

Dear *Alasdair*

In the Feltonfleet News you ask for reminiscences. I am an ex-member of staff rather than a F.O.B. but Feltonfleet had such a big influence on my career that I thought I might spend a little time recording my memories about the staff that were at Feltonfleet during the 1950s. I do not expect you to include all that I have written but bits might fill an odd corner or two. Anyhow it is better to have too much than too little as I well know being editor of our Parish Magazine.

*Derek Hoare* Derek Hoare (Feltonfleet 1951 – 1959 including period as student master when at Oxford)

In the 1950s Keith Leighton employed some excellent members of the staff and the boys, all 82 of them, never more, never less, all boarders benefited from this. Here are my recollections of some of these characters.

The senior master was Harold Carnell. He was the most brilliant teacher of French that I came across and was only equalled for a few years by a man that I appointed at Perrott Hill. Harold was a most talented person. He could sit at the piano and play almost any tune that came into his head. In the evenings a piano version of Finlandia or some other classical orchestral work would echo out of the main hall. His French lessons were relaxed and inspired. The sixth form were asked to write a carol in French. This they did and the best two Harold set to music to be sung at the carol service. They were by Macdiarmid and Hampson. I still have copies of them somewhere. Harold would occasionally have the whole school for French prep. They would all assemble in the main hall. The noise was incredible but it was all French noise as games such as "What's My Line?" were played. Of course the French scholarship results were superb. He also coached some Under 11 teams and after each match would write a report on the game. This report was much looked forward to even if it criticised a player. The players loved to see their name in print. I unashamedly cribbed this idea and used it until I retired In 1992.

Succeeding him as Senior master was Vernon Attfield. He had been a rear gunner in bombers during the war and had it not been for the war he would have been a headmaster in his own right. He taught classics brilliantly and had a very dry sense of humour. He rather startled one government school inspector by telling a boy who had made a simple mistake, to go and boil himself in oil. One of his great moments came in a cricket match against some posh school whose umpire arrived in a Scottish set up, with kilt, sporran and even a dirk stuck into his socks. Vernon gave this apparition an umpire's coat not usually worn in those days, and spent the afternoon at square leg chuckling at the sight of a couple of knobbly knees sticking out from under the coat. However the umpire had the last laugh getting Feltonfleet

out for a very low score with some spectacular LBW decisions. No, it wasn't quite the last laugh; Vernon was still chuckling over a pint or two in the pub that night, reckoning that it had all been worth while. Vernon was responsible for the very high standard of games at Feltonfleet. First of all he had to persuade Keith Leighton not to punish a team if they lost a match. Once this fear had been removed the talent blossomed. We had wonderful results and many unbeaten teams for many of the fathers of the children had been great games players themselves. He was critical of the rather frequent use of corporal punishment and insisted that two with a gym shoe was quite sufficient. Even that is considered illegal nowadays but it proved correct for twenty years at Feltonfleet's sister school Perrott Hill.

Tony Wilson was a master who gave his life to Feltonfleet. He had been a boy at the school, had gone on to Repton where he caught Rheumatic fever, I think. Anyhow he returned to Feltonfleet to act as HM secretary in about 1936. After a while he started teaching and remained there all his working life. He was an ideal prep. school master but of course had no qualifications at all. Apart from teaching English he wrote the school plays which alternated between adventures and revues. These were full length productions written with the cast in mind. He also composed songs for the shows. He loved special effects. One year there was a working waterfall on the tiny stage and always there had to be a loud explosion. These explosions got louder each year but he never succeeded in bringing the playbox room ceiling down. He wrote the Norman and Henry Bones stories, which topped the charts on BBC Childrens Hour and he practised these stories on the boys at his lunchtime table. He ran the Scouts and for two years out of three ran a week long Scout Camp after the end of the Summer Term. In his classroom there were many varieties of wildlife including in season, glowworms. Also there were occasionally some recent mechanical inventions. There was at one time a stroboscope. Although he got excellent results eventually an officious school inspector criticised his work because he was not up to date with what the powers that be required, and had no qualifications. Tony decided it was time to go.

Then there was John Youle. He was a giant of a man and taught maths. At times the panels between the classrooms would rattle as he picked up a boy and put him in the waste-paper basket for some rubbishy answer. John was the grandson of Spofforth, the demon Australian bowler of the late 1800's. He liked action in the games that he coached and his Under 11 cricket side were no exception. One team batted on after tea leaving Feltonfleet just one hour to get about 80 runs. In fact it took them just twenty five minutes. Such a dynamic person could not co-exist with KTL for long and sadly he left after about three years.

Miss Paull was the music mistress for some years. She was an excellent pianist and KTL became slightly upset when she played a rousing piece by Dohyani before morning assembly. He was frightened that the grand piano might suffer some damage. However she was a good teacher and Peter Cresswell, whom I met recently, owes his love of music and his ability as a composer to her teaching. When Miss Paull left there were some indifferent teachers. One good lady lasted only a few

weeks and her choice of the hymn for morning assembly, "Now the day is over" was just too much for KTL to stomach.

The Junior Form Mistress and Art Teacher were in succession Miss Shorten, Miss Rosemary Horne and Miss Rosemary Trew. KTL was very lucky with them, they were very talented and they all had considerable influence on their charges.

On the matronic staff were Miss Bailey in the Senior house and Miss Daniel in the Junior House. Both were efficient and kind to the youngsters. The House keeper was Kaye Davies, a very hardworking person. She was always up first to see that everything was tidy and ruled the domestic staff firmly. Her sister was Groundswoman and a very efficient job she did. There were also Junior Matrons and Junior Housekeepers. Eventually a junior house keeper came who was the sister of a former pupil, Charlie Wachter. She was so good that I could not let her go, so I married her and nine years later she became a Headmaster's wife par excellence.