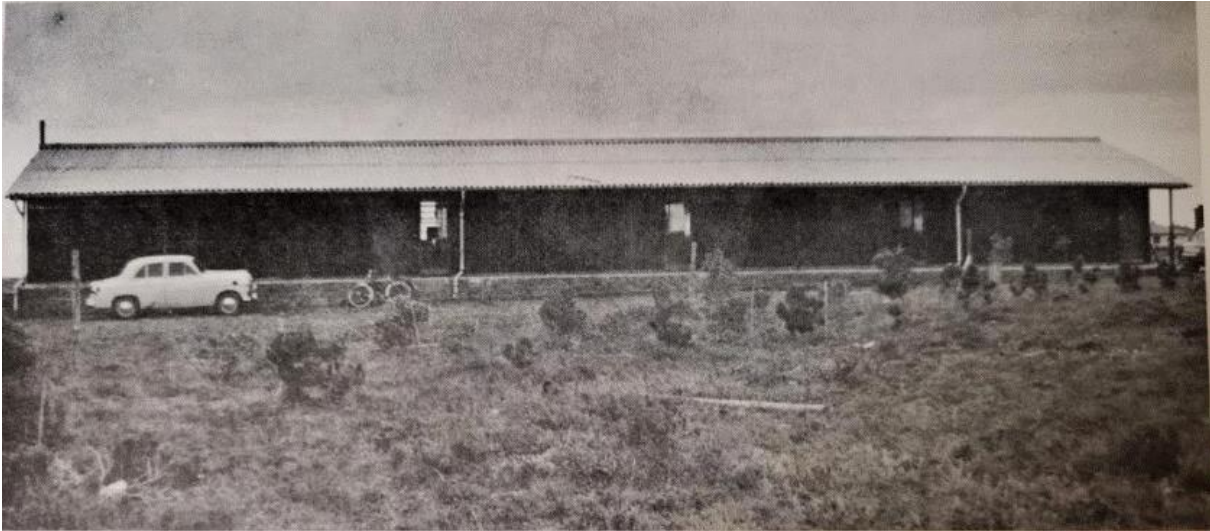
Timeline			
Event	Year	Date	Event
Initial accommodation	1955	24th January	Andrew Rabie: 4 prefab classrooms, 1 classroom in school. Shared woodwork & domestic science- 155 pupils - 12 months
	1955	5th December	Staff and pupils moved to Alexander Road (fourth term)
Shops as class-rooms	1961	January	Three shops hired in 7th Ave Newton Park for Std 6 pupils
	1962	July	Pupils relocated from shops to main school
Additions to main school	1962	July	New wing of the school opened
	1962	11th November	Hall completed
	1963	March	Percy Walker hall opened
Fields	1957		Levelling the fields proposed
	1958	15th September	Levelling commenced
	1958	November	Levelling halted due to a dispute with contractor
	1961	January	Levelling recommenced with new contractor
	1961	June	Levelling halted due to a dispute with contractor
	1964	End of year	Levelling restarted
	1966	9th March	Fields and 6 tennis courts officially opened
Sundry	1978	26th August	"The Heart" complex opened
	1980		Mr Deary composed the school song

*You will agree with me that the school badge is a masterpiece of its kind. You have the famous sculpture "Discobolus" by the Greek sculptor Myron, chosen because it represents perfect physical fitness. You have the open book representing the mind. It stands for the font of all knowledge. Finally, you have the candle, the recognised symbol of the spirit. You will notice that the candle is burning brightly and is on a white background representing purity. The discus thrower and the book are also white, the colour of purity. What the badge really tells us is that if the candle is burning brightly within us then both our bodies and our minds will be pure. I prefer to translate the motto NIL SINE LABORE thus – Nothing worthwhile is ever achieved without real hard work or as Winston Churchill put it "without toil, sweat, tears and blood".*

*The motto ties in with the general theme of the badge and reminds us that no man is complete unless he works hard at developing his mind, body and soul simultaneously. As a minister, the Rev. Paul Hardy, once said to me, our badge contains all the teachings of Christianity and Judaism and would make a wonderful text for a sermon. Perhaps at a future date when a "Founders Day" is inaugurated, this may well be a suitable theme.*

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND STAFF

*I started the school in January 1955 in four prefabricated classrooms in the grounds of the Andrew Rabie High School and with a fifth class in the Andrew Rabie building. We also used the woodwork room and domestic science room of the Andrew Rabie High School. I will never forget the kindness and co-operation of the late Mr van Zyl, principal of the Andrew Rabie school. He went out of his way to make us feel at home and to help wherever he could.*



**Above:** The prefab buildings at Andrew Rabie School used by ARHS in 1955.

*The school presented a motley appearance on the opening day. The 155 pupils had no uniform and I had to insist that the girls wear simple dresses and the boys' jackets and ties. For three days we had no desks. The School Board appealed to other schools to help us, and a motley assortment arrived so that the schooling of the pupils did not suffer unduly.*

*Among the 155 pupils there were some real tough ones who gave the five teachers whom the School Board had recruited, a torrid time. There was one dear old lady who was very short sighted. Because the pupils took advantage of her, it became a daily habit of mine to steal up to the door, wait for an extra loud noise, dash into the classroom and take off two or three pupils to the office for punishment. Luckily, she only lasted one term. In the second term two teachers who are still with us, Mrs Workman and Miss Chilcott joined the staff while one of the foundation members Mrs Poppleton will also be remembered by many.*

*At the beginning of the third term the new uniforms were introduced, and it was incredible what a difference this made. For the first time the pupils had something to be proud of and this was further heightened when we moved into the new building in Alexander Road on the 5<sup>th</sup> December.*

*Among the new teachers who joined the staff in 1956 were Mrs Maggs, Mr Welsh and Mr de Lange. The staff photograph of that year included 10 teachers, six of whom are still with us, three with 18 years' service and three with 17 years' service to the school.*

*The new school consisted of 10 classrooms, a domestic science room, a woodwork room and a science laboratory, capable of accommodating approximately 300 pupils. In 1957 that grand old teacher, Mr Deary, joined the staff and remained with us for 5 years. I am very pleased to see that although now over 80 years old he is with us tonight. It was Mr Deary who composed the school song and also suggested the form of the prefects' induction, which has become such an integral part of our Speech Nights. I am sure many of the past pupils still remember Mr Deary's wise words, "If you play, you'll pay, some way, some day". Another old veteran who joined us in 1957 was Mr G W van der Merwe, who died two years ago. He later on became O.C. shops, of which I will have more to say later.*

*In 1958 Mr Simms joined the staff as Vice-Principal, and proved of enormous assistance to me, especially in the field of organisation. In the same year, Mrs Dickason and Mr Fourie joined the staff. It*

*was obvious that the educational authorities had underestimated the rapid expansion of the western suburbs. Our enrolment in 1959 was 338, in 1960 it was 370 and the building was full to overflowing. I had to turn away more than 150 pupils who had applied for admission to the school and the education authorities made extensions a super priority project. The powers that be assured me that the builders would have 3 classrooms ready by July 1961, and on the strength of this the school committee agreed to the hiring of 3 shops near the present Cotswold Post office to accommodate 3 Standard 6 classes. Being young, enthusiastic, and very green I believed the authorities and the era of the "shops" came into being. The six months' period extended to eighteen months, and it was only in July 1962 that the three Standard 6 classes were transferred to the school.*

*The shops were 1½ miles from the school and this made the interchange of teachers very difficult. As far as possible interchanges between the shops and the school took place at breaks only. To add to our difficulties one of the shops was approximately 100 metres from the other two, and it was inevitable that the pupils had to be left unsupervised at times. It was important that the pupils should feel that they belonged to the school, and we arranged matters so that each Standard 6 class spent one day a week at the school. On this day they did specialist subjects like Woodwork, Domestic Science and Art. The new wing to the school was officially opened in July 1962. At that time finishing touches had still to be done both to the new laboratories and to the hall. The first assembly in the hall was held on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1962 and the official opening and naming of the Percy Walker Hall was performed by the Administrator, the Hon Mr J N Malan on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1963.*

*In 1962 the enrolment shot up to 470 and in that year Miss Wienand and Mr P. P. van der Merwe were appointed to the staff. By 1963 the school was again at full capacity with an enrolment of 563. Mr R H Parker joined the staff in this year, Mr Ledger and Mr Brink in 1964 and Mr Wright in 1965. Thus, of our total present staff of 29, 15 have been at the school for 8 years or more, a record of which any school can be proud.*

*Our present enrolment stands at 650 and once more additions have to be made to the buildings, so that the school can accommodate a minimum of 750 pupils. A new hall to seat 900 is also to be built, and the Percy Walker Hall will then be used as a gymnasium and an intimate theatre. The School Committee has plans to incorporate a modern tearoom and tuckshop and special rooms for the many societies in the school that at present have no permanent home. I personally am pleased that the credit squeeze has delayed the start of building operations. This is one headache I will be pleased to hand over to Mr Heath.*

#### THE PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION AND THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

*The school was built during the austerity period of the fifties and at that time schools wanting a hall or playing fields and tennis courts had to finance these amenities themselves, with only a small grant from the administration. I realised that nothing could be achieved without the backing of the parents. Even at that time when money was considerably more valuable than it is today, I estimated that a minimum of R40 000 was needed. My wife started a ladies' committee in 1955 and this did yeoman work raising money by cake sales and other means, but it was obvious that the only way to involve all the parents was to form a P.T.A. Thus, on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1956 the inaugural meeting of the P.T.A. was held in the old Domestic Science room (now the Art room). Approximately 60 people turned up, but we were all strangers to one another and when I tried to form a committee, I ran into real difficulties. Eventually one of the parents, Major King took matters into his own hands. He singled out individuals whom he thought looked likely leaders, asked their names and proposed them for the committee. In this way we got our first committee going and from then onwards never looked back.*

*Another event of far-reaching importance took place on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1956. This was the election of the first school committee. I realised that if the school was to get on, we would have to have a man of standing as Chairman of the committee. With the backing of the new P.T.A. executive I made enquiries and found that the ideal man for my purpose was a certain Mr Percy Walker. He was a well-known industrialist, Chairman of the Divisional Council, a member of the Hospital Board and was a prominent Rotarian. He had also served on the School Board. When I first approached him, he told me he had too*



*many irons in the fire and could not consider taking on another job. I refused to take no for an answer, pointing out that I wanted him as a figure head only and that I would be doing all the work. After my third visit he agreed to take on the job. What a wonderful choice this turned out to be. He looked on the job as a challenge and put his whole heart and soul into raising money for the school.*

*What was even more important, he inspired the P.T.A. with his enthusiasm, and knitted the parents into one happy body all working for the school. In the early years he ran a bazaar or fete every year. I do not think any of us will forget the All-Day fete held at the school in 1959. Percy had received a donation of 4000 gramophone records, many of them brand new. The P.T.A. decided to run a giant competition with a difference. Apart from the many big prizes, our boast was that everyone who bought a ticket would receive a prize of a gramophone record. It sounded very well in theory, but after the draw had been made, the records had to be distributed, and many of the ticket holders had gone home. Nothing daunted the fathers got stuck into the job of delivering nearly 2000 unclaimed records to various addresses in the town. That fete brought in a net profit of R3 320 which in those days was a lot of money. Altogether the P.T.A. in its various fetes and sales has brought in R21 783,62.*

*In 1959 the Education authorities offered schools who wished to build halls R15 000 towards the cost. As the new additions had been sanctioned the School Committee decided to go all out to get our new hall built at the same time. The school at that time had just over R10 000 saved up and our architects Messrs Berman and Berger told us that we could build the kind of hall we wanted for R40 000. This meant that we were still short of R15 000. The School Committee went carefully into the question of raising the money by issuing unsecured debentures paying 6% interest. Repayments were to be made by raising the school levy to R4 per family per term. R2 of this amount was to be put into a special fund to repay debenture holders. With approximately 400 families this would bring in over R3 000 per year, so that the whole scheme could be liquidated within five years. A crowded P.T.A. meeting enthusiastically endorsed the idea, and the debenture fund was launched that same year. The response was staggering. Within four months the fund was fully subscribed, and we had to turn away over R13 000. Here I wish to pay tribute to the fund secretary Mr Jock Grieve whose enthusiasm and hard work was largely responsible for the success of the undertaking, to Mr Simms the treasurer, and to the three independent trustees, Messrs Bergman, Lawson and Munro. The first certificate was issued to Mr Percy Walker. This has been framed and is now in my office.*

*An undertaking had been given to the parents that if they agreed to the raising of the school levy, there would be no further fetes or other fund-raising efforts. To weary parents who had put in a great deal of time and hard work into raising money this seemed a wonderful idea, but two years later the P.T.A. was clamouring for another fete. The parents obviously missed the wonderful camaraderie and good fellowship engendered by having to work together and felt that new parents in particular did not have the same interest in the school that they did. The School Committee stalled them off by allowing them to hold small efforts like cake sales but eventually in 1962 as money was needed for the development of the sports fields, the P.T.A. was allowed to hold a bazaar which as usual was organised by Mr Walker.*

*The school suffered a tragic loss in 1963 while I was overseas on furlough when Mr Percy Walker was killed in a motor accident. It is fitting that the name of this great friend of the school should be perpetuated by the naming of this hall after him and also by the Percy Walker Memorial Scholarship inaugurated by his widow, Mrs Edyth Walker-Tate.*

*Mr Walker was succeeded as Chairman of the school committee by another doughty worker for the school, Mr Herbert Hurd. His main interest was the development of the playing fields, and the wonderful facilities we enjoy today are largely due to him. When he was forced to resign as Chairman due to pressure of work, Mr Roy Skelding was made Chairman in 1965. He had been a foundation member of the school committee and had acted as secretary for 9 years. When he resigned in 1968 our present chairman, Rev P D Jourdan took over this task.*

*These four chairmen have guided the school through many difficult periods, and I would like to pay tribute to the valuable help they, and in fact all members of the six school committees, have done.*

*Throughout the short history of the school, they have given unstintingly of their time and advice and have always been ready to undertake any task asked of them.*

*I do not want to give the impression that the P.T.A. has been purely a fund-raising body. Once a term throughout the 17 years of its existence we have had interesting talks and discussions mainly on educational matters affecting parents, and I am sure these have been of immense benefit to all concerned.*

#### THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

*By 1957 the P.T.A. had amassed enough money to enable us to start on the levelling of the fields. Application was made to the department and work on the fields actually started on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1958. Unfortunately, the contractor deviated from the plans formulated by the department of works in Cape Town and two months later all work was stopped until the dispute was settled. Two years later, in January 1961 work was restarted by another contractor, and in June of that year all work on the fields was again stopped because of another dispute between the contractor and the structural engineer employed by the department. As the contractor threatened to sue the department, we were not allowed to touch the fields for 2½ years. Eventually the dispute was settled out of court and once again work recommenced at the end of 1964. This time there was no hitch and the then chairman of the school committee, Mr Roy Skelding, officially opened the fields and the six tennis courts on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1966. All in all, our fields and tennis courts took 7½ years to build, surely a world record for such a small job. This did have its compensations. The department gave us far more than we were officially entitled to, and the fields and tennis courts only cost the school R9 800. To commemorate the hard work of those mainly responsible one of the fields was called the Hurd field and the two groups of tennis courts were named after Mr Grieve and Mr Skelding.*

#### ADDITIONAL LAND

*I realised from the start that the 6-morgen site on which the school is situated was far too small, and on delving into files of old correspondence I discovered that on 5 November 1954 before I even commenced my duties as Headmaster, I made application for additional ground between Alexander Road and the Patterson High school to be given to the school. I had been told by a friend in the municipality that this land was available. The School Board backed up the application but on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1956 this was turned down by the department for two reasons – firstly, they considered 6 morgen of ground adequate for any high school and secondly the fencing and a wall which the municipality insisted on would cost £3 300 (R6 600) and this they considered excessive.*

*The school committee realised the necessity of obtaining additional land and negotiations were again started with the municipality. Eventually they offered us a level open site in Cotswold. The Department agreed to take over the land on our behalf, but this time the Administrator vetoed the transfer on the grounds that open spaces in suburbs had to be reserved for future parks.*

*The municipality again offered us 10 morgen of land between Alexander Road and the Patterson High School and negotiations for this land have been going on ever since. The long delays and the red tape of the Department has cost us dear. We received a letter last month from the municipality saying that the land was no longer available as the recent traffic survey indicated that the whole area would be required for a double carriageway road to link Kempston Road with the national road.*

*This school must have additional land and I hope Mr Heath will be more successful in this respect than I have been.*

*I think it fitting that I should end up this short history of the school by giving you some idea of my aims and ideals because these must inevitably have had their bearing on the character of the school which has developed.*

1. *I am firmly convinced that a pupil can only work to the best of his ability in a friendly atmosphere. If he is happy, not only will he work well at school, but he will be more likely to take part in the many societies and sports which the school has to offer. In other words, it is only in a*

*friendly atmosphere that the pupil can develop his full potential. In such an atmosphere he will feel free to try out his wings and develop initiative and self-reliance.*

2. *It is a truism that there can be no freedom in an undisciplined school or society. Pupils need the security which discipline provides, and although I have tried to foster self-discipline rather than a rigid external discipline, pupils appreciate the fact that when they know they have done wrong, they will have to suffer the consequences. In fact, I will go so far as to say that not only do they expect punishment for wrongdoing, but they feel let down if they escape.*

3. *I have always been a firm believer in the inherent goodness of our modern youth. As I have said so many times, our young people today have to contend with so many evil influences, and have to withstand so many challenges, that those who come through unscathed are far better people than you or I ever were. Our young people soon see through the shams and the counterfeits, they are tolerant but at the same time very demanding, they certainly possess a great deal of initiative and self-reliance and above all, like all young people throughout the ages, they scorn those restrictions and traditions for which they see no use.*

*Because of this it has been our aim in this school to make the pupils themselves responsible for many of their activities. I have always found that when they undertake a task, they make an excellent job of it. Examples of this are the high standard achieved by them in the inter-house plays, the magnificent organisation of the swimming gala, the school newspaper, Alexander the Great, the matric farewell dance, the variety concerts they have given us, and the many societies organised and run by the pupils themselves.*

*In 1955 a bay school was started. It has been well looked after by a dedicated staff and by a devoted band of parents, both on the School Committee and in the P.T.A. its virile growth and the way it has overcome its growing pains is in no small measure due to the nursing and care of all you people.*

*I venture to say that no adolescent has had such care bestowed on it. Although not yet out of its teens it shows promise of developing into an adulthood which will be pride of all those who have been associated with its upbringing. It is up to all of you, both staff and parents to give Mr Heath the same steadfast support that you have given me so that in its adulthood this already renowned and well-loved school will grow still greater in stature.*



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## The Staff

**Waco: With chalk-stained academic gown flowing.**



**Being the first principal of Alexander Road High School for its first 17 years, Cordingley had an inordinate influence on the development of the school. By shepherding it through its formative years, his role was pivotal in setting the school on the road to greatness.**

**Main picture:** Winston Cordingley

### Early life

Winston was born on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1911 in Verulam, Natal. As his father was a missionary, his youth was peripatetic in nature. The most serious consequence of this lifestyle was to affect Cordingley when he had to attend school. At age 6 he was placed in a Boarding School, Kingswood College, in Grahamstown. To be separated from one's family at such an early age must have been terrifying. From my experience with people who have also attended boarding school is that they exhibit attributes of resilience arising from the triumph of the human spirit over adversity. In all probability Cordingley was similarly affected.





**Left:** O’Kiep Railway Station

Elizabeth Bruton, Winston’s eldest daughter, related another life experience which would also greatly have influenced the young Winston and that was the necessity to ride on horseback from mission stations in O’Kiep in Namaqualand to the nearest

railway siding/station in order to catch the train to school in Cape Town. From Namaqualand, Winston’s father was transferred to the Transkei where he was based at mission stations in Lusikisiki and Idutywa, the birthplace of Thabo Mbeki. In this case, the young Winston would catch the train to De Aar, then onto Alice and finally to Grahamstown. The journey home by train to East London and then Butterworth. The boys then disembarked at the so-called “Kei Cuttings” on the Great Kei River Pass leading down to the Great Kei River. The pass is located between the towns of Butterworth and Komga on the N2 highway. There are 31 bends corners and curves compressed into its 11,8 km length and the 422m altitude drop when travelling from south to north is what causes the momentum gaining problems for trains and heavy vehicles, in which brake failure has been the common denominator in most of the serious incidents on this pass. Probably as a safety precaution, the boys would have to disembark at the commencement of the steep incline, walk to the top and then boarded the train again.



**Above:** Kei Cuttings: Aerial view of the pass showing both bridges

Imagine being so young and having to make one's way through a strange town to school. Like boarding school, such activities build resourcefulness at a young age, never to be forgone. Perhaps he was fortunate enough to be accompanied by an elder brother, yet nevertheless, even with an



older sibling, the experience must have been daunting for the youngsters. Today even letting one's children walk a day or two to school is frowned upon and even perhaps regarded as irresponsible.

**Left:** Grahamstown Railway Station

Living in the bundu has its own hazards. Bridget recalled her paternal grandmother encountering a snake in the

bread flour bin, a common enough occurrence in that era. Elizabeth, in spite of her advanced years, is still very *compos mentis*, related another incident which also illustrated the dangers of this wilderness area in those days. Winston's mother was dozing in a chair in the garden with their cat on her lap. Unknown to her, the cat had mesmerised a cobra. Fortunately, she awakened just in time to witness a cobra bolt upright ready to strike.

One of the distressing events that a child can experience is the loss of a parent. In Winston's case, it arose when his father died while preaching a sermon in the pulpit at the Methodist Church in East London.

After completing his schooling, Winston enrolled at Rhodes University and majored in mathematics and history. After completing his degree, his first teaching post was at Selbourne College in East London. It was while living in East London that he met his wife, Mary Holgate, whom



he married while still living in East London. The first of their three children, Elizabeth, was born in 1941 before war intruded.

**Left:** Winston Cordingley: First Field Artillery from 1941 to 1945

### The war years

After enlisting in the army and the completion of his training, Winston was posted to North Africa. Prior to his departure, he applied for leave from the army to be at the birth of his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 1941. Winston was granted leave and Elizabeth was baptised the next day by his father. Winston had to immediately return to his base in Pretoria.

The period of 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1942 must have been the most traumatic for the 31-year-old South African lad. Instead of the bushveld, Winston was trapped in the waterless desert of North Africa with its blistering midday temperatures and



its freezing nights. His foes were no longer the snakes and the predatory animals but another enemy even more deadly, the *Panzerarmee Afrika* under the wily Rommel.



Having lost the battle of Gazala, the Allied forces made a beeline for Fortress Tobruk. Having earned a fearsome reputation during the Siege of Tobruk which lasted for 241 days in 1941, the Allies, against the advice of the Royal Navy which declined to provide sustenance for yet another siege, the Allied forces sought their good luck charm and headed there. General Klopper, who lacked even a modicum of fighting experience, was placed in charge, only to find the proverbial cupboard bare. The defences had been stripped of all military equipment such as its artillery and the defensive fortifications were half-covered by a sea of sand. Instead of incurring futile losses, Klopper surrendered to the Axis forces much to the chagrin of the Australians who had tenaciously forestalled a German breakthrough during the siege of 1941.

Amazingly, that night Winston's mother experienced a sense of foreboding, a trill of impending imminent danger. Due to the vividness of this premonition, she arose from the bed, knelt beside it and prayed earnestly for his safety. Meanwhile up North, along the Cyrenaican littoral, intrepid Allied troops defied their officers and escaped along the coast. Amongst them was a South African soldier who would ignore the dangers and join the other escapees.



Based upon the fact that Cordingley was a member of the First Field Artillery Regiment from 1941 to 1945, it can safely be assumed that he participated in one the largest artillery barrages of the war viz the Battle of El Alamein during October 1942.

**Left:** A Young WA Cordingley

### **Reintegration into civilian life**

Like most South Africans, Winston would be shipped back to the Union after this battle, and unless one was converted into tankmen, most would have lingered in limbo

in South Africa until their discharge at the end of the war. Mary and Elizabeth were to spend the war years with her parents in East London. Winston's discharge from the army would be effected in Pretoria before returning to East London in 1945. In 1946, his second daughter, Margaret, was born in East London. Finally, in 1948, the family was completed with the birth of Bridget.

The family continued to live in East London where Winston resumed his teaching post at Selbourne college for three years. Later the family would move to Cathcart where Winston was appointed as the principal circa 1952.



### **Accepting a new challenge**

On accepting the post as principal at ARHS in 1955, the family would once again be compelled to relocate. Initially they rented a house in Westering but for convenience's sake, they purchased a house in Alexander Road where they stayed until the youngest daughter, Bridget had completed her schooling at Collegiate High School.

**Left:** Winston Cordingley on 6th June 1976 inauguration as President of Rotary PE West Club

In 1955, the ARHS was a new school still under construction, a veritable work-in-progress. This school was

envisaged to serve the needs of the new suburb of Newton Park. What town planning had neglected to do was to cater for a high school to service the area. Hence the use of a stand on the northern perimeter of the suburb instead of one more centrally located. This school would eponymously be called Alexander Road High School after the street in front of the school. What was wrong with a traditional name such as Newton Park Grey seeing that Port Elizabeth boasted South End Grey, North End Grey and that nondescript school in College Drive, Mill Park!



On commencement of enrolment in 1955, what accommodation could ARHS offer the prospective student but a construction site. Andrew Rabie stepped into the breach and provided the use of four prefabricated classrooms. In addition, three shops in 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Cotswold, were rented to meet the demand for additional classrooms.



Much fundraising was done to add to the basic buildings. In this endeavour Winston gave unstintingly of his time. His first priority was a hall as well as sports fields. In terms of the Education



Departments stipulations at that time, the school was obliged to raise half the money for improvements before the Education Department would provide the balance of the funds required.

### What was WACO like?

We all have our own stories about Cordingley, and the ones that resonated with me, given my interest in military history especially that of WW2, were about WW2. None related to a specific battle but rather to human nature in a time of stress and dire circumstances. The only one which I can recall – he repeated it numerous times over the years – involved the attack on German soldiers manning a MG-42 within a pillbox. It might well have been a MG-34 but I imagined it as the rapid-firing MG-42. Were any of these stories based upon his real-life

experiences, I wonder? Or were they generic themes to bolster or embellish a principle or character trait?

Kathy Sutton, the school secretary from 1965 to 1999 recalls him as follows: *"Oh, by the way, our amazing Principal (he insisted he was a principal and not a Headmaster) was also sometimes referred to as Batman. You will remember that he always wore his academic gown and when he walked down the corridors on windy days, he really looked like Batman. [This was one of Cordingley's obligatory bows to tradition of which there were many] I once offered to take his gown home and give it a good cleaning, but he refused the offer and said that there should always be chalk marks on his gown! What a man."*

The only time that I had to present myself to the headmaster in his office was for a serious offence. At that stage I was friends with Michael Henderson who came from Rhodesia. Anyway, Michael had acquired a flick knife and would annoy the hell out of me by throwing it at my feet as I walked along. In spite of numerous entreaties to cease and desist, Michael would persist with his game to annoy me.



Then one day, the inevitable occurred. The knife sliced through the side of my shoe and nicked the skin. In an incandescent rage I pulled it out and threw it with all my might at Michael. As he was running down the embankment near the tennis courts, the knife was high by the time it reached him. With a solid THUNK it sliced into the tibia. Before I could shout AMBULANCE, I was in Cordingley's office. Time slowed down as Cordingley leisurely selected the cane with which to



administer the punishment to this wicked miscreant, and then he did the deed. Worse was to follow. As I knew Michael's mother and his aunt well, I would have to go to the Provincial Hospital that night with my parents and apologise. All accepted my remorseful pleading and even offered me the knife as a souvenir.

20.8	B. Cordon	80	Not doing punishment	3	McGregor
21.8	M. Brunette	80	"	3	McGregor
21.8	A. Jenson	80	"	3	McGregor
23.8	K. Baunemto	8E	Misbehaviour - class	2	S. J. H.
23.8	C. Renshaw	8E	"	2	S. J. H.
28.8	G. Robertson	10B	Hair	2	Bryman
"	G. Walters	10C	Scratching on walls	3	Bryman
"	R. Azar	7E	No Homework	2	Whelan
29.8	D. Stryden	6E	No Homework for student	3	D.M.G.
	R. Bramson	6E	"	3	D.M.G.
30.8	R. Stevenson	8C	No Homework	2	Whelan
31.8	J. Nel	7D	Hands in pockets	2	Bryman
5-9.	T. Byron	8's	Failed Test	2	Castley
	M. Duck	"	"	2	"
	S. Greyling	"	"	2	"
	L. Packwood	"	"	2	"
	S. Beukes	"	"	2	"
	K. Stevenson	"	"	2	"
	A. Wainwright	"	"	2	"

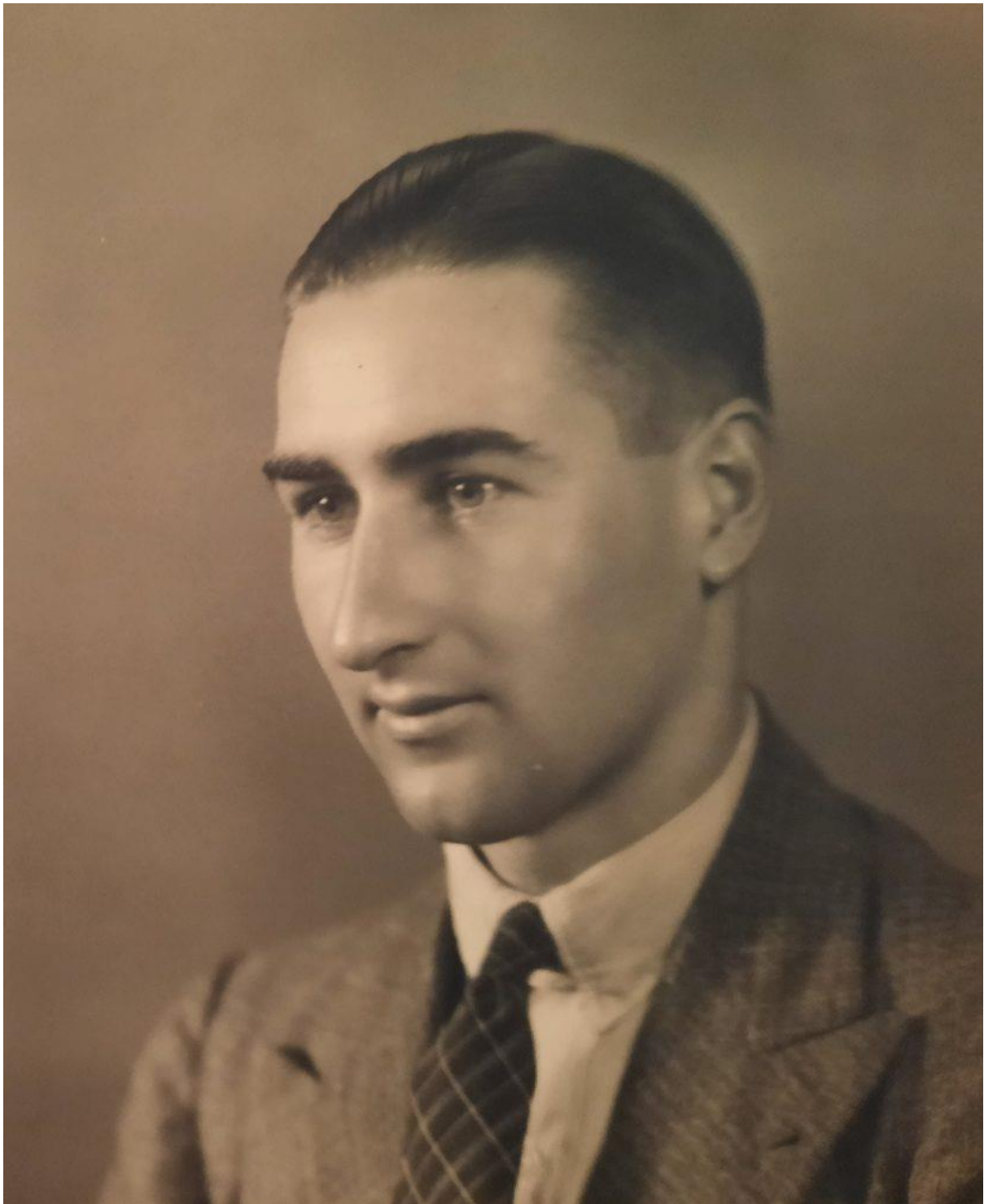
**Above:** Punishment Register aka the Caning Register.

Winston Cordingley was definitely extremely pedantic at heart, as he never referred to the school as ALEX but always used the full name, ALEXANDER ROAD HIGH SCHOOL. Most headmasters have a nickname and Cordingley's was WACO. Maybe somebody can set the record straight, but two explanations have been provided. The most obvious one refers to the fact that he could give a good "whack". Kathy Sutton recalls: *"how the boys would rub their bottoms when leaving his office. I always felt sooooo sorry for them."* The other plausible explanation relates to the fact that his initials were WAC. In the case of Herbert Hurd, the sobriquet of the headmaster was BUCKET on account of the fact that his surname was Emerick.

The one issue which created a measure of discontent related to bicycles. Cordingley mandated that cyclists could not cycle down to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue but had to push their bikes down the hill and only mount at the bottom. Similarly, the same rule applied down to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. Arguably the descent down Alexander Road to 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue was treacherous but after hours we all would cycle down both of these hills. In passing, bikes are no longer a mode of transport to school anymore; it is one's parent's car.

Sharon Rhode recalls that on one occasion Miss Chilcott (Chilly) sent all the boys in her class for a caning. Waco hit his desk instead and then winked at the boys, telling them to rub their behinds as if they had been caned.

Who can forget the hair inspections? After break, one had to walk through a gang of teachers intent on retribution on all the miscreants. At least that was my view. Of course, if one's hair was exceeded the bounds by far, one had to be selected for a caning. But what happened if one was borderline or slightly long? At one such inspection Colin Buxton who was in front of me got pulled out. Even though my hair was slightly longer, I walked through without a problem. In my cynical mind, this was payback time for Colin being unruly or undisciplined. Cordingley retired from ARHS in 1972 and was superseded by Brian Heath.



### Later life

After retiring from Alex, the Cordingley's then moved to Summerstrand. For recreation, Cordingley played bowls. He was a good player as he possessed an eye for the ball, but his principal form of



exercise was walking. He loved walking, particularly on the beach. For relaxation he spent hours lovingly tending his vegetable garden at the Summerstrand house. Little known is the fact that Cordingley was an expert carpenter using the workshop at Selbourne College, in East London, over a weekend making various items of furniture such as bookcases, dressing table amongst other things.



Winston joined the Port Elizabeth Rotary Club through the auspices of Tommy Thorpe who was headmaster of the Victoria Park High School in Walmer. He was twice appointed as President and appointed District Governor's Representative once. He was as so delighted when he was given a coveted walking stick on the birth of his first grandson, Peter, in September 1970.

Winston died on a heart attack after a walk on the beach on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 1983 at the age of 72. Taken long before his time, he still has much to offer.

## Reflections on Cordingley and his time

### From orbiter dicta to BTW or from the cane to non-contact punishment

Fifty years ago, when I passed matric, the words *orbiter dicta* would have prevailed. The taking of Latin as a subject was mandated as it was a requirement for many varsity courses. In those days, all lawyers would have been proficient with the words "*orbiter dicta*" [meaning by the way]. Now even the words *en passant* are infrequently used and has been replaced by the informal abbreviation BTW. These words can be applied as a metaphor to the world of schooling half a century ago as compared with today. In an era when authority and the cane ruled the world as the accepted norm, Cordingley was in tune with reality but in the same way that a unicycle resembles a Porsche 911 Turbo, so to some Cordingley represented the old-style Headmaster with their "*you do or else*" attitude. Questioning authority, ill-discipline and non-compliance with the rules was not tolerated. However, beneath a gruff exterior and an implacable foe of tardiness, sloppiness and ill-discipline, lurked the real headmaster, unknown to the pupils but familiar to the staff such as the school secretary who sang his praises.

Recognition must be granted to Cordingley in that it was his drive and vision which drove the creation of one of the pre-eminent schools in Port Elizabeth. In 1972 he would hand over to his successor a school which was well-established, had a good reputation and was academically sound.

For this Cordingley must take a bow.

## Comments and tributes by the class of '71

**Sharon Rhode [nee Edelson]:** I remember Mr. Cordingley very well, he always had a twinkle in his eye, even when he was supposedly being serious. I remember on one occasion when Miss Chilcott

(Chilly) sent all the boys in our class for a caning, he hit his desk instead and winked at the boys and said they were all to rub their bottoms as if they had been caned.

**Rod Foster:** So wonderful to read the blog on WACO. Was an incredible principal. Not sure if I made it to the caning register, but certainly had a few from WACO. Always tried to walk out of his office, looking like (as best you could) it wasn't hurting. Not easy...as it was.

**Stuart Allen:** I remember being caned in a mass caning by WACO for long hair in 1971, there were about sixty of us, then I got into my car with a sore bum and drove home.

**Karl Els:** I think I was the first to be chained by Waco in standard 6. Miss Chilcott sent me to his office and my terror was facing Mrs Sutton who was my choir leader at the Newton Park Baptist. Waco had me sit in his office for an eternity before saying anything. Great memories. Loved the man. Was at his funeral and cried a bucket of tears. Hope to meet him again in heaven.

**Sources:**

Kathy Sutton, ARHS secretary from 1965 to 1999

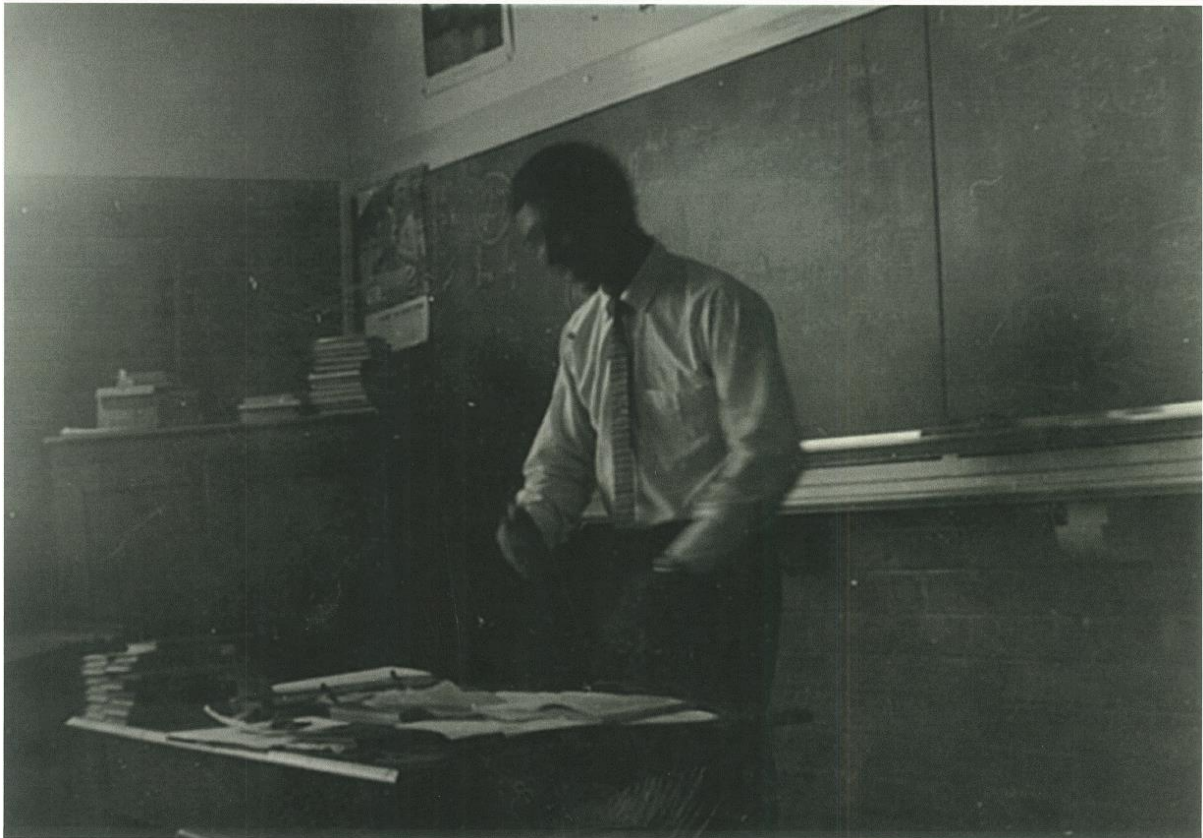
Bridget Shirras, Cordingley's youngest daughter

Elizabeth Bruton, Cordingley's eldest daughter

Rob Rudman, scholar at ARHS, class of 1966

Dean McClelland, scholar at ARHS, class of 1971

## Flip van der Merwe: With Tongue firmly in his Cheek



After 50 years the old Flip, or is that young Flip, instantly makes his presence felt. Within 30 seconds the serious tone belies a flippant comment meant to amuse and sometimes confuse the real from the unreal. Then comes the warning to me as I commence the interview: *All replies must be taken with a boulder of salt*. To expose the real Flip, I might have to interview “the girl”, now his wife of 50 years, Renée.

Personally, for me, three attributes define Flippie. If one could capture the essence and bottle it, they would be the car, the girl and witty tongue-in-cheek over-the-top statements and mannerisms.

Instead of a formal style I have adopted Flip’s flippant style. But in order to obtain a measure of balance, I have allowed Flip to write the captions to the photos.

**Main picture:** Na 36 jaar. “I have lost my class”.

### First, the Man Exposed

As I commence the delving for the real Flip, an unusual serious tone pervades the interview. Is Flip evading the questions or is he battling to recall certain events lost in the mists of history. Being 84, I grant him the benefit of the doubt but the word “complicated” exposes a measure of unwillingness to reveal all. Not wanting to intrude into unwanted memories of past events, I abandon my list of questions and let Flippie dictate the flow.





**Left:** With a little bit of help from my pupils

Flippie was born on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> July 1937 in the town of Barkley East close to the hamlet of Rhodes which is near the Lesotho border. Having twice in my life driven through this isolated hamlet *en route* to Rhodes and its famous 52 km mountain race up to the Lesotho border, I can confirm that this is not a place for young children to stay. The only reason why the van der Merwes

made this a home was because his father was a mounted policeman. Their role was probably to counter stock theft. What this area is known for is snow and lots of it. Tiffendale, South Africa's only ski resort with natural snow is situated here. I can personally attest that snow over a metre deep is possible here.



No 3. What did the future hold for us?

As far as I can understand, Flip's father was transferred on many occasions. Consequently, his life as a youngster was probably unsettled. Places and events appear to merge in Flip's mind without definition as if smudged and foggy. I let him talk. Retrieving these memories is hard requiring an SSD drive instead he possesses a 1937 model 5MB variety.



No 4. 'The Girl' 2de ry, 6de van links

What he does recall is matriculating in 1953, the year that some of us were born, at *Hoërskool Grens* in East London.



No 5. The Dream Team. Yours truly 2de ry, 2de van links. Renee-2de ry, heel regs

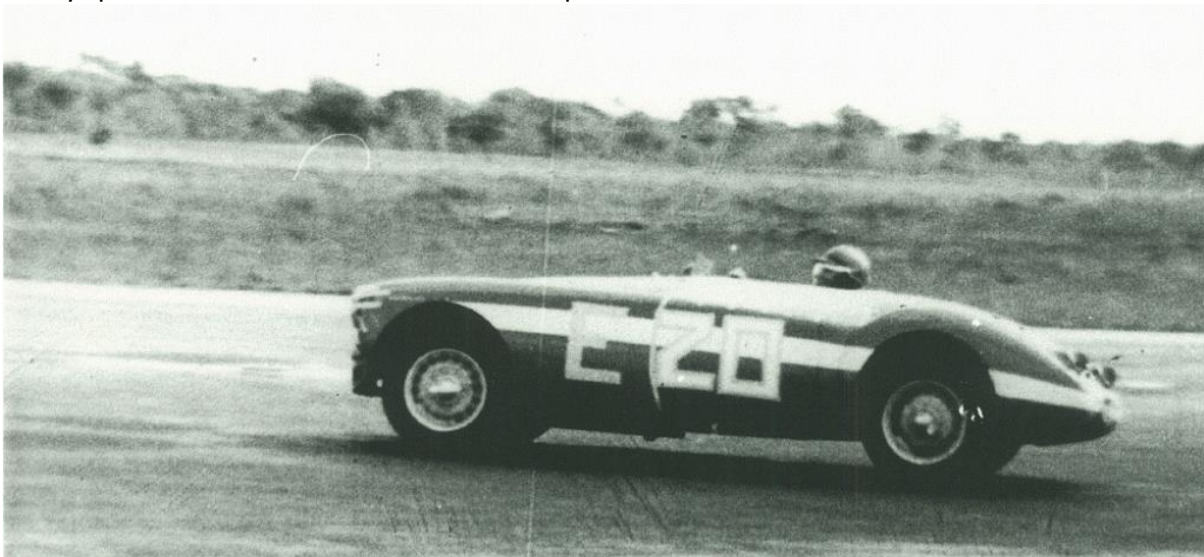
At school he was the team captain of athletics. Given his build, he probably galloped away from the field with long lopping strides demoralising the other athletes with the ease at which he sprinted ahead. Being considerably younger than his classmates, completing matric at 15 ½, he only managed to play 2<sup>nd</sup> team rugby, much to his regret, I suspect, in an era in which manhood for an Afrikaans child was defined by one's ability at rugby.





No 6. Die 2de MGA – Bought in January 1960 which I am restoring.

A long unplanned discussion on life choices ensues. Maybe unintended, but it does expose the real drivers in Flip's life. For Flip it was never going to be working a 12 hour, being a millionaire, but rather enjoying a comfortable unstressed life with the family. What this meant, is that his Life CV would never include such items as running Comrades or climbing Mount Everest. That was never his driving force. Unsaid was whether by adopting a tongue in cheek style of banter, it eased the tensions in life and made life more pleasant. I suspect that it did and ensured that the normal family spats and tensions were bearable and pain free.



No 7: MGA No.1 A gift from my Mom and Dad on my 21st. 28 July 1958



**No 8:** MGA No 1 Boxed between an Alfa Romeo and TRZ

In 1954 he tried his hand at the job market by working for Old Mutual *maar in 1955 het Flip rigting gekry*. Varsity for Flip was Stellenbosch where he took a diploma in Physical Education from 1955 to 1957. 1958 & 1959 were spent applying the skills acquired by teaching Physical Education at Lawson Brown. During this time, Flip also applied himself academically by studying at Unisa & UPE obtaining a B.A. and his B. Ed. In 1960, Wanderlust set in, and Flip moved to Livingstone in Northern Rhodesia to teach Afrikaans to a class of 6 pupils whose parents were mainly Afrikaans big game hunters. Missing the sea and not being a bush person at heart, he resigned after six months and obtained a job at Andrew Rabie. Being a temporary assignment, he applied to both Alex and Grey for a permanent job for 1961. In typical Flippie fashion he claims that he rejected the job at Grey because there were no girls there.

### The Girl

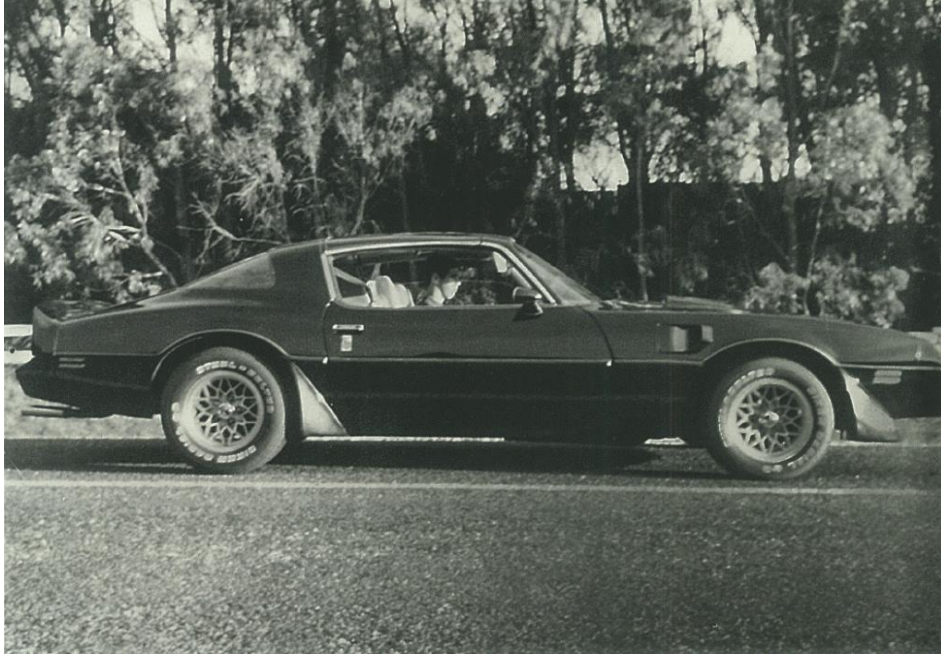
For all pupils at Alex during the era of the class of 1971, the subject of gossip was the girl that Flippie was “dating”, Renée Jordaan, a teacher at ARHS. Naturally the stories grew legs and wings and encompassed various nefarious deeds that only pupils could conjure up. At this point Flippie adopted a serious mien claiming, *“Just to be clear, I did not date her while she was a pupil at Alex and I never even taught her when she was in standard 6, 7 and 8.”* Because Renée was the belle of the ball, eye-candy in today’s vernacular, his eye did spot her but then her father, who was a senior officer in the police force, was transferred to Middelburg, Eastern Cape, forcing Renée to attend the Union High School at Graaff Reinet.



**No 9:** MGA No.2 Keep left, pass right.



Between 1965 and 1968 Renée studied at Rhodes. Fortuitously for Flippie, Renée obtained a teaching post at Alex in 1970 where she taught English and Afrikaans. Renée then left Alex at the end of 1970 and joined Collegiate where she taught during 1971. This was to be a hectic year with Flip frantically romancing Renée, finally wooing her to marry him shortly thereafter. Flip had got his girl. As married women in his bygone era were not entitled to permanent teaching posts, Renée was unemployed. However, she managed to obtain temporary employment at Framesby.

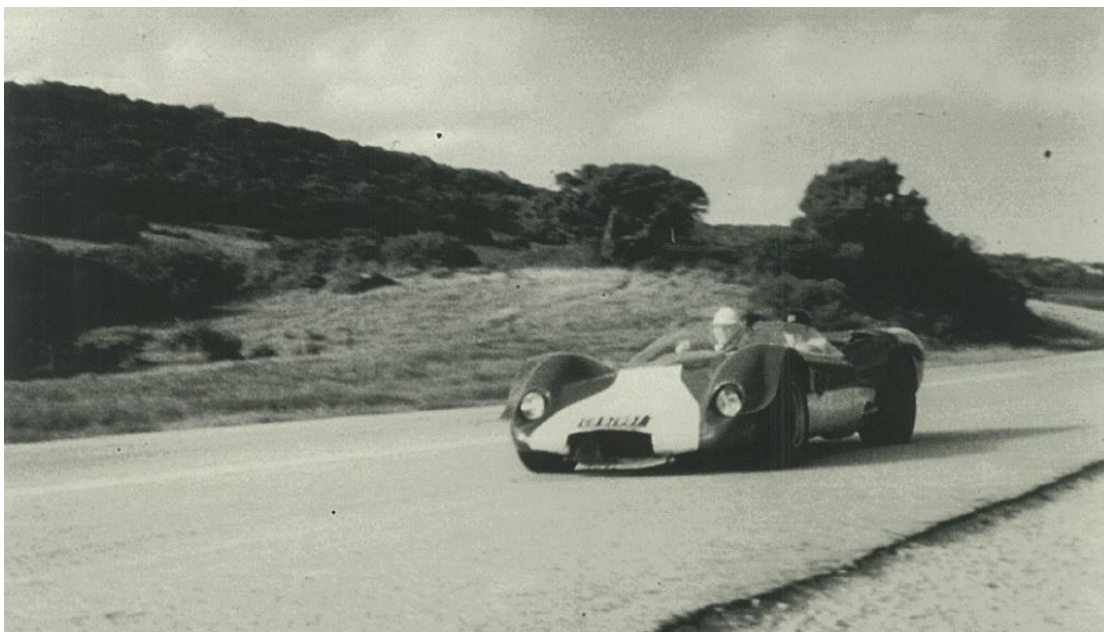


No 10: My Pontiac Fire Bird Trans Am 7459cc V8. The Rolling Thunder but a handful at high speed

### The car

Who can forget about Flip's MG? For the students at Alex, it epitomised the swashbuckling style of the man. It was his personal babe magnet. It was in 1958 at the age of 21 that his

folks gave him a very special present, a 1500 MG with drum brakes. Feeling that he needed an upgrade, in 1960 he went to Malcomess Motors to purchase the latest model MG with the extra power Babe-Magnet optional extra. A clearly disappointed Flip left the dealership without a car in hand as all they had to offer was the old model MG with a 1500 engine and drum brakes when what he wanted was the latest model with a 1600 engine with disk brakes! This MG, Flip's second MG, he still owns. However due to the fact that it was successfully used to woo his girl, he has kept it ever since but the last time that he drove it was in 1976. This turquoise MG is now in the process of being restored.





**No 11:** My Lotus 15 on an outing on the New Seaview Road adjacent to 'my plaas'. It had quite a chequered history (so as to speak) in the annals of South African motor sport.

By now the story became complicated. At one stage Flip owned 7 or 8 MGs all in various states of disrepair and certainly not in concourse condition. At best he believes that he could have assembled 4 MGs in his very own MG scrap yard. Apart from the MGs in various states of **disrepair**, his 20 garages were the recipients of his other vehicles: A Lotus B15i, a Transam Firebird and a 1989 Daimler. Apologies for any that I have missed as I suffered from brain freeze attempting to visualise Flip in his unfashionable filthy overalls with grease up to his elbows and head under the bonnet tinkering with his vehicles. Maybe Flip even took his *ugly pills* every morning to ensure that the babes never overwhelmed him as he attempted to fix his cars.



**No 12:** A pic of our Sardinia Bay B&B, Function and Wine Tasting Venue taken from the lower part of the property.

## Later life



**No 13:** The view of the lower part of the property, the forest and the Indian Ocean along Sardinia Bay Beach

Flip retired in 1996 having worked his whole life as a teacher at Alex.

With farming blood in his veins, Flip lived on a smallholding on

the Seaview Road in Lovemore Park farming Herefords.



In 1998, van der Merwe's entrepreneurial streak came to the fore, when they opened a B&B, a tea garden and a function venue on their property. With Renée venturing off alone to Oman from 2006 to 2008, Flip closed the tea garden and the function venue but retained the B&B as it did not require culinary skills. In 2010, they sold their plot and moved into town, acquiring a complex at Walmer Heights. The wander bug caught the pair again and they relocated to Somerset West in the Western Cape in 2014. As they both felt that the Western Cape was no longer the same place of olden days, they moved back to Port Elizabeth in 2015 where they still reside.



**No 14:** The Function Venue's Restaurant

Like peeling an onion, the carefully cultivated façade displaying a playboy *persona* owning a turquoise MG is revealed. The charade is vanquished, and the real Flip emerges. Flip is a loving, caring family man whose unvarnished passion is his family, the centre of his universe. While Flip was working



**No 15:** The Function Venue. Deck around the pool

in the garden, I phoned Renée to confirm my judgement. What a warm and welcoming person and intelligent to boot. And probably highly independent too. Not much like the vacuous "*poppie*" that I envisaged. All that remains of the Flippie of old is the tongue in cheek persona and an MG which he lovingly panders to.





I am not sure how Flip's boss viewed his "*nuwe metode*" as Flip coined his teaching method, but to us students, he certainly made school interesting and exciting. Unasked and unanswered is whether he had to prepare for his skit of the day every afternoon or was he privileged that it came naturally without preparation. Or perhaps he had a clandestine copy of "*Nuwe metode for Dummies*".

**No 16:** The Function Venue. Deck around the Koi Pond.

I have to thank Flip for such an interesting interview. I admit that he side-tracked me on many occasions on my mission to understand the real Flip, but the thread was broken admittedly by both of us. However, that *kronkellende pad* with discussions about life and the universe was exhilarating. It was only lack of airtime that brought it to a close. Somebody must teach Flip to use a cell phone, WhatsApp and a computer.



**No 17.** The Real Flip as a Real Barman. 'A Martini, shaken but not stirred'.

### Tributes and comments of ex pupils

**Sharon Rhode [Edelson]:** I also remember Flippie on his back demonstrating how to change a nappy and also how he demonstratively grabbed his crotch one day whilst explaining the meaning of the word *kruis*, which can be translated as a cross and also a crotch.

**Dean McClelland:** One of Flip's famous expressions when something went wrong was to attribute it to a "*nuwe metode*". One other episode that I recall was Flip wanting to be an Elvis impersonator.





No 18.

Something different from the MGA



No 19. Pa en seuns having fun 'op die plaas'



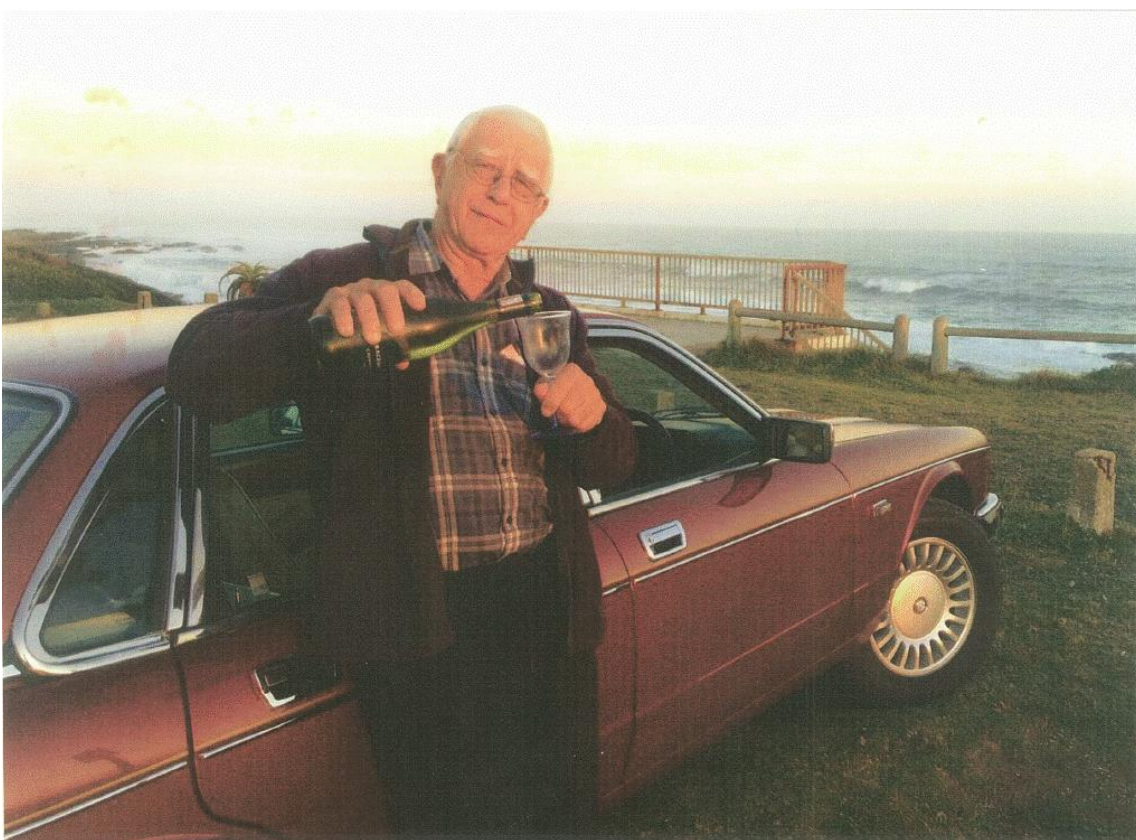


No 20: Roll Call



No 21: Feeding time





Quite different from the MGA. The 1989 Daimler XJ40 3.6L straight six. Fuel injection. Both manual and automatic. An all-alloy, dual overhead cams, 24 valve affair. Very, very exotic for 31 years ago. The speedometer goes to 150 mph / 240kph which I have done on those long-long straights *op die Groot Karoo vlaktes* tussen Beauford West and Graaff Reinet. Foto geneem op Schoenmakerskop, PE.



**No 23.** Saam met Renee en ons twee seuns, Marius en Mynhardt.

My first, my last, my everything, 36 jaar as onderwyser en op 84 steeds. 'n Pa en husband. For me the three big life achievements. THE REAL FLIP

### Sources

Renée – still young at heart

Flip van der Merwe at 84. Still the Real McCoy

## Bob Welsh: One of the Originals



**Main picture:** Alex's staff members in 1956 [front row 2nd from left].

In the photograph of the original staff of Alexander Road High School, is the visage of the lanky teacher of Geography, Bob Welsh in the front row. Bob never demanded respect from his pupils but rather he earned it. In many ways Bob was a more progressive teacher and the antithesis of certain senior teachers at the time. By evoking an interest in the subject, pupils responded in a like manner enabling Bob to teach with a light touch seldom if ever submitted the pupils to tirades of screaming or a barrage of cane strikes.

That is my enduring memory of Bob Welsh, a kind and gentle man, never given to histrionics.



When Bob Welsh was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1930 at Flagstaff in the Transkei, one has to wonder where and how he was actually born. Even today some 90 odd years later, there are scant medical facilities in areas as remote as this. His mother was a primary school teacher at the local



primary school whereas his father worked as an agricultural advisor in the Department of Native Affairs rising to Chief Agricultural Officer in Umtata shortly before his retirement.

With a dearth of good schools, Bob was enrolled in the Grey High School in Port Elizabeth as a boarder where he matriculated in 1947. After completing his secondary education in Port Elizabeth, Bob enrolled at the Natal University in Pietermaritzburg where he obtained a B.A., B. ED, majoring in Geography.

### **Appointment as a teacher at Alex**

With his degree under his belt, in January 1956 Bob joined the nascent school on the hill in Newton Park, eponymously called Alexander Road where he taught history and geography. With a shortage of classrooms, shops in 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue were hired to cater for the overflow. As it was impossible to move pupils between class as was the norm, the pupils remained permanently in their classes and the teachers moved. This greatly inconvenienced the teachers as they were compelled to drive constantly between the school in Alexander Road and the shops in 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Schedules were constantly adjusted to reduce the amount of travelling between locations. Nevertheless, these were trying times for all concerned.



### **New challenges**

In 1975 Bob was appointed as Principal of the Chinese High School. In 1968, Bob was awarded a Travelling Fellowship from the Council for English Education to teach in England where he taught at the Chiswick Grammar School in London for six months. At the age of 60 in 1991, Bob took retirement. As a suitable replacement could not be found, Bob was requested extend his employment by six months. Bob did not relinquish all his connections to geography as he joined the University of Port Elizabeth as a part-time lecturer in the Methods of Geography.

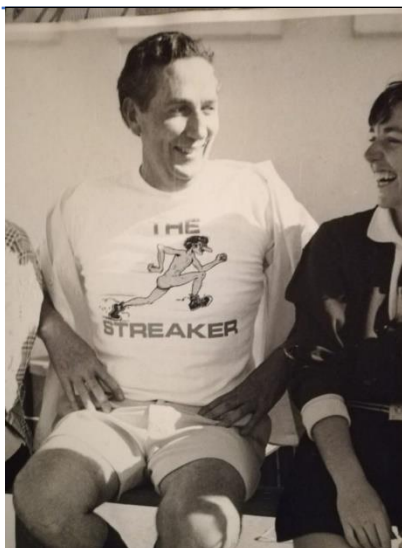
### **A Measure of the Man**

Bob displayed an intense interest in his pupils, also having an astonishing memory of all of them. Years after they had left school, if he happened to meet one of them, he would enquire after their career and even proceeded to check up on their classmates. Remarkably, he could even remember where they sat in class.

Fay, his wife, probably even found him exasperating when they were at Alex's staff parties. Bob was a very energetic dancer who would always join in the fun. Being from a ballroom dancing tradition, she was not as exuberant and uninhibited but would rather marvel at his antics.

Bob was a sports addict and watched all manner of sports but they one which he personally coached and played was tennis. When competing against other schools, the family's station wagon served as the team's transport. Fortunately, it was John Summerton who would volunteer to "sit" in the back.





Bob tried his hand at other sports such as rugby and cricket and once played hockey with Jannie Fourie in memory of previous pupils. The Alex tennis courts were built during his tenure, and he was responsible for the hedge being planted around them. What was the reason one may ask? Well, it was prosaic. In those early days, these bushes served as a barrier against the wind on the dusty hilltop. Now we know.

Naturally schooling also has its fair share of hilarious moments. Fay Welsh recalls an occasion when in the middle of a lesson, one of the girls shrieked loudly that she had a rain spider on her. Lessons are aborted and all eyes were on the victim. Having watched his son nonchalantly letting spiders climb over him, Bob stepped in as a knight in shiny armour to rescue the distraught pupil from her tormentor. As Bob picked it up, the spider bit him. Without displaying the anguish and terror that embroiled him, he flicked the spider off him and out of the window. The bite did however result in a nasty welt on his arm.



## Later life

Robert Welsh, Bob's son commented, *I don't really have any anecdotes to add, but as someone who was a teacher for 40 years, I think I am well qualified to comment on my father's incredible level of commitment to his career and his knowledge of his pupils, both of which always impressed me enormously. Similarly, he was always prepared to give unhesitatingly of his time in helping me or my friends in any of our ventures. He helped me for hours building a yacht and countless canoes as well as driving thousands of kilometres to swimming galas and canoe races while I was a schoolboy. Soon after he retired, a partner and I started a business building canoes and surf skis, and there too he gave hours of his time, unpaid, keeping our books, helping in the office and driving all over Port Elizabeth collecting materials.*

After suffering from heart problems, Bob passed away on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

### Tributes by former pupils

**Trevor Hastie:** I was a huge fan of Bob Welsh, and he was certainly my best ever schoolteacher. He taught us concepts and encouraged us to think. In 2005 I visited him and his wife in PE on a return visit to SA, after not seeing him for a very long time. Jannie was visiting as well, and we had a very nice tea session. Bob was still a keen tennis player at 75 years.

**Harry Pike:** It is great to see that my youthful perceptions of Mr. Welsh's many attributes are so fittingly reflected by the many accolades accorded him. As mentioned in an earlier note, he certainly left a strong and most positive impression on me.

**Anileen Gray [nee Begbie].** I was very fond of Mr. Welsh as well. Every time I visited PE, I vowed to visit him, but never could pluck up the courage. Eventually on one trip back home something drove me to contact him. Sadly, Mrs Welsh informed me that Mr. Welsh was in hospital after a bad fall in the garden that damaged his kidneys. She very much wanted me to visit when he got out of hospital. I am forever thankful that I did that as he passed away shortly after my visit. We had a wonderful afternoon chatting about school and sharing memories. I loved Mr. Welsh and he was a true role model for me in my teaching career. In fact, I created a book prize in his honour in my last school.

### **Anne Botha [nee Fick]:**

As for our popular and much-loved Bob Welsh, I have often referred to him as an example of great teaching and "teacher hood". The first lesson I recall that made a lasting impression on me was one day in std 6 or 7 he read an historical account and then read about the same event from a different book and perspective. Anyone else remember that? It was my first recognition of how important context and perspective, and experience is in interpreting events. Does anyone else remember lessons on the Coriolis effect ...not sure why that is memorable? And he had such a sense of fun. When the first hockey team played against the staff, he stopped a committed attack by Carol Addison by picking her up, tucking her under his arm and dribbling the ball through. ... Anileen that is such a thoughtful tribute to have a prize in his honour...did his family know?

**Phillip Williams:** So true Trevor & my favourite too. Bob always made Geography interesting, often with the slides that he took of his travels, especially around the USA.

**Sharon Rhode [Edelson]:** Bobby Welsh was also a firm favourite of mine and left an indelible impression on me. His teaching methods surpassed those of any of other teachers, he had a way of commanding respect without really trying and I remembered everything he told us in class so well that studying for exams became virtually unnecessary.

### Sources

Special thanks to:

Fay Welsh – Bob's wife

Robert Welsh – Bob's son

## Paul Ellis: With Poetry in his Veins



**Main picture:** Farewell from Muir in December 1992

The one thing that I recall about Paul is his endeavour to make us understand poetry by writing some ourselves. In attempting to do so, I soon realised writing poetry was more difficult than one anticipated.

Every biography is different. For me the most satisfying have been the one-on-one interviews such as with Flippie as they provide an insight into the real person. In most cases, the best that was possible was an interview with a surviving spouse such as Fay Welsh or the children of Cordingley. Paul's was completely different in that I was given a typed biography. Even without a verbal interview, one aspect of the man shines through and that is his humanity and a gentle spirit.

**This is the autobiography of Paul Ellis.**

I have retained the split that Paul gave me for his autobiography. Part 1 was written for the class of '59 at Grey while part 2 brings his biography up to date.

### **Part 1: Grey class of 1959 50-year reunion**

After leaving Grey with every intention of entering the Anglican ministry, I proceeded to Rhodes University where I enrolled for a BA degree. The rather sheltered life I had led did not adequately prepare me for the temptations and freedom of student life.

I soon surrendered my ministerial ambitions and opted for a career in education instead. Four years at Rhodes yielded a BA degree with English and History as majors, a University Education Diploma, four games for the EP under 19 rugby team (including the first game to be played on the Boet Erasmus rugby stadium alongside later Springbok legend, Gawie Carelse) and a wealth of new experiences and friendships. While still a student I completed my military training at Oudtshoorn and Queenstown and received an honourable discharge as rifleman with the First City Regiment. I left my last camp a week early to take up a teaching post at Otto du Plessis in January 1964.





**Left:** Newly appointed Headmaster of Muir in 1976

After leaving Rhodes I worked, played cricket in various leagues for Old Grey (including a successful season as captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI 1967/68) and in 1965 married Marian Martin, whom I had dated intermittently since 1957 and steadily since 1961. Our first child, Haydn (an architect in Cape Town), arrived in 1966 and Dee (a teacher in Queenstown) followed in 1968. That was the year I moved to Alexander Road High School as Special Grade Assistant.

In 1971 I was appointed Vice Principal at Plumstead High School in Cape Town, where I had the pleasure of working with Dieter Pakendorf, subsequently to become Rector of Grey. During this time I took a term's furlough to teach at Magdalen College School in Oxford, courtesy of a British Council traveling fellowship.

Shortly after my return from England I was offered the post of Deputy Principal at Grey and spent three very fruitful years working with Stan Edkins and an outstanding staff. In 1974 our third child, Kirsten (a psychiatrist in London), was born.



**Left:** With Nick Kruger at an Old Grey cocktail party on Grey rugby tour to Rhodesia in 1974

In 1976 I was appointed Headmaster of Muir College Boys' High School in Uitenhage. I held this position for 17 years. Initially the job came with the added responsibility of being hostel superintendent, but I was happy to hand over that burden to current Muir Headmaster, Bun Hopley in 1982. As Headmaster I was

ex officio a member of the Uitenhage Rotary Club. I served the club in various capacities, including two terms as President. Towards the end of my time in Uitenhage I started road running as a means of keeping fit and controlling stress. By the time wonky knees forced me to give up this pastime in 2002, I had completed 10 Two Oceans and 5 Comrades ultra marathons.



**Left:** Staff party at Alex in 1969

In 1992 I was appointed to the inspectorate and in 1993 moved to East London to take up duties as Superintendent of Education in the Border area. For two productive years I reported to the Cape Education Department. Then came the realignment of provinces and I found myself reporting to Bisho. In 1996 the ANarChy government decided to purge education of expertise and experience by offering voluntary severance packages. I took the opportunity to escape from the chaos and moved back into my ancestral home in Newton Park, where you will find me to this day.

**Left:** In London, on SACEE traveling fellowship 1972

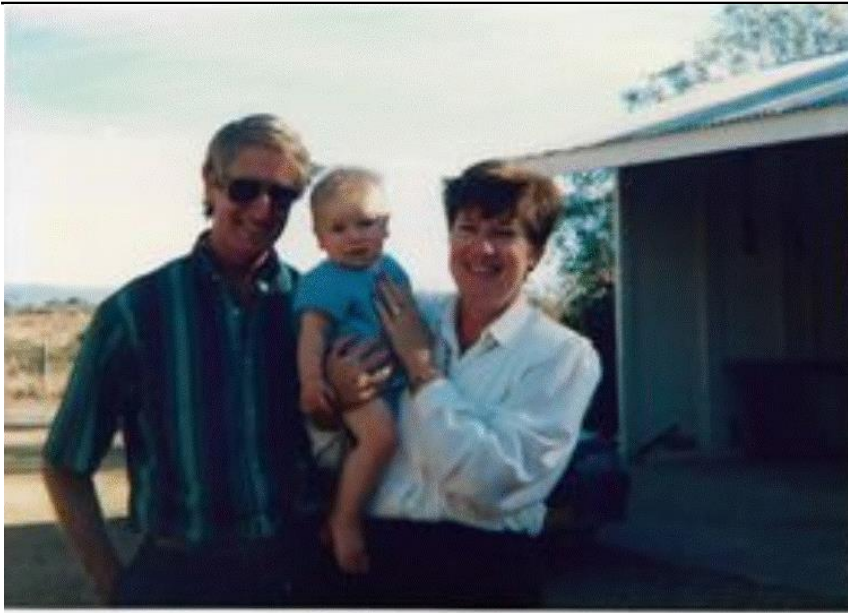
I have done the odd stint of relief teaching since retiring at the end of 1996, including six months at Grey, but



I must confess that these days I find little enjoyment in butting heads with young people whose lifestyles and values bear so little resemblance to mine. So now I am content to keep myself fit playing bowls, walking &

gardening. Reading, television, traveling, the odd game of bridge (learnt at Rhodes), crosswords and Sudoku puzzles, the computer and occasional forays into the realms of children's verse (for my four grandchildren) keep the grey cells working (hopefully!)





**Left:** First grandson Simon in 1993

## **Part 2: A Gentleman of Leisure**

After 13 very comfortable and happy years in our Newton Park home, we decided that the time was right to scale down. We were lucky to be offered a very suitable 2-bedroomed cottage at Echo Foundation's Walton Park in Summerstrand and relocated there in 2010.

Apart from some health issues in 2013, we have enjoyed a very relaxed life here, punctuated with a (final?) visit to Kirsten in London in 2016, and annual holidays at Seavale (near East London), where Dee and her family own a beach house, and Haydn's hideaway home in Kleinmond (Western Cape).

In 2015 Marian and I celebrated our golden wedding anniversary. I could not afford (nor did she want!) any more gold, so to celebrate the occasion I composed a Shakespearean sonnet for her. (Those of you who were paying attention will remember the format: three quatrains and a concluding couplet, in iambic pentameter, with abba, cddc, effe, gg rhyme scheme. But enough of that!) I presented it to her in a gold frame, surrounded by pictures of our 50 plus years together. I like to believe she treasures it more than any trinket money could have bought.



**Above:** The family at Kleinmond in 2009



Just before the Covid pandemic sent us all into lockdown in 2020, Dee and her family relocated from Queenstown to Seavale. They had added a 3-bedroomed cottage at Seavale to their property portfolio and invited us to use it over Christmas/ New Year 2020/21. Five months into lockdown we had acquired a Yorkshire Terrier puppy, who absolutely loved the freedom and space of Copper Cottage after the confinement of retirement village existence. We did not need much convincing to accept their offer to relocate ourselves; and that is where you will find us after 24 June.



**Left:** Newly appointed Headmaster of Muir College 1976

Dee's children Simon (BA HED), Justin (BComm Law) and Paula all followed their Gramps and Mother's tertiary education path at Rhodes University. The boys are teaching English in Vietnam, while Paula is in her final year of a junior phase teaching degree. Kirsten also felt the need to get away from the stresses of city life in London and relocated to Ramsgate on the Kent coast late last year. Her son, Gabriel, has been pursuing his education online for a

year, but is now enrolled at a private school in Ramsgate.



Start of Muir College peace run 1992 (Johannesburg to Uitenhage)



**Left:** TV interview outside Uitenhage Town Hall at conclusion of Muir College

Dean asked me to include some then and now photographs, from which I suppose he will make a selection for his blog. I trust they will adequately reflect how blessed we have been.



**Left:** With all the grandchildren, 2012 – Seavale Christmas

I cannot end this update without thanking Dean for forcing me to reflect on a particularly happy chapter in my life – my three and a half years at Alex. I still have good memories of WAC's assemblies, naughty end-of-term staff parties, rugby and cricket teams I coached, debating society evenings and, of course, hundreds of wonderful boys and girls that I had the privilege of teaching.



**Left:** With Garth Wright (late 1980's)

I am sorry that Covid restrictions and protocols will not allow you to celebrate your 50-year reunion in the manner you would have chosen; but I feel sure your memories of that wonderful time of your lives will inspire

you to “make it happen” somewhere down the line.

## Sonnet for Marian

(On the occasion of our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary)

When I first met you, we were very young –  
Fumbling teenagers, blowing hot and cold -  
Not yet essential as is air to lung,  
Not yet dependent, as we are now, old.

Through intervening years of joys and cares,  
A tortuous path our married journey ran;  
Enriched by children, both our own and theirs -  
The only constant us, as we began.

The future's a blank page we've yet to write,  
A leap into the unknown we must take;  
And as we run our race, the end in sight,  
We stand together for each other's sake.  
If I could have my life to live again,  
I would not change the choice that I made then.

Paul Ellis  
December 2015

Inspired by Paul, Gary Ward tried his hand at writing poetry. This is his attempt for the *Alexander the Great* award. You be the judge.

## MY END by Gary Ward

A window opens, a small face peeps out,  
Is propelled through the window,  
Down the road; though  
Soon returns, ashen, a little green maybe.

To me, that small face says,  
You fiends! You..... you bastards!  
Look outside..... just look!  
A machine whirrs silently, cool oxygen.

Yes son, with eyes slightly damp,  
I tried, ..... when I was your age  
There weren't enough of us.....  
Now it's too late, I'm sorry.

Unluckily son, it's too late for anything,  
But, I've decided.  
You see, since your Mom left us, I've thought.  
Here, drink this ..... and me this .....  
Goodnight son, sleep tight.....  
Goodbye, with eyes slightly damp.



## Kathy Sutton: A Gem of a Secretary



At 87, Kathy Sutton is as energetic and spritely as ever. With barely a pause, she will elaborate why Alex was such an excellent school and Cordingley such as superb boss and person. She concedes that she never had to endure the caning that he administered but that was a different era.

Kathy was born on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1934 in Sidwell, Port Elizabeth to an indigent family. If the family was in trying financial circumstances at her birth, her Scottish father's death before Kathy's third birthday, tipped the balance to penury. Without a job, her mother was compelled to obtain child welfare to raise her. Like today, the stipends for child support were minimal at best. Perhaps it was her impoverished upbringing, when every penny was turned over a dozen times, that provided her with a zest for life and a positive mien. Nothing could suppress her joy of life. Even though they had nothing, she recalls life as being joyful and carefree. Kathy attended the Ethel Valentine School at No. 5 Sutton Road in Sidwell. During her youth, Kathy and her mother boarded at various one-bedroom establishments. This meant that Kathy slept with her mother during her whole youth until she got married. For secondary school, she attended the Technical College in Russel Road until she attained her Junior Certificate being Standard 8. Amongst the subjects which has served her well over her whole life is shorthand which she professes still to be proficient in.

Kathy's first job after school was as a typist at Holland and Wylie, manufacturers of equipment for fruit farmers. Their offices were situated in Queen Street diagonally opposite the Chinese School. After approximately ten years, she left this job in 1964 and struggled to obtain employment until a position became vacant at Alex in July 1965.

As the school secretary, she was responsible for the admin of the school and most importantly she had to "mother" the various principals each with their own quirks. For instance, WACO insisted on being called the PRINCIPAL just like the school was never called ALEX but was referred to in full every time. After Cordingley, she served under Brian Heath, Jeff Illsley and then Peter Manson, eventually retiring in December 1999.



Kathy Sutton with Bob Welsh and Winston Cordingley



**Left:** Kathy Sutton with Brian Heather

Kathy recalled: *"Louis de Lange was my Afrikaans teacher at Ethel Valentine School many years ago and then I met up with him again when I joined Alex in 1965. I always held it against him that he caned me on the palms of my hands for spelling mistakes in Afrikaans (noga!). That really was cruel – but I forgave him a long time ago and we were good friends. He also made me a beautiful*



*Dolly Varden (dressing table) while we were together at Alex and I am still using it and have fond memories of Louis”.*

When pressed to divulge who were the “special people” at Alex, Kathy refuses to be drawn into that rabbit hole. Her stock answer is that they were all superb people but each in their own unique way. Different but special. This disjunction unrecognised. Unaware that the word special or even unique nowadays can have a negative connotation depending upon the situation, I did not tackle her on the use of these words in this context as I sense that her intentions are pure and non-judgemental. Just by the number of compliments that she bestows on WACO divulges her love of the man. When pressurised on details her default position is that he treated people admirably, – “beautifully” in her words – he was extremely precise in his use of language, and he was iconic with the academic gown flowing behind him as he strode down the corridors attempting to trap some miscreant. In Kathy’s telling, WACO was the perfect boss.



Kathy Sutton at work

As her farewell gift from the school after so many years of dedicated service, Kathy and her husband were given a cash sum which they used to purchase an air ticket to England. Not one way, mind you. What an apt gesture!

In conclusion, in interviewing her one gains the sense that Mrs Sutton still resides in a sanguine world, casting aside trials and tribulations like a wet bird shaking off the unwanted moisture on its feathers. There is no rancour or bitterness of a youth without possessions. Love and friendship were her joys.

That is how she overcame the vicissitudes of life so far and will continue to do so until her allocated days on earth are spent.

**Source:** Thanks to Kathy Sutton.



## Miss Chilcott: Renowned Calligraphy Expert



Alex's full staff complement in 1956: **Front row from left:** Mrs Maggs, Mr Welsh, Miss Chilcott, Mr Cordingley, Mr G van der Merwe and Miss G Gilbert & Mrs Workman. **Back row:** Mrs J Poppleton, Mr Louis de Lange, Mrs A Strauss

**This blog shines the spotlight on one of the original teachers at Alexander Road High School. It is a transcription from an article entitled *OBITUARY: MISS LAUREEN ALMA CHILCOTT 1914-2007* by Peter Chilcott, her nephew. Miss Chilcott taught at Alex from 1955 until her retirement in 1973.**

Born in Middelburg, Cape, on the 8th December 1914, Laureen's family relocated to Queenstown in 1917 where she did her schooling at the Girls High School. While living in Queenstown, the family-owned horses and Laureen was a keen rider.

After her schooling, Laureen went on to the Teachers' Training College in Grahamstown where she obtained her diploma. She obtained her first teaching post at Rondebosch Primary School in Cape Town where she taught until the outbreak of World War 2. During the war Laureen joined the armed forces, serving in the special Signals Services based at the Castle from 1943 until 1945. Afterwards Laureen was demobilized, going to UCT. She studied Art, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Art degree.

Laureen then went on to further her studies at the Royal School of Art in London where she specialised in calligraphy. In 1955 she joined the Alexander Road High where she taught until her retirement in 1973.

### **Civil war erupts.**

One day Miss Chilcott was walking across the tarmac area in front of the entrance to start her day when she tripped or fell due to a small pothole. This infuriated her so she rushed into her art supply store that was snuck in under the staircase and proceeded to whip up a bowl of plaster of Paris. That little place was her funk hole and, if she was upset and there were any number of things that upset her, she would take refuge there. Anyway, having got the right consistency, she rushed outside and proceeded to fill in all the holes. Unfortunately for her, this was outside the staff room and Waco – WA Cordingley, the headmaster, AKA Batman – spied her and flew outside to remonstrate. Flew is the correct verb as he always wore his Batman cape – his academic gown – and he was perennially in danger of taking off as he energetically rushed around the

school. Overall, he was a good man, but he had a short fuse which combined with his tendency to suffuse beetroot red could be rather frightening. Not to Miss Chilcott though. Her dander was up, and she gave as good as she got. The result probably was a dishonourable draw.

### **Another eruption**

Sharon Rhode recalls that on one occasion Miss Chilcott (Chilly) sent all the boys in her class for a caning. Waco hit his desk instead and then winked at the boys, telling them to rub their behinds as if they had been caned.

### **A respected artist**

Laureen did numerous calligraphic scrolls for various universities and municipalities, and her mark has been left on this city as she did the Golden Mayoral Book for the Port Elizabeth Municipality. Unfortunately, that legacy of hers was probably burnt up in the fire that consumed the City Hall in 1977. She enjoyed reading and was widely read, Laureen also travelled frequently, visiting many resorts and historical sites around the world. She participated in many local clubs and her interests included history, art, and music. Furthermore, she was a keen member of the Historical Society, even after her eyesight failed.

Following a bad fall in September 2005, Laureen was admitted to Greenacres Hospital from which she was transferred to Nightingale Lodge in Fernglen, where she died on the 15 October 2007 at the age of 92. She never married and is the last of the family of two brothers and a sister who have all passed away. She is survived by her two nephews, Peter in Port Elizabeth (and his children in the UK) and David (and his children in Australia).

### **Comments by ex-pupils**

**Sharon Rhode [Edelson]:** Does anyone remember Jimmy holding Titch upside down in Miss Chilcott's class and banging Titch's head on the floor? I don't remember why Jimmy did it, but I remember them both being sent to Wacko.

### **Source**

Obituary: Miss Laureen Alma Chilcott, 1914-2007 by Peter Chilcott (Looking Back, November 2007, Volume 46)



## Mr. Simms: The Accidental Teacher



As I was unable to track down any of Mr. Simms's surviving relatives, what better way than to utilise a brief biography of Mr. Simms written by his sister, Mrs. Maggs in 1971.

Mr. Simms was born in Bloemfontein on New Year's Day in the "Year Dot." He was educated at S.A.C. in Cape Town. Mr. Simms's career as a teacher began quite by accident. He had gone to the principal of S.A.C. in order to obtain a testimonial to apply for a job at a bank, only to be told that the ideal

post at a private preparatory school was vacant. Mr. Simms applied for the job and was accepted. He began teaching there at the beginning of the next year.

Mr. Simms taught at the Western Province Preparatory for seven years and then feeling that he had come to a dead end, went to Rhodes University to qualify properly. He did his B.Sc. and U.E.D. majoring in Maths and Physics. During the University holidays he taught at Kingswood.

Mr. Simms then taught at Selbourne for 16 years before braving the Alex front. He has been here ever since and, as he says, will probably have to be carried out. Mr. Simms, who loves working with people, would definitely choose teaching again as a career, if given the chance to do so.

Mr. Simms's favourite food is curry and rice while blues and greys are his favourite colours. He has no "pet dislikes", not even long hair on boys, provided of course that the hair is neat, clean and not TOO long. His choice in reading includes cowboy and detective stories and also books on travel and biographies. Mr. Simms enjoys light classical music. He rates the Morris 1100 as the best car (of course) and his hobby is carpentry. Other than that, he used to do a lot of extra mural work at school – rugby, cricket and boxing. Mr. Simms has an extremely good memory. His earliest childhood recollection is of being told in 1914 of the birth of his sister.

## Peggy Maggs: Keeping it in the Family



Not many of us can, at the end of a school day, congratulate ourselves on having prevented, among other things, one or two cakes from being burnt, a Standard 6 pupil from being electrocuted, and a “patient” from “missing” an unpleasant lesson. Mrs. Maggs is one of the fortunate (or unfortunate) people who can.

The author of this article is unknown.

Mrs Maggs, who was born in Johannesburg, was educated at the Jeppe High School and later attended the Domestic Science

Teachers’ College. She chose to teach “Dom. Science” because she had always found it interesting, practical and “different”. Before braving the Alex front, Mrs. Maggs taught in Bulawayo, Krugersdorp, Durban and Pietermaritzburg. If anyone feels that they have been at Alex for what seems to be centuries, simply remember that Mrs. Maggs has been teaching here since 1956. The difference is that she likes it, of course, and what is more, gets paid for it.

In her spare time, Mrs Maggs likes golf, knitting, reading and sewing. She has no favourite food but loves anything with lemon in it. She regards Sir Lawrence Olivier as her favourite actor and blue her favourite colour.

Mrs Maggs has been overseas four times, visiting Great Britain, the Continent, Canada and parts of America, and would willingly go again, if given the opportunity. She finds mini skirts particularly nice on youth, but there must be no “*mutton dressed up as lamb*”. The one thing which Mrs. Maggs really dislikes, is the noise of buzz bikes.



## Jannie Fourie: Straight to the Point



**Main picture:** Jannie and Joan Fourie in 1995

According to an intermediary who I was using to contact Jammie, he professed to be a “*very private person*”. Hence he was hoping that by ignoring me, I would just disappear. Like an irritating fly, I would buzz around periodically making my presence known. Then one day, out of the blue, he relented. He announced in a telephone call that he would talk. In providing him with examples of the other reports and interviews I

was hoping that he would provide me with a peek in the man himself, what motivated him and perhaps even reveal an amusing incident or two, but it was not to be. Instead, what he provided was a straight telling of his career at Alex. More’s the pity. Hence Jannie, the man, will remain an enigma to me. Nonetheless, I would like to thank Jannie profusely for producing a thorough professional report.

Naturally Jannie’s report is written in the first person but wherever I have elaborated on his report, it will be in the third person.

### Academic Qualifications:

- 1957 B.A. Phys. Ed. Degree: University of Stellenbosch
- 1958 Senior Teacher’s Diploma: University of Stellenbosch
- 1973 B Ed Degree: UPE



**Left:** 1965 Alexander Road High School Staff

**Teaching Experience:** Jannie commenced his teaching career by being appointed at Alexander Road High School in 1959. He would also end his teaching career at Alex sixteen years later in 1975. I attribute my success as a very young teacher to the friendliness and professional assistance I received from the experienced teachers who were most willing to assist me

in finding my way in the very challenging world of teaching.

### Subjects Taught -1959-1975

- Afrikaans standards 6-10
- Subject head: Afrikaans after the previous head retired.
- Physical Education: Boys for standards 6-10
- Social Studies standard 6

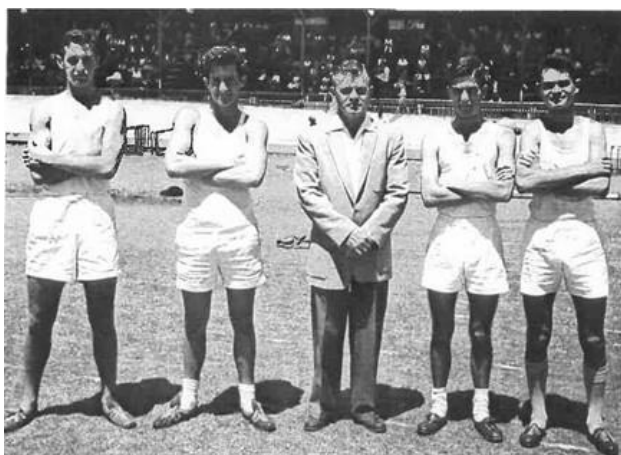
- Sports coaching

## Athletics

I was requested to organise and present the annual inter-house athletics meeting from my first year of teaching. Without the necessary athletics facilities it was a problem, but which we solved by obtaining the playing fields at the recreation grounds at 3rd Avenue, Newton Park. The actual annual inter-house meeting was held at the Westbourne Oval. Alexander Road High was soon in a position to field an inter-schools' team for participation against.



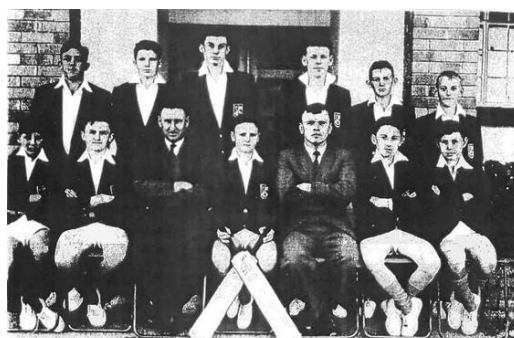
**Above:** 1960 Alexander Road Athletics Team: PE and Walmer High Schools Athletics Meeting



**Left:** Alexander Road Relay Team

## Coaching cricket

In the first number of years of teaching, I was responsible for coaching the U/14 and U/15 cricket, which I found most enjoyable.



**Above:** Alex U/14-U/15 Cricket Team

## Rugby

I began my rugby coaching career at Alexander Road High in 1959, taking charge of the U/14 and U/15 teams. The boys were keen and willing to train hard. A number of these boys later played for the school's first team and even later for the Eastern Province senior team.





Senior Teams: 1st, 2nd and 3rd teams



Our senior teams at Alexander Road found the going hard and we only competed in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th leagues with our 1st, 2nd and 3rd teams. To arouse the boys' interest in playing rugby, Mr. de Lange organised four tours to as far afield as Harare in Zimbabwe, Durban, Bloemfontein and Witbank. Soon these senior rugby teams showed the positive effect of the tours and started winning against schools known for their good rugby. In this regard Alex won against Cillie High School, Brandwag High School, Andrew Rabie High School and Muir College, Uitenhage. Alexander Road High was no longer a walk over in the first league's schools' rugby competition in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.



### Training of Prefects

I assisted Mr. Welsh and senior teachers in the training and development of the school's prefects. We visited places of interest such as Ford, General Motors and the S.A. Broadcasting Corporation, Grahamstown. We met regularly to discuss problems encountered in dealing with pupils in general when the prefects were required to maintain discipline.



Above: 1970 Prefects

### Fun Games

The teachers annually played a hockey match against the girls' hockey team. This was an event enjoyed by all, especially the teachers who won every match. The outcome was naturally contested by the girls. They complained of the tactics of the teachers' team, which were against the rules of the 'traditionalists' amongst the girls' supporters. Fortunately nobody was ever injured. In the next photo there are many of the 'old timers' such as Messrs. Cordingley, Simms, Welsh, de Lange, van der Merwe, Trehaven, Jannie Fourie, Miss Wienand, and Miss de Jongh.



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**End of an Era**

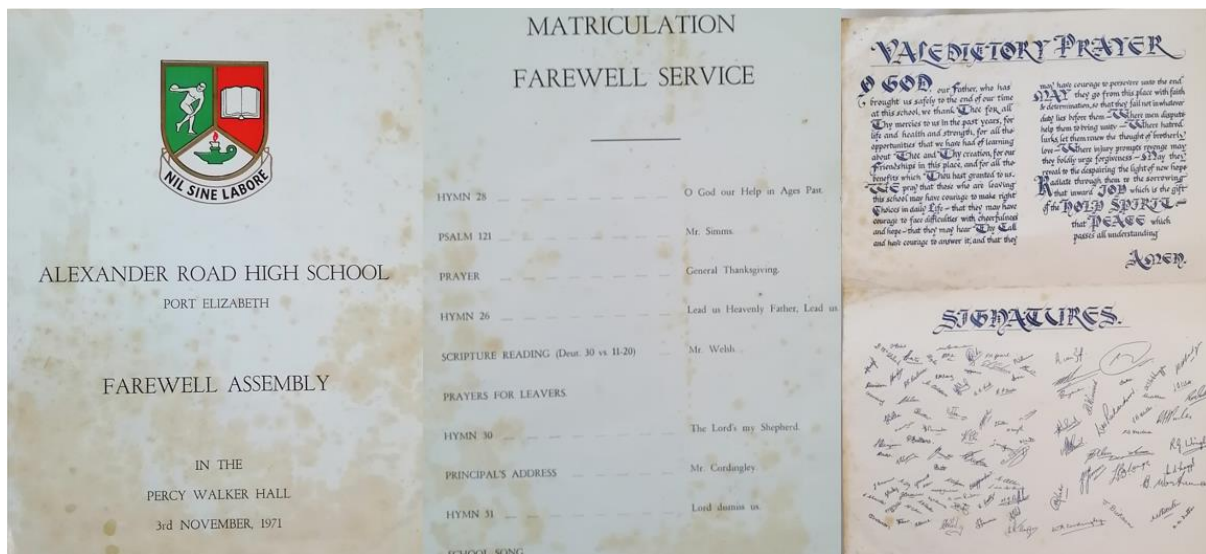
Although I was extremely happy at Alexander Road High, I began to realise that I had to change my then current position for a more promising career which would offer me something more promising as far as promotion was concerned.

**1975 Department of Sport and Recreation**

I then applied for a position in the above department and was transferred to the regional office of the Department, Port Elizabeth as liaison officer.

In the following year I was promoted to and served as Regional Head, Border Region with the office in East London. After four years I was promoted to Regional Head, Eastern Province Region, with the office in Port Elizabeth. I was then promoted to Head Office, Pretoria and served in several senior positions. Finally, I was appointed Director: Administration at Head office in Pretoria – a position I held until I retired. Our two doctor daughters and their families live close by.

## Class of 1971: What did they do after school?



Montage of Class of '71's Assembly & Service Program as well as the Valedictory Address and Signatures [Thanks to Sonia Slement (Venter)]



The 25<sup>th</sup> Reunion of the 1971 matrices in 1996

This blog was written by the pupils of the Class of 1971 themselves. It would be great to hear from everybody. Two photos of Then and Now would also be super. There are no rules about how much or how little you would like to share or indeed what you would include. The latest submissions will be included at the top of the blog thereby making the unread entries at the top of the blog.



## Stuart Allen

I started at Alex in the middle of September 1966, fresh off the plane from West Yorkshire, England. It was hot and blowing a Berg wind. How fantastic when a Coca Cola truck arrived at break time and gave us all free ice cold Cokes. This was a welcome change from the free milk we got at school break time in England. Sadly, I found out to my bitter disappointment that this only happened once a year.



I had taken French for two years in England but had to drop it to take Latin and Afrikaans. I had an immediate dislike to Latin mainly because of Mr Wright's boring delivery, so having achieved five percent at the end of the year I switched to Woodwork. It was planned for me to spend 1967 in Std 6 as well because Mr Cordingley said I would fail the year after joining so late. I beat the odds and passed. I was given three years in which to pass Afrikaans of which my brief time in 1966 was counted as a whole year. I was immediately put into the lunchtime immigrant Afrikaans lessons conducted by who else but Flip. Well, I failed Afrikaans at the end of Std Eight in 1968 so I had to repeat the year, I never failed again.

Yes, I too felt the pain of Waco's cane and was one of the sixty odd or so who got caned for long hair in one mass execution. I had just got my driving licence and remember getting into my little old Renault and driving home with a sore backside. A couple of you mentioned in your stories about Paul Ellis wanting us to write a poem. This hair story prompted me to remember my poem as handed to him. His hair was getting quite long and he came in to school one day having had a very good haircut which inspired me to write the following.

We had an English teacher  
Who had long blond hair  
But he had to have it cut  
And now most of it ain't there

His written comment when he handed it back was - actually 'had' should be replaced by 'chose'. I never was much of a poet.

I remember circuit training all too well. In April 1967 I was doing squats in the Quad next to Ian Armitage who was very tall. He got the barbell stuck behind his neck. Next thing I felt this excruciating pain in my foot. The weights had fallen off one end and landed on my foot and big toe. My toe was flat and I could see the bone. I was given some quick first aid, helped to the school lobby and with Mrs Sutton phoning my Mom. It was into Mr Parker's car, collected my Mom and off to casualty. I was off school for three weeks.

I had Bob Welsh for Geography in Std 7 and like many of us have said, what a great teacher he was. Paul Ellis was the best English teacher ever. I remember Mr Cordingley taking us for RI but he didn't stick to the scriptures very much. He used to talk about being in the North African Desert during his military days and four-day old bread tasting like cake. He was passionate about us going out in the right direction in life. It was focussed more on life and career guidance and two things that he said stood out for me. The first was that if you want to get a job that will be in demand in the future then you must go into computers and the other was that when you get married you must get an Antenuptial Contract drawn up. I had my eye on Architecture, Civils or Computing as a career and did go the I.T. route. I started as a computer operator at British United Shoe Machinery in 1972, before this they sent me to IBM for an aptitude test because they wanted me to start programming as well. I went to CATE and did three years of nights studying Electronic Data Processing as it was called then.

During my early Alex days I lived in First Avenue Newton Park but then we moved to Bramhope. A lot of my friends were the last English Matric class at Framesby. Some of them went to Westering Methodist Youth Guild on a Friday night so I started going in 1971. It was here in June that I met Myra Arnott, who would later become my wife. She lived in Sunridge and had just moved down from Joburg.

By 1974, I had saved enough deposit for a house. My plan was to buy an older property, renovate it and rent it out. Having costed it, I realised I could build a new one for the same money. I bought a plot of land in Lorraine and a builder built me a shell, I did the cabinets, cupboards and finishing off. In the planning all this I thought why rent out my new house. Myra and I got engaged in November 1974, were married in August 1975 and moved in, I had just turned twenty two in July and she was nineteen. We lived there for three years and then moved to a bigger house in February 1979. We started a family and have three daughters, Bev born in 1980, Liz in 1983 and Kat in 1987. All three went to Alex. No grandchildren yet.

I worked in various positions in PE mainly with IBM kit and was one of the first to program VDU's. I worked mainly in the manufacturing sector, designing and writing accounting and production systems.

I always wanted to have my own business, I dabbled in property and had a couple of flats that I rented out. I had a career change in 1991. I was working for the SA Wool Board at the time. The Aussies had warehouses full of wool and flooded the world market. This brought prices down and the future of the Wool Board was precarious. This was a good time to move. In fact a year later the Board as we knew it ceased to exist. I went to work for Southern Life selling Financial products. Before they employed me, I was assessed by the company psychologist in Cape Town. This was the most fun job I ever had. I think because I was dealing with people and not machines. I was high in the national sales rankings which got rewarded with overseas trips for me and my wife. They asked me to do an MBA and work for them rather than be an agent. Southern was taken over before this could happen so I went completely independent

and secured contacts with a number of insurance companies, I also branched out into short term insurance and medical aids.

I have always enjoyed endurance activities and was a long time member of Achilles Athletics Club in PE and have run all distances including Comrades and Two Oceans. The photo is Two Oceans 2001, note the time, purely coincidental.



Myra was getting a bit unsettled about the situation in the country. After much thought and planning we moved to England in September 2002. I know I'm a Brit but it was a foreign country to me. We moved to the Bristol area as it was the biggest financial hub outside London and within easy reach of Europe so we could travel. London is too busy and expensive. We came back as a family which kept us together. I was studying for the English financial qualifications which were mandatory in order to work in the industry. One thing very apparent in the UK is that everything is regulated, much different to the S Africa we left. We all settled into jobs. Kat my youngest was still at school and life carried on. In the latter half of 2003 Myra started to get weak in her limbs, spreading up from her feet. She was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. We couldn't believe it and went back to PE for a second opinion. We lost

her on Father's Day 2004 after a nine-month struggle. If this setback wasn't enough, I was made redundant eight months later.



Vic Falls



I took a break for a year and renovated my house myself doing bathrooms, kitchen etc. I have worked for the Government for the last fourteen years in the Department for Work and Pensions. I have travelled quite a lot mainly India, South East Asia and Indonesia. I do visit SA every couple of years but have no family of my own there, just my late wife's three sisters. I do a lot of camping and like quieter campsites run by the National Trust and use my site as a base and hike the coastal path. Hobbies wise I have always liked working with wood and I'm a keen photographer. I considered retiring in April last year after getting back from S Africa a week before the first lock down but carried on, just turned 68, have now applied for my pension, my last day being third of September.



Mount Bromo

I'm not one to sit down and relax and don't play golf, so who knows what next, another house renovation perhaps?

### Lorraine Benjamin [Chantler]

When I left school, I started working at Barclays Bank in January 1972. In 1975 I married Terrence Benjamin, who had joined Telkom straight after school. In 1976 we applied to do a year of mission work with Youth for Christ and spent time ministering in Jhb and Namibia. After Youth for Christ Terrence did a year in the army then joined Jack and Jill footwear whilst I returned to work at the bank.



**Matric Farewell** from left: Trevor Hastie, June Brown, Gay Bailey, Marsha Smythe, Carol Anderson, Louise Brock, Margie Mills, Michael Neff, Lorraine Chantler, and Stuart Allen.

In 1979 our daughter Kim was born and in 1982 our son Dennis. After having my babies, I was a stay-at-home mom for seven years and loved every minute of it. I went back to work at FNB when my children went to school. In 1992 Terrence and I got divorced and he remarried a few years later. Both my children attended Alex, and I found it strange to walk the corridors of the school once again, this time not as a student but as a parent. I found it even stranger that Flippie was now teaching my children. How time flies!

In 2006 I had had enough of working in the bank, and as my children were adults and no longer seemed to need me, I decided to change direction. I then started caring in the UK, looking after elderly people in their own homes, coming home to PE to rest for a few months every year. I continued doing caring for 15 years and cared for some wonderful people while still managing to have some time off to explore a bit of the UK.

During that time my son and his wife emigrated to the UK making it possible for me to spend some of my breaks with them. This also meant that I was able to be with them for the births of my three beautiful grandchildren.

Terrence passed away from cancer in 2019. My daughter remained in PE and I have retired and downsized to a little townhouse close to her.



Myself and Terrence with my daughter Kim, her husband Craig, my son Dennis, his wife Carla and two and a half grandchildren (taken in 2017)

### **Clive 'James' Buttner**

Hello to all the 1971's. It's been fantastic to hear from so many of you from around the world. Although I only spent 1 year at Alex it was undoubtedly the most enjoyable year of my schooling. I even managed to acquire the nickname James within a week of starting matric & it stuck for many years.

After school & army training I tried my hand at a few careers then settled on the building industry. I studied Quantity Surveying at Technikon in PE & Durban & worked for a number of building companies in PE, East London, Durban & Transkei during the 70's and 80's. During my time in Transkei in the mid 70's I played for the Transkei rugby team & I tried for years to convince everyone that I was an international player but as it only causes laughter I have stopped mentioning it.

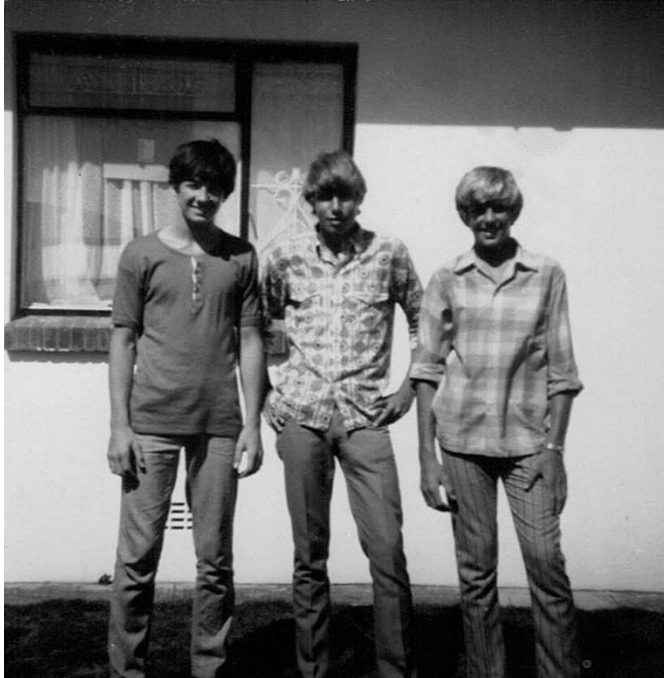
In the mid 80's I moved to Knysna & started a company manufacturing & building timber log homes, initially in all parts of SA & later in many countries around the world. T&B Log Homes is still going strong today. I emigrated to New Zealand in 1997 & moved to Brisbane, Australia in 2000 where I have been since.

I am currently working in the field of civil engineering contracting, not nearly as stimulating as building beautiful timber buildings but am enjoying it, nevertheless. A few years ago, I was lucky enough to catch up with Vincent Cory in Cape Town. He's as delightful a fellow as always and looks very similar to when he was at school!



## Colin Buxton: Bucco's Life

After matriculating, along with several others at Alex who had asked to go to the Navy, I found myself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> South African Infantry, Potchefstroom. I guess our love of surfing wasn't what they needed. My dad on the other hand thought otherwise. Watching me building surfboards for my mates he suggested I set up my own surf shop. Of course, this was in the very early days before Country Road and Billabong and I didn't think there was any money to be made



from surfing. So, it was off to UCT to study oceanography which I figured would keep me close to my first love, surfing. But the subject was dead boring, and I became a geologist instead. Now you may be wondering how someone with such a love of the ocean becomes a geologist and finds himself in the Namibian desert working on a uranium prospect. It finally dawned on me too, so it was back to Uni to complete my degree and honours in marine science.

**Left:** The Three Buccaneers

That's when I really started to wonder whether my dad was right. There were no jobs for marine scientists anywhere in the country. So, second best was to stay at Uni and do a Masters. By then Trevor Hastie had found his way to UCT and we shared a house for several of our postgrad years. But jobs were still very hard to find until I landed a contract position at the Port Elizabeth Museum in 1981 studying fish. I got married to Lynne (nee Bishop), a PE girl who I'd met in Cape Town, we bought a house and started a family in 1983 with a beautiful little girl, Samantha-Anne.



Now – Lynne & I

My laboratory was the ocean, the job entailed a lot of SCUBA diving and fishing from Cape Agulhas to Mozambique and I was being paid to have fun. These were truly the best of times. Along the way I completed a PhD which opened up the opportunity of a permanent position as lecturer in the Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science at Rhodes University. So in 1987 we packed up and moved to Grahamstown where my son David was born. Surfing had now taken a back seat to golf and anyone who plays the game would know that once that bug bites you stay bitten!

We loved our time at Rhodes, but in 1996 our world took a dramatic turn with the offer of a position at the Australian Maritime College in Launceston, Tasmania – “Tas where?” my friends would ask. Yep, up for the challenge, we packed our bags with two young kids for an adventure in what was famously a British penal colony.

To be honest I saw AMC as a stepping stone to a job somewhere on mainland Australia and didn't imagine staying for long. But we fell in love with the place and wild horses couldn't now drag us off the island. Of course it helped that in 1998 I landed a dream job at the University of Tasmania in Hobart where I was asked to set up a new marine science institute. Fifteen years in the making I'm proud to say the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies is now the leading organisation of its kind in Australia.

My work done, I retired in 2014 to establish a small consulting company which still keeps me busy. Looking back I can't describe how lucky we have been. Australia has been very good to us. Samantha has her own advertising agency, Inclusive Creatives, and my son David is a medical specialist at the Alfred hospital Melbourne. And we look forward to him giving us our first grandchild later this year.



Trevor (on my shoulder) and a few mates with the boards I built with Norman Quick (also sitting)

Sadly though, all of this moving around has meant that I lost touch with pretty much all of you and our many other friends in SA. But I have remained in touch with both Trevor Hastie in California and Gary Ward in Brisbane. Which brings me to my life changing moment that Dean was asking for.

On our last visit to California, a little before COVID hit, Trevor took me for a bike ride around his neighbourhood in Palo Alto. I was knackered at the end as I hadn't been on a bike since Std 8, but something about it clicked and on our return to Tassie Lynne and I, both well into our 60's, took up cycling. We are now regular bike riders, choosing bikes over a car to get around, being members of our local cycle lab (spin class for enthusiasts) and spending our holidays on our bikes, the last being a Coast2Coast trip across the UK. It's been a truly life changing thing.

Well that's all folks. If you are ever in Oz come down to Tassie and visit. Reading your various blogs has been an amazing ride down memory lane and I dearly wish I could attend the reunion. So enjoy, and I'll raise a glass from afar on the nite!!

All the best Colin

**Other reminiscences of Colin:** Back in the day we used to spend hours in the pool at 49a Shirley Street where lap races trying to impress Rene was high on the agenda. It was here that I developed a talent for butterfly....perhaps not a talent as such but at least I was better than Spook, Moose and a few other of the boys.

It follows that I was volunteered for the 50m butterfly event at the annual school gala. Confidently I stepped up and we were off. It must have looked very good for a few seconds but then I realised I was fast running out of breath. No-one had mentioned you had to breathe if the length of the



pool was more than about 5m. That's when my stroke started to come undone and panic set in. After what seemed an eternity, oxygen starved and thoroughly exhausted I rolled onto my back about 20m into the race.



2019 – Coast 2 Coast cycle trip across UK

The crowd was going wild, and I looked over to see Simms and Welch standing up, laughing hysterically and cheering me on as I made it to the side of the pool. That's my lasting and fond memory of Bob whose geography class was my favourite at school.

## Vincent Cory



I am so privileged to have experienced Alexander Road High back then, and my respect for Mr. Cordingley is as strong as ever, ever though I felt the wrath of his cane a few too many times. Each one well deserved; I might add. How lucky we were to have had such a tremendous teaching staff, something I only got to appreciate after I left school.

**Left:** Vincent Cory on the left  
Kay Sutton, June Brown and

Colin Buxton. They did they manage to capture the best chicks?

Harry, thank you for the photographic memories that you forwarded, especially the rugby team which beat Grey 13-8. I still remind some of the "old "Grey boys about that whenever I get the chance, much to their irritation.



Regarding my business life, I left Port Elizabeth for Cape Town along with my brother's family on the day I wrote my final matric exam paper. I then joined the SA Reserve Bank in Cape Town, primarily as they paid me a salary whilst doing my army training. After army, and back working at the bank, I was transferred back to Port Elizabeth. Soon thereafter I accepted a job offer with BP, and spent 21 wonderful years with the company, during which time we had 7 transfers within SA, finally ending up back at BP's Cape Town Head Office. In 1994 I decided to venture out into business on my own and was fortunate that it turned out to be reasonably successful. I purchased a second business in 2000 and a wine farm in 2005. By 2012 I had sold them all and have been retired in Cape Town ever since.

Karin and I have three daughters, Robyn living in Johannesburg, Dayle in Cape Town and Andrea in London. We enjoy travel and prior to Covid were spending four to five months of the year overseas where we would rent an apartment, on a monthly basis, so as to get a feel and to enjoy the different cities / country's culture. We got back from our last trip two weeks before lockdown last year, which was very fortunate. Now I spend my time playing a lot of tennis, and generally enjoying life with friends and family.



## Karl Els



**Left:** Karl Els, Carol Addison, Kathy Lang, Dave Brnic.

I was born 28<sup>th</sup> April 1952, in a nursing home in Sydenham, North End, Port Elizabeth. My mother, Beryl, informs me that I was an *en caul birth*, or a 'veiled birth,' that is where a baby is born with an intact amniotic sac. She taught me how to read and write before I started school. I spent a lot of my early years drawing comic strips.

School was still structured from Sub A to Sub B, then Standard 1 to 5 in those days and consisted of what we called 'Junior School.' Standard 6 to 10 was considered 'High School.' My Father, rather forebodingly, had to drag me, crying and wailing, to my first day of school which was at Sydenham Primary. Needless to say, I did not enjoy school and spent most of my days daydreaming, for which I got into a lot of trouble all the way

through my entire school career.

After I turned 8 years old, we moved to the suburb of Cotswold. I started Standard 1 at Cotswold Junior School (now Cotswold Preparatory) and became friends with Derek Openshaw. We soon discovered that both of our father's worked for Posts and Telecom before it eventually became Telcom SA.

After a few years, the school decided it needed an upgrade and renovations were planned for upgrading both the school grounds and classrooms – which led to my own classes being held in nearby vacated shop buildings. I remember that Miss Wepener was school principal at the time and wore out many straps on my backside. Mr Louw was the school principal at Cotswold high and he and I and I had many get togethers testing canes on my backside for not doing my homework. To help distract me from my homework I threw myself into my extracurricular and sports activities; rugby, cricket, tennis, athletics, gymnastics, swimming, you name it! I did everything just to help myself escape those long dreadful days in class. My drawing skills improved significantly as well, and I submitted a few nature study illustrations which were mounted in the biology class for many years.

In Standard 5, my last year of Junior school, I was pleasantly surprised to be nominated as a scholar patrol officer. I say pleasantly surprised, but it was more like totally mind blowing, considering my history with the teachers at the time, although I do believe my friend Derek may have had something to do with it.





For my High School years, my dad had wanted me to go to the Technical High school in Newton Park, but he had taken too long to apply, and the school was full and no longer accepting enrolments, so I ended up going to Alexander Road High.



According to Mr. Cordingley, the then headmaster (whom we nicknamed 'wacko') I had the honour of being his first caning for that year, however that was only the beginning. I subsequently earned regular canings from both Mr. Welch and Mr. Simms for being late, having long hair or being sent out of class for misbehaving. Art was my only redeeming subject, Miss Chilcot was my Art teacher and I proudly still have the book award I received from her for art achievements.

Standard 6 still left me hating school, but I had found two new loves, Carol Addison and hockey. I eventually made first team and was so proud to be part of a great team of guys. I think that for that year we were unbeaten by all the schools we played against. Cecil Thompson was my secret hero, and I took inspiration from him to play my best. One of my biggest heartbreaks and disappointments, which affected me for many years, was being the only student not to receive a colours blazer for hockey.

I participated in other sports too, athletics, swimming, and high board diving. After school, I

virtually lived at the Newton Park swimming baths and quietly qualified as a swimming bath lifeguard with the help of my lifeguard friend Aapie.



Carol Addison and I were school sweethearts and remained so up to the middle of Standard 10. Carol informed me that she was emigrating to Australia and so our long relationship would end but not our strong friendship. We did manage to see one another again when I visited Perth, and again when Carol and her husband visited Auckland. Carol and I kept in touch over the years to come, but sadly, she was called to heaven in July 2020 after a long illness.

In 1972 I joined Telcom SA. After completing a three-year apprenticeship at Olifantsfontein College, I asked Esme' Vermaak for her hand in marriage. When we got married, we happened to live in a flat close to Miss Chilcott, my art teacher, in Central, and I regularly visited her for many years. A great lady I hope to one day meet in heaven.



Towards the end of matric (standard 10) I had met Esme' and we continued to go out during my apprenticeship years. The Telcom training college was at Olifantsfontein near Pretoria and every fortnight Friday I drove down to PE to spend the weekend with Es and drove back Sunday evening to be in time for class Monday morning. I did that for three years. No canings during the three years there, by the way. We married in 1974 and were married for 43 years until cancer took her away from me in January of 2017.

My son Kyle was born in 1982 and still lives with me. We are best mates and go fishing together and practice 3D archery with our compound bows. After my Alex years, I continued to play men's hockey and eventually gave it up for road cycling. I became an honorary member of the Veteran Men and Ladies Cycling Association and was the Editor of the cycling newsletter for many years.





In 2000 we emigrated to New Zealand. I joined a small private company in a small town in the middle of North Island called Taupo. I learned all about residential security alarms and today I am self-employed and contracted to ADT security. My wife Es got a job in Auckland as a radiographer and so we moved to Auckland in 2001.

In 2002 I changed careers and studied for two years and qualified as a graphic designer. I'm proud to say that I never got caned once during the two years.

I worked for a lot of different sign and print companies over the years to gain experience in the print and sign industry. Nearing retirement age, I needed to plan for a future where I could keep busy and earning but at a more relaxed pace and eventually returned to residential security alarms as a contractor.

Today I am blessed to have met a beautiful lady who is also retired, and we have combined our families and are hoping to get married in the near future. I

still draw and paint and create 3D models which I occasionally sell. Life has been good to me I have been very blessed. My God is an awesome God.



**Above:** Karl Els and his son Kyle



## Renee Ferreira [du Toit]



**Above left:** Renee in 1971 **Above right:** Rene Ferreira (du Toit) with her husband recently in Namaqualand.

I will be the easiest (along with Margie) to be found as I am still in my childhood home in Shirley Street (hence my email address). I retired from NMU at the end of 2019 after 34 years and am loving a life of leisure. I am surprised at the number of us who ended up in education. It was not my first choice after two weeks of student teaching Maths at Alex at the age of 20. But I am grateful to have joined NMU after 12 years in the private sector. The flexibility allowed me to be with my two daughters while they were growing up. And now that I have retired, I am loving my time with my four grandsons.

### Philip Godawa: My Professional Life

If I'm honest I suspect that subconsciously I was inclined to think of school as an extracurricular necessity to my drama activities, both at school and the many amateur theatre groups in PE. I was very lucky that teachers like Mr Wright and Mr Ellis were so understanding and supportive. I can't remember a time when I wasn't passionate about the theatre and I have been so very lucky to be able to make my living doing something I love. Not all plain sailing by any means but the highs outweigh the lows. I'll try and be brief and just pick out a few highlights.

My late Dad made a very wise condition to my going into the Theatre and that was that I get a degree so I had something to fall back on. Off I went to UCT and got my degree in Drama and a Performer's Diploma. Ironically the only time I have been asked about my qualifications was when I started working in China in 2006 – the Chinese are extremely education orientated. In fact I was placed on a higher earning tier because of my degree when I worked for Disney Shanghai on "The Lion King" – so thanks Dad.

After University I worked as an Actor at the then Capab & in Johannesburg for 5 years. I then decided to spread my wings and go back to England to try my luck there (what courage one has when one is



younger!) It was very tough but I managed to keep myself in work for most of the 5 years I was there but eventually I decided to come home and based myself in Johannesburg but worked as an actor all over the country on Stage, TV & Film.

Although I loved acting I had a growing interest in Directing. There's a well-known saying that the most difficult part of directing is getting your first job, and my goodness is it true. I knocked on hundreds of doors and after quite a number of years the then Napac offered me a small production which I wrote and directed for their supper theatre and that then lead to bigger productions. I continued acting and directing and then "The Phantom of the Opera" landed on our shores. All the big international productions have what's called a Resident Director – a glorified name for a "quality controller" – and that position has given me the opportunity to travel to China, Korea, Taiwan, Turkey, The Philippines, New Zealand & Europe. After Phantom I went straight onto "The Lion King" – as Resident Director. That not only lead to my being appointed one of the Artistic Producers of "The Closing Ceremony of The Fifa World Cup 2010" but also to an 8 month stint living in Shanghai

doing the first Mandarin production of "The Lion King" and I don't speak Mandarin! Everything had to be done through an interpreter. For months afterwards I would speak in very short sentences and wait for the translation, even when speaking English.

I love China (I've even performed in Wuhan!) and having worked there so often I have seen a great deal of the vast, magnificent country and learn many of its cultures. I was lucky enough to Direct & Co-adapt a Mandarin production of "Pride & Prejudice" in Beijing just before the pandemic. (Please don't think I've been smoking something, "Pride & Prejudice" is always among the 10 top favourite books in China). I'm hoping that travel restrictions permitting to be working there again later this year – hence my not being able to attend the reunion.

As you can see, I have been so extremely lucky to have been given the opportunity to do such a wide range of work – so much of it being in the right place at the right time. I am truly thankful.

I sincerely hope my "now" photo doesn't seem pretentious but while we were in Turkey Lord Weber paid us a visit and absolutely hated the sound. Hence the irony of the following photo which looks as though I am telling him off when in fact I was getting a right royal bollocking.

**Comment by Sharon Rhode:** Comment by Sharon Rhode: Wow Philip! What an amazing career you have had! You always had great talent and your unwavering belief in yourself and your chosen path has certainly paid off!



## Carol Goldsmith [Addison]

Carol Goldsmith died on 19 July 2020. Her life story below was written by her and was entitled, "*Brief autobiography of my life as at 29 November 2019*".



My name is Carol Alexandria Goldsmith nee Addison. Born 15 December 1953 in Port Elizabeth South Africa. Spent childhood and formative years in Port Elizabeth. Attended Sydenham Primary School from 1959/60 - 1966, for Sub A, Sub B, Standards 1 though to 5. Then to Alexander Road High for Standards 6 – 10 i.e., from 1967 to matriculating in 1971. It was at Alexander Road that I met my best friend in Std 6. Her name is Ann Fick so she was called Ficus and still is to this day.

After graduating from high school, attended The University of Port Elizabeth, as did Ficus. We both left 4 years later with a BA and HED and a trip hiking Britain and eurailing Europe as part of our experience. We also both taught at the same School as our first

posting. Eventually we did separate and got positions at other schools both going to various places in the Cape Province (as it was then) but we are still in contact today as grannies.

In 1978 I met Richard and we married 10 Jan 1981 and almost immediately emigrated to Perth to start our life together. Our children arrived in 1982, Claire who's now given us two grandchildren Xavier Daniel turning 4 in 2020, Everleigh Grace 3 months as I type this. Margaret in 1983, a successful music teacher currently at Newman College, who brings to the family so much fun and togetherness with her playing of many instruments, her beautiful voice and a great sense of humour. Our third daughter Jane was born in 1985 and she has given us a beautiful, precious grandson Luca Henry who'll be two years 29th December 2019. I'm so proud of our girls, the women into whom they've grown, what they've accomplished, and how they live: good honest dependable trustworthy. I pray that they too will grow in God.

I taught at Sacred Heart College while the girls were growing up, mainly English all forms offered in Perth Schools and also English Literature. I also taught at Aranmore College where I ran the ESL programmes. My latter years in education were spent as a lecturer at Notre Dame. I loved this as I

taught a great passion, Academic Essay writing and referencing. Also, academic writing using appropriate and correct grammar and vocabulary.

Finally decided no more marking! and so I left and went on to do the course to become a volunteer Kings Park Guide. I loved this and knew I was really doing well as a VKP Guide, especially with Susanna J another guide who was a great mentor/inspiration and a great friend, my pseudo sister. I was very sad that the illness caused me to resign July/August this year, at the pinnacle of my guiding. But, with prayers answered, life went on and now Richard and I travel to entertain ourselves and I keep my mind focused on Botany as we do the wildflower trails.

I also like to spend lots of time with grandson Luca whose parents live in Perth, whereas Claire lives in Ballarat, a real journey to baby sit! But we visit when we can. I do have my gorgeous doggie Pippa to walk exercise. She's kept me fit and now keeps Richard fit too. Richard has planned a lovely trip away this December of 2019, a cruise on the Queen Elizabeth to Melbourne, then to return to Perth, we travel on the Indian Pacific. We get back just before Christmas to be with our Perth daughters. I am so proud of our three daughters, and love spending time with them.



Carol is on the left in the family photo, which was taken when their granddaughter was baptised in February 2020.

I praise the Lord and give thanks that I have had sufficient wellness in the past 9 months to be able to do so much of what filled my life prior to "the incident". Love and God Bless, dear family and friends. Thank you for your love and prayers and that you 've been a part of my travels through life. I look towards God, where earth and heaven will meet and think of Psalm 23. I shall not fear for thou art with me. You comfort me and I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever.

Amen



## Jenni Gous



Jennifer Gous (should have matriculated in 1970 but due to having too much fun matriculated in 1971)

I have had a chequered career and life. After leaving Alex I went to the Graaff-Reinet Teachers' College to do a three year higher primary teaching diploma (it was that or nursing in those days!!). I developed a love/hate relationship with the

Karoo during that time (love won in the end). I then caught a train to Cape Town to take up a teaching post in Plumstead. After two years I went to Rhenish on the Braak in Stellenbosch but returned to Cape Town after a year.

It was then that I read about autism for the first time and was immediately drawn to working with children with special needs and who live on the margins (teaching neurotypicals wasn't half as challenging).

The long and short of it all was that I left teaching in 1982 to attend the All Nations Christian College in the UK for two years to become a missionary. Mission work did not materialise and on my return to SA worked in the Anglican Church as a pastoral assistant in the Alexandria Plurality (Bushmans, Kenton on Sea and Alexandria).

The bright lights of Cape Town were calling however and I returned to teaching children with special needs in Claremont where I remained for the next 16 years.

In 2000 I relocated to Johannesburg where I have been ever since. I managed to keep studying during my teaching career and ended up with a PhD in 2010. I am currently the principal of a small school for children with autism in Parktown and I can't afford to retire!! I am longing to return to the eastern Cape, preferably Kenton.

I have loved catching up with the news of everyone and I am not sure whether I will be at the reunion or not. I loved you Alex guys back then...and still do. Saddened to hear of my buddy Vaughan.

Current interests include:

- Being an avid birdwatcher (I can't afford twitching), and loving travelling
- Exploring the more mystical side of Christianity e.g. Julian of Norwich, centering prayer etc
- Enjoying grand nephews and nieces
- Dabbling in a bit of photography
- Dreaming of living back at the beach...

**Anileen Gray [Begbie]**

Anileen Gray [Begbie] Then and Now playing grandmother with her grandson Henry.

After graduating from Alex, I went to UPE where I completed a BSc degree, majoring in Chemistry and Mathematics. I left without completing the HED year but managed to get a teaching job at Daniel Pienaar Technical High School where I taught Physics and Chemistry for one year. I married Selwin Gray in December 1975 and worked as a Chemist for Firestone while he completed his honors degree in Geology. (I could not support the two of us on a teacher's salary!). After three months travelling through Europe in a camper van in early 1977, we reported to Carletonville where Selwin started working on the goldmines. I taught Math and Science at the local high school and completed my HED through UNISA. In 1978 we relocated to Port Shepstone where we lived until 1990. At that point I was head of the Math Department at the Port Shepstone High School. In 1988 my twins, Simon and Frances were born. In 1990 we moved to Johannesburg where we lived for two years before emigrating to Canada. We lived in Vancouver, British Columbia for 5 years, and in 1996 we moved to Baltimore, Maryland for Selwin's work. We have lived here for the past 21 years. In that time, I managed to earn my master's degree in mathematics and work as the head of the Math and Science departments at two different high schools. I retired from the St. Paul's Boys School two weeks ago. I am passionate about teaching and loved every minute of the 46 years I spent in the classroom. Although it is nice to be retired and imagine spending more time traveling and with family, I cannot imagine never returning to the classroom again. I can see myself looking for an opportunity to teach again once I am settled in North Carolina.

My son, Simon, is a medical doctor and currently finishing his studies to be a specialist Gastroenterologist. He is married to Lesley, and they have a 15-month-old son, Sidney. We have just bought a house in Chapel Hill, which is close to where Simon works, and we plan to move down there as soon as we have sold our house in Baltimore. My daughter Frances is a Pharm D and is married to an air force pilot, Kyle. They have a son, Henry, who is 18 months old. My two grandsons are the love of my life, and I cannot wait to spend more time with them.

My hobby is bee keeping. I currently have nine hives in my back garden, and I keep four hives at school where I run a bee club and teach the boys how to run an apiary. We manage to get a crop of about 300 – 400 lbs. of honey per season, most of which we give away to family, colleagues and members of our church.

I am tremendously excited about returning to PE to meet up with the class of '71.



### Trevor Hastie: The American with a PE accent.

I have enjoyed reading the stream of emails, blogs, and all the comments, and catching up with you all. Waco was a legend. I know that I got caned for long hair at age 16 or so (this was after I fell under the bad influence of Colin Buxton and his pals!).

I have lived in America for 40 years with my wife Lynda (from Zimbabwe), have two adult children Samantha and Timothy, and as of 3 months ago, a grandson Jackson. But that is jumping ahead. Colin Buxton, Gary Ward, Vaughan Jones (and “Porky” David Paton) and I were keen surfers in our last few high-school years and later. Colin showed some rarer pictures of us from back then in his blog. Here is a picture of me with the board that Colin and another friend Norman Quick made for me (I still have the board today!) The other picture is of Vaughan and me painting the Alex badge over the front entrance.



In 1972, Colin Buxton, Gary Ward, Phil Williams, and I all spent nine months in the army at Potchefstroom — the worst year of my life! Gary and I nearly bought it that year. After a weekend pass in PE, we hitchhiked back to Potch, and the bakkie that picked us up slid off the wet road and flipped over a fence into a field on the other side. None of us was hurt (even though I was in the open back). After army, B.Sc (hons) at Rhodes University, then worked at Medical Research Council near Cape Town from 1977-1979 as a biostatistician, and did a M.Sc part-time at UCT. Colin and I shared digs for much of that time, ending up in a big house on Bishoplea Rd in Claremont with a lot of good friends (including Patti Booth, two years junior at Alex), whom we are still close with today.

I left Cape Town in 1980 to start a Ph.D program in Statistics at Stanford University in California. Just before I left SA I met Lynda, and lucky for me she joined me in California four months later. We got married in December 1981 in Cape Town and are approaching our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Picture on the left taken in 1982, on the right 2019 with Samantha and Timothy.



After obtaining a Ph.D from Stanford in 1984, we spent a year and a bit back in SA (I was again with MRC), and then in 1986 moved to Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, where I started a position at AT&T Bell Laboratories as a “member of technical staff” in the data-analysis research group. Bell Labs has a wonderful history, and saw the birth of transistors, lasers, photovoltaic cells, C, C++, Unix, to name a few (an interesting book: “The Idea Factory: Bell Labs and the Great Age of American Innovation” by Jon Gertner.) The S language used in the R programming environment was developed in our group. I wrote my first research monograph “Generalized Additive Models” with my lifelong colleague Rob Tibshirani while at the labs, as well as “Statistical Models in S” with John Chambers and others. We

spent 8 years there, during which our two children Samantha and Timothy arrived. We were not well off, and I learned carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring and general building skills out of necessity, since we bought a “fixer upper” and could not afford to pay contractors. Sadly, Bell Labs got split up along with AT&T, and by the early 2000s it was not the place it used to be.

In 1994 we moved back to Stanford University in California, where we are today. I am a professor in Statistics, and we live on campus in one of the original faculty homes (built 1913). Once again, the acquired carpentry skills came in handy – by now we can afford to pay contractors, but we still like to do much of the maintenance work ourselves. Like many academics, my webpage <https://web.stanford.edu/~hastie/> can tell you more about my work and career if you are interested. I have “produced” 21 wonderful Ph.D graduates so far (and 3 more in the works), 10 of which are by now professors at Universities around the world, and the others work in the tech industry as data scientists. Since coming to Stanford I have written 4 more books with colleagues, two popular ones being “Elements of Statistical Learning” and “Introduction to Statistical Learning with R”. We managed to persuade our publishers to allow that the pdf for all these books can be downloaded free of charge from our websites. Tibshirani and I also produced a free online course called “[Statistical Learning](#)”, which is available through edX and is based on the second of these named books. In 2018 I was elected to the US National Academy of Sciences. My research work has enabled me to travel all over the world (to conferences and the like), and for the last 8 years or so Lynda has been able to come with me, which has made it all much more fun. We were set to go to Estonia and St Petersburg in 2020 until Covid 19 got in the way.

I play tennis, squash, have a Saturday cycling group (more gossip than hard cycling!), I run (since Covid), and sometimes surf (full disclosure: I was never a good surfer – I mainly do body-boarding). I also dive for abalone (perlemoen, but much bigger), up the coast from San Francisco. The conditions are very similar to the cold-water conditions around Cape Town. Here is a picture of me with Vaughan Jones at Summerstrand in about 2013, and on a wave in Maui in 2016



I was a huge fan of Bob Welsh, and he was certainly my best-ever school teacher. He taught us concepts, and encouraged us to think. In 2005 I visited him and his wife in PE on a return visit to SA, after not seeing him for a very long time. Jannie was visiting as well, and we had a very nice tea session. Bob was still a keen tennis player at 75 yrs. The other picture was taken when we visited Colin and Lynne Buxton in Tasmania in 2018 while I spent a two-month visit at University of NSW in Sydney.

We have visited South Africa many times over the years, initially about every two years, and more recently every year. We are all dual citizens, and Timothy is currently living in the family apartment in St James in Cape Town.





We barely survived the last four years with our version of Zuma, but normalcy has been thankfully restored and we are much happier with President Biden. At 68 I am not yet retired, but think of it a lot! (There is no retirement age at most American universities, but they do start offering incentives around my age!)

I had planned to attend the Alex 50th reunion, and in fact was an active recruiter, but now traveling half-way around the world is not too attractive with Covid not out of the way in SA.

My sister Cathy's husband Keith Gibson taught at Alex for many years, and retired in 2019, so I kept up with the news. My brother Paul also still lives in PE, and has a brick factory (Zikhona).

All the best and I hope you have a fabulous reunion

Trevor

## Vaughan Jones

👍👍 Liked by **gitavanrensburg** and **109 others**

**claytontruscott** From about the age of 9, I would inhale every issue of @zigzagsurf the moment it hit the shelves. That hasn't changed.

Getting anything published in this hallowed mag is always personally rewarding. But this latest piece is particularly special, in that it honors Mr. Jones (I could never call him Vaughn, even as an adult). He was a man who did a lot for me, my brothers, my friends, and countless surfers at Grey High in the 90's and 00's. A kind, generous human who made it possible to be a surfer and a student at Grey, and not sacrifice all forms of self-expression to fit the school mold. A big thank-you to the Jones family who gave this a look when it was first drafted and for permission to use this photo of Mr. Jones at Pipe.

You can get a copy through the link in my bio. The photos by @kodymcgregor alone are worth the purchase, and every cent keeps this beloved mag in print.

Also, cheers to @pdvimages for the amazing cover, and to @will.bendix and @alanvangysen for continuing to make the Zag a world-class publication.

This is the info that I received from Trevor Hastie about Vaughan: Vaughan was an English master at Grey High School, and he ran the surfing club. Here is a link to an article that describes how he died in the surf in July 2014 in Summerstrand.

<https://www.zigzag.co.za/features/rest-in-peace-vaughan-jones-1952-2014/>

I used to look Vaughan up from time to time when my family and I came from California to visit my family in PE. We would meet on the beach or in the Summerstrand shops coffee house. Below is a picture of us together around 2010 or so. His students had a nickname for him which was "billos" (for biltong). After years in the sea and sun his skin was quite wrinkled and leathery. Of course, they never called him this to his face. After school and army, he went to UPE and then taught at a school in George for a number of years. He ran the school surf club there at Victoria Bay, which is near George.



the hard work in changing the flat tyre.

The photos of Vaughan Jones have been kindly supplied by Gary Ward. According to Gary they were taken on one or another of their surfing trips circa 70 / 71.



**Above:** Why was Vaughan chuckling & shaking his head while watching the others attempt to surf.

**Above:** Vaughan Jones and Gary Ward allowing Colin Buxton to do all





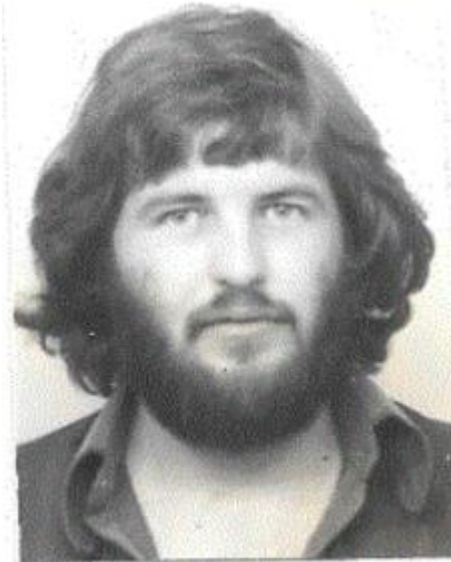
**Left:** Vaughan showing the others how it is supposed to be done.

### **Marie Juta [Steyn]**

The day I wrote matric I reported at the Provincial Hospital to start a nursing career but soon realised that I did not want this as a career. After a year auditing and a year at UPE starting a B. Com degree, I joined Standard Bank for the next 25 years during which time I had the privilege of serving Mr. Cordingley at the Standard Bank Agency at the base of the Elizabeth Hotel for a number of years. During my bank career I was married, was a foster parent and eventually adopted my son, now 33 years old. Soon divorced, left PE and Standard Bank and joined Quest Employment Agency in Cape Town. Then moved to Gauteng and joined Damelin School of Banking, later known as Mill Park Business School until my retirement. I returned to PE to retire.

## Dean McClelland

With my parents unable to pay my university fees, at 19 I signed articles with a local auditing firm. I did my BComm CTA part time at UPE with lectures from Monday to Friday night. Like Derek Openshaw, I had not taken Bookkeeping at Alex and was informed that I had six weeks to get to matric level. Hence the first term was very hectic. UPE was very conservative for a liberal *Engelsman*. Emblematic of this was the fact that one of the *Handelsreg* [Commercial Law] lectures even held hair inspections periodically. As I was a part time student, I did not have him otherwise I would have been banned from classes.



**Left: 1973**

After passing my CA and completing articles at Price Waterhouse in PE, in 1980 I joined Barlows in Joburg where I worked for 35 years. Initially I worked in finance rising to Financial Director at a small subsidiary by my mid-thirties. A promotion as F.D. to larger company followed. Part of my responsibilities were to turn this company around financially. After a year it was obvious that the company was unsalvageable. As a reward I was offered a directorship or a much larger company but with almost intractable problems. To me that was more of the same but with enormous headaches. Instead of the promotion I applied for a lateral move/demotion to run Projects which mainly encompassed IT. For the last 15 years with Barloworld as it was then called, I did ERP implementations, set up costing systems and ran Value Based Management seminars to group companies, amongst other projects.

After a brief two-year marriage in my late twenties, I got divorced and relocated to Durban with Barlows. At 31, my boss challenged me to run a marathon with 3 weeks of “*scientific training*”: week 1 – 1 x 15kms training, week 2 – 1 x 21kms training, week 3 – 1 x 32km training, week 4 – run the marathon. In week 3 I bailed the 32km training run at 21kms and week 4 loomed with 42kms to be run. By 32kms I was delirious but my boss grabbed my arm and kept me going. To cut a long story short, I finished in 4h28, 2 minutes within the cutoff. [Haydon I must still get you for that].



I must have been a soft touch because several years later my best friend challenged me to enter the 1000km challenge but our target would be 2000kms of races per annum. That meant running the equivalent of a marathon a weekend. Of course, when one is young, one's body accepts such punishment. Naturally we travelled the whole of SA to meet our target. A Saturday 21km at Fort Klapperskop in Pretoria would be followed by a marathon in Durban on the Sunday. “Freebies” would



be doing a 10km cross country or road race on Wednesday night. After a few years, Ashley's body started complaining so he withdrew from the challenge. Fortunately there were other mad people like me whom I could rely upon. This Challenge morphed into the Around the World Challenge i.e. running 40,075kms of official races anywhere in the world. After 10 years many of the initial 200 competitors had withdrawn.

February 2015 was the big day, the 8<sup>th</sup> person in terms of the SA rules to run Around the World. For me the official point when I would have completed the Challenge was the 11km mark on the Jeppe Quondam 21/42km race. As is tradition, a bunch of challenge participants would run the whole way with the finisher. As a twist I twisted the arms of a whole bunch of non-running family & friends to run from that point to the finish with me. What a response; a friend from Durban, some hiking friends and my sister who had never played sport in her life. I even twisted the organisers to give all of them a medal even though they had run 10kms of a 21kms race. Included in the 40,075kms, were 94 marathons and greater than 1000 half marathons. After completing 50,000kms in races to January 2020, I have had to retire /slow down. After a childhood injury to my back and 3 subsequent back operations, I am now battling to bend or run.



So

Gary, when you claim that I must be mad, I totally agree with you. We were all deranged, but I have made so many friends and memories and toured the country in the process.

After suffering from various ailments in her mid-forties by the age of 50, Janine's health was on a precipitous downward spiral. By 55 she was bed-ridden. For the next 4 years, she was in and out of ICU continually and in her last year she was in a coma for six and a half weeks. Finally at the age of 59, Janine passed away. I have two children, a son and a daughter, but I have no grandchildren yet.

I have published four books since retirement:

- *The Life & Times of the Cape's First Colonial Chaplain: Rev. Francis McClelland,*
- *On imperial Service with the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars during the Boer War,*
- *The Bondelswaarts Anti-Colonial War through the Eyes of Three Men and*
- My magnum opus *Port Elizabeth of Yore*. Only volume 1 of 4 has been printed so far. Volume 1 is *Defying the Odds: Port Elizabeth – From the Khoi to 1860*.

## Alan Milne: The story so Far

I would imagine that this is for everybody to read, so perhaps I should leave out my time as a male escort?

Before we track my working career, a few words about my time at Alex.

Arriving at Alex in Standard 7 from Cape Town, I fell very comfortably into the vibe of the school and the people— far preferring coed to single gender institutions, of which I had experience with both - schools that is, not genders!



**Above & left: Wedding Day**

For certain medical reasons, [which we need not go into at this stage], I had never been able to fully participate in sports. I was drawn to and enjoyed other extra-mural pastimes, notably on the stage—which was considered by some to be a bit left of centre. How times have changed, and it is great to

see that, in schools today, the “acting nerds” have become as cool as the sport’s “jocks”! This lack of sporting ability or prowess never bothered me, but it certainly did *not* sit well with some of the staff – particularly the PT teacher. Again, I am grateful that the situation has changed in today’s schools.

In hindsight I see our years at Alex as a period of change and transition in the approach to teaching. We were certainly extremely fortunate to have such talented and innovative educators as Bob Welch, Paul Ellis and Flippie van der Merwe, whose whole approach to teaching both inspired and motivated, as opposed to the somewhat dour approach that our headmaster seemed determined to maintain. The drama “gang” were certainly allowed a lot of leeway as regards to what we could and could not do. We were permitted to be on the stage at any time, including breaks, and were also give time out, during school hours, to go and look for “props” and “costumes”, if a production was on. Perhaps, not *all* of this time out was spent actually doing that!

### **My Career [thus far]**

Immediately after school, on hearing that the SANDF did not require my services, I spent some time at UCT studying drama. It did not take long for me to realise that the stage and I were not meant for one another, unlike my good friend Philip Godawa, who would go on to achieve much in the theatre.

A short foray at Springbok Radio as a studio tech, working alongside some of the stars of radio, led me to realise that I needed some sort of qualification to kick-start a career. After graduating as radio and radar technician [go figure], I was fortunate to join Sonovision Studios in Johannesburg. At the time Sonovision was one of the largest recording studios in the country, specializing in the recording of radio dramas, commercials and music. Having always had a love for music, the environment was heaven to



me. It was truly “Rock and Roll”, without necessarily having to include the other elements normally associated with the phrase.

During my tenure there, I was also involved with the recording of many memorable radio shows of the time, including such “classics” as, “The Mind of Tracy Dark” *and* the 500th episode of “Squad Cars”! I also was fortunate to have an opportunity to do some acting in radio dramas, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

I subsequently moved into the emerging corporate communications field, producing and directing audio visual programmes, corporate songs, conferences, product launches and industrial theatre.



**Above:** At the Gupta's wedding

The industrial theatre industry was the cutting edge of the marketing and promotions business, and the company that I joined, Multivisio, was the leader in this field in South Africa. No concept was too big or too bold: from hosting multi-media fashion events with over one-hundred models and dancers, plus a live orchestra and rock band, being the first to integrate lasers into live shows, and hiring the Concorde for a week using it to ferry delegates from Johannesburg to Cape Town daily, for a vehicle launch.

Whilst there, I was closely involved with the launching of all the phases of Sun City, as well as the installation of the first IMAX cinema in SA. I also began creating and directing conferences, locally and elsewhere in Africa and Mauritius.

Through a commission from Sun International, I created and produced special visual effects for a number of Extravanzas at the Sun City Theatre, also doing similar projects for TV variety shows.

I had the privilege of creating some of these projects in conjunction with some of the top talent in South African theatre- Pieter Dirk Uys and the late Bill Flynn, to name a few.

In the mid 80's two of us broke away to start our own production venture in the Eastern Cape, doing video productions, events and product launches for the motor industry. I also became a regular news reader on Algoa FM and had my own late night music show on weekends, of which I enjoyed every minute. I was also seconded by M-Net to be the regional host/emcee at promotions and roadshows, for the public to meet stars overseas of movies and soaps. Circumstances changed in the motor industry and much of the marketing moved to Johannesburg, leading to us to shut our business down in Port Elizabeth [as it was known then...]



**Above:** Behind the Scenes - Top Billing Shoot

In the mid-nineties the family moved to Cape Town, where I joined a television production company, directing television programmes for broadcast on national TV, as well as directing the first live jazz programme on e-TV.

Additionally, we also produced conferences and events both locally, and further afield. One of our major conference clients for many years was BP and I would often bump into Phil Williams, who worked for the BP at this period. I also managed to find time for reading news on Fine Music Radio and had a weekend music show on a smooth jazz station, P4 Radio- now Heart FM.

In 2012 and '13, I became the Johannesburg based content director for Top Billing, which was extremely challenging but also totally rewarding. I am not sure whether it can be viewed as an achievement or not, but I headed up the only South African film crew to cover the infamous Gupta wedding at Sun City! I thoroughly enjoyed the time spent at Top Billing, but I was alone in Johannesburg, with my family remaining in Cape Town, and eventually decided to rather leave the show and return home

On returning to Cape Town, I was approached to train and mentor interns in the MOJO Mobile Journalism programme for the Independent Media Group. This involved teaching graduates how to create and produce video news content using mobile phones, which has become a worldwide trend in the digital era.



I have subsequently moved within the group to my current position as Executive producer at Volt.Africa, which specializes in digital communications. A lot of our work is filming inserts and content for GQ, Glamour and House and Garden magazines which is right up my ally. With the next oldest member of my team being only twenty-eight, I am certainly kept on my toes, but revel in the opportunity to work with and learn from creatives who are on the cutting edge of the industry. Much of the last eighteen months has been spent organizing and producing online content and virtual presentations, a necessity brought on by Covid, which has been a challenging but immensely rewarding experience.



**Above:** Alan and Sandi

Who knows what the next challenge may be, but whatever it is I still look forward to each and every working day.

### **Personal life**

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of May this year, my wife Sandi and I celebrated our 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary! Sandi [nee Hart], was a year behind us at Alex and we started dating whilst we were still at school. The late Mary-Anne van Rensburg, who was in Sandi's class, was our bridesmaid and Gerry Strimling, was our best man.

From what I have posted regarding my career, you can tell that we have moved around a fair bit. Sandi began her working career in PE [that's Gqeberha on the newest maps] at Rob Nettl Optometrists, which is still operating to this day. She has maintained an interest in optics, working for a number of optometrists and also managed the contact lens division for Zeiss, whilst we were living in Johannesburg.

It was only when we moved back to PE/ Gqeberha/Algoa Bay that we started a family. Our eldest son Calum was born in 1985 and lives with his partner in Cape Town. Calum qualified as a sound engineer - following in dad's footsteps - specializing in music recording. The digital revolution affected the music industry hugely, with every Tom, Dick and Harry [or Jane for that matter] being able to download software and have a studio in their bedroom. This was the death knell for most large recording studios, both locally and worldwide. With his electronics qualifications he wisely he moved into the ever-growing world of IT., He now heads up a team of over sixty staff, who specialize in designing, implementing and supporting end-to-end digital communications, country wide.



**Above:** Alan & Sandi in 2021

Our younger son, Iain, was born in '88. He graduated from the Waterfront Theatre School, here in Cape Town, majoring in Performance, [Acting, Singing and Dance]. Using this background, he began working as a casting director for commercials and TV dramas. Two years ago, he and a partner established a casting company, with offices in Cape Town, London and Los Angeles. Occasionally he finds the opportunity to also be cast in commercials. He is currently working remotely from a base in Mexico! We moved to Cape Town from the city formerly known as PE, in 1994 and, apart from my time living alone in Johannesburg, have remained rooted here in Fish Hoek. Much derided as "God's Waiting Room", due to the high percentage of elderly who reside here, our stay here has been a pleasant one. During their entire school careers our boys walked to school, apart from the odd bad weather days and the beach is five minutes away. Plus, this being Cape Town, there is an array of restaurants and wineries within a few minutes drive from our front door. Things could definitely be tougher!

Our entire family is hugely into food, and we will travel fair distances to try out a new eatery that catches our attention. We have been known to travel to Hermanus which is 120km away for lunch, and then return home. We have also been extremely fortunate to have shared incredible food experiences with some top local and overseas chefs. Obviously much of this has been curtailed by Covid but we look forward to better days. Additionally, I am very blessed and immensely spoilt by having a wife who, herself, is an amazing cook and much of our home time is spent preparing and



enjoying magical meals, accompanied by the occasional [ or not so occasional] glass of wine - when the President allows us to.



genres as hip-hop and techno!

**Above:** Interview with Lisa Peluso of Loving

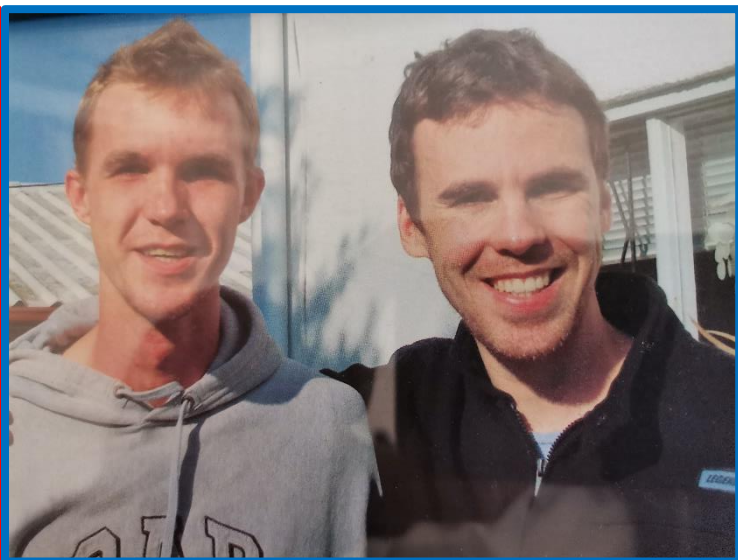
I have maintained my passion for music and still play and record at home but have not performed live for many years. I am also an avid collector of vinyl [ LP records], which I began collecting in my early teens: a hobby which I share with my eldest son. Between us we have a few thousand albums. I also trawl the internet, looking for and downloading anything that captures my attention across many styles of music, from classical to heavy metal [yes, seriously] but I do skip such

During lockdown I researched, curated and hosted an online “Pub Quiz’ which I thoroughly enjoyed. Sandi retired at the end of last year, though she is currently mentoring new staff at a local optometric practice. I, as previously mentioned, am blessed to still be needed and happily continue to work though, for obvious reasons, most days I do so remotely from my home office, surrounded by my computers, video monitors, guitars and keyboards.



**Above left:** L-R Alan, Iain, Nikki [ Cals Partner] , Sandi and Calum

**Above right:** Iain and Calum Milne

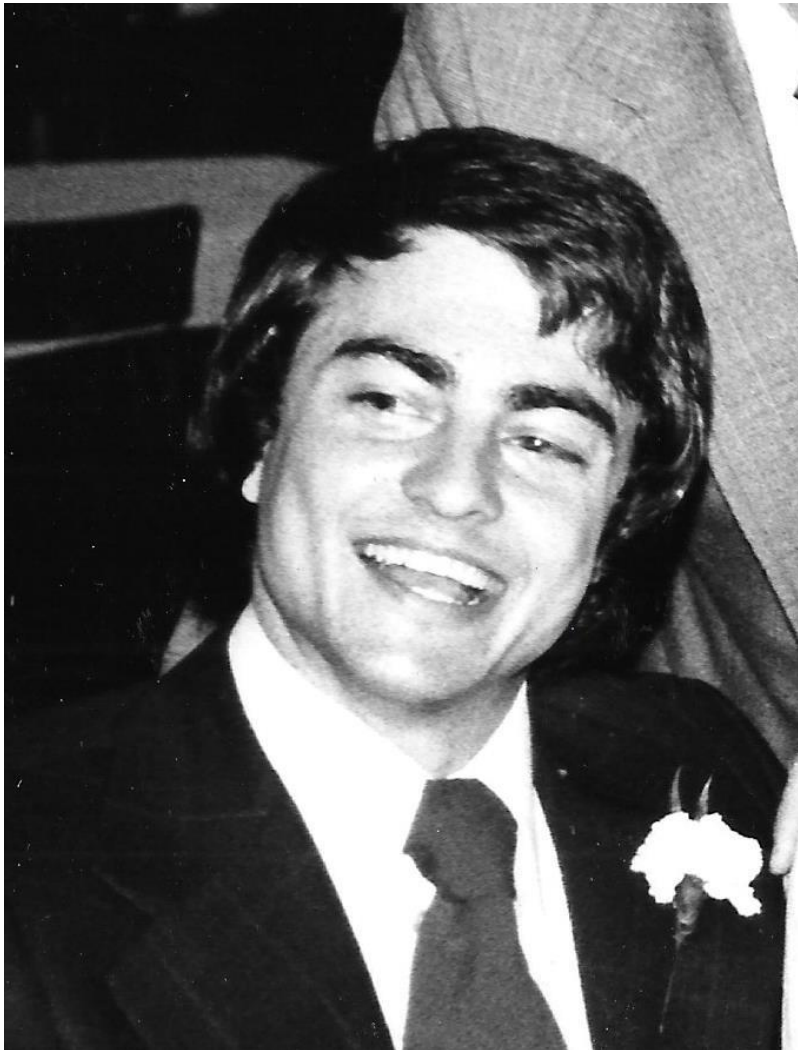


E&OE

## Derek Openshaw: The Circuit King

After '71, Karl Els, Arthur Elhert, Terry Benjamin and I started an engineering journey in Telecoms in what is today: Telkom SA. Obtaining a qualification before doing military service was advised. However, our annual callups were continually revoked and we never did military service! But that Damocles sword impacted our decision making for many years ...

A post-Alex Alan (ever the arm-twister, but heart of gold) Zeiss memory: '72 Al roped me and a few other Alexans into the P.E. division of 'InterAct' (Junior Rotary). Our first project was painting a Nursery School next to the mast on the hill north from the Alex grounds. Many more enjoyable, rewarding projects followed.



Sport changed from rugby (played at Blues – thanks to Robert Parker) when I met the person I am married to for two score and handful of years, Cheryl Robinson (of the last English-speaking class that graced the classrooms of Framesby High). Cheryl enjoyed playing squash, so 'obviously' I started playing. League and competition squash soon followed. It was unreal & weird when I first came up against Piet Snyman (Alex.- Afrikaans Onnie).

**Left:** 1975 The day I met Cheryl, when Bestman at a colleague's wedding

Road cycling quickly became integrated into the training routine – thanks to Margie (Portman) Rudman's husband, Rob. No, the heights of Alexan cyclists: Von Rubin, Theron and Watson were

never realised. But, veteran days (over 45 yrs) alongside some of the 'old greats' of the sport was the most enjoyable. Age, in sport, is a great leveller! That was also true of veteran squash - playing inter-provincials around the country and had the honour playing against England in 2002.

Let me not get ahead of myself ..... After a '6 year honeymoon' Andrew ('83) and Michelle ('87) arrived - expanded our family which in turn squeezed the budget – some of you been there too, I'm sure!

A shift from engineering to finance (following a BComm) saw us move from P.E. to Pretoria in '89. Woodwork was my subject of choice at Alex! Now suddenly in the mid-80's, I'm drowning in accounting (UNISA distance learning). Any other woodwork or Latin class Alexan enjoy a similar experience? The lecturer suggested I obtain a series of high school accounting books which I mentioned to Brian Heath (Headmaster at Alex at the time) at a squash league



game. Two days later Mrs Sutton called to say she had a full set for me: Std 6 to matric. That's Alex for you! Yes? Two weeks of burning the midnight oil, and std 6 to 10 was dusted ... not all exercises... but enough to see me through.



**Left:** Lunch at the Rose Garden Tea House, P.E. 2018 with the Van der Merwe's

In '91, Post & Telkom split, I moved over to SA Post (The qualification per 91 'Tuks Jool' magazine cover read: "The only qualification required to work in the Post Office is a long-wet tongue to lick the stamps!!") A whole new world presented itself. I established a management accounting arm at SA Post which included project managing part of their enterprise-wide SAP system and was fortunate to be offered a part-bursary for an MBA .... Only to be fished out by (then) Coopers & Lybrand's Consulting division to do what.....? Yep, project manage the implementation of the same system in Namibia Post & Telecom in '93. I then took a position at Price Waterhouse (Today: C&L + PW = PWC). A memorable project at PW was a post system implementation audit in Natal - only to discover it was designed and built by an Alexan: Andre Lotz, who some of you may well remember. It was great 'knowing someone in a foreign land' and working together – yes, the audit was good! After all, the system was built by an Alexan!!! I finally concluded my wonderful, interesting years of corporate consulting days as the Twentieth Century braced itself for the so-called Y2K gremlin! By this time, I was part-time lecturing at a business school, assisted a few business start-ups, established and co-owned a small labour brokerage in the IT industry.

One of (schoolteacher) Cheryl's reasons for agreeing to the move to Pretoria was – Nature Reserves. No prizes for guessing where the odd weekend and school holidays were spent during our 32 years in Gauteng. Days of driving, riding horseback or walking in the likes of Pilanesberg, Kruger, amongst others. We count it a privilege to have experienced our Southern African bushveld and wildlife. Cheryl's classic homeward bound statement was: "Now I'm ready for next term!"

A parallel path ... mid '75, telecomms qualification now completed, a crossroads presented itself. Do I continue the engineering route, or move into the ministry. The Damocles sword still hovered! Helping me unpack this, the late Rev Griff Rogers (Newton Park Methodist) suggested it seemed best to obtain the required B Theology (UNISA), as I could continue studying if and when the call up came. (Final exemption from the military arrived in '84!!)

So, a week before our wedding in '77 I gained the entry required recognition as a lay-preacher (Theol Certificate MCSA), and UNISA BTh began in '78! After many 'sit op die klip' years, months, days, I eventually entered the ordained ministry of the Methodist Church SA at the turn of the century. The years we spent with the four Pretoria congregations, two of them simultaneously in my final years, were extremely rewarding. Each with its own challenging, steep learning curve. Early in this new journey, I met Prof Malan Nel when undertaking a course at the University of Pretoria (Tuks). I soon discovered this amazing gentleman was internationally recognised as SA's leading Practical Theologian. I have been privileged to walk an academic path with Oom Malan to this day - through master's programmes, becoming a 'visiting' lecturer & facilitator' at Tuks, and finally obtaining a PhD at the age of 64! My thesis cites a certain Prof Trevor Hastie in the empirical section (Thanks Trev) And one of our Alex English teachers, Renee (nee Jordaan) Van Der Merwe was my editor! Wonderful working with Renee for almost a year, and chatting to Oom Flip.

Interestingly, Cecil Thompson asked me the other day: "What is it with the ministry and old Alex students? A number seem to end up in ministry!" and he listed a few. So, Class of '71 includes Cecil himself (ordained pastor in the Full Gospel church) and Gay is married to Rev Rob (Umpire Kidson) Penrith ..... mmmm closest tongue-in-cheek connection is possibly - osmosis - via WACO (Cordingly - the son of a missionary!)

'Re-tyre-meant' dawned at the end of 2018. Now more recently, January past, Cheryl and I relocated to a riverside cottage on the banks of the Keurbooms River, east of Plettenberg Bay ... 'Retired?' Eish, English has its limitations! So, maybe best said in a more descriptive language: Oom Flip se Afrikaans: .... "Ek het afgetree, maar nog nie uitgetree nie!" – as I continue to do research and writing - thanks to today's technology – for my two Alma Maters: Tuks and UNISA – which I guess will continue ... until eyes fade ... and fingers can type no more... or Microsoft Word's integrated Dictate can no longer make out what I'm croaking .....

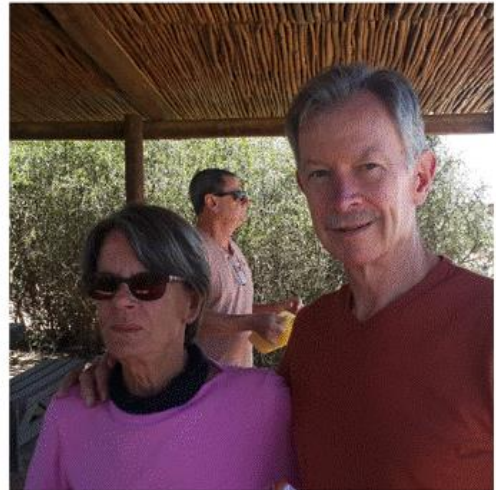
Meanwhile, stay safe, secure, and sane .... until we meet again



## Stuart Parmenter: The Paint Man



L to R – Jenny Gous and Myself, Glen Truscot and Partner



Jenny (nee Ilesley) and I, at Addo Elephant Park



**Above:** Last days of School

After harassing our English teacher in her Summerstrand flat, a crowd of us went down to the beach to celebrate.

Most of the males in this photograph would be called up for military duty soon after this. I was sent to Kimberly as was Clive Butner. Vaughn Jones arrived there some time later.



I met my wife-to-be, Jennifer Ilsley, just after finishing my stint in the army.

**Left:** Mangolds Engineering Labs

My first employment was at Mangolds Engineering in Stanford Road where I was a junior lab

assistant. I managed to convince them to send me to what was then CATE. I spent the next couple of years doing night classes there.



**Left:** Playing at the Four Winds Folk Club

On social side, I got involved with playing in small dance bands and at the local Four Winds Folk Club.

In 1975 joined Dulux Paints in Struandale as a laboratory technician. My primary role was colour development.

Dulux offered me a transfer to Pretoria to provide technical support for the car

plants (Nissan, BMW & Ford). There were new technologies being developed and I really enjoyed the activity. Jenny and I were married on 5 May 1979 prior to our move to Pretoria.

My next transfer was to Dulux Paints Head Office in Alrode, to support the collision repair (panel beater) side of the industry and run the training centre. As result of this I became very involved in developing training courses with merSETA and the Retail Motor Industry.

Around about this time, I started organising competitions at motor shows with local spraypainters. In 2013 I was sponsored by merSETA to select and prepare a young spraypainter to compete at WorldSkills, held in Leipzig, Germany. We came 8<sup>th</sup> in a pool of 25 countries.

My two daughters, Tamlyn and Megan, were born and went to school in Johannesburg. Tamlyn in 1991 and Megan in 1992.





SA Competitor putting the finishing touches to his panel

I represented South Africa as an Expert in car painting for 8 years before I handed over to my successor.

I was approached by BASF in 2000, they were doing interviews to replace their Technical Manager in the automotive paints division. Their office was in Midrand, Gauteng. I stayed with BASF for 5 years.

My next move was to 3M in Woodmead as Automotive Technical Manager. I really enjoyed 3M, they are innovative and are always looking for new ways to do things. I stayed with 3M until my retirement at the end of 2019.

My eldest daughter, Tamlyn moved to Port Elizabeth and is married with two sons. My younger daughter has moved to England and is currently living in Clapham. We sold our house in Johannesburg (during the first waves of Covid-19) and moved back to Port Elizabeth. We have been living (back) in Port Elizabeth for almost a year now.



Stuart **Above:**  
Parmenter - Megan,  
Jenny & Tamlyn



**Gay Penrith [Bailey]**



**Left:** Sonia Slement [Venter] and Gay Penrith [Bailey]

50 years ago, I was working in an IT dept! Rob and I got married two years later (48 in Sept) and we had a family of two. Our son is now a Baptist pastor in Benoni and our daughter a pharmacist lecturer at NMU. Both attended Alex. We have 5 gorgeous grandchildren. We were called into the Anglican ministry in 1984 and had two amazing years at theological college in Grahamstown. After serving in various parishes for 30 years we then relocated back to Grahamstown where Rob became the Chaplain at DSG,

and I worked at St Andrews College as PA to the Second Master.



We loved our time there in the schools and saw the wonderful educational opportunities young people have today. I wish I could have my education over!! Although we are now retired, we continue to serve the community around us. I am fortunate to have two mornings a week working as a bookkeeper for a medical aid broker. We have travelled extensively and in 2019 visited Ireland, UK, and Australia. We cannot wait for Covid to get under control so we can travel again.



## Harry Pike: The Unlikely Headmaster

Due to the family having to move from place to place through the demands of work circumstances, Alex was my 6th school enrolment when I arrived midway through Std 7 in 1968. And retrospect allows me to appreciate just how fortunate that move turned out to be! The three-and-a-half years at Alex were the happiest of my varied school experiences.

My lasting perception of Alex is that of a “happy” school, and a great mix of real “individuals” amongst the many pupils from diverse backgrounds. While due credit must be afforded “Waco”, credit should also go to his management team and to the many strong, and often colourful, characters on the school staff who, no doubt, made lasting impressions on the Alexians who passed through the school. Here I think of people like Messrs Welsh (a man for whom I developed great respect), Simms, Snyman, Ellis, Wright, Richardson, Wienand, Woollard, van der Merwe, de Lange, Parker, to name but a few.

I retired, after 40 fulfilling years in education, as headmaster of a boys’ prep school in Durban (a fact that would, no doubt, have raised a few incredulous eyebrows had some of the Alex staff been around to witness it!), choosing to follow this path due to the positive impact of some of the abovementioned on my life.



**Left:** Harry Pike with Mike Holmes on the Wild Coast in 1970.

As is the case with many of our '71-year group (some earlier than later), I have joined the Southern African diaspora and am enjoying a “late-life” adventure by settling in Bournemouth, Dorset, England.

I am so enjoying reading the contributions, from around the world, of members of the “legendary” Alex Class of '71. Thanks, once again, for setting it all off. While it is great to note the names of all who have contributed to date, it is also bitter-sweet to be reminded that some of our group are no longer with us and that we are most fortunate to still be around to enjoy this sharing.

To the “Three Musketeers” of Colin, Trevor and Gary.....pleased to see that you guys are still making your presence felt across the world. Oh for the days of the “nifty 50’s” and their buzzing

morning arrival under the trees near the hall and Gary's much-admired restoration of his red MG!

And to Rod Foster; he who lead me to Friday night youth gatherings and the games of snooker; fondly known as "RC" for the manner in which he was able to accomplish some difficult shots!



**Left:** Harry Pike circa 1974 unfettered after Alex and the SANDF

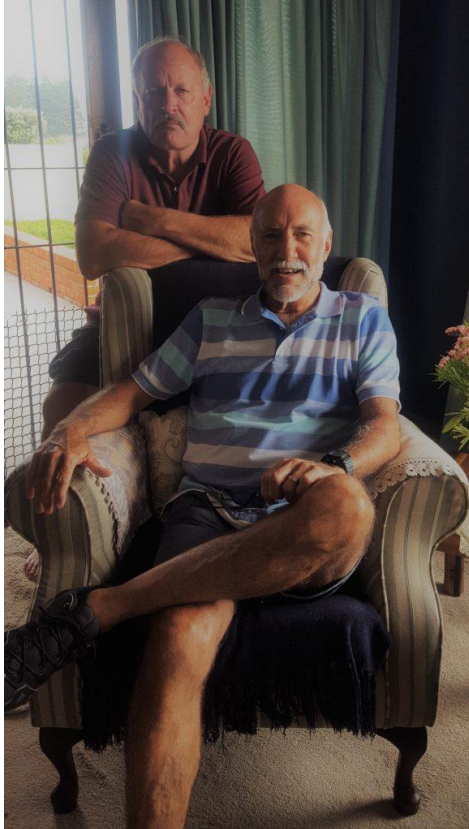
As Trevor and Anileen did with their respective visits to "Bob" Welsh, I was able to get to see Paul Ellis in 2016, another of the Alex teachers who made a strong impression on me. He arrived at Alex early in his teaching career and was there for a relatively short period of time. He was looking really well, and we were able rekindle early memories and compare notes on our experiences in the teaching profession. I count myself fortunate to have been at Alex during his brief tenure.

As for the "Then and Now" (and taking the lead from Gay) .....attached pic 1 is with Mike Holmes on the Wild Coast in 1970; pic 2 circa 1974 (and trying to keep up with you, Dean, and Colin, unfettered after Alex and the SANDF!); pic 3 is with Mike again in PE, 50 years on, in 2020 (again, with no worries about visiting a barber!).

While clearing out a collection of accumulated "stuff" before relocating to the UK late last year, I came across some material collected by my mother (she was a great family "archivist"). I have attached some of the retained material as I believe that it may be of interest to some of the '71 group. Pic 4 is a newspaper clipping, giving a brief report of the 1<sup>st</sup> XV 1971 rugby match against the school in College Drive. While one of the teams claimed that "it was just a pre-season game", the result was a noteworthy achievement, nonetheless. I seem to recall that the Alex 1<sup>st</sup> hockey teams of '70 and '71 also enjoyed their fair share of success against the same school. Pic 5 is of two pages from "Alexander the Great". What memories this conjured up! The small pen drawing is one of Mike Neff's little "masterpieces" in which he was able to capture so well, and amusingly, elements of Alex school life. Pic 6 is included for general interest.

Anecdotes in number you will, no doubt, continue to receive. A vivid and amusing recollection, and possibly at the expense of one of the aforementioned "Musketeers": Final day of matric and a group gather at the picnic grounds near Cape Recife after departure from school. There is much celebration of wide-ranging nature to mark the significant milestone, assisted by the intake of various refreshment in some cases, which carries on for much of the afternoon. Late in the afternoon a good number of those in the gathering are called to assist a fellow celebrant in his search for his much-treasured watch.





**Left:** Harry Pike with Mike Homes in PE, 50 years on, in 2020 (again, with no worries about visiting a barber)

PS: I am certain that these guys cannot be in our group. They look too old. Don't recognise them.

He is in quite a state (of disrepair?) and looking wildly around in the sea sand of the dunes while calling on "St Anthony" to assist him in his search. His antics, with his accompanying exhortations, cause much humour to those attempting to assist him. Remarkably, given the area and the circumstances under which the watch was lost, it is eventually unearthed and returned to its effusively (and amusingly) grateful owner. Hope that some of this material serves to jog memories and motivate a few more contributions to this trip down memory lane.

Hi Phil,

Thanks for sharing this pic. You guys certainly looked the part, never mind how you felt! I enjoy seeing this sort of material. It certainly helps fill a small part of the 50-year "gap" between "then and now" (how time flies!).

After completing my year at the pleasure of the SADF, I continued my pre-Alex itinerant wanderings and took off for Natal to study, only returning to PE for infrequent visits as other members of my family also moved from PE.

As mentioned in an earlier email; going through material, so carefully collected over the years by my mother, prior to my most recent move brought back so many memories of the Alex years and of the many who contributed to the enjoyment thereof.



**Left:** Harry Pike & Michael Holmes during tour arranged for us by Lions Club in 1970.

Thesens Island resounded to the sounds of Led Zeppelin with *Whole Lotta Love* and many others.

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## Sharon Rhode [Edelson]

### Here are some of my oldies:

- Matric dance with Gary!
- Our much-loved staff contingent.
- I think most of you have this one. Class of 71.
- Std. 9 dance!
- Interhouse plays – *House for Sale*, me playing an American film star with Phillip Godowa in the main role.



**Above:** Gary Ward and Sharon Edelson at Matric Dance

### More recent:

- With my son Greg and Jade, at their Wedding near Plett. in 2018
- Christmas 2020 in Cape Town with my husband, Michael, his oldest son Philipp, wife Phyllis and son Mads, Greg and Jade.
- Shovelling snow at home in March this year, we had 40 cm and temperatures of minus 8 degrees. It is quite unusual for us to have so much snow and so late in the season.

How lovely seeing all of your replies! I too have very fond memories of Alex and also of so many of my fellows and teachers. I always dreamed of becoming a vet but dear Mr. Cordingley put paid to my ambitions, when he asked how on earth I imagined that I would ever be able to dehorn a bull, considering my size and strength!

### Below a brief summary of my life after Alex

I worked in a professional stable yard in Johannesburg after leaving school and soon realised that my ability to earn a living doing what I loved most, was rather limited. I then started working in accounting as a clerk at Bristol Myers, where my boss encouraged me to study, and I began studying for my B. Com through UNISA. During my 9 years at Bristol, I moved up to head of Accounting and then to the IT department and received training in programming and systems



design at IBM, which is where I met my first husband Matthew Walsh. We were married in 1982 and Matthew was transferred to Bloemfontein.



Our son Greg was born in 1984 in Bloemfontein, and I graduated with a B. Com. in Accounting and Business Economics. We returned to Johannesburg in 1986 and Matthew and I separated after a year in Johannesburg, after which a divorce sadly followed. I continued working as a contract systems analyst in Johannesburg and whilst contracting back to Bristol Myers, my good friend and associate Kathy Green and I decided to open our own consultancy. We ran a successful consultancy, Walsh Green and Associates for 22 years implementing ERP systems in various medium to large enterprises.

Meanwhile my love of horses and dressage took me down the path of becoming a dressage judge. In



2005 I embarked on my international judging career and a qualified FEI 4-star judge and still judging internationally. My judging has taken me to many different countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia/New Zealand. Whilst attending the World Equestrian Championships in Aachen in 2006, I was seated, quite by chance, next to the man who was to become my second husband, Michael Rhode. Michael is a top amateur Grand Prix dressage rider and also a businessman. We were married a year later in 2007 and we live in Germany, in the beautiful forest area, near a small village called Oer-Erkenschwick and yes, I am now also fluent in German.

I started learning German 6 months before I left SA. I sort of did a turbo course. It wasn't easy learning German with all of the tenses and articles and absolutely no logic behind the articles. Very few

people spoke English in our town and so it was a bit difficult at the beginning, but I was fairly fluent after a short while and I manage all of the accounting and salaries etc. in German. We are not retiring any time soon but being self-employed we can pick and choose when we want to travel (Covid allowing).

We run our property business from home and still have some dressage horses at home. My son Greg married PE show jumper and triathlete Jade Hooke in 2018 and they currently live in PE, where she still has her stable yard. I was lucky to be able to travel to PE in March/April for a month, to enjoy the birth of my first grandchild Jennifer Jade Walsh. My brother Ivan Edelson, also ex Alex (Matric year 1968) still lives in PE, he is a sworn valuator and an ordained Anglican priest at St. Cuthbert's.



Bobby Welsh was also a firm favourite of mine and left an indelible impression on me. His teaching methods surpassed those of any of other teachers, he had a way of commanding respect without really trying and I remembered everything he told us in class so well that studying for exams became virtually unnecessary.

Mr. Wright sadly didn't bring out the best in me, I found his lessons rather boring (perhaps the subject matter didn't interest me enough) and I switched to Bookkeeping in Std. 9. Some of his nicknames I remember were, Baldibus or Wrightibus and someone once wrote on his board, *'this class is like a Model T- Ford with filled with nuts and screws and a crank in the front.'*

I remember the housewifery course in Std. 6 with Mrs. Maggs very well and how we had to split one egg into two for the scone recipe. An incredibly difficult task which doomed most of us to failure.

I also remember Flippie on his back demonstrating how to change a nappy and also how he demonstratively grabbed his crotch one day whilst explaining the meaning of the word kruis, which can be translated as a cross and also a crotch.



I also remember being infatuated with Mr. Ellis. He too was a gifted teacher and made English come alive for me. I remember punching Arnold Viviers in Mrs. Bowls biology class because he kept teasing me and calling me Sharry the Shark! I got sent to Mr. Cordingley, who told me in no uncertain terms that young ladies do not punch boys! On another occasion I was rather bored during English class and kept twanging my plastic ruler, this earned me an English essay as punishment. I wrote an excellent essay that seemed to please Mr. Ellis's replacement (I forget her name) until the last sentence which read, 'All teachers are dirty sods.' (I didn't really mean it; I was just angry that I had to write a long essay on why I twang my plastic ruler) so I was off to Winston again for a very stern dressing down and a forced apologise to all of the teachers during their tea break!

Does anyone remember Jimmy holding Titch upside down in Miss Chilcott's class and banging Titch's head on the floor? I don't remember why Jimmy did it, but I remember them both being sent to Wacko. Funny how these memories all come flooding back.

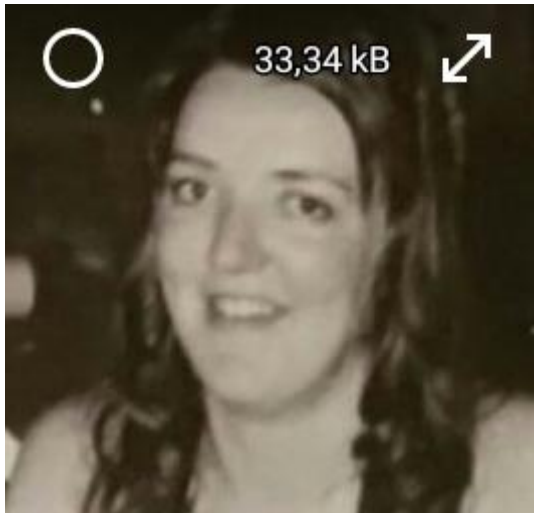


Back row, left to right: Cricket pro, Piet Snyman, Braam Brink, Mr Hiscock Caretaker, Renee Jordan, Robert Parker, Mr Jones (I think - briefly taught Maths), Flip, Dennis Woolard.

Middle row, left to right: Lisa Haus, Christel Botha, Annemarie Belge, Helen Simmonds, Tuck shop lady – Mrs van Hysteen, Denise Zietsman, Johanna van Rooyen, Unknown lady, Blanche Workman, Kathy Sutton, Maureen Matthews.

Front row, left to right: Louis de Lange, Rita Wienand, Robin Wright, Peggy Maggs, Tony Simms, WAC, Bob Welsh, Joan Dickason, Jannie Fourie, Paul Ellis.

## Pauline Rowe [Grant]



I married Colin Rowe in 1975 and moved to Cape Town, where we have been ever since. I started work at SAIMR and studied medical technology specializing in cytology through the Technikon and relocated to Groote Schuur where I completed my studies. I then joined a private practice and retired 2 years ago. I actually still do slides on a smaller scale as I have my own practice.

In between I had 2 boys born 1982 and 1984 and now have 2 grandchildren both of whom are also boys. I must say that I feel like I have spent my life putting the toilet seat down!

I have also travelled internationally quite extensively but as a tourist. Colin and I are contemplating "being swallows" between UK and Cape Town in the future.



School, what can I say! I hated it! Coming from England, I found it very militaristic, strict and behind the times hence was very anti-establishment. There were several teachers that I think back of with some fondness: Mr Welsh, Mr. Fourie and Mr. Wright. Mrs Sutton was always very kind as well. As for the rest, they needed to be put out to pasture and leave the Victorian times behind! That having been said I do have a lot of memories of laughter and shenanigans in and out of the classroom.

When pressed for comment on these shenanigans, Pauline refused to elaborate.



## Margie Rudman [Portman]

After leaving Alex in 1971, I did a Chemical Technicians course at CATE (now Technikon) and worked in a pharmaceutical lab and later in the GM labs. I got married to Rob Rudman (our dating started way back in Std 7!) at a whole 21 years old, had 3 children and am now a granny to 5. We are now in our 47th year of marriage.

After a teaching stint at Alex spanning nearly 20 years and then retiring for 10, I started helping out at Alex at reception, where a year later I now find myself permanently ensconced and very happily so! So I can say my life has really revolved around this Alma Mater of ours, be it **very** different from our days here – can't wait to show those of you who will be at our reunion.

During the years of raising our children, I continued to play a little tennis here and there at a very social level and trained with the masters swimming team to try and keep fit.

My retirement gift to myself was a



Mediterranean cruise, and we have visited a few countries and travelled SA extensively. I attach a "then" and "now" photo. The "then" taken on the Alex tennis courts in my matric year (I battled to find a school photo!) and "now" was taken officiating at a mountain biking event, a sport in which I became involved in at an administrative level. This led me to visiting another three overseas countries as the manager of our SA Team participating in the World Champs in the early 90's when I was much younger!

## Margie Saunders [McAll]: The Awesome Athlete



**Above:** Alex tennis tour in 1970

My years immediately post '71 were somewhat "fragmented" for a few reasons: my early marriage at the age of 20 (eish!) then moving to Gauteng with my husband, and then the birth of my two daughters in 1975 and 1977. Consequently my B. Pharm studies before, after and during these milestones were equally fragmented.





**Before:** Mother and daughter run on the lighthouse trail

Sadly, I was divorced when my girls were very young (2 years and 6 months respectively) and, since it was no longer tenable to work in my husband's pharmacy (and retail pharmacy is so repetitive and boring), I began my 20 year-long career in the pharmaceutical industry. My special interest was in Research and Development, implementation and monitoring of local drug trials and training pharmaceutical reps on new products. I then "moved on" to the medical scheme

administration world where my key responsibilities included, inter alia: Clinical Risk Management (especially specialist referrals and patterns); establishing a Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM) department and developing a drug formulary; setting up and managing scheme-owned medical centres around the country. After nearly 11 very rewarding years, I was approached by a national hospital group to run their emergency medicine department that managed approximately 25 medical schemes' emergency medicine benefits (both locally and internationally). I was persuaded to stay on after retirement age to project manage the set-up of Discovery's Health's international emergency benefit.



**Above:** Where we retired in 2017

Having remarried in 1989 (Brian was my running training partner for many years) and, having resided in PE for most of my career but travelled to Gauteng many weeks each month, we decided in 2017 to sell our home in Summerstrand and build our retirement home in Cape St Francis (luckily our "laatlammetjie" son is an architect). After nearly four years here, I still need to pinch myself when

running around the lighthouse and Seal Point and back home along the beach (all you surfers eat your hearts out).



**Left:** My son aka Brian Junior

(Dean – this is for you - please remember that you told me not to hold back). Whilst I enjoyed sport at school, I did very little post-matric – mainly recreational tennis and squash. In my early thirties I returned to competitive swimming and competed at SA Masters (6 gold medals and 4 SA age group records). I then decided that I would like to participate in triathlons but needed to learn to run. To cut a long story short, I started with a half marathon (21.1km) and then found myself in an EP team and from then on running dominated my sport for many years. My key running achievements were: a national ranking for marathon in my forties (2:58), my two Comrades (both silver medals / top 10 SA ladies), age group wins at SA champs (all distances) and Two Oceans (56km and 21.1km), SA 60+ age group records (15km – 64.01, 21.1km – 1:30, 42.2km - 3:15) and a 60+ world best for 30km (2:20).



En route to my World best 60+ 30km

Somewhere in between all this I (eventually) started doing triathlons and, whilst cycling is definitely my weakest discipline, managed to win two age group half Ironman events and win a gold medal at world triathlon champs. My favourite multi-disciplinary event is a run-swim-run event (yay no cycling handicap) and I was fortunate to participate in and win a few world champs events.





My eldest daughter and eldest grandson in Vanuatu

A “minor” hiccup” during my competitive years was being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000, but I was fortunate that my fitness and general health helped me through 6 months of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. It took a few years to get back to my pre CA fitness, but given that my running has always been my stress reliever, it helped me through a challenging period.



Above: 2013 World Triathlon Championships



**Left** With my youngest daughter and oldest grandchild in Dublin

For those of you that have been to Cape St Francis, you will know that our roads are not conducive to road bikes and I now only mountain bike (albeit that it is not my first love) in between running and swimming. My husband and I are fortunate to be able to train with a masters swimming group in our local pool and in the canals and of course Seal Point beach is on our doorstep. We have been privileged to complete two 12 to 14km swims in the Kromme River together with local and other Eastern Cape swimmers.



**Above:** Brian and I after a long swim in the canals



## Sonia Slement [Venter]

After leaving our Alma Mater I did a Private Secretaries (as it was called back in the day) stint at CATE (a.k.a Technikon, a.k.a. NMU) got a job and saved for a dream trip which was realised in 1976 in the form of a Contiki camping tour around Europe. We then hired a car and explored the length and breadth of the UK before returning to PE to settle down for a while! We had two beautiful



daughters who both inherited our love of travel and duly spread their wings immediately after graduating from NMU and Technikon. Basing themselves in London they worked and travelled far and wide. They both married local PE (Gqeberha!) boys and went on to bless us with a tribe of six of the best grandchildren. Over the years we visited and travelled with them around the UK including Scotland and Ireland. As our older daughter has been based in Singapore for a few years now, we've popped over to explore Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia on various visits to them.

Between overseas visits, my hubby and I made the most of the great South African outdoors embarking on many beautiful hiking trails in and around the Eastern and Western Cape.



On the grindstone front, my last job was at the CSIR where I worked for 25 years, mostly as a PA but also fulfilling a few other roles along the way and was fortunate enough to be afforded the privilege of travelling nationally and even internationally on a couple of occasions. I loved working in that exciting environment but when retirement day arrived in 2014, I embraced it! After retirement I did some invigilating and assisted in typing up a section of a doctoral student's thesis. Currently an avid gardener, while desperately waiting for soil-embedded fingernails to morph into those elusive green fingers I also enjoy doing some needlework and reading.

## Sandy Solarsh [Cohen]



I studied Graphic Art after school. I then embarked on a yearlong working holiday, it was 80c to the dollar, I went with a friend. We first worked on a kibbutz in Israel for 3 months & then went backpacking through Europe, Scandinavia & Britain. It was such a life changing experience for me, from little old PE.

**Left:** A recent photo when Marc & I went fishing, on the last long weekend. Not a fish in sight but a rare fun day off for us.

On my return I went to Jhb & married with three children. I was a sales rep

for many years selling corporate stationery. I have two grandchildren; one lives in New Zealand. My husband passed away in 2016 & I am now remarried & we have our own business in Jhb. I live a very busy life, working in our business, having my one daughter in Jhb who just got married & my other daughter devastatingly passed away from an aneurism at the age of 29 yrs. in 2015 but I have a gorgeous granddaughter from her who is turning 12 years old soon. My son is married & lives extremely well & happily in New Zealand.



### Ralph Tarr

My fellow classmates

Fifty years down the drag and we all have a story or two to tell. So interesting to read what you have achieved and been up to. Wow!

After school, first call was the army and after the spoon test, I asked, like Colin, to go to the Navy so they sent me to Middelburg in the Transvaal. Take all your sports gear they said it'll be fun they said. So armed with 3 javelins I caught the train to an unknown destination. In those days the Weermag was like an extra province and if you were any good and worth a place in the team, there was plenty of time to play and practice. Every interprovincial athletics meeting I got my call up to "gooi the spies" and they put you on the train to compete. In those days you got a free ride as long as you were in your uniform.



**Above:** Brothers Tarr (R to L) Big Tarr (Bruce) Little Tarr (Ralph) Scruffy (Ray) Baby Tarr (Neville)

Must have been a real sight to see a soldier going to war with a few spears but at least never got robbed or mugged. Having completed my year, I joined the PE Municipality as a computer operator that involved night shifts so enrolled to study towards a BA at UPE but after 2 years, it didn't work out for me so joined Ford Motor Company in the Service Development Department as a writer of service bulletins for the dealer network. That was the stepping stone to an incredible 16-year journey with Ford and spent time in various departments understanding the ins and outs of how the company ticked over.

Ford has some extremely well-developed systems that have been copied by most motor manufactures so got a solid grounding to business in the motor trade. In fact, GM was often referred to as the "Ford old boys club". Sanctions started to take their toll on Ford and while working as a buyer in procurement, we were tasked to increase the local content within the manufacturing sector. Regular meetings were had with the directors and heads of departments where we had to report back on progress of components, we were responsible for. These meetings were known by us buyers as "Lies and Alibies" There was huge pressure to meet production deadlines and sometimes had to bend the

truth to satisfy those concerned that all was under control. This often led to some highly creative persuasive measures to be able to get the suppliers to fulfil the promises we made on their behalf!!



**Above:** Lynne and I visiting the kids

Fun times indeed.

My last position at Ford was District Sales Manager (subsidised tourists as we were called) which meant having to visit dealers and assist with them achieving their sales objectives etc. During this time, I travelled the length and breadth of the country and beyond.

The Ford dealer in Gaborone Botswana persuaded me to

join them as Sales Manager and enjoyed some incredible success breaking sales records which some of the bigger metro Dealers could not match. As a result, was fortunate enough earn travel awards that allowed me to see many parts of the world. Again, as a subsidised tourist.



**Left:** Sharing a Milk shake with Charlotte

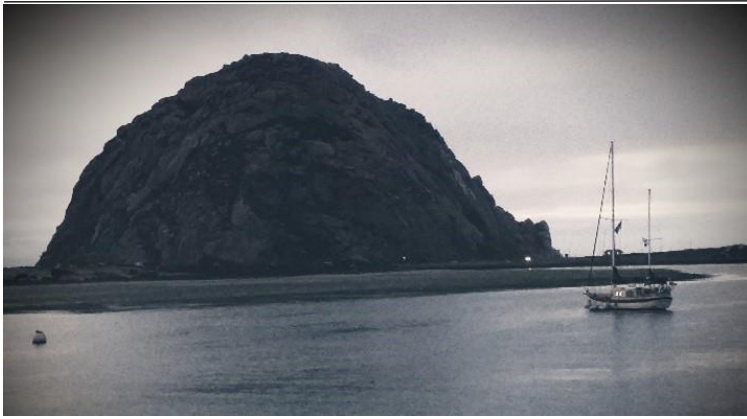
I was eventually promoted to Dealer Principal. 11 years later and after a slump in the market, my contract with Barloworld came to an end and decided to return to South Africa.

We had a holiday home in Sedgefield at the time so moved there and as luck would have it, Honda had an opening in George so applied for the franchise. Soon after, we opened the doors for business. Again, fun times, a

big successes and was back in travel mode. This time eastwards to Japan.

Six years later we sold the business and was approached by the Ford Dealer to manage their sales team. It was here at age 63, I was sent to pasture so went “farming” to a place called Vanwyksdorp which is not in the middle of nowhere, it’s in the middle of the middle of nowhere in the Little Karoo. Here we build a huge shed with a massive fireplace with the idea of starting a mountain bike retreat. That turned out to be a bit of a damp squib so sold everything and moved to southern California in a bid to settle there and start a business. Sadly, this did not materialise, so we bought a Cadillac and toured the west coast for a while, mountain biked in Oregon and then came home to settle in Bathurst. Full circle 1820.





**Above:** Morro bay on the Californian west coast

Sport has always played a key part of my life and fondly remember school rugby matches with the likes of my Dad, Harry Pike and Mike Holmes' dads amongst others, following the play along the touchline with my dad asking for "more fire Alex" at line outs.



**Above:** Lynne and our tourer in the USA



**Left:** Fishing on the golf course dam in Tehachapi

My javelin throwing came to an abrupt end after a nasty fall on my dirt bike and tore ligaments in my throwing arm shoulder.

After playing a little hockey at school I later joined up with Cecil Thompson and Theo Smith at Ramblers hockey club and then got persuaded to join Old Grey to be their goalkeeper for the first side. I managed to be selected to play for EP a few times and when we relocated to Pretoria played for Harlequins club and Northern Transvaal. My last Interprovincial game was at age 39 and had to contend with Jonty Rhodes who played striker for Natal at the time!



**Left:** The Tequila Shed in Vanwyksdorp

After that my nickname changed from Mad Max to Sieve.

As age crept up, and the knees were taking strain, I started losing money playing golf and fishing became angling with no returns so turned to mountain biking and still

at it. Love being out in the country and prefer the more endurance side of the sport. I have 10 Cape cycle tours (Argus) under the belt and 8 years ago had a knee replacement which has had no limitations on distance or performance.



**Left:** A banana moment on an outride in the bosveld

I'm still 78 kgs of quivering passion.

I have 2 boys, Brendon and Jason from my first marriage. They both live in Pretoria where Brendon is a sports administrator and coach for a private school. He also coaches hockey privately.

Jason has a Master's degree in wildlife management and has his own business that specialises in tracking for anti-poaching operations and wildlife preservation.

Remarried now for 23 years, Lynne has 2 children Lauren and Sheldon. Lauren lives in JHB running a highly successful pet business and Sheldon is teaching in Hong Kong.

Between us, we have 6 grandchildren who bring us much joy and are truly blessed to have them in our lives.

Lynne and I have been intrepid adventurers, loving life and scheming our next move but you'll have to read my book!

Cross on the Green

Ralph



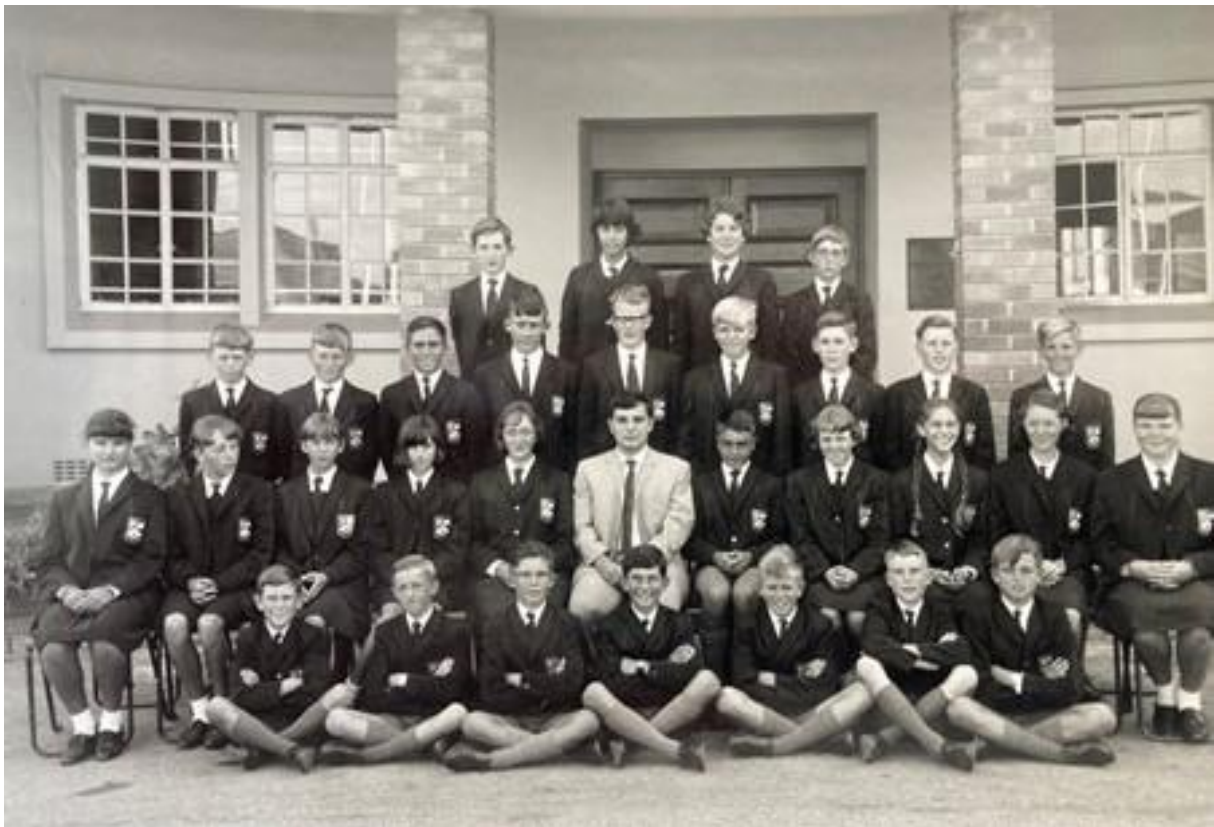
## Nicolas von Ruben



**Left:** Nicolas von Ruben-My first day at school. Notice how empty Cotswold ext. was

It is really interesting reading how we have all navigated life after Alex. It has made me review my path, mostly spent abroad. The challenge I found was keeping it short. But first my recollection of Waco: Teachers sometimes “referred” me to the headmaster for rule infringements. He would always give me the opportunity to defend myself and I did, on rare occasion, manage to talk myself out of a caning.

He took us for religious Instruction and insisted that I go to his office to remind him. Sometimes, when I arrived he went straight to his windowsill to select a cane. I think he knew I was there to fetch him for the lesson but just wanted to wind me up.



Standard Six

I really enjoyed school but was not that focused on academic achievement. As a result, I did not get a university pass. After my military service I was fortunate to be employed by Murray and Steward and

was sponsored to study for a NHD, Civil Engineering, which was undertaken in three-month block releases from work. Iain Watson and I were together in some of those blocks. We had spent most of our school years in the same class. During this time and after finishing college I worked on projects such as the elevated freeway over Strand Street, the land reclaimed container berth in PE harbour, the hydroelectric power station at the Gariep dam, the bridge over the Kromme river to Cape St Francis and construction of the Transkei University.

The year 1979 was a time of change as I got married and we went to England for me to go to university. I graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Civil Engineering. We remained in England until 1989 when we divorced, and my wife returned to PE. We were living in Cornwall, and I remained, working as a Contracts' Manager responsible for construction projects in south west England. In this time, I also converted a stone barn in Cornwall into a home.



**Left:** Nico with his Alfa Giulia Sprint circa 1974

Another seismic shift came in 1994 when I went to work for the United Nations Peacekeeping Department in the former Yugoslavia, as an engineer building camps for the military peacekeepers and refurbishing buildings for the Mission's political operations. I was transferred from there to set up the Security Council mandated mission in Haiti, after which I was transferred to the Mission in southern Lebanon (I lived in

northern Israel as southern Lebanon was a conflict zone). It was in Lebanon that I met my wife, Adriana. She was in the Polish military contingent on a one year assignment. From Lebanon I went to the logistics base in Brindisi, Italy. All these posts were as an engineer. At this point I returned to Lebanon, on promotion to chief of logistics, which included engineering. During this time the Israeli Defence Force withdrew from southern Lebanon and we relocated from Israel to Southern Lebanon. Adriana and baby Sophie could not accompany me as southern Lebanon was (and still is) a conflict zone. She moved to our home in France. I then went to the Democratic Republic of Congo and then on to New York to take up the post of Chief Engineer for global peacekeeping operations. We sold in France and moved to New York. This was the last time that I could have my family with me. I was then sent, on promotion, as the chief of logistic to the Mission in Sudan. My family went to Port Elisabeth and we bought a home. I was redeployed back to New York to be the Chief of Staff to the Under Secretary General for the newly established Department of Mission Support. We travelled extensively going to and meeting senior government officials of member states as well as NATO. After this I took up a post as the Chief of Mission Support in Cyprus, providing administrative and logistic support to the Mission. However, I spent a lot of time away on assignment to Darfur in Sudan, assisting with the expansion of that Mission. From there I returned to Sudan as the Director of Mission Support, where we provided logistical support to the referendum that resulted in the south seceding from the north. With a new country of South Sudan the Security Council mandated a new mission to support that government and I was appointed the Director of Mission Support. Throughout my 22 year career with the UN I



undertook short assignments to many other missions including Western Sahara, Gaza, Jerusalem, Damascus, Liberia, Baghdad, Afghanistan and Mogadishu to name a few. My last appointment, in recognition of doing the hardship missions, was as the Director of the Global Service Centre in Brindisi, Italy, which had by this time expanded, providing logistics support to global peacekeeping operations as well as communications and IT support to the UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes. There is a backup, mirror-image, IT facility in Valencia, Spain, for which I was also responsible. I travelled regularly to Rome and Madrid to meet with Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials.

I retired in 2015 and returned to PE after a 37-year absence. I continued my service with the UN as a consultant mentor to a Senior Management training programme, travelling to Brindisi three times a year until 2019, by which time I was also working as a consultant project manager for the World Bank traveling regularly to Juba, South Sudan. This commitment with the World Bank continues, mostly with work from home. I have just accepted another World Bank assignment in Pretoria, after which I think I will really retire.



**Above:** Nicolas with the women in his life: Amy, Adriana and Sophie

Working in conflict zones does not offer much opportunity to participate in sport. I did manage to run within the camps where we lived. In New York I joined the NY Road Runners Club and ran the Five Boroughs half marathon series. Since returning to SA I have taken up cycling again and sometimes enter the odd race. I have switched my focus from road cycling to gravel bikes. Adriana and I have two daughters; Sophie is in her second year at Stellenbosch University and Amy who is in matric (I'm a bit of a late starter).

## Gary "Gaz" Ward



**Left:** Gary at Kings Beach in 73

After leaving school I did what all young blokes at that time had to do, spend a year doing military service—basic training in Potchef-stroom and the rest in Rundu at the western end of the Caprivi Strip. The following year, 1973, I started Uni at Rhodes. This is where I was blessed to meet the loveliest lady on the planet. We married in 1977 while still at Rhodes, and are married still, 44 years on. At the end of 1977 we moved to Durban where we had both secured lecturing positions at the University of Durban-Westville. We spent two great years in Durban and then migrated to Australia in December 1979.

We spent the first seven years in Australia living in North Queensland. We both furthered our post-grad studies at James Cook University in Townsville. I completed my PhD and worked in academia while Mary went into teaching. This period also gave us the opportunity to do much 4WD driving and exploring

in the northern and central Australian outback in our free time.

In 1987 we moved down south to experience “the big smoke” of Melbourne – and cooler weather – which was a big change from the tropical north. Melbourne has amazing pubs, restaurants and attractions and we enjoyed visiting many of them, and again took advantage of our time there to discover the wonderful flora and fauna of the Victorian countryside.

However, the weather proved to be cold and unpredictable, so at the end of 87 we packed up once more and moved back to sunny Queensland, but to Brisbane, which lies just north of the NSW border – 1000Kms north of Sydney and 1350kms south of Townsville (that’s the geography instilled in me by Bob Welsh coming to the fore !!!).

After a few years with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, I joined the Queensland Government’s Treasury Department in an office that specialised in government statistics. By the late 90’s I was running the office as the Queensland Government Statistician. Around 2005 I joined Treasury’s executive management group, with responsibility for a handful of portfolios (including Federal Financial Relations, Deregulation, Macro and Microeconomics, and the Office of the Government Statistician) and worked happily in that capacity until I retired in 2014 at age 61.

Whilst I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Treasury – the work was varied and extremely interesting – I love being retired. I get to play golf as often as I wish!!! Also, we are now able to travel when we wish, both abroad and at home. Mary and I share a great love for Australia’s beautiful beaches and the



outback, and we try to get out to enjoy them as often as we can. My mother still lives in George, and we have been back to SA quite a few times in recent years to visit her and old friends. I've attached a "then" photo taken at Kings Beach in (I think) 1973, and two "now" photos, taken quite recently.

And herewith a little response to some wonderful memories so amazingly remembered and kindly shared by Harry Pike.



My goodness, Harry, you have a memory like a steel trap!!! How on earth do you remember all this stuff from so long ago? I have to say I'm in awe of not only you, but also many others who seem to remember so much from the old days. Please keep the anecdotes coming, it makes for great reading.



**Left:** Gary Ward in 2021

You are quite correct – buzzing to and from school on our little 50cc bikes was great fun, as were my early experiences with the MGA. It's amazing that you remembered!! And yes, I did love that car. It was a great little sports car and great fun to drive. And more so knowing that my father and I had restored it, literally, from parts. When my father bought the car, it was being used as a chicken coop in a back paddock somewhere in PE.

The motor and transmission and other assorted bits were packed away in boxes, and by the time we got it, all the wiring had deteriorated very badly. So, you could say we restored it from scratch.

I drove it while at university and also the two years following (78 and 79) when my wife and I and I took it to Durban where we had been offered lecturing positions at the University of Durban- Westville. Sadly, we had to sell it at the end of 79, just before we hopped on a plane to migrate to Australia.



I have attached the very last picture I have of it, taken in Durban at the end of 79. We bought two more MGs. A MGB in 1988 when we moved to Brisbane and a MGF in 2009. Mary always wanted another MG, so she got to drive both of these on a daily basis. Sadly, they don't make MG sports cars anymore. The modern MGs are pretty bland and are difficult to differentiate from all the other 4 door sedans on the road. It's a great shame.

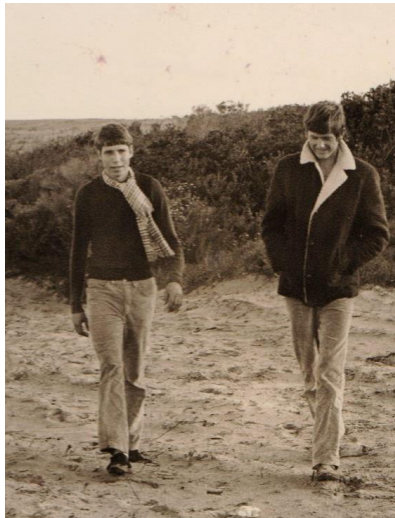


**Left: Hockey team**

You also made reference to the school hockey team. I have a few photos of my time at Alex, including this one, the second of the two attachments to this email, which shows the Alex 1<sup>st</sup> hockey team – either 70 or 71.

Thanks again Harry and everyone else who has sent in stories

of our time at Alex. The time that you all have taken to do so is greatly appreciated.





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## Iain Watson

For the record, on my many visits to WACO's office there was NEVER any tapping of sticks on tables!!!! My butt had blue strips on it for weeks after each appointment.  
Military training 1972 – enough said.

Joined Dorman Long (PE) as a learner draughtsman in 1973, during this period I met Janet Webster (Commercial High), we were married in 1976. Reception at the Hunters Retreat Hotel. Nico von Ruben was my best man. I met up with Nico in PE about 2 years ago and we had a catch up, over a bottle of wine, on our careers and cycling exploits both then and now.

In 1978 I obtained a NHD Civil Engineering from PE Technikon, it was known as CATE back then (College for Advanced Technical Education) and I ventured into the world of Consulting Engineering working for small consulting practices in PE.



In 1993 I was approached by a company called Knight Piesold Consulting and asked if I would be interested in establishing a regional office in KwaZulu Natal. We have been in KZN ever since, initially in Pietermaritzburg and currently in Hillcrest outside Durban.

**Left:** Janet and I ..... a long, long time ago .....

We have two wonderful daughters Megan and Sarah and 4

Grandchildren all of whom live in Hillcrest .... we are blessed to have them so close.

All of the above appears to be rather mundane however..... In 2006 I was approached by Thames Water London to lead an investigation into the cause of a tunnel failure on one off their many water reticulation tunnels. After much debate I resigned from Knight Piesold and we headed for London. Having established the cause of failure, the team was tasked with establishing repair and preventative solutions for the long-term future of the system. In amongst all of this we found the time to travel around the UK and Europe extensively, and have some wonderful memories.

However, in 2009 Sarah, our youngest daughter, announced that she was expecting her second child and that she wanted Mom to be present. After much debate I informed Thames Water that we would be heading back to SA toward the end of 2009.

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I then phoned the MD of Knight Piesold, cap in hand, asking for a job. I was pleasantly surprised to be reinstated to my previous position and appointed to the Board. I am a firm believer that things happen for a reason. Needless to say, we settled back into life in SA and little Erin arrived to be greeted by her grandmother. Company policy is that Directors must retire at age 63, which I did after signing an agreement to complete outstanding projects over the next 4 years. This period has elapsed, and I am RETIRED. To keep fit I am into Mountain biking, those of you that are mountain bikers will have heard of Giba Gorge, Shongweni trails, Karkloof trails etc. etc. These are all on our doorstep and if ever you are in the area, please contact me and we can organise a ride.

**Left:** Phinda January 2021  
.... ready for game drive



## Phillip Williams

I have been swimming upstream most of my career & mostly in global corporates. After a wasted



year of compulsory military service in Potch & Rundu in then SWA, I moved to Grahamstown to do a B. Com at Rhodes, majoring in Economics & Business Administration. On completion, I joined Ford as a graduate trainee in Supply Chain Management.

**Left:** Gary & Phil playing in front of a few hundred students at 1 of the Rhodes Folk festivals. While we may look confident; pretty terrifying to say the least.

In 1980, I moved to Cape Town to join Atlantis Diesel Engines (a joint venture with Daimler Benz & Perkins Engines). After 5 years there, I did an MBA part time at Stellenbosch Business School & on completion, moved on to BP as their Procurement Manager. They were very happy years surviving a good few retrenchments as transformation evolved. In 2009, BP followed Shell & moved their HO to Johannesburg. As this was never on my game plan, I opted for an early retirement at age 55. Fortunately for me, PetroSA (previously Mossgas) were setting up a Strategic Procurement sector in their Cape Town head office & I joined them on a 2-year contract. 2 years became 6 & when the gas reserves off Mossel Bay started to run out, it was time for me to retire.

While our plan was always to find a comfortable & affordable gated estate in Cape Town, we never did. My wife inherited a holiday home from her parents in Natures Valley where we always enjoyed visiting. By chance, I saw an ad for Knysna Lifestyle Estate which ticked all the boxes. So, we had a home built & moved to paradise 2 years ago & are loving life in the Garden route.

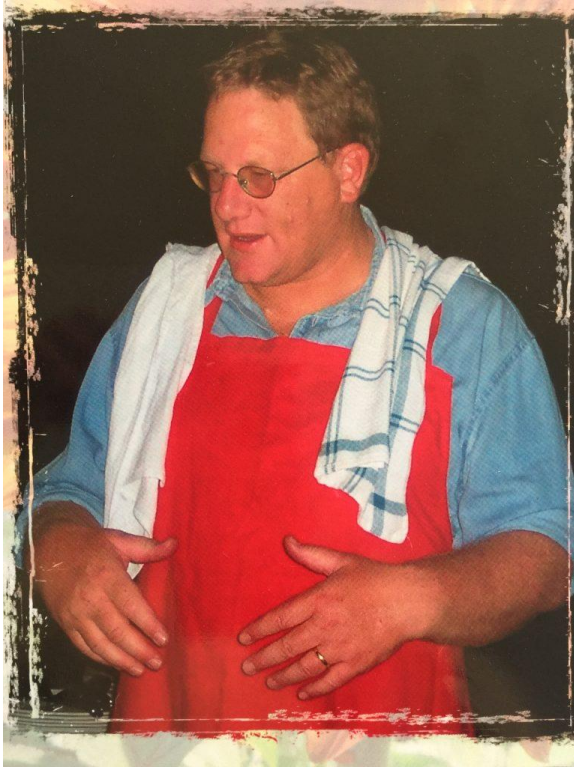


**Left:** Phil back in 71 **Below:** Phil with hat courtesy of Bheki Cele



## Allan Zeiss

This information has been supplied by Margie Saunders [McAll]: *Since I now reside in Cape St Francis close to Allan's widow Santa, who lives in St Francis Bay, I committed to establishing a few details of Allan's life. Allan obtained a law degree as well as his Masters at UPE. He worked at the Port Elizabeth Metro for 21 years and then at Coega (CDC) for 10 years. He died in June 2012 after a short illness. May he rest in peace.*



**Above:** Allan Zeiss at his graduation



**Above:** Allan Zeiss in later life

**Comment by Rod Forster:** I would just like to add a small snippet reflecting on Allan's father Bob. During my school years at Alex, whilst our family was going through some personal difficulties, I will never forget the amazing kindness shown to our family by Allan's dad Bob. He went about it in a very humble and caring way. Would just like his family to know how immensely that it was appreciated.



# Highlights and lowlights of 1971

## The Best at Circuit Training

Unlike gym which I hated fervently because I had no skill at all and embarrassed myself on the horse and the crossbars, the Circuit Training set me a challenge: I would beat it. At the end of the year, Robert Packer announced those boys who had performed the best during the year. Hearty congratulations on the top three positions:

1. Derek Openshaw
2. Karl Els
3. Mike Holmes



**Above:** Circuit Race winners in 1971 per standard. Back row L-R: Standard six: Unknown, Standard 8: Trevor Smith (?), Standard nine: Theo Smith – Not related to Trevor Smith; Standard seven: Michael Bosch. Front row: Standard Ten: Derek Openshaw.

### The true position as per Derek Openshaw

*"Technically what I stated about the fastest in the circuit race is correct if only the Std. 10s are taken into account. There is a larger narrative that reveals the truth! The lower standards had 'run their gauntlet' the previous day and the back row of the pic above was semi-sorted. In other words, the fastest std. 6 was the slowest standard. On the following day, the Std 9s and Std 10s had to complete the circuit race. The first two of the Std. 10s viz Derek and Karl timed under the so called school record that morning but in the Std 9 finals, Theo Smith (Std 9) shaved a few seconds off the "new 2 hour old record" which Derek and Karl had just set. In conclusion, Theo was the person who had 'performed the best' and should have sat in the front row ...."*


## The Matrics Hit Parade

**The Matrics of 1971**

**HIT PARADE** (from *Alexander the Great*, 23rd June, 1971.)

<p><b>10A.</b></p> <p>C. Addison: <i>Chirpie, Chirpie, Cheep Cheep</i>  M. Baker: <i>Good Vibrations</i>  A. Begbie: <i>Love Grows</i>  D. Brnic: <i>Push-bike Song</i>  A. Bulmer: <i>I'm the Urban Spaceman</i>  J. Davidson: <i>Silence is Golden</i>  S. Edelson: <i>How Much is that Doggy in the Window?</i>  A. Fanaroff: <i>Bridgette the Midgette</i>  A. Fick: <i>Amazing Grace</i>  R. Foster: <i>Pinball Wizard</i>  P. Fourie: <i>Red River Rock</i>  P. Godawa: <i>There's No Business Like Show Business</i>  P. Grant: <i>Hold on to what You've got</i>  G. Harding: <i>Mac the Knife</i>  T. Hastie: <i>We Can Work It Out</i>  K. Lang: <i>You Can Cry if You Want</i>  K. Liston: <i>The Boxer</i>  D. McClelland: <i>Nursery Rhymes</i>  A. Milne: <i>Ha Ha, Said the Clown</i>  J. Nortjé: <i>She's a Lady</i>  H. Pike: <i>The Laughing Policeman</i>  M. Portman: <i>She's a lady</i>  G. Ward: <i>Surfin' U.S.A.</i>  P. Williams: <i>Walk Tall</i>  A. Zeiss: <i>Vat Hom Dawie</i></p>	<p><b>10B.</b></p> <p>T. Benjamin: <i>These Boots Were Made for Walking</i>  P. Bester: <i>Yellow Bird</i>  G. Botha: <i>Bottle of Wine</i>  L. Brock: <i>Jimmy Come Lately</i>  C. Buttner: <i>Show Me the Way Home</i>  C. Buxton: <i>Push-bike Song</i>  V. Cory: <i>Into the Fire</i>  R. du Toit: <i>I am a Rock</i>  K. Els: <i>Paint Me a Picture</i>  L. Futter: <i>Those Were the Days</i>  J. Gous: <i>Little Red Donkey (on Wheels)</i>  M. Holmes: <i>Whiter Shade of Pale</i>  V. Jones: <i>Gimme Gimme Good Loving</i>  M. McCall: <i>Walk Tall</i>  S. Parmenter: <i>Ha Ha, Said the Clown</i>  M. Smyth: <i>Come Softly</i>  M. Steyn: <i>The Day I Met Marie</i>  G. Strimling: <i>What Am I Living For, If Not For Hockey</i>  G. Truscott: <i>Jenny, Jenny</i>  I. Venter: <i>When Love Comes Knocking at Your Door</i></p>	<p><b>10C.</b></p> <p>S. Allen: <i>Baby Jump</i>  C. Anderson: <i>Walk Tall</i>  G. Bailey: <i>Hair</i>  J. Brown: <i>Baby Face</i>  P. Butters: <i>Love Story</i>  L. Chantler: <i>See Me, Feel Me</i></p>
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Anileen Begbie  
— reserve  
(Photo: R. Tarr)



**Above:** Alex Matric 1971 – Group Hit Parade (from school mag – *Alexander the Great*) with a pensive Aileen Grey [Begbie] mulling the future.

## Rugby

**The victorious 1971 Alex First Rugby Team** posing for the press after a surprising upset when they met Grey High School for the first match of the season. Robert Parker, former prop of the Eastern Province, is acting as the coach of this team for the first time. The team that beat Grey 13-5.

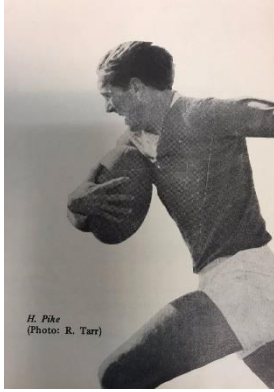


The winning team is as follows: **Back row** left to right: Cecil Thompson, Michael Holmes, Eugene Viljoen, Phillip Pneumaticatos, Paul Harper, Alan Jacobson, Mr. Robert Parker (coach), **Middle row:** Glen Truscott, Alan Zeiss, Johan Labuschagne, Robert de Kock, Neil Sampson, Clive Buttner. **Front row:** Vincent Cory, Derek Openshaw, Vaughan Jones, Ralph Tarr [captain], and Peter

Pedersen, de Kock and Buttner served as replacement at half time. It was also the first time that Alexander Road beat Grey's first team.



### Fleet-footed Harry Pike



Derek recalls another incident with Harry as follows: *"There's one 'Alex rugby movie' that I will never forget – no its not when we beat Grey High, - but rather Alex 1st Team vs DF Malherbe '71... from a lineout on our own try line, the ball moved quickly down the backline into the hands of winger, Harry Pike – who pined his ears back, focused on the opponent's whitewash about 70 yds away, and sprinted down the left hand touchline ... "collecting his dad on the Alex 25 yd line", who 'copies his son' and sprints along with Harry, long flannels and all, down the outside of the touchline, to witness Harry's try!*

*To this day I am not certain Harry, if you or your Dad reached the goal line first."*



**Above:** The victorious first Rugby Team of 1971

### Athletics



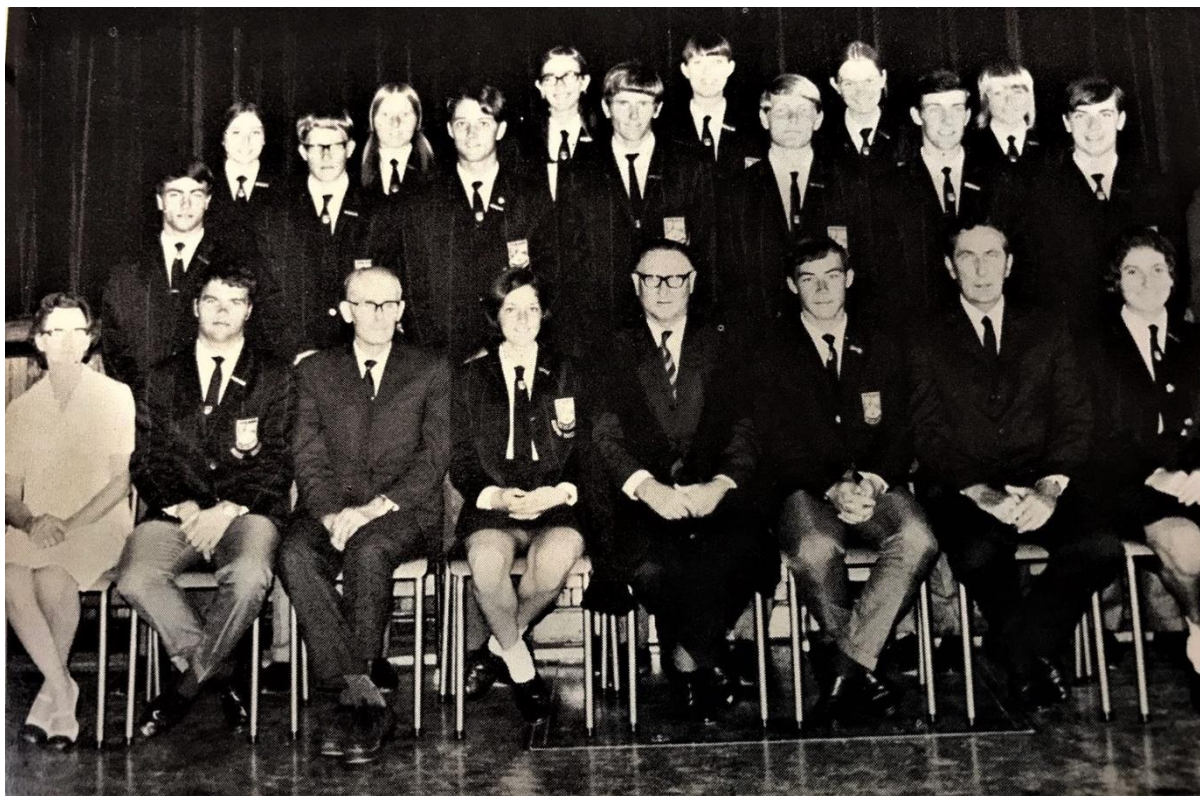


### Staff of 1971

**Front Row:** Mr Parker, Miss Wienand, Mr De Lange, Mrs Dickason, Mr Simms (*Deputy Principal*), Mr Cordingley (*Principal*), Mrs Maggs, Mr Wright, Mrs Sutton (*Secretary*), Mr Ellis.  
**Middle Row:** Mrs Workman, Mr Ledger, Mrs Doster (*Secretary*), Mr Venter, Mrs Van den Heever (*Tuckshop*), Mr Erasmus, Mrs Stokhuizen, Mr Taylor, Mrs Van Zyl, Mr Van der Merwe, Miss Coleman.  
**Back Row:** Miss Botha, Mrs Parker, Mr Brink, Mrs Richardson, Mr Snyman, Mr Hiscock, (*Janitor*), Miss Muller, Mr Woolard, Miss Chilcott, Miss Matthew.



### Prefects of 1971



### Presentations to the P.T.A.

Anileen Begbie, Kathy Laing and Alan Zeiss made presentations at a general meeting of the ARHS P.T.A. held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 1971. This meeting took the form of a symposium in which two parents and teacher spoke on what they expect from the school and the pupils. Three pupils replied saying what they expected from their parents and from the school.

### What pupils expect of their Parents and Teachers by Anileen Begbie

I would like to stress that these are my personal views and of course may differ from those of other pupils in the school. No education involves the progress from basic to the more complicated and



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developed matters of life. We as young people need assistance from educational authorities as well as our parents if we are to become anything in life at all.

**Parents**

Firstly what I expect from my parents. I expect my parents to give me a happy and contented home life, free from bickering and continual disagreements. By this I do not mean that there should be complete harmony in the home. There will of course be differences of opinion as children grow up and learn to stand on their own feet and formulate their own ideas. Parents should see this as progress in their child and allow him or her view, and if possible, discuss matters intelligently with them, so that differences can be settled. Parents should encourage their children to persevere at their schoolwork and at any other task which they may be given, although the task may seem onerous and unrewarding. I do, however, feel that parents should not force pupils to study day in and day out as this may result in a total loss of interest in the work, and the pupil may refuse to do any work at all. On the other hand, however, pupils must not be left to abstain from doing any school work at all which I am sure any pupil will do, given the opportunity. Parents should use the right approach and encourage children rather than compel them to work. Parents should be fair in their criticism of failing and be just in their administration of discipline when things are wrongly done.

Possibly the most important thing that I expect from my parents is love and understanding and an interest in all that I am doing. Parents, through their love, should give their children instruction in manners, behaviour and discipline, something which is sadly lacking in the society today. I expect my parents to set a good example and not to do things which they would not like to see me do.

I think that it is of the greatest importance that parents teach their children the meaning of independence, so that when they leave home, they will be able to stand on their own feet. It is so easy today for young people to be misled and become lost in society if they have not been taught the meaning of independence.

I feel that there should be distinct co-operation between the parent and the school. Parents should take an interest in their child's work at school as well as in their extra mural activities. I feel that it is an encouragement if parents attend school activities such as rugby or hockey matches as this shows that they are interested in the life of the school. I appreciate it if my parents attend the P.T.A. meetings held at the school because by doing this they become more & more part of the school and its activities.

**Teachers**

Now, what I expect from my school. Firstly I expect to be given instruction on the subjects of my course. Here it is the teacher's duty to promote interest in these subjects. One cannot expect a pupil to do well in a subject if the teacher makes the lesson so boring that the pupil consequently loses all concentration and consequently all interest in the subject. A teacher should be able to hold the attention of their class for the full duration of the lesson and they should be able to inspire pupils to take an interest in the subject which they teach. If a teacher is not enthusiastic in a subject How can a pupil be expected to show any interest at all.

I feel that it is of great importance that a teacher should at all times have complete control of the class. A pupil very soon notices a teacher who is not able to control their class and they immediately take advantage of this. I expect the school to provide sports facilities for pupils so that they develop their characters. Here I feel that teachers should show sufficient interest in the sport and encourage pupils to take part in sport.

The school also should have various societies so that one's cultural interests can be developed over and above one's schoolwork. In this respect I think particularly of societies such as debating and geographic societies to mention but a few. In societies such that pupils are given an opportunity to do the things that they enjoy, and at the same time, to secure more and more a part of the school. As school education is only the beginning of one's education, I feel that the staff should encourage pupils and help them in their choice of their future careers.

### **What I expect from my Parents and my Teachers by Kathy Laing**

Although we rarely admit it, we all at some time or other realise that you, our parents and teachers, play one, if not THE most important part in our lives.

#### **Etiquette**

At home we rely on our parents to teach us various standards of etiquette and it is our parents who influence our characters. It is however at school that we learn to mix with all types of people and to respect other authority than that of our parents.

I feel that it is our bringing up and education must be brought about by the combined effort of all parents and teachers if it is to be done successfully.

#### **Respect**

Whether we acknowledge it or not, all of us have a certain amount of respect for our elders, parents and teachers. WE often set you on a pedestal without even realising it with the result that when you make a mistake (even though you never realise it), it affects us more and we remember it. Just by a word or a look, which to you means nothing, may to us seem to be a sign that you do not really care about us or that you dislike us. To prevent this, I think that our parents and teachers should try to make as much interest as possible in things which would influence us for the good and also in things which would influence us for the good and also in things in which we are interested. Understanding and communicating with you is so much easier for us if we know that you and understand what we are talking about. If you know something of our interests, a mutual understanding would be more easily attained and if we have similar interests, it would be better still.

#### **Discussions**

One of the things that we appreciate most is when adults enter into a pleasant argument or discussion with us, in which, although we hold a different opinion, you try to understand and appreciate our point of view instead of remaining stubbornly fanatical, refusing even to reason with us.

Such discussion, both in the home and the classroom, are profitable both to us and to you as it is by reasoning things out that so many problems can be solved and a stronger bond can be formed between us.

Often there seems to be no communication between teacher and pupils. If however, a controversial subject is brought up in the course of the lesson, and discussion ensues, our opinion of the respect for the teacher is raised as we see that he or she is prepared to discuss something on equal terms with us.

I feel too, that in trying to understand us, you should try to put your lives in our environment and age as the times have so radically changed since you were our age. Different standards are now accepted which were never thought of as recently as 10 years ago.

#### **Examinations**

Throughout our school years, the emphasis lies in passing the final exams and too often parents and teachers feel that the only reason for going to school is to learn various cultural subjects from a text book. I feel that the extra mural activities and the way in which we can communicate with various



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types of people is just as important. After all, what use is book knowledge if you are unable to communicate and get on with people?

### **Encouragement**

I expect that parents should not only encourage without nagging us to do schoolwork but should also encourage us to take part in extra mural activities of the school. So often parents prevent their children from participating in school activities such as sport, debating, acting etc. This could result in the child losing interest in the school, or else could make them rebellious.

We appreciate you and respect you for more if you show us how to balance our activities so that we spend more time at studying but still have time for our other activities. Encourage us with your support in our activities and we will repay you by trying to study harder.

### **Parents should support teachers**

When pupils go home and tell their parents about such and such teacher who is “*always picking on me*”, the parent may get their back up against the teacher even though the accusations are invalid, this encouraging the child to rebel against the teacher and also causing the child to lose respect for such parents.

I think that the parents should rather support the teacher by reasoning with the child – without scolding – also by trying to get the child to see the other point of view.

I strongly feel that parents should make an all-out effort to support the school as it will encourage children to do likewise. If all the parents did this I am quite sure that there would be no “dead wood” among the pupils.

### **Guidance**

We look to you, our parents and teachers, for leadership, and guidance and help in deciding our careers.

We expect you to be consistent in what we say and do. We are always quick to notice those who say one thing and do another, even if it is in some small way. It often seems to us that what you say is not sincere.

We know that we must at times be advised, warned and reprimanded. If however the teacher or even parents does this publicly, in front of a large group of people, we often feel, whether we are entitled to or not, degraded and that the teacher has no respect for us or for our feelings.

### **Atmosphere limited**

I have found that a limited informal atmosphere is the most pleasant one in which to study as the pupil feels free-er to ask questions. If however the atmosphere is too informal, and the teacher permits unrestricted discussions among pupils, we, the pupils soon lose respect for that teacher, even though he or she is one of the best liked teachers. Although we claim to resent discipline, we have far more respect and liking for a teacher who exerts his authority just enough to keep us in order, than for those who let us do as we like.

My idea of an ideal teacher is one who is friendly yet does not allow pupils to be familiar with them, and who is also able to control the class. We expect teachers to be able to take a joke.

### **Poetry and short stories**

In attempting to instil a love of poetry, Paul Ellis cajoled us to write a piece and to insert it anonymously in a Poem Box. Even I tried but with not much success to emulate the masters. A number of these attempts have found their way via unscrupulous hands and been furtively presented to me. In this endeavour I have singularly incurred the wrath of several budding poets much to their chagrin.

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*Vaughan Jones has a nightmare of what the world may be like in years to come.*

### **LAST NIGHT'S DREAM by Vaughan Jones**

Last night I had a dream,  
of what the world would be like  
in the future:

It seemed they couldn't walk  
in the smoggy, sweaty street,  
for people.

I couldn't drive  
because there were too many cars  
honking exhaust fumes.

I asked, do you fly?  
It's too crowded up there,  
They replied,  
All the way up to the moon,  
But further out it gets  
a little bit better.

I dreamt of birds (with feathers)  
that flew.  
There were hardly any in this  
dream,  
except maybe in museums,  
lustreless feathers  
glass eyes staring

It's nothing, only smog,  
from the private airport  
across the flypass.  
You should go into town...

The ocean swell rose,  
as unchanged as ever,  
but on the water  
was an oily black mass, sticky.....  
Just chemicals they told me.  
I've got some  
In my mouth.

Last night I had a bad dream,  
But was it in the future?

### **BELFAST '71 by Alan J. Milne**

*Alan shows another aspect of our society viz man's inhumanity to man.*

*A bit of trivia: It was used by Paul Ellis as part of a Poetry exam for the Standard 9s [Grade 11s]*

Fragments of life all blasted away,  
Sounds and sights of war.

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"You children can't go out and play,  
That's not an order – it's law."  
Your next door neighbour has his gun  
Your family hide in fear.  
They're after you, you start to run.  
A shot, you fall, they cheer.

The Tommies watch with weary eyes,  
Preparing for the worst  
A shot rings out, one of them dies  
A short trip in a hearse

Tomorrow brings another day;  
Perhaps, with it comes peace.  
Then children can go out and play  
While you chat to a priest.

*Here Karl deals with another aspect of our society: materialism. Its symbol is money, money which brings both joy and sorrow.*

### **PRAYER by Karl Els**

We can hardly respect money  
enough for the blood  
and toil it represents. Money is  
frightening. It can serve or  
destroy man.

Lord, see this note, it frightens me.  
You know its secrets, You know its history.  
How heavy it is!  
It scares me for it cannot speak.  
It will never tell all it hides in its  
creases,  
It will never reveal all the struggles  
and efforts  
it represents, all the disillusionment  
and slighted dignity.  
It is stained with sweat and blood.  
It is laden with all the weight of  
the human toil which makes its worth.  
It is heavy, Lord.  
It fills me with awe, it frightens me.  
For it has death on its conscience,  
All the poor fellows who killed  
themselves for it ....  
To possess it for a few hours,  
To have through it a little pleasure,  
a little joy, a little life . . . .  
Through how many hands has it  
passed Lord?  
And what has it done in the course  
Of its long, silent trips?

It has offered white roses to the

radiant financee,  
 It has paid for the baptismal party,  
     And fed the growing baby  
 It has provided bread for the family table  
 Because of it there was laughter  
     Among the young, and joy among  
     The adults.  
 It has paid for the saving visit of  
     The doctor  
 It has bought the book that taught  
     The youngster  
 It has clothed the young girl.

But it sent the letter breaking  
     The engagement  
 It has paid for the death of a  
     Child in its mother's womb  
 It has bought the liquor that made  
     The drunkard  
 It has produced a film unfit for  
     Children  
 And has recorded the indecent song.

It has broken the morals of the  
     Adolescent  
 And made of the adult a thief  
 It has bought for a few hours  
     The body of a woman  
 It has paid for the weapons of  
     Crime and for the wood of the  
     Coffin

O Lord, I offer you this note with  
     Its joyous mysteries, its sorrowful  
     Mysteries  
 I thank you for all the life and joy  
     It has given.  
 I ask you for forgiveness for the  
     Harm it has done  
 But above all, Lord, I offer it to  
     You as a symbol of the labours  
     Of man,  
 Indestructible money, which  
     Tomorrow will be changed into  
     Your eternal life.

Winner of the prose prize: Vaughan Jones

### REFLECTIONS AT DAWN by Vaughan Jones

Judges' comments: Both Anileen's and Kathy's pieces reflected wisdom beyond their years but Vaughan Jones' piece entitled *Reflections at Daybreak* embraces the ethereal yet visceral beauty of a surfer's dawn with only the taunting maudlin shrieks of piebald gulls to interrupt their thoughts.



Pushing the tent flap aside, the youth stepped out into the cold, wet sand. Shivering in the early morning mist, he made his way over to a plastic bucket. Grimacing, he splashed the icy water on his bronzed face and shoulders. Thoroughly awake, he pulled a towel and rubber wetsuit from the washing line strung between two stunted trees. He paused, then picked up his small, slender spearlike surfboard, he made his way gingerly down to the light dappled beach.

The young, tousled-headed surfer pushed his way through a clump of straggly bushes encroaching on the path, and then ascended to the sounds of the surf washing slowly up the beach. Across the heaving sea, where the blue tinged mountains loomed beyond the vast bay, the sky had a rosy hue. The surfer reached the rocky point; he stopped, overcome momentarily by nature's display. Beautiful, glistening waves wrapped themselves around a far-off reef. In the glimmer of the rising sun, these frothy denizens of the coast still fascinated him. He had witnessed this sight every morning for the last four months, and was yet to be disappointed by it. Turning away from the liquid motions of the sea, he made his way slowly to the top of a small sand dune, his surfboard reflecting the sun's rays sharply onto the cold, hard sand.

Reaching the top, he sat down on the damp grass. This time of the day was the only time he could think sensibly. Close to nature, the top of the sand dune with the gulls swooping low overhead was the only place he could gather his thoughts. With a conscious effort he turned his mind away from the roar and bustle of the sea below him.

The pattern of his thoughts had found its Karma here. In his small tranquil village by the sea, he was isolated and unaware of what city life was like again. To him it meant home, smoke, jostling crowds, sweaty smells, abuse and empty beer cans. Leaving his home in the sprawling metropolis, he had sweated his way across oceans on board a tramp steamer. His faint glimmer of hope had lain in the postcard from a surfing colleague advising him "to come on over." Facing poverty, hardship and hunger, he had reached his destiny.

After a few months of fantastic surf and idyllic days spent in the sun, his Paradise had been toppled. The people of the village – surly, rough-spoken people – had become antagonistic towards him and his easy-going brothers. They had said that they did not want or need the likes of him around. What could be done? It was not his country, yet the nostalgic feeling which binds all surfers to the sea kept him there. He had a decision to make – to stay and face abuse, taunts and hardship, or to pick up and go back to where he came from.

The sun finally curled golden fingers around the tops of the mountains in the distance. They reached him, a lonely, cold pathetic figure perched on the vast sand dune. The shafts of golden warmth drew him from his reverie. The fabulous hollow waves filled his vision as he looked up. He looked around himself wonderingly, his gaze absorbing everything which reached his eyes. He saw the sun shining through the backs of the vivid breaking tops of the waves as they wandered around the point. Suddenly he knew his destiny. Stripping quickly and pulling on his wetsuit, he grabbed his board and raced joyously across the warming sand, shouting taunts to the seagulls.

Judges comments: With South Africa on the brink of being classified as a failed state with endemic corruption and incompetence rife, yet more morose, woe-is-me/us articulation would never in the circumstances. Much like a toxic boss / friend / person, I will shun me in order to avoid being infected with this debilitating malady. Something more uplifting is what the national mood demands.

Coming in second, was a light-hearted poem of no great moment and without pretensions of greatness, but which illuminates one aspect of our final days at Alex. Entitled, *WEDNESDAY, 1ST SEPTEMBER*, it will bring back memories of that bygone age which Pauline Grant terms

*militaristic*. Perhaps a touch more gravitas would have placed it in the category for mature audiences instead of being directed solely at the teenage market.

### WEDNESDAY, 1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER

The boys they came in one by one  
The short, the tall – all woebegone.  
Three teachers stood there side by side,  
And for the boys – no place to hide.

The first boy's fringe was in his eyes  
(He looked the worst of all the spies)  
Sir cocked his head, then bellowed forth:  
"No long hair here from now henceforth"

Doomsday had dawned so bright and fair  
No one had guessed of the blitz on hair.  
Yet after the break they felt the blow  
When sixty boys were bent so low!

Other pupils heard the rasping sounds,  
Their symphony just knew no bounds  
Three rhythmic blow – and then a pause  
It sounded like some deadly morse.

But after that – still more to come –  
There was no mercy for anyone.  
Another forty pierced the daisy  
Wishing that it seemed more lazy

And now at school when rings the bell  
Short back and sides – and tops as well  
For they know what long hair does spell  
A long sore stripe that starts to swell.

The winner is a shy lad who has never displayed the arrogance of a potential *Poet Laurette* with hubris being their descriptor. Not for him the limelight. Instead of taking top honours in the CIRCUIT RACE CHALLENGE, in the last several metres he held back enabling Derek Openshaw to take the winner's medal. With a mind attuned to poetry, he once again displayed his mastery of this art form by entering not one but two poems into this austere competition. The mental thought process still requires some smoothing of the rough edges, but given time and age to reflect, Karl Els is destined to become our Poet Laurette. Great things are still expected of this gentle soul of poetry.

### A DROP OF FEAR by Karl Els

Bright in the rain, falling  
From an overcast sky,  
As a light reflects raindrops sailing by  
Hanging on cobwebs



Like jewels in the night  
I watch as a spider, wet, takes fright.

The moon at sunrise,  
And Venus at set,  
Both hang like jewels  
On spiderweb wet  
And the jewel on a leaf  
As it drops like the sun.  
And a spider that hunts  
When the day is done

A child on four legs  
And an old man on three  
The spider on seven is waving at me  
The moon is shining and  
The rain hath fell  
The spider is free  
And I live in hell.

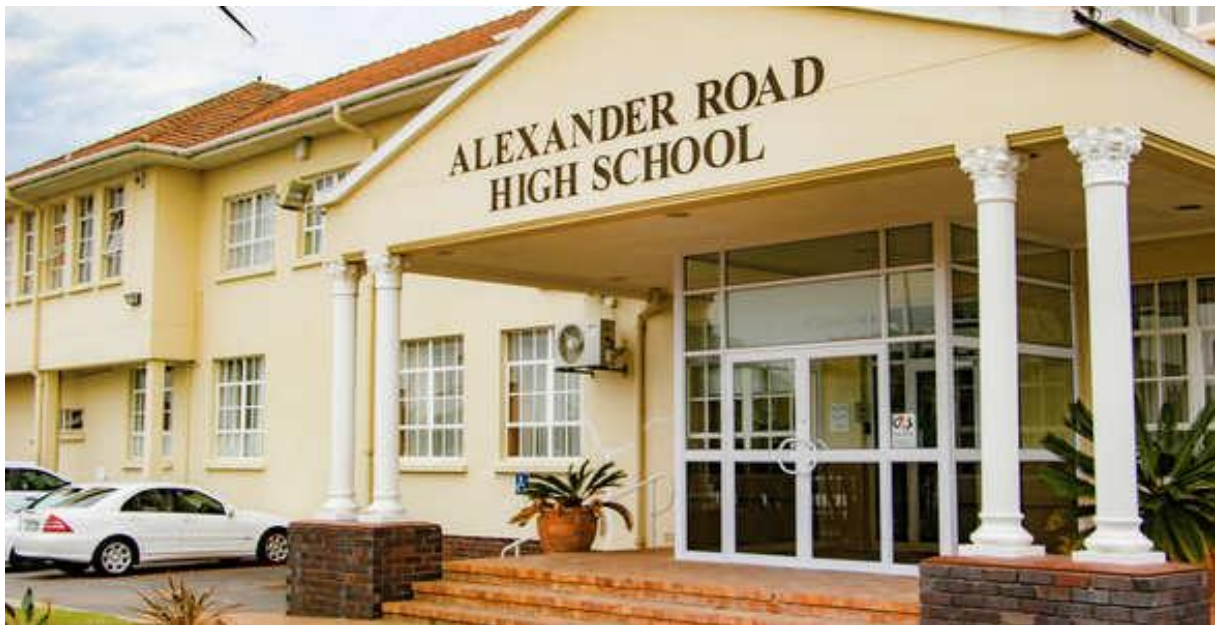
The spider has fled,  
The rain has stopped  
The moon I shining and  
Reflecting the dropped.

### Was Ralph having a bad year?



Next year we'll be free . . .  
(Photo: R. Tarr)

## Look What they did to our School!



Step into the Alex of today. No nostalgia here. What our grandchildren would see if they attended Alex now. Thanks to photographer extraordinaire, Margie Rudman, for the photos. I wonder what Cordingley would have done if he found Margie skiving off, not at her computer, and instead taking photos of the school?

### Sport

- Sadly, Alex no longer has a swimming gala. Casual swimming is held in the school pool
- Alex focuses on water polo as the major water sport and hosts a large tournament each year
- Hockey now played on astroturf
- Hockey, soccer, rugby, tennis, athletics, netball, cricket for girls and boys

### Subjects

- The old Typing, Domestic Science and woodwork rooms are all computer labs now of which there are 7. The school no longer offers those subjects.
- Alex has 4 fully functional Science and 4 life sciences laboratories. Practicals are no longer only demonstrated. Labs are equipped for learners to do group practicals and there are often practical exams as a component of the written exam.
- Biology is now called Life Sciences.
- Natural Science in grade 8 and 9 is a combination of junior science and biology
- Life Orientation encompasses a number of life skills which includes a small physical education component (NO formal physical education is offered anymore, so they might have 5 or 6 physical education lessons in a year). They use absolutely no gym equipment or mats or anything, rather fun activities on the fields. Learners have to pass Life Orientation in order to proceed to the next grade.
- Learners choose between English and Afrikaans or English and Xhosa



GET Phase: Grade 8 & 9		Must do 9 Subjects
Subjects		Comment
1	English	First Language
2	Afrikaans	Second language
	isiXhosa	Second Language
3	Mathematics	
4	Creative Arts	Drama / Music/ Art
5	Digital Technology	
6	Economic Management Sciences	Accounting/ Business
7	Natural Sciences	Biology/ Science
8	Social Sciences	History/ Geography
9	Life Orientation	
Optional	Music - extra	
Optional	Advanced Programme Mathematics	

FET Phase - Grade 10, 11 & 12		Must do 7 Subjects	
Subjects		Comment	
Compulsory	English	First Language	
Compulsory	Afrikaans	Second Language	OR
	isiXhosa	Second Language	
Compulsory	Mathematics	Old Higher Grade	OR
	Mathematical Literacy		
Compulsory	Life Orientation		
1	Accounting		
2	Business Studies		
3	Computer Applications Technology	Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Access	
4	Dramatic Arts		
5	Geography		
6	History		
7	Information Technology	Programming	
8	Life Sciences		
9	Music		
10	Physical Sciences		
11	Tourism		
12	Visual Arts		
Optional	Advanced Programme Mathematics		

### Terminology / nomenclature

- Prefects are now known as Student Leaders.
- You don't pass or fail: You proceed or are retained.
- You may not be retained more than twice in any phase.

## Societies

One has the choice of 35 societies to choose from:

- All-4--Strings
- Annibrand - Afrikaans Club
- AlexPress
- Al-Ibsaan Society
- Beat
- Chess Club
- Choir
- Computer Club
- Costume Room
- Dance Sport
- Debating
- Dramatics
- D-Squared
- Events Team
- Fan People Society
- Finance Committee
- First Aid
- Interact
- Junior Drama Group
- Library Assistants
- Masibuyel'embo
- Maths Relay and Maths Scorers
- Muslim Students' Society
- The President's Award
- Popcorn Club
- Pop Music Society
- Production Crew
- Quiz
- Science Club
- Photography Club – ShutterSpeed
- Tenrec Hiking and Adventure Club
- Toastmasters
- The Voice
- Video Club
- Y.A.P. (Incorporating NSRI)

### All-4-Strings

Teacher in charge: Ms. Evan der Vyver

*Music is a world in itself, with a language we all understand  
Music is a form of prayer, uniting people everywhere,  
Transcending Language, Time and Race, Rhythm building at a pace  
Will transform most any place into a holy, sacred space. Stevie Wonder*

This is a society for the strings' players of Alexander Road High School, but also for anyone else who would like to team about and participate in community-building projects through making and enjoying music together. We will socialize, watch music related movies, have fun workshops and spread beauty into the community in our city and region.

Join All-4-Strings if you:

- Have a love for music
- Have a love for people and children



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- Believe that one person can have the power to inspire and change the world
  - Can play the violin, viola, cello, double bass (or any other instrument) - but not excluding anybody else. We might just inspire you to want to start learning! Come and join us as we meet once a month.

### **Annibrand.**

Teachers in charge: Mr. M Stander; Ms. K Joubert; Ms. G Smit. Annibrand (aan die brand) is a committed Afrikaans group that serves the community in need. We help primary schools by collecting stationery, books and other relevant equipment in order to provide academic excellence. Our aim is to promote Afrikaans in our schools offering extra classes, competitions and other enjoyable activities.

### **AlexPress**

Teacher in charge: Mr. D Lavelle. The aim of AlexPress is to provide a newsworthy publication each term containing interesting and enjoyable writing. It is also a platform for Alex pupils to voice their opinions. As such, it is a channel for communication in the school. Pupils are encouraged to submit their own pieces of writing for publication. Although there is an editorial committee in Grade 11, any pupil who wishes to do so may write articles or poems for publication.

### **Al Ihsaan**

Teacher in charge: Ms. N Phiri. Al-Ihsaan means 'committed to doing right' and 'excellence in everything'. This is the aim of the society. The Ground Staff tea is an annual project when Alexans thank those people who do so much for us by presenting them with gifts. Al-Ihsaan hosts quarterly birthday parties for the foster kids of the Department of Social Development. They are given gifts sponsored by members of our Alex family. We provide I-Care-Kits filled with toiletries to needy individuals. Our "Helping Babies Heal" projects help to provide starter packs for abandoned babies. Snacks and personal items were donated to the Thuthuzela Care and Rape Crisis Centre and handbags with essentials were handed to Bel Sheekom House of Restoration for women in crisis. Anyone who shares our ideals would be welcome to join the society.

**BEAT.** Teacher in charge: Dr L Emery. What happens is a quarterly evening meeting where there is a backing band providing an opportunity for singers and instrumentalists to perform with them - or alone - in the Hall. At the same time, there are refreshments on sale, board games and cards are available: poets, dancers and soloists also perform. Pupils are able to bring music DVDs to play as well. This is a wonderful opportunity to be able to listen to and play or perform your favourite music. While in the company of your friends. Listen for the announcements but sign up today if you are interested.

**Chess Club.** Teacher in charge: Ms. M Benson. Alex has an active Chess Club of approximately 25 Club players. We are fortunate to have a number of EP Players in our Squad, one of whom also represented South Africa at the World Youth Chess Championships 2018. We encourage all aspiring young Grade 8 and beginner chess players to the game to join the Chess Family at Alex. We have lots of fun with our many intra-School Mini Chess Tournaments taking place during Chess Practice times on a Tuesday and Thursday at 2.30. to 4pm in TDO. Choose which day suits you or even better join us for both practices.

**Choir.** Teacher in charge: Ms. S. Heunis. The best definition of a choir is a group of people experiencing the joy of singing and making music together. This is our aim at Alex. The Choir will give you the opportunity to develop your singing talents as well as to interact with other people who share the same interests. We will sing songs to cater for all tastes and cultures. We meet on a Monday afternoon and a Tuesday morning before school. Acceptance subject to a successful audition.

**The Computer Club.** Teacher in charge: Ms. I Oosthuizen. This club is open to all Grade 8 to 10 pupils. It is a highly interactive club dedicated to providing pupils with opportunities to use technology in ways that they might not be able to during their regular Digital Technology lessons

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in class. Pupils will be introduced to systems technologies and coding. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their own skills and interests using applications ranging from coding to web design to creating interactive games. Club members meet once a week in the computer lab.

**Costume Room.** Teacher in charge: Mr. G Everard. The school holds a stock of valuable costumes which need to be organised, stored, issued, repaired, cleaned and supplemented. These costumes are used to dress the cast members who perform in the various plays / drama events staged by our school. Pupils will be expected to work on a Tuesday afternoon and during certain breaks to assist with the issuing of costumes. As this is a service group, awards can be earned. At the same time, you will learn a lot and have a great deal of fun.

**Dance Sport.** Teachers in charge: Ms. K Reynolds, Ms. R. Smith Ms. B. Dalton. Dance Sport is a fun and exciting club for anyone interested in Ballroom and Latin American dancing or for anyone who would like to meet and socialize with Alexians from all grades. Practices take place on Thursday evenings: 18h00-19h00: Beginners; 19h00 - 20h00 Intermediates; 20h00- 21h00: Advanced. The cost is R580-00 per person for the year as well as a once-off R50 fee for registration. It is important to get as many guys as possible to join so, if you sign up with a partner, all the better. So come along and join the fun. For further information, check the Dance Sport notice board outside GF18. Other highlights include the inter schools' competition, optional dance exams and the Grand Ball.

**Debating.** Teacher in charge: Ms. J Long. Are you tired of your mundane and uninteresting conversations in the classroom and on the field at break? What you need is a good dose of argument. Join P.E.'s best Debating Society and experience intellectual, comic and invigorating debating at its best. What is it? A debate is a formal discussion with an argument either for or against the topic. The most convincing argument wins the debate. When do we debate? All debaters meet every Monday and Thursday. We have league debates fortnightly against various schools in P.E. and Uitenhage. We also attend workshops and have our own Debate Fest once per year. Anyone can join. The more members, the better the arguments!

**D-Squared.** Teacher in charge: Ms. I Conradie. This is a club geared to developing skills in design and drawing. The drawing skills practiced in this club will pique the interests of learners who have an interest in landscape, architecture, interior and mechanical designs.

**Dramatics.** Teacher in charge: Mr. G Everard. Drama is alive and well at Alex. Not only do we offer Drama as a subject to Matric level, but we also encourage our pupils to participate actively in the various opportunities afforded them to get on stage and put it all into practice. We host an annual inter-house one act play competition in the Third Term. These plays are (often written and) produced by the pupils themselves. Alternate years see Alex producing musicals. In 2009 we had the SA premiere of the schools' version of the world famous *Les Misérables* which was sold out at every performance and walked away with ten awards at the Showtime Awards evening. 2011 saw the Alex family on stage again with our very own musical revue Kumbula! Remember! 2013 had Port Elizabeth audiences flocking to our award-winning production of Hairspray! In 2014 we did something different with a farce, Noises Off. In 2015 Alex celebrated its diamond jubilee year, with the production of Shrek the musical and in 2016 we staged The Crucible. 2017 saw Alex put on our very own The Addams Family and in 2018 saw a production of Romeo & Juliet in 2019 we produced a magical musical Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Rehearsals started for our Agatha Christie's murder mystery. *And Then There Were None*, but it was sadly called off owing to Covid-19. We have just had auditions for our new musical production. Watch this space ...

Our pupils regularly compete in the Port Elizabeth play festival. Local drama also has our pupils actively involved and Alex features prominently in the annual *Showtime* production. Everyone is welcome to join. Come along and have a ball!

**Events Team:** Teachers in charge: Ms. L Felix, Ms. T Horsley. For those of you who would like to learn more about the finer details of entertaining - this is your opportunity. Under the guidance of Ms. Felix, you will learn how to do creative table arrangements. Ms. Horsley's group sees to the issuing of the kitchen stock for our many events. You will also be able to earn service points or even an award for Service by getting involved.

**Fan People Club.** Teacher in charge: Mr. B Long. The definition of a Fan Person is a fan boy or girl, especially who is obsessive about comics, music, or science fiction, games and gaming, people who love something so much that all the details matter. The Fan People society is a home for anyone who shares a love for all things geeky. We create fun events where fans can enjoy the different forms of media. These events cater for three groups:

- Pop culture - media about superheroes, fantasy, sci-fi. **Events:** Movie days, Cosplay, Theme quiz days
- Console gaming - Xbox and PlayStation gaming. **Events:** Gaming Day or gaming tournaments
- Tabletop gaming - Card games and board games. **Events.** Board game day, Magic Gathering tournaments

**Finance Club.** Teacher in charge: Ms. K Glover. The Finance Committee plays an integral part in the fundraising of Alex. It is made up of Grade 11 and 12 pupils. Our main tasks are organizing civvies days and school socials. The funds generated are disbursed to various sports teams and cultural groups for tours. The ideal member of our team is a creative thinker with good organizational skills. A little entrepreneurial interest will not hurt either. Grade 11 pupils are encouraged to sign up for the committee in order to make a real difference at Alex during their Matric year.

**First Aid Society:** Teacher in charge: Ms. L. Sutherland. The First Aid Society serves the school by being present at all sports matches and other functions or outings where there may be a need for First Aid. Through serving the school, these young people are equipped with the lifesaving First Aid skills and confidence needed to react effectively in an emergency situation. They undergo official training by the St. John's Ambulance and the certification that they acquire is recognised internationally.

**Interact.** Teacher in charge: Ms. K. Glover. The aim of Interact is to help, serve and care for the community. We are involved in many fund-raising activities for those who are less privileged than we are. Each year we adopt a main project, but we help wherever our help is needed. We live by our motto, "*Service above self*". The group does not have a limit on numbers but traditionally it consists of members from grades 9 to 11.

**Junior Drama Club.** Teacher in charge: Ms. C. Stronach. It's play time. Drama lessons with a fun twist. Learn the basics of movement, dance techniques and various dance styles, including how to prepare for a dance audition.

**Library Assistants.** Teacher in charge: Ms. B. Olivier. A Library Assistant must be available to offer up two or three breaks during the week and before school to assist in the library. He / she should display the following characteristics: friendliness, responsibility, punctuality and efficiency. Must be avid readers. Duties include issuing and returning books on the computer and keeping the library in tip-top shape. In helping pupils to obtain information for their various projects, much satisfaction can be gained particularly if the library assistants have an interest in reading or computers themselves. The opportunity exists for Library Assistants to assume leadership positions as early as grade 9. Service awards (scrolls and colours) may also be earned. Team spirit is built, not only during working hours, but also at occasional informal socials.

**Masibuyel'embo.** Teachers in charge: Ms. B Scout, Ms. U Makinana. Masibuyel'embo is a Xhosa phrase meaning '*to go back to our native roots*' calling our learners back to their customs, traditions and



cultural activities. This is about taking and expressing pride in who we are. promoting Ubuntu (an abstract noun meaning *humanity*)

**Maths Relay and Maths Scorers.** Teacher in charge: Dr. L Emery. **Maths Relay** is a team event, which takes place 8 times a year also includes an inter schools' Maths Fair and Prize giving at the end of the year. A maximum of 4 people participate per team. There are Junior and Senior teams. **Maths Scorers** take part in the Maths Relay 6 times a year and assist with setup and scoring at the events. Maths Scorers will also help out at other events including the UCT Maths Competition and other Maths Fairs.

**Muslim Students Society.** Teacher in charge: Mr. R. Baartzes. This is a society to help take care of the needs of the Muslim students at Alexander Road High School. It is a non-profit society aiming to gain its rewards in the hereafter.

The society is committed to:

- Developing and maintaining an environment where Muslims can practice Islam comfortably.
- Creating a space where students can learn about Islam, not only Muslims.
- Creating a dialogue to decrease the misinformation about Islam.
- Encouraging students to take part actively in community uplifting projects.
- Involving parents / guardians in the religious development of their children at the school

**Photography Club -Shutter Speed.** Teacher in charge: Ms. J. Long. The Alexander Road High School photography club (Shutter Speed) is a society whose aim is to capture the life and times of Alex. Our photographers are on the ground taking good quality photographs at all school events. These photographs will be used for the school magazine, social media and the newspaper. Members of the club will also get the opportunity to attend workshops where they will have the opportunity to improve their photographic skills. Open to all.

**Popcorn Club.** Teacher in charge: Mr. G Everard. We will meet once a month to watch movies together, old and new, classic and cult, comedy and drama, compare originals and remakes of the same movie. We will visit art gallery exhibitions, see plays and musicals and music concerts. After each outing, we will have a discussion about the movie or happening, express our opinions, likes, dislikes, praise and criticisms, increase the knowledge base from which to draw when needed. We welcome any AleKan (or staff member) from Grade 10 -12 who is 16 years of age or older.

**Pop Music Society:** Teachers in charge: Ms. D Everard; Ms. D McCoy. Inviting all musicians who wish to play music in ANY popular or contemporary music styles. Instrumentalists, singers, rappers, D.J.s and producers are all welcome. Bring your creative talents and let's make some music together.

**The President's Award:** Teacher in charge: Ms. A Miller. This programme is an international award programme for young people founded by the Duke of Edinburgh. The South African patron is Mr. Nelson Mandela. The different award categories / levels exist: Bronze, Silver and Gold in each category.

There are four sections to be completed:

- **Physical recreation:** Take up a physical activity and show improved performance.
- **Skills:** Choose a hobby or job interest and improve your skill
- **Adventure activities:** Partake in basic planning and carry out hikes or approved adventures.
- **Community service:** Choose a service and train or give service over a period.

This programme is voluntary, fun, rewarding and can open doors to many opportunities. It is a challenge to change your life. Pupils need to be at least 15 years old in order to participate in the programme.

**Production Crew:** Teacher in charge: Mr. G Everard. The Production Crew at Alex is a society that takes care of the technical elements of theatre such as sound, lighting and backstage work. The involvement

of the pupils in this integral part of the school's cultural life really enhances every aspect of our productions. Ideally the Production Crew should consist of about 10 - 16 pupils from Grade 8 to Grade 12. Full training in every sphere of fascinating work will be given.

**Quiz.** Teacher in charge: Ms. G Smit. The aim of the Quiz Group is to foster an appreciation of general knowledge and an awareness of current affairs in an exciting and interesting way through participation in league and knockout competitions, Olympiads, and internal inter-house competitions. Number of members: Although more members are encouraged to participate, teams comprise four members, plus reserves, senior and junior.

**Science Club:** Teacher in charge: Mr. C. Oosthuizen; Ms. M Hough; Ms. C Rademeyer. Learners are exposed to science in action. The focus is to realise that there is much more to science than just everyday school work. Hands-on activities are arranged. **Experiments in Chemistry and Physics** - focusing on safety and correct skills. **Audio-Visual material** is in the form of DVDs for non-practical science club questions. There are often excursions where science in industry is observed. An annual breakfast, the International Mole Day, celebrates the importance of chemistry in the world.

**Tenrec Hiking and Adventure Club:** Teacher in charge: Ms. M Benson. Tenrec aims to encourage all Alexians to appreciate the environment by getting involved in outdoor activities like hikes, camps and adventure trails. There are also fun activities that involve the community and stimulates care for our planet. Social events may be occasions to share with clubs from other schools. The Club does not require active membership, but pupils may put their names down for any outings or activities that come along. If pupils wish to be actively involved, this is encouraged.

**Toastmasters:** Teachers in charge: Ms. R Woods; Ms. L Felix. Toastmasters is an internationally recognised course in the art of communication and leadership. By participating in the course, individuals will learn the following:

- To overcome the nervousness which everyone naturally feels when asked to speak before an audience.
- To organise and present your ideas logically and convincingly.
- To offer helpful advice that will help others to improve their speaking and leadership skills.
- To participate in and even lead group discussions and meetings.

**Video Club:** Teachers in charge: Mr, G. Everard, Mr. P McEwan. Explore the possibility of making videos at school. We want participants who are able to use their own equipment. We are keen to make instructional science videos and to shoot practical demos that could assist learners. These may be made available on the internet. Learnings would assist in planning, filming and editing the demonstration videos. A new development this year will be having our own video editing suite.

**The Voice:** Teacher in charge: Ms. M Simpson. We are the Christian Society at Alex. The aim of *The Voice* is to be a Christlike voice and example at school. WE want to provide opportunities for Christian growth through fellowship. Bible study (cell groups), prayer, outreach, praise and worship and through having fun times together. We feel the need to share the love of Jesus Christ.

**Young Animal People:** YAP (incorporating NSRI). Teachers in charge: Ms. K Joubert Ms. D Strydom. YAP aims to make the pupils of Alex more aware of the problems and difficulties that face animals and animal organisations in Port Elizabeth and in South Africa. Each year Alex pupils are encouraged to raise as much money as possible to aid the NSRI. We hold numerous fundraising events throughout the year, and we are usually very pleased with our fundraising efforts and with the help that we can extend in this way. YAP and NSRI can only survive if the Alex pupils support this worthy cause and help us to help those who cannot help themselves.

## Physical facilities



**Left:** The ubiquitous Covid-19 accessory, not with 70% alcohol mix, but directions as all passages are unidirectional for the duration of the pandemic

**Above:** This deck is where the cars used to park to watch school sport on the rugby field.



Upgrade from the tuck shop under the hall stage. It's called the Heart Centre where learners meet at break





**Above:** The quad where we used to park bicycles is now full of prefab classrooms with a third wing added to the left on top of the old parking area. According to my info, nobody cycles to school anymore. Cordingley insisted that cycles walked down to 2nd or 3rd Avenue.



The old physical education quad is now a place for learners to relax





School pool was not there in our days. Alex provides formidable water polo teams.



New prefabs built on tennis court outside the hall. What would Bob Welsh say about his court?



# Class lists

## Class 10A

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**RIP**

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Terrance	Benjamin	
Vaughan	Jones	
Eric	Coetzer	
Jeanette	Erasmus	
Carol	Goldsmith	Addison