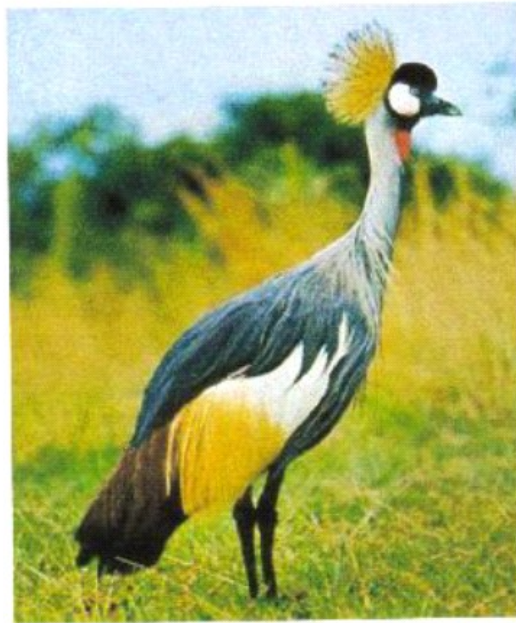


Treasured Memories.



PERSEVERE

Collected from past pupils,
Including Jay Pickford's Memories,
Compiled by Paula Allen.

Kitale School Memoirs – Memories contributed by Past Pupils and Staff Members

Compiled by Paula Burch (Allen) Edited and revised by Bridget Walton

It all began with a coffee at the Kirstenbosch Gardens in Cape Town, in 1995

It was a 'remember when' morning between Kitale School friends, arranged by Helen Nicholson (Bailie) who invited Liz Troward (Vorster) with her father, the now late **Dick Troward** and me (**Paula Burch (Allen)**) to meet our ex. Teacher **Bridget Doenhoff (Walton)** who was then holidaying in Cape Town.

Bridget writes that 'We chatted about so many ex Kitale Schoolites, and it seems that, between us, we keep in contact with a great many people. **Helen** suggested we start a Newsletter in the form of a 'Round Robin.'

1999 **Bridget** decided to try a new format to be sent to all addresses received through the snowball effect over the four years of Round Robins. Thus was born the Kitale School Newsletter.

Chris Hearne feels that if a successor to Bridget cannot be found, we have achieved our objective in putting friends back in contact with each other. (Thank goodness for **Alison Pickford Wardle** who has taken on the task – so we continue to move forward). The rest is up to individuals to continue communicating.

Many of these memories are from those Newsletters.

I checked up with my 90-year old sister in England with regard to the old Kitale School, which was situated in the first or second house about two miles from the Club on the left hand side of the Kitale Hoey's Bridge Road. My two brothers went to that school although I did not as I was in England at the time. They were all later at the new school when it opened (**Ernest Irwin**).

The school started with three Houses, **Eagle, Falcon** and **Hawk. Kestrel** was added later. While I was there, the school numbers shrank during the time of Kenya's Independence in 1964. Therefore the houses were again reduced to three. They were renamed Cherangani, Elgon and Nandi. Later they were further condensed to two houses: Cherangani and Elgon.

'Meetings with past pupils are very special for people like me for two reasons,' reflects **Bridget Walton**. 'The first is that beyond school, teacher and pupil become friends and are Able to converse. The second is far more humbling as I realize that most of those I taught in my 55 years in the profession have enjoyed the most successful careers and have reached such dizzy heights.'

Robert Richard wrote: 'I occasionally reflect on those far off school days. In retrospect, we

received an excellent education there although I could have managed just as well without the occasional caning. When I tell people in Israel what school discipline was like in Kenya, they can hardly believe that there used to be such a thing as corporal punishment. Discipline in schools in Israel is slack and this shows up strongly in later years.' **Bridget** commented, 'I wonder if this isn't part of a modern lifestyle.' 'To my friends today it sounds like somewhere straight out of Dickens.'

Derek Strange wrote, 'Reading the Kitale School Newsletters had given me enormous pleasure, revisiting the Kitale Society of my childhood in my mind, recalling some faces vividly, smiling at the thought of some funny incidents that have suddenly surfaced. I have spent hours with the puzzles of names and easily or only half remember faces that the Newsletter reminds me of, the whole spectrum of that remarkable community we lived in ages ago. Memory Lane. Most enjoyable.'

About the School Heads

Not much is reported about **Roy Barton**, who was the first Headmaster, except that he preceded Mr. Woods.

Jeremy Pickford wrote: 'I spoke with **Headmaster Woods** some years ago in London and he told me that when he took over the school there was a big book of rules. He gathered the kids together and told them that all the rules were being scrapped as he had only one rule and that was to behave as you behave at home. He was Headmaster when I was there; his son, Jonathan, e-mailed me pictures of pages from his Dad's photo album and, by snail mail sent a copy of his Dad's Memoirs entitled, 'The Lion and the Bicycle,' which I have enjoyed reading, especially descriptions of his early days in Kenya when he started a coffee farm before training to become a teacher. I think you would enjoy reading it – First World War stuff. He was injured at Pascendale (so?) and then flew Sopwith camels. However, war ended before he could fly in combat. (*Cost per copy is £10 and can be ordered through Jonathan at: jwoods@amajor.com*)

David Reynolds pays tribute to **Woody (Johnny woods)** who he said worked hard at achieving 'class' in his school through incorporating sport, including swimming, dramatic and gardening on the menu.

There are many from the **Johnny Woods** era, who have contributed to these Memories. **Bridget Walton** mentions that 'Johnny's name was on lips even in my time (1955 – 1963) and there will be many others who remember him.'

'**Johnny Woods** was Head when I first went there and I think **George Brooks** came in 1954 I will never forget the 'key-jangling Brookie.' He had his favourites and some he seemed to hate I was in the latter group and will never forget being caned. I still don't know why. He also beat me with a cricket bat at practice and I have never played cricket again after leaving Kitale.' So writes **Hugh Gladman**.

'I believe that a **Mr Brooks** took over from dad in 1954. He was notorious for banning tree climbing on 'safety grounds.' **Peter Woods**

A short quip from an unnamed ex-Kitale pupil remembers **George Brooks** thus, 'I can remember the keys. I would have been in a lot more trouble than I was if it had not been for his keys and the way he always played with them behind his back. It was a good warning signal – perhaps that is why he did it.'

Helen (Nicholson) Bailie recalls going to some Royal Visit in Eldoret and once was terrified because she was given a lift by **Brookie** to the Eldoret Show' – can you imagine?!!

A few details about **George Brooks** are contributed by his son, **Michael**.

- 'As a member of the Overseas Civil Service (Education) my father (Edward) was employed in Kenya from 1948 to 1964, in various posts i.e. At Nairobi Primary School (1948 – 49), the Arab Boys' Secondary School, Mombasa, (1949 – 54) and subsequently Kitale Primary (1955 to February 1964). He succeeded **Mr Woods**. He relocated, with my mother and myself, to the UK in December 1962 and returned to Kitale in April 1963 to complete his Civil Service contract by early 1964. **Biddy Crowcombe** acted as Head during his absence. She was then formally appointed as Head on George's departure. '
- Whilst we moved back to the UK, Whiskey and Soda were looked after by our family friends, Tony and Jessie Dale at their Cherangani farm. My father then arranged for them to be relocated back to the UK in 1964 for the mandatory six months veterinary seclusion in kennels (which they, understandably, hated). They then joined us in a village post office / grocers shop in the Cotswolds that my parents ran from 1965.
- As my mother's health was deteriorating during that year (Hip replacement) my father sold up and returned to teaching near Stratford on Avon in 1966. He retired from that in 1967.

An appreciation of the life of **George Brooks** from son **Michael**: 'My father taught in the UK before the war and, following his demob. Prospects in teaching after the war were not encouraging. So he joined the Colonial Service in the 'Teaching division' and was posted to Kenya, taking up his first appointment in Nairobi Primary School in 1949.'

A film about George Brooks was transmitted nationally on Channel 4 at the beginning of the 1980s.

Kay Yuille (staff) writes: **Edward George Brooks** – an Appreciation. 'I first met George when I came out to Kenya in August 1949. I was posted to the Nairobi Primary. At that time, George was in Mombasa, I think. I believe it would have been about the summer of 1950 when our paths first crossed. I did not particularly enjoy my time at the Nairobi Primary.

I was young and so naïve; George was kind and did me a lot of good. However, it was not to last long as I was posted to Kitale Primary School at the end of 1950.

Johnny Woods was Headmaster then, but he retired and, after a spell of acting Heads, George arrived to take up the helm in 1955.

It must have been a very difficult time for anyone to take over Kitale School. Johnny Woods was a charismatic character. To many, the name of Johnny Woods and Kitale School were forever linked. He was a very difficult act to follow. To their credit, George and Vera took over slowly. Everyone liked Vera. She took over the running of the office side of the school with calm efficiency. You never went to the office with a query but you came away with the right answer. With George, it was more difficult. There were pupils and staff members who did not take kindly to the new era. However, George, to his credit, went steadfastly about the task of being Head.

George has a dog of somewhat mixed ancestry called **Whiskey**. In the fullness of time, Whiskey mated with a rather nice little lady belonging to **Slice Jacobs** and George became the proud owner of a puppy. Being George's dog, what else could it be called but **Soda**. My Yorkshire terrier, **Freuchie**, and Soda became bosom cronies.

Speech Day came round and George issued instructions that Freuchie and Soda were to be shut up that afternoon. I do not know how each escaped and met up but meet they did. They appeared on the platform in the school hall and sat one on each side of George as he delivered his year-end speech. Both dogs were filthy. George did not turn a hair. I don't know what he said to Vera afterwards; what he said to me does not bear repeating.

In 1960, I was promoted to Senior Mistress and posted to Nakuru. I didn't meet up with George and Vera until we were all back in the UK again. I stayed with George and Vera when they had a post office-cum-General Store in Evesham and again when they were in Fowey in Cornwall. I looked forward each Christmas to long letters from George. Even after he began to have eye problems, he was a great letter writer. Kwa Heri George and Vera; I shall never forget you.

Locum Heads remembered **by Bridget (Doenhoff) Walton**:

Peter W Dowson acted as Head while George was on long leave in 1959, although only for a term. Sadly, Peter later died having suffered from dementia in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa. He was a real gentleman Head although after the death from cancer of his lovely wife, Jan, he became strangely religious. He also lost two sons, Roddy (appendicitis) and Jeremy, a journalist with the Argus, was murdered in Cape Town. One has to ask whether a father ever recovers from the loss of three members of his family. Tim, the youngest, lives in KZN although we have all lost touch.

Jen Ussher was another locum head. He acted during the 2nd term of 1959. Ken came with his lovely wife and daughter Lindsay. Sadly, Ken took a dislike to all of us teachers. He gave us all

negative evaluations to a point where the Department disbelieved him.

Of **Biddy Crowcombe, Michael (Brooks)** writes that she stood in as acting Head during his father's absence, from December 1962 to April 1963. Biddy was then formally appointed as Head after George's final departure in 1964. Biddy later retired to England where she and **Chris Gibson**, jointly, bought a lovely home in Devon. Bridget used to visit them there.

Derek Strange writes that **Biddy Crowcombe** is another vividly remembered figure in the gallery of characters.

Jeremy Kidner describes **Biddy Crowcombe** and **Kay Yuille** as women that are the 'Empire Breed,' touch, resourceful and caring. He mentioned that Biddy was quite terrifying.

Biddy died in 2003 aged 85 years. **Dee Rayner** describes her as 'a born and gifted teacher, although often terrifying to those who has not yet reached her class. Of my year, I think I was the first to detect a human face behind the littering spectacle lenses and the frequent refrain of, "You horrible little boy / girl."

Dee continues: 'It was only years later that I discovered that Biddy stood as guarantor for my improved behaviour when the Head, exasperated by my particularly vile phase of testing the parameters of rebellion, intended to eject me from the school. Realizing that much of my disruptive behaviour stemmed from boredom, she set up a programme that was both challenging and enjoyable, thus turning negative energies into positive. When, later, I wrote to her about this, Biddy dismissed it as "just a question of guiding you in the right direction and ignoring your little foibles," – a prime understatement.

'**Mary Macdonald** (sports) and senior girls' housemistress, gave a probably well-merited detention one Saturday to myself and several others. Ways and means of evading this were discussed, none likely of success. At last, an inspiration – I would ask Biddy for a detention, knowing full well that an academic detention would over-ride a dormitory one. "She'll never do it," said the others. Bur she did, bless her. She gave s tea at her house and then set us down to read 'Mind-improving' books doe the duration whilst we, unthinking, left her to handle ruffled feathers elsewhere. Biddy was probably amused by the pure gall of the request.

'Biddy's aim with the blackboard rubber was unerring. There was nothing like a direct strike to bring the inattentive pupil back to the lesson of the moment with a sharp jolt.

'Biddy and my parents remained close, lifelong friends; they adored her straight talking and her laconic humour. Biddy expected the best, whether leading from the front, pushing from behind or both. As is the way of the world, many of us failed to realize until much later the influence she had on our lives. Rest in peace, Biddy, you ran a wonderful race.'

Liz (Toward) Vorster recalls words of wisdom from Biddy: "Don't be afraid to make mistakes as you will learn from them."

On Revisiting the School

In 1997, **David Reynolds** revisited Kitale Academy with friends. He wrote:

‘Entry to Kitale Academy is a kilometre out of town along the main Eldoret road. There are security gates at the entrance, leading to the old playing fields towards the Senior Boys’ Boarding House.

David recalls ‘inter-galactic house matches and duels with the Hill School and other unfortunates.’ He mentions the main buildings, academic block, Junior Boarding establishment and extended dining room standing grand and unpainted and largely deserted. New alterations seem to be effected in the old school hall, now divided horizontally to form two floors, the upper being entered through the three old arches in the stairway. *(This seemingly was a temporary arrangement as no further comments about this alteration have been made since. Ed)* The old dining room still stands, walls unpainted and faded, roof peeling. However, inside were the old buck and horse, unused. The box was nowhere to be seen, possibly shopped for firewood. In the dormitory complex, the old sleeping rooms seemed untouched and the signs on the doors were as they used to be, leopard, rhino and giraffe.’

In 1999, **Charles Kerfoot** and **Vicky (Bell)** remarked, ‘It’s such a tragedy that we have all spread to other parts of the world. We revisited the school and was amazed at how little the school had changed – dirty but solid. You wouldn’t believe it; the old Honours Boards in the hall were still there. You can imagine what a thrill that was,’

In 2000, **Carol Cooper**, with her brother **David** and his family visited Kitale School. They were welcomed by the Headmaster and a couple of teachers and shown around. ‘We saw the Junior School and the classrooms where **Pa Chiarletti** taught us art and where we learnt our tables. The dormitories still have the same names. I saw where we cleaned our shoes and where we stood in line for finger-nail inspection before going in for meals.’

Carol saw the swimming pool and sports’ fields and the Hall with its many broken windows. She mentions that ‘The Honours Boards are still intact although not altered since 1965.

Carol writes about the huge welcome from the matron who stopped the children in the middle of lunch to announce that Carol was a pupil from way back. She wanted to show Carol everything, even the kitchens. In the dormitory she stopped and said, “Ah Cooper, your bed must have been about here and your clothes kept in one of these cupboards. We still keep the children in alphabetical order.”

The bathrooms and toilets all needed some paint and perhaps a good scrub. There were sheets drying on the grass in the quad. Carol wrote: ‘It’s remarkable that things have not changed that much in 40 odd years.’

Derek Strange and his son **Mark** enjoyed an unforgettable tour round some of the early scenes of their Kenya days, including a visit to Kitale School where he found new management to be

completely charming.

Michael Strange wrote in 2000 that he celebrated his 50th birthday in Kitale with a friend. 'There was an eerie feeling that everything has changed and yet nothing had. The school looked much the same, even to the beehive in the apex of the front pediment. We met the Headmaster in the grounds. He was very welcoming and also very proud that his school had done the best of all the Primary Schools in the recent secondary qualifying (ex KPE) exams. The school has huge numbers. We walked down to the Grasslands Research Station, which is still very much in business, and saw where we used to live.'

About 2004, saw a return to the school for **Eric Lusso**. He was welcomed warmly by the Headmaster. To his pleasant surprise, all was clean and neat.

Pauline kept a diary of events experienced at the 2009 Reunion. Hubby **Richard Statham** e-mailed the following feedback: 'the 2009 Reunion at Kitale School was an emotional occasion. We were able to relive the past by walking through the old buildings, memorising friends of yesteryear and visualizing all those special events and people that made those years happy and sad.

'I felt pride in the school when the Headmaster, **Mr Sawe**, told us of the contribution the Kitale Academy, now with 1000 pupils, was making to the future of Kenya. I also had to swallow the lump in my throat when I saw the enormous effort being put into trying to maintain the school buildings and furniture, this in spite of the tremendous financial pressure and no government grant. It was obvious that the old school motto still means a great deal to those current pupils and staff. I felt proud to have been a past pupil.'

Bridget (Doenhoff) Walton elaborated: 'Richard had made a heraldic shield of the school crest which he presented to the Headmaster, while the fund contributed also Nelson Mandela's Long Walk to Freedom, which was presented to the school's proposed new library, as a gift from the past pupils who were present on this occasion.'

Jane (Nicholson) Cox mentioned how delighted she was to see so many girls in Brownie and Guide uniforms, this indicating that the extra-mural activity started by her mother, **Margaret**, was still going strong. *(There is to be a reunion of the entire Nicholson family in Kenya in March this year as Margaret reaches her 100th milestone Birthday. I am told that there will be a lunch in her honour in Nairobi, at which the British High Commissioner to Kenya, among others, will be present. Margaret, I am sure all Kitaleites would wish to join me in wishing you a very happy special birthday.)*

Bridget concluded with the feeling that all those who had revisited the school would agree that the Head and Staff members are to be congratulated on running a school in which, considering the numbers, time management is excellent, the children are disciplined, extremely well-mannered and neatly turned out.'

In 2010, **Jenny (Woods) Eaton**, who had been asked to represent past Heads at the school's 80th celebrations wrote: 'The ceremony was held on the main playing field. The school grounds looked spotless, the main building painted with the bell fixed. The magnificent turn out included local MPs and dignitaries. Eight trees were planted near the gate and a stone was unveiled. The children put on a display which included excellent songs, dances etc. My Dad would have been proud to have been there and to see how far the school has come under its present leadership.'

Jenny mentions a cake measuring 6ft by 4ft in the shape of the school, with every last person getting a slice. To know that the school roll numbers 1850 children will give readers an idea of how many slices were cut.

Terry Davidson was also invited as guest of honour at the 80th Anniversary. He was asked to unveil the plaque at the entrance to the school. Invited too were Bishop Stephen Kewassis, Richard Eternesi (Chief Executive of Standard Chartered Bank) Hon Eugene Wamalwa (local MP) and Kiproni Kittony (Old boy and prominent business man) All at the school were present – the Board of Governors, staff members and pupils and quite a number of past parents and alumni. Terry concludes, 'I was impressed with the current Board of Governors and management, who seem to be making a real effort to revitalize the school and upgrade the facilities.'

Robert Richards returned to introduce his wife **Naomi** and his three children to the school. All were amazed at the size of the school and the extensive grounds, swimming pool included. However, what horrified them was the thought of leaving a six year old boarder at the school, with parents driving away.

About the Uniform

'Who can remember the lovely soft, faded uniform dresses of blue with white dots, with their appalling matching bloomer knickers,' asked **Diana (Fulton) Purchase**? 'The dresses had white Peter Pan collars, white cuffs to the short sleeves, button up fronts and a belt.'

'I do agree that the uniform was blue with white dots (guinea fowl material) and we had little white collars,' this from **Gay (Tilney) Prevost**.

Andrew Hillier is able to picture Kitaleites in their red, yellow, green or blue tee shirts with about 90% accuracy. Talk about 'Cock House' still unleashes negative feelings towards those cads in Falcon and Hawk who always seemed to win it (*As I recall, Andrew was in Eagle, ED*)

'Talk of uniforms reminds me that our socks were sent to the laundry tied in pairs by tape sewn to the toes. And, yes, I also remember how we had to shine our shoes at the end of each day. We each had our own shoe box; strangely, I loved cleaning shoes. We used to spit and polish.'

The Games we Played

Do you recall some of the games and crazes we enjoyed?

This might bring back some happy memories. Do you remember that we used to play marbles 'Nyabs' – followies and bananas?

Diana (Fulton) Purchase recalls: 'We used to play a game on the dining room steps. Every step had a name – Lady, baby, gypsy, queen, elephant, tiger, tangerine. You had to jump from whatever step you were on to the one that was shouted out and do this as quickly as possible. Why no one ever broke a leg playing that game, I shall never know. The ground was known as 'fresh air.'

Liz (Troward) Vorster reminds us of: 'Break time fads, marbles, jacks, pick-up sticks using porcupine quills, hoolah hoops, pogo sticks and stilts as well as roller skating. I recall **Kevin Northcote** roaring down the corridor and jumping over the steps leading to the Junior Block and the dining room, only to come a cropper and break his arm.'

Remember, we had a phase of walking on stilts? There were several skipping games. In one game we skipped to rhymes while two others turned the long rope.

How about this one? Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground; teddy bear, teddy bear, turn tight round, teddy bear, teddy bear climb up the stairs; teddy bear, teddy bear say your prayers; teddy bear, teddy bear, switch off the light; teddy bear, teddy bear say "Good Night."

I remember also that we used to play 'Antick,' and fling a ball over the games equipment shed in the area outside the pool; then we'd run round the shed as the two teams swapped sides without being caught or hit by the ball. If we were caught, we had to go to the ball holder team's side.

Richard Northmore writes: 'I have become a normal Englishman, although clearly with an unusual background. This week I made three 'chuggies' with my son, David. He had been given a physics project, which translated into 'chuggies.' Today was the day of the test. He got the only credits because my Kitale School chuggy design was the only one that worked! (For those of you who have forgotten, chuggies are little cotton reel toys which run on rubber band power.)'

Jay Pickford's Recollections

KITALE SCHOOL: Motto: **Persevere** School Badge: a Crowned Crane [Kavirondo Crane] with a star and incorporating the motto above [See cover page].

At Kitale School, I became known as **pugnacious Pickford** to the staff members. To the kids, I was **Picky** while to most I am probably, mercifully, forgotten. However, I have some memories, a lot of them not altogether unpleasant. What my memory has dredged up seems an odd collection of stuff that should have been better deleted from the mind's computer where it has been clogging up the channels of more important thoughts such as, 'Where did I put the car keys?' or 'What did I come in here for?' I ask myself or anyone else that may have the answer, 'What has happened to all the stuff that should have been remembered?' – Memorable.

When I was at Kitale School in the early 1950s, the Headmaster was **Mr. Woods**, who lived in a house in the grounds.

On one corner of the boys' dormitory block, **Mrs Gorrie** had a flat, while **Mr Paxton**, the Housemaster lived in a flat on the other corner. If I remember correctly, the block was built around a quadrangle with bathroom facilities along one corridor, dormitories – one Junior and one senior, down opposite sides with staff apartments, prep room and tuck room along the remaining corridor. I imagine that the girls' dormitory block was configured in the same way. Between these two blocks was the kitchen and dining room block. The dining area had a raised platform at one end where the staff used to dine. We had to sit on benches, boy, girl, boy girl and I was pleased when I found myself sitting next to **Janice Howitt**. She was a pretty girl with wavy blonde hair, usually tied in plaits although sometimes falling free. I wonder if she felt as pleased as I did. I don't expect so. At that time, if my memory serves me well, she had a boyfriend named **Michael Loveland**.

It was after meals that letters were handed out. Both my brother **Nic** and I were often disappointed to hear our names called, only to find that the letters were for **Jeremy** or **Nicholas Bickford**, and not Pickford. It was here that special birthday parties were allowed for children whose birthdays fell during term time. Nic's was in term time while mine fell during the holidays.

Further up, on the way to the classroom block, were the playing fields and the Sanatorium, which was run by **Mrs Tellatin**. She had a daughter **Velia**, who, I recall, did not study at Kitale School. [Velia went to Loreto, Eldoret – Ed.]

The classroom block was a two-storey building with a grassed play area in front and bordered at the back by the road up to the school, which was lined with Jacaranda trees. These we were allowed to climb at break times until one of the Headmasters sons [Bernard, I think] fell and broke his thigh. There were also climbing frames of some sort from which we used to swing or hand by the knees.

THE CLASSROOMS: Blackboards and chalk. The board was wiped clean with the duster, which was a thick block of felt set on a wooden, black holder. This occasionally served as a teacher's weapon, as did bits of chalk. The blackboards were attached to the walls and set at the entry end of the room. Here a table for the teacher stood on a raised platform. Along the same wall was a cupboard where stocks of books, both text and exercise, were stored, along with powdered ink and the ink dispenser. There were also rolled maps and anatomical diagrams of the human body which illustrated what the body looks like without skin, or the contents of the body [cavity] the sight of which made one boy, [**Philip Keese**] faint, and the skeleton.

In front of the teacher's table were rows of desks at which we sat. They were wooden with a slightly sloping lift-up lid hinged along the upper end. There was a hole for the inkwell and a groove, which was intended to stop the dip pens or pencils rolling off. In the cavity beneath the desk top, we stored our books etc. Each class had a prefect and an ink monitor. Along the side wall opposite the door were windows with views over the playing fields. On the corridor side, I

seem to remember that the windows were too high for us to look through. The door was half glazed.

The back wall had a display board on which pictures were pinned with drawing pins [nowadays, by way of American influence, often referred to as thumb tacks].

Lessons often began with a dose of mental arithmetic or spelling tests. Mistakes in written work, spelling or grammar, were marked [usually with a red pencil]. Spelling errors had to be written correctly ten times.

School Uniform: Boys, I think wore khaki trousers and a blue shirt with a banded blue and silver [?] tie that did not come to a point; it was rather like a ribbon. I think a hat was also compulsory. This has a band in blue and silver like the tie. Girls wore a full-skirted frock with matching knickers. They were blue and covered with tiny white dots.

Mr Woods's family included **Peter, Bernard** and **Jonathan** and **Jennifer**, the twins. Sometimes, on a Sunday afternoon, a few selected children would be invited to have tea with them. These would be the ones who had not had a chance of a Sunday out with parents. I think we were allowed out four times a term. One afternoon, my brother and I were invited. It was fun as there were paper and pencil games to play. However, **Nic** disgraced himself by telling a joke that was considered in poor taste. It was a question joke.

Q: 'What is the difference between a sailor and a baby?' A: 'The sailor makes his bed in the ocean while the baby makes an ocean in his bed.'

Another Sunday activity for those who had not gone out was the afternoon walk. Supervised by at least two members of staff, we were formed into a crocodile and taken a couple of miles around the grounds.

Staff Members I recall: **Miss [Biddy] 'Crowbar' Crowcombe**, **Miss Buchan** – [known as black currant] **Mrs Fell** [who had red hair and a bit of a temper. She often used the expression, 'You desiccated piece of cow-dung.' **Mr Corbett** was, for a while, acting Headmaster. It was rumoured that he had once been a lumber jack, so the idea of being caned by him kept most of the kids in line. I was caned once by him and it did not hurt as much as when I was caned by Mr Woods. **Mr Paxton**, housemaster, taught, among other subjects, Latin. When badgered to do so, he would recite a poem about a cricket match in the wild-west where the opposing team wore six-shooters and threatened the umpire if anyone yelled 'Howzat.' Naturally, they won the match, this in spite of being dreadful players. **Miss MacDonald** was, unkindly, known as **Fatty Mac**.

Among the children, I remember **David and Francis Henn**. They had an older brother **Michael** and an older sister named **Jill** who had great talent as an artist, particularly for drawing horses. David, one of my close friends, was an excellent cricketer. Sadly, he got cancer, had long and painful treatment, and seemed to have been cured although some years later it returned. Other friends included **Robin** and **Biddy Lloyd**, a younger brother **Paddy** and **Sally Lloyd**. **David** and

Michael de Bromhead both played a good game of tennis. The catholic kids often had breakfast at the de Bromhead's house after Mass. **Mrs de Bromhead** quite shocked me when she came to our farm to buy a bull. She thought it was too expensive and drove off, only to return a short time later. She had changed her mind and would buy it because, 'It's got such magnificent balls.'

Jacques Barraclough had an elder brother **Nick**, who was killed in a car crash in the sixties. His father dies shortly after giving a puppet show at the Kitale School Fete at which the school was raising funds for the building of a swimming pool. His mother was wheel-chair bound after being bounced out of the car on the bumpy roads. I met up with Jacques in London in the early sixties and we formed an unsuccessful group which played at a couple of pubs. Jacques played guitar and we both wrote songs, singly or together. In 1964 we recorded an LP of our songs in a studio in Wimbledon. I still have a worn copy. I believe only three or four copies were ever made. **Jacques** was also an excellent, skilful painter. He had a *thing* for **Anne Margaret** and painted her portrait a number of times from photographs. We were both members of the Habari Club and, if I remember correctly, between us we contributed bits of nonsense for the Habari Club Newsletter.

Drucilla and **Ian Barberton** were both adopted children. Ian played guitar and sang and we sang together, making a couple of recordings. We once performed in a café in Kitale [Was it the Bamboo?]. Drucilla went into catering.

Sarah Chambers mother played in the **Dorothy Chambers** trio, with whom I made my first public performance, singing rock 'n roll at a dance in Eldoret. Her Dad used to play the maracas. I last saw Dorothy Chambers playing in a hotel. I think this was in the late 1960s.

In 1963/1964 I was enrolled at St Mary's Teacher Training College in Strawberry Hill, where I studied Art and Drama. Drama was a second choice as the biology list I hoped to join was full. I had to audition. The Head of Drama turned out to be an old Kitale School boy who I remembered as being a senior, and hence a big boy. I didn't instantly recognize him until he gave his name, **Roger Lane**.

The **Foster** family came out to Kenya on the S.S Mantola at the same time as we did, in 1946.

Susan and **Alan Hitchcox**: I had a crush on Sue and wrote to her when she went to the Denson [?] Secretarial College, in England.

Janice Howett had a brother, **Frank**, I think.

Philip and **Joyce Keese**: I remember seeing Joyce dressed up as an angel for the Nativity Play and was immediately smitten. However, the relationship had no time to develop as we all went to our respective homes after the performance.

Lucia Pelissier had a brother whose name, momentarily, escapes me. [There was also a **Francesca Pelissier**. Ed]

Serge, Phyllis and Percy Grandcourt had an older sister, **Lorna**, who, I believe, became a nun. They lived in a simple house by the aerodrome. **Mr Grandcourt** worked on keeping the main roads in good condition. I often stayed with them and **Serge** and I used to go hunting together. I last saw **Serge** in Nairobi in 1961 or 1962, when he showed me the scar from some stomach operation he had recently undergone.

Charlie White whose Dad worked in the bank in Kitale has a younger brother who was blind. Charlie occasionally invited me to join him on his Sunday out.

Bernard Verlaque came to the school after the Hill School in Eldoret was closed because of a fire that killed a boy names John Latin While at Kitale School, Bernard contacted polio, which left him with a limp. He later joined the Kenya Police.

The **Hawksworth** brothers – **Gerald** and one nick-named **Paki** could run really fast. Their Dad grew and sold a rough tobacco; he had a voice that was low and gruff, possibly as a result of smoking too much of his own product. He once growled. You wouldn't believe it, but when I was a boy, I could sing like a lark.'

Michael Montgomery's Dad has a marvellous speaking voice. He was much in demand at gymkhanas, air shows and such like to give commentaries over the Tannoy system. He also coached us in cricket and once made us giggle as the rear seat of his trousers had split, revealing a hairy end.

Am I right in thinking there was a boy called **John Luck**? And was there a **Noel Edmunds**? It might have been **Neal**. The latter, I remember as having fair, curly hair. He was also a bit gangly and uncoordinated. Once, when trying to catch a cricket ball, he allowed it to pass his outstretched hands and bounce off his head – without apparent damage.

Frank Norris was much bigger than me and with whom I had a fight in the dorms and who, with a lucky punch, I ko'd.

Else Sunde was, as I recall, very small and a great acrobatic contortionist. I remember **Patricia Matthews** as small, compact and agile, a dark-haired **Else Sunde** type gymnast.

Harvey Taylor came to our farm on several Sunday's out.

Peter 'Titch' Gerrard: I remember cycling from our farm to his during the holidays. While mucking about on our bikes, I fell and grazed my leg. His elder sister, **Carol**, applied iodine which, as anyone who has ever used it knows, stings like billy-o. Being a boy, I had to grin and bear it.

Deidre Raymer

Rowena Candler

Vanessa Reid was red haired and easily aroused to temper. When we were taught the 'i before e' rule in English, it was pointed out that there were exceptions. Vanessa was asked to give one.

She could not. It was then pointed out that her surname was an exception to the rule. I admit to feeling sorry for her in her embarrassment. I recall **Robin Lloyd** being similarly embarrassed by a teacher who illustrated an anagram of *Lloyd* as *Dolly*.

Gilly Valentine and brother **Rodney**: I had a crush on Gilly V and sat next to her once in a singing lesson. While singing *Clementine*, I substituted *Valentine*.

Gillian Higgins was known as Gilly H while **Gillian Valentine** was known as Gilly V. The former was my counterpart as Head of Hawk House.

Gillian Horner – What Gillian was she? Might it have been she who was Gilly H and, if so, what Gilly was Gillian Higgins?

Gillian Bowden: Did her mother play the piano and was she known as Gilly B? I remember seeing a photograph of her at an exhibition in which she was perched on a rock like a naked nymph. I think the photo had won a prize.

Anne Baxter suffered from being overweight. She was always in tears on weighing and measuring days.

Topsy Parsons used to pull her voluminous knickers up over her frail shoulders when she was chilly at playtime.

David and **Grant Daniels** lived on the farm neighbouring ours. I stuffed and mounted their budgie when it died. I last saw them in the UK and visited their mother in an old folks' home.

Judy Davies has the desk next to mine in Standard Seven.

Avril Swann's parents had a farm which they later sold to the **Burches**.

Helen Crampton later became a policewoman in the UK. **Pauline**, her sister, I believe became an excellent pottery repairer. Their parents ran Crampton's Inn, which had a swimming pool.

Claire Roberts

Douglas Forrester owned a lumber jack type jacket and was therefore named 'Fug-Jacket Forrester. He went to the Duke of York School but dies of leukaemia in his first year.

Juliet Kennard-Davis was tall, skinny and freckled. A paler cross amongst the freckles on her back showed where her swimming costume straps blocked out the sun. For a time, they lived on a farm next to ours.

Some years later, when I was at the Duke of York, I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro with her brother, on an Outward Bound course. Their father had written a sea novel called, 'The Gentle Captain.' I think that his father later looked after the Nyali Bridge on Mombasa. [His mother stayed on as catering matron for the Junior School.]

Sue Shields and her brother, **Ian**: I saw them last in the 1980s, in London, where Ian was promoting avocados.

Brandon Brooksbank and sister **Susan**

Andrew Hillier [and brother, **Adrian Ed**]

Anthony Monkhouse's father was a doctor in Kitale. Dr Monkhouse died when Anthony was in his first year at Duke of York. He had a brother called **Keith** who became House Captain of Mitchell House at the Duke of York.

Anthony Humphris [and sister **Sarah**] Their parents ran Toad Farm and produced Edam [or it might have been Gouda Cheeses].

Diana Fulton and brother **Michael**

Ann Bowker: we used to go swimming at **Bowker's Dam**. Ann was at St Thomas's Hospital in Paddington where she had to prep. me for an operation, poor girl.

Jean Hallett taught me the steps of teenage dances like the jive and the bunny hug. That was some years after I had left Kitale School. She had left the school before I went there.

Fiona – Fi Fi Robertson – a pretty blonde

Patsy and **Christopher Tofte** [Some years later I taught a younger brother, **Johnny**, at Manor House School near Kitale.

Daniel Shaw

Robin Tilney, who was, I recall, a good friend of my brother, **Nic**

Mike Meyer

Nick Claassen whose elder sister, **Marie**, had a beautiful singing voice. She had left Kitale School before I went there.

Alan Dale

Tony and **Mike Mills**

Tony Foster

Peter Rosa

Hugh Evans [Haggis] – wicket keeper

David Duirs

Giles Shaw

Elizabeth Sinclair

Rosemary Sinclair

Sally Disney

Neill Campbell

Hugh Gladwyn, in running around the Prep Room, ran in front of a darts game in progress and received a dart that went through his cheek and into the hollow of his astonished mouth.

John Dove, whose father ran the prison.

GAMES, CRAZES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

The kids were split into four houses. Hawk [red]. Falcon [Blue], Eagle [Yellow] and Kestrel [Green].

I remember games of hockey, soccer, rugby, cricket, [netball for the girls] and sports' days [when the **Lloyd** family members used to win everything, **Paddy** the Junior races, **Robin** and **Biddy** the senior races. Their parents win the mothers' and fathers' races]. I remember the fêtes that were put on to raise money for a swimming pool, these efforts coming to fruition shortly before I went to Secondary School. However, I remember too that the rains caused the metal pool to become distorted and it was closed for repairs. The last time I saw it, it was full of rather disgusting looking water. I preferred our trips to **Bowker's Dam**. For trips to Bowker's Dam we were driven in the pick up truck that was the school bus and which was driven by **Juma**. He wore a red fez and had false teeth of which he was very proud and which he would remove and clean with a scrubbing brush. He was quite old, old enough to remember the Nandi uprising when he was a toto. He used to drive the catholics to church on Sundays. I met him in Kitale some years later when he confessed he was out of work. My father, who needed a driver, employed him and he stayed with us until my parents retired to the coast. My father found him a place with some kind person. He told me how he became a driver. As a child, he had been one of those working children who led the oxen as they ploughed the fields – in Swahili a shika kamba. He worked for a South African who had a broken down car, which he used to have pulled by a pair of oxen. Juma used to sit at the wheel and steer while the oxen pulled. When the war came along, he applied for a job in the army and, when asked what skills he had he mimed to the recruiting officer, whose Swahili was not the sort that Juma understood. The officer took it that Juma was a driver and he was employed. I wonder how soon he was able to control a vehicle that ran without oxen, the changing of the gears and other complexities? However, master them he did and he drove all through Africa and into Italy.

We used to have Physical Training which included Indian Clubs, an enthusiasm, I think, of Mr Paxton. Also tumbling – diving our bodies on to mattresses and pyramids as well as vaulting the horse with its extendible legs, and the other box affair that was heightened by adding another layer to the bottom. Then, of course, there was the horizontal bar. There were displays of these

activities to which parents were invited. Odd contortions, like bending backwards until hands reached the floor and then walking, as well as one where two people somehow bend head to tail, formed a wheel and rolled along.

Among the various crazes, my particular favourite was 'nyabs' [marbles] with different games whose names escape me. One was *followees* and another was *bananas*. A third was 'holees' where the aim was to shoot your nyab into a hole, which then gave you the chance to pick off your opponent's nyabs. These then belonged to you. I started off having no marbles, I soon found a lost one and with that accumulated a bag full. This I carried with me all the time until my marbles fell on to the floor during a lesson and all were confiscated.

There was a craze for stilt walking that lasted a term. Roller skating had its time also.

There was a game called 'jacari' where a stick was laid across a hollow in the ground. It was then, with a longer stick, lifted into the air and struck. I cannot remember much more about it except that I was not much good at it. [I recently saw a TV programme where the same game was being played by children in Brazil.]

Hiccockalorum [have I spelt it correctly?] was another good rough and tumble game.

Autograph books became popular and I now have pity on the staff members who were asked to contribute to so many. Crowbar **Crowcombe** did a skilful pen-drawing in mine, showing a small boy [me] looking at a clock and being told I should have learnt to tell the time by my age. Humiliating, but I did not know how to tell the time because nobody thought to teach me and I had never felt the need to ask. I got by through looking at the sun's position and my hunger pangs. Mt Woods wrote a limerick for me which ran:

*If a job looks decidedly tricky,
And that job is all gummy and sticky,
Then, who will delight
to put it all right?
But that fellow they call Picky Picky.*

Robin Lloyd used to draw strings of marching ants with the leading ant saying something; I cannot recall the caption. Viscount Lymington, who took us for boy scouts wrote, '*To the bane of my life; Lymington.*' He wore jeans and I once saw a hundred shilling note sticking out of his back pocket.

The school plays were usually written by **Mr Woods**. One was set in the time of the Huguenots. Another was an adaptation of Alice in Wonderland. With a grinning Cheshire cat made by shining a light behind a big piece of plywood, the shape of the cat's face, with small holes drilled in it. The flamingos for the croquet game were well made also.

Parents were invited to see the plays for a price, the money going towards the swimming pool fund. We also raised money by inviting parents to concerts and charging them. **SINGING** We

used to sing songs like, 'Old Black Joe', *Clementine*, 'Camptown Races' and the like.

For one concert, we learnt 'Glorious Devon' and 'Early one Morning.' I had a bit of a crush on **Gilly V** and so used to sing, 'Oh my darling Valentine' instead of *Clementine*, and another favourite, 'The Quarter Master's Stores.' I have just remembered another often sung song, 'D'ye ken John Peel?' This, in turn, reminded me of Jeremy Peel who, more than once, joined me and some other lads on a Sunday out at our farm. Somewhere, I have my first photograph album [*Snappy Memories* on the cover] which should jog my memory even further.

The plays took place in the hall, which has a proscenium arch stage at one end. This was where the Headmaster stood at assemblies and from where some poor unfortunate had to read a prayer. The hall was also used for indoor activities and gymnastics. Occasionally, displays were attended by parents who, once again, were expected to cough up funds for the coffers.

Along the walls of the hall were hung the 'honours boards' with names of those who had accomplished on the sports' field written in gold leaf. When I was there the word *Eagle* seemed to dominate the Cock House board. It was certainly the strongest house while I was there and that can be judged by the fact that I became House Captain of Hawk House. There was no one better to fill the place [though in fairness there should have been]. Gillian Higgins was House Captain for the girls in Hawk House.

There were boy scouts, girl guides, cubs and brownies. I was a member of the boy scouts and earned a few badges – fire-lighting and cooking. One of the scout masters was Mr. Kitchener, a lanky, thin man who was nicknamed the Mari bout Stork. When he and Mr Kennard-Davis, also very tall, were talking together, they did resemble those birds.

PUNISHMENTS

Punishment took a number of forms. One was detention, staying in after lessons [or was it on Saturday afternoons when everyone would be out playing?] and having to write lines or learn poetry by heart. I remember having to learn a chunk out of *The Legend of Robin Hood* [or something]. The last line of the bit I had to learn was, 'The robber band went by.' For a joke, I said, 'The rubber band went by.' I was given some more lines to learn for my sins.

There was also the cane, which I received on numerous occasions and which I preferred to the lecture which, for some unaccountable reason, brought an uncontrollable urge to giggle along with an unwanted and unconcealable smirk. The cane was administered to the posterior, the number of strokes depending on the degree of naughtiness of the offence, with a maximum of six. The strokes were administered with admirable accuracy. 'Bend over and touch your toes, 'a brief flick as the master lifted the tail of the blazer from your bum and, like a golfer addressing his ball, adjusted his stance and measured his distance as he prepared to strike. There followed a swish and a thwack, which raised a stingingly warm red weal, which later became a dark bruise. Six of the best would leave a ladder pattern across the buttocks, with rungs an inch or so apart.

SWEETS

After lunch we all had to rest on our beds where we could read, snooze or engage in quiet activities. We were also allowed our ration of sweets. At the beginning of each term, we would hand in all our sweets; each afternoon we would be allowed to choose three. A *Mars* bar or a *Crunchie* did not count as a single sweet but would be cut up. I usually had a bag of K O L boiled sweets [*Kenya Orchards Limited*] which were brightly coloured, transparent, lozenge shaped. Incidentally, I believe these sweets were used to represent jewels in the film *King Solomon's Mines*.

Oddly enough, it was possible to swap these basic boiled sweets for a slice of *Mars Bar*. The Kitale Bakery has a line of sweets made on the premises. There were sugar mice with a bit of string for the tail. There was delicious hard, dark toffee that was smashed with a small hammer, and there were conical lollipops known vulgarly as donkey-knobs. They also sold aniseed balls, which changed colour as you sucked them and at the centre of which was the seed.

Also, somewhat like sweets and issued only to those kids whose parents had provided them, were tonics and 'build you ups' such as *Malt*, *Virol* and *Minadex*.

Some of the other items that the memory dredges up and which don't seem to be on shop shelves any more are *Kolynos* tooth paste, which came in a yellow tube and was vulgarly called *Kolysnot* – and *Gibbs Dentrifce*, which came in a round, flat tin and which was a pink block against which you rubbed your moist toothbrush. As for the soaps! We used a cheap, locally produced soap that was cut from a long bar. Luckier kids had *Palmolive*, or *Lux* or *Wrights Coal Tar*, with its odd odour, and *Pears*, which was a lovely transparent, deep red. Who can forget that dreadful *Bronco* toilet paper?

The Dorms

The dormitories were long rooms with beds either side. Above each one hung a mosquito net with its large knot during the day and which created a tent at night. I sometimes used my knotted mosquito net as a cage for my chameleons. We had to make our own beds with a change of sheets once a week when also the mattress was turned. [Was it the top sheet becoming the bottom sheet and the clean sheet becoming the new top sheet?]

Dining Room

There was a platform at one end where the staff members dined. The food must have been unremarkable as I have no memories of it, good or bad. I do recall that there was once an outbreak of food-poisoning, which was traced back to the washing-up liquid. Happily, I avoided the illness. Another odd thing I remember was when people's tumblers started exploding as the hot chocolate [or was it Ovaltine or cocoa] was being stirred.

EXTRA MURALS

Piano Teacher: Mrs Hamson

Related by **Gay [Tilney] Prevost**

Biddy Crowcombe and **Kay Yuille** were also piano teachers – I was taught by Kay Yuille. I remember once having a punishment for something – there were a couple of us although I cannot remember who or what for – We had to cut **Kay Yuille's** grass outside her room with nail scissors! Her dog, Freukie was a Yorkshire Terrier and I have never been taken with the breed ever since.

Granny Taylor played the piano for ballet classes taken by **Mrs Northcote** and later **Mrs Waterfield**.

Helen [Nicholson] Bailey remembers ballet lessons with **Mrs Northcote** and doing “pas de chat” down the hall as well as ballet exercises on the bars.

Riding Lessons – Blackie and Grock [who could tell you his age by pawing the ground]. Pony Club was run by **Denise Chapman**.

Swimming was coached by **Mrs Barberton**. Swimming Galas were big events, which included diving from the diving steps and spring board.

What about swimming in the pool and having blonde hair turn green from the chlorine? **Ariadne Munro** springs to mind. She was a wizard diver – with green hair from the many hours of practice in the pool.

Tessa [Haupt] Watson wonders who remembers that we got pomegranates for swimming well.

The Girl Guide and Brownie District Commissioner was **Mrs Nicholson**. **Chrissie [Luck] Briscoe** remembers **Mrs Troward** who took Girl Guides and one day drove some girls, including **Francesca Pelissier** in her old Morris Cowlie when the brakes failed on an incline. Fortunately the car stalled before it hit a tree!

I remember that there was a Girl Guide Company in my time. The Captains, as they were called then – now Guide Guider, that I recall if the 1st Kitale Guide Company were **Mrs Durrard**, then **Mrs Mandefield**.

There were five Brownie Packs held in the school grounds and in the school Hall by Brown Owls. **Liz [Troward] Vorster** remembers that her Mum took over the Brownies as Wise Owl from Mrs Nicholson for a few years. Mrs N was in charge of the Girl Guides. The Girl Guides went on an outing to the Nicholson's farm. They were at the river, building rope bridges to get across when I injured my ankle. I had to be carried back to the farm house by two guides using the arm-seat hold. I remember sitting by the camp fire and tucking into the food – I was always hungry!

Sylvia [Bumpus] Rattenbury wonders: Maybe **Alice Jacobs** [who lived in the school grounds] could have been involved, or **Margaret Powell**, the nurse from the San. Also, **Margaret Parr** [who married **Graham Bush**] could have been.

Helen [Nicholson] Bailey mentions that the Brownies changed from being Wise Owl and bird names given to the Sixes to flower names. This change was made after independence. Helen's mother, **Margaret Nicholson** was commissioned to adapt the movement to be more suited to African Brownies. This took into account the fear that Africans have for owls, and so forth.

My pack met in the school Hall. I was in Weaver Six. My Brown Owl / Wise Owl was **Mrs Bumpus**. I remember going to her house in Grasslands to bake rock buns' for a hostess badge. We used to collect flowers from the school garden for the 'pool' round which we sang and skipped at the opening – "We're the Brownies, Here's our aim; 'lend a hand' and 'play the game.' We ended with the following closing ceremony – "Oh Lord our God, thy children call; give us thy peace to one and all. Good Bye, Good Night Brown Owl."

Scout Master: **John Williams**. Can anyone remember who was Baghera or Barloo?

Wendy Batten's father was boxing coach. His words of encouragement were: 'If you want to, you can give as good as you get,' This was a very important discovery for **Robert Richard** at the time.

Remembered snippets

We received a few vague recalled memories. It is fun to try and recall Kitale Township. Try to visualize the drive we all took from our homes, all on dirt roads. **Karin Ganz** suggests we try to recall the toad to the school.

Shirley [Heriz-Smith] Brown [1933 – 1935] remembers the school under Headmaster **Ray Barton**, with **Miss Roberts** as matron. Shirley disliked the 19h00 bed time to a point where, after Sunday outings, she took back food for a midnight feast. The girls unscrewed the glass case where the key was kept in case of fire; the boys did the same and both groups met in the quadrangle. Unfortunately, on one occasion they were caught by a wandering teacher. This resulted in the expulsion of one of the girls.

Val [Arnold] Jacob [] writes: Kitale School had something indefinable that no other school had. Perhaps it was because we all lived in the area so were all the same. Perhaps it was because all of us lived on farms, where life for a child could be a little dull, whereas at school there were friends and plenty of activity. Whatever it was, we must all have been very happy there to want to relive these memories and to keep in touch with former friends.

An extract from correspondence received from **Ron Standfield** [of class 1944] is mostly about Kitale Bakery toffee. When I and my brother **John** first started at Kitale school we were boarded at **Peter 's** parents place and we all walked to school each day for some months. Thereafter, we became "Proper' boarders at the school.

One of my lasting memories is Kitale Bakery toffee. When we went on scout camps to **Bowker's** Dam, we always went to town first to buy a big bag of 'Bakery toffee' and a round tin of 50 Players cigarettes, some of which we smoked while at camp.

I cannot imagine smoking them in school. That would probably have been an offence worthy of six cuts of the best in punishment, from **Johnny Woods**, who was Headmaster then.

The first cigarette smoked was a 'ten centie' or a 'rooster.'

Peter: 'You must have been rich to have afforded tins of 50 Player's cigarettes.. All **Geoff Griffin** and I could afford was a packet of 10 Scissors cigarettes, which we smoked in one go in a railway cutting. I found the taste so disgusting that I never smoked another one – Lucky for me and for my health.

Yes, Bakery toffee was everyone's favourite, I suppose partly because, during the war there were no sweets or chocolates to be had in the shops. **Alan Wood**, the son of Willie Wood, owner of Kitale Bakery, lives in the UK and he did promise to send me the toffee recipe some time ago at a Kenya Regiment Reunion. I'm still waiting.' [Wait no more, Peter. I will add the recipe as an Appendix. Ed]

Ron: 'You are right in that Alan Wood did run the Kitale Bakery – made the best toffee I have ever sampled. We used to sample lots [brought by **Antonia** and **Clemency Bagshawe** [now **Jarvis**] on the train going back to school – kept our spirits up.

I possess a Kenya E A Post and T – Post Office Directory for 1960 – 1961. I see for Kitale – **G Revill** was Box No 416, **E C Hallett** was Box 544 and **J C Burch** was Box No. 436. Then there was **Miss M E Strip**, P O Box 510 – she was our Junior School teacher in about 1939. The Directory was very useful for reminding us of names long since forgotten.

Graham Duirs recalls first nights in boarding houses where there was a considerable amount of 'weeping' at the way parents abandoned their children in a strange place. **Fatty Mac** would be the kind lady to come into dormitories to reassure homesick children. Graham remembers Sunday outings at the **Dales** farm.

Clare Roberts remembers that her great rival in class was **Peter Liechti**. She has a vivid memory of **Niels Bertlesen** sitting on a drawing pin that the whole class knew was there and the trouble all got into as a result. It was a case of 'tacky' to the posterior for boys and girls, no less. Clare remembers also weekends idling under Persian Lilac trees in the driveway and the hairy caterpillars.

What about **Ann Barnley** who ran away from the Boarding House, escaped over the roof and was discovered the next day in a stable at the Showground, unrepentant and much admired by all.

I remember Clare Roberts as staff member on duty in the dining room. She used to walk round

and prod us in the back with her keys to make us sit up straight.

Biddy Crowcombe remains for **Carol** an image of the ideal teacher.

Of '**Miss Doenhoff**' – **Bridget Walton** aka **Memsahib kali sana**, **Helen [Nicholson] Bailey** of the mid 1950 era says she would hide her bacon and egg in her uniform rather than be told to eat it up by Bridget.

More recently [2002] **Bridget Walton** was described as 'the one who allowed the girls to suck Super C sweets during exams to help them relax' to which Bridget commented, 'Is it age that mellows, or experience, or both?'

Ann [Attwood] Totty remembers sugar sandwiches, climbing Jacaranda trees, midnight feasts with five pieces of Willy Woods' toffee and reading under the bed clothes until **Mrs Munro** tapped on the bed. She remembers also Kestrel's one and only Cock House win, finger nail and show inspection.

Vivien [Greaves] Young shares her memories ... 'handstands on the grass, collecting 'lucky beans' under the flame trees, Brownies, the taste of bread and melting butter at break times, clotted cream with everything, club swinging in PT and having throats painted with nasty purple liquid. The best times obviously were when suitcases arrived in the dorms prior to all going home for the holidays. Vivien was known as 'Tiddles.'

Tessa [Haupt] Watson added, 'I do remember the film shows we had. The end of term dinner after the film was for the house that won 'Cock House' – named after the silver trophy. Each of the school houses was the name of a bird, Hawk, Kestrel, Falcon and Eagle. The dinners always ended with the best meringues in the whole world. The film used to be an ordeal for me as I was afraid of the dark, even Charlie Chaplin movies made me anxious.

The Lucky Bean tree near the San was *Erythraemia Crista-Galli* [Cock's comb coral tree]. It is a deciduous shrub which grows to a height of 3m with a spread of 3m. The stem is twisted and covered with thickish-black bark; the leaves are brilliant green and trifoliate with large, oval-acuminate leaflets. The petioles have small spines; the flowers are bright red and pear-shaped occurring in large snowy racemes. The fruit are blackish, large leathery pods and contain several kidney-shaped brown seeds. A native of Brazil, it has become a weed in Sydney, Australia.

Helen [Nicholson] Bailey had these memories to share: I remember having Guy Fawkes down on the bottom field with a huge bonfire and a guy. One time a firework went into the box of fireworks. Also, at some stage, a helicopter landed there.

Remember TAB [torture after breakfast] – after which we had to play netball in the afternoon. This was very painful as was making the bed with a stiff arm. I remember also having verukas burnt out by the san matron.

We also played sport against other schools – teams may have come from Eldoret to play hockey;

boxing matches were held against Manor House.

Learning tables, cuss-cuss and **Fatty Mac** with feet on table as the driver tied her laces.

Mrs Munro and midnight feasts

Punishments were getting the 'takkie' or cane or standing in the corner.

Food, stringy beans, soapy potatoes, stones in the spinach

Sermons [Golden Syrup tin] '..... out of the strong came forth sweetness.....'

End of term and waiting for parents

In 'titch' block I remember putting soap in our tooth mugs and frothing it up with our tooth brushes, also throwing soap on the ceiling as well as putting it on the back of the bath and sliding down with a splash; also getting shock treatment in the loos from the faulty electricity.

I remember changing our sheets etc. although not sure how the laundering of our clothes worked. Washing blankets at the end of term – in the bath and we stamping on them with our feet.

We lined up for sweets after lunch. Before rest time some lucky people got malt – I always imagined Radio Malt gave one brains; hence I lost out because I wasn't given any.

I am sure others will mention Cock House and the delicious food and taking some back to friends – all wrapped up and having a midnight feast. We also ate monkey food and other plants because we were so hungry.

Remember the chameleons in the hedges and trapdoor spiders on the playing fields, which we teased with pieces of grass.

We had Birthday parties when we were allowed to invite 11 friends and how people sucked up to one before the party.

Here are some of **Liz [Troward's] Vorster's** memories: On the first day of school, I remember being taken to our classroom by **Penny Flat**. It was to the left of the hall when facing the stage.

We had lunch time rests on mattresses in the corridors in Junior Block until we were old enough to become boarders.

We collected and kept florescent winged lady bird sized beetles, which lived in the hedge that surrounded the swimming pool

There was a food-poisoning incident when the San was full so we stayed in our beds in Junior Block – what a mess.

On another occasion a bad case of chicken pox saw us taking to our beds in the Senior Block.

Visualize **Jenny** [twin sister] running down the sanatorium steps with matron in hot pursuit come TAB time.

There were nature study outings with **Joyce Berridge** and elocution lessons [not so much fun]. When our brother went to the UK after 'O Levels' Joyce put us in touch with her sister where **Peter** [brother] stayed for a while and often visited after that, as we all did. Our family kept in touch with Molly until she passed away a few years ago.

I recall Dad's production of Snow White, when half the school took part – from the cats round the witch's cauldron [Tessa, Jenny and I] to all the forest animals. Our Uncle John had the job of keeping us all under control.

Miles Barton ran away from school and was found at the Showground.

Julian Shorten recalls being whacked at least once a week by the Headmaster, while **Miss Gibson**, Standard 7 teacher, used to punish with a ruler to the backs of our knees. Julian remembers getting into scraps as well as seeing scraps between the African workers. He remembers **Anthony Burch, Chris Flatt, Glenda Duirs** and **Lesley Bowers**.

Patrick Halahan remembers the time when a D9 tractor [he had never seen a machine that big] was brought in to rid the school of some eucalyptus trees. He remembers starting school in what they called the 'Old House' [Junior Block] and stealing fruit from the Headmaster's garden and how scared he was that he might be caught. He recalls breaking his finger and the school sister put gentian violet on it [the correct treatment was administered later]. His and Anthony's Dad, as in Captain Halahan, was the 'weird' guy who built a 27 ft yacht on the farm and then had to figure out how to get it to Mombasa.

Mrs Munro – the boys' matron, was one of the delightful people in **Barbara White's [Boy's]** life.

John Foster writes: 'When I first started school in 1949, I can remember feeling a bit homesick but I soon made friends and never looked back.'

The Senior accommodation with the kitchen and dining block in between and the Sanatorium, were not built in those days. Work commenced on these in 1950. Also, the old generator was still in use before mains electricity became the norm. The swimming pool was built a couple of years later, amid much excitement. The excavations were carried out by convicts who were guarded by armed 'askaris'. There was much speculation and whispering as we walked past as to what their crimes had been and which were murderers – you can just imagine it.

I remember looking forward to weekends when we were left pretty much to our own devices; we played to our heart's content and made wonderful hideouts. We also indulged in stealing from **Miss Crowcombe** and **Miss Yuille's** gardens.

Every term there was a competition to see which house was 'Cock House.' I was in Hawk and I don't think we ever won while I was there; it always seemed to be Eagle and we hated them for

it.

Karin Ganz remembers that: 'We made our first cigarettes using the ends in the ashtrays – yes, I know, lethal for our health. We would mix the tobacco with crushed dry gum leaves and swap sweets with the Africans for a bit of their tobacco. This would all be mixed together and rolled in African newspaper. We lit our cigs with hot coal from the hot water fire. I can still remember the burning sensation and the stench – we smoked in a guest room while reading comics and little thinking that we would stink when coming together with the adults. That swiftly put an end to our smoking for a couple of years.

Who else made alcohol with fermented pineapple? As kids we got up to a lot of mischief

Having per chameleons and having to catch grasshoppers with which to feed them

Alison [Pickford] Wardle remembers accompanying **Grant Daniels** and **[Peggy Owen's]** brother when he had to go and check on his rats in his laboratory.

Patricia [Greaves] Casadio remembers **Mrs Ivy Woods** fondly and also **Miss Crowcombe** and **Kay Yulie's** little dog Freuchie.

Mike Mills wrote after Kay died: 'That ends a 52 year relationship between Kay and me. The reason for it was because Kay was, without question, the best teacher I ever had.'

Miss Yuille was our Housemistress and **Mrs Munro** was the matron. She thrashed me regularly with a hair brush because I was always being caught out of bed. When we had received a thrashing, we used to sneak into the bathrooms and sit in basins of cold water to cool our butts – so remembers **Diana [Fulton] Purchase**.

Miss Yuille had that tiny little dog called 'Frooky' (Freukie) – that was how it was pronounced. He went everywhere with her. She also used to take us for Scottish Dancing and we put on displays.

Di goes on to remember – The dining room has a 'top table' where the staff sat. After every meal a name would be called out and that person had to say grace. **Ronnie Duirs**, who was a real wag, was called one day. Instead of saying, 'For what we have just received, may the Lord make us truly thankful,' he said, 'For what we have just received, may the cook be forgiven.' His name was called a second time a couple of weeks later [that never normally happened] and this time he said, 'For what we have just received, may the cook be severely punished.' We were all hysterical.

We used to send 'love letters' to boy friends and give these to the person sitting next to the friend at the dinner table who would deliver letters back to us. We used to sit boy, girl, boy, girl etc.

In the dorms, we slept in alphabetical order. **Karin Ganz** was always one side of me and **Biddy Doughty** the other. There were 26 beds in a dorm. If I remember correctly, Karin, your Mum had

written 'Good Night' on the inside top of your net. **Pat Whittaker** was always in bed 26.

Karin adds..... and the dormitories – squeaky beds and mosquito nets – the mischief we got up to..... Our 'sweet boxes' ... we were rationed to three sweets after lunch.

The bathrooms, where we had our baths – 2 in each bath. My group of friends was **Gay Tilney, Diana Fulton, Sandra,** and **Sue Shields** amongst others.

My memory of Senior Block dorms was that no one ever slept in bed No. 13.

Gordon Armstrong [1952 – 1957] and **Sue Roffey** used to exchange love letters and sweets each night at dinner time.

Di continues One of the best teachers we had was **Miss Crowcombe** who taught science and, I think, Latin. She was an amazing teacher. We were all terrified of her although loved her to bits.

Then there was **Mrs Macdonald** whom we called Fatty Mac because she was as round as she was tall. She took Class 3, where every morning she would make us stand on our chairs and recite our tables from 1X2 to 12X12 and then we had to say them backwards, $12 \times 12 = 144$, $11 \times 12 = 132$ back down to $1 \times 2 = 2$. My son cannot get over the fact that I still know my tables.

[There were two Mrs MacDonalds in my time – late 1950s – known as Skinny Mac and Fatty Mac]

Then there were **Mrs Jacobs** who taught science and **Mrs Firth**, who was a tine little thing – was she the garlic eater?

Remember the TAB injections we used to have to have every year when our arms hurt so badly we couldn't use them for about a week.

Mrs Tellatin was the sister in charge of the San and we all adored her. At one stage or another we all went down with measles, chicken pox and mumps.

I was the fastest runner in the school. Every week the boys would take me on, having practised furiously all week, much to our amusement. They never beat me. That was SO against the make ego of that time too.

Karin Ganz wrote: 'I was quite often in the Sanatorium – not fond memories. I remember vaguely the dining room – how we filed ion for our food. The 'cook' would oversee the proceedings with her big 'belly' pushed out I was a vegetarian although was not getting the right food, so I started eating meat. I hated the spicy sausages and had to get a letter from my mother so that I did not need t eat them. I was called Memsahib Masiwa by the Africans; we were not supposed to talk to them.

I remember a chicken pox epidemic. When someone returned to class having recovered, we would touch the scabs and try to catch the pox. We filled the San. A few times we all stripped

down, stood at the end of our beds and we were daubed pink all over with lovely smelling calamine lotion to stop the itching.

Was it **Mrs Henn** or **Miss Margaret Powell** who was the Sanatorium matron then?

Mrs Ivy Woods was responsible for the production of the Nativity Play every two years, involving Standard 1 and 2 children. **Joyce Berridge**, who did the Speech training, always read slowly and clearly the Gospel reading from St John: 'And the Word was God'

Besides the usual Nativity characters of angels and shepherds, there was always a dove and we sang, 'From out of the wood q cuckoo flew, cuckoo. He hopped and he curtsied and round he flew, cuckoo.' Mary and Joseph came slowly us the aisle from the back of the Hall.

Sports Days were enjoyed with sack races, 'tug of war' bunny hop races and even egg and spoon races for the Junior classes. Don't forget the -legged race and the wheelbarrow race – such fun. There were enough white-washed lanes measured out son the sports field to take three competitors from each house for all events. These were marked off at various distances to cater for all the different age group races – 50 yards, 100 yards and so on.

The spectators and the parents sat on chairs or on the ground under the lilac trees that provided shade along one side of the field. I remember sitting under the gum trees in our house groups. We enjoyed eating glucose sweets. There was a big blackboard with the results, which were altered after every event as points were earned. This helped build up the excitement and competitive house spirit.

At morning break, we all lined up outside Junior Block dining room for a glass of milk and a slice of white bread and butter. We used to put nasturtium leaves on the bread. Parents used to be allowed to visit during morning break times. We would watch the cars arrive in hopeful expectation. My mother would bring a little tube of Smarties, which we would also put on our piece of bread. We used to invite a friend to 'visit our parent.' This friend would share in the treats until the bell rang out to announce the end of break.

Diana [Fulton] Purchase recalls that the swimming pool was built in her time. One day, when all were fooling around, **Biddy** slipped on the edge of the pool and her leg went between the rail and the wall. She fell in and her leg broke. We were horrified.

I was in Kestrel, records Karin Ganz. I have forgotten the names but there was one female teacher who loved garlic. She always wore open sandals and short-sleeved summer dresses. I used to cringe if she leant over to check what I had written I left around the time that the swimming pool was built. It was the time of the MauMau.

Mrs Bumpus taught us gym, took us for Physical Training and swimming. During P.T. great use was made of the house-coloured bean bags, which were filled with poisonous castor oil seeds. When the bean bags needed to be refilled or replaced, we used to collect the seeds when we went out on supervised walks down the lane towards Grasslands Research Station. The plants

grew along this roadside.

Our gym was advanced and well-equipped for a Primary School, by today's standards. We were taught to work on the buck, and the horse, with the use of the spring board. We did bar work also, all in the school hall. In the school grounds we also had metal pipe bars. We used to do knee hangs, sit a-top of the bar, and hang by our hands with feet doubled into a back bend called 'eggs in the basket.'

There was a teacher, **Mrs Davis**. Before I advanced to her class, she became blind and left. However, she impressed me a lot as she was so capable and would pour out a cup of tea for us when we visited her.

I remember when **Mrs Jacobs** pranged her car into one of those wattle trees on the road by the tennis courts. She broke her left leg. I witnessed the crash. It was quite a traumatic experience for a 10 year old, recalls Michael Fulton.

You asked for memories says **Penny Flatt [Madvig]**: I remember sitting on the floor of **Ma Jacobs** house, in the sun, near the swimming pool and learning embroidery stitches. I still embroider now. I also remember a girl who could do handstands and walk around the pool on her hands. Davies: I have a vague recollection that she was connected to one of the House Mistresses. One of the teachers in Year 5 [?] taught us about the Snowy River Hydro-electric scheme and I think that has a lot to do with my interest in Australia. I also remember attending swimming lessons, I think, with one of the Barberton wives. We learnt how to dive off those boards which seemed soooooo high. Bomb drops were more fun.

Does anyone remember the army-worm plague, hundreds of works that squashed with every step – and our takkies went green?

Sylvia [Bumpus] Rattenbury remembers a Sports' Day that took place whilst we had an infestation of army worm. Doing a bunny hope race when the whole place was covered with these green grub things was just revolting. They squished under one's feet and hands.

alison@pickfordwardle.co.uk **Veronica** Plunkett tells of the army worm invasion during which the girls enjoyed skidding around in their while takkies.

Seemingly, the boys got up to pranks also. They tickled out tarantula spiders from their holes and threw these at passing girls.

Remember the lucky bean trees and the bumstitches, or whatever we called them? I remember they were sticky, round, hard fruit. Heaven knows what their botanical name is.

Do you remember going to the Kitale Show Ground in 1958 to see the Queen Mum? I had detention and had to write out lines because of my untidy writing, with the threat that I would not be going to see the Queen Mum. I did eventually go in Brownie Uniform. She shook the hand of the Brownie next to me. We have it all on DVD [made from the old cine film].

We used to roll out notes in hollowed out pieces of chalk and 'ping' it across the classroom with our ruler or off our hand. That was in Standard Five. Our small, slender teacher wore her hair in a bun. We used to dust off the chalk black boards and afterwards beat the duster against a hard surface to clean it. **Michael O'Hanlon** was known to use his ruler to shoot pea sized pieces of paper in the direction of the blackboard.

Sunday School was held in the Hall by **Cribby**, or **Mr Housden** from the Methodist bookshop. I still have a little yellow Order of Service booklet for the 'Colonial Children of Kenya.' We wore our Sunday 'mufti' for the service. The frock fashion was a full skirt with 'sticking out' petticoat. Mine was made out of thin, yellow foam coated with netting. I think Mr Housden had false teeth as he used to spit with every word spoken. The sun would stream in from the high hall windows and we would watch the spittle droplets float down the sunbeams.

On Saturday evenings, I suspect it was every Saturday, we would have high tea – a meal combining tea time with supper. We would try to keep our ration of three sweets to enjoy at the old 'reel and projector' film shows.

Veronica Plunkett writes of the Green Room in the 'Senior Girls' block, which housed the play costumes. It seems that on Sundays, the girls were allowed to invade and make up their own plays. She tells of **Jenny [Northcote] Hellier**, who brought raw onions as well as Oxo cubes, to eat after lights out. We would lick these as someone told ghost stories. Veronica still has her autograph book with loads of names, sketches etc.

Chrissie [Luck] Briscoe remembers **Miss Dempsey as Housemistress. She could wallop hard with a takkie. Mrs Munro's daughter-in-law**, Heather, who helped with the matron work, looked like a ballet dancer with long hair parted over her head and tied in a ballet bun. She was stunning to look at.

Rounders, hockey and athletics were popular sports. I hated them all, says Chrissie.

Lunch times with 'cakie' puddings and 'chockie' sauce were nightmares for Chrissie. She would swallow them down with masses of water under the eagle eye of **Mrs Fell**. This has disastrous results afterwards when loo calls during afternoon sessions were not permitted.

Birthday times made one popular; many girls chugged around trying to get in on the ticket. Once the party was over, relationships returned top normal.

Bath times were a conveyor-belt situation – two in a bath, in, out, dry and rush to get ready for supper. The last couple to have a bath got grotty water. However, the list was rotated so one had a chance at both.

I used to share a desk with Pieter van der Westhuizen, who was a huge blond chap, or with Michael Mayer, stocky and dark. Our inkwells always ran out of ink and our pens always

splodged. These desks and wells are collectors' items now.

Chrissie remembers the Kitale Bakery sweets and fudge, petite fours and **Ma Woods** running round the tea-room.

Dee Raymer wrote: 'Post exams, the Standard Sevens were royally entertained on a day out to one of the **Wallop** farms [then managed by **Hugh Lloyd**] and whence we were transported by farm lorry, as we sang, 'She'll be coming round the mountain'

More about Class Friends

Peter Hayes [his old name used to be Peter Uys, as in Ace] lives in England. He was of the Standard Five class of 1944 and had come up with more memories. He wrote:

'Some time ago, I got together with Ann Seton-Miller [now Fernandes after her third marriage – formerly Roberts and Ainscow] and we agreed on all the class names from a class photo. Here they are:

Goff Griffin, Evelyn Valpy, John Spratt, Eunice McDonald, Ian Woodley, Helen Balabanoff, Neil Pearson, Tim Miller, Shirley Reynolds.

Philip O'Neill, Dorothy Wain, Harry Fell, Ann Seton-Miller, Noel Hales, Barbara Turney, Pierry Vorster, Helen Godley, ? Powles.

Eric Cohn, Gillian Brown, Peter Uys, Anne Gilson, Ronnie Stanfield

[Peter, how about letting us have the photo for the next Newsletter – that would stir up some memories].

Bobby Skinner was not there as he had returned to Canada or the USA with his parents. He turned up at POW sometime later when his parents were posted back to Kenya although he didn't stay long. I seem to remember the parents were missionaries, possible African Inland Mission – Aim, at Kijabe.

Anne Gilson was the only one not to pass the KPE [Kenya Prelim Exams for to go to College] and so had to stay back. Therefore she features in the 1945 photo along with:

David Reynolds, Bobby Gray, Jane Green, Hector Munro, Benjie Hatfield, Jim Martin, Alida Glover, Winnie Lutkens. Ramona Paul, J [Jane?] Manger, June ? and others.

Do you remember **Ramona Paul's** younger brother, **Jackie**, a real makora, who in later years fell foul of the law in Tanganyika?

Of the 1945 class, those I know who have died are: **David Reynolds, Hector Munro, Jim Martin and Winnie Lutkens.**

Sandy Munro, the great all-round sportsman has also died.

Of the 1945 Class, **John Spratt, Neil Pearson, Shirley Reynolds, Harry Fell, Helen Godley, Tim Miller [Helen's cousin] and Eric Cohn** are no longer with us. There are surely others that I may not have heard of.

Geoffrey Griffin was famous. He founded a school for under-privileged boys.

While writing of friends, **Ron Standfield** adds: 'We, who were a year or two younger than **Sandy Munro** were always in awe of his athletic abilities, even into High School. He had an older brother too. When we ordered school photos, we would order those of Sandy in the field also. I still have those photos. [Again, Ron, would you be happy to send copies for subsequent Newsletters. There are several among us who would still remember Sandy.] All his siblings were gifted sportsmen, like him.

Peter [Uys] Hayes wrote: 'I have just heard that Sandy Munro has passed away in Zimbabwe where he had been living for several years. He was older than us so must have been at least 80. I think you will agree that he was the greatest all-round sportsman of our school days, ever since we saw him at Kitale School. When one sees internationals in many sports strutting round on TV today, pretending to be 'great' and described as 'world class,' I think of Sandy and what he would have achieved on world stage if only he had been given the opportunity. What a shame that he never had the chance. I doubt his throwing the cricket ball record at the POW will ever be broken [112+ yards, if I remember correctly – Peter, since we have moved to metric measurements, his record will stand for all time. Ed] The **Hooper** twins, who were in the cricket X1 in 1948 will speak with awe about Sandy's feat of hitting the season's fastest century at NAC in that year, including 10 sixes. We have our memories of a truly remarkable sportsman, who was completely self-taught. May he rest in peace.

I [again **Peter Hayes (Uys)**] spoke to **Evelyn Valpy** [in Wales] with the news and we swapped reminiscences about the **Munro** family who were farming friends of the Valpys

Ron Standfield – with more about the class in the 1940s:

I believe there are only five of us remaining: **Myself, Peter [Uys] Hayes, Dorothy [Wayn] Wright**, in Australia, **Ann Seton-Miller** and **Evelyn Valpy**.

When my brother and I first started at Kitale Primary School in about 1940, we boarded and were looked after by my friend **Peter Hayes'** family. He goes on to ask: Do you remember the **Bianchi** family who used to live below us next to the **Balabanoffs**? They were Italian, with three children, a boy **Tura** and two younger sisters who all went to school with us.

When Italy entered the war on the German side, Mr Bianchi was arrested as an Enemy Alien by Mr Griffin, father of another school friend, **Geoff Griffin**. He was imprisoned in a POW camp until the Italians changed sides in 1943. Ironically, their house was taken over by the Government and the Griffins moved in, leaving Mrs Bianchi and the children homeless and penniless. Goodness knows how Mrs Biancho managed to cope, but cope she did and the children eventually went to

secondary schools in Nairobi , Tura to St Mary's and the girls to the Convent.

Later, a desperately sad thing happened. Tura was one of the first casualties in the Mau Mau Emergency – shot dead along with Baillon, Mike Downey and Cantonius. I often think of Tura and ponder how some people get all the bad luck. I have paid for a tree to be planted in his memory – on Holy Island off the Northumberland coast. I am sure all this is unknown to the youngsters who run the Kitale School website. Perhaps you might like to bring it to their attention. [Ron, the memories Document in full will be posted on the website. I like the thought that you write of me as a youngster when I am probably your age and knew Sandy Munro, his wife and family well and am still in touch with relatives living in South Africa]

I do remember all those named above, who we met at various stages of life in Kenya.

Although I did not realize it at the time, all the German Jews in Kenya were also “arrested.” In Kitale, there were quite a few of them with farms, and the children at school with us.

They were released to go back to their farms.

One of my best friends at the school was a Jew – Eric Cohn. I recall that he and I cleaned up all the races / events in athletics in our last year (1944)

I suspect he might always have let me win the 100 yards and 200 yards races, probably because his father may have told him to do just that – not to show up to be too accomplished in those wartime circumstances.

Peter Uys (surname changed to Hayes) wrote: ‘Thinking about it, I remember Mr Balabanoff giving us a lift to school from time to time in his box body car. It must have been quite a squeeze with us four and the three **Balabanoffs, Willie, Laurie** and **Helen**, who of course was in our class. She married a young Jew who was not permitted to live in Kenya as he had been a member of one of the Jewish terrorist organisations fighting the British in Palestine. So they settled in Israel where she still was when I spoke to Willie a few years ago. I suppose the distance to school would have been about a mile and a half. Otherwise we would have walked there.’

I was in Falcon house, writes **Hugh Gladman** I was House captain in my final year and Janina Legg was the girls’ captain. She was my very first girl friend and we wrote many lover letters, which we exchanged at meal times. Oh!! That first kiss in the class room!

The other captains were: Hawk, **John Dale** and **Diana Fulton**; Kestrel – **Sue Shields**, Eagle, **Biddy Doughty** – funny, I have not idea who the boys were.

I particularly remember Dorothy Keese because she was given the impossible task of teaching me how to knit. This was done in class; all the boys were paired off to learn how to knot. This very important skill has never been put to use since.

Diana (Fulton) Purchase writes of that time too: ‘The girl who died was my best friend

Josephine Shepherd. She dies on 02 December 1955, just 2 weeks short of her 13th birthday; she had leukaemia. The injections that were so painful were iron injections. She had a brother called David. They were both adopted children and came from Kampala. Josephine won the Gym cup that year and I came second. The following year I won the gym cup. I still have a photo of her holding the cup.

Sue Shields was House Captain of Kestrel (green), **Nina Legg** Falcon (blue), **Biddy Doughty Eagle (yellow)** and I Hawk (red).

Gay (Tilney) Prevost – thinks back: I am not sure whether **Alison Nicholson** was in our class. I believe her brother **Ralph** was in my brother, **Robin's**, class. I see **Hennie van der Bijl** quite often. He was **Alice Jacob's** nephew and he spent a year at Kitale School. He of course was **Tom Jacob's** cousin. I think Tom was a couple of years junior to us. Hennie has an incredible memory so I will e-mail him to see what he remembers from that time. The only other Kitaleite that I ever saw much of was **Alistair Douglas** also Falcon, who dies last year. I still miss his wonderful sense of humour. Unfortunately, conversations were mostly around farming as Alistair has a pesticide company here in Elgin (Cape S.A.) However, the shared background was always special. (Sadly **Robin Tilney** was brutally murdered in Gaborone, Botswana, in January 2012 BW.)

Sheila Archer was also in our class, I think. Other names that come to mind are the **Duir** boys and **Jilly Luke**. I was sorry we didn't put anything like this together for our first reunion in Johannesburg – like Paula, I was somewhat overwhelmed, writes **Gay**.

Diana (Fulton) Purchase continues: 'The **Dales** were our neighbours in the Cheranganis. **John** was one week younger than me and we were boyfriend / girlfriend for quite a while. When he left school, he went to England where he got badly knocked about in a boxing bout as a result of which he got tetanus and died. He was only 18. His brother, Allen married **Jessie Barbour** who died recently of cancer. **Cherry Dale** still lives and works in Kitale.

Percy Grandcourt was also in our class. I remember that he could run like hell.

The **Barnley** children were all at Kitale School. They are related to me (Writes **Diana (Fulton) Purchase**.) My step Mum, Betty, was Tim Barnley's sister. **Anne** is married to **Robert Bairstow**. They were together at school. **Dick** lives in Kitale, with his mother, Jane, now 87. **Julia** dies of cancer in January 2010 and **Bill** died of cerebral malaria, which he contracted while on holiday in Kenya.

Helen Crampton was in our class. Her parents ran Crampton's Inn. The last I heard of her, she was a mounted Police Woman in London. She then joined MI5 or MI6 – or one of those. Helen has a sister, **Pauline** and a brother called **Roger**. **Mike Mills** was also in our class. He now lives in Scotland and is doing very well selling Forever Living Products (aloe vera). Then there were **Sue Roffey** and **Percy Grandcourt**.

Michael Fulton adds: 'I last saw **Roger Crampton** and his parents. Mrs Crampton's mother was

95 in 1971 and she was still as sharp mentally as anything. They were living in Letchworth. **Helen** retired recently from the Metropolitan Police – or so I was informed by **Lindy (Northcote) Wilson**. **Pauline** is married to Brian Shaw and they live just outside Perth, Australia. .

I have never married, says **Karin**, so my surname is **Ganz**. My Mum, a widow, married my step-dad, a widower, and they were known in Kitale district as Do and Hans Mels. Hans was very much in demand to fix farm machinery.

My parents led an extraordinary life. During the 1940s, it was not popular to have a Germanic accent, which we all had. My brother, **Jurg**, and I were sent away to Crompton's Elgon Boarding School to learn English before we started at Kitale School. Wow!! I really am churning up memories.

We had a farm in the Cherangani Hills. Our neighbours were the **Symes** and the **Parburys**. **Sylvia Davidson** is the sister of my father who was also the first cousin of my mother – work that one out!!

I have lost contact with **Sandra Purves**, last heard of in Scotland. I do have contact with **Pat Collins (Symes)** and once a year I share news with **Miranda Parbury** who lives in Sidney.

Roffey is a name I am familiar with – it was one important reason for me to be confirmed at the age of 15, so that I could liaise with A girl although I cannot remember her name and one of the Roffey brothers. My mother would address 12 envelopes to me. I would give these envelopes to a friend to give to Roffey. He would write to her. I would get the letter and pass it on to her at Holy Communion. What we did not do to get round the teachers and the nuns.

It was quite an achievement to organize a party when we had no phones and no transportation. We would arrange for one parent to take us to the party and make sure that parent would also have a great time. A party for the parents and a party for the teenagers This took quite a bit of devious organizing. These are memories I haven't thought about for over 50 years!! **Karin Ganz**

This was sent through by **Di Fulton (Purchase)**

You find it hard to go to sleep without someone yelling "Lights out!" first.

You have been to more countries than counties.

You expect the water in your taps to turn brown after a rain storm.

You experience the need for a 'Chai' break every morning at 10h00

You are able to sing at least three National Anthems.

You are still trying to find a U.K supplier of Chevda.

You know how to read a currency exchange table.

You have a sign made by Mugo.

You cannot ride in a shuttle without thinking it would be an awesome Matatu.

You find yourself estimating the weight of the ivory in nature shows.

You think 'Direct Dial' is a new invention.

You know the area code of at least three countries but not the next city.

You have siblings with passports from another country.

Your best friend lives over 8000 miles away.
Your parents dropped you off at school in a Land Rover.
'Big G' is still your favourite chewing gum.
The night seems empty without the sound of Tree Hyrax screaming.
You cannot remember whose clothes you are wearing.
You keep expecting the water to turn hot in the shower.
You still yell 'Flushing' every time you go to the choo.
You keep looking for a guy roasting maize while you shop.
You only call your parents twice a year.
Your family members live on more than one continent.
You have a house that is decorated with the skins of endangered species.
You know what an anti-tetanus shot feels like.
You watch old Africa movies just to hear a bit of Swahili.
You have been to most of the places used for scenery in Africa movies.
You think of termites / flying ants as a food group.
You keep looking for a good curry and rice restaurant.
You cannot figure out why the speed limit is so low when there is so much pavement.
All travel is measured in hours or days instead of miles.
You find yourself addressing people as 'Bwana'.
You fly at least two national flags at your house.
You planted a Jacaranda tree in your yard.
You enjoy chilli hoho on everything you eat and make your own.
You had a driver names Salomon. Babu or Kiplagat.
You cannot figure out why supermarkets sell so many varieties of dry cereal.
You keep looking for Omo at the grocery store.
You own a laundry bag and wash clothes only once a week.
You can read a flight schedule better than a bus schedule.
You can estimate the weight of a suitcase within two pounds.
You prefer your sugar in 7 foot stalks.
You sift your flour before baking anything.
You check for safari ants before sitting down.
You know how to hot-wire a 'piki piki'.
You wish you could teach football players how to tackle.
You cannot get used to more than 12 hours of daylight.
You keep a bottle of 'Bitters' in the house but do not drink.
You know what Marmite is.
You have flown on the national airlines of countries that most people cannot find on a map.
You never assume that a petrol station will have petrol for sale.
You keep your passport current, just in case.
Most of your memories are of Africa.
You feel uniforms are a good idea.
You own a shortwave radio.
You get homesick about every three months.
You understand more of a Kikuyu / Jaluó hymn than a Rap song.
Valleys less than 2000 feet deep and 30 miles wide fail to impress you.
You think camping means sleeping in a tent.
You prefer countries with only two seasons, wet and dry.
You know that the lines on a map do not necessarily represent a road.

You feel free to drop in on people that you have not seen for years.
You only feel comfortable sleeping on a camp bed.
You watch the weather channel for the international forecast.
People who speak fewer than five languages are not impressive.
You know all the answers to the National Geographic quizzes.
You know what a real chameleon looks like.
You drive on dirt roads just for the fun of it.
You think the money is fake because it does not have the President's picture on it.
Queues of less than 40 people seem short.
You have read every Wilbur Smith book
You plan your vacations around April, August and December.
You can convert 160 kilometres per hour to 100mph without thinking.
You pass on the shoulder. That's what it's for is it not?
You wonder why the British do not run the exhaust on their trucks up behind the cab.
You miss the smell of fresh diesel in the morning.
You miss the 'ngombes' on the highway {Live in Africa; they are still there, as are the sheep and goats. BW}
You find staying in one's own lane boring.
You drive for years without a licence.
You had your first car accident at age 12.
You stay out of lakes because the stagnant water may infect you with bilharzia.
Any car less than 10 years old seems new to you.
You purchase maps of Africa just to find the mistakes.
Your mouth waters when anyone says 'samoosa.'
You know the difference between a Cape and a Water Buffalo.
In conversation, you start a lot of sentences with 'When we'
Mountains of under 16 000 feet fail to impress you.
You did not meet your grandmother until you were four.
You drive by large fields and still look for zebra.
You once had a wild animal as a pet.
You look out for leopards when walking at night.
You own a pair of Bata safari boots
You own a pair of million milers.
Bundu-bashing was once your favourite pastime.
You still wear a Kikoy in the house and garden even though your neighbours think it is a dress.
You subscribe to 'Old Africa' magazine to keep in touch with the past.
You still refer to trainers as 'takkies.'
You know what a 'kikapu' is and that it is eco-friendly and only needs renewing every year.
You know that OHMS means 'Omera Haina Meno Sita' and that Omera is of the Jalu tribe.
Omra was a python.
You never went to a football match.
You know what a yarpi is.
Your parents were always going somewhere for 'drinks.'
You are happy to watch lizards running round the walls of your living room. [Might they be ghekos?]
You check to see if your eggs float before cooking them.
You have sundowners every day, regardless of the position of the sun.
'Dawa' and 'kali' are still part of your everyday vocabulary.

You love the small of rain.

You only remember having two channels on TV, black and white.

You remember Mzee Pembe from TV.

You know that black cotton soil will bog you down.

When you ask for a 'White Cap' it is understood that you want a beer.

You killed 'mozzies' and 'dudus' by spraying with a 'flit' gun and hand pump.

We close with a few memories that **Bridget** as a teacher in the school contributes, which indicate so clearly the hospitality of parents and how a young, inexperienced teacher experienced the school in the years she was there as a teacher.

I remember the friendship and hospitality of the parents and the wonderful weekends I enjoyed on farms – the **Horseys**, the **Roberts** (Lugari), The **Sparkes**, the **Bartons**, the **Jacobs**, the **O'Hanlons** and many others.

The Kitale and Elgon Club weekends where I was able to play tennis – again with many Kitale School parents, **Jean** and **Guy Sparke**, **Jimmy Matthews**, the **Stathams** and others.

Then there was the Sports Club where I played hockey, my level of play being not nearly up to the Standard of the **Barbour** clan, **George** and **Jean**, **Mike** and **Pip Bennett** and others, enjoyable nevertheless.

I recall coaching senior, mixed hockey at the school and how in my second year we managed to beat both the Hill School and Nairobi Primary – they were good times. In the team were the **Barbour twins** (**Jessie** and **John**), the **Davis** twins, **Sue Forrester**, **Diana Fulton**, **Alan Dale**, **Alison Nicholson**, **Caroline** and **Oliver Barton**, **Pam Hissey**, **Richard Northmore**, **Chris Hearne** and many other excellent Junior School players.

I remember my Wednesday evenings at the Sports' Club where I went after coaching hockey. **Mrs Mac** was the Housemistress then and she used to watch my going out and especially my coming in. On one occasion we had no water when I wanted to freshen up after hockey coaching. I left the tap on accidentally only to discover on my return more than a slight flood in both my flat and especially Mrs Macs. In total innocence, I went across to help her clean up – never admitting my carelessness. I don't think she ever watched my comings and goings after that incident.

Mrs Mac left and **Doreen Drakes** moved in with **Chris**, **Ian** and **Lynne**. We were good friends so the inter-leading door was never locked and only closed at night so that the children had more space. Those were the best Boarding House years. **David Drakes** had been posted to the Nanyuki area so the family were only reunited during school holidays. I shared a lovely holiday with them and there learnt that I was an animal conservationist. Hunting continues to be my least favourite sport.

Dorothy Hallett, boy's matron loved playing Bridge and we played regularly once a week after the children had gone to bed – good times, good play and a most enjoyable coffee break in between made these happy evenings.

Alison Grey, sister of **Margaret Davis** (Junior House catering matron) was the girl's matron. She

and I worked very well together and helped each other out in regard to duties.

Weekend duties were heavy especially as we went from Friday to Monday morning and straight back into a classroom. In my hour off between lunch and tea I would enjoy having the use of the swimming pool all to myself.

I was then the Grade Two teacher, 42 children in the class and some of them were special needs children. I remember especially those who struggled, **Chris Pease** and later his brother **Bruce, Tim Roberts** and then his brother **Mark**. We have lost touch with all four. **Ann Taylor** was there from Kaptagat. **Terry Davidson** was one of the bright boys. His parents, **Walter** and **Sylvia (Ganz)** old girl, were friends throughout our time in Kenya. I remain in touch as I do with so many others.

When asked to take Standard Six, **Adrian Hillier**, very bright and in Standard Four was given a double promotion, which caused him some stress as he found the maths difficult. So he came for extra coaching and soon caught up. His father was Chairman of the board and his Mum, **Freda**, a very concerned parent, presented me with Mrs Beeton's cookery book – a very treasured gift to this day. This group of young people was the brightest and most challenging I think I have ever taught. It convinced me of the benefits of co-ed schools where the girls set the standard while the boys challenged and provided the creativity. Many continue to keep in touch.

Miles Barton was an unhappy boarder and so, on my weekends off, I would take Miles home to his parents in Kedowa. We would leave on Friday afternoon with Miles taking the wheel as soon as we were off the main road and Memsahib Kali managing the accelerator, clutch and brakes that he could not reach. We never had a single scare, even as we drove down the hair pin bends of the Nandi escarpment. **John** and **Barbara** would meet us in Songhor, where my parents farmed, and bring him back on the Sunday.

I recall **Biddy Crowcombe** coaching boys who were taking Common Entrance exams prior to going to school in England. **Nigel Sinclair** and **Robert Duris** were two while I helped **Ian Brooksbank** – and really enjoyed the way he applied himself. Nigel has since gone on to become one of the leading heart surgeons in Perth, Australia. He has saved the life of several Kitale School past pupils. **Andrew Hillier** comes to mind as being one of them. Robert lives and works in London while Ian is a hard-working, successful farmer in the south of England.

Holidays at the coast shared with the **Partridges (Anne, Biddy and Hugo)**, the **Bartons (Caroline, Oliver, Susan and Miles)** and the **Hemphills, (Robert and Alison)** were just the best. We were sometimes at Vipingo and at others in Watamu. Nowhere have I since experienced such amazing beaches.

One thinks back to those happy days in Kitale. The fond memories linger as do the not so good ones. One could go on for ever. It's time to close. I conclude with an entry from **Anna-Karin Jensen**, written recently on Facebook: 'If I had to re-live my life, I wouldn't change those years I lived in Kenya and went to boarding school at the age of 5, for anything!' I think we would all agree, Anna Karin. The country has changed although those who continue to live there, **Tony** and **Adrienne Mills, Cherry Dale, Robert Bairstow** and **Anne (Barnley) Jane** and **Dick Barnley, Horace, David, John** and **Ruth Horsey, Terry** and **Colin Davidson**, also **Sylvia, Barbara Boys**

(White) and **Gordon** and probably others that I have omitted from this list, live there because they love the country, the life and the friendly people. They are totally loyal Kenyans.

Some who have left and have returned or are planning to return are: **Niels Sunde** with his family, **Anthony** and **Penny Denton**. Kitale and Kenya will always be there – both will outlive all of us in the same way as do our memories, long after our departure to ‘greener pastures’ and new challenges.

Well done **Paula** for the idea that these memories need to be shared and for the amazing correspondence you had in compiling them. Thank you from us all.

APPENDIX

Kitale School Staff. (- not in any specific order.)

Boarding section:

Matron: Mrs Gorrie.

Housemaster: Mr Paxton. **followed by Mr Chiarletti and Mr John Green, in that order**

Junior School matron: Dorothy Hallett.

Junior Boarding House: Doreen Drakes – late 1950’s. **Housemistress Bridget Doenhoff from 1957 - 1960**

Jean Munro – looked after Senior Girls Boarding House.

Mrs Vail Senior Girls boarding house 1961

Heather Munro - (Jean Munro’s daughter-in-law) Boys matron.

Matron: Miss Roberts 1935.

House mistress: Miss Dempsey.

House Mistress; Miss Yuille 1955

Catering:

Catering Matron:

Elna Jensen after Mrs Fell [**Senior Dining Room**] and **Mrs Davis Junior Dining Room.**

Claire Roberts senior block dining room – used to walk round and prod us in the back with her keys, to make us sit up straight.

Sanitoruim ‘The San’: Mrs Telatine 1955,

Margaret Powell. 1958

Mrs Henn

House Staff: This list needs to be updated

Junior School:

Mrs MacDonald – Housemistress followed by Miss Doenhoff

Alison Grey – girls’ matron

Dorothy Hallett – Boys

Catering: Margaret Davis

Senior School:

Mr Peter Chiarletti – Housemaster
Mrs Joan Chiarletti – Boys’ Matron
Miss Kay Yuille – House Mistress
Mrs Jean Munroe – Girls’ Matron
Catering: Mrs Elna Jensen

Heads:

1929 -1935 Ray Barton.
1935 -1954 Johnny Woods.
1954 – 196? George Brookes. ‘Brookie’
1959 acting head while Brookie on leave Mr Dowson and Mr Ken Ussher,

1964? – 1969 Biddy Crowcombe. ‘Crowbar’
1970 -? Haidee King.
1974 - ? Frank King.
1979 -1983 Ms Dukelow
2003 Mr Sawe
2008 Margaret Wanyonyi.

Teachers:

Miss Biddy Crowcombe Standard Seven A Latin,, Science and tennis
Mrs Alice Jacobs.- Standard Seven B
Charles Mortimer – standard 4. - wife Alice; when she passed away, Charles married Alison Grey - Junior Girls' Matron Alison was Margaret Davis' [catering matron Junior Block] sister
Mrs Greenwood – standard 4. –very Scottish.
Betty Cory,
Mary Sloan, and her husband, 1969 -1975.
Chris Gibson,
Kay Yuille, Standard Six
Mrs Valpy, Standard Five
Peter Chiarletti - Art and Standard Six wife Joan was boys' matron
Colin Davey,
Mrs Dorris Fell- taught art and crafts in Johnny Woods time.
Mr Charles Mortimer Standard Four – wife Alice did not work at the school
Miss Eileen Williams, Standard Four alongside Mr Mortimer
Rosemary Claydon, Standard Three - alongside Mrs Mac when Miss Walker left
Francis Walker, Standard Three
Mrs Valpy. Maths and English Standard Five
Mrs Ivy Wood, Standard One
Miss Rule ‘Ruler’

Margaret Lariche, 1934 era.

Mrs Firth,

Graham Bush, Arrived with Margaret Parr and Chris Gibson. The two ladies came from Nyeri Primary School

Margaret Parr - married Graham Bush

Miss Buchan,

May Montgomery,

Mrs MacDonald 'Fattymac', Junior School Housemistress; Standard Three

Mrs MacDonald, 'Skinnymac'.

Mr George Brooks and Vera [School secretary]

Mr Ken Ussher, [his wife was in the office during the term that Ken acted as Head].

Mr Peter Dowson [acting Head]

Mrs Winnifred Bumpus P.T. and gym,

Mr Batten – boxing.

Mrs Barberton - swimming

Bridget Walton – Junior School Housemistress after Mrs Mac. Standard Two; thereafter Standard Six A, when Peter Chiarletti left and hockey

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