

I remember our Latin teacher. He was a bit deaf but had lightening reactions with the board chalk or the ruler. Chalk would become an air born missile and the ruler would be given on the hand. One day when he was writing on the board I put a holly leaf on his chair and he sat on it. I then got the ruler. Poor old ME, what a character. I never learnt any Latin!

Days at the school in the 1970's were very different from today. I remember midnight feasts, day dreaming when I was a fielder during cricket only be screamed at to run after the ball, runs across the cliff in freezing weather and horrible food. Happy days!

Justin Morley

Christopher Parkinson (Sep 75-Dec 80)



I have so many memories of Durlston although it is now over a quarter of a century since I left. I still recall being driven along the, what seemed at the time, long drive towards the “Jubilee” Entrance and being met by Bunty Mills and Miss Long (who was anything but) and being taken to the dormitory all of which were named after various public schools. I seem to remember that as 3rd formers we started in Harrow and Eton before moving onto the like of Wellington and Sherborne - a prefect in each dorm who would ensure we behaved after “lights out” and put us in “mud” if we started chattering. The dormitories on the top floor were smaller and the camaraderie seemed better probably due to the fact that we had to share the freezing winters. I remember ice forming on the inside of the windows and the tap freezing in one of the dorms at the top.

The teachers who made the biggest impression on me were (and apologies if the spelling of the names is not exact) Mr Ransome, Mr Harrison, PY, Major Elvery, Major Beavis, Mr Burnham, Mr & Mrs Keys and of course the somewhat intimidating headmaster Mr Onslow who must have been the inspiration for the children’s programme “The Demon Headmaster”. Mr Ransome was a suave English master who drove a series of flash cars including a Lotus Esprit. He would often be late for a lesson as he would be smoking a cigarette just outside the window of the 6A classroom and would often smoke a cigarette leaning out of the window during the lesson.

Mr Harrison inspired a love of music with his enthusiasm. I remember choir concerts in local churches including New Milton, Lyndhurst and Beaulieu Abbey and indeed recording an album in Beaulieu Abbey (1979 or 1980). The school shows including Joseph and Trial by Jury (I was the usher in the 1980 production) and then involvement in local music competitions in Bournemouth and Southampton. Trombone and piano lessons on the top floor.

As the school chaplain, PY was incredible. As well as his pastoral duties he taught squash and tennis and I remember him showing us films on his video recorder, a device that in the mid-to-late 70s, was pretty new stuff. I also recall the reward of the soda stream for minor jobs and trying to get as many different flavours in as possible.

Major Elvery I recall taught history and sports and was deputy headmaster. As part of the school 2nd XI (recently demoted from the 1st!) we played football against Hordle House. Unfortunately flu had swept through Durlston and the 2nd XI was not so much a 2nd XI as a 3rd or 4th. We were truly hammered. Afterwards Major Elvery said to me "at least you kept running about and didn't give up". I remember (fondly now) his history lessons and the occasional war story. Having spent the last 17 years in the military I am pretty ashamed at the flippant way in which many of us treated his war stories. I am sure I would not have his patience with snotty boys who treated his wartime experiences as a laugh.

Major Beavis probably only taught for a couple of years in my time at Durlston but I recall him as a kindly teacher who wore half-moon spectacles. Principally I remember him for reading us "The Hobbit" whilst in 4A and I have to this day a love of JRR Tolkien. Mr Burnham taught maths I think as well as taking us for various sports. I do recall being given 10% by him for some maths prep - never was my strongest subject. I also remember him taking us for runs around the local area especially down the cliffs onto the shingle beach. Mr Keys (history) and Mrs Keys (art) edited the school magazine and I still have copies with the covers designed by the pupils.

The school houses were named after the UK's patron saints and the daily wear ties indicated which house you belonged to. I can't see Gordon Brown on television wearing a red tie without thinking "Ah, he must have been in St Georges" (and therefore, obviously, can't be trusted) similarly I always had a soft touch for the liberals because the previous party leader often wore a yellow tie and so, despite his personal difficulties, he clearly must have been a member of the superior house - St Davids! I remember the weekly house meetings where those who had brought shame on the house with the number of black marks were encouraged to improve for the benefit of all. Of course membership of a successful house bought rewards - namely the end of term or year outing to the cinema in Bournemouth.

The food at Durlston was pretty poor I seem to remember. Toast was a treat that only staff got for breakfast - bread and some, at times, pretty rancid butter or margarine and jam for the pupils. However, if you were quick you could nab some of the leftover toast from the top table once the staff had left. I also remember raiding the kitchen for bread and toasting it over the electric heaters in some of the classrooms. Actually I think I lit my first ever cigarette against one of those heaters. Two things I wouldn't encourage my children to do!

The opportunity for sports (or should I say the enforced participation) has left me with a lifetime love of sport and a healthy respect for the danger of turning ones back on someone armed with a

wet towel. I can't be sure, but wouldn't be surprised to find that one of the many scars on my body was inflicted by a quick flick of a towel! Then what seemed enormous communal baths in the boys changing room are I am sure long gone as they were deemed a health issue when I was playing rugby at university. The outdoor pool was fantastic and the slide was a real bonus. I was first taught how to turn a pair of pyjama bottoms into a floatation device and dive to the bottom of the deep end to retrieve a brick there by Mrs Barraclough(?). Weekends in the hot summer of 1976 were cooled by hours in that pool.

The matches against the other local prep schools on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons were a highlight of school time. Edinburgh House, Hordle House etc were regular rivals but I don't recall Durlston being a top sporting school and that a trip down the M27 to West Hill Park was likely to be followed by defeat at whatever sport was played - football in the autumn, rugby in the spring and cricket in the summer.

Outside of formal school time I remember hours spent in the grounds climbing trees whilst dressed in denim dungarees and wellies or our gym shoes - which had to be plain white. Anyone whose parents tried to get any gym shoes of a slightly higher quality such as Dunlop Green Flash or, heaven help us, trainers was taken to get plain white plimsolls from Woolworths. Exeat weekends were eagerly anticipated as were the film nights which were probably programmed for once or twice a term. However the most eagerly anticipated event most weeks was tuck time. In my first year or so we arrived at school with a big tin full of pick and mix which was safely stored in the tuck shop next to the playroom. We were then given our ration of sweets, with no doubt the senior boys taking their cut, from our own tins. Later the school issued out standard amounts - normally a Mars bar and a packet of Polos or similar. This was our equivalent of tobacco in a prisoner of war camp and was currency that could be traded.



Ascension Day 1974. Greg Boucher, extreme left, Mark Page & David Chapman standing on the left bank, Across the stream - Peter Boon, Jeremy Tanner, Paul Gahan, Peter Dredge, Simon Lee (arm on Dredge), David St Maur Sheil. The boy on the extreme right standing at the back next to Simon Lee is Stephen Gresham and the boy very extreme right (can't see his face as he is looking at David St Maur

Sheil) is John Gibbons. PY is collecting rubbish. Sitting on the left bank (knees slightly bent) is John Paddock with Noel Carter standing on his right (ie the two nearest to PY). Joff white is bent over standing in the stream with Baird looking down also standing in stream two other boys further in the background on the left bank are Charles Alford standing looking at Joff White and Michael Busher kneeling furthest in the background

Not all memories are entirely happy. I still remember the casual violence and bullying that was part of school life in the 70s - I don't for a minute suggest that Durlston was any worse than other schools, just that times and accepted mores have changed. The stern discipline of the Headmaster, Ian Onslow, who was not afraid to use the cane is a relic of the past and we were probably the last generation of Durlstonians to suffer corporal punishment as I believe he retired a couple of years after my year left. However it did prepare me for school in Scotland where the belt was a common punishment dealt out in public - at least the canings and, much worse, the humiliation of tears were in private at Durlston. There was also the homesickness of young children away from home for the first time. Some who actually went further than the musings of various escape committees and made a bolt for the train station usually to be picked up within a few hours.

Although a strict disciplinarian, Mr Onslow was not unapproachable and could even be kindly. I remember that as prefects we were invited into the Headmasters lodgings on a Saturday night to stay up late and watch "Tales of the Unexpected" or "Hammer House of Horror" with a mug of tea and a biscuit.

I have not kept in touch with anyone from Durlston so I cannot pass any news on any ODs. Names from my year that I remember were Kit Rogers, Mark Tremlett, Adam West, Sophie Pattman, Fry, Norton, Bentley.

Durlston has clearly left a great mark on me. I remember much more of it than my subsequent school - probably because as a full boarder I really did spend my formative years there. Much as the Jesuits say - if they are given a boy of seven they will have him for life (or something to that effect) - I think Durlston has shaped my life one way or another. I am glad that the school continues to flourish and wish it a successful bicentenary in the future.

As an indication of how indoctrinated I have been by my time at Durlston, on arrival we were all given a number that had to be on all the name tags attached to our clothes - which helped the matrons place clothes on the correct pegs after washes I guess. My number was 31. Since then I have always considered that 31 is my number - even more so than my RAF Service Number. Whenever I buy a lottery ticket it has to include 31. Whenever I change RAF postings and have to get a new Mess Bill number I always seek out 31. After Durlston I went to Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen followed by university and a degree in Business Studies. Following university I joined the RAF and have spent the last 17 ½ years flying over various regions of the world - strangely quite a lot of the Middle East! I am married with 2 daughters who I would gladly send to Durlston based on my experiences - unfortunately it seems unlikely that we would live near enough for that to happen.

Christopher Parkinson (Sep 75-Dec 80)

Chris Paterson



Pirates of Penzance November 1972

I have so many great memories of the early 1970's at Durlston...

Half the teachers were mad, and many were great fun. I remember pick up games of football in the cold, and inside the main hall in the rain. It seemed like we never had a moment, or wanted one, to rest!

Building forts from pine needles, and defending them from rivals. Those long "crocodile" walks when I managed to kick water up someone's back, and got a caning when they grassed on me!

I remember NC and those Gilbert and Sullivan musicals, Com. Holgate and his dog Porgan, Wing Com. Wasp, Col. Pidsley in science, who knew my father from the army and was I think nicer to me than I deserved! I imagine prep school back then was an ideal second career for retired military officers.

I remember PY and chapel services, Anne Keys (correct name I think...) in Art, and great team sports. Though I never made the first teams, I was always made to feel good about myself for representing the school. (Something that has stayed with me)

Who could forget learning to swim in the outdoor pool? The Ascension Day picnic, Sports Day, the summer term....great memories. In many ways I enjoyed it more than my public school experience afterwards.

Though it is easy to view the past with rose tinted glasses, I would send my children to Durlston Court in a moment were I living in the area. Though I know the set up is quite removed from those early 1970's school days.

Certainly hope to make it back there for a visit before I am too much older, and bring my US born children back to see where their father once sang the lead in the "Pirates of Penzance!"

Best wishes to everyone past and presently connected with the school,

- Chris Paterson ('69-'73)

Farid Shams - I remember when in the 70's



On a summer vacation in the summer of 1970, our parents made a special visit to Durlston Court School and they were sold on the idea to enrol my twin brother and I in the school for the next school year.

My twin brother (Hamid) and I were only 10 years old when my parents decided to pack our bags and board us on an international flight from Iran to England. I vividly remember the day we arrived at the school and how scared we felt.

With a very limited knowledge of English language we tried to communicate and make friends as soon as possible.



The first few weeks were incredibly difficult and over whelming, and it only got more difficult once then Headmaster "Mr. Onslow" decided to split us up and assigned my twin brother and I to different dorms and student groups. I recall different student groups wore different colour ties and competed against each other in sports and other extracurricular activities. The days and nights dragged on at first as we looked forward to weekends when we could go to Bournemouth and visit with my mother and sister.

It was a very difficult time before we started to understand the language and communicate with the other students. My twin brother and I only saw each other in classes and during recess times. It was about a month before we settled in and felt more comfortable. Our passion was playing football and we soon made many friends on the field. Sunday afternoons were the most memorable for me, when we all piled up in a small TV room and watched the English Premier league games.



After graduating from Homefield College (close to Christchurch) we moved to United States in 1978 and have lived here since. Back in 2002 I flew back to England for summer vacation and made a special trip to Durlston Court schools in hope of reminiscing my school days so many years ago. It was amazing to see the buildings, the dorms, classes and the cafeteria again. It all seemed so much smaller to me now than it did when I was only 10 years old. My biggest surprise was to find a mix of boys and girls attending the school now. I guess there is no longer a need to dress up the boys in girl attire to play in the yearly rendition of Pirates of Penzance!

I haven't had much luck remembering the names of the students in our class, but they all played a big role in my life and my memories of our school years (1971-1973) at Durlston Court. I hope to be able to visit Durlston Court schools again on my next trip back to England.

Farid Shams

James Coakes



James's 1st day at
Durlston

My life at Durlston began in the pre prep, which I remember as a very happy little school.

Our Headmistress was Margaret Vyse and she was always interested and kind whilst being suitably strict. We watched the 'big school' from pre prep with a mixture of interest and awe and the older larger pupils whom we occasionally saw marching around the sports fields, seemed very grown up and rather frightening.

One of the challenges of school is that as soon as you reach the heights as a member of the highest year (in which you consider yourself very wise) you are sent on to the next school where you start again in the lowest (where your best hope of survival is to keep your head down). Thus I crossed the field into the big school aged 8 and wondered what would become of me.

I have many memories of Durlston. P.Y.'s shack was the centre of life. Here we would congregate at break times swarming around P.Y. asking for tasks in return for a handful of peanuts or a bottle of Soda Stream fizzy pop. P.Y. had a wide range of different flavours and we were allowed to mix several together to make a unique concoction. It was here that I learned the important life lesson that most flavours will mix well together, but once banana is added the resulting drink will only ever taste of banana. The tasks handed out by P.Y. were to collect 200 daisies or dandelions or a bag of litter and the school grounds were always immaculate, probably more due to Aubrey's attention than our tasks.



The School Choir

As I write, more memories flood back; the boating lake, the whole school gathering to watch the first Space Shuttle launch, Ascension Day picnic and the library where we played Top Trumps during break and hoped we would not be caught. We were supposed to spend break time outside, even during the winter and wearing those shorts. Luckily we were never caught, the teachers never suspecting that they might find errant pupils in, of all places, a library.

The school was endowed with a variety of interesting trees that made for ideal climbing. The Boom Boom tree was squat and wide and had huge plates of foliage that could be lent upon. The first branch was quite a reach for smaller boys and I remember the feeling of shame when someone correctly accused me of being unable to climb the Boom Boom tree, as well as the feeling of achievement when I first heaved myself onto the lowest branch. It was fairly easy to get to the top from there.

Jacob's Ladder still exists. It is a fallen tree although still alive and not such an exciting or interesting climb as the Boom Boom. Still, it would occasionally be claimed as a base camp for some gang or other and become a focus of attention.

Between the pre prep and big school there was a line of very tall trees; I think they were firs of some sort. Climbing to the top of these was a real challenge and those who had reached such dizzy heights were talked of in hushed tones.

When I eventually decided to attempt this challenge it was a break time and I went alone. I thought that I might chicken out at some stage and I did not want the ignominy of a witness. I did make it to the top, or nearly at least as the branches became very thin and I was not. The next time I went up I made sure that others were present and it was a great moment of achievement.

Officially boys were not allowed to climb the trees and if one were caught one could expect a beating. However, most of the time our tree climbing antics were overlooked. Young boys should climb trees, it's important.

James Coakes

Justin Morley remembers.....



Mud, tuck, sport and memories.

Ah yes, Durlston Court circa 1970's. I remember the start of term and lugging my big blue trunk with Morley 18 written on it up to my new dorm at the start of term. The smell of polished floors, mud and disinfectant. We had to go in via the smelly boot locker room that was next to the Jubilee entrance, it stank of mud as that was where we kept our "gum boots" as they were called. I used to be full of dread when it came to going back to school as it was then a boarding school. Being settled into your new dorm, then finding your standard issue metal bed and saying goodbye to your parents, often a quivering lip and a tear or two. Watching their car driving away down the long drive that seemed to stretch for miles. Then catching up with holiday news from your school chums and swapping sweets and getting back to boarding school life and gossip.

We had long velvet grey shorts in the winter that stopped at your knees and grey socks that came to your knees. Your legs got quite cold in the winter so we used to stand against the radiators (when they were turned on) to keep warm, "you will get chill blains" the teachers would shout at us. We also had a summer uniform and were allowed to wear "Muffti" as I think it was called? on Sundays. These were dungarees and were classed as "casual clothes" although we all wore them and they were blue. We used to make underground camps and climb trees in the school grounds, which were a lot bigger in those days where the new housing estate now stands.

I remember runs along the cliff at Barton On Sea and playing Rugby in all weathers, rain or snow, well I stood there shivering and looking at the ground often to be screamed at to "wake up Morley". I hated all sport and was a bit of a "wet blanket" as they used to say in those days, during cricket I would day dream in the long grass as fielder plotting my escape, only to be screamed at to run after the ball. PY, the school vicar was the best teacher and used to give us peanuts and soda stream drinks in return for doing small tasks around the school such as picking up litter or cleaning the chapel. I remember the feared headmaster who put terror into every boy. He used to wear brown plastic glasses, sports jackets with arm patches on the elbows where the material had worn out and red Doc Martin shoes that squeaked when he walked down the corridor. They acted as an early warning alarm that he was coming, he also smoked a pipe so you smelt him first then saw him arriving. We all had our own pegs in the changing room with our school number above them and kept our slippers next to our bedside tables.



The terms seemed like years to us boys and I remember always looking forward to weekends at home that only came 2 or 3 times a year, we did however have very long summer holidays that could last 7 weeks or more. It was not all hard times, although the food was really awful we had Tuck (a Mars bar and Polos) and a cooked breakfast of sorts on Sundays, (a cold fried egg and maybe a sausage) we were also allowed to watch TV sometimes, classics from the 70s such as The Professionals, The Guns of Naverone, Tales of the Unexpected or Saturday Swap Shop etc often watched in PY's shack. This was where he lived and it was a wooden hut in the school grounds near the school chapel.

The school was a harsh environment by today's standards but it did us good. It taught you right from wrong and I think it installed a sense of "others" rather than just the self that seems to be the sad vogue these days. Many of the teachers worked at the school for 20 years or so and gave everything to it. Although I hated it at the time, I had some good friends and missed the place when I was later dispatched to a public school that was the big wide world and an even harsher environment in which to cope in. Durlston Court was like a strict but loving parent that looked after you but also told you off when you were wrong. I am now convinced that we can all learn a lot from that these days. About the only thing I learnt was how to do hospital corners on a bed, polish my shoes so they shone and good manners, I suppose good learning by many standards. I will not forget my time there albeit only 3 years!

Justin Morley Durlston Court circa 1970's.

The School Day, circa 1970' – "Middle aged memories"
by Justin Morley, DC, peg 18.

I remember being woken up by the school bell at 7.00 or 7.30 every morning when I was at DC as a boarder in the mid 1970's. Bunty Mills (the matron with glasses) would fly in the dorm and fling open the windows telling us all to get up in a shrill voice "wake up boys" . I would get out of bed, put on my standard issue M&S slippers and cord dressing gown, grab my wash bag and make my way down the corridor to the cold washroom to wash my face and clean my teeth. We would make our beds making sure we had "hospital corners". Once a month or so we would put "top sheet to the bottom, bottom sheet to the wash" This was our bed change training installed into us by the

matrons and had to be followed, our beds would then get checked for quality. I still remember how to make hospital corners.

Once dressed, we would all then queue on the stairs before breakfast, waiting to be told by the headmaster Mr. Ian Onslow or Major Elevery to go into the dining room. We would get for breakfast a kipper full of bones or a greasy bit of old bacon full of gristle; we would drink stewed tea from a giant metal tea pot. I remember the giant tea bag, I'm not sure if it was tea but tasted of floor sweepings from carpentry classes.

On some days at lunch time, a boy or two would be fed to the Onslow head table near the window and have the feared task of sitting at their table for lunch, where one would make polite small talk through gritted, shaking teeth. PY would say grace before each meal, although it seemed like a prayer to survive it. I think after breakfast we had chapel, but they may have been only on Sundays, I'm now 43 and time plays tricks on you! The morning would consist of various classes, most of which I was day dreaming in plotting my DC escape, We had classes such as Latin, French, English, RE (Religious Education) , geography, science etc. Art classes were the best, with Mrs. Keys who was a wonderful artist and a motherly figure to us all. Lunch would be an ordeal of lumpy warm potato and liver or an ancient lamb chop from a lamb that really was a teenager, washed down with plastic tasting water from a plastic water jug. Food plays a big part of my 1970 DC School memories.

In the afternoon, we would play games, (subject to the season) such as rugby , cricket, football or hockey. I was not a sportsman, so I found this to be an ordeal of endurance. To make matters worse, in the winter we had to wear shorts without any underpants on underneath, why? I don't really know why. I remember standing freezing (dressed in my black shorts with white match stick legs) on a hard frosty rugby pitch with major Elevery screaming at me, "wake up Morley run with the ball". I remember before games, having to walk through the "boot locker room" that stank of mud and smelly feet . Our "spikes" as they were called, were kept there in wooden boxes along the walls with our name tag number on them. Of course, you could never find your boots because other boys would throw them about on the floor or swap them for a laugh; this resulted in you arriving late for the game where you would then get a clip round the ear or a detention. I remember spending hours in detention writing 100 times "I must not be late".

Tea or "supper" was a similar affair to all the other meals. On some afternoons or evenings we had clubs such as stamp collecting, train railways (tiny trains on little tracks) run by Mr Onslow, fly tying also run by Mr Onslow as he liked fly fishing . After tea, we would roam the grounds in our standard issue grey shorts making camps or climbing trees. Bed time was prompt at 8.00 or 9.00. Weekends were long and boring, although I remember on some Saturdays, being allowed to watch "The Professionals" or "The Guns of Navarone". On Sundays, the food standard went up one notch and we sometimes got a kind of stringy roast beef. We could wear casual clothing on Sundays; this was called "Muffy" why I don't know. It consisted of light blue dungarees and "gum boots" . It was important to only have one button done up on the strap of the dungarees or you were called a girl.

On Sundays, we would also have letter writing, where we would write home using our standard issue writing sets that consisted of leather (fake leather W.H Smith issue) bound zip up case. On side was a pad with an underline guide that you used to write in a straight line, on the other side

envelopes and in the middle a fountain pen. I was always given one each Christmas much to my horror as I knew it was for school. Letters were then checked for content and given to the "Master or Sir" for sending once he had edited them. Stamps had to be positioned nicely in the right hand corner of the envelope.

In the summer, days were long and hot, in the winter, days were short, cold and dark. We would often stand against the old radiators in the classrooms to get warm legs. School days were strictly run by the bell. The bell was on the wall outside the "Headmaster's Study". It was a brass bell that would be pushed for about 10 seconds and was very loud; you could hear it up a tree in the school grounds. The headmaster or one of his teachers would press it at set times to follow the old school clock that was on the wall above the headmasters door. If you were late you got a pulled ear or a beating. We had music lessons on some days, taught by a teacher who wore very thick glasses and had a passion for music. He would play classical music and we would then chat about it although I had no idea what he was talking about. His room was in the roof of the school on got very hot in the summer. On Saturdays PY (the School Chaplain) would give us peanuts and a fizzy drinks and we would roam around the school grounds looking for illegal activities, such as climbing trees or making underground camps.

I have very vivid memories of my days there. The school was glued together by strict discipline, custom and routine and I don't think it did me any harm but helped to shape me into the fine upstanding man I am today. At the time, I did not enjoy it so much, but it was a school set in a different time and followed a society that is totally unrecognizable by today's standards. We should have schools like that again; I think it would solve many youth problems that the UK now faces.

Marcus Gibson Remembers

We had a very good science teacher, with a white moustache, whose name escapes me who was a former Gloucester Regiment officer in Korea, and in addition to 'Commander Holgate', we had a brilliant History and Geography teacher named Youle, I believe, a tall man with a voice that could be hear on Barton beach. He inspired me to become interested in those two subjects, and eventually to become a writer and journalist.

I remember headmaster Onslow well, but perhaps with mixed feelings. On Youle's last day at school on Speech Day he was about to get up and deliver a farewell message but Mr Onslow stood up and declared the event was over - much to the astonishment of all present. Youle sat there stunned, with notes still in his hands.

I do remember trips to cinemas in Bournemouth, making dams in streams in the New Forest as well as the excellent riding school, and often hilarious hockey and rugby matches against Hordle. We also had a perfectionist choirmaster who was terribly shortsighted but who had tremendous hearing capabilities. His room was far along the corridor from my top floor dormitory but no matter how quietly we whispered - he would hear us - and roar his warnings!

Of the old boys mentioned, I was acquainted only with one named Elvery, son of a teacher perhaps, who was one or two years younger. He was an observant and perceptive person, I remember.

Marcus Gibson

The address by Pat Cox Summer 1974



I am just going to try and give you a small history of the School, which is 71 years old. I shall be quoting from the Durlston song, which was destroyed in the Fire and so hasn't been sung since 1947.

*Nineteen hundred naught and three,
Edward was King o'er land and sea,
To Durlston Hill with its bay below,
The place where the breezes always blow,
Came the first of the Courtiers O!
Courtiers O! Courtiers O!
Came the first of the courtiers O!
Three and twenty Courtiers O!*

Yes, in 1903, Atkinson, our founder, who was affectionately nicknamed 'Banger' (because he occasionally used the cane) moved twenty three boys, mostly Doctors' sons from Highgate Junior School, where he had been Head to Swanage, to a building which he nicknames 'Durlston Court'. The name being taken from the famous headland between Swanage and Weymouth. G.T.A. was a great character, a Scholar at St. Pauls and Magdalen, Oxford, with a terrific sense of humour and he took as the School motto, 'Erectus non Elatus', Which means" Upright not swanky', though he said the best translation was 'Chests not Tummys .

*Nineteen hundred naught and four,
Greyband white and well to the fore
With bat in hand and ball at toe
All falling in when the bugles blow.
Cheery Sportsmen on we go!
On we go! On we go!
Whether our side be winning or no*

Always ready to face the foe.

The School was enlarged now to take about sixty. And then came that terrible '14 - 18 War' and Mr. Atkinson's only son, who had been Head of Marlborough, was killed at Mesopotamia. The east-end window at St. Aldhelm's Chapel, now in the Swanage Parish Church was put up as a memorial to him and to the other Old Durlstonians who lost their lives in the War. About half the School was killed in this War.

In 1926, I joined 'Banger' as Joint Head. Now, my six brothers and I had very little brain and all but one of us had to go to Choir Schools, where we tried to win Senior Scholarships. I had a public beating at Magdalen Choir School. I am going to tell you this story because it shows you how different Schools are today from what they were then. I was a very small ten year old and I had just started Latin and on a lovely day I was kept in a whole afternoon trying to put into English 'Reges amant Reginae' and I couldn't do it; so I was put down for a whacking on the Monday afternoon. Now there were boys from 8 to 19 in the Choir School those days and 120 were present at my execution. And the Headmaster, I remember, took off his gown and waistcoat. I can't remember whether I had six or eight but they were jolly hard ones, I can tell you that! My next elder brother waited for me outside Tuck Shop in the High Street at Oxford treated me to a penny worth of Pear Drops, which produced twenty! And suppose that today they would give you about half of one!

I joined Mr. Atkinson in 1926, as Joint Head and Mr. Ellis became my partner when G.T.A. left. Mr. Ellis became my partner and first class colleague for nineteen years until he became Headmaster of Orley Farm. Mr. Fawces, who had been with me at Bradfield, then became my partner until he became Headmaster of Winton Church Hall.

Our famous picnic at Swanage was held at Studland. Every boy in the School took a piece of string with a bit of raw meat on the end, weighted by a stone and we went and caught crabs. Ten prizes were given for guessing how many we were going to catch, usually between eight and nine hundred. Visitors were terribly intrigued as "to what we were doing".

'Banger' retired in 1928 but he went on correcting all our Common Entrance Papers, until he was over eighty. In memory of the founder we added a new wing, the Atkinson Wing, two dormitories: and a large Playroom. Our numbers went up from 49 to 82 in between the wars, despite the fact that we were a School in a road and that about half the Schools of England closed at that time.

Miss Dawson joined us in 1936 and in my humble opinion, was the best teacher of English and History we ever had. She is the only lady member of the I.A.P.S.

Those of you who are keen on Sport may like to know that just before the Second World War, we played twenty-four matches at Soccer, Rugger and Cricket and won the lot! Very bad for us! There were five of the same boys in all those three teams and one of them, Mr. Croll, who owns the Sports Shop here at New Milton, had an average of 93 for his last term at Cricket, before he went to Charterhouse.

Mr. Ellis's nickname was very easy. Ellis became Eli. We couldn't have the lesson about Eli and Samuel from that day forward. Mr. Hawkend, our Maths master became 'Hawkeye'. But it is a curious thing that the boys took ten years to see that my name was far the best of all - 'Cockeye'! I had often used it as a nom de plume; so from '36 onwards that was what I was called.

Then came the Second World War and Worth near Swanage became a special Radar station. 75% of our parents voted that we should move – 25% that we should stay. We moved to Earnshill near Curry Rivel with Mrs Combe, whose husband had been killed with the Coldstream Guards at Dunkirk. We had a marvellous time there. No one could have been kinder than she.

We were the first school in England to have a 'Spotters' Club'. We never lost a match against the Observer Corps. One of our boys, Wolley Dod, who, I think got a Scholarship to Rugby, could take 600 planes from any country in the world and in three seconds he would guarantee for a shilling that you couldn't defeat him. He was never defeated. It was incredible! Russian, Japanese, the lot... he knew them all. He actually taught me to spot 200!

We used to send a bus round to collect boys and girls. Meanwhile Durlston Court, at Swanage, was taken over by the army. By the end of the war they had done about £4,000 worth of damage. Suddenly we heard of Furze Close, from Mr. Stubbs. So in September '45 we all moved here. Durlston Court, Swanage, became a Miners' Convalescent Home and it is now a Hotel.

*Striving all to play the man,
Trying to finish what others began,
We'll aim at high and scorn the low,
Hating swagger and vulgar show.
What's your motto Don't you know?!
Don't you know? : Don't you know?! -
Erectus non elatus O!
Quoth the Durlston Eagle O!*

This is the story of one boy who was recommended for the Victoria Cross. Mark Hollis was a big boy of twelve - a very doubtful Common Entrance Candidate. His father, Sir Claud Hollis, was Governor of Zanzibar and he asked if Mark could: go out to Zanzibar with a Tutor a term before Mark took Common Entrance. We were a bit nervous but we let him go. His first postcard to me was:

*Dear Sir, Having a super voyage.
There was a Derby sweep stake yesterday.
I won it! Drinks all round!*

He passed the exam and had a most distinguished career. He was Head of the Corps and had three years in the Rugger team. Afterwards he got a Junior International cap for Scotland.

When the Sultan of Zanzibar came over to England, Mark wrote to him and asked him to come and inspect the Corps. The Sultan brought a gold studded cane for Mark, as his present. At the end of the inspection Mark said, "It is usual for royalty to ask for a week's holiday. Whereupon the Sultan asked for it and they got it. So you can imagine that Mark was pretty popular.

When Mark left Sedburgh, he joined a Highland Regiment and went out to North Africa where he had a most distinguished career. In the Battle of Mount Keren, where the Italians put up their greatest fight of the War, Mark Hollis was the first person on the top of the mountain. He was mortally wounded. When his sergeant wanted to carry him back he said, "No, I'd rather be buried where I am." Well, that's a Durlstonian!

In 1947, Sunday, May 17th. Evening Chapel. After it some boys said, "There's smoke coming out of the top of the School! Twenty minutes later the School was burnt to the ground. Apart from the Private End, most of Bradfield Dormitory and the far end of the Dining Room, the rest absolutely flat. Today it would have cost at least £100,000 to rebuild it; then it cost over £2,700. The worst tragedy was that one of our very nice domestic staff suffocated in the smoke. The local fire engine - wouldn't start and instead of taking four minutes it took twenty minutes to come. It looked like the end of the world, but thanks to our Parents and Old Boys, we were rebuilt within a year, almost to the day.

During the rest of the term we paid back two thirds of the fees to every parent. Mr. and Mrs. Roper of Forde Abbey, whose boys were here, took seventeen boys and a master and Matron. The Radlett parents did the same, with Mr. Nelson Wright in charge. I had about seventy boys at the Grand Marine for the rest of the year. We walked to and fro twice a day. The boys worked it out as twenty-two miles a week! I never heard a complaint.

Mr MacLellan, who, fortunately for us, was very well insured, added two classrooms, two dormitories and doubled the size of the changing room.

Sad to say my book of funny stories was burnt in the fire but I am going to tell you one or two that I can remember. The first one happened at St Cyprians and all the staff had to teach Scripture on Sundays and usually the boys had to learn the Collect off by heart. But, on this occasion Mrs. Vaughan-Wilkes said to me, "Pat, I want your boys to write something". So I said, "Write a few lines on the Pharisees". This boy, aged ten, who afterwards became a famous racing motorist; and was killed at Brooklands wrote "The Pharisees were a mean and stingy lot. One of them showed our Lord a penny and our Lord said, "Whose subscription is this? ". I gave him full marks and underlined the word subscription. He said, on Monday, "Oh Sir, frightfully decent of you but why have you given me full marks? "Well, honestly ", I said," If Jesus had been correcting it I think he would have given you a bonus".

The other story was connected with this School. A tiny boy, nicknamed very aptly 'Burrow Beetle' was chosen by Miss Dawson to read the first lesson in the Carol Service. But as he was so small we had to get a special stool to raise him high enough. He read the lesson extremely well. At the end he bowed to the altar and said, " Thanks awfully God".

In 1953 the Jubilee Entrance was built. It was our fiftieth birthday, our Jubilee. Mr. Sheffield did the architecture as his gift and many others helped.

In 1965 I retired after one term short of forty years. We had had three homes and we had been happy in every one of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Onslow joined me in 1953: Major Bevis in 1959 and Miss Mills in between those two.

Many a minster far renowned
Sprang from stone of Durlston ground,
And Durlston boys as the ages go,
Shall build up a name that will always grow,
See to it! Durlston Courtiers O!
Courtiers O! Courtiers!*

*Loyal and true through weal or woe
Are the Durlston Courtiers O!*

(* Swanage is famous for Purbeck marble and a tremendous number of churches in this area are built of Purbeck marble.)

You can imagine what a joy it is for me to see the School going from strength to strength. As you look round this dear little Chapel make up your mind when you leave that you will never let England go in for another war. I have lived through three! You may say, "What's the first One?" It was the Boer War. I can remember my father giving me two shillings after the Relief of Mafeking.

I wish you all the best of luck. I have tried to do a fifth verse for the Carmen but I am asking you to finish it.

*Nineteen hundred and seventy four,
Grey and white, still well to the fore.
With Pre-prep now and kindergarten
Our rebuilt home is here at Barton.*

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER AND DURLSTON



Pat Cox and some pupils look at a sundial at Earnshill

I thought old Durlstonians who remembered my father would like to be 'filled in' on a little more of his early life and the memories I have of Durlston in its three homes.

Pat was a Devonian born, and bred. His father, schooled at Blandford Grammar School and Cambridge went into the Church. His first 'living' was Georgeham in north Devon and from there he went to Lynton. Pat was the 6th of 7 sons, with a sister the youngest of all.

He was educated firstly at Magdalen Choir School at Oxford with his elder brother, Stephen. Two others went as Choral Scholars to Kings, Cambridge. From Oxford he went on to Bradfield, where, of course, he got his colours for cricket, fives and soccer. He was in one Greek play when he was fairly

junior, but even in the last years of his life could perform his one speech with great feeling, and then tell us he never knew what it meant!

He went straight into the Army to a commission in the Durham Light Infantry and straightaway into active service. Twice wounded he was transferred to the Grenadier Guards - again in action and became a Prisoner-of-War at a camp in what was then called the Polish Corridor. The end of the war brought him home at not more than 5 stone.

Pat's father was by that time Parson of Dartington. My mother's family had retired from Liverpool to Totnes. Helen and Pat married in 1920. At the time Pat was delighted to get a job as a clerk in his father-in-law's Shipping Broker's office in Liverpool (Broderick, Leach & Kendall). He said the only useful accomplishment he learnt in his short-lived business life was doing accounts! He certainly managed without a secretary the whole of career as a headmaster!

My brother was born while they were in Liverpool, but Pat then got his wish to go to Cambridge where he got a degree in history and law. I was born while he was up at Jesus and was baptised in the Chapel. He was a member of the Hawkes Club and the footlights where he acted with Jack and Claire Hulbert. I think it must have been there that he had his voice trained by a well-known singer called Plunket-Green. He had been a fellow choirboy at Oxford with Ivor Novello.

From Cambridge he went as an Assistant Master to a prep school at Eastbourne called St Cyprian's. From stories he told us, we gathered the school was then run by the formidable Mrs. Wilkes, rather than he husband. Their son went on to be Warden of Radley, years later.

It was there he met up with Jack Ellis with also a good voice and a love of Gilbert & Sullivan.

Pat joined G.T. Atkinson as a Partner I think in 1922. We lived in a house halfway up Park Hill, almost next door to St. Aldhems Church. It was there that my sister was born in 1926. By that time Jack Ellis had joined the staff and when G.T.A. retired Pat asked Jack to be a partner and also Leslie Fawcus with whom Pat had played cricket at Cambridge. Both Ellis and Fawcus became Headmasters of their own prep schools. Jack Ellis at Orley Farm and Leslie Fawcus at Bilton Grange.

My memories go back to my sister's birth when I would have been 3½. We must have moved into the school building when I was about 5½ because we had a Governess called Pearly Slade for a short time before I was allowed to go into the Junior House playing cricket and football in the junior playground. At some time before that I remember having my tonsils and adenoids out on the kitchen table in the school sanatorium!!

But at the age of 9 I was banished to Sentry Fields just opposite - a small girls boarding school run by 2 spinster sisters. The girls shared Sunday services with the boys at St. Aldenhams. After 2 years at Sentry Fields I went off to St. Mary's Caine where I stayed until 1940.

What are my memories of Swanage? As I get older they seem to get more vivid? A lifelike Guy Fawkes being marched up on a sort of tumbrel to the Lower Field followed by the whole school. Roller-skating in the playgrounds. The boys tree huts in the Lower Field. Match teas sitting watching cricket on the Upper Field with a delicious strawberry and cream sponge cake from the Rose House Tea Rooms, served for tea.

The lovely walk up the rough pathway through pine trees to the Belle View café near the lighthouse. School picnics at Studland riding in a charabanc. Standing out in the dark street in January watching the Junior House in flames 3 days before the start of term. The fire was started by mattresses and blankets being aired before an open fire! Sneaking 'left-over' food up the wooden backstairs to the Prefects at the end of term! My sister and I playing mixed doubles with John Shelley and Malcolm Stewart.

Then the move to Earnshill in July 1940. I missed the last two weeks of my last term at St. Mary's because my mother suddenly telephoned the Headmistress saying that she wanted me home to help with the move.

What a wonderful home Earnshill was for Durlston, and so well described by Rowland Whitehead. The stables became the changing room; the landings, form rooms. The beautiful main rooms - dormitories. The huge pictures in the latter had been well covered with safety covering. Alas not the family portraits on the stairways. It was discovered after the first term that some small boy could not resist poking a pencil up some poor Combe or Colthurst's nostril!

Outside the wonderful topiary made and nurtured by Shaunagh Combe's father-in-law. The Orchid house contents had been removed elsewhere. Not the peacocks who strutted about on the front lawn — however, they only lasted a few weeks of the first term.

My son David was born in Taunton and as I was homeless we spent the first three months of 1945 at Earnshill. I had got to know Shaunagh Combe well by then and she kindly put me up in one of her spare rooms and she became one of David's godparents. Geographically it wasn't easy. I found myself carrying pails full of nappies up the Private Stairs, across a form room of grinning little boys and down into my parents private rooms! My wedding banns were called in Isle Brewers Church, but I never heard them as I was serving in the WAAF.

1945 was the year of 'moving. David and I were with my in-laws in Whyteleaf when my father-in-law moved to take up his final living in Newbold Verdon in Leicestershire. I remember hearing that the war was over on the veranda outside the Vicarage drawing room. David and I stayed with them until August when I returned to Earnshill for the move to Furze Close. Marjorie Dawson and I were the last out of Earnshill - just as my mother and I were the last from Durlston at Swanage!

The only thing I remember vividly in those first 2 or 3 weeks at Barton was a team of teachers and myself scraping the sticky tape off all of the windows. It was Nelson-Wright's first term as Chaplain, soon to be known as Smelly Nelly!! - poor man but he was a good teacher and I believe he took the scholarship boys off to Forde Abbey after the fire so that they would not miss any teaching.

I was in New Zealand when the fire took place, and years after I was told by a member of Durlston staff that it was my mother's courage that - supported Pat to go on he felt that Durlston was finished. In 1952 I became a 'parent'.

Of course I was down often after Pat retired. My mother died in 1970 and after that I would come down to look after my father when Doreen went on holiday. She had started in the kitchen at Earnshill, with Miss Bates, the cook, at the age of 17 and remained at Durlston with my parents until

they both died - a wonderful record. I heard from Peter Yurburgh that she died at the beginning of 2004.

Hilary Bolton (nee Cox) December 2004.

Anne and Alex Keys Remember

Noel Clarke was Director of Music at Durlston Court from 1967-1978. Marvellous years, Noel produced outstanding concerts, operas and his chapel choirs were a revelation of what young children could achieve.

Noel was conducting a rehearsal of H.M.S. Pinafore on the playroom stage. Admiral Porter spoke these lines: "Tarry wait here – pray silence – Here comes your most engaging daughter."

The door slowly opened – who entered? A large dog. The whole cast dissolved into laughter!

The dog in question, had been watching a match with it's owners. The had a son playing in the game. The parents, (who were local) forgot the dog and he probably had wandered off to look for the boy (who was a boarder).

A clever dog indeed, to find the stage and make a remarkable entry!

Alexander Keys



Continuing the Opera Theme

Tremendous work was carried out behind the scenes: Stage manager – set builders – lighting experts – stage furniture and props, etc.

One particularly helpful boy (Alas! The name slips my mind) a very good stage hand was detailed off to climb some step ladder with a platform at the top. His job was to adjust the lights.

Suddenly a vivid blue flash – the lights went out – the boy luckily survived – the drama continued as a large tin of blue paint descended from the top platform of the ladder and poured all over Anne Keys below. She was covered in blue paint and looked as though she had had a blue rinse!

1969 saw a magnificent production of the Mikado. A grand and very dignified Emperor marched on to the stage. It was Christopher Onslow (Head Boy at the time). The audience were duly impressed.

In 1971, a wonderful production of The Gondoliers ran for a week, four or five performances.

Mr Onslow travelled all the way to Poole Hospital and collected an old operating trolley. This came back in the grey minibus. With this he built a spectacular gondola which sailed across the pit at the back of the stage. The audience saw this magnificent gondola, Casilda (played by Siân Keys) had to leap from the gondola in high heeled shoes and a beautiful elaborate gown. There was quite a gap between the gondola and the firm stage. Each time this happened we might have expected a disaster!

In 1976, Doctor Malcolm Tuddenham played the part of the 'Voice of God'. He had a wonderful, deep, melodic voice. This was in the production of Noye's Fludde and took place in New Milton Parish Church. He was cleverly hidden in the pulpit and rumour had it that he was allowed a bottle of sherry to lubricate his vocal chords.

In this production too, was Ian Burnham (teacher of Maths) who would crawl around beneath the level of the stage pushing all the stage furniture into place. He was dressed in P.E. Kit and an old pair of trainers.

In the summer of 1977, Mr Onslow challenged the Leavers to put on a play. Alex Keys produced the play and played the musical version on the piano (all at the same time!).

The Leavers really enjoyed it! Were you in the cast? Toad was admirably played by John Gibbons.

Edward Wilson built a super caravan that travelled across the stage drawn by a jolly old horse.

The boys wore appropriate masks. The scene was the River Bank (with Ratty's hole) and two willow trees.

The performance was so successful it ran to four performances and afterwards we celebrated with a modest party!

In 1977 Good King Wenceslas was an outstanding production and took place in the church. It was written by Alan Ridout especially for Durlston Court. A musical play, a fight between good and evil, King Wenceslas was good, his brother Bolislav was evil.

The music was an inspiration. A full account can be found on page 150 in the Centenary Book.

Painting the scenery seemed to go on for ever! An angel 12 feet high and the devil also 12 feet high.

The devil was fun to paint but the angel was very difficult as a nail protruded where the mouth was to come and I had to give the angel a pout to disguise this.

We also had four seasons, Spring and Summer to represent good, and Autumn and Winter was cold and evil.

What we ate in the 70's

Justin Morley's humorous memories of the School Menu mid 1970's - A la DC "IDO Cafe"

Starter

None

Main course choices**Dinner or Lunch**

Cold limp fish fingers x2-3, plum tomato laver hot x1-2, warm lumpy potatoes.

or

Beef "a la old cow", gravy brown, thick and suspect, vegetables: string beans (lots of string from recycled rugby boots), mushy peas glowing/radioactive green or cold cabbage.

or

Mince with different sauces cold, rice lumpy/sticky, carrots tinned with other very unknown tinned vegetables.

Pudding

Cake with unknown topping and warm lumpy custard, or leftovers from yesterday's tea mixed with jam or coconut/wood shavings.

Drinks (from the bar)

Water, tin/plastic jug flavour, very stewed tea from giant tea bag (unknown brand - could be from floor dust and wood shavings from carpentry classes)

Breakfast

Warm/cold porridge with salt, cold toast no butter, ultra/mega greasy sausage x1, egg x1 not sure from which bird (Sundays only) cereal with ultra creamy milk.

High tea

Boiling cup of cocoa, broken digestives Or sponge cake with jam on top or pineapple ring or jelly