

I have realised for a long time, now nearly 50 years, how formative certain staff at MHGS have been in my life. So, for example, Mr Bescoby taught me that members of staff could be approachable without being familiar. He also managed to teach me enough Biology to satisfy the 'Maths or a science' requirement to get into university.

Tony Hayhurst, English, gave us, among other teaching, access to the then new culture of multiple-part newspapers, not a mean feat, and taught us to read the press critically. A life-long lesson.

Mr Littler, 'Hitler', took half a dozen boys, who'd been told, mistakenly, that Latin wouldn't be necessary for university entry, and taught us 'O' Level in 6 months. Again, no mean feat. Teaching us in 'the Creamery', he gave us homework every day and, if one boy in the group couldn't answer a question the next day, he just walked out of class, to a chorus of 'Sir, come back. Come back'. All but one of us passed, I think.

Mr Mather, however, taught me that being hit on the back of the head taught me nothing.

In total contrast, Mr Stevenson, 'Stevo', used just the force of his personality to teach many boys the value of the rigour of the study of French. It was, as he said, 'Casting sham pearls before real swine'. He taught me how to focus and concentrate on written text, among other linguistic skills. Even today ... and I mean *today* ... I have used techniques that he taught.

MD Taggart, English, taught me *a lot*. Not least, literary analysis; a set of skills that I have used almost every day of my working life. Like Stevo, he taught the value and the practice of academic rigour; of being thorough; of looking at the item in question and dissecting it until there is nothing left to examine. He and Mr Stevenson were two of the most influential teachers in my school or university life. (The other was Lord Strang at university.)

Finally, the 'Beak', Mr Armishaw. Not an approachable man, but he changed my life. As a senior prefect, I refused to read the Bible in assembly, because of religious doubts. He made me stand in front of his desk for 45 minutes to justify my position and then made me deputy head boy. An effective lesson in the values of free speech.

As for 6th form peers, I remember Hugh Tomlin, John Webb (who left early to go to UEA), Leslie Mitchell, David Slinger (who entered the Foreign Office and then came back to teach at 'Shints'), the late Clive Holland (who also left early, to go to Cambridge) and others less clearly.

As for me, I did a degree in English, French & Philosophy, followed by a Dip Ed and a teaching and administrative career in Turkey, England, Kuwait, the Gilbert & Ellice Islands (now Kiribati & Tuvalu) in the Western Pacific, Qatar, England again (and an MA with Distinction), Turkey again and, finally, the University of Leicester, from where I've worked in China, Taiwan, Italy, Germany, Spain and other places. (Do MHGS boys travel a lot?)'

Kind regards,

Keith