

I remember the old building had a couple of classrooms where the doors were permanently locked, because the floor was so weak it would probably have given way if trodden on. There was also a Tuck Shop, which was run by 6th formers, in separate building. In there you could buy crisps, biscuits, Wagon Wheels and 'Fling', which was a fizzy drink. Across the road was a shop that sold filled rolls, so I would often buy one to have instead of the school dinner. That earned me the nickname 'Wally'. Across the other road there was a print firm and you would often see apprentices getting covered in all colours of ink as part of their initiation.

Because some of the rooms in the old building couldn't be used, there was an annex about 10 minutes walk away, past The Cut and Union Street. It was always a good excuse that have a quick drag from a cigarette when walking between the two.

We used to use the OXO tower for sightings using sextant out of window during navigation lessons. Once a week games were held for full afternoon at Moredon Playing Fields – to get there you had to get a tube ticket from the secretary (Veronica Crick) then take the Northern line from Waterloo station, south to Moredon. Then there was about a 10 minute walk from the station. We often had inter-school rugby matches on Saturday morning, swimming galas after school during the week, and athletics competitions on Saturdays. I played wing $\frac{3}{4}$ in rugby, swam the breaststroke and butterfly in swimming and threw the javelin and discus in athletics, all for the school. One year our Sports Day was held at the Crystal Palace track. Plans for an inter-watch boxing competition was abandoned after some consultation and thought.

Teachers I remember from those days are – Mr D P 'Deepy' Owens (maths), Mr Owen (woodwork), Mr G A 'Gappy' Parsons (maths), Mr 'Rosie' Rosenthal (french), Mr 'Basil' Young (chemistry), Captain Gibbs (navigation & seamanship), Captain Harding-Reynes (navigation & seamanship), Mr 'Foxy' Fowler (RE), Mr 'Harry' Grimwood (biology), Mr 'Bob' Scott (physics), Mr Ferber (music), Mr 'Jack' Challis (history), Mr 'Ralph' Dunkley (geography), Mr 'Sid' Hurst (games & PE), Mr Jenks (english), Miss Veronica Crick (secretary) Mr L A Lickerish (chemistry), Mr Coudry (lab technician)

Each year Prize giving/speech day was held at the County Hall, and one year we had Robin Knox-Johnson giving the prizes. I think that was the year he had sailed single-handed around the world. We would meet at the school and then march down the road in forms.

We also had a small launch called the 'Kings Reach' moored on the Thames. I can only remember going on it once. On that occasion a tug was approaching and sounded that he was going to port. Captain Gibbs ordered the lad steering to steer the wrong way, and we almost had a collision. The tug captain wasn't amused

As part of the seamanship lessons we had to bus to Surrey Docks, where we would row or scull a boat under the supervision of the navigation master.

The Headmaster in the old building was Mr Hugh Colgate. He was replaced with Mr Allat when he retired. The Deputy head was Mr Bob Scott

For our weekly swimming lessons we used to get a bus to just beyond the Elephant & Castle. I can't remember exactly where the baths were located

Mr 'Foxy' Fowler was a bit of a lad. He had an open top Sunbeam Alpine which he would drive at break neck speed, skidding into car park/playground. You can imagine kids running everywhere to get out of the way. Scarf around his neck. Peaked cap on. Pipe in his mouth. Big grin on his face

Captain Harding-Reynes smoked 60 Weights per day. He would send a lad out to buy them for him during the first lesson of morning. He would try like mad to hide his cigarette if the head came in the room.

Mr Colgate (Skully) always used to say same prayer each morning at assembly, as well as the Lord's Prayer.

One year we had a lad in the 5th form killed in a motor bike accident - It was a rainy evening when he rounded a bend and went straight into back of parked lorry. There was no counselling like today. Just an announcement at assembly, followed by a minutes silence.

Below is a short section from my life story, that I put together for my family.

London Nautical School (LNS)

At age 11 years (1960) I left the Whitmore Junior School to go to The London Nautical School. This is located in Stamford Street, south of the Thames, just across Blackfriars Bridge, (SE1) It is equivalent to a grammar school, and it was only under the influence of my last teacher, Mr Greene, that I was even considered. To get into a grammar school you were supposed to have passed the '11+'. I didn't even know that I'd taken the 'elven plus' until our head teacher, Mrs Burke, came into the class and called out a few names to accompany her to her office. When they came back my friend David Baker told me that he had passed the exam. Obviously then I had failed. Anyway, I still managed to get into the Nautical School. The London Nautical School was founded in 1915, as a consequence of the official report into the loss of the "Titanic". The plan was to train young men to be good sailors so that another disaster would not happen

I was told that I was the first boy from the Hoxton area that had got in. (Privilege). LNS (as it was called) was just like any other grammar school except that from age 13 you learned navigation and seamanship, as well as the normal subjects. The idea was once you had passed those two subjects at 'O' level you went on to become an officer in the merchant navy. Unfortunately (or fortunately) I failed both. As part of the seamanship course we used to go rowing in the Surrey Docks. One cold and frosty morning one of the lads was late, and as he ran along the quay side to get into the boat he slipped and fell into the water. Once he was fished out he had to be taken to hospital to have his stomach pumped out, and a few days later his normally navy blue school uniform turned white!

Having failed at being a sailor I decided to be a scientist instead, so concentrated on chemistry and biology. I had plans of, maybe, going to university and becoming a biochemist. So I took chemistry, biology and pure maths at 'A' level. Guess what. I failed again. Seems to be the story of my life.

LNS was a great school. Our uniform was just like a naval uniform. A navy blue 'battle dress' jacket and trousers, plus a white-topped peaked cap. (see below)



Me in my new school uniform



Me in the garden at home

There was a parade each morning where you were inspected by the watch captain to make sure you were clean and tidy. The school had four 'watches' or houses. First and second port, and first and second starboard. I was in second port, and managed to make Watch Captain before I left school, so I did the inspection of my watch each morning and reprimanded anyone not up to standard. Success at last?

To get to school on time I had to get a number 76 bus just around the corner from the prefab in New North Road at about 7:30 a.m. The bus used to go right through the City, so if I left it any later the traffic was diabolical and I would be late. You know, I think that every day I went to that school Mum gave me a packed lunch of cheese and pickle sandwiches. I also used to buy a bread roll filled with sliced gherkins in the shop opposite the school, which earned me the nickname 'Wally'. Maybe explains my frequent stomach upsets.

Believe it or not I was quite athletic in those days. I swam for the school in inter-school galas. My strokes were breaststroke and butterfly. I also used to play wing three-quarter on the rugby field and made the 'First 15', and I used to throw the javelin and discuss in athletic events. They didn't give medals in those days, just a paper certificate. I think I still have a few in the loft. I could throw the javelin quite a way (almost held the school record) and I remember one school sports day nearly impaling one of the masters. He was out in the field to see where the thing landed and would then hold the tape measure in place. Anyway, this time he wasn't paying attention. I was given the go ahead to throw. And as I let go and followed the flight path I could see that the javelin and the master were on a collision course. I was frozen to the spot as I watched it coming down. It must have missed him by about a foot. What a relief.

I enjoyed doing chemistry and biology at 'A' level. Our chemistry teacher was named Mr Lickerish. Absolutely true. He was into singing sea shanties, so if we wanted to get out of lessons we would goad him into singing a few for us. Just like the idiot he was he told us 'whatever you do NEVER mix iodine and concentrated ammonia solution. It's fine while it is still wet, but once it dries it becomes very unstable and explosive.' Fancy telling 16 year olds that. As soon as he was out of the lab we mixed some up. And he was right, it was very unstable. We ended up putting it in the lock of some kids lockers, so that it went off when they inserted the key. We threw a load of it along a corridor, so that it went off as kids walked over it, and the largest crystals we placed on the radiator at the back of the lab so that it went off during the next class. Drove everyone crazy. The worse part was that I left the remainder in my cupboard in the lab. A couple of days later when the technician was tidying up he opened the door of the cupboard and the whole lot went up. I got into a bit of trouble over that.

He also told us about 'the Thermite Process'. This uses some form of chromium to reach extremely high temperatures. He said we wouldn't do it in the lab 'just in case'. Just as well, because once it got started it

burnt a great big hole in the car park. He got into a bit of trouble over that.

For the chemists amongst you; The Thermite process is very useful for the welding of broken metal parts. When Aluminium powder reacts with iron oxide or chromium oxide, a large amount of heat is released and about a temperature of 3500oC is attained which is enough to weld broken metallic parts.



Another thing we did was to connect the gas tap to the water tap and turn them both on. There was more pressure in the water line so it would flow into and fill up the gas line. The next lad to attach a Bunsen burner then had his match rapidly extinguished as water gushed out instead of gas. Oh what fun!

Biology was taught by Mr Grimwood (Harry). He was a good bloke and had a very positive effect on me. He really encouraged me to do my best. In those days we still did dissection of animals, which I found fascinating. I was really proud of my dissection of a rabbits neck and chest. It was text book perfect, even if I say so myself. I also dissected a dog fish and embedded in clear acrylic resin (never knew what happened to that. Judy probably threw it away)

I was actually engaged to Judy while I was still at school. Can you believe that?



Me, Geoff Redman, Alan Bone and Dick Moor in the Prefects Room



Dick Moor and me enjoying a cuppa in the Prefects Room

