

TRIBUTES TO ANDREW SEELEY WHO PASSED AWAY 23RD MARCH 2016

From Phil Robinson

I have lots of evidence around our home of his efforts to teach me how to shape metal into useful items – a poker with a sheep crook handle; a boot scraper that resided at my parents house for a number of years, but was cleaned up recently and showed no sign of rust & all the brazed joints were still intact [after 45 years!]; a copper ash tray; a brass tea pot stand; a brass letter opener.

My immediate memory was of him chastising me for leaving my poker for too long in the forge and it emerging as a rather brilliant sparkler!!

From Kevin Emmerson

I spent a lot of time in the great man's company in the sixth-form. Over the years the knowledge he imparted saved me thousands of pounds, got me home when I otherwise wouldn't have and quite possibly saved a life or two. Sad news.

From Brian Ellis

...and forever branded in my memory..."The tapping size is the nominal size minus twice the depth of the thread"

From Adrian Dubock

Sorry to hear of his passing. I too have evidence of how much he taught and I value it greatly. A nut and bolt made by my own hand, inside and outside measuring calipers, a pin bowl in copper, a silver plated half pint mug - ah using the highest melting point solders first in the construction with three joints.

I think I recall he also had a life as quite good cricketer in the county.

I don't think they teach metal work any more (nor Tech Drawing). What a pity.

From Emba Jones

I too still have a wrought iron lamp, copper mug and an iron hammer! The red marks on my backside from a cricket bat have long gone.

I am really sad to hear this news – he was an outstanding teacher, craftsman and sportsman. He made a lasting impression on me.

My condolences to Miss Cooper.

From David Mills

"Mills, you silly cuckoo. How many times have I told you that if you cut it off you can't put it back on again."

I remember everything he taught me... I'm still no craftsman but I remember all the theory. Find myself remembering him whenever I have a saw, plane or chisel in my hands. "Olly would be proud of that."

The other week I was describing him to someone (an ex-pupil of mine) and said that he was a big man in whose hands a cricket bat looked like a rounders stick.

I once had to return to WyColl and met him. He grinned and said "Hello. Are you any better at wood work, David?"

From William Trevethick

Very sorry to hear that. I never progressed metalwork, much to that department's relief, so my most abiding memory of Emod is his performance as the Sugar Plum Fairy, complete with pink tutu and wand... Sorry, I won't be able to make the funeral, but will raise a beer in honour of one of the teaching profession's great, eccentric educators...

From Flossie Foulis Brown [Parrott]

Mr Seeley taught me metalwork on Saturday mornings when I was in the Lower Sixth; patently enlightened times although I was the only girl taking the subject at that time.

From Jon Parrott

He was a larger than life figure! Although I also have countless items from years of WC metalwork lessons, I never had AGS as my teacher. As with many fellow Gloucester House occupants, I received the slipper from him for talking after lights out. Strangely, after we moved to the new House I became the nominated caretaker of the sacred slipper, a size 13 plimsoll. I cannot recall who I passed it to, but it must have merited a ceremony not far removed from the up reaches of Freemasonry.

From Nick Harding

Sad news. I remember his hefting a ball pein hammer at Tojo. It just missed. I'm sure Tojo deserved it!

From Stephen Woodbridge

Sad news indeed. I, like you, have things made under his supervision. My overriding memories are his love of cricket and bringing such people as John Edrich. Mark Radley and several others to Gloucester House. I also remember him using his famous slipper on me on several occasions but I think that says more about me than him perhaps.

From Richard Wilson

My need for a workshop at home was built on the influence of Emod. (Why would anyone not want a lathe in their bedroom, and injection moulders in the outhouse?!) About the only thing I don't use is a white dust apron!

From Steve Human

I will remember Mr Seeley as Housemaster of Gloucester House. He was always approachable and had a kind and friendly manner.

From Kevin Westnott

I have great memories of Mr Seeley. Apart from him getting me through my GCE in woodwork [of which I am enormously proud!] most of my memories of him are on the sports field.

In the early formative years of the college, because of our ages and newness, we were allowed to play an adult in some cricket matches. Primarily this was against North Walsham (if my memory is correct) and local village sides. I have great memories of him hitting a six off of Peter Parfit (England and Middx fame) and his continual cajoling for us to do better. He, like me, was a wicket keeper and I owed a lot to his encouragement and criticism.

From John Head

.....and I remember him asking me to bring the anvil over to him ...an impossible task for me....but not for him. Did he once score a six off a forward defence?

I would think the ' six off a forward defence' could be apocryphal but it was well used in Salisbury House. Even if it was apocryphal (and it may not have been - the strength of his bat going forward and the speed of a fast ball coming off the top edge) it still demonstrated the strength of the man. If you failed to remember formulas and other such things in his metalwork class.....then you had to stand on a bench and repeat it until you knew it by heart. It was a tortuous but effective way of learning as I can still remember that..."the tapping size is the nominal size minus twice the depth of the thread"together with three class mates we had to continually repeat this whilst standing on our benches until Ollie was satisfied that it was truly embedded in our brains.and it has been ever since.....it affected my life forever!

From Kate Hallett [Bowden]

I recall wanting to learn metalwork, and enamelling which he allowed me to do, and have studied since. He was a great teacher - in those days, girls & metalwork was a "no no"!

From Neil Sparrow

Like you I have a number of 'artefacts', but building small model steam engines was my preference and I spent as much time as I could in the workshops. I was the only one doing metalwork O level in my year who was not also doing TD, so AS gave me some help on the drawing side for the exam. It was my favourite subject and created a lifelong interest in engineering and workshop technology. At my (only) careers guidance interview I said I wanted to be a steam engineer. The C Guidance person thought I was taking the proverbial, so kicked me out.

He never suffered dissent, stupidity or idleness easily but wasn't alone in that.

From John Mayes

This is sad news for me. He was one of the three nice masters that made up the engineering and woodwork group with together with Bob Mullenger and Dave Goman. I was always engineering minded because my father was a self employed engineer and when I left WyCol I made the choice to come home and be with him. I was also in the cricket first XI for three years with him in charge.

From Jimmy Alston

EMOD will always be remembered as a part of my Wycol life and his reaction to me leaving a chuck key in the drill then turning it on sending it flying across the school workshop has meant I have never made that mistake again. Big man and big personality.

Addendum from Phil Robinson

I did the exactly the same except the chuck key went out the open window and hit the brickwall opposite [the Domestic Science room]. If anyone had been passing by I dread to think what damage that would have caused! I did have a look to see if the imprint is still there on one of my return visits to the College!

From Andrew Smart

Sincere apologies, Mr Seeley, for changing the drill bit in the metal work room for a larger one for my woodwork project. I do hope you were able to resolve the issue for all my colleagues who had spent the term diligently casting nut crackers & then inadvertently used the drill bit I left in the machine..... oops. Rest in peace.

From Jack Smith

He contributed so much to Wymondham College especially in the early years. Since I was a September '51 Grammar School entrant (or rather Thetford Transferee) he was not involved with teaching us but was in charge of cricket and a great enthusiast of the game. On one occasion in the summer of '52 he took me off to play for his outside cricket club - possibly without Dr Mosby's approval! He was a big man with a huge personality. He was tough but he was fair.

I am reminded of the old English poet, W.E. Henley, (1849 - 1903) who wrote:

“When that One Great Scorer comes
To mark against your name
It matters not who won or lost,
But how you played the game”

That for me encapsulates something of Andrew's innings.

From Simon Turtle

I have fond memories of Emod as well. He got me to play for his village cricket team a couple of times. He also caught me and Steve Roy down the pub in Spooner Row one Sunday and got us to buy him and Bob Mullenger a pint, let us finish ours and sent us on our way - nothing more was said, good man. Until her death my mum had the garden trowel, planished dish, poker and a metal framed coffee table that I made in metalwork proudly displayed in her house!

From Alan McIvor Dean

I remember Olly well as he taught me metalwork for several years and, as long as you didn't do anything daft, his lessons were fun. It was largely due to the interest in metalwork instilled into me by Olly (along with Bob Mullenger and Ted Herrington) that I took on a three-year apprenticeship in agricultural engineering after leaving school in 1966. He had a good turn of phrase as well, epitomised by a tale related to me at the time by Richard Fuller (a contemporary of mine in York House) where some person had hurled someone else's apron up on to the roof of the craft block, whereupon the miscreant was summarily dispatched on to the roof to fetch it down again, accompanied by encouraging words from Olly including '...and they're LIVE WIRES you're grabbin' hold of. We don't want you FRIED for breakfast!' The story was enhanced by Richard's great gift for mimicry and he could do a particularly accurate and funny imitation of Olly.

From Bob Rowell

My memories of Andy Seeley are not of him attempting to teach me to craft wood or metal in the workshop. That was undertaken with some frustration by Mr Canty, but the time spent on the cricket pitch and in the nets. Bob Syrett and I played in the 1st XI for four years and I captained the side in my Sixth Form years establishing a close association and involvement with Mr Seeley as he advised me as I discharged my duties. In 1957 as holders of the Scott Chad Cup we were knocked out in the first round. I thought I might get sacked, I survived, and we regained the Cup in 1958. Mr Seeley was good fun and much respected and his dedication and enthusiasm was valued by us all.

My friendship with Andy extended beyond College days. I played in old boys matches in the 1960's and was invited by him to play in a match at Ingham CC, his club, against an Edrich XI. John and his brothers who played County Cricket played, Bill was a spectator. In recent years Gerry, my wife, and I have enjoyed calling into see Pam and Andy at their home at Gt. Melton when we have visited Norfolk. I last saw Andy in hospital on March 19th after I had attended the AGM of the Old Wymondhamians. During visiting Pam and I reminisced and as we were leaving Andy smiled and his eyes opened hopefully recognising his visitors.