

1950s Class notes

Nancy Fisher (MBChB, 1950)

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I qualified in 1950, completed house jobs in Birmingham at the Queen Elizabeth and General, and then did Anaesthetics.

I moved to Hove in 1960, where I have lived ever since. In 1960, my husband Michael – clinical in Birmingham but a Cambridge graduate – who was working at the old Middlesex in London got a post as Consultant Radiologist in Brighton and I worked here first doing locum and then as a Consultant until I retired in 1992. Almost our entire junior staff were London trained and most on rotation with Guys and Kings. We did have one registrar who had done her clinical in Birmingham – and she was noticeably more practical than a lot of the others.

Duffy Mcleod and her husband were GPs in Brighton when we arrived but left soon after and then we were a loan outpost.

We went back occasionally to reunions but apart from the old friends who we saw regularly had rather lost touch with what was going on. In fact two years ago after Mike died, I went to a concert with John and Pam Ball and visited Barbara Parker – it must have been the first time I had been in the city for over 20 years, the only bit I recognised was the clock at Five Ways and Lee Longland's shop (which was big and fashionable when we left) which stood out as being so small!

(Mike, my family and close friends always called me Jane – down here everyone does, I think only the bank manager expects Dr N.G.S!)

Kate Fussell (MBChB Medicine, 1951)

It is 62 years since I graduated with my MBChB, though I have been back to reunions and Golden Class. After finishing training, including five years in New York and getting my FRCS, I was eventually appointed Consultant Surgeon at Wigan Royal Infirmary.

I was Chair of the Medical Executive Committee, and on the Area Health Committee and the Area Management Committee. I retired in 1990, and subsequently became a Non-Executive Director of the local PCT until 2006 and then a Governor of Wrightington Wigan and Leigh Foundation Hospital Trust. I gave this up last September as I have become too deaf to hear what goes on at Governors' meetings.

In 1971 I joined Soroptimist International of Wigan. I was Club President twice, President of the Region of South Lancashire and in 1986 President of the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, which actually included 17 countries – mostly formerly colonies. This was a wonderful year, in which I visited 14 of the 17 countries to promote Soroptimism. I enjoy travelling and have visited many wonderful places including the Canadian High Arctic and the Antarctic.

I am also a member of the Medical Women's Federation. I was made an Honorary Freeman of Wigan Metropolitan Borough in 2000. In the following year I was awarded a BA by the Open University. I never married but have had a wonderful life!

Brian Priestman (BMus Music; MA Music, 1952)

Brian founded, and was Principal Conductor of, the Opera da Camera and the Orchestra da Camera in Birmingham, and was Music Director of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon (1960-63).

He was Music Director of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (1964-68), Music Director of the Handel Society of New York (1966-70), Resident Conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra (1968-70), Music Director of the Denver Symphony Orchestra (1970-78), Principle Conductor of the New Zealand National Orchestra (1973-76), Music Director of the Florida Philharmonic (1977-1980), Principal Conductor of the Cape Town Symphony (1980-86), and Principal Guest Conductor of the Malmo Symphony Orchestra (1988-90).

He founded the New York Handel Opera Society and appeared frequently at the Mostly Mozart concerts there, as well as the Aspen Music Festival and the Grant Park, Chicago, Festival.

Brian was Dean of the Faculty of Music and Professor at the University of Cape Town (1980-86) and Artist-in-Residence at the University of Kansas (1992-2002) and, for three years, was Music Director of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (1967-69).

Priestman has written articles in music periodicals and encyclopaedias, including the *New Grove Encyclopaedia*, *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and *Music and Letters*. He lives in France.

Peter Lamb (BSc Civil Engineering, 1952)

I joined a company where I did my vacation training in 1952. I spent approximately 13 years with them. I travelled extensively in Canada, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and so on, as Chief Engineer.

I started my own structural engineering company in 1965. (Tip: if starting your own company, make sure you own 51% of the shares). It was a good decision. We completed several contracts of £1m for well-known companies.

I retired in 1990 – bad decision – as the company went down gradually over the next 3/4 years.

I must say I enjoyed the whole experience, travelling extensively and having a good time. The next best thing I did was to design and build my own house for my wife and family.

Anthony Barnard (BSc Physics, 1953; PhD, 1957; DSc, 1974)

Last year I rang down the curtain on my 52-year career as a University Professor – 44 of those years being at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where I was also Graduate School Dean. I was elected President and Treasurer of a very selective organization, open only to those who earned degrees from both the University of Birmingham and from UAB (MBA degree) – actually I'm the only member!

Alan Brailsford (Mathematical Physics, 1953; PhD, 1956; DSc, 1991)

I graduated in 1953 from the School of Mathematical Physics under Professor RE Peierls. Three years later I received a PhD from the same school, and in 1991 was awarded a DSc in that subject.

I first left England in 1956 to work first at Bell Telephone Laboratories for one year and later went to Ford Motor Company Research Lab (for 37 years in all). I also had several interim appointments at Harwell UKAEA Theoretical Physics Division.

I consider myself highly privileged to have studied under Prof Peierls and to have shared time with the many great physicists who were in his department during my student days.

Reginald Smith (BSc Physics, 1953)

As I sit in my Office at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, I sometimes think of my classmates, most of whom I have not seen or heard from since graduation. Time runs by increasingly swiftly these days – seasons become months, weeks only hours. At 78, I have just bought a snow-blower – on the instructions of my children who would like to have the 'old chap' around a little longer so that their inheritance, sadly denuded by the current financial meltdown, might have time to regain strength. I and my wife, the former Joyce Jarvis (Chemistry, 1953), are indeed fortunate in having graduated when job offers were plentiful and having had stimulating jobs ever since. As added bonus, we get to spend some of the Northern Winter with colleagues in New Zealand and of the Northern Summer at our home on the Welsh Border, where my old Birmingham Research Group join us every August. Would be nice if some of our classmates might read this and suggest a 'get-together' somewhere in the world!

Barbara [nee Collins] (BA English, 1954) and Ellison Platt (BA Philosophy, 1954; Cert Ed, 1955)

Barbara was one of the two people in her year in the English Department to gain a first-class honours degree and went on to do a year's research at the Shakespeare Institute. After 12 months peering at microfiches, she decided that this was not her vocation and left to become a teacher for the next 31 years, as well as producing two children, David and Julia.

During that time she taught a wide range of children, from pupils at a posh English girls' high school to Arabian, Indian and English children at a prep school in Aden. Wherever she taught she was highly regarded for her pedagogic skill, and equally for her ability to write and produce plays the children could perform at term ends etc.

Ellison joined the RAF in which he served for 16 years, taking early retirement as a Squadron Leader in 1971. Whilst serving, he was funded to complete an MEd in Educational Psychology at Reading University (this was not disloyalty to Birmingham – Reading happened to be not far from the Institute of Aviation Medicine at Farnborough, where he was Training Advisor).

Thereafter he worked for the British Open University for 27 years, ending up as Director of Publishing Services for 11 years. He was also, for a while, sent abroad as a Missionary to help the Israelis establish their Universita Ptucha (guess: Open University). In the Queen's New Year's Honours List in 1998 he was awarded an MBE for services to higher education.

Both Barbara and Ellison now live in Cornwall to where they retired in 1999, thus providing a useful holiday resort for their children and five grandchildren.

Peter Smith (BA English, 1954)

My 40-year career in university administration in Canada and the USA ended with an eight-year stint as Dean of the Graduate School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York City. Having spent 10 retirement years puttering about somewhat aimlessly, I returned to the UK to begin a PhD in the Department of Theatre, Film and Television at the University of York.

Alan Endicott (BSc Chemistry, 1955)

Retired and living in Maidenhead, Berkshire.

Gilbert Cleeton (BSc Physics, 1956; Postgrad Education, 1958; M.Ed 1970)

I graduated with a BSc Honours Physics, 1956 and gained a Post-Grad Certificate in Education, 1958 – this was the best course, qualification and tutor Dr. Sparrow I ever had (great fun too, with plenty of social life and tennis).

I taught as a physics teacher at Wolverhampton Municipal Grammar School, then as Head of Physics at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School – I also played cricket for Tamworth Cricket Club. I then taught as Head of Physics at Harold Malley Grammar School, Solihull.

I graduated with an MEd. in 1970 – an excellent course with Professor Taylor.

I married for the first time and became Deputy Head of Lyndon School, Solihull. I took early 'retirement' in 1985 and did voluntary work in hospitals. I divorced but then married Lorraine, a girl from Brooklyn, USA.

I became a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Communication and Neuroscience at Keele University, designing and fabricating signal processors for cochlear implants in the UK and USA. My first and only child, our daughter Meredith, was born when I turned 55!

I took a PhD in Education – Learning Barriers in 1990 at Keele University, before becoming a Research Fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University on European Social Fund and National Lottery grants for children and adults with disabilities.

Lorraine also got a PhD in Education from UoB and we moved to Buffalo, New York. She said I could play tennis and golf while she earned money, but on the second day I was offered a job teaching research methods at St Bonaventure University! I've never stopped working since and am now 78.

I taught weekend graduate class in research methods for Bonaventure. We moved last August to Columbia, South Carolina, which has a lovely climate, trees and flowers. I'm teaching research methods to PhD students online and have published *A Pocket Guide for Student Teachers* (Corwen, 2004) and *Controlling the Levees of Your Mind* (Verlag, 2010).

I would love to make email contacts with any alumni from my three courses.

Robert Hall (BSc Physics, 1956)

1956 BSc in Physics
1957 MSc in Reactor Physics and Technology
1959 PhD in Reactor Physics
1959 to 1961 Research Fellow in Physics Department
1961 Joined CEGB Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories (Gloucestershire) as a Research Officer, eventually becoming a Research Manager.

In 1984, I moved to CEGB Offices in Barnwood, Gloucester, as the Senior Manager concerned with Fast Reactors – this led to a lot of consultation in many countries overseas.

When Nuclear Electric was formed I became Nuclear Systems General Manager, and was for many years a Member of the Nuclear Power Stations Safety Committees.

On retirement in 1993 I became a Consultant for the Ministry of Defence on the safety of the propulsion plants in the Royal Navy's Nuclear Submarines, during which time I had a number of very interesting undersea trips. I finally retired in 2007 due to eyesight deterioration.

Ljubica Erickson (BA English, 1957)

I came from Yugoslavia on a scholarship to study English. I graduated in 1957, did not return to Yugoslavia as I married and stayed in Britain. Our daughter studied History at Birmingham University and graduated in 1983. Her son is now at Birmingham University studying Political Science. He is now in his second year.

In order to be employable, I entered St Andrews University course in Social Administration and received a Diploma and later after doing a course at Stirling University, I got a Certificate in Qualification for Social Work. I worked as a social worker in the City of Edinburgh and when I ceased to work there I became a Curator Ad Litem for Edinburgh Court. I also worked with my husband and we wrote *The Eastern Front in Photographs*, published by Carlton. My son and I edited *Russia: War, Peace and Diplomacy*, published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

I can truthfully say that what I gained at the University has been of great help to me and that I have had an interesting and eventful life.

H.Jonathan Tovey (BSc Mechanical Engineering, 1957)

I am a retired engineer living in Connecticut. I left Brum in 1957 with a Mechanical Engineering degree and joined Rolls-Royce as a Graduate Apprentice (the Rolls-Royce name has been a boon to my subsequent CVs).

I stayed with Rolls for a few years, working on the first by-pass gas turbine, the Conway, then got 'poached' by a start-up machinery company (Bonas Machine) that I had worked for for a few weeks after graduating and before the Rolls-Royce September intake. That company eventually became a 95% export business and received a Queen's Award for Technological Innovation. That felt good as I was, by then, its Chief Designer. I also helped them become the manufacturer of the first commercial machine to successfully polish diamonds (for The Diamond Trading Company, DeBeers).

I was then poached again, this time by a company set up to pursue a Loughborough University invention, an NRDC-sponsored machine to make cheap cotton towelling. We (Pickering Locstitch) were not allowed to refer to the product as Terry Towelling. However the parent company, Edgar Pickering (Blackburn Ltd), manufacturers of Carpet Tufting machines, collapsed (taking Locstitch with it!) as highly competitive carpet from the USA killed the UK industry.

This was in 1980 and the UK was in a badly strike-ridden state, so I had no regrets in emigrating to the USA to join US Surgical – inventors and manufacturers of Surgical Staplers and Clip Instruments. This company eventually provided the devices that pioneered the rapid growth of Laparoscopic Surgery and I became Senior Director of Research and Development for that division (with 60+ US patents in that field).

I am now retired and take an interest in landscaping the community we live in and I was a founder member of the West Highland White Terrier Society of Connecticut (we do have a website) and I am currently VP of that fine organization (pictured)



Geoffrey Ogram (BSc Metallurgy Engineering, 1958)

After gaining my doctorate in 1961 I spent a short time as a research fellow in the (then) Industrial Metallurgy department, working with that delightful man the late Donald Wilson, who had been my PhD supervisor. I applied for a job at GKN Group Technology in Wolverhampton and worked there for three years as a research and development metallurgist, but left in 1965 to teach at what was then Wednesbury Technical College which, after a few name changes, ended up as Sandwell College. I retired from there in 1995.

Two main hobbies have kept me occupied since then. Stereoscopic Photography is one. I decided to write a book on the subject! I researched long and hard and self-published in 2001, no publisher wanting to take on what they felt was too specialist a topic. It has sold worldwide (more than 300 copies – not exactly a fortune maker, but I am happy!).

My other interest is classical music and that of the English composer Gordon Jacob (1895-1984) whom I met many times. We became firm friends. I seem to be the authority on his music, according to his widow (his second wife, the same age as me and much younger than he was) and I have finished another book, all about his music which is currently in the hands of a publisher. I am awaiting their comments but suspect I shall have to reduce drastically the number of musical examples (extracts from scores) that amount to about 500 at present! Watch this space.

Gerald Brooke (BSc Chemistry, 1958)

Like many others in the Chemistry Class, I stayed on to do research, in my case to join the Organic Fluorine Group led by Professor Colin Tatlow. I stayed on for an extra year as a Temporary Assistant Lecturer until 1962, when I moved to Durham to a Lectureship in the University's Chemistry Department, where I remained until early retirement in 2001.

I married Brigid in 1963, the daughter of the Vicar of St. John's Church, Harborne. We have two daughters, one son and four grandchildren. We still live in Durham.

I have never been in doubt that there is more to life than chemistry so on retirement I took over a neglected allotment across the river from Durham Cathedral. We started travelling abroad in 2002 visiting friends going to Bangladesh, Uganda and China and other interesting countries. We had hoped to teach English in China for a year in 2001, but our plans fell through, so we have been helping to teach English to asylum seekers in Washington, Co Durham.

Underpinning all our life together is our shared Christian faith and hope, which is expressed in various ways through membership of our church in the Market Place, St Nicholas' in Durham.

Reginald Smith (BSc Physics, 1953)

As I sit in my Office at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, I sometimes think of my classmates, most of whom I have not seen or heard from since graduation. Time runs by increasingly swiftly these days – seasons become months, weeks only hours. At 78, I have just bought a snow-blower – on the instructions of my children who would like to have the 'old chap' around a little longer so that their inheritance, sadly denuded by the current financial meltdown, might have time to regain strength. I and my wife, the former Joyce Jarvis (Chemistry, 1953), are indeed fortunate in having graduated when job offers were plentiful and having had stimulating jobs ever since. As added bonus, we get to spend some of the Northern Winter with colleagues in New Zealand and of the Northern Summer at our home on the Welsh Border, where my old Birmingham Research Group join us every August. Would be nice if some of our classmates might read this and suggest a 'get-together' somewhere in the world!

Donald Southall (MBChB Medicine, 1958)

I met a SRN, Catherine Spiller, at the General Hospital in 1955 and we married in 1958. I spent two years in hospital House jobs in Wolverhampton and became fully registered with the GMC. As soon as this happened, I was conscripted for National Service with the RAMC in Aldershot.

The Congo uprising happened and I was given a Special Short Service Commission and sent to Ghana on Secondment to serve with the Ghanaian Army Contingent in the Congo. I moved in elevated circles and never went to the Congo, serving my time as Garrison Medical Officer in Takoradi with responsibility for Army, Navy and fledgling Air Force. My wife joined me and my son was born in the Military Hospital, Accra.

After my return to the UK, I became a GP in Wolverhampton. My daughter was born in 1964 in Wolverhampton. Becoming dissatisfied with being a GP in the NHS, I migrated to Australia in 1966 and joined a Sydney GP. The writing was on the wall to disallow GPs access to Hospitals so I returned to the UK and trained in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in the Birmingham region. I was successful in the MRCOG examination, scoring the highest marks in the written papers, but failing to get the Gold Medal as I was not at my best in the Clinicals, since my mother had died the day before my viva.

I returned to Sydney and achieved a hospital appointment in O&G and spent 30 happy years in practice. My wife attended Sydney University and obtained a Diploma in Nursing Education. She then abandoned Nursing and studied for five years at University of NSW achieving a B.Arch (Hons). She was then 'head hunted' by the Department of Health and involved in Hospital Design. My daughter died of a dramatic cardiac arrest in 1989. My son attended Sydney Uni and became a dentist, with a BDS.

I retired in 2000. My wife died of carcinoma of the pancreas on St Valentine's Day 2011. So, I am retired on the waterfront in the delightfully named suburb of Lilli Pilli on the Port Hacking Estuary in Sydney's South. Here is a picture of my garden taken from the rear balcony.

Anthony Taylor (PhD Metallurgy, 1958)

Hello from Hinsdale, Illinois! This year, my wife and I both will be 80. We still keep our old residence and enjoy the friendship of members of our Unitarian Church.

Ready access to Chicago by road and rail allows us to enjoy the many cultural events in the city. We recently went to a concert given by the BaroqueBand, a group started in 2007 by Gary Clarke from Coventry.

Peter Russell (BSc Mechanical Engineering, 1959)

I have now lived in Canada for 40 years plus. Though I retired from full time employment in Housing Research I continue on projects towards sustainable housing in the Hurricane Belt, Nepal and the Arctic. Makes life very rewarding. Would love to hear from any class mates.

Gillian Thomas (BA French and German, 1959)

After spending two years in the BBC's Paris News Office, I returned to Birmingham to get married, moving to London in 1967. I use both my French and German as a freelance journalist, specialising for the past 20 years in travel writing. You can see what I write on www.thetraveleditor.com (<http://www.thetraveleditor.com>)

J Winterbottom (MSc Information Engineering, 1959)

I was previously Research Team Leader with the Motor Industry Research Association in Nuneaton. My thesis study was on analogue/vehicle suspension systems.

I joined Farrington Data Processing (in the USA), then joined Portsmouth Polytechnic and ended up as Head of School with 40 postgraduate staff. I retired in 1988 but taught at Southampton for four further years. My key subject area was Project Management – very large, multi-million, high-risk work.

I'm a very active member of the Institution of Electrical Engineers and a member of Council and Division Boards.

Keith Wright (MBChB Medicine, 1959)

I retired in April 1999. Formally a Consultant Physician at Glan Clwyd Hospital, near Rhyl. 'Reorganisation' was one of the triggers for me to go at 62.5 years. There has since been a further mega reorganisation and a mini one is underway!

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