

Recollections and thoughts from Alisdair McFarlane (1960-65)

- a. Why does the Friends Reunited website persist with listing girls' names for the School? I've challenged them on a number of occasions without any success [Ed: I've often wondered the same thing – I'm absolutely certain I'd have noticed them had they really been there during my time (though I wouldn't necessarily have told anybody about them!)]
- b. As a youngster in the 1960's, it seemed odd that the most geographically northern school on Portsea Island should be called the "Southern" Grammar School! Can I suggest that your introduction to the school entry 1955 - 1975 provides a potted history of the Baffins building? [Ed: Of course this emanates from the previous history of the buildings – see the School/Buildings section of the website]
- c. A favourite recollection was the annual midsummer sight of leavers setting fire to their school caps. During my period it was mandatory to wear the school cap 1st - 5th years inclusive. Any pupil breaking this "law" was faced with detention/lines [Ed: only if the senators caught you – the usual practice being to put them on about 250yards before getting to the school gates!].
- d. One usually only sighted Henry Mills for the morning assembly. Otherwise his room was to be avoided!
- e. First year (1960/61) the music department mounted a production of Gilbert & Sullivan's Iolanthe. Yes, we first years were co-opted into being the fairy chorus.
- f. Does anybody remember a teacher by the name of Butterworth? I can't remember his subject but the indelible memory of him is being a red headed Yorkshireman/Lancastrian [Ed: sure fire way of upsetting one or other of the counties!] with a fiery temper who would toss his blackboard duster at full force towards any miscreant (never be tolerated these days!).
- g. Living as I did in the Kings Road/Elm Grove area of Southsea, I got a free bus pass from Portsmouth council. In the early 1960's (pre Thatcher bus deregulation), one took the Portsmouth corporation route C/D (subsequently renumbered to route 143) bus to Tangier Road. It was upstairs on the school bus...yes in school uniform....that many a lad had his first cigarette on the way home as the bus traversed the winding route from Baffins (Tangier Road) through North End along Arundel Street/Edinburgh Road (still scarred by war with many bomb sites) passing the Dockyard gates and HMS Vernon to home in Elm Grove.
- h. PE teacher "Knackers" Naysmith favourite winter PE lesson was for him to set us off on a cross country run which involved jogging (unsupervised) alongside Langstone Harbour as far as the airport before returning back to school [Ed: I recall some hardy types actually going for a swim in the sea in January – just to prove how hard they really were!] Brian Naysmith would often run or be at the far point of the course to ensure everyone actually went the whole way – but it didn't stop some from getting the bus on the way back!].
- i. Just why did the school choose to designate Sixth form pupils as "Senators" and not "Prefects"? [Ed: see the entry against Mr Mills in people/Headmasters for the answer!]
- j. Back to teaching staff, I have to agree with the web comments on Mr Burnett, a "gem" of a teacher who never lost his temper. As for "Buller" aka Wilf Jeffries he didn't actually teach anything.
- k. As I've said above, a combination of poor signatures and a timescale of 45 years mean that I can't remember many of the teachers' names. In slow time, would it be possible to compile a list of PSGS teachers/years appointed? Can't remember his name, but I certainly "crossed swords" with the biology teacher 1960-65!!