

Peter Lover's (joined 1935) recollections

I joined the school in 1935, just in time to be a sister, cousin or aunt in HMS Pinafore and also a lady (with bustle) in Trial by Jury. Subsequent years saw me in the Mikado and Merrie England before my voice broke.

I was not keen on games and not really a very cooperative pupil so that the annual opera was my only venture into extra curricular activities.

I can still remember the first day at the school. I returned home in great excitement to tell my parents all about it. I explained that all the masters had nicknames; there was Mr Steed (Cabhoss), Mr Downing (Flip), Mr Cooper (Goofy), Mr Walker (Dizzy), Mr Keating (Bugser). I went through the list, to the great amusement of my father until, in my innocence, I came to Mr Hancock (Wanker). When I was taken aside and told that it was not a very nice name.

It seemed to me at the time that the school saw itself as a source of clerks for the Civil Service, skilled artisans for the Dockyard and navy, with only a tiny minority going to university with scholarships. When it was known that I intended to go into the Dockyard my father was summoned to appear before the Head (Mr Jones) to be told that I deserved better. Luckily it was my mother who turned up and who would have none of it.

So, a Dockyard apprentice I became and was commissioned at 19 into the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors and never looked back.

I had an older brother (E J Lover) who went through the school three years ahead of me who lost his life in HMS Gloucester off Crete in 1941. I have never forgiven the school for omitting his name from the Roll of Honour in site of a reminder from my father [Ed: this omission is recorded on the Roll of Honour page of this website).

Peter Lover
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