

Recollections of Colin Maddison (1960-68)

My school career was 1k, 2k, 3k, 4k, then RemScA, but the science remove year didn't work out so I repeated my remove year in Rem Mod A, then on to LVI Mod A, leaving with an unremarkable 1 A-level. I definitely never shone at anything, nor did I ever achieve fame or win anything. I remember trying to learn violin at school but my father couldn't stand the pain of my practicing. Like many others, I joined the CCF in our third year for one compulsory year in the basic section in army uniform. I stayed in the CCF in the army section. I was a radio operator and used to enjoy going on signals exercises in the hills of West Sussex. I also recall doing something or other to help out the RN section and being given the chance to go with them on their summer camp on an MFV on the Clyde. We travelled to Scotland by train via Glasgow where we caught the local train to Helensburgh which passed the John Brown shipyards at Clydebank. As we went past, we saw the old QE2 under construction on the slipways.

I went on one School Holiday to Rome in I think it was just before Easter 1966. We left school in a coach for Folkestone where we caught the cross-Channel Ferry to Calais. From there we spent 24 hours on a train through France, Switzerland and Italy down to Rome, stopping off in Basle for breakfast whilst they changed the trains.

In the 1970s I met up with was Jim Allaway, who I think joined the Southern one year after me. He became a journalist and, when I met him again, he was the editor of Navy News, and had been for many years. He had also written one or two books on naval subjects. I understand he retired a few years ago. I assume he is still living in Portsmouth somewhere but he may have moved away. I have very clear memories of Jim at school. He was very small and wiry and a great athlete who usually excelled at both short and long distance running events.

I do recall in particular, two of my school friends from those days. We all shared an interest in shipping and often used to cycle across to Southampton docks on a Saturday to see what was in. We even did one or two bus trips to London docks which were much more active in those days. Their names were Brian Robson and John Rollinson. I lost touch with them almost as soon as we each left school and I have no idea where they are now. It would be nice to get in touch if they are members.

My older brother Ian started at the Southern in 1956. He was far harder working than me. He pursued a career in medicine and, before he retired, was a consultant radiologist in London, specialising in what was then a very new field of digital imaging. He now lives with his American wife, Dorothy, in West Virginia, USA.

I did notice on the web site, in the drama section, that you had some photos of various school plays, including Macbeth. I played Malcolm in that play. I am fairly certain that, in one of the pictures there are four sinister looking characters, and I was the one on the left of the picture. I am sure I have other photos from that play and I think I still have a copy of the programme. I must see if I can dig it out. Most years I was involved in productions, mostly backstage but occasionally on stage as in Macbeth, and more embarrassing, in the Gilbert & Sullivan production "Iolanthe" in my first year when I was press-ganged (that's my excuse) into becoming a member of the chorus of faeries whilst my brother was in the chorus of peers. I do remember that the wands they gave us made quite good swords!!

I also recall the superb back scene for "Iolanthe" that was painted by the art master "buller" Jefferies. He had apparently gone up to the South Bank of the Thames in London and sketched the view across the river to the Houses of Parliament, and then reproduced it singlehandedly in a superb backdrop for our production.

Colin Maddison 2009