

Strode's School, Egham, Surrey

As I start to compile this account, it is sixty years almost to the day that I first set foot in this venerable institution as a prospective pupil, and one hundred years since the main building, now part of the present Strode's College campus was opened. Noting that there is very little detail as yet to be found on the Internet, I was inspired to write about Strode's School in more detail after renewing contact with a few contemporary school friends for the first time in many years, also following the unfortunate demise of the "Friends Reunited" website, with its recollections of the times; fortunately, I saved a copy of these before they disappeared.



Sources of information

- 1) Book "The Strode Foundation 1704-1954" published in 1954
- 2) Book "Henry Strode's Charity 1704-1994" by Pamela Maryfield, Principal, 1994
- 3) "The Strodian" magazine, a full set comprising pre-war editions 1-38 published twice yearly 1920-1939 and "new series" (annually) 1947-1972 in the Egham Museum archive and some personal copies
- 4) "Panora" School Photographs for 1960, 1963 and 1966
- 5) "Annual Speech Day Programme", 15th July 1965 and others in the Egham Museum archive
- 6) My School Diary for Trinity Term, 1966
- 7) "Viewpoint" school newspaper, just around 20 random issues of over 90 published 1961-65, in the Egham Museum archive
- 8) Form Lists for 1961-62 and 1963-64 in the Egham Museum archive and others from Peter Dawes
- 9) My Report Book covering the years 1959 to 1966
- 10) Personal recollections from those years
- 11) Recollections of other contemporaries and some of those published on the Friends Reunited website
- 12) The 1939 wartime ID card register, with searchable index, available on Ancestry and Find my Past
- 13) The Register of Staff, 1919-1963, recently "re-discovered" in the Egham Museum collection!

Acknowledgements

I must at this point stress that what follows is not by any means all my own work; but rather an ever-growing compilation of memories and anecdotes from many contemporary colleagues, listed at the end of this account, with myself acting merely as editor. I am most grateful to all those who have renewed contact after all these years, and welcome any further contributions!

Setting the scene - a history of the school

This is mainly compiled from item 1) above for interest, since copies of this book are probably quite rare nowadays and thus difficult to find....

Henry Strode born in 1644 trained and worked as a cooper (barrel-maker) in London, and by 1703 was elected Master of the Worshipful Company of Coopers. He died on 6th May 1704, and in his will left the sum of £6000 to purchase land and build a free school and alms-houses in the town of Egham, his ancestral home town (as an amusing aside, an irreverent “history” published anonymously in the “Strode’s Week” event programme in 1965 suggested that the executors had misread Strode’s flamboyant script, and that what he had really intended was a “foolhouse”, i.e. Lunatic Asylum!) The school was to be for “the boarding and edification of the poor children of the parish”. His favoured site was “Dead Pool Close” on the south side of the present Egham Causeway roughly where the Sainsbury’s store is now situated, but it was not possible to purchase there. Instead the present site of what is now Strode’s College was chosen, next to the Crown Inn in High Street, purchased in 1706. By 1707 a school house and twelve alms-houses were erected, opened as an Endowed Charity School in 1708. Here is an engraving of this building....



It can be seen that the entrance was directly off the High Street, and the Crown Inn building is shown at the right-hand side. The taller central part comprised a large schoolroom on the ground floor, with accommodation for the schoolmaster and his family above. There are six alms-houses on either side.

A Master was appointed at £40 per year and the alms-people paid 3s 0d (15p) per week for their accommodation. The initial pupil roll was probably around 30, all boys (the first girls’ school in Egham did not start until 1868). Six boarders were accommodated from around 1785, in a partitioned-off part of the main schoolroom.

The second school, 1839

The number of pupils increased to around 40 by 1813 and the original facilities became inadequate, so new premises were built in the period 1828 to 1839, set back further from the main street, on the site of the present old main building of the college....



The above drawing was made by our art master, Mr Ashdown from an old lithograph, and the picture below is a contemporary print. The main building comprised a chapel in the centre, a master's house and schoolroom, and the east and western side blocks are the new alms-houses, six in each, which will be familiar today since they survive as listed buildings. The school roll quickly grew to around 100, and to 150 by 1885, but the new accommodation could hold up to 200.



The Ordnance Survey plan extract of 1897 below shows the layout of the buildings and the relationship of the school to the town. It will be noted that the entrance for pupils at that time was adjacent to the letter "I" of High Street, and that there are no playing fields to the north of the school.



This second school closed in July 1900, and the alms-house function ceased in 1911, replaced by financial support of deserving cases accommodated elsewhere in the town.

The third school, 1919

The new school, on the site of the second but much larger, was started in 1915 and completed the following year, at a cost of £10,000, but did not open until September 1919 as a public secondary day school for boys. The building was designed to accommodate 150 pupils initially, but with possible expansion to 300. The initial intake was 35 boys, and there were 4 members of staff.

On the ground floor, adjacent to the main entrance, was the Headmaster's room to the right (with its red light above the door) and the school secretary's to the left. Further left was the dining room and its kitchen, and at the back from left to right were a workshop, darkroom and laboratory, then the double-height main assembly hall in the centre, extending further backwards, with a stage to the rear. The remainder of the ground floor on the east side comprised an Art room at the back, cloakroom & PT changing room at front, and the upper floor was almost entirely form rooms. Upstairs at the east end was the Staff Room, with its forbidding sign on the door: "BOYS must not enter this ROOM" - provoking the oft-quoted comment "girls were presumably welcome"!



The land for the playing fields (somewhat larger than at present) was purchased around the time the school opened.

This OS plan is from around 1938, and the former Crown Inn has by that time been rebuilt into largely its present form as a hotel.

The 1839 alms- houses now serve as gardener's and caretaker's stores, staff accommodation, and a classroom towards the north end of the west block which we knew as the Music Room in the 1960s, as usual separate to the main teaching rooms due to the noises emanating!

For admission to the school it was necessary to pass an entrance examination, but there were no residential restrictions; boys began to travel from as far away as Camberley and Byfleet, and there were always a few from the Staines and Sunbury areas over the county boundary in Middlesex. The Head assisted by up to six masters presided over them, and numbers grew to 160 by 1930 and 212 by 1939.

In 1938-39 the main assembly hall was lengthened northwards, with a larger stage and a "green room" off it on each side. In the latter year a new block comprising a classroom with geography room above and a single-storey physics laboratory to the rear was erected at the west end of the main building, together with a new boys' toilet block (the "Bogs") beyond, replacing what was probably a wooden affair at the western boundary on the above plan. While the front of the extension matched the existing building, the back, out of the public view, was somewhat more utilitarian, presumably to save costs. The necessary demolition & building work going on was reported as causing chaos in the daily running of the school! The cellar areas beneath the main building were converted into emergency air-raid shelters with two sets of entrances and steps prominent in our photo above. Air-raid practices were held in October 1939.

For part of the war years, the school hosted pupils evacuated from others in the London area, and operated on three days a week for Strode's Boys and for the visitors, Monday to Saturday. Four temporary female teachers were employed from 1941 to cover for men called up into the armed services.

By 1945 further new classrooms were created in the old alms-houses to cater for a massive increase in pupil numbers, reaching 351 in that year, with annual intake of around 60 in two classes.

As a result of the 1944 Education Act Strode's School came under the administration of Surrey County Council in 1950 as a Voluntary Controlled Boys Grammar School, and all fees were abolished. The entry qualification was now the new national standard "Eleven Plus" examination. In 1951 the school was redecorated after years of wartime neglect.

The drawing (right) by Mr Ashdown shows the east end of the main school building from the boys' entrance in early 1954. Later in that year a new block was constructed here, housing a library and sixth-form room. The school was now of the form in which we knew it from 1959.



Increasing pupil numbers led to pressure on space from around 1956 on, an issue highlighted constantly in the headmaster's reports at least until 1967. In 1956 the total roll is recorded as 375, with 67 in the first forms; the following year it had increased to 394, and by 1962 to no less than 452 with 80 in the 6th forms. It was no longer possible to accommodate the whole school in the main hall for Morning Assembly, so separate Junior & Senior Assemblies were held on different days of the week. The cramped dining room meant that junior boys had to walk down to St John's church hall for their midday meal, although many such as myself brought a packed lunch from the outset. At the same time it was noted that the school needed three new science laboratories. The situation was made worse in 1958, when years 3, 4 and 5 were split into 3 streams rather than 2, requiring an extra 3 form rooms; the alms-house Music Room, Art Room and Dining Room now serving dual roles. In that year Biology and German became fully-available school subjects, and Latin was



made compulsory for years 1 & 2, optional thereafter.

The space issue was partially resolved in 1961 when a new science building was opened at the north-east corner, with a large chemistry laboratory on the top floor, biology and a woodwork/technical drawing room at ground level. At its north end from 1965, a vestibule led through into a new school hall, completed shortly afterwards at a cost of £25K, funded by Surrey County Council. The old main assembly hall was then converted into a library, and the old library became a new physics lab. The picture (right) shows the almshouse form room at left, with the 1954 extension in the centre and the 1961 Science block at far right. A “temporary” pre-fab classroom appeared on the Juniors’ playground at the east end of the site in 1962 and another in 1963.



This picture shows the north side of the new school hall, completed in 1965-66, but demolished in recent years....



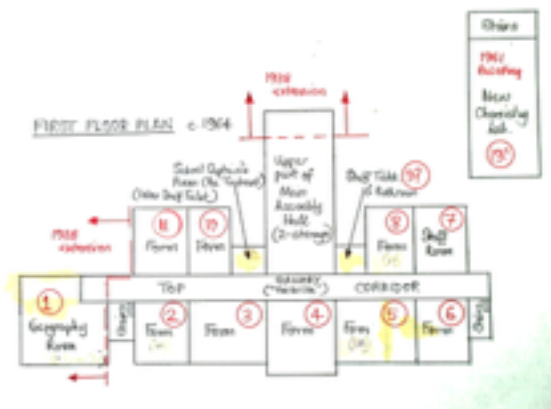
Lastly, a new sports pavilion with much improved changing and shower facilities, long overdue, was provided in 1967 on the SW side of the playing fields; it also served as a sixth-form common room. An appeal fund for £8000 paid for this and a new boathouse on the River Thames at Staines.

Here are some sketch plans of the school as we remember it, circa 1964

These are hand-drawn at present, to be replaced by more professional looking versions when all possible information has been obtained!



The



Geography, Music & Art rooms and the Dining room were also used as form rooms for at least 1958-1962, giving the total of around 16 shown here. From 1958 onwards the requirement was 17 until the Biology sub-divisions of the science sixth forms were introduced in Autumn 1964, whereupon these (only around 8 each in number) shared the 1961-built Biology Lab (room 18?) under Mr Cameron. It has been suggested that there may have been an internal access to the basement under the stairs at the east end of the main building, but I recall only ever using the outside entrances during Caxton Club activities.

The Physics and Chemistry labs at the western end are thought to have been accessed from a shared lobby off the main corridor. The School Captain's room shown had previously served as a Prefect's Room and became a second staff toilet after 1965. A second staff room was created around 1963 "with its door opposite the geography room"; this would seem to be a new construction, possibly a lightweight "pre-fab" affair on top of the physics lab roof; it was also used for such activities as the French GCE "oral" exams.

In the absence of any known surviving documents, Peter Dawes has kindly provided details of the room numbering system as he remembers it, and now indicated within the red circles on the above plans. It seems that only the form and staff rooms were numbered. There had clearly been a numbering system in use in pre-war days, but had been changed subsequently; in the 1930s room 8 was recorded as being used as the groundsman's potting shed! The numbering of rooms 1-8 is logical, and we presume that 9 was the staff bathroom. Rooms 10-11 were divided by a movable partition, which was probably rarely opened. 13 was apparently never used. 21 was the converted alms-house as shown, and 20 was the Music Room on the other side. So what then were nos. 18 and 19? Maybe the 1961-built Chemistry & Biology labs if/when they were also used as form rooms? Rooms 22 and 23 were definitely the "temporary" wooden rooms added on the East playground area in 1962-63, and so it is thought that 16 was logically the original library in the 1954 extension. In July 1964, a "Room 25" is mentioned, with no indication of its location.

In general, it is said that rooms tended to be used by the same forms and form masters each year, but obviously there were changes when the two prefab classrooms (22-23) arrived in 1962-63: 1B and 1A were moved out there and the surrounding east playground was then designated for their sole use. Again no definitive lists seem to have survived. Form 5C was usually in room 6 at the east end opposite the staff room "presumably so the staff could muster a crowd control force rapidly!" In at least 1964 the 5th form rooms 5, 6 & 8 were used for their springtime "O" level exams, with the upper corridor being out-of-bounds to other boys. The present extant of our knowledge is summarised in the table below; can anyone add to this?.....

Years, forms, masters & rooms				<i>Items in red are speculative only</i>			
School year	Form	Master	Room	School year	Form	Master	Room
1959-60	1A	Jones	3	1959-60	5A	Bloomer	5
1962-63	1A		23	1962-63	5A	Bloomer	5
1959-60	1B	Greely	2	1964-65	5A	Bloomer	5
1962-63	1B		22	1959-60	5B	Russell	8
1959-60	2A	Mathias T.		1963-64	5B	Preston	8
1960-61	2A	Jones		1959-60	5C	Wheeler	6
1959-60	2B	James		1963-64	5C		6
1959-60	3A	Stamp	1	1964-65	5C		6
"Most yrs"	3A	Stamp	1	1959-60	6A Arts	Mulholland	10
1959-60	3B	Elliot		1963-64	6A Arts		21
1961-62 (pt)	3B	Cranham	20	1959-60	6A Sc	Cope	4
1961-62 (pt)	3B	Tanner		1963-64	6A Sc (M)		15
"Most yrs"	3C	Ashdown	17	1965-66	6A Sc (M)	Mulholland	15
1959-60	3C	Ashdown	17	1959-60	6B Arts		11
1959-60	4A	Loveluck		1963-64	6B Arts		11
1959-60	4B	Hodge	11	1964-65	6B Arts		9
1962-63	4B	Hodge	11	1962-63	6B Sc		6
1964-65	4B		3	1959-60	6B Science		15
1959-60	4C	Tanner	14	1963-64	6B Sc (M)		2
1961-62	4C	Tanner	14	1964-65	6B Sc (M)	Cope	2
				1964-65	6B Sc (Bio)		Bio Lab

The enlarged and modernised school continued as outlined above until 1975, when its status underwent a major change to a co-educational sixth-form college, admitting girls for the first time ever, and continues with much further expansion of the facilities to this day, and a current role (2018) of some 1350 students.

Strode's School in the years from 1959 to 1966 - a personal recollection

1) The Preliminaries

During the early weeks of 1959, those of us in the last year of primary school who were expected to pass the 11-plus exam were invited by the Chief Education Officer for Middlesex to submit our choice of, I think, three local grammar schools, for the granting of a "Common Entrance Award". I certainly included Strode's, but cannot remember what the others were; maybe Latymer Upper in Hammersmith and Sunbury Grammar.

An interview date at Strode's came quickly by post and on Thursday 23rd April I journeyed by bus to Egham smartly dressed with my parents to attend at 2.40pm sharp. We arrived somewhat early, and paced the streets anxiously awaiting the time. I was seen first, by the headmaster himself in his study, and must have somehow acquitted myself adequately. Then it was my parents' turn, and my father told me afterwards that their grilling was no less thorough than mine had been! Initially Mr Brady's opinion was that I would be better suited to a Technical College environment rather than his establishment, but dad somehow managed to persuade him otherwise, saying that I should not have to specialise to that extent at such an early age, and that both he and I wanted a continuing good and broad education such as that he was offering. With hindsight, this is the only occasion I can recall of Mr Brady's mind ever being changed about anything! A formal letter of acceptance at Strode's was duly received in mid-May, my application having been sent to, and approved by, the Surrey Education Committee in the meantime.

There then followed a brochure relating to school life, uniform requirements etc (my copy was unfortunately mislaid many years ago), and an invitation to a meeting of parents of new entrants held in July. The uniform (as per picture right, taken a couple of years later) required a trip to Kitney's shop near the west end of Egham High Street (later near the top of Station Road, and from around 1963 at Caley's in Windsor) to be kitted out, as they were the sole approved supplier; this did not meet with father's approval due to the obviously inflated prices charged, but we had no choice. The



uniform comprised a bottle green jacket (which faded to emerald with hard usage!) with the school crest sewn onto the breast pocket, a green cap with yellow lion motif, and the school tie and scarf in green and gold. The school motto "Malo Mori Quam Foedari" translates as "Death before Dishonour". The regulation white shirt, black long trousers and black shoes could be purchased in our usual local shops.

Opinions differ as to whether the cap was compulsory for the first year; in around early 1959 at least one detention is recalled for non-compliance at a bus stop in the High Street, but later in that year Mr Brown declared that the rule was unenforceable. It was in any case generally dispensed with in subsequent years. I don't recall any specific requirement for sports apparel at this stage, apart from navy blue shorts and a green shirt for football etc. Apparently the shorts for PT had to be white, along with plimsolls. Though



the serious cricket players often appeared in their smart “whites”, on the very few occasions that I was cajoled into participating, I think my football kit had to suffice.

Since the school was just over the minimum qualifying three miles from home, I was provided with a free annual bus pass for use on London Transport’s 117 or 441 services from Staines to Egham. I duly started at Strode’s for the Michaelmas term in early September 1959. My home stop was close to the entrance to Matthew Arnold Secondary School, so I was often subjected to jeering as the “Posh Grammar School Boy” from its denizens. In accordance with the social hierarchy of the times, we scruffy Middlesex oiks were in turn generally looked down upon by the immaculately-dressed boys travelling by train from the Surrey stockbroker belt!

2) The Teaching Staff

They were always Masters, never teachers! Most of the old stagers wore long flowing black academic gowns at all times in school, and some even their mortar boards. Thus, in theory at least, commanding total respect and authority from all.

The first headmaster from the opening of the school in 1919 was **Captain James Mylam Gittins**, who was in charge until his retirement in 1945 and still commemorated with a photograph in the main assembly hall. He was succeeded in the interim by his long-serving deputy **Stanley J. Heddon**

James Brady, known to all boys as “Jock”, pictured right, was born in Bethnal Green, East London on 22nd February 1910, the son of a policeman, Walter Valentine Brady born in Stepney. It was a surprise to learn this many years after we left, as I always assumed he was Irish, and others thought he was a Lancashire lad! (some said they thought he came from hell!) By 1921 his father has retired from the police and the family are at the School House, Snelston in Derbyshire, where his mother Margaretta was a mistress at the local school and James was in full-time education there, followed by Clacton College, Essex from 1922. He won an open scholarship to Imperial College, London in 1930, graduated with 1st class honours in Botany in 1933, and by 1939 was teaching Biology at the Strand School, Tulse Hill, South London which was evacuated to Effingham in Surrey upon the outbreak of war. He was appointed as Head at Strode’s in Autumn 1946, whereupon Mr Heddon became his deputy until his own retirement in 1949. Mr. Brady initially lived with his family in the east side former alms-houses, then moving to Manor Way, Egham where at least two pupils also resided; they had to be on their best behaviour at all times, not just in school! In around 1958 a purpose-built house was erected for him opposite the eastern end of the main school building. He is said to have rarely taught, but is recorded as teaching Latin to the first years in 1958-9, and Economics to form 4A onwards from 1962-63, we thought mainly for his son’s benefit! He also always took 4B for Religious Knowledge for some reason. He sometimes also invigilated to cover for an absent member of staff. His stated mission in life: to “turn out good Christian Conservatives” (He was not entirely successful in this; a “Viewpoint” 6th form survey in 1964 returned just 60% Tory, 15% Liberal and 12.5% each Labour and Don’t Know!). Most likely to say: “Make the most of your opportunities”, “Come here, Boy!”, “The future of the country lies in your hands” (it was recalled that some wag wrote that last one on the wall over the urinals in the boys’ toilet!) and possibly “....punctualally”. Mr Brady retired in 1970 to Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, and passed away there in April 1981. He was replaced at school by yet another James, **J.J. Evans**, the last headmaster of the grammar school, until 1975.





Deputy head **Athelstan Brown** (“Buster”) born 14th February 1903 in Hastings and educated at the local grammar school there, had started at the school even further back, in January 1930 at a salary of £301-10s per annum, and was promoted to deputy head in 1949 upon Mr Heddon’s retirement. In the 1911 census he is at 2 Mann Street, Hastings with his parents and a younger brother; his father was the town Postman. 1921 finds him lodging at 11 Gascoyne Road, Hackney as a student at the East London College. He came to Strode’s from Sutton Grammar School in Plymouth. By September 1939 he is living at 11, Rusham Park Avenue, Egham, with wife Mona. He taught Senior

Mathematics and retired in summer 1966, a true gentleman fondly remembered for his patient, firm but mostly kindly manner and a special way of imparting the complexities of Maths to us in a way that made it both interesting and absorbing right from junior school through to A and S-level in the upper sixth form. Most likely to say: “I well remember the time when.....”, “what would happen if everybody did it?”

He retired in summer 1966 to Maidenhead, Berkshire, but continued an active interest in Strode’s affairs for many years; he passed away in 1992 aged 88.

The Four Housemasters

All pupils of the school were allocated randomly upon enrolment to one of four “houses”, mainly for purposes of sports competitions etc. They were identified by a coloured ribbon strip sown onto the jacket breast pocket above the school crest, and were **Strode’s House** (red ribbon), **Cooper’s** (blue) and **Paice** (green) with **Charter** (light yellow) added in 1946. William Paice was a respected Chairman of the school governors for many years from 1915 on.



Mr. Brown was not the longest-serving master, that honour fell to **Lionel Marshland Stamp** (“Sticky”, though with that unusual middle name he should surely have been “Swampy”!) who joined Strode’s in January 1928 teaching Geography, History and Religious Knowledge, later just Senior Geography. Born 15th October 1903 in Friern Barnet, Hertfordshire; the 1911 census shows him with his parents and a younger sister at 37 Beaconsfield Road there; his father was a teacher at the local Council School. In the 1921 census he is now found at *no.* 38 Beaconsfield Road, Barnet, his father Arthur is a schoolmaster at St Paul’s School nearby. However he attended Christ College in Finchley, then King’s College, London. He came to Strode’s on a starting salary of £234 per annum from a supply teaching post with London County Council. In 1939 we find him at 1 Littlecroft Road, Egham, facing the school playing fields; he apparently never married and continued to live there for many years thereafter. Most likely to say: “Double Up” (in other words “get a move on you lot”). Mr Brady once said “Under Mr Stamp’s Napoleonic frown there beats a heart of gold”. He was House-master of **Cooper’s House** and finally retired in 1970, the powers that be having somehow “overlooked” the fact that he was well past the then-statutory retirement age of 65 years! He died at Crawley, Sussex on 8th July 1986, aged 82.



The Rev. **Leonard Arthur Preston** (“Holy Joe” or just “Joe”) was the Strode’s Housemaster, teaching Senior Divinity. We now know he was born on 28th April 1909, but initially proved difficult to identify as there were three all with the exact same names born within a few weeks of each other, in Brixton, London, Bromley, Kent and Crewe, Cheshire. By coincidence all three have close relatives in the printing trade, hence his interest which led to his setting up of the Caxton Club at Strode’s in 1953 (see later). Many of us thought that he was a Londoner, but the more precise ages given in the 1921 census show that our man was definitely the one born at Crewe; he was the son of Arthur Mountford Preston and his wife Martha. Young Leonard had a hard and quite sad early

few years; father was an apprentice gas fitter in 1901, but then went to sea with the Merchant Service as an engine-room worker, and is away at the time of the 1911 census. In this we find Martha and her family at a tiny terraced house, 4 Bryn Tirion Terrace, Llandudno Junction in North Wales; Leonard aged nearly 2 has 3 elder siblings all born at Crewe, and another one has passed away in infancy. They then moved to the Isle of Anglesey, where two more children were born, both of whom died young. Mother Martha herself passed on there in 1919 aged just 36. The 1921 census shows that the 4 surviving children have moved back to Crewe, in the care of Martha's brother, Isaac John Ayre, his mother and sister at another small terraced house, 42 Walthall Street. Isaac is a printer's compositor at Willmot Eardley Ltd, Chester Bridge, Crewe; his sister and Leonard's elder brother Harold are both employed by the London & North Western Railway Company. His father Arthur is with them, a break from his seafaring on census night.

Leonard's fortunes then improved; he was educated at Tatterford School, Fakenham in Norfolk, Leeds University where he studied History, then Mirfield Theological College, Yorkshire. He married Marjorie Woolford in 1936 at Wakefield, and was ordained into the Anglican Priesthood becoming Vicar of St Augustine, Penarth, South Wales by 1939. In September that year we find him living at 6 Jenkinsoill, Church Place, Penarth with his wife Marjorie. Throughout the Second War Rev. Preston served with distinction as a Senior Army Chaplain with the Royal Army Chaplain's Dept, winning the Military Cross, mentioned twice in despatches and awarded Knight of Orange-Nassau (with Swords) by the Netherlands Royal family. Coming from a teaching post back at Wakefield Grammar School he was appointed at Strode's in September 1948 and retired quietly in 1971. He passed away in July 1996 at Ashford, Kent, aged 87.

Frederick Neville Foster Cope ("Horace" - as in "horoscope" but occasionally "Grunter") was in charge of Paice house and taught Senior History. He was born 16th June 1909 in Darlaston, West Midlands; the 1911 census finds him at 51 Catherine's Cross in that town, with his parents and 1 servant; his father Henry Wilkes Cope ran a Butchers Shop there (some may think this explains the young Frederick's evolving character!). However by 1921 like many others they have evidently fallen on hard times, as father is now recorded as a Joiner (out of work) and his mother is now running a shop (unspecified); they are at 18 King Edward Street, Darlaston and the servant has gone. Frederick at 12 is now attending Queen Margaret's Grammar School in Walsall; he went on to study history at Fitzwilliam House, Cambridge. In September 1939 he is an assistant master living in at Whittingham College, Surren Road, Brighton, Sussex but was appointed to Strode's a few months later, then called up into the RAF for 5 years' service as a Flying Officer; he often regaled us with stories of his sometimes hilarious wartime exploits in India in his distinctive Black Country accent, together with his oft-repeated expression: "of cuss..." (course). In his younger days an enthusiastic wielder of the cane, he is reputed to have smashed a ceiling lamp during one furious upswing! With his bulky frame he was also a terrifying opponent on the hockey field, "not caring who or what he hit". Mr Cope retired to Peacehaven, Sussex in 1970 and died there in February 1981.



John Francis Giles Bloomer ("Johnny") was Master-in-Charge of Charter House. Born on 7th February 1908 at Stourbridge, Worcestershire, in 1911 he is at Victoria Avenue, Bromyard with his parents and an elder brother; his father is an Insurance Superintendent with the Pearl Life Assurance Company. By 1921 they are at 57 Shaw Road, Dudley with father now a General Clerk at Edward Webb & Sons, the well-known Seedsmen of Wordsley, Stourbridge. Educated at Dudley Grammar School, he was another long-server who joined Strode's in September 1930, his first teaching post after graduating from Birmingham University, on an annual salary of £249.



His main subject was Senior English: “and accordingly, gentlemen, I’d like to complete if I can....”; “cut the cackle and select your work, gentlemen....” He also led the editorial team producing the annual school magazine, the “Strodian”, for many years after 1955. In 1939 he is found at 21, Pooley Green Road, Egham with wife Julia. In the Second World War Johnny served in RAF Bomber Command as an AC2 navigator/bomb aimer, flying De Havilland Mosquito aircraft, so was lucky to have survived; he returned to Strode’s in 1946 along with Mr Cope. He retired in summer 1972 but stayed in his long-term home in Pooley Green Road, where he passed away in May 1987, aged 78.

The other two Senior Masters in our time both joined Strode’s in 1949/50: **William Rees Loveluck** (Jack, for some reason) was born on 9th April 1915 in Llantwit Fardre, Pontypridd, Glamorgan; in 1921 he is at Seaview House, Wick, Cowbridge with his parents and 2 siblings where his father was Assistant Overseer & Rates Collector for Bridgend UDC. He was educated at Bridgend County School and the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. In September 1939 he was living with his parents Bertie & Margaret, now at 11 Bowham Avenue, Bridgend, shown as a modern languages master. In the war he served as a Major with the Royal Corps of Signals in North Africa and South-East Asia. Coming to Strode’s in May 1949 from Chelmsford Grammar School he taught Senior French: “What is it that it is?” (trying to explain the complexities of French syntax) and is thought to have transferred to the sixth-form college in 1975 for a short while before retiring; he died locally in April 1998 aged 83.



Douglas Morgan Jenkins (Doug) was born on 3rd October 1920 at Penclawdd, Gower; the census 9 months later shows him at home, Brigydon there with father Albert John, a teacher at the local school, mother Lilian Mary and an elder brother. He attended Gowerton County School 1933-39 then University College, Swansea, graduating in 1942. The 1939 index shows him at home with his parents at Ayrarth, West End, Gower, “not previously employed”.



For the remainder of the war he carried out industrial research in Surrey then returned home to teach Chemistry at Port Talbot Grammar School; he joined Strode’s from there in April 1950 as Senior Chemistry Master. His class questions were elicited abruptly but precisely as for example in “Ooleum!...Vaaalency?...”. He continued teaching into the sixth-form college era beyond 1975, but died in Egham in April 1981 at the age of just 60.

Our other Masters serving during the period 1959-66 were as follows:

Alfred William Ashdown (Bill, but always “Scrub” to the boys, as in “a washdown”!) was an inspirational Art teacher. Born on 27th November 1924 at Aldershot, the September 1939 ID card index shows him at 27 Christmas Avenue there with his parents and 2 elder sisters; his father Thomas was a clerk in the civil service. He was educated at Farnborough Grammar School and Guildford School of Art. He served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve as a Sub-Lieutenant 1942-46, and joined Strode’s in January 1952. He sadly contracted a severe wasting disease and spent some years in deteriorating health before dying in the Isle of Wight in November 1990, aged 65.



Frederick John Charles Cranham (“Fred”) was born on 7th March 1907 at Blackwater, Hampshire; the 1911 census shows him at Oaklea, Hawley with Minley (NW of Farnborough) with his parents, his father having a house painting & decorating business. They are still there in 1921, now with a younger sister. He was educated at Aldershot Grammar School and King Alfred Technical College, Winchester, then studied Music at the Universities of London & Durham. The 1939 index shows him at age 32, single, lodging at 85 High Street, Lewes in Sussex, as an Elementary School Master with two colleagues. His war service was in



the Royal Navy as an Instructor Lieutenant, 1942-46; he was reputedly on board a submarine and badly injured when his vessel was torpedoed. He joined Strode's from a post with Croydon Local Education Authority in January 1948 to teach Music, with some divinity & english, based out in the western alms-houses. We taunted him most unfairly and mercilessly; he also was inspirational, a brilliant piano-player, organist and choirmaster, but all this sadly failed to rub off on me. His suggested favourite expressions: "Own up - I know who it is!", "Wonn table at a time!", "Have on the desk the Bibol". Mr Cranham retired in 1972 and died locally in 1997, aged 90.

Leslie Elliott ("Ernie", later "Les") was born on 5th April 1918 at Tow Law, County Durham; in the 1921 census he is at 2 Gretta Street, Pelton Lane End where his father Thomas Emmerson Elliott was an engineman at Pelton Colliery. He was educated at Wolsingham Grammar School and graduated from the University of Durham in 1939, where in September we find him at 4 Laburnum Avenue. During the war he was a commissioned officer in REME 1940-46, and was teaching at Rye Grammar School in Sussex from 1947. He joined Strode's from there in September 1956 to teach Senior Science, later just Physics at all levels: "this is partickly todowith theidearof..." He transferred to the sixth-form college in 1975 for a few years before retiring, and died in Egham in September 2004 aged 86



The amiable **Alfred John Bristow Hodge** (Alf, sometimes "Creamer") was born on 10th May 1904 in Malling, Kent and was educated at the Judd School, Tonbridge then University College and Goldsmith's College, London. Both the 1911 and 1921 censuses show him at Burnt House, East Peckham in Kent with his parents and siblings; his father had a Coal Merchant business. In September 1939 we find him as a schoolteacher living at 95 Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent with his wife Maude. He joined Strode's in September 1944 from Bath Technical College, teaching science and maths, later just maths. In demeanour and teaching style he was almost a copy of



Mr Brown. He co-ordinated the school National Savings effort during the war years and afterwards, then was Cooper's House tutor and ran the Photographic Society in at least 1963-64. He was also a competent musician and chorister. Retiring in Summer 1964, he returned as a part-time library supervisor for a while in 1965 - couldn't stay away! - then went to live in Eastbourne, Sussex, and died there in January 1998 aged 93.

Michael Alexander Tanner (Bob) was born 1st December 1933 in Bristol and attended Marywood County School and the university there, interrupted by National Service as a Sub-Lieutenant. He joined Strode's in September 1957 upon graduation, assisting with English and French, also some Latin in the junior school. He helped organise the school plays and the Cross-Country Club. He left in Summer 1965, becoming head of English at George Abbott County Secondary School, Guildford.



Kenneth Howard Wheeler (Jimmy) was born on 2nd April 1921 and the census shows him with his parents and maternal grandmother at 16 Ilderton Road, Rotherhithe, South London; his father was a master house decorator (employer) with premises at Parkhurst Road, Bexley. He was educated at The Roan School, Blackheath and Kings College, London. Wartime service was with the Royal Fusiliers 1941-46 in North Africa; he had one glass eye, saying he had left his real one in the Western Desert in that conflict. Joining Strode's in 1959 having previously taught at Worcester Royal Grammar School since 1954, he took French and German classes. A likely favourite expression: "Belt up a minute". He retired from the sixth-



form college in around 1977, then ran a tea-room “The Kettle Sings” with his wife Connie in Jubilee Drive, Malvern, Worcestershire, passing away there in December 1991 aged 70.



Bearded, quiet academic **John Haldane Mulholland** (Moke, Mully) was born in Farnley, Yorkshire on 12th August 1912; in 1921 he is found at The Vicarage, Ben Rhydding, Ilkley, where his father was Vicar. He was educated at Bradford Grammar School then Birkbeck College, London. In 1939 he is lodging at 22 Milbourne Lane, Esher, Surrey, a single schoolmaster. He served in the RAF as an Education Officer during the war and joined Strode’s in February 1947 from Epsom County Grammar School. He tried hard to impart a love of Classics to us philistines, and was also in charge of the school library from 1955 until retiring in 1972. He recalled introducing somewhat “risky” books into the curriculum to liven up his lessons, until Mr Brady found out!



Clifford Edward Cooper Greely (Greasy, possibly due to overuse of the Brylcreem?) was born in Croydon on 8th May 1936, but educated at High Wycombe Royal Grammar School, Bucks and at St Catherine’s College, Oxford. After a brief period at Brentwood School, Essex, he joined Strode’s in September 1959, and clearly struggled to cope with our class of boisterous juniors, initially at least; his subject was English, with some Geography. He departed at Easter 1964 for a post at Hertford Grammar School.

Donald Antony Pinches (Don, right) was born at Plympton, Devon in April 1932, and educated at Devonport High School. National Service followed from 1950-52, then Pembroke College Cambridge. He taught briefly at Berkhamstead School before joining Strode’s in September 1956. His main subject was English, but he also took junior French and some divinity classes, leaving in Summer 1960 for Churston Ferrers Grammar School, near Paignton in Devon.



He was replaced by **David Hodgson** (Sid or “Mincing”, left) who took mainly French, but he too left in Summer 1963. Born on 3rd May 1936 at Barton-upon-Irwell, Manchester, he was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School, Retford, then New College & Westminster College, Oxford, interrupted by National Service in the Army from 1954-56, and came to Strode’s from University. He left to go to a new post at Sir William Borlaise School in Marlow.

Another French master, with some Latin, from September 1959 to July 1960 was **Harry Jones** (right), born 22nd March 1931 at Heversham, Westmoreland and educated at the Grammar School there. He was a graduate of St John’s College, Cambridge University and came to us from Lancaster Royal Grammar School; he also taught some junior Latin. He went on to the Priory School in Shrewsbury, but sadly died a few years later.



Peter Franklin Russell (Pete) was born on 19th December 1933 at Bassett Green, Southampton, attending Taunton’s School, Southampton & university there. He joined Strode’s from college in September 1957 to teach General Science, and introduced Biology into the school curriculum for the first time. He moved on to the Roan School, Greenwich in Summer 1962.



Thomas David Gareth Mathias (Mathias the Chem) was a fiery Welshman from Carmarthen, born 14th July 1935 and attending the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School there followed by the University of Wales, Cardiff. He came to us in September 1959 from another teaching post at Northampton County High School. He taught Science and Maths until emigrating to New Zealand in late 1964 with his new wife. He was a proficient and fearsome rugby player, but is mainly recalled for setting fire to his gown one day in a chemistry lesson, and not even noticing until alerted by a pupil!

John Leslie Mathias (Mathias the Wood, another Welshman, but no relation to The Chem) arrived in September 1961 from Shoreditch Technical College to teach the newly-introduced subjects Craft (mainly woodwork) and Technical Drawing. He was born in 1938 at Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, and attended Milford Haven Grammar School 1950-58. Les was the only one of our masters still teaching at Strode's when I visited again after many years, in October 1988; he retired in 1999 and is still a popular attendee at school reunions.



P.T. (Physical Training) or P.E. (Education, Exercise, Exertion?) was inflicted in the main assembly hall, with lockers on the rear wall and changing room nearby (next to the head's study). Equipment such as a vaulting horse had to be manhandled from a storeroom off the stage. This was the domain of **Desmond Collett Paul** (Des, left) from September 1957 until Easter 1961; he was born in Braunton, Devon in October 1934, attending Barnstaple Grammar School, followed by National Service 1952-54 with the RAF, then University of Exeter, coming to Strode's from there. He also taught some junior maths, and left to a post with Hampshire LEA.



He was replaced by fellow Barnstaple Grammar School lad **Kenneth Charles Lancey** (Ken, right), 18 months younger, who attended St Luke's College, Exeter after National Service again with the RAF and came to Strode's from Hillside School, Borehamwood. He also taught some history. Leaving in Summer 1965, he went to a post at Bracknell Grammar School. He in turn was succeeded by **P.D. Eschrich** until 1969.



In addition to the above, some 25 other masters and assistants served at the school in our period, reflecting both the expansion of pupil numbers and variety of subjects taught. Some stayed for only a year or two, and as our form did not have the pleasure of being taught by them, we were hardly aware of their presence in some cases at least - indeed did not recognise them, on occasion with unfortunate consequences as we shall see later! For completeness, here is a summary showing their years at Strode's (in order of appointment), nicknames where known, and subjects. Further biographical details for many of these can be found on our companion database showing all known staff from 1919 to 1970....

Surname	First name/s	In	Out	Nickname	Subject/s
James	Roy Lewis	1959	1960	Jimmy	Maths, Science
Lowther	Peter	1960	1962		Maths
Regan	Anthony	1961	1962		French, Latin
Renaud	M.A.	1961	1962		French (Asst)

Fuller	Laurence George	1962	1964	Laurie	French
Payne	Philip Frank Clifford	1962	1965	Snotty	Biology
Stavers	Peter Michael	1962	1965	Pete	Science, Maths
Piper	Walter Frank	1963	1965	Willy, Tom	Maths
Carter	Eyre S.	1963	1965		Russian
Gee	James Kenneth	1963	1967	Ken	Physics, Maths
Hogben	E.N.	1963	1965		English, History
Roberts	David	1963	1970		French
Thomas	Herr	1963	1964		German (Asst)
Chaplin	K.	1964	1969		Sen. Maths
Davies	Miss	1964	1964		English (see note below)
Nunn	A.	1964	1966		French
Russell	R.W.	1964	1967		English, Divinity
Webb	G.A.	1965	1985	Froggy	Maths, Chemistry
Hollom	Geoffrey D.	1965	1972		Sen. English
Cameron	James A.	1965	1970	Jimmy or Angus	Biology
Constantin-off	P.	1965			Russian
Edgington	Peter	1966	1966		Maths
Stott	Miss Eileen M.	1965	1968		Maths
Brun	Mademoiselle	1965	1966		French (Asst)
Hambling	Derek G.	1966	1968		Maths, Science

Miss Davies was a supply teacher from Australia, covering for Mr Tanner during his few weeks medical absence

Peter Lowther was (and is) a proud Yorkshireman coming from Mexborough (with deepest sympathy from those of us who had seen that mining town in the 1960s!). He also continues to be a welcome visitor to school reunions.

Froggy Webb is recalled as “the most boring master ever...we sometimes fell asleep in his lessons”. Mr Hogben was a New Zealander, previously head of Wellington College there, and remembered as a brilliant teacher. Ken Smith recalled that he told stories about his travels around Russia by train. Also that Mr Hambling always wore his college blazer with badge motto “Una Mente” which he translated as “One Track Mind”. Jimmy Cameron was a Geordie who had a habit of sending senior pupils into town to buy him packs of 20 “Park Drive” cigarettes! Miss Stott proved immediately very popular with all Upper School pupils, but became Mrs Shephard before she left us.

And lastly, a mystery: several of us recall a Mr (J. G.) **Ponsonby** briefly in spring 1964, but he is not mentioned in the Strodian magazine and just briefly in "Viewpoint" where he lists his hobbies as rowing, politics and photography. We were told he was Canadian, so were expecting a burly lumberjack type - as it turned out he was a chinless wonder who had no control over us at all; I seem to recall we gave him a nervous breakdown for his trouble, and he left after just a few weeks. He was a temporary supply teacher taking English between the departure of Mr Greely and the appointment of R.W. Russell.

The Ancillary Staff



The School Secretary from 1946 until the end of 1960 was **Mrs Irene Pitman** (left, surely an expert at shorthand!), her replacement was **Mrs T. Butler** until at least 1970. A **Miss S. Finch** was recruited in 1961 as lab steward to look after the two then-new laboratories in the east wing extension, but left in 1964.

The long-serving and popular Caretaker, **William George Peachey** (Bill, below right) has proved somewhat elusive in pre-war days as his is quite a common surname, and some of them changed the order of first names in some documentation. We think the most likely candidate for him was born in Battersea, London on 22nd June 1905, but this needs further confirmation. What is definitely known is that he served with the Royal Corps of Signals in the war. He joined Strode's after demob in 1946 and retired in 1970. He lived in one of the former alms-houses and also had a workshop and store there. There was very little that Mr Peachey would not turn his hand to; apart from routine electrical, plumbing or drainage issues, he built stage scenery for the dramatic productions, fixed equipment problems in the Caxton Club and reputedly was an expert at unlocking locked doors by some quite unconventional means! Many boys also found that they could come to him with various personal or school problems, for a sympathetic ear and sound confidential advice. He passed away in the summer of 1983 in the Kingston area, aged 78.



The kitchen/canteen manageress was **Mrs J. Mitchell** from 1957 to 1965, then **Mrs E. Miles**.

Groundsman **J. H Brown** served from around 1950 to 1965; he also had a workshop and store in the alms-houses. His pride and joy was the immaculate front lawn, upon which no one but he was allowed to set foot; he was no doubt dismayed by the intrusion thereon by the Panora school photograph once every three years, but was also responsible for the upkeep of the extensive playing fields, cricket square etc beyond the school. His replacement was the aptly-named **Mr J.D. Gardiner**.

Fellow pupil Jonathan M. Gledhill helpfully published a list of **staff stock phrases** in the "Strodian" magazine for 1966, some of which are recalled above (somewhat later after this slightly irreverent episode he became Suffragan Bishop of Southampton, then Bishop of Lichfield). Of his other quotes, memory does not enable me to match them to their rightful owners at this distance in time; so can anyone else say "who says it"?.....

"Prahaps its yoomer, you guys", "Everything in the garden's beautiful, "Get shot of it", "there's an awful lot of muck under your desk, boy", "Let's be having you", "What's all this nudity then?" and "You're in easy street now, lad"

3) Forms & Subjects

They were always Forms, not classes. The intake Form 1 and Form 2 (which would nowadays be called Years 8 & 9) comprised the Junior School, 3 and 4 were the Middle School and 5, Lower 6th and Upper 6th the Upper School. The official school leaving age at this time was just 15, and some left then, during or at the end of Form 4, but many others stayed on into Form 5 at least.

Our 1959 intake form lists

The list below shows the names and houses of fellow students of the September 1959 intake and later arrivals, taken from the little booklets produced by the Caxton Club for each school year. With the exception of that for 1963-64, a copy of which is in the Egham Museum archive, thanks are due to Peter Dawes for kindly supplying copies of the others, so that we are only missing that for 1960-61 now. These also usefully have handwritten additions showing leavers and additions during the course of each year.

We were of course known only by our surnames, often even amongst ourselves, and the forenames shown are from my contemporary index to the 1963 Panora photograph, from our collective memories, and in a few other cases from the Birth Registration indexes for 1947-48 where the surnames are relatively uncommon. The University/ College entrance details are from the 1966 edition of the Strodian magazine.....

Surname	Forenames	House	Year....						Further Education (<i>where known</i>)	Note
			1st	3rd	4th	5th	6B	6A		
Allinson	Richard Lancelot	S			4B	5B	Arts	Arts	U. Sheffield - Politics & History	
Atwill	Keith M.		1B	3C	4C					E
Badenoch	T. A.		1A							
Barker	Alan W.	P				5B				
Bartsch	Douglas Ivan John					5A	Bio	Bio		A
Barwick	Peter J.	S	1A	3C	4C	5C				
Bell	Peter George							Sci	Sheffield City Coll - Science	B
Bell	William Walter			3B	4C					
Benson	Peter L.	Ch	1A	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci		
Bevan	Anthony	S	1B	3C	4C	5C				
Black	Roderick McDonald		1A	3A				Sci	U. Bristol - Mechanical Engineering	C
Bland	Derek C.	P				5A				
Bluestone	Geoffrey	C	1B	3C	4C	5C			Industrial apprenticeship	
Brady	John Mark	P	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Oxford (Magdalen) - Economics & History	
Bromley	Patrick Gavin							Sci	U. London (Imperial) -Chemical Engineering	B
Bryan	Martin T.	P	1B	3C	4C	5C				
Cattley	Raymond F.	S	1B	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	U. London (Imperial) - Aero Engineering	
Chamberlain	Paul Hensman	S	1A	3B	4B	5B	Bio	Bio	U. London (R. Holloway) - Botany	
Clarke	Duncan M.	P				5C				
Clarke	Humphrey G.	Ch	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts		
Coles	Michael Tarquin	C	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Surrey - Modern Languages (<i>in 1967</i>)	

Cox	Martin A.	C	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Leeds - Mechanical Engineering	
Crockett	John Stewart						Sci	U. Nottingham - Industrial Economics *	B
Davis	Stephen J.	Ch	1A	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Wales (Bangor) - Chemistry
Dawes	Peter Graham	S	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Bristol - Law
Dix	Nigel W.	Ch	1B	3C	4C	5C			
Eames	John Sandy	P	1A	3B	4C	5C	Sci	Sci	U. London (Imperial) - Electronics
Enstice	Michael E.	C	1B	3C	4C	5C	Bio	Bio	U. Aberdeen - Medicine (<i>in 1967</i>)
Evans	Howard Christopher	P	1B	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	U. Bristol - Physics
Everett	Michael J.	Ch	1A	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	
Fayle	John P.	S		3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	
Ferrol	Andy						Bio		B
Foreman	John A.	P			4A	5A	Arts	Arts	
Foster	John R.	C	1A	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Birmingham - Civil Engineering
Frost	Graham E.	Ch			4C	5B	Arts	Arts	U. Birmingham - Law (<i>in 1967</i>)
Gadsden	Robert	S	1B	3C	4C	5C			
Garratt	Kevin Alan Nisbett	P	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Bristol - Law
Glanville	Brian P.	P		3C	4C	5C			
Hall	Richard Adrian	S	1A	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	U. Oxford (Oriel) - Economics & History
Hambling	David S.	Ch	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Sheffield - Economics
Hamel-Cooke	Christopher Owen					5A	Arts		
Hathaway	Martin C.		1B						
Hayter	Frederick C.	Ch				5B	Bio		
Herbert	Trevor J.	C	1B	3C	4C	5C	Arts	Arts	Westminster Coll - General Studies
Herington	Peter J.						Arts	Arts	
Hodges	Jonathan R.	C	1A	3C	4C	5C			
Holmes	Michael	Ch			4B	5B	Bio	Bio	U. Wales (Cardiff) - Science
Horrell	Timothy J.	Ch	1B	3C	4C	5C			
Hulme	Richard E. Stanford	Ch				5C			
Jaggers	Keith Alan	P	1B	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Wales (Bangor) - Electronic Engineering
James	Trevor H.	C		3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	U. Essex - English
Jenkins	Richard A.	P			4B	5B	Arts	Arts	Bournemouth CAT - Civil Engineering (<i>1967</i>)
Kelland	Michael Francis	C				5C		Twickenham College	B
Knibbs	David E.	P	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Sussex - Economics
Lambert	Thomas Frederick	S	1B	3C	4C	5C	Arts	Arts	Regent Poly - Commerce
Lawrence	Peter H.	Ch	1B	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	K. Alfred C Winchester - English & Theology
Littlejohns	Christopher M.	C	1B	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	
Mackinnon	John D.						Bio	Bio	Royal Vet. C., London - Vet. Medicine (<i>1967</i>)
Markes	D.F.L.		1A	3B					
Marston	Richard A.	Ch				5C			
Martin	C.F.	C		3B	4C	5C			
Matthews	D.R.	S	1B	3C	4C	5C			
Maxwell	M.S.	C		3C	4C	5C			

Merry	Basil J.			3C	4B							
Mollet	Grahame L.	S								5C		
Molyneux	Peter B.	Ch	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	CAT Kingston - Economics			
Moore	Peter J.	S		3B	4A	5A						
Morgan	Duncan G.	S	1B	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci				
Morgan	Graham J.	C	1A	3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Sheffield - Economics			
Moules	Peter R.	Ch								5C		
Murphy	Brian A.	S			4C	5B	Arts	Arts	CAT Kingston - Economics			
Part	David A.		1B									
Paterson	Richard S. G.	Ch	1B	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	U. Southampton - Aero Engineering			
Paxton	Geoffrey G.	P	1A	3B	4B	5B	Sci					
Pearson	Michael J.	C	1B	3B	4C	5C						
Pettit	Martin H.	S	1A	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Wales (Swansea) - Chemical Engineering			
Pierzchalo	Mark Richard						Bio	Bio	CAT Plymouth - Biology			
Pitcher	Andrew B.			3C								
Pittard	John B.	C	1A	3A	4A	5A	Bio	Bio	U. Newcastle - Medicine			
Porter	Neil ?			3A								
Price	David	C								5C		
Radford	Antony D.	Ch	1A	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Newcastle - Architecture			
Radford	David I.	C	1B	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	U. Salford - Transport Engineering <i>(in 1967)</i>			
Reynolds	T.B.							Sci	CAT Staffs - Engineering			
Rogers	H. G.		1B									
Russell	A. L.		1B									
Sach	Keith H.		1B	3B	4A							
Sheppard	Stephen D.	P		3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Leicester - Chemistry			
Sibley	Michael L.	C	1A	3C	4C	5C						
Smartt	Michael R. C.	P		3C	4C	5C						
Smith	Roger W.	S	1A	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts				
Squier	John Vernon	C	1B	3C	4C	5C						
Staplehurst	Barry Richard	P	1B	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	C. Commerce Liverpool - Commercial Studies			
Stickler	Frederick George						Arts	Arts	Bede Coll Durham - Geography			
Strong	Andrew W.	Ch	1A	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	U. London (Imperial) - Physics			
Stroud	Paul A.	P			4C	5C						
Tarr	Michael Owen	S	1B	3A	4A	5A						
Tedder	Michael T.	P	1A	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	U. Wales (Swansea) - Economics <i>(in 1967)</i>			
Thomas	Derek George Ellis	Ch	1B	3B	4B	5B	Sci	Sci	U. Surrey - Mechanical Engineering <i>(in 1967)</i>			
Thomas	Keith G.	C		3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Sussex - English			
Thomas	Peter J. D.	C	1B	3C	4C	5C						
Tofts	Stephen W.	P	1B	3B	4B	5B	Bio	Bio	U. Glasgow - Veterinary Science			
Varney	Paul R.	P	1A	3A	4A	5A	Bio	Bio	U. Wales (Cardiff) - Medicine			
Walters	Nigel Jon	S	1B	3A	4A	5A	Sci	Sci	U. Wales (Bangor) - Maths & Physics			
Ward	Stephen H.	Ch	1B	3A	4A	5A	Bio	Bio	London - Guy's Hospital - Medicine			

Warr	Neil Royston	S	1A	3B	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	
Watt	David G.	Ch		3B	4B	5B	Bio	Bio	R. Dental Hospital, London - Dentistry
Watts	Michael A.	S	1A	3B	4B	5B	Bio	Bio	U. Newcastle - Agriculture
West	Russell A.	Ch		3B	4B	5B	Bio	Bio	U. Glasgow - Veterinary Science
Wheeler	Christopher K.		1A	3A					D
Whyte	Alun Stuart						Arts	Portsmouth CAT - Modern Languages	B
Wickens	Ian Talbot	Ch		3A	4A	5A	Arts	Arts	U. Salford - Modern Languages
Willingham	Richard H.		1A						D
Winslet	Richard M.	P	1B	3C	4B	5B	Arts	Arts	

Notes: A) **Bartsch** and his brothers were from NSW, Australia B) from **1958 intake**, joining our year later as shown
 C) **Black** was in Australia with parents for years 4, 5 & 6B * this is correct, not as shown in 1966 Strodian
 D) **Willingham & Wheeler** left to take up Charterhouse scholarships E) **Atwill** went to New Zealand

The **first year** intake of around 70 boys was divided arbitrarily between Forms 1A and 1B (my report book shows 34 in 1B at end of 1959 and 35 by the summer term 1960), and the Masters and Subjects were the same for both. I was allocated to Form 1B (and Paice House); our Form Master was Mr. Greely and we were based in upstairs room 2 at the front of the west wing. Mr Greely took us for English, Don Pinches for History, Fred Cranham for Music and (surprisingly) Religious Knowledge, Bob Tanner for Latin, Mr Jones for French, Des Paul for PT (and again surprisingly) Maths. The PT classes were held in the main assembly hall; there was a small changing room adjacent to the Head's office and lockers at the back of the hall for our day clothes, watches etc. Physics, Chemistry and Biology were combined at this stage as General Science, with Mr Russell. We also started Art in the Lent term, with Mr Ashdown. Our progress was reported at the end of Michaelmas and Trinity terms, and we appear to have had exams of some sort in both terms as the reports quote both an Exam position and Term position within the Form. Allocation into the second year Forms 2A or 2B was based on an average of these rankings, and I just managed to scrape into the "upper" one, 2A, starting 6th September 1960.

Form 2A was based in the front part of the east wing, with Mr Jones as Form Master. My report book shows a total roll of 36 throughout the year. The same subjects were continued throughout this year, except that the Biology element was largely dropped from General Science. There was a big change-round of Masters; we now had Mr Tanner for English, Mr Cope for History, Mr Jones for Latin, Mr Loveluck for French, Mr Brown for Maths, T. Mathias for Science and Mr Lancey for PT, with the others remaining the same as previously. My overall performance was described as "mediocre" as well as other more forceful terms, and so I was "demoted" into Form 3B for the following year (there was also now a "C" form). This did however prove to be a blessing in disguise, as firstly I no longer had to study Latin, which I had struggled to get to grips with at all. Secondly, 3B seemed to be tending more towards the Sciences, and 3A to the Arts subjects. Thirdly, School Prizes were awarded on Speech Day towards the end of each academic year, and being near the top of the B forms henceforward rather than bottom of the A's was much more lucrative in this regard! After prior notification, we had to choose an appropriate volume from the bookshop in Station Road; I always picked a railway book, probably to Jock's dismay, but I still have them today and find them useful.

So to 3B, with numbers reduced to 32-33, based off the beaten track in the Music Room 20 (former alms-house) under the command, but rarely under the control, of Mr Cranham. For some reason this kindly old fellow was the butt of unheard-of levels of mischievousness on our part, and 3B quickly gained an enviable reputation as the most

unruly bunch of oiks in living memory! Despite this, my academic work seemed to improve considerably. There was a week-long visit by HM Inspectors of Schools in November 1961, so presumably we were on our best behaviour for that. One of the lads in our class, gaining notoriety as the School Bully and already well-endowed in the trouser department, delighted in playing with himself under cover of his desk, much to the amusement of all around him! Inevitably we were moved back into the main school under the authority of Mr. Tanner sometime during the Lent term, to try to instil a sense of discipline. We started Geography lessons with Mr Greely, English was with Mr Bloomer and RK now with Mr Hodgson. T. Mathias took Maths as well as Chemistry and introduced Mr Elliott for Physics. Part-way through the year a "Handicrafts" course was started up (mainly woodwork) with J. Mathias. Other subjects continued as before, and I joined the Caxton Club (see later) under Mr Preston during the year.

Form 4B with a roll of 31 found us I think back in the westernmost top-floor room (2) at the front of the school, with Mr Hodge in charge. Geography was now with Mr Stamp in his dedicated room in the west end extension, and we enjoyed an interesting two weeks of visits and field work for a Local Studies project in early July. This was an annual event for the fourth-years and typically involved talks and behind-the-scenes visits to a Head Post Office, Youth Employment Centre, a local farm, the Council Offices and their work, a Bank, Fire & Police Stations, the Parish Church, and Electricity, Gas and Water works. A "mystery excursion" turned out to be a visit to Chertsey Sewage Works! All this was organised by Mr Stamp & Mr Greely. We were also allocated in pairs a 1 km square area to study in detail re land usage etc, mine was around the "Fishing Temple" on the Thames down Chertsey Lane in Staines. Thirdly, a report had to be compiled during the summer break on a local topic of our own choosing; naturally I did mine on the history of the railways around Staines!

Mr Hodge now presided over us for Maths, and Jock Brady for RK. We dropped Music this year, and other subjects continued as before. Art was my favourite, and woodwork lessened in favour of Technical Drawing, still with J. Mathias, another interesting activity. In June 1963 at the age of 15 most boys in Forms 4A and 4B sat an initial three GCE "O" level exams, in English Language, Maths and Physics-with-Chemistry in late June. It was deemed necessary to have "mock" exams to prepare for these, during the previous winter, despite the fact that we had been well-used to a regular exam environment since at least the 11-plus. I did not bother myself doing any preparation or revision whatever for these, and a couple of weeks later was taken aside by our physics master Mr Elliott who said "your results were appalling; you'll never get anywhere in life". I thought to myself: "I'll show you what I can do in the *real* exams, you little, bald-headed man!" (some of us were already considerably taller than him) - and I did, too.

At the end of our fourth year we said goodbye to a few of our schoolmates, though many stayed on for a further year to gain at least some "O" levels. They generally went on to successful careers, one becoming a market gardener, others doing apprenticeships leading to competency in printing, telecoms and electronic engineering. Two formed a double-glazing company to service this rapidly-expanding market, and reputedly made more money than the rest of us put together, Masters included, as told to me ruefully by Mr J. Mathias many years later.

And so onwards into the **Upper School, form 5B**, and serious stuff leading to the main block of "O" level exams in late June. Most of us took up to nine subjects, the usual general ones and others according to our arts, science or biology specialities. Having already completed the English Language course, the emphasis was now on Literature, with Mr Greely back to teach us. Geography continued with Mr Stamp, and I was able to drop History. RK remained with Jock - perhaps we were not yet up to his required standard? - and French with Jack Loveluck. Maths was now separated into two subjects, Pure and Applied, both with the competent and popular Mr. Brown. Physics,

Chemistry and Art continued as before to complete my quota of nine. Our form master was Mr Preston, now mainly in an administrative role only.

The usual routine was severely disrupted in mid-November 1963 by a mysterious outbreak of illness - about half the pupils were absent at one stage, but our form seems to have mainly avoided it.

Upon reaching the age of 16 many boys took up the offer of temporary work with the Post Office for about a week following end of term, in the busy run-up to Christmas. Being unable to ride a bike, I was given the cushy task of accompanying the parcels lorry on its rounds, thus able to keep warm and dry for at least some of the time. Most of the parcels were well-presented & addressed, but I recall that one, a very large turkey, had lost all its wrapping and had just a label tied round one leg. At a flat in Staines Broadway I rang the bell and held up the offending article in front of me; when the door opened the woman screamed and recoiled in horror. I placed it gently on the mat and beat a hasty retreat! For a week's work which also included some time in the sorting office I received the enormous sum of £2-10s-0d and a stamp on my brand-new National Insurance card.

Just one review in our Report Books was now deemed necessary, at the end of a year remembered just as one of unremittingly hard work, ultimate well-balanced but not unduly spectacular success in any one subject, and a prize at the annual Speech Day. With 33 in our form, all managed at least 2 further passes at "O" level, with an average of around six.

The **Lower Sixth Form 6B** was divided into Arts, Science (Maths) and Science (Biology) disciplines. In the Science (Maths) group we studied Pure Maths under Mr. Brown, Applied Maths with Mr Chaplin and Physics, Chemistry with Messrs Elliott and Jenkins respectively. Mr Cope was our Form Master, based in his usual room 4, again just for administrative purposes.

In the winter of 1964-65 I started learning to drive. My first lesson, in the local British School of Motoring's little Austin A40 Farina Mark II saloon was held in thick fog, and we only moved a few yards along Chestnut Grove in Staines. Another unnerving experience some weeks later was when another motorist ran into the back of me at the Bridge Street/Church Street junction in town - "I didn't think you were going to stop", this despite the "Halt" sign. The instructor then decided I needed a bit of "high-speed" experience on the newly-opened and deserted Ashford section of the Staines Bypass - to the dizzying heights of 60 mph!

On 14th May 1965 the whole school was given a sunny afternoon off to attend a memorial dedication service on Runnymede for the late US President John F. Kennedy; this was apparently not a "formal" half-holiday, as the school had somehow used up its "quota". However, Jock realised that if more than 1/3 of pupils failed to turn up for afternoon registration, he had no option but to close the school, and this was quietly arranged. He himself also attended the event; a select few representatives were allowed into a seated enclosure and were presented to some of the guests, but the rest of us had to stand behind the ropes on the approach route, where we saw the Queen and Prince Philip, Prime Minister Harold Wilson (whom some of our number booed as he passed, and got a filthy look for their trouble!), former PM Sir Alec Douglas Hulme, Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsay, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk and members of the Kennedy family arriving.

At the end of this school year, June 1965, around 18 of us sat and passed the combined Pure & Applied Maths "A" level as an intermediate step to studying each separately in the Upper Sixth.

1965 was the inaugural year of "Strode's Week", with various fund-raising events to support the new sports pavilion and other improvements. The annual Speech Day was held on Thursday 15th July, followed by a parade through Egham on the Friday, in which I allegedly rode a tandem with Nigel Walters, dressed in some form of "period" apparel, perhaps plus-fours, one of dad's old jackets and a flat cap; no photographs seem to

have surfaced to date showing this momentous event! Finally on the Saturday, a grand fete was held on the school playing fields.

The **Upper Sixth 6A** was similarly divided into the three disciplines, and we Scientists were now grouped with Mr Mulholland and based in the small room 15 opposite the old library. The workload increased as in addition to the above four subjects we were expected to take the Associated Examining Board's "Use of English" qualification and exam in March. I was also recommended to continue beyond "A" level in Physics, adding the additional study needed for the "S" or Special Level exam. This in turn required the "S" level mathematics course to complement and fully understand it. Something had to give, and I reluctantly informed Mr Jenkins that I would have to drop his Chemistry course, as there was conflict in the timetable which could not be accommodated, as well as the workload. As it turned out, only 5 out of our group of 22 managed to study and pass four "A" levels, and only one of those achieved an "S" level "distinction" in addition. The single year of Chemistry did however prove very useful to me in later life.

There were other "tests" to be endured too; early on in the school year I failed my first driving test at the Weybridge test centre. One of several faults recorded was "travelling at 37mph in a 30mph zone" - well everyone else was too, and I didn't want to hold up the traffic flow. So I had to find another £1 or two, a few more lessons and another test, this time at the new Ashford centre which reputedly was passing everyone - they did. A Scholarship exam for the University of Wales was a disaster - I had a heavy cold and then suffered a nosebleed during the three-hour session in school, which no doubt made the test paper look quite pretty but did not seem to earn me any sympathy from the markers.

Some members of the Upper Sixth (but not me) were nominated as "Prefects", otherwise known by many as "defects". In our earlier years they were easily identifiable by a black blazer pocket rather than the standard green, but by now all sixth-formers were entitled to wear a black blazer, the idea being that this (with the badge removed) would be continue to be usable after our schooldays were over; the prefects just had a slightly different tie.

At the end of our Upper Sixth year, no less than 37 of us (including the Arts & Biology factions) gained University entrance, and a further 12 to Advanced Technology or Further Education Colleges - not bad from an intake of around 68 seven years previously, though of course quite a few had come and gone due to parental house moves etc in the meantime. Also, these figures compare markedly with those shown in my 1960 "Strodian" magazine, where just 10 students of a total roll 30 plus went on to Further Education that year. This amply demonstrates the development of a very strong and successful Sixth Form regime at Strode's during the early 1960s. It was also noted that the 1966 'A' and 'O' level exam results constituted an all-time record, probably never surpassed.

4) Annual School Events

A number of regular events took place during the School Year, helping to break up the normal routine, and attendance was generally compulsory. Twice a year we all trooped down the length of Egham High Street to the Parish Church, firstly on the last Friday afternoon of term time before the Christmas break, for a rousing **Carol Service** and address by the vicar, Rev. S.C. Strong, who also happened to be one of the school Governors and father of one of our form pupils, so attendance was most definitely compulsory. Similarly, for the annual **Founder's Day** service, held on or around 6th May, the anniversary of Henry Strode's death, with appropriate hymns and a sermon reminding us of his benevolence and the need to fully appreciate this.

A **Remembrance Day** service was usually held on the nearest Friday to November 11, either in the school hall or the parish church.

Sometime during March, depending on the date of Easter, was the annual **Cross-Country** run; this healthy ritual had been initiated back in 1947. Often dismally wet and muddy, this involved a circular course of about three miles; after leaving the school playing fields at the north-west corner and being shepherded carefully across the busy Egham by-pass road, we went across the Runnymede meadows to the River Thames, along the towpath westwards and then up into the woodland footpaths and bridleways of Cooper's Hill. One year, we actually splashed around in floodwater covering the meadows. For those of us familiar with the terrain, it was possible to slope off quietly and take a short-cut in the woods, saving about a mile of un-necessary exertion. Of course, before re-joining the proper route we had to conceal ourselves in the bushes to make sure that sufficient of the leaders had passed already, so that we would not inadvertently be selected for a School Team (with our usual casual progress this was generally not a problem!). This little ruse was of course dealt with in subsequent years by the posting of marshals at the key divergences. The **Cross-Country club** in our time comprised three teams, Junior, Intermediate and Senior, each of around 7-10 of the keenest participants.

The aforementioned "**Panora**" school photo occurred on a sunny afternoon in May or June, on the lawns in front of the main building. Long benches were stacked up and clamped together to form about six tiers, upon which we were to sit or stand for about half an hour while the photographer set up his kit. This special camera panned slowly from one side to the other to produce an image which when printed up resulted in a roll approximately a metre long; here is the full version of my 1963 copy, which had to be purchased from the school office; I forget what the cost was.....



We were arranged in our Forms, with the junior boys seated at the front, Masters behind with Mr Brady at the centre, flanked by the Sixth Formers. We happened to be marshalled in the uppermost row on this occasion, towards the left with about a ten-foot drop behind us, feeling truly precarious, slightly swaying to and fro due to the weight and thankful there was not much wind that afternoon! Health & Safety considerations at that time were unheard of. Unlike later similar College group photos, there was no dashing around the back by the more daring boys from one end to the other to appear twice, nor the deployment of a headless dummy or two within the throng to make the result more interesting!

Also during the Summer (or Trinity) term were the **School Sports Day** and **Speech Day**, which took place on separate days within "Strode's Week". Parents were invited to both events; the sports consisting mainly of the House teams competing against each other in their various disciplines. There were also compulsory whole-school events, and separate races for fathers and Masters, which we found highly entertaining; here is a picture of the 1964 Master's race on 9th July, from the finishing line, with Messrs Lancey (left), Gee and one other vying for first place. T. Mathias (3rd from right) makes a good effort, and there is a brave but unidentified soul struggling at extreme left. Only Mr Lancey appears to be appropriately dressed and Mr Payne (?) has not discarded his customary waistcoat.....



For the annual **Speech Day**, held on Thursday July 15th 1965, but not until October 27th in 1966 for some reason, a very large marquee was erected on the playing fields for the expected 1000-plus attendees: the whole school, many parents, also many of the Governors and Trustees, representatives of the Worshipful Company of Coopers, and usually an invited special guest, sometimes a Bishop or a Chief Constable, to give a suitably inspiring address. The Viewpoint newspaper of 15th July 1964 gives us some interesting figures: the marquee measured 145' x 40', seated 927 people and cost £120 for the hire period. The chairs were arranged by Mr. Brown and helpers; tickets and programmes were printed by the Caxton Club. Catering was provided for guests in the school rooms 9 & 11, the hall and dining room (the then 441 boys were excluded!). During the afternoon, 40 gallons of tea, 750 cakes and 600 scones were consumed. Exhibitions were arranged in Room 25, including a German project by form 5a. I recall that the 1965 event was a stiflingly hot day, and during the seemingly endless speeches felt as if I was being gradually strangled by my school tie. The prize-giving ritual followed, again a lengthy process as in addition to individual subject and general prizes in each form of every year, there were numerous special prizes, for the School Captain & Vice Captain, the four House Captains, sports clubs and some of the other clubs, many donated by the Governors and local businesses. It was doubtless expected that awardees should choose appropriate highly academic books as their prizes, but I took the opportunity at least once to select works on my favourite transport subjects from the local bookshop on Station Road, much to Mr Brady's dismay. I still have them though, and still find them useful! After the formal part of the proceedings and refreshments, parents and other guests were invited to tour various exhibitions of school activities, crafts & hobbies etc spread around several rooms, created mainly by pupils in all years. Another event arranged that year by Mr Gee was a car rally for sixth-formers - a sign of the times!

5) Sporting Activities and Societies

A surprising variety of club and society activities were offered by the school, several of which were very long established. All the Masters involved in the organization and administration of these gave of their time voluntarily, in many cases demonstrating a very high degree of commitment over many years. Starting with the sports based ones, whose teams competed both within the school (house-based) and between other schools and groups within the area:- The **Boat Club** appears to be the oldest, founded in 1924 and achieving an excellent reputation locally; it had its own boathouse on the Thames at Staines, and participated in most Regattas on the river, up to and including the most prestigious at Henley, with an impressive display of trophies in a cabinet on the assembly hall balcony to prove it. Mr Wheeler was the Master in charge from at

least 1959 to 1964 and a leading light, assisted by Mr Greely and several others. Following a brief interlude with Mr Ponsonby, Mr Stavers took over from 1965, then Mr Russell.

An **Athletics Club** quickly followed in 1925, in our period run by Mr Paul and later Messrs Lancey, then Eschrich & Loveluck. A **Cross-Country** team was also formed that year, followed by **Cricket** in 1929 (Mr Cope in 1960s) and **Table Tennis** in 1929, defunct by 1960 but revived in 1961-2 by Mr T. Mathias with over 50 members from which Junior and Senior school teams were selected. **Hockey** started up in 1933, led by Mr Jenkins during our time. Other Sports clubs active by 1960 but for which no start dates have been found were **Association Football** (Mr Stamp until 1955, then Mr Jenkins), **Gymnastics** (Mr Paul, later Mr Lancey) and **Tennis** (Mr Russell and T. Mathias). There was a short-lived **Volleyball Club** in 1963-64. All activities, fixtures etc won and lost were reported in the annual "Strodian" magazine, along with frequent "team photographs" in which the headmaster also usually appears - one might conclude he was the most active sportsman in the school!

Mr T. Mathias and Mr Lancey trained boys for the new **Duke of Edinburgh's Award** scheme, from around 1962.

6) Other Clubs and Societies

By 1960 there was also a good variety of other clubs and societies to cater for the less energetic interests of pupils, including some which were quite unusual in schools at the time; rather surprisingly a "tuck-shop" operated in the school for just a short time in early 1928!

A **Debating Society** was started as long ago as 1932, and in 1960 was organised by Mr Pinches. In 1933 a **Short-Wave Radio Club** was formed, but this does not seem to have survived WW2. Likewise in late 1936 there was a "Senior Mathematical, Geographic & Scientific Society" (SSMGS). During the war and for around ten years afterwards, a school **Cadet Corps** held shooting practice on rough land to the east of the main building which was later taken over to build the new Headmasters House.

A **Dramatic Society** run by Mr Bloomer in our period produced plays given a public airing in the main assembly hall. A **Music Club** with Mr Cranham trained up an excellent choir to accompany various events such as the Christmas carol service. Mr Paul or Mr Regan ran an **Aeronautical Society** which had around 50 members in 1962, and Mr Jones or Mr Lowther (later Mr Piper) a **Chess Club**; amazingly the latter had over 80 members in that year paying a small subscription, from which Senior & Junior teams of around 10 each competed in inter-school matches. The rest of us would often play chess or draughts in our form-rooms at lunch-time on wet days.

Mr Ashdown hosted a **Sketch Club and Pottery class** on Mondays from 4 to 5pm and a **Model Railway Group** meeting on Wednesday evenings to construct a modest layout in a corner of his art room which was exhibited on Speech Day and other open days. He also organised popular group visits of about 30 boys to railway installations and locomotive sheds around the London area during 1960-62, including Willesden, Old Oak Common, Cricklewood, Camden, Kings Cross and Stratford. **Model aircraft** were flown by around 15 boys on the school playing fields. Mr Preston organised a **Film Club** during the 1950s, showing short feature films in the library during dinner hours, and longer ones after school hours. There was a **Photographic Society**, started in 1955 by Mr Hodge with 24 members, and a darkroom was created in a corner of the physics lab. This enabled us to dabble in our own black & white film developing and printing, but sadly this was closed down in 1965 when the darkroom was taken over for other uses during the many building changes that year, and not replaced. As it was, many of us by then had switched largely to colour photography, for which the demands of precise processing environment control would have required expensive alterations. The society itself

however was re-started by Mr Elliott in 1967. A **Biology Society** and a spin-off **Lepidopterist Society** were started in 1964 but do not appear to have lasted long.

A group of around eight of us formed a **Travel Club** in 1960, which about once a month spent a Saturday riding all over London and its suburbs, out as far as St Albans, Reigate and Romford, using London Transport Day Rover tickets on the buses and trolleybuses, later including all the tube lines as well. This lasted until around 1963, but we never thought to seek official recognition from the school for our activities. A **Sixth-Form Music Club** was initially organised by Mr Cranham in 1955 to promote interest in the classics but broadened in 1964 into a wider interest in the music of the period. Some Senior boys also started to play golf at nearby Wentworth, whereas others including myself offered ourselves for caddying services there in the summer break, hoping to supplement our pocket money but without much success.

There was a semi-official school newspaper called "**Viewpoint**" which appeared about every 7 - 14 days during term-time, started in January 1961 by members of form 6B; it was sold for 3d but does not seem to be mentioned after 1965. Mr Preston was in charge for at least 1963-4 and his Caxton Club printed the covers; the rest was duplicated. A typical "daily school dinner menu" appeared during 1961! I was surprised to find recently that I had contributed a short article in 1965 lamenting the closure of the Staines West branch railway. Two other student news-sheets briefly saw the light of day. Unfortunately we did not keep any copies and only vaguely remember the content; the somewhat pretentious-sounding "**Solar Times**" was promoted by the headmaster's son & other self-styled intellectuals from mid-1960 and is thought to have mainly comprised personal takes on the political and cultural issues of the time; it sold for 2d a copy, with the laudable aim of donating receipts to charity, raising the sum of £8 in 1962. The competing "**Gazette**" probably proved more popular, being the response of more liberal-minded, if not heretic, members of the student body. Most of us soon found we had much more pressing things to occupy our time! There was also, very briefly a "**Mini Monthly**" by and for the junior school in early 1964, and something called "**Spotlight**" which apparently ran a Gossip Column in 1965.

For the school leavers there was an **Old Strodian's Association** keeping us up to date with school activities and developments into adulthood, competing with the school teams in various sports and organising regular socials and re-unions. **In January 2025 Peter Dawes informed me that the OSA had sadly been disbanded, with the few remaining members enjoying a farewell lunch with the residual funds.**

7) The Caxton Club

This was started in 1953 by Mr Preston, and deserves special mention as one of the more unusual (if not unique) facilities in any school. He was assisted in the initial setting up by Arthur Edward Gill, a master printer of Grange Road, Egham, who was an old Strodian from as far back as the early 1890s, and was looking to run down his business into retirement. He donated a small, hand-cranked bench-top printing machine, a Peerless 8" x 5" together with several cases of type and all the accessories necessary.

The picture shows the tiny, cramped room in 1958, viewed from the top of the stairs. The boy at L is setting up the Peerless machine, while another assists Mr Preston at the bookbinding press.



Mr Gill passed away at the very end of 1960 aged 81, and early the following year his widow Isabella presented the school with a much larger machine, a treadle-operated Foolsap Folio platen type of unrecorded make, together with a much larger range of type fonts, blocks and accessories.

The Caxton Club became responsible for composing and printing all manner of day-to-day school notices, diaries, calendars, lesson timetables, Form lists and sports fixture lists, as well as the programmes for Founder's Day and Speech Day, from a small room down a couple of steps from the stage of the main assembly hall. We also had our own occasional social events, funded by Mr Preston as evidenced by this spoof menu from 1960; hopefully the Grubs were tasty!.....



The Caxton Club provided a valuable grounding in the essentials of printing (albeit by then somewhat old-fashioned techniques) for pupils interested in a possible future career in the industry. It was a favourite for me and other less sports-inclined boys, as an urgent printing job would guarantee permission to forego a wet and muddy afternoon on the playing fields in favour of a cosy warm workshop. Likewise, some pupils who were excused Divinity lessons on grounds of religion found a haven here. A total of 24 members were recorded in 1962, but no more than about 6 could work comfortably in the tiny room at any one time; presumably there was some sort of rota system in operation, though I cannot recall any such.

The letterpress printing processes involved would however horrify today's Health & Safety practitioners! Seemingly not much had changed since Victorian times. We could not find any of our own pictures of the activities, but I have included a few taken from the Internet for interest; I hope the owners will forgive me for reproducing them here!

All along the east wall were stacked wooden cabinets and trays full of filthy, dusty lead type, individual letters of all sorts of fonts and sizes, which we hand-picked and "composed" line by line into a small metal "stick". Each completed few lines were then carefully transferred within thin metal strips (leads) to the "Galley" a large storage tray, and when a page was complete a "Galley Proof" could be made by inking the type with a roller and pressing a sheet of paper onto it - this was then carefully checked for errors before proceeding.



When satisfied, the whole together with any "blocks" of stock pictures, the school crest etc, was assembled into a heavy cast-iron frame, the "Chase", spaces filled with wooden "furniture" and securely locked up with clamps - "Quoins" to create the finished page layout, the "Forme" ready for transfer to the printing press. Ken Smith reminded me of the "Bodging Iron", a key used to tighten the older wedge-type quoins, but also handy to tighten up lines of type by tapping with the large wooden mallet on the end of a row, a practice frowned upon by Mr Preston! He also mentions the "Swear Box" installed by the latter.

We had two printing machines, the above-mentioned Peerless, similar to this for diary page work etc, on which we were all initially trained, as "apprentices" or "devils". This required two operators, one to crank the handle, another to feed and remove the paper. The 8" x 5" (203 x 127mm) maximum size required 4 passes to print

both sides of a standard 10" x 8" (254 x 203mm) sheet which when folded up and trimmed produced a pocket diary size 77 x 114mm approx.

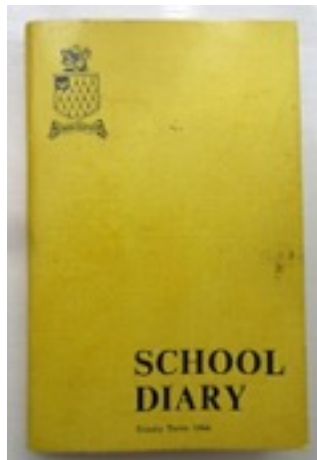
Four-hundred plus copies of the School Diary were produced three times every year, with around 60 pages in a card cover, and including a list of staff, clubs etc, the school rules, football or cricket fixtures as appropriate, and a blank timetable for filling in our lesson details, as well as plenty of space for day-to-day notes. Spare a thought for the poor lad (fortunately not me) who on one occasion printed off a complete run of card covers for the "School Dairy" before anyone noticed! Below is what it should look like, together with the "School Rules" pages for interest; the bit about running shouting etc was ignored most of the time....

Having achieved a sufficient level of knowledge and competence we graduated to the much more lethal, heavy and clanking treadle-operated beast like this one lurking in the corner behind the stairs, whose

rhythmic rumbling made the floor around it shake noticeably. This machine could take up to Foolscap size paper (13.5" x 8.5" or 343 x 216mm), allowing 4 pages of the Speech Day programme and similar documents to be produced per sheet, in two passes with just one operator.

Both machines had circular platens which had to be coated as evenly as possible with thick, gooey ink using a spatula and hand roller, then the machine's rollers transferred this onto the "forme", clamped vertically in the centre of the frame. We had to load paper accurately against locating pins on the platen during the one second or two that it was retracted away from the forme towards us (as seen in the pictures), then unload the printed sheet, quickly check it for quality and replace by a new blank sheet in the same time, repeatedly for maybe half an hour or so, all the while operating the handle or treadle at a steady pace. And without getting fingers, ties etc trapped in the machinery or wasting too much paper through mishandling. Some of us competed to see how fast we could operate the treadle machine and still produce good results; imagine 11 or 12 year olds being let loose unsupervised on such contraptions these days!

Having survived this, the next step was to clean the type and blocks with paraffin using an old toothbrush, then "dissing" all the letters back into their correct places in the type racks, which I always found to be the most boring task of all. The machine also



needed careful cleaning, especially if the next run required a colour change; sometimes the same sheets were run through again with one or more additional colours, and then of course when dry, usually once more to print the reverse sides. In the midst of this somewhat unhealthy environment, some of us would eat our sandwich or fish-and-chips lunch on wet or busy days!

On completion of the whole job, the sheets were compiled into page order by hand and taken down into the murky depths of the cellars beneath the main building (the former air-raid shelters) to be stapled and guillotined - more lethal equipment! This glory hole also contained all manner of stored junk, broken chairs & desks etc some of which had clearly been there for many years, a real treasure trove which we could explore unsupervised!

We were allowed to compose and print our own headed notepaper (Basildon Bond, of course) for use at home; usually with the address in "Palace Script" to make it look posh.

Some interesting Caxton Club visits were to the Coombelands Press, Addlestone in 1962, to the IPEX exhibition at London Olympia in 1963 and in the spring of 1964 to the Rawlings & Walsh newspaper printing works in Chertsey, which had the latest keyboard-operated "Linotype" casting machines. As the name suggests, these produced complete lines of type in pristine white metal without any direct operator handling, and when finished with, the metal was re-cycled by melting down ready for the next casting session. How we wished we had one of these (very expensive) machines!

8) And finally - some Notable Incidents recalled

In this section, I would firstly like to put on record that, personally and thankfully, I was not aware of any incidents whatsoever of any kind of sexual abuse, at any time during my years at Strode's 1959-1966, either by staff or more senior pupils. A bit of harmless fun usually went on in the large communal shower in the sports pavilion, where we all had to stand naked in close proximity under the (often cold) water jets, but this was always just among our own form-mates.

The PE master, Des Paul, strangely decreed that nothing was to be worn underneath the navy-blue sports shorts, even in the depths of winter. On the sports field, one of the lads in our form had the annoying habit of creeping up behind me and whipping the shorts down; I took to wearing underpants to preserve my dignity, then next time I spun round and kicked him where it really hurts - I was never bothered again.

There was however, punishment, both corporal and otherwise, administered according to the nature of the misdemeanours committed. For the most serious offences which came to the attention of the headmaster, the Cane was applied personally by him to either buttocks or hands; two or three prize specimens no doubt of varying whippy-ness including a "special occasion" one were usually displayed on hooks on his study wall. Individual Masters dealt with more minor cheek, noisiness and general disruption in their own way; Mr Ashdown favoured the gym slipper (plimsoll) on the backside, in front of the whole class, and others such as T. Mathias were adept at hurling a chalk-dust laden blackboard rubber with great accuracy down the length of a classroom. Mr Greely was good at flicking a ruler to the back of our legs, causing a stinging pain.

Less physical punishments took the form of Detentions, an hour after school in a chilly room, usually on a Tuesday or Thursday I think, when the invigilator demanded the tedious writing out of lines: "I must not...." or some other onerous literary task. Any offences outside school, e.g. on the streets of Egham and reported to staff were dealt with at the regular Assemblies in the main hall first thing in the morning, with demands that the guilty own up on the spot, then "naming and shaming".

In 1956 a light-hearted "survey" was carried out amongst members of that year's first form, the results of which make interesting reading nowadays. This revealed

among other things that 42% of boys travelled to school by train, and an amazing 50% had tried knitting - "surely a Knitting Club must soon follow?" 16% had travelled beyond the UK, 38% belonged to a school club or society, and 75% "enjoyed Cross-Country" (surely not??). 11% were left-handed, and 25% could play a simple tune on a musical instrument. Some very dubious statistical analysis followed, which concluded a) that left-handed people are intellectually superior (but some of us have always known that!) and b) no boys should be allowed to use the train (as their intellectual development appeared to be impeded thereby).

I cannot recall anything significant occurring in our first two years at school, we must have been quite a docile lot then, but as already noted, Form 3B rapidly gained quite a reputation. One afternoon in the Alms-house Music Room, we were aware that Mr Cranham was away and waited to see who would come to supervise us. A small boy with desk below the west side windows was deputed to stand on it and act as look-out; in due course he shouted out a name as the master crossed the small yard towards the door. A deafening crescendo of desk-lid banging, foot-stamping and yelling ensued, but as the door opened we realised he had in panic called out the wrong name, and the apoplectic vision of rage that appeared before us was a master who demanded absolute respect at all times; shocked silence was instant, and I'm sure that a mass detention followed. I trust we ourselves were suitably lenient towards our hapless peer who had caused the confusion! I am reminded that the master we were expecting was perhaps dear Mr Ponsonby, and the one who actually appeared was possibly the dour-faced Mr Stavers.

A physics lab experiment was to measure the specific gravity (density) of two liquids by different methods. We were split into two groups, each working firstly on one, then swapping round to do the other. That for water involved boiling the container over a Bunsen burner; the other, with Benzene most definitely did not! Inevitably one pair of carefree experimenters got the two sets of instructions muddled up, and proceeded to heat up their beaker of Benzene. Cue the Fire Alarms and instant deployment of extinguishers by Mr Elliott and some other boys - fortunately no significant damage or injuries resulted. Another experiment was to measure air pressure and note the effect of pulling a vacuum, using a Mercury-filled manometer tube. Great fun was had batting the little silver globules around on the worktops, and some inevitably ended up lost on the floor. Poor Mr Elliott had the job of clearing up afterwards; "they say Mercury poisoning affects the brain".... After some misdemeanour in form 4B, Les called out: "Benson and Fayle, come to see me at 4 o'clock without fail" and wondered why Benson turned up alone!

Chemistry was also fun at times; not for us the simple pleasures of discreetly connecting a length of rubber hose from a water tap to a nearby gas tap and watching the impressive display of fountains as we turned on and tried to light our Bunsen burners, though this was tried at least once; it was much more amusing to wait until Mr Mathias was to perform a solo demonstration from his raised front bench, so that he alone got a drenching - he took it commendably well.

Another impressive Masterly demonstration was to sprinkle small flakes of Sodium onto a water surface and watch them skit around giving off lots of heat, the classic Exothermic Reaction. One day a suicidal lunatic (not in our form) decided to try this himself on an industrial scale, and smuggled a large lump of Sodium out of the lab store cupboard at lunchtime. Panicking, he then threw it down one of the loos in the boys' toilets and fled. A couple of minutes later the resulting explosion completely wrecked the cubicle and all its contents, causing a major water leak. Mr Brady was observed prowling around the scene, vowing to eliminate the perpetrator when found, but I think no one ever owned up.

Even worse was to follow. In the summer term of 1965 we started using the "new" Chemistry lab on the first floor of the north-east extension wing; on the far side the

builders were still at work on the new School Hall, and had laid a smooth, gleaming white concrete slab floor to form the vestibule entrance just below the lab windows. After the morning lessons some of us were allowed to remain in the lab unsupervised, to work on our forthcoming Speech Day exhibition projects. I was quietly engaged on my “smoking machine” (of which more anon) when I became aware that a group of about three of the “usual suspects” at the other end of the lab were in a huddle, talking in whispers. They had concocted a strange sludge in a test tube, then panicked and the lead suspect hurled the tube through an open window. When it “touched base” there was a loud bang, a surprisingly large “dimple” (some said crater, or a perhaps a mere crack) had appeared in the pristine concrete below, and the end doors were blown open. I heard that the offending substance was Tri-nitro Toluene (TNT) but a colleague with extensive teaching experience suggests it was much more likely to have been the schoolboy favourite Nitrogen Tri-iodide, which when smeared in small quantities around the rim of a desk lid, would explode violently the next time the lid was dropped shut - I think we inflicted this on poor Mr Cranham once, making his nervous state even worse than normal. This much larger incident was no doubt a case for instant expulsion, but at the very least the group had surely forfeited the chance of a Chemistry prize on Speech Day. The builders’ comments were not recorded.

A few weeks previously, in one of our occasional sixth-form debates about society and morals, Mr Preston had asked if any of us had tried smoking cigarettes; to his great surprise and mine I was the only one not to raise a hand - what a sad wimp! - so we proposed to construct a demonstration “smoking machine” in the laboratory for the Speech Day exhibition to highlight the dangers to health. Ironically, when attempting to join a length of plastic tube to the end of a glass fitting, the spigot broke off and caused a nasty gash to my finger. An ambulance was called, by which time I had been taken to the school office by the main entrance, and sat waiting with a handkerchief tightly bound round the wound. The crew were surprised to see this, as they had been told I’d got a badly cut *head!* Nevertheless, I was given the full emergency dash to Ashford Hospital with the then-equivalent of “blues & twos” (I think the old clanging bell on ambulances and fire engines had been abolished by that time?) and my finger received the quick and simple remedy of just *one* stitch and a neat bandage.

The smoking machine was duly completed, and a couple of packs of fags were supplied by Mr Eschrich, kept safely at home until the big day to avoid any pilfering by my classmate addicts. A small peristaltic pump and valve was arranged to simulate breathing, and a trial run gave a successful result, albeit the cigarette was consumed rather too quickly in about 3 minutes. Speech Day was fortunately quite warm, as windows had to be opened to clear the fog of smoke, and someone had to dash to the shops to get more fags before the afternoon was out. The incredible amount of tar and other muck which accumulated in the glass “lung” should have been enough to put anyone off the habit for life - it certainly did for me!

On a gable at the rear of the main school building there was a large clock, visible from the far side of the playing fields (until the new Hall was built) - this served to remind us that our long break was nearly over; also a bell was sounded five minutes beforehand so we had time to stroll back for the afternoon session. Around the time of the above exploits, I think the same usual suspects were demonstrating their soccer skills in the adjacent playground, when a forceful high kick resulted in the ball smashing the clock face. So no Sports Prizes for them either!

Duncan Morgan wrote on “Friends Reunited” in 2002 that “Jock Brady could smell nicotine at 30 paces”, so pupils returning after lunch had to be most careful to avoid him. He was also slow to embrace the rapidly-evolving youth cultures of the 1960s, as Terry Whitworth wrote: “.....would launch a major search & destroy mission at anything that remotely resembled blazer abuse, drainpipes, flairs, winkle-pickers, chisels, sideburns, button-down collars, tab collars, coloured socks and illegal haircuts” (if you

don't know what some of these were, you weren't there!). Apparently one creative individual had "removed the side pockets of his blazer and turned them overnight into very smart epaulettes". To quote Mr. Brady from his 1964 Speech Day address: "youth today shows a certain irreverence for some essential moral qualities.....(but he had) no real criticism of youth, apart from certain trends in their dress"!

Our hair was much too long if Mr. Brady could creep up behind, grab it and haul us towards him (probably just envy, of course; he had very little). This extract from the 1966 Panora photo shows that I am the one in the 4th row down and just to the right of centre with the Big Hair...

Obviously sailing very close to the wind with this, and I wonder how long I was able to get away with it before being told: "go away, and don't come back until you've had it cut, boy"? Note also in the picture, two female members of staff, Miss Stott and French assistant Mlle. Brun, to left of centre in the third row up, appearing for the first time in living memory. They were of course allowed to have big hair.



Our route 117 red bus at going-home time was due to leave Egham station at 4.03pm and so at the next stop, on High Street by the school exit path a couple of minutes later, a bit tight if we were to catch it; they ran every twenty minutes or so. One afternoon in the 4th year a fellow Middlesex-resident friend was taking a while to pack up his things, everyone else had gone, so I yelled across the room to him from the doorway; "get a move on, we'll miss the xxx bus!", unaware that Mr Brady had come up the adjacent stairs and was right behind me. Grabbing me by the blazer lapels and bringing my face up close to his, "What was that you said, boy?" I replied "just reminding my friend of the time, Sir.....". He not only made sure that we missed the bus, but also the following two or three as well. The homeward train travellers report "interesting" encounters on Station Road at around 4.15pm with girls from "Willy Perks" school in Chertsey having just arrived and going in the opposite direction!

In the Upper Sixth, many of us were by now 18 years old, or nearly so. I was one of those who sometimes borrowed dad's car and drove to school: "....would you like a lift, Sir?" would probably have been regarded as somewhat un-diplomatic though. Parking on the school premises was strictly forbidden for masters and pupils alike, but there was plenty of free on-street parking around the town centre in those days - don't even think about it now! Lunch breaks tended to be spent in various High Street pubs, never the Crown Hotel adjacent to the school which was known to be frequented by several masters, but we favoured the Red Lion some distance along, feeling quite safe there. That is, until one day when Mr Loveluck walked in and sat quietly nearby smoking his pipe and reading a paper. We slunk out furtively hoping he had not noticed, but later that day were summonsed to Mr Brady's office and severely reprimanded for damaging the school reputation. Apparently it would be quite OK though if we were to leave our blazers and ties behind in school on any future occasion, a remarkable concession indeed from him! The same sentiment no doubt applied to the eating of fish-and-chips or pies in the High Street during long break.

I don't think he would have been very pleased though to hear about the recent ex-pupil who allegedly managed to leave his distinctive school scarf behind after a visit to a Soho strip joint - I trust the performers were able to make good use of it! He would

doubtless also not have approved of the fact that several of us joined in the Easter Sunday Aldermaston to London “Ban the Bomb” marches on a couple of occasions, albeit just tagging along for a couple of miles as they passed through our local area - but we were very careful to remain “incognito” for these.

Keith A. Jagers Poynton, Cheshire
2019

First draft dated 12th March

The fourth updated version of 5th November 2019 contains welcome contributions from Paul Chamberlain, Ian Allison, Les Mathias & Geoff Bluestone, Vivian Bairstow, Roy Smither, Mark Brady, Peter Cole, Miq Kelland, Mike Farrer, Grahame Mollet, Richard Miller and Bruce Allison (and apologies to anyone else I have left out!), also from extensive further research at the Egham Museum archive & spelling corrections etc.

Further new contacts to April 2021 have included Bruce Hamilton Clark (at Strode’s 1949-1954) whose book “Tea was a Yellow Fish” contains a chapter on his life at the school (copies are still available at e.g. Waterstones). Also, the former maths master from 1963, Ken Gee, and through him, his contemporary David Roberts. Ken is married to Wendy (nee Nicoll) the laboratory supervisor at the time. Michael Oakes (1961 intake), Roger Phillis (1960-66) and Phil Wilson (1969-76).

In July 2021 I heard from Mike Painter (1960 intake) and Peter Dawes (1959-66), both stalwart members of the boat club. Peter supplied a very detailed review of my write-up, with comments, corrections, additions etc including the form room numbering system, additional form lists and many additional forenames of our contemporaries, all of which have been incorporated into the version published September 2021, together with further recollections of my own. In December I also heard from John Mackinnon, who joined us just for the sixth-form years, 1964-66.

New contacts in late 2024 - early 2025 are Ken Smith (1964-67, 1B-2B-3A, now living in South Australia) , Ian Moir and further info from Peter Dawes

This version published February 2025 with anecdotal additions from recent contacts; these are shown in red for easy identification