



"It remains to say that the epidemics of strange diseases which surround Mill Hill as the sea surrounds Great Britain, or any other island in the ocean, have been the indirect causes of several inconveniences, including the curtailment of exeats and the scratching of at least one match. We therefore conclude our editorial with the earnest desire that our readers may, one and all, be saved from the strange germ and the foreign ailment, and bid them farewell."

Mill Hill School Magazine 1918
during The Spanish Flu Pandemic

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WHEN THE WORLD WENT VIRAL

OLD MILLHILLIANS IN LOCKDOWN

Armistice Day 2020

CONTENTS

03
CHAIRMAN'S
LETTER 2020

4
THE PRESIDENT'S
YEAR 2019-20

8
HISTORY OF
PANDEMICS

12
HOW COVID-19
UNFOLDED AT
MHS

18
OMS REPORTING
FROM THE
FRONTLINE

46
OMS IN LOCKDOWN
EUROPE
ROUND THE
WORLD

90
CAREERS

104
OM EVENTS

109
YOUNG OLD
MILLHILLIANS
AMBASSADORS

111
CLUB OFFICE

112
CHAIR'S REPORT

113
IN MEMORIAM
ANDREW WELCH
JOHN VINCETT
RAY HUBBARD
JIM ROBERTS

Photo Credit: OM Jamie Davies, Priestley 2012-17





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*Evolution is cleverer
than you are...*

FRANCIS CRICK
OLD MILLHILLIAN, RIDGEWAY 1929-1934
NOBEL PRIZE-WINNER



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

It's been an eventful year. It's been an eventless year.

In this Autumn 2020 edition of Martlet we pay tribute to OMs who have endured the Covid-19 pandemic across the world. We have compiled a collection of OMs reports from the frontline (page 18) and OM's personal lockdown stories (page 46) to create a unique record of this unforgettable and equally forgettable year.

In October, I escaped the strictures of the UK's lockdown, spending two weeks in Sweden where the governing message was refreshingly simple, friendly and motivating: "take care of your loved ones, protect the vulnerable". It seems by demonstrating that you trust people to be responsible and exercise good judgement, they will do just that – in Sweden at least. It remains to be seen, however, if this evidence-based common sense approach will be enough to beat Covid-19. I suppose only time will tell.

It does, however, beg some questions: what is different about society today and why have governments reacted so differently? I doubt we will ever be able to adequately answer these critical questions. For sure, these answers will be data driven – at least two years' worth and counting – and so at present we can't make that call. To see if we can learn anything from the past, journalist Nicholas Lapan, in his article The History of Pandemics (page 8), explores how changing social and economic factors might explain where we are today. Bringing the subject back slightly closer to home medical journalist, Mark Honigsbaum, focuses in on the 1957 Asian flu that many OMs may well recall. A commentary from Roy Moore CBE, MHS headmaster at the time, tells us how the school was affected by it (page 11). We follow this with a selection of communications sent out by Jane Sanchez, the current head, as the 2020 pandemic unfolded revealing just how challenging a time it has been for the school community (page 12).

In these economically uncertain times the careers committee ran a virtual event on how to use LinkedIn as a way to improve OMs careers prospects in lockdown. On the back of this we have pulled together, through our network of experts, further insightful advice for OMs who might be looking for new employment and career opportunities (page 90). We also share enterprising OMs stories who, when faced with the challenges of lockdown, turned their lives and businesses around to develop new and exciting opportunities for themselves. We also include a list of club events for 2021 (page 104) in the hope we will be able to resume a semblance of normal life once the vaccine comes into play. Fingers crossed.

Personally, Sweden's approach of standing firm when all around are doing something different, struck a chord. It tapped into an instinct for 'refusing to conform to a prevailing rule or practice' perhaps sub-consciously instilled in me from my days at Mill Hill whose foundations are after all rooted in non-conformism. It has been unquestionably tough for us all to adhere to government lockdown restrictions but whatever our starting point, to succeed against Covid-19 we have learned to embrace uncertainty, acknowledge errors and adapt to a 'new normal'.

In the meantime we salute all OMs who have worked and continue to work on the frontline and all the OMs and their families who have been forced to act out this unrehearsed lifestyle.

My thanks go to everyone who has contributed amazing content to this special lockdown edition of Martlet and of course to Laura Turner for her fantastic and fanatical time and commitment in creating it.

Take care of yourselves. Take care of others.

Peter Wakeham
Chair, Old Millhillians Club



With Angela, at Te Matu, North Havelock, Hawkes Bay, New Zealand (14 Feb 2020)

PRESIDENT'S YEAR 2019-2020

GORDON MIZNER

MURRAY 1965-69

This has without doubt been an extraordinary and unusual year, to say the least.

The first six months of OM events and travels following the annual dinner went much as planned with the remaining six months stalled by the global crisis that is Covid-19 and therefore requiring a few words relating to lockdown and virtual OM "gatherings".

I received the chain of office at the superb annual dinner held at the National Liberal Club and hosted by my predecessor Richard Llewellyn. I was delighted to see so many familiar faces and meet up with a few contemporaries whom I hadn't seen for many years.

I decided at the outset to start a BLOG of my year reflecting the events that I attended and the travels that Angela and I followed; and this is what I did (<https://gordonpres.blogspot>).

com/) at least until the lockdown brought reporting to a temporary halt.

I first attended a celebration of 150 years of rugby at MHS on a wet October day. This was organised by OM Graeme Roberts (who had captained the school team on the occasion of the 100th celebration) and Aaron Liffchak MHS's Director of Sports. Despite the weather there was a good turnout and I met up with contemporaries whom I hadn't seen since school days.

Next there were two special highlights during the Autumn. Firstly, a visit to Alford House (AH). I had heard so much about AH over the years and the visit was an eye opener. I was shown around by the Manager Tim Saunders and Chairman Nigel Baker (OM), both of whom have had a long association and commitment to AH and deserve recognition; I was surprised by the scale of the facility and the size of the rooms.

The contribution they have made to the local community has been significant over many years. Nigel was stepping down after a long stint as Chairman to be replaced by Nick Priestnall. I was honoured to be invited to his retirement dinner at the National Liberal Club with the Trustees.

Then came Armistice Day which is always a highlight for the President. The school did a magnificent job in remembering those OMs who had fallen. This year the focus was on WWII and Chaplain Richard Warden conducted a moving service reading passages from letters and recollections of those who had died, creating a personal touch for the current pupils.

Other events before Christmas included: OM Golf Society Dinner (Derren Hamilton) (of which I am a fully paid up and playing member), a visit to Belmont School (Leon Roberts), Accountancy Drinks (Mike Solomon and Andrew Millet), Creative Arts Drinks (Tom Lincoln), OM Oakers Christmas Lunch (Gerry Westoby), YOMs (Young OMs) Christmas Drinks. I was delighted to meet many OMs at all these events many of whom were well known to me from my regular participation. However, what has been a great delight is to meet so many enthusiastic Young OMs at many of the events and to hear of their varied study and career paths following school.

Suddenly we were into 2020 and Angela and I were preparing for our long trip to Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong where we had plans to meet OMs and have a really memorable holiday.

We set off on 15th January. Covid-19 was just about in the news in Wuhan and no-one had any notion of how this might develop. At that time we were more concerned (if at all) by fires in Australia, erupting volcanoes in New Zealand and unrest in Hong Kong!

Our first stop was Adelaide. We had visited Australia a number of times and so this time we wanted to include Adelaide having heard much about it. The Cycling Tour 'down under' was in full swing as was the Adelaide tennis open, and we were fortunate to have a tour of the renowned Adelaide Oval. Roger Tagg was our contact/host and very kindly took us on a tour of the Barossa Valley wine region.

We passed many well-known vineyards and had a delightful lunch at Chateau Barossa. Roger had organised a reunion lunch out at Glenelg overlooking the Gulf of St Vincent and we were joined by Roger and Sue Tagg, John (44-48) and Margaret Fereday and John Newson (50-59). Unfortunately, Emma Goodall was out of town on business.

Our next major stop was Melbourne. We took a road trip over four days stopping at many lovely places along the way and largely followed the Great Ocean Road. We arrived in a bustling Melbourne where we spent five nights including Australia Day. The Australian Tennis Open was in progress and we managed to get in to see some great tennis.

Justin Wernham (78-82) organised a most enjoyable evening at the RAC Victoria Club. We were joined by Justin and Emma Wernham, Robyn and Judy Tillyard, Gary and Julie Yorke, Roy and Angela Hanson, Randy and Kerryn Marshall. Dan Penson had to pull out at the last moment as he was on standby as a volunteer firefighter and lives some four hours away.

At the time, the fires were one of the main topics of conversation and in the news. We had seen some signs of fire damage along the route from Adelaide but nothing that affected our journey or sightseeing to that point.

Our next stop was Sydney. The temperature was starting to climb once again. We stayed overlooking Darling Harbour and enjoyed visiting places we hadn't seen before. Guy Pollock and Mike Hailey arranged for a lunch at the Sydney Flying Squadron yacht club where we spent a delightful afternoon. We were joined by Mike (62-67) and Linda Hailey, Guy (82-85) and Annette Pollock, Alan (59-64) and Dawn Mills, Steve Rudlin (64-69), Michael Bishop (Lord Glendonbrook) (55-57), Grahame Elliot (52-57). Michael and Grahame are regular visitors escaping the UK winter and I was delighted they could join us. I was also very pleased to see Steve Rudlin (65-69) who flew down from Brisbane for the occasion; Steve was a direct contemporary of mine.

"Covid-19 was just about in the news in Wuhan and no-one had any notion of how this might develop"

After a few days in the beautiful Blue Mountains where we saw and experienced fire and smoke damage and indeed were diverted by it, we were off to New Zealand. This was our third visit in recent times and we based ourselves in Auckland staying with friends. Our first week was spent exploring the Western coast of greater Auckland and we were then taken on a week long tour of the Eastern Cape and Napier/Hawkes Bay. This is a beautiful part of North Island and quite remote in some places especially around the East Cape which is the most easterly land mass (178.5 degrees) when counting from Greenwich. On our return to Auckland Nick Howe-Smith (78-83) invited us for dinner at his beautiful place in Devonport. It was great to meet his parents Tony and Ann who had recently arrived from the UK and have been involved with OM rugby for many years.

Nick was the organiser of the Auckland dinner which took place at Sails restaurant overlooking Westhaven Marina. We were a party of 11 including Nick (78-83) and Jill Howe-Smith, David (65-70) and Debbie Duggan, Brian (83-88) and Caroline Jones, Tony and Ann Smith (Hon OM), Peter Mensah (80-85). David Duggan and I were direct contemporaries and actually played in the same tennis team; it was David's first reunion since retiring to Auckland and we caught up over a coffee down at Auckland Harbour a few days prior to the dinner.

We had been monitoring news about the spread of Covid-19, and by the time of our arrival in Auckland it became clear that we should not stay for any length of time in Hong Kong. Further, our OM Ambassador Stephen Chan informed us that all gatherings were banned/discouraged, so we would not have been able to meet OMs. Reluctantly, therefore we cancelled our stay in Hong Kong and rescheduled our flights to come straight back to London. This still required us to



transit Hong Kong airport as our tickets were with Cathay Pacific. Our transit took place late at night so there weren't many people around. However, there were temperature checks at the airport and many people were wearing masks (including us). We arrived back into London 29th February about three days earlier than planned and without incident and kept a low profile for two weeks.

Back in the UK, matters regarding Covid-19 started to progress rapidly. Initially we thought that many of the OM events would still go ahead. This included our planned trip to New York and Toronto. However, by the third week of March everything had to be cancelled/postponed and we went into lockdown and hibernation.

Like many people, we got to know Zoom and MS Teams and at least this allowed us to keep in touch in two Dimensions. The OM Oakers of NW London set up a weekly Zoom connection, organised by Gerry Westoby for those missing the monthly lunches. As I write the first actual lunch has just taken place once again (outdoors and suitably distanced!).

Impressively, I was able to Chair the OM Club AGM which we arranged using Zoom and an online voting website. This turned out to be a great success with some 50 OMs participating which is more than we usually have. My thanks to Peter Wakeham, Julian Pollock and Laura Turner for making

this happen. I was honoured to be asked to extend my Presidency for a further year in view of the Covid-19 disruption and I was delighted to accept.

So, as I write we are trying to put together a provisional programme of events for the coming year. The Club Annual Dinner did not take place this October as there was still restrictions in place regarding gatherings, and we look ahead to 2021 and further overseas travel can only be pencilled in.

The OM Golfing Society has seen its programme halted this summer; however I am delighted that the autumn meeting at Deal in Kent did go ahead and I participated (see my blog for a short report) hoping as always to do better than last time.

In summary, a year of two halves and two extremes. Time and the evolution of events has changed perspective. We were really disappointed to have cancelled our stay in Hong Kong and not to meet the OMs there or complete the programme we had set up, as well as our trip to North America. However, now looking back I realise that we were so fortunate to have completed such a successful trip to Australia/New Zealand and to have had the opportunity to meet many OMs before and during the first half of my year in office.

Now I look forward to a gradual resumption of some kind of normality and hopefully attending many more OM gatherings.



Above: Standing L-R: Robyn Tillyard (48-52), Randy Marshall (71-76), Justin Wernham (78-82). Front L-R: Roy Hanson (50-54), Gordon Mizner (65-69), Gary Yorke (72-78)

Middle: Adelaide lunch 18th January 2020 (Sammy's at Glenelg) L-R: Gordon Mizner (65-69), Sue Tagg, Roger Tagg (54-59), John Fereday (44-48), Angela Mizner, Margaret Fereday, John Newson (50-59 Belmont/MHS)

Middle Right: Sydney lunch – Sydney Flying Squadron yacht club (30th January 2020) L-R: Michael Bishop (Lord Glendonbrook 55-57), Gordon Mizner (65-69), Mike Hailey (62-67), Steve Rudlin (64-69), Guy Pollock (82-85), Alan Mills (59-64), Grahame Elliott (52-57)



Me and Angela in Devonport, Auckland, New Zealand

A TIMELINE OF HISTORICAL PANDEMICS

The World Health Organization on March 11 declared COVID-19 a pandemic, pointing to the over 118,000 cases of the coronavirus illness in over 110 countries and territories around the world and the sustained risk of further global spread

NICHOLAS LEPAN
OF THE VISUAL CAPITALIST

As humans have spread across the world, so have infectious diseases. Even in this modern era, outbreaks are nearly constant, though not every outbreak reaches pandemic level as the Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) has.

Today's visualisation outlines some of history's most deadly pandemics, from the Antonine Plague to the current Covid-19 event. Disease and illnesses have plagued humanity since the earliest days, our mortal flaw. However, it was not until the marked shift to agrarian communities that the scale and spread of these diseases increased dramatically.

Widespread trade created new opportunities for human and animal interactions that sped up such epidemics. Malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, influenza, smallpox, and others first appeared during these early years.

The more civilized humans became – with larger cities, more exotic trade routes, and increased contact with different populations of people, animals, and ecosystems – the more likely pandemics would occur.

Despite the persistence of disease and pandemics throughout history, there's one consistent trend over time – a gradual

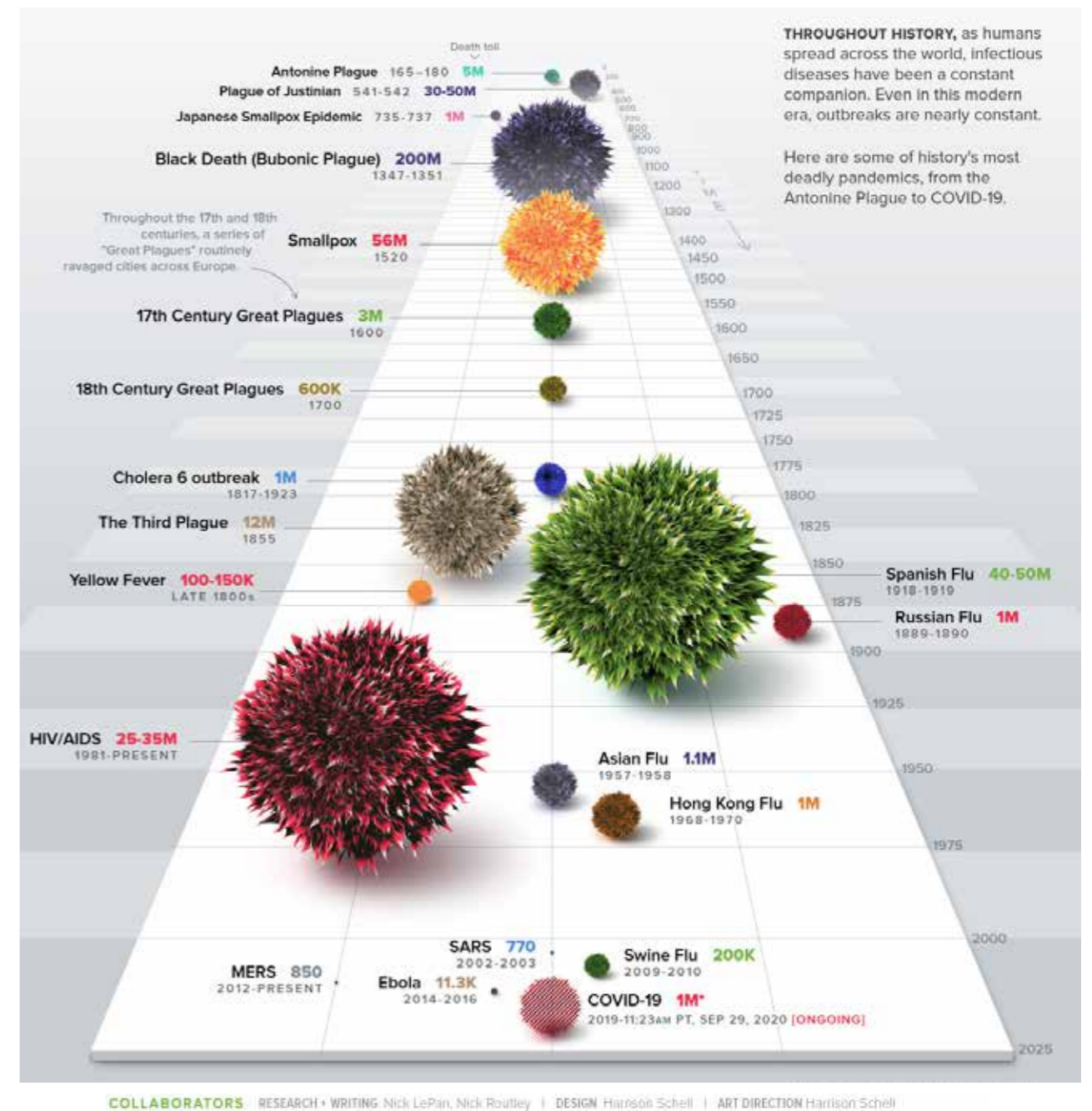
reduction in the death rate. Healthcare improvements and understanding the factors that incubate pandemics have been powerful tools in mitigating their impact.

Importing Disease

The practice of quarantine began during the 14th century, in an effort to protect coastal cities from plague epidemics. Cautious port authorities required ships arriving in Venice from infected ports to sit at anchor for 40 days before landing — the origin of the word quarantine from the Italian “quaranta giorni”, or 40 days.

One of the first instances of relying on geography and statistical analysis was in mid-19th century London, during a cholera outbreak. In 1854, Dr. John Snow came to the conclusion that cholera was spreading via tainted water and decided to display neighbourhood mortality data directly on a map. This method revealed a cluster of cases around a specific pump from which people were drawing their water from.

While the interactions created through trade and urban life play a pivotal role, it is also the virulent nature of particular diseases that indicate the trajectory of a pandemic.



Tracking Infectiousness

Scientists use a basic measure to track the infectiousness of a disease called the reproduction number — also known as R0 or “R naught.” This number tells us how many susceptible people, on average, each sick person will in turn infect. Measles tops the list, being the most contagious with a R0 range of 12-18. This means a single person can infect, on average, 12 to 18 people in an unvaccinated population.

While measles may be the most virulent, vaccination efforts and herd immunity can curb its spread. The more people are immune to a disease, the less likely it is to proliferate, making vaccinations critical to prevent the resurgence of known and treatable diseases.

It's hard to calculate and forecast the true impact of Covid-19, as the outbreak is still ongoing and researchers are still learning about this new form of coronavirus.

Urbanisation and the Spread of Disease

We arrive at where we began, with rising global connections and interactions as a driving force behind pandemics. From small hunting and gathering tribes to the metropolis, humanity's reliance on one another has also sparked opportunities for disease to spread.

Urbanisation in the developing world is bringing more and more rural residents into denser neighborhoods, while population increases are putting greater pressure on the environment. At the same time, passenger air traffic nearly doubled in the past decade. These macro trends are having a profound impact on the spread of infectious disease.

As organisations and governments around the world ask for citizens to practice social distancing to help reduce the rate of infection, the digital world is allowing people to maintain connections and commerce like never before.

PANDEMIC TIMELINE 165-2020

NAME	TIME PERIOD	TYPE / PRE-HUMAN HOST	DEATH TOLL
Antonine Plague	165-180	Believed to be either smallpox or measles	5M
Japanese smallpox epidemic	735-737	Variola major virus	1M
Plague of Justinian	541-542	Yersinia pestis bacteria / Rats, fleas	30-50M
Black Death	1347-1351	Yersinia pestis bacteria / Rats, fleas	200M
New World Smallpox Outbreak	1520 – onwards	Variola major virus	56M
Great Plague of London	1665	Yersinia pestis bacteria / Rats, fleas	100,000
Italian plague	1629-1631	Yersinia pestis bacteria / Rats, fleas	1M
Cholera Pandemics 1-6	1817-1923	V. cholerae bacteria	1M+
Third Plague	1885	Yersinia pestis bacteria / Rats, fleas	12M (China and India)
Yellow Fever	Late 1800s	Virus / Mosquitoes	100,000-150,000 (U.S.)
Russian Flu	1889-1890	Believed to be H2N2 (avian origin)	1M
Spanish Flu	1918-1919	H1N1 virus / Pigs	40-50M
Asian Flu	1957-1958	H2N2 virus	1.1M
Hong Kong Flu	1968-1970	H3N2 virus	1M
HIV/AIDS	1981-present	Virus / Chimpanzees	25-35M
Swine Flu	2009-2010	H1N1 virus / Pigs	200,000
SARS	2002-2003	Coronavirus / Bats, Civets	770
Ebola	2014-2016	Ebolavirus / Wild animals	11,000
MERS	2015-Present	Coronavirus / Bats, camels	850
COVID-19	2019-Present	Coronavirus – Unknown (possibly pangolins)	1.5M+ (as of Dec 1st, 2020)

THE 1957 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

Mark Honigsbaum
The Lancet

The virus emerged in China in the winter of 1957 and spread rapidly worldwide via ships, aeroplanes, and trains. In April, it sparked a major epidemic in Hong Kong, where about 250,000 people were infected, and by June India had seen over a million cases. Shortly afterwards, it made landfall in the UK, and by September outbreaks were being reported in England, Wales, and Scotland.

General practitioners were “amazed at the extraordinary infectivity of the disease” and the suddenness with which it attacked younger age groups. Yet, while some members of the College of General Practitioners called for the UK Government to issue a warning about the dangers presented by the virus and

coordinate a national response, the Ministry of Health demurred. Instead, the virus was permitted to run its course.

The 1957 outbreak was not caused by a coronavirus—the first human coronavirus would not be discovered until 1965—but by an influenza virus. However, in 1957, no one could be sure that the virus that had been isolated in Hong Kong was a new pandemic strain or simply a descendant of the previous 1918–19 pandemic influenza virus.

The result was that as the UK’s weekly death count mounted, peaking at about 600 in the week ending Oct 17, 1957, there were few hysterical tabloid newspaper headlines and no calls for social distancing. Instead, the news cycle was dominated by the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik and the aftermath of the fire at the Windscale

nuclear reactor in the UK. Not everyone was happy with the UK Government’s passivity, however. “The public seems under the impression that nothing can be done to prevent the calamity that is threatened by the advance of influenza in the Far East”, argued Dr Kitching in a letter to the BMJ in June, 1957. “On the contrary there is a great deal that the Government can do; by acting at once they may save hundreds of thousands of lives.”

By the time this influenza pandemic—known colloquially at the time as “Asian flu”— had concluded the following April, an estimated 20 000 people in the UK and 80 000 citizens in the USA were dead. Worldwide, the pandemic, sparked by a new H2N2 influenza subtype, would result in more than 1 million deaths.

ASIAN FLU AT MHS 1957

My memory goes back to the Asian Flu pandemic of 1957/8. Most boys eventually succumbed to it. Dormitories were converted into sick rooms for isolation purposes. Those boys who didn’t get the flu spent their days playing games or had ‘fun’ lessons which were not part of the curriculum. Once a boy had recovered, he went home for a couple of days to recuperate. I, on the other hand, survived the main part of the epidemic, but was the last boy at the school to catch it.

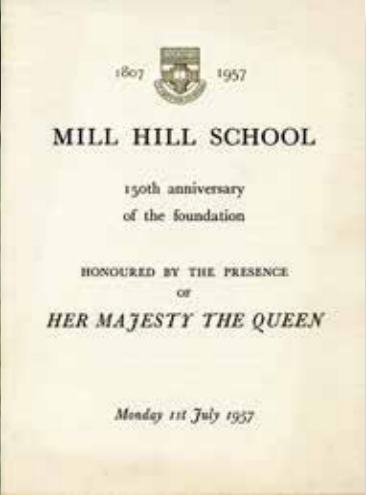
Gerry Westoby, Ridgeway 1956-61

“The new academic year in September started briskly with an influenza epidemic; our contingent from Yorkshire and Lancashire not only brought on this occasion their well-known rugged qualities – so well personified by our Chairman and Sir Harry – in which we in the South are reputed by the North to be so deficient, but in addition they imported a peculiarly virulent virus. It was soon a question of whether there would be enough well to look after the sick.

However, the epidemic passed as epidemics do, just in time for a tottery and slow-moving XV to meet an equally tottery XV at Harrow in the first match of a good rugger season. The XV, as soon as it was fit and in practice, gave us one of the best of recent seasons.

Well led by the present Senior Monitor, the side played with great dash and fire, and success, and gave us plenty of excitement.”

Roy Moore CBE
Mill Hill School Headmaster 1951-67



The Queen’s visit to MHS on 1st July 1957. Head Roy Moore introduces the Queen to a pupil, two months before the pandemic struck.



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All schools in England have been required to close from Friday 20 March until further notice and I do not underestimate the impact on all levels that this will have on Mill Hill pupils, their families and our staff...

JANE SANCHEZ, HEAD MHS
19TH MARCH 2020

HOW COVID-19 UNFOLDED AT MHS

As the impact of global pandemic reached our shores and descended on Mill Hill, communication became more important than ever; for information, reassurance and leadership through these uncertain times. The frequency of use of the word ‘unprecedented’ was, well, unprecedented. These extracts from the Head’s letters and blogs, addressed to parents, pupils and the wider community give a flavour of these communications, which will no doubt be looked back on in future years as we look back at correspondence relating to the wartime evacuation to St Bees School in Cumbria.

4 March 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff

I am writing to you with a further update regarding the measures the Foundation is taking regarding the Covid-19 coronavirus. At the time of writing we continue to have no cases in the school community, but given the continued developments worldwide, I thought it would be appropriate to write to reassure you about the measures we continue to take across all the schools.

Pupils have been reminded of the importance of good hand hygiene in preventing the transmission of this virus, and guidance has been given to those who have travelled to affected areas. Across the Foundation we had some pupils who travelled to Category 2 areas during half-term, specifically parts of Northern Italy that were categorised as such during their visit. For these pupils, we are following the guidance of Public Health England and currently none of these are presenting as symptomatic, thus requiring self-isolation.

Given the government expectation of continued growth in the number of cases, it is prudent that we prepare for a “worst-case” scenario, where a case in the Foundation required all the schools to be closed, for up to two weeks. Should the School need to close for a period of time, this will be on instruction from Public Health England: we are likely to have no choice in the matter. At the moment, the government is saying that any school closures will take place on a case-by-case basis. Should the School close, we will ensure pupils’ ongoing education via remote communication. Pupils will be set work which they will return electronically to their teachers, who will provide them with feedback.

I will continue to provide regular updates given the rapidly developing events to do with coronavirus. I would of course inform you if there was a confirmed case in the School community, and detail the steps to be taken if this occurred. I trust you will see that the measures we are taking place the pupils’ overall wellbeing at the heart of our decision making, whilst maintaining an appropriate measure of calm continuity at a time of potential distress.

16 March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Following the government announcement yesterday evening regarding Covid-19, we wish to update families. You will no doubt be following the UK Government’s advice concerning the decision to keep Schools open during this ‘delay phase’ as announced by our Prime Minister last Friday. Until we are advised otherwise, our School remains open and lessons and activities continue.

We are now in a phase where full household isolation is required in the event of any member of the family developing a new continuous cough or temperature of 37.8C degrees or above. Please keep all siblings at home for 14 days if any member of the household displays these symptoms, whilst also self-isolating the rest of your household.

Any families already self-isolating their child for the above symptoms for 7 days must now self-isolate the entire family for 14 days. Pupils who are self-isolating are being set work by their teachers via Firefly. Some parents have asked if we can make lessons themselves available online, but regrettably, this is not possible. Similarly, we are not set up for pupils to dial into lessons or connect via Skype or FaceTime.

Instilling values, inspiring minds

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Mill Hill

The School remains open for all other children, but we are taking precautions to carry out ‘social distancing’ as follows:

- All fixtures have been cancelled until the end of term
- All educational visits have been cancelled until the end of term
- We are reviewing trips for next term and beyond, and will communicate key decisions as soon as we are able
- Assemblies and Chapels have been cancelled with information being communicated via Tutors

As the situation evolves, and in the event of School closure, I want to assure you that we have been working hard to minimise disruption to your child’s education. We will be able to maintain a continued provision of education for your child by remote communication during any closure period. We will rely on technological solutions to set work, receive it back from pupils and give regular feedback. In the event of a closure, the close support of parents will be invaluable in helping to maximise the benefits of this system of work in highly challenging circumstances.

19 March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

As you will be aware, all schools in England have been required to close from Friday 20 March until further notice and I do not underestimate the impact on all levels that this will have on Mill Hill pupils, their families and our staff. I am writing with information on how the School will maintain a continued provision of education for your son or daughter via remote communication during the closure period, together with information to support the children of key workers in our School community.

20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Following on from yesterday’s letter about School closure I am writing to confirm that Grimsdell, Belmont and Mill Hill will continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home. We have a number of teachers who have volunteered across the Foundation and who want to make their contribution by supporting these children and key workers in the fight against coronavirus.

HEAD’S BLOG – Together Apart**27 March 2020**

It does feel as though we have now entered a different reality; the School is closed, except to a handful of pupils whose key-worker parents have welcomed our support, along with just a couple of boarders who have not returned home or to their guardians.

The teaching and support staff and the Senior Leadership Team continue to keep the wheels turning, as we accustom ourselves to video-conferencing, working from home, ‘own clothes’ and increasingly natural-looking hair styles! The School and our magnificent grounds have an eerie feel to them; fitting in my 10,000 steps per day is not easy as I commute from just across the road, so I have taken to striding round the fields and paths – missing the smiling faces to which I am accustomed. Meanwhile, parents (and teachers) who find themselves working from home in the interminable company of their (now literally) nearest and dearest, face new challenges of their own which cannot be underestimated; also keeping the nation’s wheels turning as they combine work with parenting.

In many ways, though, we are working hard to maintain continuity in the delivery of teaching and learning through a range of online systems, which are adjusting their bandwidth to accommodate the surge in demand. Academic departments have kept our pupils at least as busy as on normal school days, introducing imaginative elements such as the English Department’s recording and sharing of favourite poems. And it is to our pupils’ great credit that, by all accounts, they are rising admirably to the challenges of the virtual learning environment, and to being cooped up, despite their instincts for freedom. The pastoral team has been no less engaged, with Housemasters/mistresses/House Parents continuing to support their pupils, working through the usual Tutor teams. Old Millhillians have also come to the fore, recording songs and choral pieces for our online enjoyment. Life is full of paradoxes, and somehow in this age of social distancing the Mill Hill School community, along with the other Foundation Schools, has never felt more close-knit; looking after each other but also keeping an eye on what we can do for the

Instilling values, inspiring minds

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Mill Hill

national cause and our local community. I, for one, was certainly out on the Ridgeway last night applauding the heroic efforts of the NHS at the appointed time, just as we as a Foundation found our own ways of posting our thanks through our social media channels. This technology, which is now part of our everyday communications and has come in for criticism in various ways as having an isolating effect, is now coming into its own in this new world in which we are ‘together apart’.

3 April 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Now that we have reached the end of the Spring term and I reflect upon all the events of the last few months, and in particular the last fortnight, what stands out for me is the extraordinary spirit of Mill Hill School during a time that none of us would have ever foreseen. I am immensely proud of the pupils and teachers for their resourcefulness and patience as we embrace technologies and new ways of remote working with which we are less familiar. I am grateful, too, to parents and guardians for your support in helping us to manage these challenging first few weeks of School closure.

HEAD’S BLOG – Listening, Learning and Educating since 1807**18 July 2020**

Little did I imagine on returning to the UK after visiting OMs in Los Angeles and San Francisco, that within just two months the world would change so dramatically. Relieved that, in my absence, the School had passed its unannounced ISI Inspection with flying colours, and having mastered the art of communicating with colleagues, Governors and Inspectors remotely during this critical period, I was not anticipating finding myself, soon afterwards, leading a school once again from a distance. The evacuation to St Bees School has been cited as the closest analogy, with remoteness taking the form of Google Classroom rather than West Cumbria. We were, in many ways, entering uncharted waters.

Whilst the practical challenges thrown up by the physical closure of the School, required of us by law for the latter part of the Spring Term and the majority of the Summer Term, tested the resilience and resourcefulness of all involved, they also brought us even more closely together as a community and sparked new ideas and approaches which may well inform our educational delivery in the more familiar Mill Hill School which we look forward to re-opening in September. What was particularly striking was the sense in which pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and school managers were united in their learning – to master this new world of the virtual classroom and the wider aspects of co-curricular and pastoral provision during lockdown.

The first challenge to face up to was the unprecedented cancellation of public examinations; the GCSEs and A Levels, in the preparation for which so much time, energy and emotion had been invested, were suddenly no longer taking place, to be replaced by Centre Assessment Grades. Planning meetings moved from the boardroom table of the Crick Room to Google Meets, and over the weeks we became unexpectedly familiar with our respective casual clothes, wayward hairstyles and well-stocked bookshelves (always a popular backdrop); more importantly, we rose to the challenges and managed to steer a steady course through a certain amount of inevitable turbulence. Our Fourth Form pupils made an early start to their GCSE courses, and the Fifth Form and Upper Sixth pupils benefitted from bridging courses to A Levels and Sixth Form life and to Careers and university life respectively.

Surveys were conducted as the weeks went by to gain feedback from pupils, teachers and parents; regular communications went out as Head’s letters and through our social media channels; as far as reasonably possible, we kept up morale, continued our educational provision and looked after the wellbeing and best interests of all stakeholders. We also remained open throughout lockdown to cater for the needs of the children of key workers and vulnerable children, and engaged in numerous charitable activities to support local and national causes.

The Summer Term culminated with the partial reopening of the School constrained by the government’s directives: only for the Remove and Lower Sixth and no more than 25% of each year-group in school at any one time. It was with great pleasure that we welcomed back 119 pupils from the Remove, around 35 each day, and 93 from the Lower Sixth, around 30 each day. It is hard to express the happiness felt by me and my colleagues on greeting our returning pupils, as they sanitised their hands and had their temperatures taken, and on seeing this feeling reciprocated in their smiles and friendly words, ‘I never thought I would be so delighted to be coming back to School’, said one pupil, with a mischievous smile.

Looking ahead to the Autumn Term, we are ready to ‘embrace normality’ but are also prepared for whichever scenario may face us as we get closer to September, including for Foundation Day, a highlight of the school calendar, our Guest of Honour being Usha Raman, Head of Sri Jayendra School in Tamil Nadu, India.



Just days before lockdown I was pleased to receive a detailed review of Mill Hill School by the Good Schools Guide, based on a recent visit, which I think captures our ethos well, and suggests that preparation for life, which is every school's mission, is one of our great strengths: 'A vibrant, buzzing school, with a solid academic underpinning and outstanding extra-curricular programme producing confident, articulate, mature young people, who start adult life solidly grounded, positive and informed. "a very happy place to be" is the concensus of the parents and pupils.'

Of all the qualities required by our pupils as they leave us to play their part in, and contribute to, the rapidly evolving wider world, resilience, tolerance and altruism should be at the top of any list. And those who educate must, themselves, listen and learn; often from their pupils and alumni. I fervently believe that, whilst we will continue to listen and learn, we serve our pupils well when it comes to instilling values, and have done so for many years; non-conformist not only in the history of our Foundation, but in our determination to reject complacency or unquestioning acceptance of the status quo.

The 'back to school' posters which traditionally adorn the windows of stationers and school outfitters in August, will this year sound much more like a promise than a threat!

26 August 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Since I last wrote to you outlining the initial plans for Mill Hill School's reopening in the Autumn Term, we have been busy preparing for the pupils' return on Monday 7 September.

In putting together our plans we are following the latest Government guidance for schools and have carried out clear and detailed risk assessments to ensure that we minimise the risks to pupils and staff. I shall be writing to you by the end of the week with a comprehensive booklet detailing the ways in which the School will operate safely and effectively.

I am very much looking forward to welcoming the pupils back to school and hope that a full return will be an exciting prospect for everyone. Thank you, once again, for all of the support and feedback I have received, as we continue to prepare for the start of the new academic year.

28 August 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Return to Mill Hill School: September 2020

I hope you have been able to enjoy some time with your family over the summer break and that life is settling into the 'new normal' as the lockdown measures continue to ease for us all. It has certainly been a busy and challenging time for us at Mill Hill School, following this year's A Level and GCSE results, reopening the boarding houses and planning for reopening the School on Monday 7th September.

In my letter of 30th July, I set out our initial plans for reopening Mill Hill School in the Autumn Term, and since then we have been busy preparing for the pupils' return. I am now in a position to communicate more details about our plans and at this stage would like to thank my Senior Leadership Team and other staff who have worked extremely hard to ensure that the school operates as close to normal as possible. The detailed plans for reopening are set out in our 'Covid-19: Return to School Handbook', a copy of which has been attached with this letter. We have followed the Government guidance for full opening and have carried out clear and detailed risk assessments to ensure that the measures put in place minimise the risks and reassure you of our commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of the whole School community. The information contained in this handbook is intended to supplement the risk assessment, rather than replace it, providing an accessible resource for pupils and parents.

In order to reopen the school safely for pupils, staff and visitors, you will note there have been significant adjustments to the School site, routines and structures. Given the likelihood of further updates and announcements from the Government, we have built in the capacity for us to respond quickly and to allow us to make any necessary changes which we will communicate to you as appropriate. The adjustments set out in the handbook illustrate our commitment to our shared responsibility for each other and for the wider community to ensure we consistently follow Government guidance. Whether at home, in School, or travelling between, this will help us successfully navigate these challenging times. In order to assist us with our preparations, I would be grateful if you could complete the Covid-19: Return to School Form on page 8 of the handbook. I am looking forward to welcoming all pupils back to school on Monday 7th September.



11 September 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

Reopening of the School

It was wonderful to welcome back all pupils and staff to Mill Hill on Monday morning. The week has been full of excitement and enthusiasm about the reopening of the School and I am very proud of the way our pupils have adapted to the changes to their usual timetable and routine. I would like to thank them all for their hard work and efforts in ensuring we are following the guidelines at all times, and I would also like to extend my thanks to parents and guardians for your continued support whilst we have navigated the reopening of the School for all year groups. It is very important that your son or daughter continues to observe these protocols as the weeks go by and that we continue to maintain the safety of all members of our School community. As you will appreciate, the staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as possible and I am very grateful for their dedication during this unusual start to the academic year.

18 September 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians

I am mindful that you have received a significant amount of information in recent days, but am also very much aware of the importance of sharing with you the latest updates, particularly with regard to the health and welfare of pupils and staff and of our continued educational provision.

Covid-19 Update

Since re-opening on Wednesday, we have had confirmation from parents that a further three day pupils and one boarder have tested positive for Covid-19. This includes: one pupil in the Fourth Form, one boarder in the Fifth Form (Mill Hill International), one in the Lower Sixth and one in the Upper Sixth. One additional member of staff has also tested positive. In total therefore, there are five confirmed Covid-19 cases amongst day pupils, four in the boarding community, and 11 staff members (three teachers and eight support staff) affected.

Please be reassured that the necessary tracing of contacts has taken place and those pupils and staff affected have been informed. Our decision to close the school at the beginning of the week helped to minimise the contact between pupils, and pupils and staff, and the number of people being required to self-isolate has reduced as a result.

We continue to liaise closely with Public Health England, whose clear instruction is that those pupils and staff who return a positive test, must self-isolate for 14 days in order to protect the School and wider community. For clarity, this only applies to the individual who has had contact with the person who has tested positive; it does not affect siblings or other family members who have not been in contact with the infected person.

The school has entered the new era of blended learning, and I am delighted to have received so much positive feedback from parents in this regard. With several pupils and teachers in self-isolation at present, classes have been taught in a variety of ways this week. For most, this has meant business as usual. Some pupils have experienced learning in School, whilst their teacher is beamed into the classroom from home. For others, it was the reverse. Most of our lessons have been taught in this latter way, with a balance of set tasks to be completed in lesson time wherever live sessions are not appropriate. The landscape of the school looks very different compared to just a week ago, and I am proud of the rapid adjustments made by our staff and pupils to make it work. I have been impressed by all those who have really hit the ground running with a 'can-do' attitude this week, and the school community has my gratitude for this.

At the time of writing the country is once again in lockdown, though this time schools remain open and we have learnt much over the past eight months as our resilience and ability to innovate has been tested more than we might ever have imagined. New initiatives such as online Parents' Evening, our Call to Remembrance in which the majority of pupils watched from their classrooms through live-streaming, Virtual Open Days and the Foundation Day Movie, have not only enabled us to keep the Mill Hill flame burning, but may well enable us to streamline our offering in the post-Covid-19 age which will, we hope, one day come. Until then, we will be cautious about what may prove to be false dawns, celebrate that Mill Hill is more popular than ever, with a 10% increase in the school roll this September, and continue to instil values and inspire minds as we have done for the past 213 years.

Jane Sanchez

Head, Mill Hill School



DR DAVID COHEN
MURRAY 04-09



DR ONYEDIKACHI OJI
BURTON BANK, 05-07



DR LEANNE ARMITAGE
RIDGEWAY 11-13



NEIL LODHIA
SCHOOL HOUSE, 13-18



DR TOBI OPUTA
BURTON BANK, 01-06



DR MARK SIMMONDS
MURRAY, 91-96



DR VINOD ACHAN
RIDGEWAY, 83-87



DR MATHEW WELK
MCCLURE, 92-97



DR ALEX MENTZER
COLLINSON, 94-98



DR OLIVER GALGUT
SCHOOL HOUSE, 06-11



DR PRAMOD ACHAN
RIDGEWAY, 83-88



DR MAX COUPE-KING
PRIESTLEY, 05-09

OMs REPORTING
FROM

FROM THE
TLINE



DR DAVID COHEN

A&E DOCTOR/GP TRAINEE

East Surrey Hospital & Barnet General Hospital

I'm an OM who was in Murray House from 2004-2009. I also attended Belmont and Grimsdell before that (from the very first day it opened!). Although I have just changed jobs to pursue a career in General Practice in London, for the past year I had been working as an Accident and Emergency Doctor in Surrey. Since late January, I had been involved in treating patients suffering from Covid-19. We had quite a large number of patients with it due to our proximity to Gatwick Airport and also the high number of care homes in our catchment area. There have been many success stories, where I was delighted to learn that patients who I didn't think would make it out of hospital actually did. The lowest point for me was the loss of very respected and well-liked colleague who tragically died on our Intensive Care Unit after a long battle with Covid-19.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

I think that one of the most frustrating parts of the job over the past eight months has been the constantly changing and haphazard approach to PPE guidance nationally which I feel was largely down to supply chain issues rather than any true scientific evidence. In terms of the hardest part of the job; I would have to say that the past few months have forced me to have some of the most difficult conversations of my career with patients and their families. Some so difficult, I can recall them word for word.

How do you think the country coped with the Pandemic?

I think that I would rather comment on the remarkable response from the public, who have had to make huge sacrifices, than the Government's response which has left a lot to be desired. I can't imagine how hard it must have been to not be able to go to work every day or to have the uncertainty of not knowing how your income might be affected. They have demonstrated real courage in coming together and making sacrifices to help protect our front line services. I know that myself and all my colleagues have really appreciated that. The weekly Thursday claps often coincided with me walking to or from work and it was truly uplifting to witness, instilling such an enormous sense of pride in me.

Was there anything they could have done better or were you impressed by how they handled it?

Again, I would prefer to comment on my local experience rather than the

Government's sub-par handling of the Pandemic. I was very impressed with how my hospital handled the pandemic and put in place contingency plans to provide high quality care for patients presenting with any and all problems. Our A&E department was split into two areas; a 'hot area' for those with symptoms of Covid-19 and a 'cold area' for those without in order to reduce the transmission as much as we can. I don't think they could have done any better truthfully!

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

Around the start of April, I had Covid-19 myself and spent seven days in self isolation, which was a very frightening experience rife with uncertainty about how things might progress. It certainly gave me much more empathy when looking after these patients. My sense of smell has still not fully recovered almost five months on! Working in Accident and Emergency, my working day didn't feel that different overall as I still remained on the same shift pattern. Having to make split second decisions on the door as to whether a patient may or may not have Covid-19 was certainly tricky and working in PPE of all levels was difficult to say the least. You'll see a photo of me in full PPE about to start a ten hour night shift in 'Hot Resus' where the sickest patients come in off the ambulance and we work to stabilise them before admitting them. With no air conditioning, the temperatures in the room could reach 28 degrees in addition to the stifling nature of PPE, making for some really gruelling shifts.

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

The biggest impact for me has been the inability to visit my support network in person. Personally, being around family and friends is vital to keep my spirits up, and not being able to see people in person took its toll. Having said that, we all adapted to keep in touch regularly with Zoom calls for a catch up or an online pub quiz which was one of my most anticipated parts of the week.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

I think it's impossible to say how things will pan out. We've all used the term 'new normal' in recent times and I think that sums it up very well. I definitely believe that we are witnessing massive cultural shifts in societies the world

over, including social distancing and the widespread use of masks which I think will become a staple of our day to day, at least for the foreseeable future. For example, will we see a full crowd at Wembley stadium or Twickenham in the next few years? I'm not so sure. I'm hopeful that we will get back to life as it was but I think it's a long way off.

Are you keen to return to life the way it was before the pandemic, or have you reconsidered a change in your lifestyle or even career as a result of it?

In many ways, I am keen to return to life as it was, with the ability to travel freely, visit new places and experience new cultures. The arts for one have been profoundly affected by the pandemic and I know this has sadly had a big effect on one of my closest friends. I hope the Government will do more to safeguard these industries so that we can all enjoy them once again when things start to normalise. Personally, and after much reflection, the pandemic has without doubt impacted the trajectory of my career. Although remaining in medicine, I have chosen to train as a General Practitioner rather than to pursue a career in Emergency Medicine.

Has anything positive come out of the Pandemic?

One positive has been that the adversity has encouraged many demonstrations of kindness between neighbours and complete strangers which has often been lacking in modern society and this has been wonderful to see. That is one thing I would love to see continue.

There have also been some really heart-warming stories of communities coming together, neighbours helping each other however they can. It would be nice to see this kind of community spirit continue beyond the pandemic. My parents both tested positive for coronavirus antibodies showing that they had indeed had the virus when they were unwell in March. I am very happy to say that they recovered fully and that I am very proud of my dad who has been donating his plasma every two weeks to be used to treat people critically ill with Covid-19.

What do you miss most about MHS?

This is a tough one. My time at Mill Hill School and the Foundation as a whole is filled with some of my fondest memories. What I miss most is probably having my close friends, who are all OMs, around regularly as we have been spread all over the country for the past few years.



DR ONYEDIKACHI OJI

DOCTOR

North East and Central London

My name is Onyedikachi and over the years, I have been known by numerous versions of this. After leaving MHS, I went to Cardiff University to study medicine (of my own volition, fairly unusual in Nigerian culture!). Back in school, although I was also a fan of the arts, my main passion was for the sciences and a career in medicine felt like the obvious next step (MHS to NHS, if you will!). A Welsh university is perhaps not typical for Millhillians – I only met one OM in the nine years I lived in Wales – but I enjoyed it and made some life-long friends there.

After a lot of post-graduate training and some interesting research as part of my master's degree, I have settled on cardiology as a specialty because what is more important than the heart? The best part of being a doctor is applying all that scientific knowledge to the management of patients and making a difference to their health and well-being. Over the last six months, I have been working as a registrar. My job involves the management of acutely unwell patients who have been admitted with a heart-related problem and reviewing stable patients in outpatient clinics.

Being a frontline worker during the pandemic is physically and emotionally distressing—we are working gruelling shift patterns and are losing patients and staff to this disease. No one could have predicted this happening, but the continued support of colleagues and the public's support of the NHS make me proud to be a doctor. The NHS is recognised world-wide as not only being world-leading in many areas of medicine, but also the fact that it is open to everyone. I feel proud to be part of a health service which is based on need, and not on ability to pay.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

There are several patients with acute issues who are scared to come into hospital due to fear of contracting the virus. Unfortunately, the delay in presentation and in some cases, non-attendance have negative consequences in terms of their outcomes.

Obviously, we cannot heal everyone and the fact that some patients die, sometimes unexpectedly can be distressing. Breaking bad news to patients, their relatives and loved ones is never easy. In recent times, hospitals have implemented strict

policies limiting the number of visitors per patient to prevent cross-infection. This also means patients are not surrounded by their loved ones when they are most vulnerable.

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

There was some initial panic, but this seemed to settle as people became more well-informed about the virus, the symptoms of infection, how to get help and the policies introduced to combat the pandemic. Most continue to adhere to the rules instituted and distancing seems to be the 'new normal.'

Clearly, we are not out of the woods yet. It is great that we are making some progress towards a vaccine, but there is a lot more to be accomplished. No one is certain how things may go this winter, but I know that all staff in the NHS will do everything they can to help patients back to health.

Were you impressed by how we coped with the pandemic?

It is tricky to answer this without getting political! The government has a very difficult job dealing with, at the risk of overusing an already tired word, an unprecedented pandemic. They have said that they are following the science, but this can be conflicting and sometimes difficult to interpret. In a democracy, decisions are made by politicians and it is they who are ultimately accountable for some of the questionable policies they have put in place.

What was your experience of lockdown and impact on your life?

I was working as usual which of course had its challenges but on the plus side this meant I was permitted to leave my home and benefit from social interactions, albeit in the workplace. In my spare time I rediscovered reading, I made more meals from scratch and like the rest of the country, I even baked a banana bread or two!

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

It was difficult not seeing my family and friends with the travel restrictions in place. I usually see my parents every summer, but I haven't this year and I miss them. It has been especially tough as my first nephew was born at the start of lockdown and I have not been able to fly to the United States to see him.

Do you see things ever returning to 'normal'?

Everyone now talks about the 'new normal' of mask wearing and social (I prefer interpersonal) distancing. It is strange how quickly we adapt to new ways of living and relating to one another. Thank goodness we have technology to help to connect us. I certainly hope, like everyone, that we will have a safe and effective vaccine as I miss partying with friends, but until we do, we just need to follow the rules and respect one another. In the work environment, technology has proven to be very useful in these times and companies have managed to conduct business as usual with their employees working from home. In medicine, I envisage more remote working where possible, for example telephone clinics to improve efficiency, possibly decrease waiting times and also eliminate the stress of travel for elderly patients. Other aspects might not change very much as physical examination is still an essential component of assessing a patient.

Has anything positive come out of the pandemic?

The crisis cultivated a sense of unity against a common enemy (and I do not mean the Conservative government!). People became more creative and devised ways to deal with problems that being in lockdown posed, keeping in touch and rekindling long lost connections via social media. The situation also brought to light the kindness and compassion of the public towards one another, especially towards the vulnerable. Neighbours checked in on, shopped and cooked for the elderly. Donations to food banks increased as did the number of volunteers helping out locally and in the NHS. I hope this sense of community continues.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the NHS and in fact, the whole industry of key workers and the disparities in their theoretical value to society and their remuneration. Whether this will lead to any long-term changes and much needed increases in funding is yet to be seen.

What do you miss most about MHS?

I really enjoyed school and made some great friends. I especially enjoyed being involved in house productions. Maybe the drama of hospital life feeds that part of me.



DR LEANNE ARMITAGE

JUNIOR DOCTOR

Medway Maritime Hospital

I'm a newly qualified junior doctor working on the Cardiology Ward at Medway Hospital in Kent. In my spare time I run The Armitage Foundation, a charity I founded committed to increasing diversity across UK medical schools. I am also, in general, very passionate about inspiring people to be the best version of themselves, whether it be through health or through elevating their thoughts about themselves and their place in the world.

Over the last six months a lot has happened for me. I graduated from medical school in a way that I could have never imagined possible...an online graduation during the midst of a global pandemic. Almost immediately afterwards, we were given the option to start working on the frontlines, as interim foundation doctors before our formal training programme started in July.

Personally, I decided that I would not start immediately, instead I would work on developing my charity for the few months I had before July. This decision was challenging but easy at the same time... It was challenging because I worried that people might judge me negatively for not going straight to the frontline where many of my colleagues were. However, it was an easy decision because I was planning to use the few months I had to pour my heart and soul into building a sturdy foundation for my charity. I reasoned that it was very unlikely I would ever have this much time to work on my charity and so I need to harness the moment. In addition, Covid-19 has widened disparities that already exist within our society. As such, if there was a time that the beneficiaries of The Armitage Foundation needed us most, it is now!

Now that I am working full-time as a junior doctor, I can say that overall, I am really enjoying it! I work in a very busy hospital in a relatively deprived area. As such, we tend to see patients presenting to hospital late and with multiple health problems. What is also interesting, is that the hospital serves quite an insular community. As such, at Medway Hospital we have not experienced an overwhelming number of Covid-19 cases compared to other hospitals in the country. However, we have still encountered a number of challenges and even though things are starting to quiet down, there is the possibility of a second wave and uncertainty surrounding how exactly we will navigate through the next few months.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

I love my job, however, as with all things in life, nothing is perfect! What I find most frustrating about my job is the, sometimes, poor communication/synergy between departments and teams. If there was a more robust system of communicating and working with different departments (both in hospital and out of hospital) I think this would allow us to work more efficiently.

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

I think the country was put under an immense amount of pressure – responding to a global pandemic that it had not foreseen and initially, understood little about. It seemed that this was reflected in many of the decisions that were made, particularly at the initial stages of the pandemic, and the subsequent confusion that ensued from many of the messages that were being communicated to the general public.

However, in spite of this, I think there are many reasons to be proud of our country's response – the NHS have been phenomenal, particularly in creating the capacity needed to respond to the surge of patients and by generally providing a sense of hope in very uncertain and challenging times.

In addition, the government and charity organisations have provided various forms of financial support for those placed in economically vulnerable situations. At present, there is also the hope of a vaccination which may take us closer to the end of this pandemic.

Was there anything they could have done better or were you impressed by how they handled it?

I think our country could have responded better to the pandemic by considering, to a greater extent, the response of other countries who appeared to be dealing more effectively with the pandemic.

The UK, amongst other European countries, was one of the hardest hit by the pandemic. It had the highest levels of excess mortality during the most crucial months of the pandemic. The reasons for this are, of course, multifactorial. However, I think there was a lot to learn from those who seemed to have not been hit as badly.

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

Initially, I found it challenging adjusting to lockdown as it totally transformed my normal routine. I'm a very active person and I spend more time out of the house than I do inside! As such, experiencing lockdown was a total lifestyle transformation. However, I feel like I quickly adjusted to this and actually started to enjoy many of the benefits. Prior to lockdown, I could spend up to three hours a day in total commuting. Having fifteen hours extra per week was very valuable and for the most part, I feel like I used this time productively. I had a number of really useful virtual meetings and managed to do a lot of work for my charity.

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

The lockdown experience provided me with a major paradigm shift in my thinking. Faced with a global situation that was totally out of my control, I had to remind myself to focus on that which I could control. This helped to empower me and give me a sense of stability, during a time of great uncertainty. The lockdown experience also helped to deepen my faith as trusting God through such uncertain times gave me a deep sense of comfort.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

I don't think things will even return to 'normal', instead, there will be a 'new normal'. When exactly this will happen, I do not know. I hope it happens soon as I really want to go on a holiday that involves getting on a plane!

Are you keen to return to life the way it was before the pandemic, or have you reconsidered a change in your lifestyle or even career as a result of it?

I'm excited for the new normal as I think our society will function more effectively because of it. For example, many institutions were quite resistant to virtual meetings and workshops, but as a result of the pandemic, they've been forced to accept this, and in doing so, have seen the great benefits!

What do you miss most about MHS?

I miss the student life. Although it sometimes felt stressful, it was great studying and developing as a person whilst at Mill Hill. I enjoyed boarding at Ridgeway, and I loved having all of my meals cooked for me!



DR VINOD ACHAN

CONSULTANT INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGIST
Frimley Park Hospital, Surrey

"One of the hardest personal challenges has been striking a balance between the risk of taking the virus home and infecting family members, and the need to be at the frontline and fully immersed in patient care"

I have been a consultant interventional cardiologist at Frimley Park Hospital for thirteen years after training at Oxford University and spending two years at Stanford University on a Fulbright Scholarship. Frimley Park is now a regional heart attack centre in Surrey (serving patients from Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire) where we provide a 24/7 primary or emergency coronary angioplasty service for approximately 300 heart attack patients per year. As part of the heart attack team, the cardiologist inserts a small tube or catheter into the artery at the wrist, manoeuvres it to the heart, and restores blood flow to heart muscle as quickly as possible by inflating a tiny balloon and deploying a stent within the coronary artery.

Over the last six months, we have been very busy. Heart attack patients have continued to arrive but have been presenting later than normal. These delays in presentation have been attributed to patient concerns about access to emergency treatments during lockdown, and have increased the risk of complications. Also, we have seen cases of Covid-19 myocarditis mimicking heart attacks.

A major reorganisation of the hospital and our wards allowed us to maintain all emergency cardiology services. Now we are trying to catch up with a huge backlog of elective or planned work before a likely second wave strikes.

I am proud of the fact that despite wearing full PPE and having to adapt protocols for all emergency coronary intervention procedures, we managed to maintain our average door to balloon time (that is the time between a patient arriving at the hospital to the moment a balloon is inflated in the coronary artery) at 35 minutes (well within the national 60 minute target).

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

One of the hardest personal challenges has been striking a balance between the risk of taking the virus home and infecting family members, and the need to be at the frontline and fully immersed in patient care. Commuting from London to Surrey has taken longer and at one stage I lived in the hospital for a week to circumvent these issues

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

There are many things in retrospect that could have been done better. Public health messages like asking people to 'stay alert' have been too vague. U-turns in policy and advice, about mask wearing and social distancing for example, have led to confusion. There has been a failure by government to listen to diverse opinions from a range of public health experts, a failure to act quickly in the beginning, and more recently a failure of our test and trace strategy that relied too heavily

on inadequate technology and an inexperienced private sector.

At the other end of the spectrum, I have also been so impressed and moved by those NHS colleagues and co-workers who stood up to the challenges of the pandemic, some of whom gave up their lives.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

Things will eventually return to a 'new normal', possibly after the development of a vaccine, rapid on-the-spot virus testing, and a better understanding of the science.

Has anything positive come out of the pandemic?

The development of virtual or telephone out-patient clinics and virtual international conferences have been positive changes during the pandemic.





DR MATHEW WELK

CONSULTANT ORTHOPAEDIC FOOT AND ANKLE SURGEON

Royal National Orthopaedic NHS Trust

I am a consultant orthopaedic foot and ankle surgeon, working at the Royal National Orthopaedic NHS Trust in Stanmore. This is a tertiary referral centre for complex orthopaedic problems. We usually deal purely with elective (non trauma) problems such as arthritis, deformity and neurological foot and ankle disorders.

When the Covid-19 pandemic began, all elective surgery was cancelled across the NHS and private sectors. The RNOH transformed from an elective centre to a trauma centre overnight, for the first time in its history. This involved an amazing feat of infrastructure transformation, from IT, to surgical equipment, ward reconfigurations, surgical team restructuring etc. We delivered consultant lead orthopaedic trauma care, with a socially distanced meeting each day to prioritise the cases by urgency.

The highs were working in a fantastic team, delivering an essential service to take trauma from all the surrounding hospitals, freeing up their bed base for Covid-19 patients. The teamwork and sense of achievement were outstanding. The support from local charities providing food and equipment was heartwarming. The lows were working outside of your usual comfort zone, in an environment fraught with risk. Whilst the country was on lockdown, we were at work every day in a busy hospital doing our best to keep ourselves, our families and our patients safe.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

It was hard to work outside of your normal comfort zone, dealing with a case mix we were less used to. This extended across the hospital, from the surgeons, to the theatre staff, to the nurses caring for the patients on the ward. To operate in full PPE was also a huge challenge. The masks were painful to wear for long periods, and the visors made vision difficult. The layers were exceptionally hot. We experimented with different masks to overcome some of the difficulties. One such adaptation was a snorkel mask with a 3D printed connector to a HEPA filter. This sadly didn't work as the condensation was a problem (and looked ridiculous!) The most frustrating, although fully understandable, were the large delays between patients in theatres as the theatres were fully cleaned, the PPE safely removed and put back on again,

and the patients safely recovered after their operations. This was the case country wide and was unavoidable to keep patients and staff safe. My anaesthetic colleagues dealing with the airways of patients potentially carrying Covid-19 were exceptional in their bravery and professionalism.

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

The lockdown was well respected in our area. The hospitals were exemplary in their work, quickly increasing capacity and reconfiguring. The Nightingale centre has come under criticism for its cost and lack of usage, however in my opinion it was essential to have it as an insurance policy in case the numbers escalated beyond the capacity. The loss of many lives and the economic consequences are huge, however people pulled together to help others and community spirit was at a high. It is easy to criticise and feel the country should have locked down earlier, however each country is different, and I have colleagues in public health who were tirelessly evaluating the evidence to try and make decisions at the correct time to maximise the efficacy, without the benefit of hindsight.

"Whilst the country was on lockdown, we were at work every day in a busy hospital"

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

My father was hospitalised with Covid-19 so due to contact with him I had to isolate at home with my family for two weeks. My pregnant wife and two children abided lockdown instructions throughout. Whilst they were on lockdown and I was at work, I would have to sterilise myself and change at work, prior to coming home to minimise risk of transmission. I was especially concerned about passing it to my wife in pregnancy and how it might affect her and the risk of vertical transmission to the baby. Thankfully all was fine and our son is now a few months old!

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

My children have clearly missed six months of schooling and at eight and six years old this has some social impact. On a positive note, having more time at home with the family with less commitments, allowed us to spend some really lovely family time together.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

That depends on whether we find a vaccine, and the extent the treatment of the virus improves. Certainly intensive care colleagues of mine speak of just how ill the Covid-19 patients on intensive care were with multi-system effects, however the understanding of the virus and treatment of these patients is improving.

It is hard to predict a second spike, and the extent of local lockdowns in the future. I am anticipating a year to eighteen months before things start returning more to normality.

Are you keen to return to life the way it was before the pandemic, or have you reconsidered a change in your lifestyle or even career as a result of it?

I am keen for my work life to return back to before the pandemic, to be able to operate on people with life limiting foot and ankle conditions without fear of causing harm secondary to Covid-19.

I am keen socially to be able to go to restaurants and to pubs without restriction. I am keen for social interaction to return, rather than to live a virtual life on Zoom and Microsoft Teams! I certainly feel some aspects are here to stay, and for me virtual consultations and meetings are likely to play a part in my day to day life to some extent.

Has anything positive come out of the Pandemic?

Kindness and compassion to others, and time spent at home as a family are positives.

What do you miss most about MHS?

I am still in touch with many of my friends from MHS and we all miss the time we used to spend together at work and at play. I miss the time we had to play sport and the excitement and anticipation of what lay ahead!



DR ALEX MENTZER

INFECTIOUS DISEASE REGISTRAR AND ACADEMIC CLINICAL LECTURER

University of Oxford and John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford

I have two job roles that I have been in since 2017 which I balance simultaneously. The first is being a doctor in infectious disease and microbiology where I give advice on patients with all sorts of infections. The second is a research role where I try to understand how differences in our genetics influences how we may respond differently to infectious disease.

Over the last six months these job roles have collided in an intense way! Firstly, I've been working on the Covid-19 wards looking after patients with suspected or confirmed Covid-19 and attending to them as they become very unwell. I've seen the hospital overwhelmed day and night with all staff members rushed off their feet. The lowest point was certainly when three hospital workers sadly died from the infection in a very short time-span.

Secondly, I became nominated as the University lead for blood sample collection from patients with Covid-19 for various research studies that are being conducted in Oxford. Although it has been difficult to juggle both aspects of my job, and I've had to work harder than I have ever had to work before, in some ways it's been exciting to be immersed in a field I find so intriguing. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

Juggling both aspects of my job and trying to see my family. Working intense hours with demanding schedules without knowing if there would be any respite to look forward to.

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

In retrospect I cannot help but think there could have been ways that we could have improved coordination and preparedness, but undoubtedly I have been overwhelmed by the motivation and unity of the frontline and support staff (including those family members at home) both across the health service and the country that helped us all get on with our day job.

Was there anything they could have been done differently?

A lock down earlier might have helped, but we'll never really know. We're not out of the woods yet, so it's a difficult question to answer.

How did lockdown affect you?

My work never stopped. If anything it got the most intense it has ever been.

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

Not having time to spend relaxing with the family or take any holidays.

How do you see life after the pandemic?

Certainly, this pandemic has altered my career path. I'm an infectious disease specialist working through a pandemic. It has meant a lot of my projects have gone on hold, but on the plus side, as I've said before, it has been an opportunity to take a close look and try and understand a new infectious disease that may inform our response to infection more generally. Discoveries could help move science forward in a positive way.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

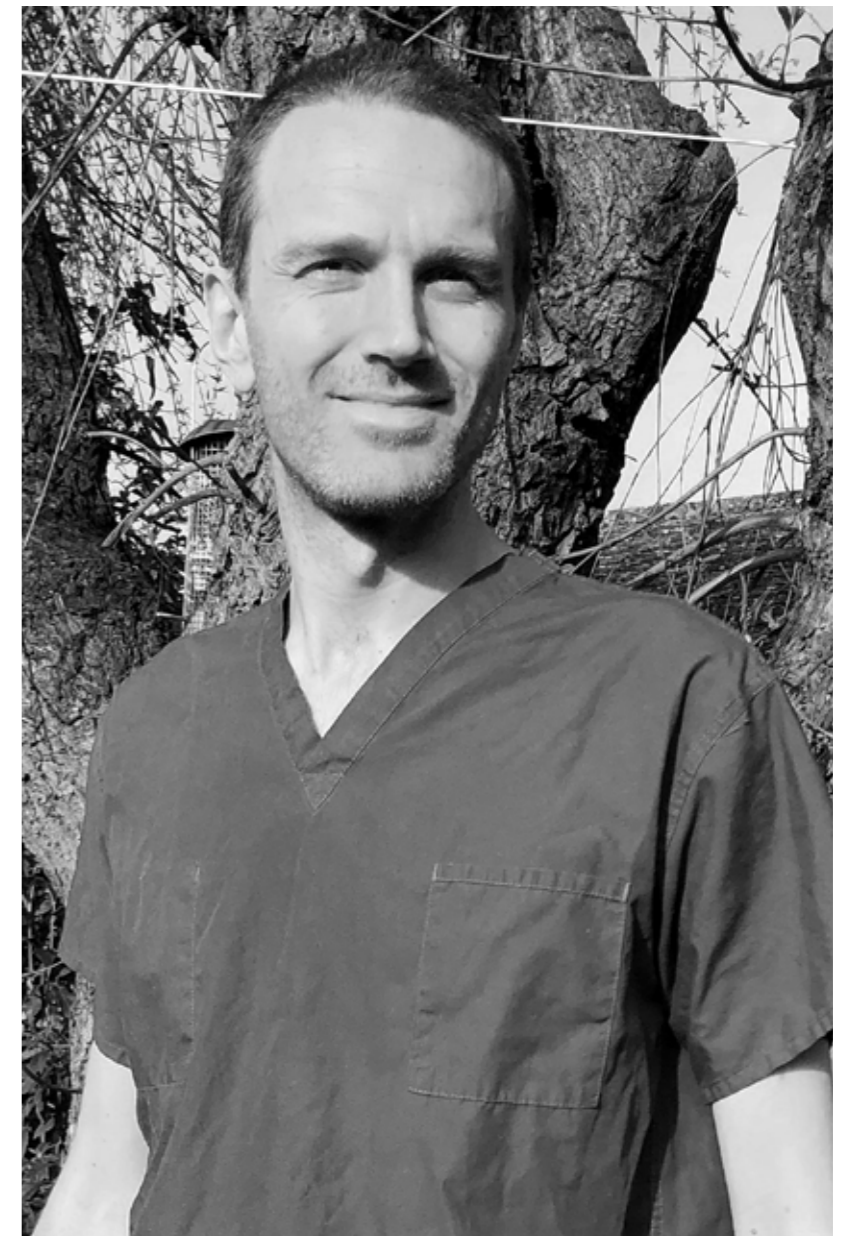
I don't think things will return to normal any time soon. Certainly over the next two years I think we will have to all adapt to a new kind of normal.

Has anything positive come out of the Pandemic?

I'd hope that people are becoming more aware of the need to make an effort to stay/become fit and healthy through proper diet and exercise.

What do you miss most about MHS?

The close-knit community and friendships with both pupils and teachers.





NEIL LODHIA

MEDICAL STUDENT

Kings College, St Thomas' Hospital and a community psychiatry centre in Croydon

I'm a medical student at Kings College London.

As many of students across the country have now realised, universities were not exactly prepared for the pandemic. This was incredibly frustrating for many reasons especially as I chose King's for its early exposure to clinical areas. A lot of our education depends on us seeing patients and learning from experiences rather than the rather traditional type of studying through textbooks and reading. Nonetheless, my university is associated with fantastic clinicians who shared what they were learning about the virus during lockdown. It was definitely a privilege. Coming back in September for fit testing for the FFP3 masks and finally seeing patients is definitely the highest of highs!

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

Seeing seriously ill patients, who unfortunately were put on the bottom of the waiting list due to new Covid-19 regulations. Although it is not anyone's fault per se, patients who are not attended to early enough might find their symptoms do get much worse. In particular, talking to a cancer patient, who was supposed to have spinal cord surgery in March, has seen irreversible damage and increasing amount of pain. She was only just been treated in September.

How do you think the country coped with the Pandemic?

I was surprised by the unity the country showed as a result of the pandemic. There are countless examples of the selfless nature of individuals throughout this year from sending food to NHS staff to sending face shields to care homes.

How did lockdown affect you?

Indeed! I went through all the phases from making banana bread to Instagram 5k challenges and Zoom pub quizzes... We have only just started being phased back into clinical settings so there is a lot to catch up on in terms of competencies and experiences.

If there will be any form of lockdown, it has been reassuring to know my colleagues and I will be allowed to stay in clinical settings as much as it is possible since we have been granted key worker status by the university.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

I don't think I am particularly qualified to answer that! But I do hope it is soon. Saying that, I do believe that there will be a new normal for a lot of us and it will be incredibly difficult to eradicate the fear and, indeed, the trauma that the virus has caused. At the time of writing, we have just surpassed one million deaths worldwide – ultimately there are many families and friend groups affected by this.

How do you see life after the pandemic?

I think the virus has inspired me in particular to continue pursuing my career. Having a closer look at what was going on, it was incredibly humbling to see the stoic nature of some of these clinicians. With regulations and guidelines being changed literally on a daily basis among other idiosyncrasies not to mention the danger and lack of

information of the virus, doctors, nurses and health care professionals did not stop working. It is an insane privilege to learn from these individuals.

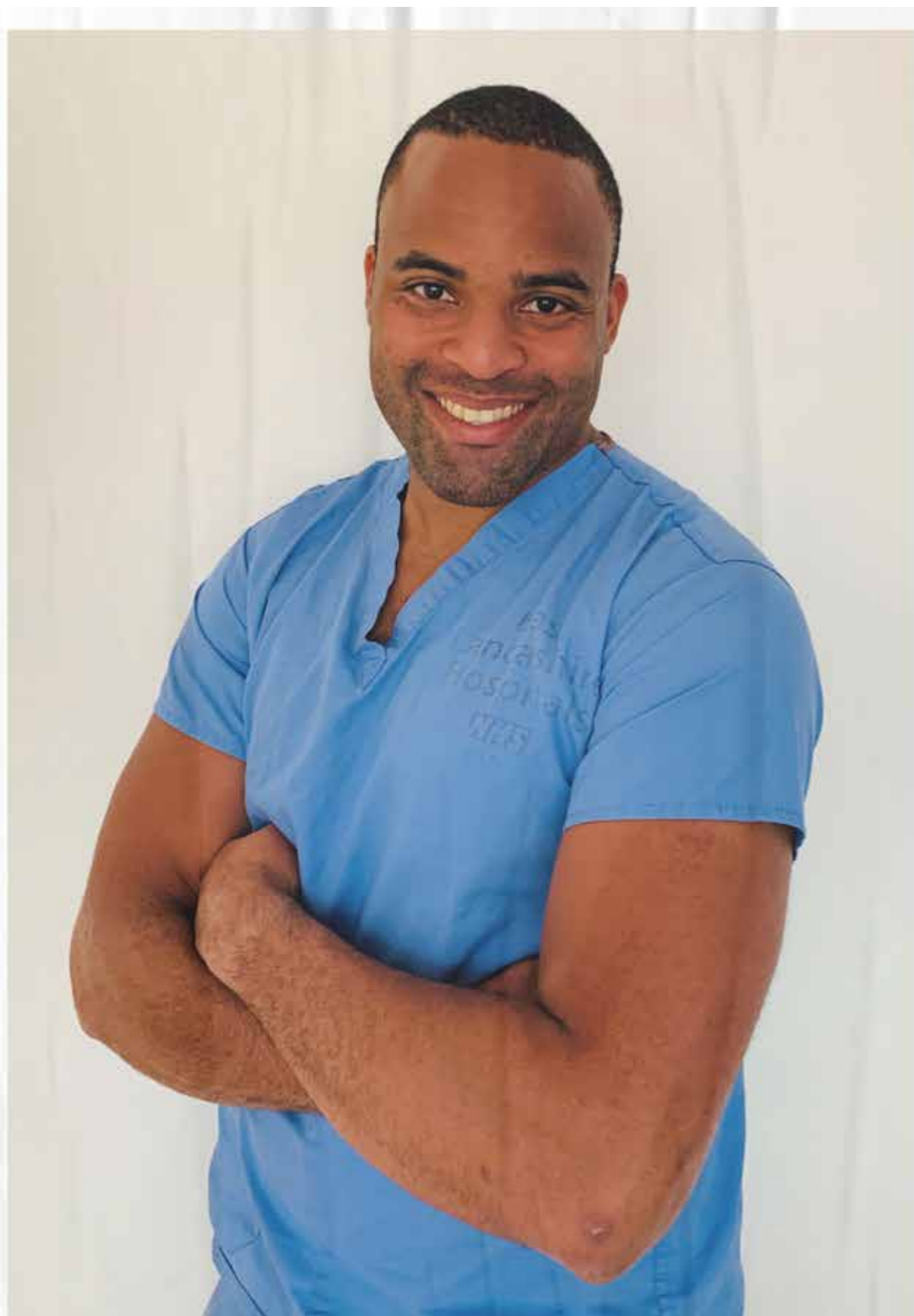
What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

Not seeing my university mates for so long was difficult but it was incredibly nice finally spending time with family.

What do you miss most about MHS?

Oh, definitely the community around you. There's an innate culture at Mill Hill to do your best and always improve led by your friends and teachers around you. You do take for granted seeing some of your mates every day. I also do miss the amount of support the teachers give you – Mr Barron, Mr Saint, Mrs Damberg and Mr Minett among those who influenced me the most!





DR TOBI OPUTA

TRAUMA & ORTHOPEDIC SURGEON
Manchester

"I imagine it might of been a very fun experience if I had been locked down in Burton Bank, with all of my housemates. No classes to go to and creating havoc for my housemaster Mr Luke"

After leaving Mill Hill in 2006 I studied medicine at the University of Leeds. I initially worked in Leeds for two years as a junior doctor then moved to Manchester to complete my training in trauma and orthopaedic surgery.

In the past year I've been working in a very busy trauma department just outside Manchester. Prior to the pandemic I was mainly doing elective hand surgery, and occasionally trauma surgery.

In March, we stopped doing all elective (planned) operations and all of our resources have been focused on trauma surgery and clinics. During the height of lockdown the workload was actually reduced, as everyone was staying at home and having less accidents so not needing emergency operations.

Many of my more junior colleagues were allocated to Covid-19 wards so we have been running the trauma service with reduced staff.

Most of our clinic appointments have been done via telephone, and this has required us to use many novel techniques, such as giving patients removable plaster casts they can take them off themselves at home. We have also been directly triaging patients from A&E, to speed up workflow.

Operating has become much more challenging as we are required to wear full PPE. Many orthopaedic trauma operations are already carried out in a lead gown (As we use x-ray during surgery) so full PPE added onto this can make it very challenging and physically demanding.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

During the height of lockdown there was a genuine sense of fear amongst people to go out and leave the house. It was difficult at times to go into hospital – the highest risk environment – every day, knowing you are going to be exposed to Covid-19, then come

home to your family at the end of the day. We frequently had to assess and treat patients with Covid-19 often with inadequate PPE.

Although you take it in your stride and get on with it, as that's what you're trained to do, there were moments when you do stop and the gravity of the situation hits you. One such moment for me was when one of my surgical colleagues ended up on the intensive care unit.

"There were moments when you do stop and the gravity of the situation hits you"

How do you think the country coped with the Pandemic?

I think it's very easy in hindsight to look back and criticise. I think the government and the NHS got a lot wrong, as evident when you compare our statistics to other countries.

However I think they also got a lot right, also evident when you compare our statistics to other countries. I think in the long run, only time will tell.

As a country overall however I think the response has been great. I worked in the main hospital in Manchester on the night of the terror attacks in 2017. I remember the spirit of coming together and sense of community in the city for the weeks following. The atmosphere in the country in the past few months has been similar.

Seeing all the rainbow flags and thank you signs in the windows as I went for my daily jog, seeing all of the letters and drawings sent from kids posted up around the hospital was really heartwarming and reminds me of why I do this job.

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

I continued to go to work every day. I also made a conscious effort to go for a run every day. My wife has been working from home since March, accompanied by my son who has only just gone back to nursery in the last month.

At times I was grateful that I had the opportunity to go out to work every day. To interact with and see people and to regularly meet and talk to my colleagues many of whom are close friends. So I don't feel as though I was ever really in lockdown, like many other people were.

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

I've had a couple of holidays cancelled, and was unable to see my parents for over six months, but these are so insignificant compared to the problems faced by me.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

If we don't have a second wave or a bad flu season this winter, I think we will be pretty much back to normal by next summer. From a healthcare point of view I think it's going to be much longer.

This is a brand new disease and we are learning so much more about its impacts on all different aspects of healthcare every single day.

I have recently published a paper on the impact of Covid-19 on patients with hip fractures. There are so many similar additions to the medical literature that are definitely going to change the way we practise forever.

Has anything positive come out of the Pandemic?

Yes, I have definitely considered a change in my lifestyle. We put our house up for sale as soon as lockdown ended, And we have now bought a house in a little village in the countryside.



DR MARK SIMMONDS

DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR, MEDICINE. CRITICAL CARE CONSULTANT
Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust

I am an intensive care consultant working clinically about 50 per cent of the time, but am also Divisional Director for Medicine at Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust (NUH), so Covid-19 was a double whammy for me! NUH is one of the largest hospitals in Europe with up to 1000 emergency attendances per day and 1600 beds spread across two campuses. We serve a population of around 1.2 Million and are the Major Trauma and Neuro centre for the East Midlands.

"I think we all learned a lot about ourselves, what is important, and how the crazy expectations of modern life may not actually be necessary to live"

In my clinical role, I was caring for patients on our Covid-19 ICU who were highly complex and many extremely unwell. The challenges of full PPE and strict isolation affected every aspect of normal ICU work and in this new and tricky disease we learnt a lot as time went on. Covid-19 is not a classic pneumonia so our usual treatments and procedures didn't always help. Being unable to talk face to face with relatives was particularly difficult as this is usually a substantial part of my role as a consultant: keeping them informed, understanding and realistic about their loved ones' prognosis and plans. Although our outcomes were good in comparison to other units, our ICU Covid-19 mortality was around 25-30%.

The real challenge though, was my managerial role as Divisional Director for Medicine, which I had only started in February which was impeccable timing! This role is accountable for the work of nine specialities including ED, Geriatrics and Respiratory, all of which were in the forefront of Covid-19 care. I had previously led our Urgent and Emergency Care Directorate through a very difficult winter but to be honest, the middle of March into April remains a bit of a blur for me. We very rapidly had to redesign virtually every aspect of

the hospital to cope with the challenges of Covid-19 whilst maintaining 'normal' services as much as possible. This involved effectively duplicating many hospital services for Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 patients resulting in the need for two EDs, two admission pathways and a rapidly progressing need for inpatient beds.

The response from our staff in this rapidly evolving situation was extraordinary with everyone volunteering to go the extra mile. The sense of camaraderie and collaboration was something I have never witnessed before. I know of many things that we would have done differently in retrospect but I am almightly proud of how Nottingham responded to the Covid-19 crisis. It led to innovations in ICT, systems, processes and patient care in a matter of days that, in normal times would have taken months to implement. We managed to lead the country in the maintenance of cancer care despite the crisis and, although other waiting lists have suffered, our population is getting the urgent, emergency and cancer care that it needs.

The Covid-19 crisis has been a tragedy for many and I believe we will be feeling the negative after effects for many years to come but if you asked me whether our hospital is better now than it was before, I would have to say yes. We have learned more about our capabilities and weaknesses in the last six months that we usually do in five years and made changes (for the better) that we will never go back on.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

Concerns about PPE shortages and an ever changing set of guidelines for its use from the government.

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

I think we all learned a lot about ourselves, what is important, and how the crazy expectations of modern life may not actually be necessary to live.

Was there anything that could have been done differently?

Honestly, I don't think there was one right answer. It is too early to tell whether the UK, Swedish, New Zealand or Korean response was right. I think what we can say is that the US response wasn't.

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

It was odd because I wasn't massively affected by it in comparison to my wife and kids. I got up, went to work, came home, watched Netflix! Not that much different to normal!!!

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

The biggest impact on my personal life was not being able to travel with my family. We were meant to be going to Dubai, Malaysia and Florida this year but that turned into Cornwall, a canal boat and Northern Ireland! Which actually were brilliant and much more relaxing than long haul!

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

Genuinely, we can not sustain this life beyond March next year. Winter is going to be tough, but at some point we are going to have to live with the disease (and its consequences). I am a guinea pig on the Covid-19 vaccine trial and am confident that this will have a profound effect early in the new year.

"Winter is going to be tough, but at some point we are going to have to live with the disease and its consequences"

Are you keen to return to life they way it was before the pandemic, or have you reconsidered a change in your lifestyle or even career as a result of it?

I'll tell you next year!

What do you miss most about MHS?
The extraordinary teachers. I couldn't have done any of this without learning from Mr Brownlee, Mr Luke and Mr Hughes and many others, as well as the early leadership training that being Head of House under Mr Williams gave me. Having said that I also can trace many of the skills I have had to use in recent months back to the compassionate leadership and willingness to break the mould that I learnt from Roger McDuff and Aubrey Haigh at Belmont.



DR OLIVER GALGUT

CARDIOLOGY CLINICAL FELLOW

Jersey General Hospital

"I was always considering a career in ICM, but I think it has definitely become a primary goal. And I will definitely be looking to get more exposure to critically ill patients in the near future"

After finishing A Levels, I spent a year working in the admissions office at Mill Hill and then studied medicine at the University of Southampton. I then moved to Birmingham working as a doctor in two hospitals and at a GP practice.

The last six months have been defined by change. In December I went from easy access to resources working in a hospital to being at the mercy of outpatient waiting lists in GP land. Then in February I went from face-to-face consultation to telephone only consultations. In April I was meant to move to a cardiology job in Solihull Hospital, but was redeployed to up working on the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Heartlands Hospital in Birmingham.

It was very much a trial by fire in a unit running at something approaching triple capacity. Fortunately the department was a welcoming and supportive one, with excellent support from senior trainees and consultants. There was also great camaraderie among the junior members of the team, fostered by the rota which kept the same juniors together for the entire time they were working on ICU.

I really enjoyed my time here, I got to work with a tight knit team of varied professionals, I was learning new skills, and getting a deep insight into Intensive Care Medicine (ICM). Even at our busiest the team were keen to teach and develop our skills.

As things were dying down in Birmingham, I moved to Jersey to start a whole new job as the Cardiology Clinical Fellow. I've only been in the job for two weeks, so I don't have much to say! I would, however, recommend it to any doctors thinking of taking time out, or even as an elective location for medical students.

Was there anything they could have done better or were you impressed by how they handled it?

I'm not sure this is the place to fully dissect what did or did not happen, nor what should or should not have happened, but I can say the contrast with the response in Jersey is stark.

If you want to see how the response in the UK could have been/should become, check out their coronavirus information page.

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

I did not get the full experience of lockdown – I was at work 44 hours a week and half of those hours were overnight. This meant I spent most of my down time asleep, watching TV, or reading, which is what I would have been doing anyway. The main differences I did notice were how quiet my cycle commute became and how difficult it was to get hold of pasta.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

The most difficult part for me was the rota. The unit ran an emergency rota which consisted of three days on followed by three days off then three night shifts followed by a further three days off, and then everything repeats.

That might sound ok (particularly with three days off between each set of shifts), but the frequent changes into and out of night shifts makes it difficult to sleep at any time and deeply damages the quality of any sleep you do get. This leads to accumulating fatigue – which I still think I'm getting over, even three months after it stopped.

How do you think the country coped with the Pandemic?

Poorly.

Are you keen to return to life the way it was before the Pandemic, or have you reconsidered a change in your lifestyle or even career as a result of it?

Two main things come to mind. Firstly this (and the big B-word) have really highlighted how much I took for granted foreign travel, when this is all over maybe I'll get a bit more travelling under my belt. Secondly, I really enjoy ICM – I was always considering a career in ICM, but I think it has definitely become a primary goal. And I will definitely be looking to get more exposure to critically ill patients in the near future.

Has anything positive come out of the Pandemic?

Hard to know now, but I really hope that the idea that you shouldn't be in work if you're ill (crazy we have to remind ourselves of this). And that we should all have paid sick leave (to encourage the former). And that robust public services are built in good times ready for bad times, not constructed or reconfigured on the fly.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

Fortunately, no family members had Covid-19, nor did any have serious financial problems – in fact, my brother has got a new job out of it! The biggest impact I've felt is cancelled summer plans. Jersey takes quarantining new arrivals very seriously so I'm having some trouble getting off island to see loved ones, but I'm aware it could have been so much worse.

I'm not 100% sure we will return back to normal, but any normal we do end up at will probably happen after the coming winter (at the very earliest).

Anything else you'd like to share with us about your experiences?

Wash your hands!



DR PRAMOD ACHAN

CONSULTANT ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON

Barts Health NHS Trust & One Welbeck Orthopaedics

I am a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at Barts Hospital, who specialises in hip and knee surgery, and have been in that role for over fifteen years. I left Mill Hill in 1988 to go straight to medical school at Barts (the oldest hospital in England founded in 1123 AD). Having graduated I completed my surgical training on the Percivall Pott programme passing through Stanmore RNOH, The Royal London Hospital, Great Ormond Street Hospital and the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital along with completing fellowships in New York at NYU Langone and the Hospital for Joint Disease as well as in Queensland Australia. Following my appointment in 2005 I became the chief of service in 2009 and ran the department for eight years making it the biggest orthopaedic department in London with 52 surgeons and a newly appointed Professor. I also ran the training programme which I continue to do today.

Over that period I have had numerous MHS students spend time with me in work experience roles prior to applying to medical school but have also mentored one or two OMs who have chosen orthopaedic surgery as their career. I helped setup and lead the Orthopaedic group at One Welbeck orthopaedics, a state-of-the-art private healthcare facility in the centre of London with an incredible group of clinicians, the largest of any private group in the country.

Then Covid came along – my wife's family live in Hong Kong so we probably became aware of the pandemic before it was considered a serious issue in the UK, but when it did come the implications for me were huge, not just as a 50-year-old male, but in terms of the impact on my service. Orthopaedic surgery is made up of two components, elective (planned surgery) which for me is dealing with sports injuries to the hip and knee and joint replacement surgery for the hip and knee, and emergency surgery (dealing with broken bones after injury).

Personally, I had just given up emergency work after fifteen years at the busiest and biggest major trauma centre in England. When the pandemic came, Italy had shown us that patients got very sick very quickly and in order to give them a chance, the best bet was to ventilate them (use a machine to pump in oxygen and remove carbon dioxide, a function the lungs would normally carry out). The UK had the least number of ventilated

beds per capita of population amongst the bigger European countries and the challenge was how to rapidly increase those numbers. The obvious solution was to stop all planned surgery and so all elective orthopaedic surgery was stopped. We also had to minimise footfall in the hospital setting and so all clinics were stopped and where possible converted to video or phone consultations. This left a number of highly skilled surgeons with nothing to do in an environment where staffing was going to be a problem especially if staff started to catch Covid-19 and get sick. We were very proactive in deciding as a department to open up a service to cater for minor injuries in our clinic area.

"I have had numerous MHS students spend time with me in work experience roles prior to applying to medical school but have also mentored one or two OMs who have chosen orthopaedic surgery as their career"

The A&E department where these cases would normally go, had been taken over for Covid cases and so was a high-risk area, and so we setup a rota covering minor injuries 24/7 and staggered it so there was always cover if one team went off sick. We also had to fight to establish a safe level of PPE for all our staff as the Govt and PHE advice appeared to be driven by availability and managing public panic rather than the safety of health care workers and sadly that approach did result in the loss of a number of gallant and dedicated practitioners across the healthcare space from doctors to nurses, porters to cleaners. Those were the lows during this period, the highs the levels of camaraderie and dedication to caring for our fellow humans. A crisis that puts your own life at risk really brings out the true nature and values of individuals and it gave me immense pride to see my

friends and colleagues selflessly commit to doing the right thing and dedicate themselves to the care of their patients.

I was also asked to help with the setting up of the training at the Nightingale Hospital in the Docklands but once there realised there were far too many excellent educationalists there already and my own skills could be better utilised back at the hospital. In my role as training programme director I had a pastoral role in ensuring the wellbeing and health of my own trainees some of whom were seconded out of their surgical trainee roles to act as nurses on intensive care units. They did this with the dignity and commitment I have come to expect of them and for that and the fact that they never once moaned about it I salute them.

With our facility at One Welbeck, we had a choice to make, when beds were required, do we try and stay open or do we recognise the wider need for society and close down and handover the space to the NHS. For us it was a no brainer and we handed over the entire brand-new facility to the NHS for potential use. Three months in it had not been used at all and private patients were desperately requiring our services. We collectively felt it was improper to continue to accept government funding while the facility remained unused and made another brave and right decision to reopen for private care, doing so before most other facilities were able to, because of the clinician involvement in decision making.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

The hardest part was trying to get adequate PPE for the staff, trying to get the senior management to acknowledge that government advice at times was just not good enough, and then hearing of the avoidable loss of healthcare workers. It was also frustrating when I was unable to help due to childcare issues. My wife is a Consultant Oncologist (Cancer specialist) with an extremely busy practice and with schools closing our two boys had to be looked after. Fortunately their school was extremely supportive and helpful as was our wonderful nanny but nevertheless there were days where I had to bail out of my work commitment and rely on my wonderful colleagues to help out. That came with an element of guilt that only passed once I felt I had repaid the hours lost.



"Without adequate PPE, a silent analogy would be going into battle every day with bullets you can't see"

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

The country coped remarkably well, but that is the fortitude of our nation and its people. The Government on the other hand were shambolic in their management of it and much of it is coming to light in the squandering of contracts in public tender to companies with no experience of the task they were expected to deliver.

Was there anything they could have done better or were you impressed by how they handled it?

We have read about most of this in the press. I think lockdown could have been earlier, border controls tighter, testing quicker and on a much larger scale and the provision of adequate PPE to all workers expected to deal with people was just too slow.

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

We observed lockdown in that we observed it in our household. Both my wife and I developed a routine that was strictly adhered to on return from work. We wore specific clothing and washed this thoroughly as well as showering immediately before hugging the kids. The boys were quite worried at the start of us continuing to go to work but that eased over the days and weeks.

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

It has really made me reflect on my work life balance, my blind commitment to my work and a realisation of our vulnerability. Going to work can mean taking a risk that is so significant that it changes your perspective on what matters to you.

Without adequate PPE, a silent analogy would be going into battle every day with bullets you cant see flying around, and although everyone is willing to do that in a crisis, in the cold light of day it isn't something that I would choose to do with any regularity. I am proud of what my wife, my colleagues and I did but having come through the worst of it, there will have to be a reconsideration of what lies ahead.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

Some things will slowly move back to normal, this isn't the first viral pandemic and is unlikely to be the last, but other never will.

The impact on peoples livelihoods, understanding what really matters to them and is of true value puts things into perspective and that will not be undone. We are likely to see that mindset alongside the impact of a recession and a likely no deal Brexit. Pre Covid-19 normal is some way off I suspect.

Has anything positive come out of the pandemic?

It became an opportunity for forced innovation. Some of that is positive in that we have finally embraced the technology to conduct far more healthcare virtually and from afar.

Equally others have used the opportunity to push local agendas that are not as positive to counter that!

What do you miss most about MHS?

My friends. Ridgeway in my time was a very close-knit family and some of my best friends are still the guys and girls from there (shout out to you all!).

I also miss sport. I played an awful lot of sport at MHS and my time playing hockey and cricket with guys senior and junior to me are some of my most cherished moments. Nothing beats the parks in the summer watching a Hartman or Akpofure or Forde running in while fielding at cover point or standing at the other end while a Younger or Propper smashed it around or a Dell or Bohn or Braham stroked it to all corners.

Sunday house Hockey with Bobby Morgan, Freddy offering you seconds in the dining hall, Biology with Chiltern and Dingle and the odd detention for being cheeky!



DR MAX COUPE-KING

ANAESTHETIST

Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust

"The pandemic has been a massive wake up call to a lot of people. The last 60 years or so has been a period of considerable global stability and my generation has never had to deal with something like this before"

I have been a doctor for five years now, having graduated in 2015. Over that time, I have moved away from where I studied at Guy's hospital in London and completed my foundation jobs in Salisbury and Jersey. I then decided that I wanted to specialise in anaesthetics and have spent the last three years in the South West training in anaesthetics and intensive care. At the beginning of 2020 I was feeling on top of the world, I had recently got married, I was happy that my career was going well and that I was well established in Exeter and comfortable in all aspects of my clinical work.

The pandemic was probably something that we all saw creeping up on us and never really believed would actually happen; senior doctors would recall SARS and MERS coming and going without much disruption and the general feeling was that Covid-19 would be the same. It was around the time that the situation in Italy began to look concerning that changes started to appear at work. Daily email briefings began, wards were cleared and repurposed as 'hot' zones ready to accept incoming coronavirus patients, retraining of all staff began; theatre nurses were trained to work in intensive care, surgeons were re-taught how to provide medical care and to look after ventilated patients.

I remember arriving in the operating theatre complex one Monday morning and finding that all elective surgery was cancelled and that all of the ten operating theatres and recovery areas had been repurposed as extra intensive care capacity. That was when everything started to feel very real and quite scary.

New rotas were created very quickly, and extra staff were in the hospital, night and day and at the weekend. There were benefits; the canteen was open 24

hours a day seven days a week for hot food, car parking at work was a dream, and driving down the empty M5 as the sun set on the way to a night shift had a chilling yet spectacular post-apocalyptic feel to it.

In my free time I volunteered setting up the Exeter Nightingale Hospital. Me and a team of other doctors and nurses worked to set up the Intensive Care bed spaces and ensure that essential ITU equipment was present, safe, and ready for use. It was a really interesting experience getting insight into setting up a field hospital in quick time. I particularly enjoyed working alongside other volunteers from diverse backgrounds from clinicians to hundreds of staff from Network Rail who were also volunteering on days off to help in response to the pandemic. The community spirit was excellent, and everyone approached the huge task with a can-do attitude.

What was the hardest or most frustrating part of your job?

My main role during the peak of the pandemic was providing anaesthetic care to patients in intensive care, those presenting for emergency surgery, or on labour ward, putting in epidurals and anaesthetising for caesarean sections. All practical tasks became incredibly challenging whilst wearing PPE; masks made breathing and communication difficult, visors impeded vision, and several layers of gloves made even simple tasks like putting in a drip a real trial.

However, the systems that had been put in place to keep patients and staff safe and to reduce spread of the virus also meant that we could not allow visitors into the hospital. At the beginning this included birth partners for women giving birth in the hospital and continues to include visitors to people severely unwell

or dying from coronavirus. Speaking to families over the phone, knowing that they can't come in to say goodbye to their loved ones, or be present at the birth of their baby, has been very emotionally challenging.

How do you think the country coped with the pandemic?

I will avoid commenting about the national response but certainly the local response at my hospital in Exeter was excellent at all levels. Daily meetings and emails to all staff ensured that rumour was kept at bay and that everyone knew the state of the hospital. We were lucky in that we had more time to prepare in Devon, so we had good access to PPE from the offset, although I am aware this was not the case elsewhere. Good systems were put in place which stopped a great deal of spread of infection within the hospital, which is one factor that probably stopped us from ever becoming truly overwhelmed.

Was there anything they could have done better or were you impressed by how they handled it?

We can all have an opinion but should remember that everything is much easier with the benefit of hindsight.

Did you experience lockdown and if so, to what extent? How did that impact your work?

I think during the eight weeks when things were at their worst both my wife and I worked most weekends and saw very little of each other. I certainly became quite anxious at the start with a feeling that the virus was closing in from all sides and that we were sure to get very unwell. One of the first critically ill patients we admitted with Covid-19 in Exeter was a young and normally fit adult. It was easy to imagine the face of this young patient replaced with my own, my wives, my friends, or family.

Around that time my mum called me on my way home from the hospital to say that my dad, who I knew had been unwell for around ten days, had significantly deteriorated and was struggling with his breathing, and that she was very worried about him. I had never felt so far away and powerless to help, knowing that if he was admitted to hospital, I would not be able to visit anyway.

I found this period particularly challenging as the intensive care was filling up and it was beginning to look like things were only going to keep getting worse. Thankfully, we were relatively spared in the South West and I can only imagine what it must have been like to work somewhere where things were really busy.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

Fortunately, no family members had Covid-19, nor did any have serious financial problems – in fact, my brother has got a new job out of it! The biggest impact I've felt is cancelled summer plans. Jersey takes quarantining new arrivals very seriously so I'm having some trouble getting off island to see loved ones, but I'm aware it could have been so much worse.

What has been the biggest impact on your personal life and why?

Being able to go to work during the lockdown was a real luxury and I am sure that it would have been far more challenging to stay at home without driving to work to break up the monotony. Not seeing family and friends was a real challenge and this has made me appreciate those I love all the more.

When do you see things returning to 'normal'? Or do you think they never will?

Whilst I am hopeful that the worst of the pandemic in the UK is over, I do have a degree of concern that the coming winter may present a number of challenges to the health service and the general population. I think that we are looking at about three to five years before we have truly put this behind us.

Are you keen to return to life the way it was before the pandemic, or have you reconsidered a change in your lifestyle or even career as a result of it?

The pandemic has probably cemented my career choice. I feel really lucky to be a doctor and to have been able to contribute to the global response

to the pandemic. It has been really wonderful to be part of a team of millions of healthcare workers around the world and I think that the feeling of camaraderie has really grown in the last few months.

The pandemic has been a massive wake up call to a lot of people. The last 60 years or so has been a period of considerable global stability and my generation has never had to deal with something like this before. The pandemic has shown us that we cannot take our lives for granted. For me this means spending more time doing things I enjoy and spending time with the people I love.

Has anything positive come out of the pandemic?

Staff in hospitals have been empowered to make decisions in the interest of patients without the usual reams of bureaucracy. Hopefully the benefits of this will continue beyond the pandemic. Nurses, doctors, and all those working in healthcare have been shown appreciation by the country and we can hope that nurses in particular will see some kind of financial reward.

There have also been some really heart-warming stories of communities coming together, neighbours helping each other

however they can. It would be nice to see this kind of community spirit continue beyond the pandemic.

My parents both tested positive for coronavirus antibodies showing that they had indeed had the virus when they were unwell in March. I am very happy to say that they recovered fully and that I am very proud of my dad who has been donating his plasma every two weeks to be used to treat people critically ill with Covid-19.

What do you miss most about MHS?

It is strange to think that I left Mill Hill eleven years ago now, the time has really flown. I had a really wonderful five years there and Mill Hill will always be a very special place to me.

I loved my time at the school and made some really amazing friends there, we are still a very close-knit group and some of my best friends are Old Millhillians.

During the pandemic we 'met up' as a group weekly over Zoom so that we were probably seeing much more of each other than normal. Seeing my friends, even through a screen, really helped keep me sane when times were getting tough.



Exeter Nightingale Hospital



Photo Credit: Graeme Turner, MHS Master 2000 - Present.

OMs IN LOCKDOWN

EUROPE

AUSTRIA

PAUL EICHMULLER
BURTON BANK 2013-2014
VIENNA – AUGUST 2020

The Austrian government reacted fairly quickly, first closing down all universities, then schools and in the end, the whole country was shut down with only essential facilities like supermarkets kept open. This process happened in mid-March and it only took about a week between universities closing and the full-scale lockdown. At the time I would FaceTime close friends in Britain and they could not believe the severity of the measurements, as it was still business as usual in the UK. The fact that the Austrian government reacted so quickly is probably the reason why both the number of infections and the death toll has remained comparatively low.

As the Austrian government had to react quickly, the legal base for the lockdown was not perfect. The Covid Ordinance, specifying the details of the lockdown, was based with the Austrian Epidemic Act which allows the government to limit access to ‘specific places’. However, the Covid Ordinance forbade access to ‘the public domain’ in general – albeit with wide exceptions (work, essential shopping, but also individual sports or walking). This led to the Covid Ordinance and all fines issued based on it being quashed by Austrian courts. Although these court proceedings only took place after the lockdown was eased, it caused massive controversy and had a lasting negative effect on the trust in the government.

Personally, I was impressed with the rigour with which the government enacted the lockdown in spite of the resistance of the Austrian economy, but also by the early easing of the lockdown already in mid-April with non-essential shops reopening. Once again, friends in Britain could not believe we were

allowed to go for a pint to the pub in mid-May.

In Austria, the lockdown rules always allowed us to go out for a walk and catch some fresh air, so the situation was not too bad considering how strict the measures were in other countries. Nevertheless, it was a strange feeling to work and study only from home – to such an extent that grocery shopping became the ‘highlight of the week’, as it was a change of environment. Naturally, it is hard not to see family and friends for such a long time, but also losing some hobbies that are very dear to me has been difficult. Normally, I would spend a lot of time singing in a semi-professional choir. Yet, due to the pandemic, singing was made virtually impossible. The reason why this had such an enormous impact, is because for choirs, Covid it is the gift that keeps on giving. Most other aspects of life have either reverted to (almost) normal or are in the process of doing so, but for choirs there is still no prospect for a return to choir practice and concerts due to the increased infection risk, even long after the lockdown has ended.

I suppose that that the earliest when we can return to some form of a ‘normal normal’ as opposed to the much proclaimed ‘new normal’ will be way into 2022. Next year will still be shaped by the virus. I am very confident though that – with some exceptions such as more distance working and studying – things will revert back to how they used to be, a trend we already experienced when the lockdown was relaxed.

The experience of lockdown made me realise how important social and particularly cultural events were to me

and to society as a whole. Thus, I have not only decided to return to the state before, but rather to go to concerts, theatres, lectures and other events more often and support these severely damaged industries as soon as it is safe to return. Additionally, I have realised that one doesn’t have to travel that far to see interesting and inspiring places, so I plan to explore Austria and the regions surrounding it in the future – Britain of course being the exception.

One of the fondest memories I have of MHS – although I am fairly certain that I did not enjoy it as much at the time – are the hundreds of hours in morning registration with my tutor group. All of us used to come in half asleep to an (almost) always joyful Mr Slade with the Heart Radio breakfast programme playing in the background. As we slowly woke up to the same songs every day, we then fooled around a bit, but registration really helped us to get ready for the day.



BULGARIA

STAN YANEVSKI
RIDGEWAY 1999-2005
SOFIA, BULGARIA – AUGUST 2020

Bulgaria was one of the first countries to enter lockdown, implementing all of the recommended WHO precautions list to follow. Only pharmacies, food stores and the churches remained open. As everyone was caught by surprise there was a shortage of masks, disinfectants and similarly to the rest of the world, people stockpiled groceries and toilet paper.

The media could have acted better by not instilling fear into the population with constant communication about deaths, deathbeds, death bags etc. Reporting was often contradictory and changed from one day to the next: “this is only a normal seasonal virus and there is nothing to worry or panic about” or “this is a deadly virus, lots of people will die!”

I was impressed by the discipline of people, especially the younger generation. The elderly however refused to comply: “I’ve lived through x y z, I’m not going to be afraid of some virus”. A number of people are now suffering with panic attacks and mental health issues as a result of it, not helped by the frequent misinformation available.

I was injured for over two months of lockdown and most of my experience was spent in pain and watching the news. Once I got back to my feet I was surprised to see the fear and stress on the streets. It felt post-apocalyptic with everyone wearing masks.

The biggest impact for me was restricted opportunities for work. My job as an actor requires me to travel and this restriction has led to a loss in business and a reduced income. I wonder how necessary this all is? Experts that I know suggest otherwise.

According to rumours we should be back to normal by summer 2021. I believe Russia has already come up with a vaccine and is starting to vaccinate its population. Soon the whole world will have access to “the cure”. There are so many theories: it will take years for the truth behind COVID-19 to emerge. I read an article published over 10 years ago predicting something like this. Perhaps Bulgaria has previously been exposed to a similar virus giving us protection? This might explain the low rate of infection here.

I have always lived a very sporty and healthy lifestyle. Pre-pandemic I built myself a home gym having previously caught a winter virus that left me exhausted. I have not changed my lifestyle really – a virus is like any other virus - and won’t change me as long as things go back to normal. Due to my job in acting, hygiene products are not new to me. If we were to panic and change the way we lived every time we got sick or sneezed we’d go crazy.

Believe it or not I often dream about MHS. I was head of Ridgeway House and left a big part of my heart there. My pupils, my house, my team achieved something that is rarely seen. We were working together on all levels like a reactive engine. We were unstoppable both academically and when it came to sports. Everyone from Fourth Form and up all the way Upper Sixth worked as equals together the House. I miss my boys and girls. I miss the fun we used to have, the gatherings in my room, all the talks and discussions. The team spirit, even the 10-mile cup training at night. I’m not sure if this keeps going on until today but I was the one who introduced training after the first prep time. I started

going out running, doing push ups and sit ups on the rugby field to prepare myself as captain of the 10 mile cup team and slowly managed to get the whole house interested. Of course this had the domino effect and Burton Bank together with Collinson House soon joined. Mill Hill School is special and I believe has left a solid mark in many of us.

What I’d like to share about covid-19 is people please stop believing everything you see in the media. Use the statistics and information that is out there and do some calculations. When you look at the numbers from a different perspective, things start to take a very different form and shape. Also, the more we as humans are informed about everything that surrounds us the more we will know about life. One last thing I would like to say is – what would you rather be, the wolf or the sheep? The choice is yours!



STAN YANEVSKI



Photo Credit: OM, Richard James, Prague Square

CZECH REPUBLIC

RICHARD JAMES
WINTERSTOKE 1983-1987
PRAGUE - AUGUST 2020

The Czech Republic dealt with the pandemic quickly. Wearing of masks was mandatory from late March, most shops closed immediately (except supermarkets and petrol stations). Some villages were sectioned off to prevent spreading of the virus.

Borders were closed with Germany, Austria, Poland and Slovakia. Even newsreaders wore masks!

Luckily I work from my home music studio, so my personal working life was totally unaffected by lockdown. Nevertheless, the absence of travel and socialising was difficult. Fortunately, lockdown happened in spring and there's always lots of

gardening to keep me busy. Nevertheless, life did feel different. I think children are going to find it difficult to go back to school. The biggest impact on my life was the simple restriction of travel and therefore not being able to see my family face-to-face.

The country did ease Lockdown slowly. It was actually very nice to be in Prague without thousands of appalling tourists. Mask wearing may be reintroduced in September.

Recently, it has felt like life is returning to normal (even though we know it's not the case).

If I'm honest my lifestyle hasn't changed as a result of the pandemic. I can travel now, but visiting relations in the UK is potentially risky for both parties. In speaking to friends and family in various countries, there's definitely been an impact, particularly for those who are isolated and alone. There are a number of things I miss about Mill Hill. I enjoyed certain aspects, like the CCF, some sports, friends etc. What was called the Old Gym at the time had long-forgotten relics of an earlier age, like wooden panels listing the schools boxing champions, and the old CCF office still had the faint echoes of the British Empire with flags and drums. It would be nice to revisit those in exploring the history of MHS. I liked the library,

although all the best books were locked up and never taken out. I remember finding a heap of discarded old MHS annuals in the Murray Scriptorium. I did hear years later that some notable first editions were also found there. I used the phone in the Murray Scriptorium to call NASA and JPL.

Looking back, however, there were many aspects which were well below standard (especially given the level of fees involved). Notably the very archaic living quarters and some rather uninspiring teaching staff employed at the time (there were notable exceptions of course). The grounds in MHS were always fantastic – probably lost on most pupils of course.



Picture Credit: OM Jamie Davies, Priestley 2012-17, Theatreland, Shaftsbury Avenue

ENGLAND

MARCUS ANSLEM
MURRAY 1986-1991
LONDON – SEPTEMBER 2020

London was in lockdown from March, overnight we were all working from home, kids learning from home, not mixing households, not going out other than to shop once a week.

Pretty much confined to the house and garden for several months. Hindsight is 20/20 vision and it's easy to criticise the decisions made, but unprecedented times call for unprecedented actions and I certainly wouldn't have liked to have been the CEO of the UK the last few months. I work in the Mergers & Acquisitions world and life at my firm

is usually pretty full on. The biggest impact of the pandemic from a work perspective was definitely less interaction with people and not being on so many planes. In a 'normal' working environment, I would be frequently meeting people for meals, meetings and travelling; suddenly all of that just stopped. Although it was nice not travelling so much, interacting with people over Zoom and Teams just doesn't cut it for me. It's no substitution for face-to-face engagement and that little bit of extra magic you get through physical meetings. It is very hard to

build new relationships with people and clients online. From a personal perspective, spending more time with the family was great. Instead of getting home at 8pm or 9pm during the week (and eating dinner late) when most of my kids are asleep, I have had the opportunity to eat early (much healthier) and be with them virtually every evening.

This part of the lockdown experience was memorable for all the right reasons. I think there will be a 'new normal' where people travel less for meetings, but still travel and where people go to the office

less, but still go to the office. In time, I'd expect there to be queues at Heathrow again and full planes (albeit less of them in the air at any one time), but that we'll all think twice about whether we need to fly for that one meeting and equally on days where we don't have meetings. I expect people will be quicker and more willing to work from home. My money is on this happening during 2022.

If I could keep everything the way it was before Covid-19 arrived, but be home every night at 7pm and fly a lot less, I'd take that. Ultimately, I'd like to get back

to a place where my home is my home and my office is my office and there is a separation between the two.

But, I will definitely be more open to working from home and to having members of our team working at home. The pandemic has showed me that you do need to physically be with your team to get that buzz and benefit from group thinking but equally, time apart is important to give you space and to actually get your head down and get work done.

LONDON

CAPTURED BY OLD MILLHILLIANS



Do not travel unless it is essential
Visit tfl.gov.uk

Minimum



Please keep
your distance

For your safety and
the safety of
our staff

56

MAYOR OF LONDON



TRANSPORT
FOR LONDON

57





Photo Credit: OM Windsor Roberts, Biarritz Beach, October 2020

GREECE

LEE NIKOLAIDIS
BURTON BANK 1979-1984
ATHENS – AUGUST 2020

Greece coped with the pandemic very well. It was contained quite efficiently and people followed the rules. Having got used to the tough years of the financial crisis (which had just ended), the government and the people showed resilience and responsibility, thus keeping the amount of cases very low. That said, cases are up in August due to youngsters partying but once schools/universities return, it should return to low levels. Overall it was handled well, although the scaremongering and tone should have been more encouraging and reassuring.

Generally, I am not a big fan of how governments manage many things, even at the best of times. I am sure that many things can be said, but I will just mention one. As a teacher I was amazed at how much work school pupils were given during the lockdown. More than before. Unrealistic expectations (from parents too), excessive homework especially with primary school children. Spending

so much time in front of a laptop in online classes was unhealthy. There should have been less of the above and more promotion of healthier activity, physical exercise and social skills all round.

I experienced lockdown with my family, a seven year old child and it was very hard trying to explain to him the logic behind the fact that he could not be with or hug any of his friends or family outside of our home. All our work (my wife and I are teachers), and our son's had to be done at home, in front of a laptop. Not pleasant. To go out, we had to fill out or text a form, stating our business. I made sure that I took my son out for at least 90 minutes of physical exercise per day. We disconnected our car batteries too...it was very limiting, not nice!

It all was and still is unpleasant, however we bonded more as a family, which was good. On the other hand, it was very

restrictive since we could not travel back to the UK at Easter to visit family, nor to the USA during the summer to work (something we have been doing for over 20 years during the summer months). The latter had a big impact as it also involved loss of earnings. The big positive that we got from it all was that we were able to take a month off (as teachers) and travel around Greece for its entirety with our young son to see many places we had not seen as a result of our normally very busy lifestyle. That had a healing quality. Being unplugged has been very beneficial.

However, I am most definitely keen to return to normality. I suppose the biggest change is that I will appreciate everything a lot more and be happier with all the things I took for granted in the past.

I do miss MHS. The camaraderie, the togetherness and bond we all shared, teachers and pupils alike. Irreplaceable!

FRANCE

WINDSOR ROBERTS
COLLINSON 1979-1985
BIARRITZ – AUGUST 2020

France went into lockdown before the UK with schools, restaurants and bars closing and only being able to travel within 1km of your own home. We had to carry documentation stating why we had left our homes (shopping, medical urgency, exercise etc). I think this was all that could have been done.

I feel that travel restrictions were lifted far too quickly as, living in a tourist attraction, the levels of Covid-19 cases have increased significantly since the holidays started. I also think the French do not adhere to rules as well as most countries...this is probably a 'latin' thing but it amazed me that people ignored the rules when it suited them.

I was impressed by how the French, when confronted with something we have never experienced before, reacted quickly and effectively and put people's health over economic issues.

I also genuinely enjoyed lockdown; for me it was great, (I hate to say it), however we live in a nice house with plenty of room, a garden and the weather was hot so my daughters did their school work in the mornings and sunbathed in the afternoons. Spending so much time with them was wonderful as being sixteen and eighteen, I normally don't see a huge amount of them! I addition to the family time, Covid-19 has been a significant benefit to my

business, although, I dislike stating positives when so many have suffered.

I work from home and travel back to the UK frequently, I have enjoyed not having to do that, however, I would like the normality of sports to return and to be able to not have to wear masks when leaving the house (Biarritz has rules about having to wear a mask when outside your own property).

I think it will take years to get back to doing what we used to do without restrictions however there have been significant improvements in many areas such as home working etc. Normal? What is normal anymore?

Photo Credit: OM Windsor Roberts with daughters Elise and Bea, rugby match in Biarritz



HUNGARY

SZONJA PORKOLAB
COLLINSON 2007-2010
BUDAPEST - AUGUST 2020

I think Hungary coped quite admirably during spring when Covid-19 hit our country. Hungary closed its borders as soon as people started becoming infected. Our government had some great ideas when it came to helping the people. For example digital education was introduced in schools for children and at universities. Elderly people had shopping time frames, they could go shopping from 6 - 9am when younger people were not allowed in the shops, parking was free on the streets; clubs, bars and most restaurant were closed and of course we had to wear masks everywhere we went. Most workplaces closed their offices and sent their employees home to work. We were told to stay inside and only go out if we must.

Thanks to these restrictive measures, the number of cases were low. In addition, the government introduced the debt repayment moratorium until the end of December. Just recently this debt repayment moratorium was extended for another six months after December.

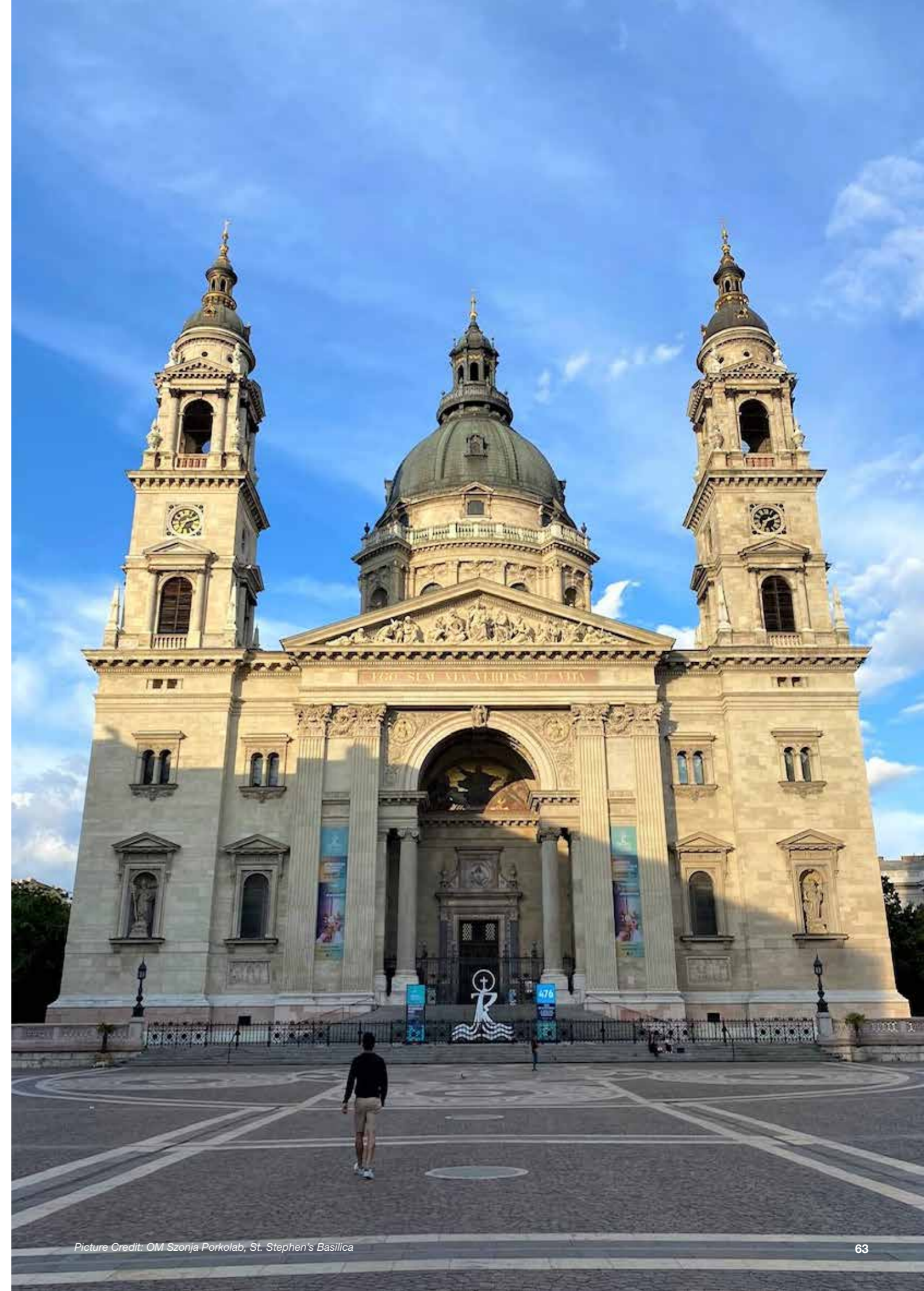
Lockdown was not as bad as in Italy for example. We didn't really have a proper lockdown we were just advised to stay at home and only go out if we needed food or medicine.

Thankfully, I did not experience any negative impacts of Covid-19. I did not lose my job, my salary was not reduced, I did not catch the virus and nor did my family. I actually enjoyed life slowing down a little bit and enjoyed

doing things that I would not have done before. I went to play tennis instead of the gym, I went hiking, went running in the nearby forest etc. I am definitely not keen on returning to the office. I have been working in the home office since March and I am much happier.

I think things won't return to normal until there is a vaccine. Hungary is experiencing the second wave of the virus and things are getting worse and worse with more cases every day. I am sure this will go on until there is a vaccine that provides protection.

I miss the people most who I used to be friends with in Mill Hill School.



Picture Credit: OM Szonja Porkolab, St. Stephen's Basilica



Photo Credit: OM Matilda Gannon, Weymouth 2013-16, Westport County Mayo, July 2020

IRELAND

ADRIAN FLAVIN
SCHOOL HOUSE 1995-1997
MAYNOOTH, COUNTY KILDARE – AUGUST 2020

I retired from playing Rugby in 2013 and I moved to Maynooth from Galway with my wife and two sons to take up my role as Director of Rugby at St Vincent's Castleknock College, Dublin.

There was a lockdown of the Schools on 12th March and they have been off since then returning early September.

All restaurants, bars and sporting events were also closed or cancelled shortly after and have been on a gradual phased reopening recently.

In any situation there is always something that could have been done better. The buy in from the people around the Country has generally been very good and guidelines - whilst frustrating at times - have largely been adhered to.

My sons were homeschooled by my wife and I for three months. All sporting events were cancelled which meant no Rugby for Schools or Clubs at the weekend so I had to find other things to fill my time with! Not being able to see my family in England has been tough, although FaceTime has been a very welcome substitute.

As well as the opportunity to spend some quality with my own family, the enforced break was a good opportunity to take stock and identify what is actually important in life. Although face to face interaction is important, working from home was also a viable option for a lot of people.

To coin a phrase, I think we will have a 'new normal' for a while until there is a vaccine or cure found. I'm a eternal

optimist so I would hope that we will return to how things were before the pandemic, at least socially anyway. I'm hoping for a new normal where people are a lot more grateful for what they have as opposed to what they don't have and where people look out for other people a lot more rather than focusing on 'the next big thing'.

I absolutely loved my time at MHS and I have some of my happiest memories from my time there. The people, the School grounds, the Rugby, the staff, my fellow students and the mischief we got up to was certainly an incredibly happy time. A bonus of lockdown was reaching out and getting in touch with old friends that I hadn't spoken to in some time and I hope that everyone reading this is safe and well. Feel free to contact me on social media!



Photo Credit: OM Nigel Moran, Piazza Signoria, Florence July 2020

ITALY

NIGEL MORAN
SCHOOL HOUSE 1982-1984
TUSCANY – AUGUST 2020

Generally we coped fairly well, we definitely feel we are safer here than in the UK. The local council distributed masks, shops employed security guards to encourage the mandatory use of PPI, but it was done politely.

We were confined to our property unless for essential journeys, e.g. shopping once per week (only one member of the family) and medical emergencies.

Masks and gloves were mandatory when out and about. We had to carry a self-declaration so that the reason for your

journey could be checked by the police. You may have seen Italians singing to their neighbours from balconies, and young girls playing tennis from roof to roof. The Italians "always find a way". The main aspect was clarity of information coming from the Health Ministry. We were never in any doubt as to what to do, or how to behave.

I do feel however that effecting the lock-down of Lombardia (North of Italy), earlier, before making the press release would have prevented some of the spread of the virus that came South

I struggled with the cancellation of work engagements initially, currently my work is now 'virtual' (online lectures), we do not expect a return to Face to Face lecturing for some time and I suspect that the future will be a blend of the two methods of delivery.

I do miss being able to move around without a mask, to shake hands, to embrace friends would also be good. But to now go to an office for a meeting I can have via video conferencing...why?



Photo Credit: OM Nigel Moran, The Duomo Cathedral, Florence



Photo Credit: OM Nigel Moran, Piazza Signoria, Florence

JERSEY

WILL KAYE
BURTON BANK 2014-2016
ST BRELADE – JULY 2020

I really don't think there was a better place to be for lockdown especially within the British Isles. I was still able to get out, swim and play golf with my family throughout the whole of lockdown. Although when I returned home from university in the UK, I had to have a fourteen day quarantine in my room which wasn't fun whilst my parents and brother were living the life in the sun!

With very few cases and limited deaths on the Island the lockdown was released much earlier than in England and it was never quite as severe. On the whole I think they have dealt with it well especially now as they are on a level of lockdown which is back to life, much as normal.

They did build the Nightingale Hospital which was never occupied by a single

patient which seems like a huge waste of money. Other than that I think they did well to open the borders as early as they did and have so few cases coming onto the island, especially important with such an elderly population.

I graduated during the pandemic and I have still managed to come out of University with a 2:1 in Economics with Geography. To my surprise, I also managed to secure a job in the middle of lockdown that I have just recently started in the City of London.

But the principal challenges others have struggled with I have overcome quite well. The biggest test, as many others of my age was a lack of social contact and events which I struggled with at the start. Now everything is relaxing it is much easier.

I really hope by next summer we will have a vaccine and be back to normal. Before then I'm not expecting much really but enjoying being able to work from home half of every week while still getting that human contact in the office.

I look forward to going out and having fun again. It would be appreciated not to have to stand two meters apart and be seated the whole time. Although at times I have liked the slower pace of life, I'm looking forward to it speeding up again.

Thinking back to Mill Hill, I feel that being surrounded by people of all walks of life and cultures is something I miss. Having lived in Jersey until I was sixteen, I really learnt a lot from the whole experience.

NETHERLANDS

BEN HARTMAN
McCLURE 1982-1987
AMSTERDAM - AUGUST 2020

Amsterdam quickly implemented working from home and two meter social distancing everywhere, and the infection rates fell quickly. In fact it went so well that the public have recently become a bit lazy and almost forgot about Covid-19. The Dutch being the practical people they are used the time with everyone at home to carry out lots of road works etc, which was smart. Although a lack of masks has consequently meant the rates have gone back up, and new restrictions implemented again.

Lockdown was pretty relaxed here. I went to the supermarket with a mask (lots didn't wear masks), I still saw friends at a distance, I ran and exercised in the parks, cycled wherever I needed to. I even went into the office occasionally.

I feel very lucky to have been locked-down in Amsterdam rather than say, London.

But that's just thanks to the same things that make it such a wonderful, relaxing place to live in the first place. It's small, flat, and beautiful and you have the freedom to cycle anywhere without fear of contamination. So you actually never really feel locked down. Whereas in London and other major cities, you can go for a walk around the block, but anything else becomes a mission, either by car or the worries of public transport.

Soho House Amsterdam was closed for two to three months, which was a bit of a pain as it's a place I frequent. I had no gym, no steam room, no screening room. But then again, I'm single and don't have kids to worry about. Oh, it seemed a bit harder to date on Tinder for a while too ;)

I'm not sure if things will return to normal. Most people think it's fast-forwarded everything to online, including working from home. But then you may find there's a backlash and people

suddenly remember the importance of human interaction. In terms of the next few years, I estimate people in Amsterdam will go back to work at the office more often than not because they can cycle there and don't have to worry about standing on top of each other on public transport.

As a freelancer I was used to working from home or work-spaces anyway, so from a work perspective, the pandemic didn't have a huge impact. I'm very keen however that every other aspect of life returns to pre-covid. For instance I'm missing the OMs golf meeting in Deal this September because of the quarantine rules on flying to the UK from the Netherlands. I haven't seen my parents since February.

No one knows exactly what the future holds until we know more about this disease and if it can be controlled with a vaccine.

PORTUGAL

SIMONE GAROFALO
SCHOOL HOUSE 1989-1994
CASCAIS - AUGUST 2020

Portugal is a relatively small country with a delicate economy as a result it was fearful of realising the effects of the pandemic due to the inherent consequences however once it became clear that it was inevitable they went to inordinate lengths.

There was a great spirit of political and social unity, with the young checking on the old and many contributing towards food banks. However, it is my belief that the opening of the borders should have been delayed further.

Lockdown here last roughly eight weeks, with assessment checks at most junctions. If you were out in a car it was necessary to have a valid reason

otherwise you were asked to return home, the only legal reasons for being out of the house was; shopping, dog walking and exercise.

I mostly work remotely with offices in San Francisco and Seoul therefore I am used to travelling every couple of weeks, this is the longest period in my life that I've gone without travelling. I would say that on the whole my life has been better for lockdown.

Although there's been a downturn in business, it has allowed me to spend time with my family (both near and far) and also to focus on time at home rather than always thinking of some point in the future.

It has allowed me to live in the here and now. I hope life is changed forever, with our focus on society and nature being long-term. I am hopeful society will no longer have an attachment to myopic experiences; weekend transfers, intraday flights for meetings, quick dip and flip of a house. The pandemic has given us an opportunity to re-evaluate and allow nature to breathe, I believe this should be capitalised upon to spend longer and more valuable time with what you have to hand. I have discovered that my desire to travel further afield has been seriously diminished.

I do miss MHS in the autumn, the colours and hearing all my class mates stories from the Summer!

SERBIA

IGOR ZOKIC
COLLINSON 1991-1997
BELGRADE - AUGUST 2020

Serbia, during the first peak of the first wave imposed a curfew from 5pm to 6am in the morning and an all-day curfew during weekends and public holidays. There was a 24h curfew for elderly over the age of 65. No intercity bus and rail travel, cancelation of public transport in the cities, border closing, airports shut down, emergency airlifts for Serbian citizens wishing to return to the country, closing down all stores except grocery, pharmacies and petrol stations, restaurants (only delivery available), cinemas, theatres and such, limiting the number of people present inside stores, mandatory masks inside.

The measures were being eased from the beginning of May. Grocery stores, shopping centres and restaurants gradually opened and even football matches with supporters were held. Not

to mention the general election! Shortly after the election, there was a second peak and the government wanted to impose a curfew again which sparked protests and even clashes of protesters and police on the streets of Belgrade and other cities across Serbia.

The government gave up on the curfew but re imposed mandatory masks inside stores, public transport, buses and rail, shopping centres. All stores to close by 9pm, all restaurants and bars to close by 11pm, cinemas and theatres remained closed.

I believe far more testing was needed, the curfew imposed was pointless as during the day parks, favourite walking grounds by the rivers and streets were overflowing with people, and elderly people over the age of 65 were

pointlessly closed down 24 hours a day. The curfew impacted on me as I felt trapped and working from home I found demotivating. Personally, I was not impressed and even felt that certain measures were imposed for political gain by the government to exploit in the upcoming general election.

I think a return to normal is only possible if a vaccine is developed. It seems that collective immunity is not possible to achieve as it appears you might be able to catch it again.

I am very keen to return back to normal but it seems that will never be the case. Although the pandemic is making us close down for health reasons, it seems that the recession that will follow will affect us even more.



L-R: Ben Hartman, Igor Zokic, Simone Garofalo



SWEDEN

SIMON PARRISH
MHS 2000 -2010
STOCKHOLM – AUGUST 2020

Here in Stockholm, we began to feel the effects of the crisis on the back of the February half-term which was in week nine. Many Swedes typically go abroad skiing at this time, and many returned from Italy which turned out to be one of the early hot spots for the Coronavirus in Europe. At this stage the Government urged people returning from the northern regions of Italy to self-isolate. I remember a few members of my class doing this but it became clear later on that not enough had heeded the Government's advice. The Government later was criticised for not closing down incoming flights from hot-spot areas quickly enough and the real problem

came when they were slow to protect the care homes where most of the serious (deadly) cases were to evolve. The crisis was most noticeable between weeks ten to fourteen at the school I teach at. During these weeks we probably had up to a third of students and a third of teachers absent – either due to illness or because some were taking precautions. These were the toughest weeks for two reasons. Firstly, those of us who weren't sick were having to cover a lot of lessons and secondly, many were anxious that Sweden was perhaps not doing enough to get to grips with the spread of the virus as country after country

initiated full lockdowns. Almost 50 per cent of teachers in our school hail from countries like the UK, Australia, Canada and the US, many of whom no doubt had families going into full lockdown so it was rather unnerving to be in a situation which seemed to be almost like 'business as usual'. Of course life in Sweden was very far from business as usual (as your data for the economic slowdown proves) but for those of us working in schools it very much felt like it.

The advice from the authorities for those with any flu-like symptoms had initially been two weeks of isolation for every

family member, even if they weren't sick, but this very quickly changed to 'back to school' if you were symptom free for just 48 hours. I had colleagues who got sick (presumably from Coronavirus but since there hadn't been any widespread testing at that stage one never fully knew), self-isolated and then returned to work after two days with no symptoms.

As a school we discussed the changing climate almost daily. We gave the students a study day so that us teachers could work on preparing for distance learning, were this eventuality ever come to pass under a potential lockdown. It never did. But all school trips were cancelled as were exams and after-school activities. We deployed other social distancing measures in school as best we could, such as by spreading the students' desks in the classroom, limiting the number of students going into the canteen at the same time, and encouraging the students not to touch

or grapple each other, as they tend to do. In reality, it is almost impossible to oversee stringent social distancing measures in a school. I understand that other schools in the country suffered similar staff shortages and many students were pooled into classes where they could be supervised but not necessarily taught. Thankfully, this did not happen in our school but as I said, we all had to put in a tremendous effort to ensure that the children's education could continue to take place.

But as time went by, I think more and more us reached the conclusion that it had indeed been the right decision to not close schools, particularly now when we read the controversy facing governments in the UK and US, for example, who have to justify that it is safe enough to reopen schools when a few months ago it was deemed too dangerous.

It did not seem that the students were

unduly worried by the crisis. If they were, or if their parents were, they tended to stay at home and they were not penalised for doing so by the authorities. Most returned after the Easter holidays and student and teacher numbers returned to almost normal. We continued to set work for those who had to (or opted to) work from home right up until the end of the academic year in the middle of June.

At this time the Swedish government relaxed the rules on how far one was allowed to travel around the country, no doubt to allow families to escape to their summer houses and remote cabins. Imagine the uproar if they hadn't!!

Now, as the summer holidays have drawn to a close, the plan is for all schools (including gymnasiums) to open more or less as normal. Indeed, today was my first day back for staff training and there was not even a single mention of Covid 19, which I must admit was rather alarming given that we are a staff body of almost 80 and we congregated in the same room for hours with little attention to social distancing. It almost feels like people in authority are loath to tell people what to do, but as you hinted at, Swedes do tend to conform to government advice and social norms a little more readily than perhaps us Anglo-Saxons do...

I think what Sweden has been able to achieve, through constant dialogue and the following of central advice, is a sense of cautious normalcy. Work from home if you can, avoid public transport, keep your distance in public places, don't socialise with elderly relatives but carry on your business, go to school but stay home if you are sick. It seems that most, but by no means all, are following this advice, and I imagine this is the way it will continue.

Unfortunately, the numbers in Sweden have been comparatively high (compared to our Scandinavian neighbours) preventing many of us from visiting families in the UK or US unless we are prepared to self-quarantine for two weeks first. I guess the proof will be in the pudding when the new academic year kicks off in Europe and around the world and we might learn which countries are better placed to deal with a potential second wave. But for now, a trip to visit friends and family in London still seems some way off.



Photo Credit: Ex MHS Master, Andy Luke, an empty Angkor Wat

OMs IN LOCKDOWN

REST OF THE WORLD



Photo Credit: Steph Smith, St Kilda Pier

“Whilst the first lockdown was significant, since June, life in Melbourne has been classified as the longest, most extensive, lockdown in the world”

pack up Mill Hill life much more quickly than anticipated. I was already preparing for a huge life change, so in many ways the lockdown in Melbourne was just a new version of normality I quickly settled in to. The biggest impact on my life has been leaving Mill Hill, which was undoubtedly one of the most difficult decisions of my life.

The Victorian Premier regularly discusses the concept of a ‘new normal.’ At this stage, after so long without much freedom, I don’t remember much about my old perception of ‘normal.’ As time has passed, I’ve come to realise that life this way is here to stay with us for a while: not a good time, but a long time. Accepting the changes and making the very best of them, has brought with it a sense of calm which escaped me at the beginning of the pandemic. Life will feel a bit more ‘normal’ to me once I can leave my face mask inside when I go on a walk or take out the bins!

My lifestyle has changed beyond recognition. Life in London was fast-paced and hectic, training as a counsellor whilst working full-time in the boarding life of the school. I knew I needed to take a breather, but I wasn’t expecting it to be quite this much of a breath! Never have I exercised so much over the last few months, and at absolutely no cost. Utilising online platforms for social interaction, especially when my friends and family are spread all over the world, is brilliant. I am able to take time to do things I never have before – even simple changes, like being able to finally try that recipe I’ve wanted to.

My outlook has changed completely – I realise I don’t need to sprint my way through life at 500 miles per hour constantly accomplishing things. If all I do in a day is go for a walk close to

home and pay attention to the world moving around me: that’s enough. Because every day, the world is still moving around me. Remembering that has been grounding.

My years at MHS have been the happiest of my life, because of the real sense of family I felt every time I walked through the door. The people, and the sense of community they collectively create. I often felt MHS to be ‘a bubble’ – and thinking of it from afar, it was a bubble I’d have loved to have been locked down within, and one I’ve missed every day since I left. Though our wedding plans are slightly on hold given travel restrictions, there is absolutely nowhere on earth that means as much to myself and my fiancé Steve (Cover Supervisor, 2018-2020) as Mill Hill. We long for the day we can celebrate our marriage there.

I’ve often heard the phrase during this pandemic: “we may be in the same storm, but we’re not all in the same boat.” I have found it difficult through our severe lockdown to avoid creating comparisons to other states or countries; and have felt envious when I’ve seen what others can do (but we can’t). I’ve found our ‘boat’ really rubbish at points and felt it’s pretty much sinking. But then I remember, it’s not about what we “can’t” do, it’s about opening your eyes to what you can. I’m part of a research programme having had the virus and I see it as a privilege to harness something useful out of my experience. For those heading into further lockdowns, ironically as Melbourne very gradually eases out of ours, be sure to the time each day to remind yourself what you’re able to do, rather than what you can’t (for now).

AUSTRALIA

STEPH SMITH
MHS BOARDING ADMINISTRATOR 2017-2020
MELBOURNE - OCTOBER 2020

Australia as a whole initially coped with the pandemic very well, quickly moving to close international and internal borders, alongside mandatory hotel quarantine for returning travellers and bringing in nationwide restrictions – which collectively have been widely regarded as the key elements of its success.

Mass testing with quick tracing was quickly implemented. Melbourne’s state, Victoria, however suffered a sizeable second wave from June due to the mismanagement of hotel quarantine

through the use of private security guards.

Had this been different, the outlook of Victoria would have been massively different, and Australia as a whole would have appeared to fair almost as well as New Zealand.

Upon my arrival in Melbourne in March, I spent two weeks in home quarantine before hotel quarantine was introduced. During this time I tested positive to the virus, having contracted it on my

journey. Thankfully my symptoms were mild and my recovery swift.

Whilst the first lockdown was significant, life in Melbourne since June has been classified as the longest, most extensive, lockdown in the world. An 8pm curfew, 5km travel restriction, one-hour exercise allowance, mandatory mask wearing every time you leave the house, and full closures of all shops, businesses, retail and education; has made for significant reductions on freedoms. We have had daily press conferences for over 100

days detailing all relevant information. Slow and steady changes are now being made, with a view to “covid normal” by the end of November.

My life was already scheduled to flip upside down through my planned move from London to Melbourne in April. I spent a long time waiting on a partner visa, as many of my former colleagues will know, and we had big plans and hopes for the move. Bringing this moving date forward to avoid the closure of the Australian border, meant that I had to

AUSTRALIA

CHRISTOPHER QUIRK
SCHOOL HOUSE 1974-1980
SYDNEY – JULY 2020

With insight into the health system and family, friends and colleagues over in the UK the Covid Process and management has been if not interesting but also frustrating. Please note, however, that my opinions are not necessarily correct and certainly we have seen multiple different ways of handling this, different approaches and of course we have all changed our views over time as more is learnt. It is also worth noting that in my opinion both New Zealand and Australia have done the best at handling things (so far!). I do acknowledge that our location, Island status and our relative 'under-population' has helped. As I am sure you have heard before, "The spread of Covid is dependent on 1. The Density of the population and 2. The density of the Population"

Anyway, how did we cope with it? I felt that we reacted a bit too slowly, initially more fearful of the economy than health. We did close the borders but very loosely, and initially suggesting voluntary isolation for returning people. Of course, society is full of individual selfish people who have not taken things seriously and did not obey. In my opinion the single most important thing we did which saved us, and almost got us to an 'elimination state' (as per New Zealand) was to enforce hotel guarded quarantine for two weeks. Beyond that we only had to deal with local transmission.

The second most important thing that was done was immediate financial support for both business and individuals that were impacted. This was actually a very generous amount and meant some people were in fact better off but was certainly the right thing to do (as expected, it was abused by some!).

Very early on in the pandemic, quite rightly the Government and advisors appreciated that going forward the only way of getting on top of things would be quick and accurate tracking of cases and contacts. They quickly developed an app for smart phones that would log

anyone who had been in close proximity to you, such that if you tested positive all contacts could be quickly tracked. While this does work, actually what we have seen with the Victoria disaster is that compared with NSW, manual tracking probably works better. This is combined with every public place taking records of all visitors. Indeed, the problems in Victoria have culminated from poor management especially around hotel quarantine and slow tracking. We have also instituted very early widespread testing. As I understand it, none of the above has occurred in the UK!

From the hospital aspect, I strongly believe there is no country in the world that has a better hospital and health system than Australia and I am enormously proud of who our administrators, allied health care workers and my colleagues have prepared and handled the pandemic.

There have been issues lately in other states that are clear results of poor Government. Cutting corners and dare I say some degree of corruptness. We may have gone to almost elimination had it not been for Victoria and in my opinion, I feel a national strategy may have been better rather than leaving things to individual states. We have subsequently had issues with state border closures which were done too slowly and allowed cases to jump over rapidly spreading infection and cases. We have also seen greater difficulty controlling things in light of individual acts of selfish behaviour. Ignoring social isolation is bad enough but going out with symptoms and with a positive Covid-19 test is still going on and quite frankly in my opinion is not been dealt with harshly enough by authorities!!

We did have a lockdown. However, what does that mean? I am sure you are aware of the lockdown in NZ. Ours was no where near like that. Whilst we had restrictions on the number of visitors, only allowed out for essential matters

etc, on the whole we did have a degree of freedom and was actually not very restrictive. And yet during that we were still able to keep our numbers down.

OK, now is where another disclaimer comes!! Of course, this has had an enormous impact on my and our lives, but we truly acknowledge how lucky we are and how privileged we have been – I still work, my son still works, and we are happy and safe at home. Yes, my daughter can't get to Uni, my sons partner is stuck in the UK and can't get over here and my wife can't get to UK to visit elderly relatives – but hey, allowing for the people doing it so tough, we can't complain at all. It's worth reminding ourselves when people continuously say we are all in it together. Excuse my French, but 'Boll**ks!' We may be all in the same storm, but we are all in different boats! In fact, many people we know, and I see from the more affluent parts of society comment how much they have enjoyed the forced isolation, time with family and working from home.

I am not sure a return to normal in the near future is likely, or indeed desirable. This should be the forced change the world needed. Having said that, human nature being what it is we will soon forget and go back to the pre Covid-19 state, but I suspect that will be years and not months. International travel will never return to normal.

I am certainly keen to get back to the way life was, although for me personally it has been an opportunity to reevaluate work, and perhaps expedite winding down, including coming back to the UK and spending time there working and catching up with old friends.

On a separate note, I was actively involved with OMs sports after leaving school, and I think the main thing I miss is still being able to do that and maybe have a few more games with them and attend functions – one day!



Photo Credit: Steph Smith, MHS 2017-2020, St Kilda Beach, Melbourne

NICK VACLAVIK
SCHOOL HOUSE 1977-1983
GOLD COAST – JULY 2020

The Australian government was quick to close the borders and as such was in a good place to contain the virus. They managed to flatten the curve fairly well. However, there was a second wave, which came about because of slack quarantine procedures of residents being repatriated to Australia.

However, I am confident they did a good job under the circumstances, no one really expected anything like this to happen. Looking at other countries and how they've handled it I believe they have done well.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing, the NSW government could have handled the

disembarkation of the Princes Rose cruise ship a lot better. People who were infected with the virus were basically allowed back into the community even though they were contagious with Covid-19.

I think better quarantine training for the security guards protecting the International travellers coming home that went into 14 confinement. Also better security and training in the aged care centres where a lot of vulnerable people have lost their lives.

I experienced lock down to a certain extent, however I was allowed to travel to work everyday. Not being able to visit

my son and his new baby girl was very tough. They live in New South Wales and the borders are closed into Queensland. In order to visit them I would have to go into quarantine for fourteen days on my return.

My preference would be to return to life before Covid-19, but don't think it will, there will be changes coming. I'd like to think that things will return to normal next year, however I don't think life will. There will be a new normal, living with Covid-19.

Thinking about Mill Hill I do miss my old buddies from school and the rugby club, nothing quite like a pint down at Headstone Lane.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DANIELLE WOOD
SCHOOL HOUSE 2004-2009
PERTH – AUGUST 2020

All states within Australia differed in their approach and lengths of lockdown. Here in Perth the initial stages of lockdown meant you could only leave the house for work or exercise. Restaurants closed except for take away, school, university, and was, if possible, all completed from home. Lockdown was later eased to allow gatherings of ten people, then 20 and so on, over the course of about four months.

Currently, in my State, there are still minor restrictions such as two square meter spacing rules between people, and a hard boarder from the rest of Australia and the world, and our sports stadium allowed a reduced capacity of 30,000. Western Australia hasn't had any community transmission in months, but we are having one or two new cases here and there from overseas/interstate travellers who are in mandatory two week quarantine in hotels as soon as they arrive.

Western Australia was not too badly hit, most cases came from International ships docking at our port (over 100 cases), or incoming international flights.

My state government did an excellent job, they shut the borders and made the decision early reducing community spread. Lots of Covid-19 testing centres were opened. Australia wide, there was

an additional job 'seeker' payment of 550 dollars a fortnight added to the existing unemployment payment – to prevent people from feeling the need to go to work to put food on the table even if they were sick. There was also a job 'keeper' payment of 1100 dollars a fortnight per employee given to businesses to continue paying employees even if they had to close or amend their work practices. All in all, it was an expensive exercise, but worth it for the safety of all.

The staged lockdown was minimally invasive. I just worked from home for a few months, and kept my outings to a minimum. I've never really done that for a long period before, but it was a refreshing 21st century way of looking at how work could be managed remotely. The 'stay home' message was given as advice, and you had to have a good reason (work/exercise/medical appointments etc) to leave the house.

I struggled not seeing my elderly grandparents, missing birthdays, barbecues, social engagements and not being able to hug family members or friends. Not being able to touch my face!! Gosh, who knew how hard that would turn out to be!

I believe 'normal' will be redefined, six months ago it was common for someone

to blow on a cake and everyone eat a piece, now I couldn't imagine doing that. Personally, I am definitely going to be more cautious with how I conduct myself in public in relation to hand sanitisation, being more aware of personal space on public transport, and international travel such as cruise ships. I think the way in which we conduct ourselves (with strangers specifically) and how we action our work will differ forever due to Covid-19, and that may not be such a bad thing. I believe it forced businesses to think proactively, and has taken some workplaces out of the stone-and-chisel era of work.

I just hope no OM's lost their life or suffered because of this terrible virus. I also hope that those around the world are, like Australia, seeing the end of community spread of Covid-19.



Photo Credit: OM Danielle Wood, Lockdown in Perth

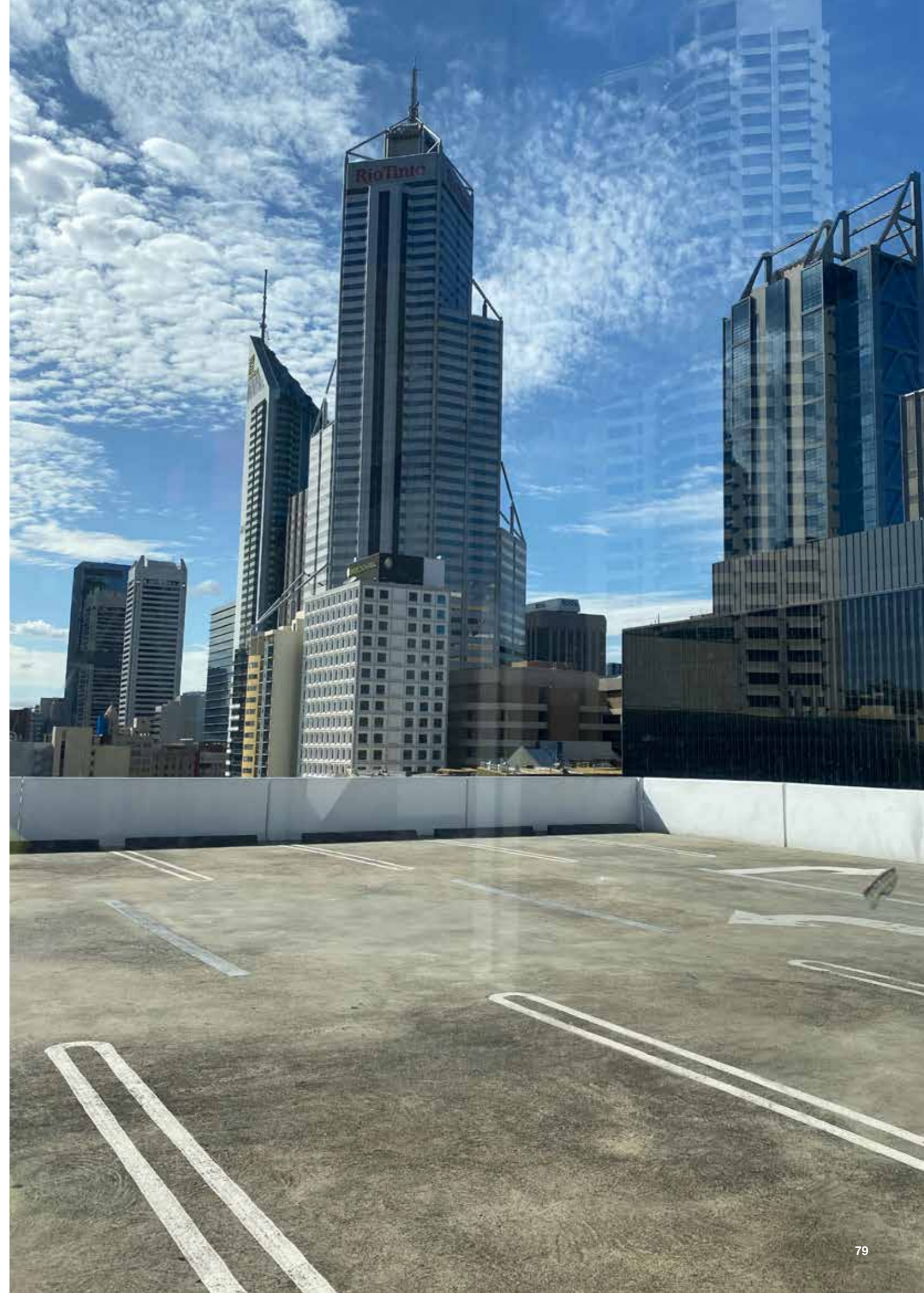




Photo Credit: Ex MHS Master, Andy Luke, an empty Angkor Wat

CAMBODIA

ANDY LUKE
MHS MASTER 1990-2011
PHNOM PENH – SEPTEMBER 2020

Cambodia got worried in February, and then closed down in March. Flights leaving the country were massively reduced, and incoming flights were almost impossible to get on. Even internal flights became difficult. Then the country completely closed its borders. Nobody was allowed in without a test followed by full-scale quarantine. Then with cases low anyone who had any sort of contact was tested and isolated.

Because testing and tracing was so near-perfect (there are always individuals) very few businesses were fully closed down. Yes there were some (cinemas, karaoke bars, beauty parlours, bars etc) which were closed for a time,

and of course everyone naturally wore masks and socially distanced, but at no stage was there a total lockdown.

The upshot is that there has been no recorded local transmission case since April 12th. All other cases - every one of them documented, and every possible contact quarantined - have been imported and immediately tested and isolated.

Every entry has had to set aside \$3000 in case they were incoming with an infected person, because they would be isolated in prescribed hotels if that happened. The family I know of who had to spend fourteen days in quarantine

only paid out \$1000 in the end. They were refunded the rest which in their case was \$5000.

Bottom line - I would rather have my family here than the UK.

The knock-on effect of no tourists has hit places like Angkor Wat and Siem Reap, dreadfully hard, and many, many people are now out of work with no prospect of much money and not much hope of a government bailout. Sadly this leaves us trying to spend as much money as we can spare, trying to help whomsoever we can.

One day, this will go away. Until then...

CANADA

JOHN HENLEY
WEYMOUTH 1953-1957
DURDAS, ONTARIO – AUGUST 2020

On the whole Canada has dealt with the pandemic reasonably well when compared to some other countries. In the USA for example the pandemic has run amok. A more reasonable approach to social distancing and wearing a mask has been less of a problem here. Unfortunately there are still the anti-maskers and idiots who think parties, bars and mingling on the beach won't affect them.

Hindsight is always 2020... which is an appropriate expression for this pandemic because of the year! It takes time to find out what works and the government should have insisted on fourteen day quarantine right away. Unfortunately, as with other countries, there was a window for residents to fly home from other countries, which meant, in many cases, they brought the disease back with them.

My 80th birthday was on March 12th and I decided the following day that I would start my own self-isolation without waiting for a government directive. I saw the writing on the wall and have been hyper cautious ever since. My 'bubble' is small in terms of people I will even see so that I am not exposed to the virus through their contacts. In some respects

I have been fortunate as I have worked from home for many years so being confined to home was no big deal. I was still able to continue working on various projects.

The biggest impact has been my work in movies has been reduced to zero. I did have an opportunity recently to get back on set but I think it is way too early in the game to decide whether they have got all the right precautions in place that will protect cast and crew. I can't see things returning to normal until they create a suitable vaccine that guarantees protection. If you catch Covid-19 you could be in for a rough ride, especially if you are elderly, and no-one wants to end up on a respirator because the vaccine did not measure up.

It would be nice to revert to the way things were before Covid-19 as far as my own personal life is concerned, but the world has changed to the extent that maybe we are being given an opportunity to clean house, deal with matters that have been suppressed in the past (Black Lives Matter, the state of long term care homes, a rethink of how hospital rooms are designed so they accommodate one not four people) and do other things to improve the

world. I see this current state of affairs continuing for another year at least. I will continue to do what I do and my social life has been curtailed but that is the small cost of staying alive.

I am quite seriously concerned at how the disruption to education is going to affect the current generations' ability to learn what they should and be competent enough later when they start looking for work. Will they be at a big disadvantage because their education was incomplete? Is the world going to be run by a generation of poorly educated people? One can see the results of that in the U.S. Only time will tell. I have been responsible for producing "Mill Hill Times" for the past 5 ½ years and it has made me appreciate the history and architecture a lot more now than at the time. I always thought it was a magnificent looking school.

My parents, my sister and I always used to drive past Mill Hill School on the way to visit my father's parents in Finchley and they would often say that one day I could be at that school. Through our newsletter we made contact with OMs we had not seen for decades and renewed long lost friendships.

JAPAN

RIKAKO TAKEI (LIKA)
BURTON BANK 2005-2007
TOKYO – JULY 2020

Tokyo has had a high number of Covid-19 patients but we have not had any lockdown. The government have been telling us repeatedly to 'stay home' particularly over the weekends.

There has been little more than encouragement to stay indoors, I felt a proper lockdown might help ending new infections. Travel was also suspended.

More people started to work from home and as I never imagined the Japanese being able to do this; I was very impressed.

The biggest impact on my life due to the pandemic was having to cancel my wedding in Prague this year as we cannot fly out of Japan.

I am hoping that Japan can quickly return to normal as soon as possible so we can have the Olympics next summer. However, I'm doubtful as I don't see a proper vaccine being available for

at least another year. I feel Japan has turned less 'worker bee' style since the pandemic. We have managed to work effectively from home. Now I can do more working in the house and spend quality time with my family.

There are challenges, it's sometimes difficult to communicate online, but I also think it has highlighted occasions where we can work online and spend more time as a result doing something else, something more important in our lives than work!

NEW ZEALAND

NICK HOWE-SMITH
McCLURE 1978-1983
AUCKLAND – AUGUST 2020

In my opinion the country coped with the Health crisis aspect superbly. The NZ response was “to go hard early”. We adopted a four level Alert system and we were put in the highest Alert level when we had only 36 cases of Covid-19. To date our death toll remains far lower than other countries. We became Covid-19 free for a while and life returned to normal for over three months except for international tourism. Restaurants, cafes, gyms, sporting fixtures, weddings and funerals all functioned without social distancing or masks. Financial assistance packages were rolled out swiftly to assist those businesses that could demonstrate substantial losses to keep their labour force in employment. Fortunately New Zealand is a relatively isolated island with a 3000 km moat. Our five million population is small but willing and compliant and as a team of five million, we believed and adopted the ‘elimination goal’. The economic toll is yet to be realised and fully understood.

Our border quarantine processes however were found to be sadly lacking with several breaches and persons breaking out of and into managed quarantine facilities. The Health authorities took over hotels and looked after returning NZ residents well, as hospitality would, but forgot in many cases to perform the routine day three and day twelve testing that we all took for granted. This created national outrage and ministerial resignations.

The manner in which NZ has coped with the pandemic and the relatively low infection rates and death statistics are impressive compared with many countries in the world. It really came down to the speed in which decisions were made and implemented. I was

also very impressed with the 1pm daily television updates from Jacinda Ardern, our PM, the Government Covid-19 response website and having a NZ Covid-19 Tracer QR Code App for mobile phones.

Lockdown for us, also known as Alert level four, started on 25 March 2020 and ended on 27 April, so about 5 weeks in total. During this time everyone on a national scale had to stay at home and work from home. Schools and universities were closed, borders were closed, restaurants, cafes, gyms, shops, hairdressers were closed. In fact everything was closed apart from supermarkets, pharmacies, hospitals, doctors and those deemed ‘essential workers’. Exercise was allowed but you had to stay ‘local’. The meaning of the word local was tested!

Fortunately lockdown occurred during the end of our summer season and we had blissful weather so that was one less thing to complain about. Our days were spent at home fishing off the jetty, brewing beer, completing home improvement projects, cycling and walking the local beaches.

The biggest impact on us, as we had my parents from the UK living with us (and still do), was ensuring that they remained safe and not exposed. We had to stay in our family ‘bubble’ which meant no contact with anyone other than those in your bubble. So no friends or other family members.

That was hard not seeing the kids. We participated in the dawn service on Anzac Day standing at our front gate as the bugler of the ‘Last Post’ echoed through our iPhones! Very different. The other bizarre happenings were

queueing under a large tent to enter the supermarket, the 2m metre markings on the footpaths outside shops and ordering your take away coffee by phone or text.

History of previous pandemics has shown that life does return to ‘normal’ once again so I hope we do and quickly. With a little more wisdom and care, practising safe social distancing, improved testing and contact tracing regimes and border controls we can learn to exist normally once more.

Life before Covid-19 gave us all the freedom to see who we wanted, do what we wanted and travel around the world. I am keen to revert to the ‘old life’ particularly for the travel advantages. However Covid-19 has raised some pertinent questions and introduced alternatives. The biggest is in our work/life balance and in understanding what is really important to us such as spending more time with children and family. For me the current WFH trend is a positive step and allows me to work from home one or two days a week as and when required or desired. Other than that no major lifestyle changes are necessary for my part.

I do miss Mill Hill School days, they were great fun. Friends, sport, activities it was all laid on – the sausage/cheese/pickle roll for morning tea in the Sixth Form Centre was pretty hard to beat! Five years providing lifelong friendships and contacts.



Photo Credit: OM Patsy Rose O'Shea, McClure, Wellington NZ

IMOGEN PRIOR
MURRAY 2015-2020
AUCKLAND – AUGUST 2020

I was in New Zealand at the beginning of the pandemic, who as a country took a very proactive approach to the pandemic. As the number of cases surpassed 100 on 25th March, we immediately entered Alert Level four which consisted of a minimum of four weeks in lockdown with only essential visits to the shops being permitted.

At the time there were 10,000 Brits stuck in New Zealand and we had very little access to support from the British Consulate in New Zealand as flights home became both scarce and extortionately expensive due to the closure of many of transit the countries. Jacinda Ardern maintained a very detailed dialogue with the public from the beginning of the pandemic and

acted swiftly in response to the ever-changing circumstances.

As a short-term traveller in New Zealand, I had nowhere permanent to stay and with the closure of surrounding borders I also had nowhere to go. Unable to find flights home, I spent three weeks in lockdown in a 14th floor flat in Auckland with a fellow traveller.

I was able to return to London at the beginning of April and experience the remainder of lockdown there. Frustratingly, I had a further two months of travelling planned beyond New Zealand! Hopefully I will get the chance to resume my travels at some point.

I think there will be a many Corona-related repercussions that will be in effect for years to come; including the way students attain university places and attend their courses.

I have really missed playing team sport and seeing friends in larger groups however there have also been positives from experiencing such a drastic reset.

I have found it encouraging to see people making a more conscious effort to stay safe and healthy. I have also felt inspired by the sheer number of people pursuing personal growth and the ever increasing sense of community during this time.

SOUTH AFRICA

MARC FLETCHER
PRIESTLEY 1986-1984
BLOUBERG, CAPE TOWN – SEPTEMBER 2020

South Africa had one of the most stringent lockdowns globally. We had a curfew from 8pm to 4am and were not allowed to leave our homes except for grocery shopping or medical needs. To the point where if you were found on the street without a shopping bag or a doctor's note you were fined and issued with a criminal record. The government also banned tobacco products and alcohol which ultimately created a massive underground black market. We were not allowed to exercise outside of our homes, so many people were running marathons on 3m balconies. We also had the army on the streets and our police service which is already quite para-military so there was a lot of 'force' on the streets. This is not so unusual for us here as South Africa has laws that permit gun ownership in private hands, but the army was not trained for urban and domestic law enforcement so there were many incidents of heavy handed enforcement.

South Africa has a large divide between the rich and the poor. Many of the poor live in what are known as 'Townships' – these are in some places just shacks on hillsides, lowlands, river estuary's or highway sidings. The density of population and poor sanitation in these areas were big risk factors in the spread of the virus. The lockdown was so

severe from a commerce perspective that many industries (tourism, travel, hotels, restaurants, liquor, tobacco etc) either failed completely or took a very big hit. Due to the restrictions of lockdown the Government's tax revenue was greatly reduced. This has widened the deficit leaving South Africa in a serious risk of an increased sovereign debt. The government closed the borders to the rest of the world and as of September they remain closed which means we have no freedom of travel. I felt the Government could have had a better way of segmenting the restrictions based on risk profiles, not banning tobacco and liquor (which caused many to lose their jobs and income), and focused on the high risk areas whilst balancing the economy. The restrictions at time seemed arbitrary and draconian and for some counter-productive to a post Covid-19 society.

The ANC (Government) is corrupt to the point that the President (who is also part of the ANC) has finally admitted that after years of corruption at all levels of Government, the Pandemic was the final straw that broke the camel's back.

On a personal note the economic impact took a hit on our household, both my income and my wife's income was affected by Covid-19. This was

balanced by not driving much, not eating out, and generally having less need to spend money. My work became very challenging as I work on complex IT solution sales, so adapting to selling over a telephone and Microsoft Teams was an initial challenge, however the industry has learnt to adapt. Not having face-to-face interaction has personally made life more challenging. Not being able to travel has also had a massive impact – my parents and sibling live in the UK and my father was diagnosed with cancer in February 2020; I have not been able to travel to the UK to spend time with him. I don't see myself being able to see them in person until 2021.

The new normal is here to stay to some degree. As of two weeks ago, we are still in level two. We have been given tobacco and alcohol back but it's August and we still have a curfew. The impact of Covid-19 will have a very lasting effect on the country and its citizens. We will perhaps get to Level one between November 2020 and May 2021. This would be when the government will remove the State of Disaster which is how the government operates with emergency powers without oversight or democratic governance. After this point they will open the borders to the world and we hope that we will be able to rebuild the ailing economy.

JOHN PARROTT
SCRUTTON 1950-1955
CAPE TOWN – OCTOBER 2020

There is not much to say about the Covid-19 virus other than its effect of having a major economic disruption on commerce and our industry in general. Not forgetting the severe medical effect on the population of the country, even

though the latest figures of virus related deaths is only just under 19000, which is much less of a percentage of the total population compared to most other countries.

There is also not much I can say about myself as I moved over to my daughter and son-in-law's home the day before our country-wide lockdown was imposed (26 March 2020). The plan now

is to stay with them on a permanent basis in a separately built cottage on their property when funds permit. This move did not prevent both my daughter and I testing positive with the virus but fortunately only necessitated a short stay in hospital to recover, thank the Lord. No pictures I'm afraid, anyway who wants to be photographed with one of those dreadful surgical masks covering half of one's face!

THAILAND

CHRISSIE JR.SAKUL
COLLINSON 2009-2012
BANGKOK – AUGUST 2020

Thailand was one of the first few countries to come in contact with Covid-19 cases. When the government announced an official statement that a number of travelers were tested positive, there was a nationwide spread of panic. Immediate shortages of surgical masks, rubbing alcohol and disinfectants further fuel the demand for self-protection, which consequently caused the prices of these ordinary commodities to increase tenfold. Wearing a mask is mandatory; those without masks are refused of entries to restaurants, grocery stores, public transportation and more. Since Thai people are very cautious, temperature checkpoints are located everywhere and you're likely to be checked more than three times a day if you're living in the capital city.

At the start of the pandemic, everyone wanted to get tested for Covid-19 but there weren't enough test kits for low-risk individuals. Even so, Covid-19 tests were not covered by insurance and they still aren't. As doctors claimed that the only effective barrier against the virus was surgical masks, they suddenly became more valuable than gold. Those who were lucky would get their hands on fabric masks, those who were less fortunate had to come up with their own kind of protection.

Even though the Thai government handled the containment of the disease very effectively, there was a price to be paid. In concoction of both lockdown and a strict curfew, many local business owners, especially those who heavily relied on tourism, had no income and some were forced into bankruptcy. I was disappointed at how the government chose not to disclose the extent of the spread at first, which, in turn, caused panic and even paranoia to Thai people.

When the outbreak of Covid-19 began, I was about to start my last year of dental school – it's the year where dental students get to harbor clinical skills, learn from their patients under supervision of their advisors. Everything

came to a halt with rising Covid-19 cases. Many people had to work from home and so my clinical hours turned into online lectures. Thailand went into lockdown when the government issued a curfew to take effect in early April between 10pm-4am in order to limit the spread. Additionally, they also issued a travel ban for all foreign travelers and domestic flights for Thai travelers too. Panic buying of canned foods and drinking water only lasted for a short while before lockdown, afterwards food delivery service became the new norm. Places that once were crowded, became empty – people were afraid to take public transportation, so much so that they refused to leave their homes unless necessary.

Due to Covid-19, my life schedule has been juggled around the pandemic; it has affected our lives immensely. Since Thailand came out of lockdown a few months ago, I have had to work twice as hard to be able to graduate as a dentist by the end of this academic year. In a way, the situation has been a motivation to push myself harder every time I come across a setback. We are all coping in our own way with Covid-19 and eventually we will get through it. I would say, currently, Thailand is functioning at its full capacity – everything is almost the same, except we're wearing facial masks and there are no commercial flights in or out of the country as yet. I don't think things will return to how

they were until we get a real 'cure'. The vaccines in development is our hope if we are ever going to be able to fly across the world again.

I would love to hop on a plane again and explore the world, take a breath of fresh air without having my mask on or worrying about being at a risk of exposure just like how things were before the pandemic.

I miss walking down the B-way with my fellow boarders, getting scolded by our Housemaster for staying up late, Matron fixing us with tea and biscuits on our bad day. MHS is full of wonderful experiences that has molded me into the person I am today.



Photo Credit: OM Chrissie JR.Sakul, Ayutthaya Ancient Temple

UAE

JAMES MONAGHAN
MHS 1994-2011
SCHOOL HOUSE HOUSEMASTER 2002-2011
DUBAI - OCTOBER 2020



If you are going to be stuck in lock down anywhere in the world, there are definitely worse places for this to happen than Dubai. Testing here is plentiful and everyone somehow obeys the rules. Lockdown itself was certainly tough, applying for permits to go for a walk for example, although we didn't much want to walk around in 45 degree heat anyway! Now in October, restrictions have been eased, but we still feel very safe. We are back on the beaches and back on our bikes, taking full advantage of what we have available here.

Has this fully compensated for not seeing our families? Of course not. With our children spread all over the globe, from Japan to London, it's been very, very hard to accept that it's going to be a long time till we can be together again. Of course, Zoom helps, but it's definitely not the same. We have also missed our dose of English greenery and pub lunches, but these will be all the more special when we do finally get to come home.

Working as the Principal of North of London Collegiate School in Dubai during Covid-19 has been challenging to say the least. There have been moments when I have wanted to run away and work on a farm in the middle of nowhere, but things are slowly settling. Cycling this morning, through the oryx and the amazing desert, I was rather glad to be here – for the moment at least.



Photo Credit: Jamie Monaghan, MHS 1994-2011, Triathlon training in Dubai

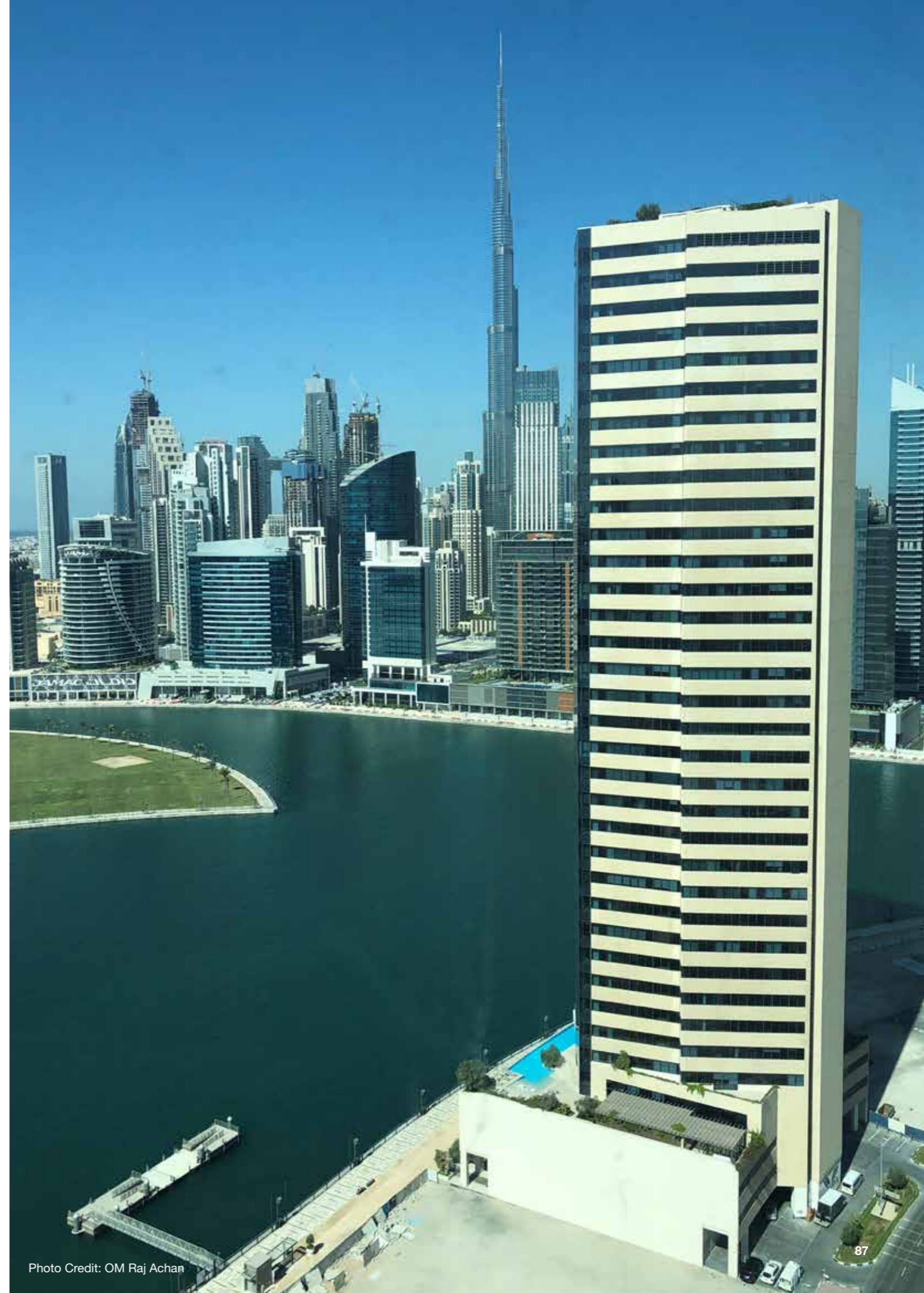


Photo Credit: OM Raj Achan



RAJ ACHAN
RIDGEWAY 1985-1991
DUBAI – OCTOBER 2020

The UAE, being the travel hub between the East and the West, went into a lockdown with tight restrictions quite early on in the spread of the pandemic outside of China. Although, it felt quite draconian at the time, we can see the benefits of the foresight the UAE government had at that time. Along with ramping up testing, to creating makeshift quarantine facilities, bringing medical support from India, disinfecting all public places and offices, ensuring enough supplies of PPE, they did everything within their power to enable

life to move into a new normal. The lockdown gave people forced time to spend time with loved ones, dust off rusting hobbies and reconnect with long lost friends online. The long summer was unbearable with masks and gloves making outdoor ventures miserable. But we didn't realise we were getting conditioned for the long haul. Now the cooler months are upon us and we have more freedom to move around, we are back enjoying the cooler outdoors, still in masks and spaced out bubbles, but without complaining. The picture below

DINESH PAGARANI
PRIESTLEY 2002-2007
DUBAI – AUGUST 2020

I think Dubai coped impressively. As decisive as a leadership could, advantages of a monarchy government is that they could implement a full style lock down with the public adhering to rules. It is hard to critique any leadership as we have dealt with a new phenomenon and the UAE government have done well containing the spread

and restarting the economy. The lockdown imposed on residents was effective and the testing is known to be one of the best globally. We were unable to leave the house for almost an entire month except for food shopping and to visit the pharmacy, we weren't otherwise allowed to walk outside.

The lockdown gave me some much needed personal time and introspection. It gave me the opportunity to feel grateful for the little things and not take what I have for granted. Life in UAE has

is taken from one of our family outings in the peak of summer to the Al Jahili fort in Al Ain. We braved the 48 degrees heat that day when the monotony of the lockdown within four walls became unbearable.

We stepped out of our car and rather pleasantly we were greeted with rain and breeze and a lovely earthy aroma adding a mystic touch to the forlorn fort. Twelve years on, this little desert country never ceases to amaze us, even as we start to feel we have seen it all!!

pretty much returned to normal and cases are very low. I imagine people will quickly return to the way they lived before as the impact here wasn't spread out over a long period of time. I am keen to travel again with ease but I am more than happy to be at home.

I miss hanging out on the school grounds at Mill Hill on a nice, warm summer day, sharing jokes and banter on the CCF trips!

USA

JOHN PITCAIRN
RIDGEWAY 1977-1982
FLORIDA – AUGUST 2020

I'm sorry to say that the United States has done rather poorly in coping with the pandemic. We haven't had the national leadership or a national plan to confront and overcome the virus. The USA got very little right and could have done better with a national plan coordinated with the governors of the 50 states, a plan guided by public health professionals and that shared a clear, consistent public health message throughout the country.

I am however impressed at what a number of states have been able to accomplish, despite the lack of consistent focus, leadership, and support from the federal government.

I did experience lockdown. Both my wife and I are educators – I'm the Middle Division Director for a PK3-12th Grade independent private school. We went into lockdown when we had to close school in mid-March. It was more of a self-imposed lockdown until the State of Florida imposed an official lockdown a few weeks later, after local governments had begun to do so. We both worked from home to support our school's

'E-Learning' program through the spring semester.

We've been quite strict about keeping to ourselves, with the exceptions of a once a week visit to our local grocery store (and wine shop!) and ordering take away for dinner once a week from one of the local restaurants. We did book a home in Virginia, just outside Shenandoah National Park, so that our family could gather for a two-week holiday. We formed our own 'quarantine pod' sticking together and spending much of our time outdoors, including many wonderful hikes in the Park.

Being an educator, the most meaningful impact on my life has been the sudden, unexpected transformation of the school experience in the spring from on-campus to E-Learning and the work with my colleagues throughout the summer which was to plan a safe and effective return to school in the fall, all while trying to maintain as much of the caring nature and culture of our school community. On a more personal note, I miss traveling greatly, especially visits to my parents in the Cotswolds, whom at this point I've not been able to visit for almost a year.

Although I don't much like the expression, we'll return to a 'new normal' in a year or two, after an effective vaccine is available and has been widely enough distributed. (That, of course, assumes that enough of the population chooses to be vaccinated.)



I do believe that masks and social distancing will be part of our lives for quite some time to come. This entire experience of the last six months has made me seriously consider bringing forward the time for me to retire.

When I think about school and what I miss, it's Ridgeway House, Mr. Morgan, Rugby...and beans on fried bread for breakfast! (Not allowed the latter delicacy at home!)

NADA MIJATOVIC
BURTON BANK 2091-2093
LA, CALIFORNIA – AUGUST 2020



In the beginning I felt that the USA felt well organised, but sadly the reopening was too fast. We really suffered the consequences of this rash decision. The Government should have been more cautious and gradually open up the economy.

The hardest part was being in lockdown for two and a half months, I found this very challenging. I did however find that I had more spare time and the opportunity to adapt to the new normal. I do think some things are changing

for the good, in what capacity - I don't know. It depends on our discipline and finding the right balance to interact with people and keeping safe and healthy at the same time.

I am definitely changing my lifestyle and habits as a direct result of this forced lifestyle change.

When I think about Mill Hill School I miss the sense of security, being free and young. Good memories!



Photo Credit: OM, Ariel Grunberg

July 21st BLM protest at 6:41pm 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue, closing traffic south bound.

USA

ARIEL GRUNBERG
COLLINSON 1968-1971
NEW YORK – OCTOBER 2020

I live in the United States, East Rockaway, New York, 40 minutes east of Manhattan by train. I believe that New York state handled the pandemic terribly; if the governor wanted to slow the spread of the pandemic, he had the wrong approach. He waited far too long to stop large gatherings like concerts, games, weddings, and indoor dining in restaurants. He also mandated that hospitalised nursing home patients be accepted back into nursing homes once they were discharged from the hospitals; as a result 11,000 deaths occurred in nursing homes. Even patients with

the virus were allowed to return to the nursing homes which were not equipped to handle so many sick patients. The city was eventually put on lockdown and the infection rate slowly went down. Once the infection rate went down to less than 1% the mayor still withheld permission for restaurants to offer inside seating.

This damaged many restaurants in NYC. In October restaurants were allowed to offer seating inside but only to 25% of capacity. Masks must be worn at all times on streets, and inside any stores or public places once seated in

a restaurant masks may be removed but employees in restaurants must wear masks at all times.

From late March until July 6 I stayed home on Long Island and did not go into the city for work. Our staff did go in during those months but only twice a week. We own and manage an office and residential building in the city, as well as in other US cities so we are considered an essential service and were allowed to go to work even during lockdown. While home for those months, I kept busy by pulling out my

sewing machine that I'd bought 20 years earlier but never used. I tapered many large shirts to have a better fit around the waist and chest.

My wife and I threw out and shredded many years' worth of varied documents. I went for evening walks and participated on many Zoom conferences daily.

I took up zoom Zumba classes four times a week! I enjoyed my time home as I got more sleep and exercise than I would otherwise have had, if I returned

to work. During this period all our employees continued to receive their salaries. The biggest impact on my life was that I lost 8 lbs at one point. I believe many middle and upper class people who, economically speaking, that left NYC will not return because of the lack of concern by the mayor and governor to reopen the economy.

I see things returning to normal either when herd immunity occurs or a vaccine is released and new infections do not occur. I am keen to return to the life as before.

What I miss most about Mill Hill School is that it is located too far away to visit and participate in alumni activities.

I took the picture above of a BLM (Black Lives Matter) impromptu protest in Manhattan on 5th Avenue and 23rd street opposite the Flatiron building. This was on July 21st at 6:41 pm during rush hour. The protestors blocked south bound and East and West traffic with bicycle riders and used a bull horn to make their demands be heard.



Photo Credit: OM Michael Wong - McClure 1976-1983

OMs CAREERS

IN LOCKDOWN

OM CAREERS COMMITTEE

DICK LIDWELL
MURRAY 1959-1964
CHAIR OF CAREERS COMMITTEE

Thoughts on how the Covid-19 epidemic is impacting on the Employment Market

Clearly Covid-19 has had a world-wide impact on many facets of everyone's daily lives. The social impact has been severe with families having to cope with the effects of lockdown: the closure of schools, the restrictions on visiting family and care homes, shopping, and our everyday movements. In addition it has had a severe impact on employment and the economy. The crisis has led to an economic shock that is unprecedented in modern history in its size and speed. In the UK employment fell by at least 1.5 million, equivalent to 5% of all of those in work. This is double the fall in employment in the last recession and five times larger than the previous largest quarterly fall at any point since 1971. Unemployment therefore quickly rose to at least 2.5 million, or around 7.5% of the workforce: a far faster rise than in any of the last three recessions.

Government initiatives have alleviated the adverse effect to a degree, in particular its Job Retention Scheme. This gives grounds for cautious optimism that if the economy can be revived soon, then demand and jobs will return. However, the labour market takes time to rebuild, previously about seven years, so there will inevitably be future disruption. The UK had seen a buoyant employment market in recent years. However it was also a mixed picture with regional differences, slow wage growth and indifferent improvement in living standards, with still some three million out of work, and others in precarious and insecure employment.

Young people are always particularly vulnerable, as are the older who tend to take longer to get back into work, and women who make up the largest proportion of the low paid. These groups also tend to be found in the retail and hospitality sectors which have been severely hit, and the care sector which is most vulnerable to the effects of the virus. One hopes that the Government will recognise these sections of the working population with further initiatives, especially for young people being our future. What will happen to the 'working from home' phenomenon? Both employers and employees are making great adjustments with many appreciating the advantages of less commuting, albeit with other pressures building up on home life. The crisis has given rise to

examining how we work, why and where, which may produce advantageous long term changes. Much work, but not all, can be completed in a virtual form, but at what price 'social interaction' and the adverse effect on the travel and hospitality industries, especially near office locations?

"The market for the graduates of 2020 has been problematic with many employers cancelling recruitment or deferring. Encouragingly many have offered 'virtual' work experience and internships"

The market for the graduates of 2020 has been problematic with many employers cancelling recruitment or deferring, waiting for the market to turn. Encouragingly many have offered 'virtual' work experience and internships. Understandably more graduates are applying for Masters courses to postpone their entry and to gain new skills, but funding can be problematic and they are seeking out traditional not virtual teaching.

Indeed there have been disputes over fee levels failing to take account of the change from face to face to virtual teaching. The fall in employment in the retail and hospitality could reduce the opportunities for part time employment for students, in particular women and students from disadvantaged backgrounds with adverse consequences for social mobility.

However graduates have generally been faring better within the employment market than many other groups.

With acknowledgement to the Institute for Employment Studies research, and to Prospects 'Luminate' Graduate Employment Market report.



Photo Credit: OM Michael Wong, McClure 1976-83, City of London

CAREER

DEVELOPMENT



Whether you are in employment, furloughed, unemployed, a student, or starting out on the job search, there are a number of actions one can still be taking during these confusing Covid times. Some of the activities outlined below you may well be doing already as they are ‘Good Practice’ at any time

MICHAEL WONG
MCCLURE 1976-1983

KEEP ACTIVE

Mens sana in corpore sano Classicists will recognise this time enduring maxim!

Translated as ‘A healthy mind in a healthy body’. It may seem obvious but one can easily drift when times are uncertain. Maintaining a structure to your day helps, as does taking exercise. Take a break from your computer or phone. No need to go to the gym (if it’s open). Even walking rather than taking the car to the shops helps.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteering offers the opportunity not only to help others, but also develop one’s personal skills. This could take many forms: join a local community group, so many have sprung up during this Covid crisis, seek out a local charity or other organisations. See this link for helpful advice:
www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer/volunteering-coronavirus

NETWORK

Think creatively about who you may know. Talking to your family, your friends’ parents, could be a start, but you may already have some ready-made networks through your societies, sports clubs etc. Sometimes it takes a bit of confidence to strike up conversations, but most people enjoy talking about what they do for a living. But in these difficult times be sensitive to others’ situations as they may be unable to help right now.

Always remember to make notes of what you’ve learnt; useful for future reference when making future applications, and to thank people for their time.

Sign up to networks such as LinkedIn and other professional groups is another way to develop your networks. OMs have had to suspend their networking events for now, it may be able to put you in touch with its members for informal discussion or advice in different careers.

CAREERS SERVICES

Make use of your university or college careers services. They continue to be open providing a full range of virtual services: guidance discussions, talks, and work opportunities.

Keep a record and update your CV. People often compose a CV and think the task is done. However it should be regarded as a ‘living’ document and to be revised and updated regularly so is available to be submitted quickly if needs be.

Here’s a link to a helpful site:
www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters

Strengthening your opportunity search
We find ourselves in extraordinary times with the pandemic. Effective lockdown and isolation since 23rd March have made us adapt to new ways of running our lives. As always there are winners and losers. In business we see Public Sector, Utilities and Banking and Financial Services doing well, but those that are struggling are plain to see - Automotive, Retail, the Arts, Travel and Hospitality. During this time, I have been helping friends and colleagues who are looking for new opportunities with advice on networking, CV writing and self-promotion. If you currently find yourself in this position, I would like to share some tips with you.

Firstly, as obvious as it may seem, build and connect to your professional network and influential others. It is much more effective than just cold calling. They are a good source of information about the health of your industry, the companies that are doing well and the skills currently in demand. Remember networking is about creating long term relationships for mutual benefits rather than charming people or looking for the most important person in an organisation. Always offer to help your contacts in return and take time to thank them. The giving and taking of information can lead to stronger more open relationships.

LinkedIn is a great tool for networking but just as importantly it’s a platform

ADVICE

for you to sell yourself. Through school, university and work you will have developed many skills. Depending on the position you are looking for some skills will be more relevant than others. Are you aware that recruiters using LinkedIn place their search criteria mainly on your top three listed skills then the next seven? Do yours reflect your abilities and your experience? Keep your LinkedIn profile up to date and review frequently.

To raise your profile further use LinkedIn to follow groups, topics and individuals that you are interested in. Review articles, add your point of view and comment by mentioning the author’s name and invite others to contribute. Commenting on a post gives you exposure and adds value by engaging with the author which in turn expands your network. Add hashtags to increase stickiness!

In terms of your profile and CV make yourself stand out. You are the product of your career, education and everything that you have achieved. Your CV needs to get across who you are and what makes you attractive to the hiring manager. Think about what differentiates

you and makes you stand out from the crowd. Communicate your value through achievements rather than focus solely on responsibilities which can be too similar to others looking for the same role. Ideally, your CV should be two sides of A4 - the first side your employment history, the second covers your education, qualifications and other interests. While you work on your CV develop your elevator pitch. Think about this as your one-minute introduction to meeting someone new. It needs to convey succinctly what you do, what makes you unique and what you are looking for.

It may take a little longer to find your next position, but the job market will pick up once companies figure out how they adapt to new ways of working. You may need to broaden your job search looking at adjacent industries where your skillset can be transferrable or maybe start your own business. Be ready, focus on the things that are in your control - keep your profile up to date, keep in regular contact with your network, keep yourself current with industry news - above all be positive!

GRADUATE IN LOCKDOWN

VINAY PATEL
SCHOOL HOUSE 2011-2016



Vinay Patel (School House 2011-16) shares his experience of finding the right career and applying for jobs in lockdown

I have just graduated with a First Class Honours from Imperial College London studying Chemical Engineering right in the midst of these uncertain times. My career journey began during my second year at university at the time of applying to spring weeks and internships. With the mindset of pursuing a career in Chemical Engineering, I applied to the Oil & Gas and the Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industries based on the modules I most enjoyed on my course.

After successfully securing a spring week with Unilever for 2018, I passed the term time with the multiple projects that were thrown at us. After my spring week, there was an opportunity to apply for the Summer Internship for the following year. I capitalised on this great opportunity and prepared intensively, knowing that if I was to get accepted onto the program my Summer 2019 would be sorted! Thankfully, Unilever offered me a summer internship in the supply chain area with a focus on the manufacturing and engineering aspects.

During this internship I was based in a factory producing household items which were being sent worldwide. My job was to understand and suggest improvements on various engineering aspects (apply some of the engineering knowledge that Imperial has taught me!). However, about half-way through I realised in the long term a career in

engineering for wasn't for me. I am much more interested in the financial and consulting sectors.

My passion for these two areas rapidly increased during multiple engineering economics projects and from following financial news including surprisingly enough from watching The Big Short (definitely recommend)! From then on, I switched to finding a graduate role in finance or consulting in the finance industry. This switch between engineering and finance is more common than not, since the soft skills learnt during an engineering degree are totally transferable to any industry.

My summer of 2019, whilst working at Unilever, suddenly became very busy with building my CV and writing cover letters for companies I was interested in, within the aforementioned areas. Of the numerous banks and consulting companies I applied to, my heart was set on securing a role in Accenture's Management Consulting Graduate Scheme. After successfully passing the first couple of rounds including tests and video interviews, I was invited to the final round Assessment Centre which, for the first time ever, included a VR strategy game section.

After waiting an agonising two days, I received a phone call to offer me the job. I was ecstatic. I was informed my start was to be February 2021. This was just

when the number of cases of Covid-19 had started to pick up and was spreading quickly around the world, although it hadn't yet been classified as a pandemic. I was still hopeful that my start date wouldn't change; everything seemed on track for me to start exactly a year later.

Months went by without hearing anything from Accenture until a phone call in June, when I was told that due to Covid-19 my start date was to be postponed until September 2021! This news put me back and left me without a job for more than a year. I keep thinking to myself, circumstances change in a matter of days if not hours and then re-planning becomes more and more difficult.

However, I am still lucky as my offer is still being upheld and has only been delayed for a six months. Being part of the so-called Covid-19 Class of 2020 has had lots of downs and for now, my plan is to find something in the interim within my areas of interest and wait for Accenture's start date of September 2021.

My advice to up and coming graduates still at university is to be ready for any eventuality no matter how large or small. Prepare properly for those pesky numerical and verbal reasoning tests which can catch you out. Don't let them affect our chances of getting into the company you aim for!



PANDEMIC TO PODCAST

HOW LOCKDOWN GAVE ME HEADSPACE TO START AGAIN



Talking with David Birtwistle from the Netflix show, Too Hot To Handle

JAMES ROYCROFT DAVIS
MURRAY 2007-2012

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a brutal yet fascinating experience for me and continues to throw up its intense but rewarding experiences. In 2019, my life was going well. I was running and raising money for two of my companies, though not without its challenges. I was playing rugby for OMRFC regularly and we were vying for promotion. I was also enjoying spending time with my friends and probably enjoying alcohol a bit too much.

However, late 2019, my entire life changed and it changed dramatically; this was a direct result of a decline in my mental health. Both my companies weren't heading in the direction I had hoped, I dislocated my knee playing rugby at Headstone Lane and as a result, found out through CT scans that I had a problem with my liver. The liver problems meant I had to cease drinking alcohol immediately for at least six months. My happy life pretty much felt like it had been dismantled as I knew it within a period of six weeks.

By the end of January I slipped into a very dark place. Getting out of bed became a physical struggle and I noticed that I had little or no control over the incredibly obtrusive thoughts which occupied my head. I was living with full-scale depression and anxiety; by February I was suicidal. This is something I don't say lightly.

Then Covid-19 happened, the world slowed down to an unrecognisable place and everything changed again. I began to speak to my male friends who'd suffered with their own mental health. The response was not what I was expecting. I realised there was a distinct common theme running between all of us, we didn't know how to open up about our feelings.

"I was living with full scale depression and anxiety and by February I was suicidal"

Men rarely talk about their mental state and emotions, instead of talking we think we are seen to be stronger by learning to 'man up'. During my period of intense depression, I found myself scouring available podcast apps which presented the difficult but relatable stories surrounding men's mental health. I couldn't find any that truly resonated.

I needed a new focus and a career change. It felt like it was now or never. Lockdown was happening and male mental health issues were being flagged at an all-time high. The male suicide statistics are nothing short of shocking.

"I needed a new focus and a career change. It felt like it was now or never. Lockdown was happening and male mental health issues were being flagged at an all-time high. The male suicide statistics are nothing short of shocking"



Catching up with RFU Ref, Craig Maxwell-Keys

I started my own podcast called 'The Rut'. My aim was simple; to get men from all walks of life to talk openly, candidly and often brutally about what life was like being in a mental health 'rut' and how they were able to eventually get out of it.

I wanted to show men that it's a sign of strength and NOT weakness to talk about how you feel when the going gets tough; I wanted me to know they were not alone. One in four men will suffer from mental health issue in their lifetime and I want to do everything I can to help change that statistic.

During lockdown I began interviewing professional sportsmen, entrepreneurs, businessmen, psychologists and more to discuss their stories and to shed more light on the murky world of men's mental health.

I was completely shocked by the incredible reaction I got from people who tuned in week in week out during lockdown to the stories of the 17 men featured in season one of The Rut, and we rapidly reached the Top 10 Podcast list on Apple Podcasts for Health and Fitness.

Amazingly, after season one, we have had 10,000 people listen across 31 countries and the impact the podcast has had on people listening has been extremely heart-warming. Several

OMs who have reached out after listening have told me they've been struggling for varying lengths of time with their mental health and the podcast has provided a them a comfort zone to know they're not alone in their struggles.

Season two has launched with guests including Alastair Campbell, Premier League Footballer Joe Bryan, Reality TV star David Birtwistle and other exciting names. I am now building a mental health content company from the podcast through sponsorship and speaking opportunities. I am also writing a book about male mental health.

Covid-19 has been very difficult for so many people. It has challenged me in many ways I didn't expect. The pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the mental health of hundreds of thousands of people across the world. My own journey is only just beginning and I hope the podcast will continue to provide comfort to many more people in the future.

If you or your company would like to sponsor the podcast, please reach out to therutpod@gmail.com!
#GetMenTalking
www.therutpodcast.com



Petit Pli's Beta (MSK) is Petit Pli's first commercially available adult-wear design.

FASHION TO FACEMASK

RYAN MARIO YASIN
PRIESTLEY 1986-1984

I left Mill Hill in 2011 and went to Imperial College London where I received a (MEng) Master of Engineering. I started Royal College of Art in 2015 where I completed an MA in Global Innovation Design and at the same time I gained an MSc in Global Innovation Design at Imperial.

After a few years of work experience, in 2017 I created Petit Pli, a children's fashion label, with the ambition of reducing waste and plastic pollution generated by the wearable industry.

Our first award-winning product utilised a material with geometric pleats to make expandable clothes. I was able to use my background as an aeronautical engineer to design a system of permanent folds that can unpack to stretch and then return to shrink.

Applied to children's clothes, the pleats expand making a single garment able to last a child from the age of six months through to 36 months. Our suits are breathable, lightweight and rainproof, while their expanding shape allows for effortless movement.

When Covid-19 pandemic arrived at the start of 2020 and masks became one of the primary items required to help slow the spread of the virus, we realised we could help.

We wanted to create a mask which complimented the change Covid-19 has had on our habits, attitudes and way of thinking - while still embodying our ethos of problem solving, sustainability and innovation. The mask is the first item for adults made by Petit Pli, and the pleats make the mask a comfortable

accessory that can easily convert into a face covering. Petit Pli used its patent-pending technology to create reusable face masks in response to reports that disposable personal protective equipment (PPE) has led to a surge in plastic pollution during the pandemic.

Beta (MSK) fastens around the neck like a soft fabric collar. When the wearer wants to mask their mouth and nose, they simply tug on the top of the fabric to pull it up over their chin and nose in one quick movement.

A clever pocket between the face and neck can be used to insert an extra disposable filter. The mask is made from 100 per cent recycled polyester, a hardwearing fabric created using plastic from recycled bottles, and the pattern

for Beta (MSK) is designed to waste as little fabric as possible, and can be machine washed at 30 degrees Celsius.

We know that face masks do not prevent the wearer from contracting coronavirus, but by catching coughs and sneezes they protect the people around them and slow down the rate of transmission. The mask is available in four colours – Lunar Blue, Neptune Blue, Mars Red and Aurora Green.

About the Petit Pli (MSK)

Petit Pli's Beta (MSK) is Petit Pli's first commercially available adult-wear design.

Designed and made in London, Petit Pli is releasing its mask to make bipedal commutes in a post-social distancing world as comfortable as possible.

About Petit Pli

London-based Petit Pli has won awards for their patent pending fabric which expands bi-directionally to fit children aged between nine months and four years old.

Former winner of the UK James Dyson Award

2018 Dezeen Award for Best Wearable Design 2018, 2019

Red Dot Award Product Design: 'Best of the Best' Winners

Global Change Award (2019)



Mike Berwin, Mount Batur, Bali

"Today's technology, that has kept us connected and collaborating when apart, has helped me weather the storm of Covid-19 and come out the other side"

BALI TO BRISTOL

HOW BEING A 'DIGITAL NOMAD' HELPED ME TO RIDE OUT THE TURBULENCE OF COVID-19

MIKE BERWIN
SCHOOL HOUSE 2002-2006

At the time global awareness of the Covid-19 pandemic was spreading, I was just over a year into living my #bestlife in Bali, Indonesia.

Back in December of 2018, I left New York to escape having to endure a sixth winter there and decided to spend a couple of months in Bali with the plan of returning to Manhattan after the city had thawed. I could never have imagined that I'd actually end up spending over a year in Bali and be able to fill it with so many amazing experiences. But that's exactly what happened and I was finally feeling like

I'd laid down some solid foundations for a continued future there. Then everything changed...

Fast forward to the middle of March 2020 when I made the incredibly tough decision to leave my life in Bali and come back to the UK, my birthplace but somewhere that I hadn't lived in for over seven years.

The combination of vulnerable family members who were and still are at risk as well as the many unknowns of what was going to happen globally made for a compelling case to 'come home'. Within

48hrs of making my decision I had packed up my villa, said my goodbyes and was on a plane headed back to the UK.

Luckily for me, my brother James (Weymouth, 99-04) and his wife Susan opened their home (and bubble) in Bristol to me and I spent the following three months during lockdown with them and their (at the time) yet to be born baby girl, Annabel.

After a couple of weeks feeling more than a little unsettled at both my new surroundings in Bristol and the plight of the world, I got back into my flow and my work. For the

past four years, that has been running my digital branding and design agency, Napkin Studio. We provide strategy, design and development services to companies, brands and individuals covering a wide spectrum of industries.

When setting up Napkin Studio I made a conscious decision to not take on the burden of a physical office space or to hire full-time employees but rather to allow myself to work from wherever I wanted and with whomever I wanted. That strategy I believe has been key in allowing me to survive during these unprecedented times.

Today's technology that can help keep us connected and be able to collaborate when apart, I've been able to weather the storm of Covid-19 and come out the other side.

I know that for so many around the world that's not been their reality and so I decided early on after returning to Bristol to dedicate resources from my agency to help those who needed design services to help their own business adjust to life in lockdown. I truly believe that the future of remote work and those who can work from anywhere is only going to increase exponentially. However it's going to take

some time for people to adapt to this new normal.

As for me, I now find myself making another move from Bristol to London and I'm excited at the new opportunities that will bring.

If you're thinking about going out on your own or want to understand better how to set yourself up to work remotely, feel free to get in touch and I'd be happy to share my experiences.

www.napkin.studio



OM CLUB EVENTS



Past OMC Events 2017-2019

2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING

Date	Career Path	Location	Speaker	Organiser
04 March 2021	Marketing	One Blackfriars	TBC	Karen Prichard
11 March 2021	Business Plan & Capital raising	One Blackfriars	Dipankar Shewaram	Michael Wong/Peter Wakeham
17 March 2021	Medical	College of Anaesthetists	Symposium speakers	Dr Russell Cowan
25 March 2021	Property	Cavalry & Guards Club	TBC	Graham Chase/Mike Peskin
06 May 2021	City/Financial Services	Lansdowne Club	Johanna Kyrklund, Global Head, Multi-Asset Investments, Schroders	Peter Wakeham/Solon Satanas
14 May 2021	Engineers	Bleeding Heart	TBC	Gordon Mizner
24 June 2021	Entrepreneurs Networking Event	One Blackfriars	TBC	Michael Wong/Peter Wakeham
30 September 2021	Property	Fino's	N/A	Graham Chase/Mike Peskin
28 October 2021	Robust Accounting and Social selling in a digital world	One Blackfriars	Asif Ahmed, Sarah Goodall	Michael Wong/Peter Wakeham
04 November 2021	Accountancy	TBC	TBC	Mike Solomons/Andrew Millet
18 November 2021	Legal	Wedlake Bell	TBC	Clive Weber
25 November 2021	Creative Arts/Entertainment	Royal Court Theatre	TBC	Tom Lincoln
TBC	Journalism	One Blackfriars	TBC	Caroline Hepker
TBC	Liverymen	Guildhall	N/A	Archie Galloway



Legal networking event, Wedlake Bell offices, 2018

CLUB FLAGSHIP EVENTS

Date	Event	Location	Speaker	Organiser
28 April 2021	Past Presidents' Luncheon	Athenaeum Club	N/A	Richard Llewellyn/Stuart Hibberdine
29 April 2021	Upper Sixth Leavers Event	Mill Hill School	N/A	Laura Turner/YOMS Ambassadors
17 June 2021	AGM	TBC	N/A	Julian Pollock
17 June 2021	Cocktail Party	TBC	N/A	Laura Turner/John Hellinikakis
18 September 2021	Old Millhillians Day	Mill Hill School	N/A	Laura Turner/John Hellinikakis
01 October 2021	Annual Dinner	Plaisterers Hall	N/A	Gordon Mizner/Laura Turner
17 December 2021	YOMS Christmas Party	Adam & Eve	N/A	YOMS Ambassadors

UK SOCIAL REUNIONS

Date	Region	Location	Speaker	Organiser
16 April 2021	Wales	Cardiff		Ronnie Boon/David Paddison
08 May 2021	East Anglia	Cambridge		David Short/Dr Russell Cowan
21 May 2021	Northern	Manchester	John Elliot tribute	Peter Wakeham/Graeme Elliot/Peter Belshaw

OVERSEAS SOCIAL REUNIONS

Date	Region	Location	Speaker	Organiser
08 April 2021	North America	Penn Club, New York	Jane Sanchez	Gordon Mizner/Peter Wakeham
9-10 April 2021	North America	Toronto	Jane Sanchez	John Oldroyd

YEAR SOCIAL REUNION

Date	Class	Location	Speaker	Organiser
TBC	2006 - 15 Years	TBC		YOMs Ambassadors

UNIVERSITY PUB EVENTS

Date	University	Location	Speaker	Organiser
06 March 2021	Oxford	TBC		YOMs Ambassadors
20 March 2021	Nottingham	TBC		YOMS Ambassadors

OM RELATIONS COMMITTEE



JOHN HELLINIKAKIS
MARRAY 1976-1981
CHAIR OF OM RELATIONS COMMITTEE

At the time of writing, the UK is still in the middle of a global pandemic, last experienced one hundred years ago. Many people, some known to us and particularly from the older generations, have sadly passed before their time. In the coming months, countries may have to endure another dramatic peak in infections. Apart from the obvious effect on peoples' physical health, the virus has adversely affected mental health, confidence, and the education of our children. It is a period of great uncertainty.

What is certain, however, are the severe economic consequences because of the lockdowns. Many have been or will be made redundant. Furthermore, as companies fight to stay viable, their first loyalty will be to retain their existing employees. As a result, the opportunities from annual recruitment drives by companies from the pools of fresh university graduates and school leavers will diminish. Many Old Millhillians, including those graduating from the school and the university this year have already been affected. At this time, possibly more than any time in the recent past, the Club community can provide support,

advice, and opportunities for the benefit of fellow Club members and for the pupils of the school. And one of the great advantages of being part of the Club, where members have both a common professional interest and an abiding affinity with Mill Hill School, is the opportunity to network amongst old friends and to potentially make new friends and contacts.

After the cancellation of much of the 2020 calendar, the following schedule of professional and social networking events, while necessarily provisional, is probably the most ambitious that we have undertaken. We have increased the number of the professions represented and we hope to improve the scope of what is being offered during many of the individual events.

Where possible, more organisers are aiming to engage speakers. For current pupils of the school and undergraduates, who are investigating potential future careers, we hope to provide a question and answer session before the main event. A chance to obtain a better idea of the pros and pitfalls of a profession from people, who really know.

In addition to the excellent programme of events from previous years, we are introducing a series of two or three events covering 'Entrepreneurship', which we hope will include some inspirational speakers and provide advice to aspiring entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial managers. We have also created two events, 'Marketing and Media' and 'Journalism' out of a single previous event – recognising the deep interest in these professions.

There are also plans to introduce pop-up events at universities, which in some cases will coincide with regional events. More information about these and all events will be provided by regular email newsletters closer to the date of the events.

This event programme is a work in progress and will only be successful due the hard work of the organisers and good attendance by the members. If anyone has any ideas for new events or any helpful input, we are pleased to hear from you.

We look forward to seeing you again in 2021. Please mark your diaries.

YOMS AMBASSADORS



Our new YOM Ambassador:

Oji left Mill Hill in 2007 and was a boarder in Burton Bank. Following his time at the school, Oji went on to study medicine at Cardiff University and followed this up with a masters at UCL. Oji is now back in London but often goes to visit his family back in Nigeria when possible. In his spare time, he loves hiking and playing golf (challengers welcome!).

What he will bring to the YOMs:

Oji has enjoyed being part of the OM network and wanted to be a part of the YOMs ambassadors to help more recent school leavers see the value in remaining connected to the OMs. He loves being around people and is really keen to inject his energy and ideas into the future YOMs plans. He also looks to engage not only the UK YOMs, but also those internationally – being a former international student himself.

School memory:

Oji and the YOMS Chair Dev have remained good friends since school. One notable memory was when Oji broke his knee during a snowball fight with Dev and a few others. He then went on to convince a number of pupils and teachers that he had been attacked by a shark whilst on holiday.

Clockwise from left: Dev Dhokia (McClure 02-07), Sive Ozer (School 04-09), Ciera Radia (Weymouth 07-12), Onyedikachi Oji (Burton Bank 05-07), Ted Macdonald (Priestley 11-16)



What we do

The YOMs ambassadors have two main objectives:

1. Engage the YOMs in the activities of the old millhillians club (funded networking events, annual dinners)
2. Bridge the gap that exists between the YOMs and the existing Old Millhillians who have traditionally been more involved in the clubs activities

What we have planned

Despite the setback of Covid, we are already planning towards a 2021 schedule. We are currently working on booking in University pop events, annual Xmas drinks and 5/10 year reunions for school leavers to encourage Yoms to stay in touch with each other and the club.

Some events already provisionally booked in for 2021 include Nottingham and Oxford Universities pop up events. These events will build on the London universities pop up event held last year.

YOMs ambassadors also attend the club's committee meetings to represent young voices in discussions around the future of the OMC. This allows the YOMs to actively contribute / influence OM committee plans.



OAKERS STAYING IN TOUCH

GERRY WESTOBY RIDGEWAY 1956-61
OAKER-IN-CHIEF

I believe that if you look at the list of Oakers, all 114 of them, the over-riding Impression is that there is definitely a very strong bond amongst this group of Old Millhillians of a certain age. Back in the 50's, 60's and 70's, we played rugby, cricket and hockey together, some still play golf. We regularly lunch together and more than anything we have many, many laughs together. It is this 'togetherness' which is the glue that bonds us and has been paramount in these rather challenging times. Our friendships new and old have offered the most wonderful support network and I hope that during the difficulties we have all faced over the last six months of the pandemic that I have been of some help.

It has been a strange period. I suppose, in a way, it's because lockdown has meant that conventional 'fun' was no longer available. So, to combat that problem, a motley bunch of Oakers, including the President of the Club, the Chairman and Henry Goldsmith from New Jersey among others, have been on regular thursday evening 'Zoom' sessions lasting about half an hour to 40 minutes.

Meanwhile, yours truly has tried to keep everyone amused, informed and involved thanks to the daily preponderance of jokes, news and opinions, which appear on my computer almost hourly from Oakers near and far. Grateful thanks to those who have sent me all this material. It has most definitely

felt like a team effort in raising spirits amongst this motley crew of OMs.

This has been a time when I have considered my own mortality. It was brought home to me when my cousin Nicki's husband died very suddenly from Covid-19 in April. She worked in the office at Belmont for many years. I spoke to her recently and the pain and the grieving process is still there in a big way. It has been very tough for so many people.

For the first time in decades, millions of people have been facing the same health concerns. I suppose everyone is slightly anxious about venturing outside, fearful of picking up the germs, despite socially distancing and wearing masks. It is the sign of the times.

However, I am an optimist. I cannot abide the naysayers and prophets of doom everywhere in the media. If you buy what they are selling, you'll end up convinced that there is no hope. They wheel out these so-called 'experts' who have the benefit of hindsight and blame everybody but themselves. They all do it, politicians, scientists, religious leaders and Uncle Tom Cobley and all. That is why I seldom watch the news.

It's Murphy's Law, which states, "Nothing is as easy as it looks. Everything takes longer than you expect and if anything can go wrong, it will – at the worst possible moment". Nevertheless, I have

rather enjoyed spending time at home and not spending money on fripperies, but steering it more towards charities like Captain Tom, Cancer and Dementia. I would be grateful if your thoughts or prayers could be directed towards any Oaker or Old Millhillian who you know, is suffering from ill-health or bereavement at the moment. We do know about a few.

Even now, as life returns to something like normality, maybe it won't be quite the same again. There are so many areas where changes to one's way of life may become the 'norm'. One of the bright spots in this bleak year is the reminder that friends and neighbours are not just for lockdown, but for life. However, having said that, the Welsh Police weren't very friendly when I drove through a village called Friog at 35mph, which had a 30mph speed limit while on holiday. So, I went on a speed awareness course on Zoom. It took 2 ½ hours instead of the usual four hours; it also cost less than a speeding fine. Let's hope they continue to do it that way!

Finally, I hope my ramblings won't mean that I will be 'cancelled' by the 'woke brigade'. I won't be 'taking the knee' because I can't kneel anymore. What is an algorithm? I thought it was a musical term, until I looked it up in a dictionary. Maybe it would be a good idea to read Rudyard Kipling's 'IF' again ... 'If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you' ...etc!



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GET IN TOUCH

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MERCHANDISE

Silk Ties	
Country & Town	£35.00
Extra long	£41.00
Non crease	£35.00
Silk bow ties	£17.00
Cuff links - Enamel	£19.50
Silver Ballpoint Pen (black)	£12.00
Golf Umbrella	£39.00
Pashmina	£25.00
Silk Square	£25.00
Mens Scarf	£25.00
OM Beanie Hat	£15.00

Does not include Postage & Packing.

Available to collect from the Club office.

MEMBER	RESPONSIBILITY
Officers by election	
Asif Ahmed	Honorary Treasurer
Julian Pollock	Honorary Secretary
Peter Wakeham	Chair
Ex Officio members 2020/21	
Nigel Baker	Alford House Representative, Sponsorship Foundation Liaison
John Barron	
John Gallagher	Vice President
Gordon Mizner	President
Jane Sanchez	Head of Mill Hill School
Members by election	
President role development	
Chris Kelly	Vice President for 2022 AGM election
Richard Llewellyn	Immediate Past President (Ex Officio)
Committee Chairpersons	
Clare Lewis	Chair, OM Relations Committee
Dick Lidwell	Chair, Careers Committee
Dev Dhokia	Chair, YOMS Ambassadors
Solon Satanas	Chair, Investment Committee
Peter Wakeham	Chair, Nominations Committee
Liaison Officers	
Adrian Jordan	Belmont and OBs

FROM THE CHAIR

2020 will be remembered by all OMs as a life-style changer – maybe forever if recent USA research into changing consumer habits is anything to go by.

I see the trend to home working and digital meetings as an exciting opportunity for the Club to expand the range and reach of offerings to members at very little extra cost.

Physical social and networking reunions will continue. Subject to future meeting restrictions in risk areas, we have an intensive programme lined up for 2021 – see page 106. My thanks go to all event organisers for their preparatory thinking and time thus far and to John Hellinikakis for his leadership of the programme.

This year we held a virtual AGM. Julian Pollock and Gordon Mizner organised and chaired a meeting that had one of our best attendances in recent times. Secure on line pre-and during AGM voting was successfully implemented. Q & As went well. I hope we will be able to return to a physical AGM followed by our Annual Cocktail Party in 2021, but I am sure we will retain the digital attendance and voting processes so that those less able to travel can still attend.

Beyond the AGM, digital opportunities are massive – especially for the programmes undertaken by the Club’s Careers Committee and professional networking organisers. Attracting guest speakers to contribute to a one hour virtual presentation and Q & A is likely to prove much easier than to a physical meeting. We will have no room hire charges and meeting planning and organisation will be far less onerous. We experimented with this in September with a digital event aimed at helping OMs to improve their job prospects through their LinkedIn profile and settings. Sarah Goodall, CEO Tribal Impact, led this session which was well attended. Creating a programme of digital events will be a 2021 priority.

Alford House Youth Club which has been supporting the young people of Lambeth since 1884 and with the help of OMs since the 1930s continued to do so during lockdown. The two senior youth workers stayed in remote contact with some of the most vulnerable young people and as soon as it was possible the Club reopened its doors, providing a safe space for relaxation for its members. Meanwhile the Trustees’ development group continued preparation for the exciting initiative to refurbish the Club building.

2021 will be a busy year for the Club’s relations with the Foundation. February 2022 marks the centenary of the death of Sir John McClure and the Foundation is planning

to celebrate this great man’s contribution to Mill Hill. The Life Guardians Committee and McClure Award Trustees, chaired by Julian Pollock, together with John Gallagher, proposed OMC President 2021/22, will lead OM support for the Foundation’s plans. Sir John is a legend and I would encourage all OMs to be part of the celebration of his heritage in whatever way they can.

Finally, my thanks to Laura and Ann for their great work during these weird months. We chose not to furlough because we had catch ups to do on the administration side and we were very keen to publish Martlet. This edition contains important memories for the future. The Club Office has therefore been mobile – sometimes in Burton Bank, sometimes in Ann’s home and regularly at my home desk. All in all, it’s worked well.

Take care of yourselves. Take care of others.

Peter Wakeham, OMC Chair
(Burton Bank 60-64)



IN MEMORIAM

Da Costa	Gordon	Murray	1938 - 1943
Davey	Keith	Weymouth	1947 - 1952
Hawes	Douglas	Winterstoke	1932 - 1935
Hemingway	John	Winterstoke	1944 - 1948
Hobdell	Roger	Collinson	1951 - 1956
Hubbard	Ray	Weymouth	1946 - 1951
Hutton	Noel	Burton Bank	1963 - 1968
Larkin	Howard	Ridgeway	1956 - 1960
Macfarlane	Maxwell	Scrutton	1944 - 1948
Prout	John	School House	1935 - 1939
Rafalat	Zuzanna	Weymouth	1996 - 1998
Revell	Raymond	Weymouth	1945 - 1950
Riley	Alastair	Ridgeway	1965 - 1970
Roberts	Jim	Collinson	1945 - 1950
Robinson	Anthony	Scrutton	1951 - 1956
Vincett	John	Collinson	1960 - 1966
Welch	Andrew	McClure	1975 - 1980



Walking daughter Rosie down the aisle in Mill Hill School Chapel, Aug 2019

ANDREW WELCH

1962-2020

McCLURE

After spending his early years at Goodwyn School (1966-70), Andrew started Belmont in 1970. He would always recall playing in the Belmont woods dressed in a boiler suit, making dens and keeping an eye on the time to be back for lessons. His school reports used to say that he struggled with Maths; a trend that seems to have continued through the family tree. He began at Mill Hill School (McClure) in 1975, followed by his brother Jonathan in 1979 (McClure). Andrew was involved in several extra-curricular activities, including the CCF Navy section, the modern languages film club, fencing team, farm society and even a short-lived career in the rugby team.

After finishing school, and with the encouragement of William Winfield, he also spent some time teaching English at the Institution Join-Lambert in Rouen, France where he became fluent in French. He was still in touch with friends from his years at both schools, and always fondly remembered walking to school with Roger Perkins, to name one. Another of his school friends was the Rev. James Fields (McClure) who, in August 2019, conducted the marriage of his eldest daughter Rosie to Greg Walsh (both Old Millhillians) in the Mill Hill School Chapel. James also poignantly led Andrew's funeral recently in May 2020.

In 1981, Andrew gained unexpected yet well-deserved entry to Keble College,

Oxford to study Geography, following encouragement from Alan Prosser Harris (McClure Housemaster). Naturally unable to sit still for too long, he joined several clubs and societies including Territorial Army, rowing club and fencing teams (on which he achieved a half blue). Andrew always reflected on his time at Oxford with great happiness, as this was where he made life-long friends and brilliant memories as a student. Upon graduating from Oxford in 1984, Andrew spent a term teaching Geography at Mill Hill School. A few staff contemporaries include David Woodrow, Tony Slade, Dai Rees, Uschi Pullham and Tony Armstrong.

Since early childhood, Andrew had always dreamt of becoming a police officer. This dream was finally realised in 1985, when having trained at Hendon Police College, Andrew started 'on the beat' in Golders Green. His career then took a unique and extraordinary turn in 1989 when he joined the Metropolitan Police Special Branch at New Scotland Yard. He held a wide variety of posts during this time, including work on Irish terrorism, organised crime intelligence and public order extremism at Heathrow Airport.

This unit was later merged with the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist Branch to form the Counter Terrorism Command in 2006. During this time he specifically dealt with many complex and protracted investigations into some of the most

major counter-terrorist incidents in the UK, whilst also finding time to pass Part I of the Inspectors Exam.

Andrew's police career eventually culminated in his dream job in 2010 when he became the Counter Terrorism Police Liaison Officer (CTPLO) for the UK. This posting required him to relocate to Paris for six years where Andrew was able to build trusted and professional relationships with all forms of foreign police, government departments and intelligence agencies. Further using his linguistic abilities, Andrew became an invaluable link between France and the UK. During these six years in Paris, he became even further involved in many investigations into highly sensitive terror-related incidents, spanning across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Tunisia and Algeria. Alongside working, Andrew also built many lasting friendships, often





returning to Paris to meet socially long after his return to the UK.

Andrew received six Police Commendations throughout his career in relation to the contemporary threats from International Terrorism, eventually retiring as Detective Sergeant with 32 years of exemplary service in 2016. The words most commonly used to describe Andrew in his professional career, and which feature consistently on his commendation certificates, are dedication, diligence and tenacity.

In testament to his hard-working nature, Andrew enjoyed only a very brief retirement, choosing then to fulfil another personal ambition of becoming a teacher. He chose to train with the pioneering organisation 'Now Teach', becoming a Geography teacher. He taught at Ark Globe Academy in South

East London for a year, and gained his NQT status in 2019 whilst teaching at St. Mary's and St. John's CE School in Hendon. Whilst doubting he was any good at teaching, testimony from his pupils say that he was kind, patient and caring and even got some of them interested in pursuing Geography further into their school career. Andrew was always driven by a duty to put something back, believing that every pupil should have access to the same support and opportunities that he had enjoyed throughout his life. In 2008, Andrew was proud to be invited to join the Mill Hill Court of Governors by Dr. Roger Chapman and served nearly 12 years as a member. He simultaneously served on the board at Alford House Youth Club in Lambeth managed by a number of Old Millhillians, including Nigel Baker, having been a member since his school days.

Andrew married Jo in 1990 and together had three daughters, Rosie, Amy and Eliza, all of whom attended Mill Hill (Weymouth). Constantly outnumbered in a house full of girls, Andrew found various forms of escape through sailing, gardening and adding to his legendary collection of model police cars. Modest and highly intelligent, (yet sometimes in need of reminding about the mundane matters of the day), he barely ever raised his voice, never spoke a forceful word and always took joy and appreciation from the simplest moments in life.

He had a complete inability to throw anything away, treasuring his eclectic collection of French films and Blue's CD's, and always laughing and joking playfully whenever we were to point it out. Our merciless teasing of Andrew's quirks was a source of endless fun for the family and will be so terribly missed.

He brought calmness to our family of five, always reminding his daughters never to take life too seriously, through his advice to 'only worry when it happens'. He encouraged the four of us to be confident in our abilities and to always be content with what we have.

Andrew's death was a result of a sudden cardiac arrest on Easter Monday, 13th April 2020, during the peak of the 'Covid-19 lockdown'. He was only 57 years old, and his passing has snatched away all other ambitions we know he had. His proudest moments over the last few years were seeing all three of his daughters graduate from university after leaving Mill Hill School. Most recently, he was overjoyed to be able to walk his eldest daughter down the aisle in the Mill Hill School Chapel and dance on the Masters Lawn at the wonderful reception hosted on Belmont School grounds.

His legacy to his family, his parents David and Philippa, and to his brother Jonathan is immeasurable and simply beyond words. His sense of dedication, honour and duty is evident, not only in his proud service to Queen and Country, but also his commitment to child welfare and education. Andrew is loved, well-liked and well-respected and will be sorely missed by so many. We cannot think of a better tribute to a life well lived.

Thank you for reading about my husband. I am so proud to be his wife. Our daughters are so grateful and feel privileged to have had such a loving, dependable and upstanding role-model for a father and for the quality time they had with him.

May I also take this opportunity to thank those who have sent such kind messages and cards that I haven't yet personally thanked for, they are so appreciated by all of us. When conditions allow, we will hold a memorial service for Andrew where all his friends and family can finally attend.

Joanna Welch



Andrew Welch, Front Row, Second left, Fencing team

JOHN VINCETT

1946-2020

COLLINSON

J. P. VINCETT (1960-66)
Collinson; Upper Economics VI; Monitor; Librarian; Games Committee; Hobbies Prize; 1st XV 1964-65; Middlesex Schoolboys' XV 1965-66; 1st XI Hockey 1964; Sevens Team 1965-66; Athletics Team 1963-66, Capt. 66; Geographical Society; Science Society; Koinonia; Ancients Anonymous; Phoebe Group; Natural History Society; Petty Officer Instructor, R. N. Section; Hoping to enter University College of North Wales. Ban-

With deep sadness, we announce the passing of John Vincett (aged 72) on April 8.

Predeceased by his parents, Lilian and Phil Vincett, John was the devoted husband of Pam Wheaton, cherished father of Toby, Sarah (Steve Race) and Megan (Chris Muir), and beloved grandfather of Alice, Benjamin, Lily and Madeleine. He also leaves behind his two sisters, Jenny Freeman (the late Harry Freeman) and Susan Houellebecq (Gary Houellebecq), sister-in-law Sandra Wheaton, and their families.

Born in England, John grew up in Mill Hill, attending Mill Hill School as a boarder for six years. After teaching for a year at Clayesmore Preparatory School in Dorset, John attended Manchester university where he obtained a degree in Psychology.

John rocked the boat (as was his way) leaving a centuries-old family tradition of butchers to forge his own unique path. Drawn to Canada's wilderness and northern communities, John emigrated to Canada in 1971 living in Red Lake, Ontario for eight years.

Through his work with remote Indigenous communities while working for the Ontario government, he met

Pam, who relocated from Toronto to Red Lake. In 1979, they moved to Toronto where they raised their family.

In Toronto, John worked at Imperial Oil for several years before joining PDA, a public affairs company, later becoming a partner.

He eventually set up his own company, Public Dialogue Alternatives (Sacbe Consultants Limited). His greatest joy in later years was building a cottage in Eastern Ontario that he and his family enjoyed together.

John was a mentor, a teacher, a renowned story-teller, and a gifted communicator. Among John's many passions was his love of art, in its many forms.

As a man of great integrity, principle and wisdom, John worked in public affairs, dedicating his career to finding resolution to challenging public issues through meaningful community dialogue. His quick wit and sense of humour remained with him throughout his illness.

A celebration of his life will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Princess Margaret Hospital.



*"Within his eyes
were galaxies of
thoughts"
(anonymous)*



John in 1st XV Rugby, 1964

RAY HUBBARD

1933-2020

WEYMOUTH



Dad was born in Rushcutter Bay in Australia on 24th February 1933 as his parents were on their way to the Solomon Islands where our grandfather had a position as a judge.

He moved on with his parents from the Solomon Islands to the Middle East where he spent much of his childhood. Dad's sister Ann completed their family. Once he was old enough he was sent to join Mill Hill School as this was where his father and Uncle had been educated. At that time Mill Hill School was at St Bees in Cumbria so Dad spent a short time there before moving down to Mill Hill when the school returned after the war. This was the beginning of his lifelong connection to Mill Hill School, very much a second family to him where he made many friends. He, Don Allen and Ronnie Jones were great friends 'the 3 Amigos'.

At 18 he left school and tried a variety of different jobs before settling down in the drinks trade. He and his colleagues used to travel to France to try out different wines so that they could inform their clients on the best ones to purchase. Everyone will remember the excellent wines that he provided for all the different events he was associated with. Dad met Mum (Dorothy) at the age of 21 at a dance at Wembley Town Hall, one which Mum and her friend were encouraged to go to by their landlady. They married and this was the start of their 65 year partnership. They moved to Mill Hill after Dad finished his National Service and recovered from a broken leg – a rugby injury – with Sue their baby daughter. Ann and then Caroline completed the family.

Mum and Dad became involved with St Pauls Church, where Dad had been confirmed as a Mill Hill School pupil, the other churches having been dismissed after being doctored by Mum. Together they helped to run and organise many different events over their 65 year association with the church.

Dad continued to play rugby as a 'fearless' wing forward, the Old Boy

teams being in their heyday at this time with a number of England Internationals. Apparently this team mainly comprised players from the unbeaten school XV of 50/51. He played rugby, water polo and swam against the school; according to one of the boys he competed against 'he had a demon speed at breaststroke and was a dab hand at water polo'. He survived a horrendous accident at the bottom of Wills Grove, the bottom lamppost on the left being labelled by us as 'dad's lamppost'. Dad played rugby for a while afterwards and then took up refereeing and we have fond memories of afternoons at Headstone Lane while mum had a well deserved break at home.

Dad was a devoted OM, heavily involved with all aspects of Mill Hill School and the OM's associations. He organised many successful events with Mum's help, always being one of the first to arrive and the last to leave. Dad played an active role in the management of Alford House for 25 years. He served on the OM's Club Executive Committee and particularly enjoyed his year as President (2000-2001), attending various social events abroad and at home.

Dad really enjoyed rugby and contributed much to the activities of the rugby club over the years, encouraging participation from the Colts upwards. He and Mum enjoyed rugby tours with the school all over the world from South America to Torquay, making friends with many of the parents of pupils at the school. Dad was an active member of the OM's Lodge and he practised the principles of masonry - brotherly love, belief and truth throughout his life.

He was a school governor of a local primary school, totally committed to his role in supporting the pupils and staff. Dad was a wonderful father to us, his three girls. After masterminding three outstanding weddings he welcomed his son in laws into the family and the boys remember many wonderful dinners and other events that Dad invited them to. He was a great father in law with a wicked sense of humour; Huw recalling

that over a period of about 30 years whenever he phoned and said it was Huw Dad always replied Who! The whole family remember the wonderful Sunday dinners at Parkside.

Once we left home Dad and Mum travelled to many places including Egypt to revisit Dad's childhood places, Canada to visit his sister's family, Switzerland to visit his mother's family, Australia to renew his Australian passport!, New Zealand and a cruise to Alaska.

He was the best grandad to Sian, Gareth, Owen, Mari and Rhys getting involved in all aspects of their lives. He was also great grandad to Evie, Lily and Amelie who he enjoyed watching play.

Comments from cards and letters Mum received sum Dad up: kind, humorous, caring, generous with an overwhelming willingness to help others and an amazing friend. As a family we have so many memories of Dad including: the black cat brought home from a warehouse he visited, the rabbit he found on the A41 on the way home one night which we found in the bath the following morning and the stories he told of his younger days. One which Ann remembers in particular was of Dad's inaugural solo flight as a qualified pilot after leaving school. He got lost, landed at an airfield somewhere, having no money on him he persuaded someone to give him fuel and directions to fly home. These included following the railway track!

Dad survived invasive prostate cancer treatment and carried on life as normally as possible with Mum and the families support. Dementia took a lot of Dad away towards the end but he was still as always a family man, remembering all his family and enjoying the sounds of his great grandchildren playing.

We will all miss him and never forget him for the fantastic man he was.

Sue, Ann and Caroline.

MEMORIES OF RAY

Ray was a great friend to me, as you know, we became very close during the heyday of the Mill Hill School Rugby Football Social Club. I first met him at Headstone Lane in 1982, shortly after I arrived at Mill Hill, he was organising an OMs Colts game with Jim Kent. I requested some help in hosting a team that was coming over from Agen in France and he immediately offered. In the end we held a memorable dinner in the St Paul's church hall. The way that Ray offered to help and then contributed so much time and effort to the successful hosting of the boys from France was so typical of him.

I always thought it was quite remarkable that he was prepared to spend so much time and indeed money supporting the school, in particular the rugby, despite the fact he didn't have children there. All the other parents, who helped, had boys at the school and therefore a vested interest in our fundraising. His tireless efforts, ordering and unloading wine and glasses, shifting barbecues and working hard at events was quite remarkable.

At school Ray was an outstanding rugby player and swimmer, he immediately joined the OMRFC after leaving school and was a leading player during one of the Club's most successful periods in the 50's. Ray became a devoted Old Millhillian, his service to the Club was quite outstanding, culminating in his year as President, which I know he greatly enjoyed.

His service to the Management Committee, Alford House, The Lodge and the rugby club in particular was exceptional. He clearly loved his time at the School and was determined to support the old boys in so many ways. He was the leading contributor to the activities of the Club of his generation.

Ray and Dorothy were a great couple, she supported him in all OM activities and they made many friends in the Millhillian community, regularly attending the Annual Dinner and joining the European Tours. They were great friends to so many, they were a special couple.

It was a great shame that Ray became so unwell in his later years, he bravely fought his illness with his usual stoicism and fortitude.

I shall treasure many happy memories, enjoying his company on so many memorable occasions at Headstone Lane, Mill Hill, OM dinners and indeed on tours all over the world from South America to Torquay!

Chris Kelly Mill Hill Master 1981-1993

Ray was a wonderful man whom I got to know through rugby (Ray and Dorothy introduces me as a colt to OMs rugby and came as supporters on my three crazy OM Easter tours 10 years later too) and then as a fellow governor of Alford House.

Eddie Pratt, Collinson House 1979-1982)

I remember a conversation between Ray Hubbard and a boy in my dormitory. The boy had been caught talking after lights out. He begged Hubbard not to punish him, on the grounds that he very rarely broke the rules and there were many boys who offended more often. Hubbard explained that he had great sympathy for the wrongdoer and would dearly love to have overlooked the incident. But that it was his bounden duty as a House Prefect to report wrongdoers and to avoid giving grounds for accusations of partiality. It was the most civilised conversation I ever heard between a prefect and a culprit.

David Butler, Scrutton 1948 -54

I don't think there are enough words to describe his contribution to rugby both at School or OM. The MHRSC organised and fundraised for school rugby tours, and Ray with Tony Smith helped Chris Kelly on many occasions. Ray ran the OM Colts for decades, hence being the close liaison between the OMRFC and MHS Rugby. I recall my first match as a sixth former, playing for the Colts on a Sunday at HL. Ray always on hand with clean kit, medical bag and the water on the side-lines. He always made sure we had everything to hand, and Dorothy was like our adopted Aunt!

Of course this was in hand with the Smiths too, but Ray led from the front. Never forget a match against Feltham Young Offenders at their ground which was basically within the prison walls. An uneasy match with many outbreaks of fights, but Ray looked after us in his usual way. He also took me on my first ever tour, at Easter down to Weston-Super-Mare/ Taunton. Travelling with the OM was of course a treat, but as a schoolboy Colt it was daunting but, like many others, I remember him buying our first beer on tour.

He really was an incredible person, never gave up on the cats and raised money to ensure we have new kit every season. Stood on the side-line in the pouring rain, as if we were all his adopted sons, shouting and supporting from the side-lines. My story isn't unique, he was a mentor to many of us and will be sadly missed as the gentle, caring individual mentor he was for many of us.

Noyan Nihat, Collinson 1982-87



R. C. HUBBARD (1946-51), Weymouth; Shell; House Prefect July 1950; 1st XV 1950; 2nd XI Hockey 1951; Senior Swimming VIII 1949-50-51; Boxing VIII 1949; Choral Soc.; Y.F.C. (Manager); Sgt. in R.A.F./C.C.F.; Cert. A pt. 1 July 1948; A.T.C. Proficiency 1950; Flying Scholarship June 1951; Aviation; Supreme Court, Jos, Plateau Province, Nigeria.

My memories of Ray date back to the time of the MHS Rugby Football Social Club during the 1980's and early 90's. Ray and Dorothy were immensely active at all of our fund-raising events including BBQ's, Race Nights, Curry Lunches. They were first to arrive for the set up and, more often than not, last leave at the end. Ray was our "go to" man for the wine for all our events. Along with the likes of Ann and Tony Smith, Ron and Ros Morgan, Jim and Jill Kent and of course staff members like Chris Kelly and Tim Dingle, they were part of an immensely successful fund raising operation for rugby tours and, latterly, cricket and other sports tours. They were loyal and committed members of St Paul's Church on the Ridgeway.

David Woodrow, MHS Master

Ray's commitment to OM and school rugby, the OM Lodge, the Foundation and the OM Community at large is legendary. As many note above, his lovely wife Dorothy was also an active supporter of all his initiatives, as has been his son-in-law, Huw Richards, who on numerous occasions has arranged for gifts and the President's Chain to be elegantly engraved. Ray was fun to be with and generous with his spirit as well as his time. I am sure all Past Presidents and current and former members of the Club Management Committee join with me in recognizing his significant contribution to our welfare and enjoyment. We will miss him.

Peter Wakeham, Chair, Old Millhillians Club



Ray was an outstanding rugby player and I still have an OMRFC, Headstone Lane, Rugby Programme, dated March 1954, which shows the OMs team list and includes Ray and myself.

Rodney Haynes

JIM ROBERTS

1932-2020

COLLINSON



J. ROBERTS (1948-50; Collinson; Upper Science VIth; Monitor, December 1949; 1st XV, 1948-49-50 (Vice-Capt. 1950). Presentation Cap, 1950. 1st VII, 1949-50; 1st XI (Cricket), 1947-48-49-50 (Hon. Sec. 1949, Capt. 1950); 1st XI (Hockey), 1948-49-50; Selection Committee, 1949; Hon. Sec. 1950; Athletics Team, 1948-49-50; Single-handed IX, 1949-50; Fives VI, 1949-50; Squash V, 1949-50; Junior Swimming VIII, 1946-47; Games Committee; Executive Committee; Geographical Society; Choral Society; Music Circle; C.S.M. in Army/C.C.F.; Cert. A Pt. II, November 1948; School Certificate, 1948; Higher Certificate, 1950; Hamilton Bailey Memorial Prize for Bowling, 1949-50. 64 Mildred Avenue, Hayes, Middlesex.

"He was part of the famous school 1st XV in 1948/49 and 49/50 which only conceded two tries over the two seasons and which boasted future England Internationals Jim at fly half (18 caps) and Johnny Williams at scrum half (9 caps)"

James (Jim) Roberts (MHS 45-50) was born in Liverpool, where his parents originated from, on 25th June 1932. His father's company moved the family to Harrow soon afterwards where his brother John (MHS 48-53) was born in 1934. Jim attended primary school in Harrow, however, the family moved to Hayes in 1937 when he went to Pinkwell Lane School and from there he won a scholarship to Drayton Manor Grammar school in 1943.

Jim's parents couldn't afford to educate him privately, but in 1945 he was fortunate enough to be awarded a place at Mill Hill School, as part of the Middlesex Scheme. When he first started at MHS, in Collinson House, Jim was passionate about football and was punished on numerous occasions for playing with a football in the school grounds. Before long, however, he 'saw the light' and applied his incredible sporting talent to playing rugby, cricket, hockey (including single-handed

hockey) and athletics, representing the school across a wide range of sports with a considerable level of excellence. He was part of the famous school 1st XV in 1948/49 and 49/50 which only conceded two tries over the two seasons and which boasted future England Internationals Jim at fly half (18 caps) and Johnny Williams at scrum half (9 caps).

Jim left Mill Hill in December 1950 and in January 1951 was posted to Catterick for his National Service with the Royal Signals. During his service period, the length of National Service was increased; however, in 1952 he was fortunate enough to be discharged and start at Christ's College, Cambridge to study Engineering. Whilst at Cambridge he won three Blues as centre (1952) and wing (1953 & 1954).

Upon leaving Cambridge Jim started working for OTIS in London and played rugby for the Old Millhillians, London,

Middlesex. He also played a few games for both Paris University Club and Llanelli and had a number of England trials.

In 1958 he married Marianne Dunne, the young Irish model he had been introduced to by Tony O'Reilly, moving to Manchester in 1960 so he could take up the position of Sales Director at Weston Evans. It was at this point he started playing at Sale Rugby Club.

In 1960 having played the final trial at Twickenham and on their way back to Manchester, Marianne suggested it was possibly time to consider giving up on his dream of playing for England as he was now 28. In order to change the conversation, Jim switched on the radio, only to hear that he had been selected for his debut International match against Wales at Twickenham; a game England won 14-6 and in which he scored two tries!

Jim went onto play another 17 consecutive matches for England until

his final appearance against Wilson Whineray's touring All Blacks team in January 1964, a game that England lost 0-14. Jim carried on playing for Sale until he retired in 1965.

One of the most memorable and talked about England matches that Jim played in was at Cardiff Arms Park in 1963... the following report gives some idea of the conditions that day:

"Still in living memory is the scarcely less remarkable match of 1963, played amid a winter that the Met Office reckoned the coldest since the 1740s with huge piles of straw close to the touchlines and a collection of agricultural equipment, including three tractors, behind the goal at the Taff End. It was too cold to train outside and Wales's new half-backs were forbidden to use a ball in the gym at Newport, had to practice with a rolled-up tracksuit.

The match was as chaotic as you might expect, with frozen hands dropping

passes and players skidding haplessly past the ball as they attempted to pick up. Amid it all was one truly great moment - England's first-half try. Wing Jim Roberts threw a long line-out on his own 25, centre Mike Weston gathered and passed on to partner Malcolm Phillips. He scissored with wing Peter Jackson, who passed rapidly back near halfway. Phillips, given a small overlap, made it all the way to the line in the face of an icy wind. It would have been some score in good conditions. On an icefield it was little short of miraculous and the key moment in the 13-6 victory by an England team featuring seven new caps, including the entire front five."

This match was famous (or infamous) for being the last time an England team beat Wales at Cardiff for a period of 25 years. In 1988 Courage, the then sponsors of the Six Nations, arranged for the team to reunite for a photo to replicate the team picture from 1963.

In July 1960 Jim and Marianne had their first child Guy (MHS 73-78), followed by Karen (MHS 79-81) in May 1963, Fiona (MHS 80-82) in October 1964 and Windsor (MHS 79-85) in July 1966.

Jim continued to enjoy a healthy and engaged relationship with Mill Hill School since the last of his children left and fulfilled many roles between 1992 and 2006 including Chair of Governors, various functions on the Mill Hill School Foundation Committee and as President of the Old Millhillians Club. More recently he organised the OMS Cambridge Dinner over a number of years.

Jim and Marianne separated in 1982 and Jim went on to remarry in 2001, where he lived a quiet life in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. He had a close relationship with his four children and nine grandchildren, Hannah, Katie & Millie (Fiona), Mane & Dana (Guy), Laura & Becca (Karen) and Elise & Bea (Windsor).

Guy Roberts

MEMORIES OF JIM



One memorable story JR would tell often was set in Auckland 1997. He was running late for the OMs Dinner there, it was his year as Club President. He was stopped by a 'large' Islander Police Officer for speeding! JR quickly got out of the car to plead ignorance and the officer noted his OMRFC jumper and said "I guess you were a 'back' as you were driving very quickly?" JR immediately saw his window of opportunity and told the officer that he had not only played wing, but had played for England a long time ago and that his last game was in 1964 against Wilson Whineray's all-conquering team! The officer paused, then shook his hand before asking where he was heading to. He then gave him a 'blue light' escort direct to the venue; upon arrival he asked for JR's autograph and thanked him for being in New Zealand!

Windsor Roberts, Collinson 1979-85

Jim was a huge part of our Club history at Old Millhillians, but also our identity. He was our last surviving full international

player, but more than that, he was a truly lovely man. All our players were honoured recently to have Jim present them with their shirts before a match – his strength of character shone through in every firm handshake. We were all truly devastated to hear of his passing, but he will not be forgotten. We are massively proud to be able to call Jim Roberts an OMRFC player.

Ben Nash - Chairman OMRFC

The first teams used to have little cartoons drawn for them when they had their team dinner. As I had some meagre talent in drawing I often drew the cards. I drew one of Jim Roberts confronted with a policeman on a motor bike. The policeman was saying 'I don't care if you are on foot, Mr Roberts. Thirty miles an hour is still the limit.' Only a few years ago I saw Jim at an MHS rugby match and reminded him of the card. 'I've still got it,' he said.

David Butler, Scrutton 1948-54

Jim captained the School cricket XI in 1950 and we opened the batting together,

or, I should say, he opened the batting and I accompanied from the other end. Subsequently we both served on the OM committee and enjoyed each other's company on the OM "European dinner" tours.

Robert Harley

Jim was a very popular character. One classical year I played for the OMs XV with Jim on the wing. Needless to say I was totally out of my depths!

David Marks, Winterstoke 1943-48

Jim Roberts was one of many OMs of his era who gave much back to the school and its community of OMs. He was President of the Club 1996-97, a Governor of the Foundation and Chair of the Life Guardians Committee. Thanks to him and Roger Gardener, Life Guardians (formerly Life Governors) continue to play a valuable role today as Governors of the Foundation and Trustees of the McClure Memorial Trust, which helps fund the current McClure bursary at Mill Hill School.

Peter Wakeham, Burton Bank 1960-65

FROM THE 'PEN' OF JIM ROBERTS

SEPTEMBER 1945

It wasn't long before I found out about school discipline. Being a soccer fanatic, I had brought a soccer ball with me and at the first opportunity, I took it on to Collinson Field and kicked it about.

Very soon the Head of House came out and told me in no uncertain terms that Mill Hill played rugby and soccer balls were not allowed. 'Don' let me see it again' he said. A day or so later, I did the same thing and out came the Head of House, and he reminded me of what he had said a day or so earlier, confiscated my ball and I received three whacks with a slipper. It was the first of many.

'And so I turned to rugby, very reluctantly. I remember the first occasion I was involved, which was about my third day and it was on the Park. As I had played right wing at soccer, I thought that I should be right wing in rugby. However, Steve Ruhemann, another new boy, who was very bright but a rabid communist, also wanted to play right wing (strange), and as he was somewhat bigger than me, he prevailed. However, I played right centre and got my own back by never passing him the ball. I soon became interested in the game, but was moved to fly half by the Under 15s master and thereby formed a partnership with the great Johnny Williams and under the captaincy of the then very large Ronnie Aye-Maung. I don't think I have kicked a soccer ball since.'

Years later, my younger son was Head of House and found the old Punishment Book. Looking through it, he found 1945, and my name many times with the misdemeanours committed, one of which said 'Typical Roberts attitude to all forms of authority ... 6'. (I assume that the 6 meant 'six of the best'). Despite that I loved it at Mill Hill. Also, I found that a huge benefit I gained from Mill Hill, was that I could join the Old Millhillians Club.

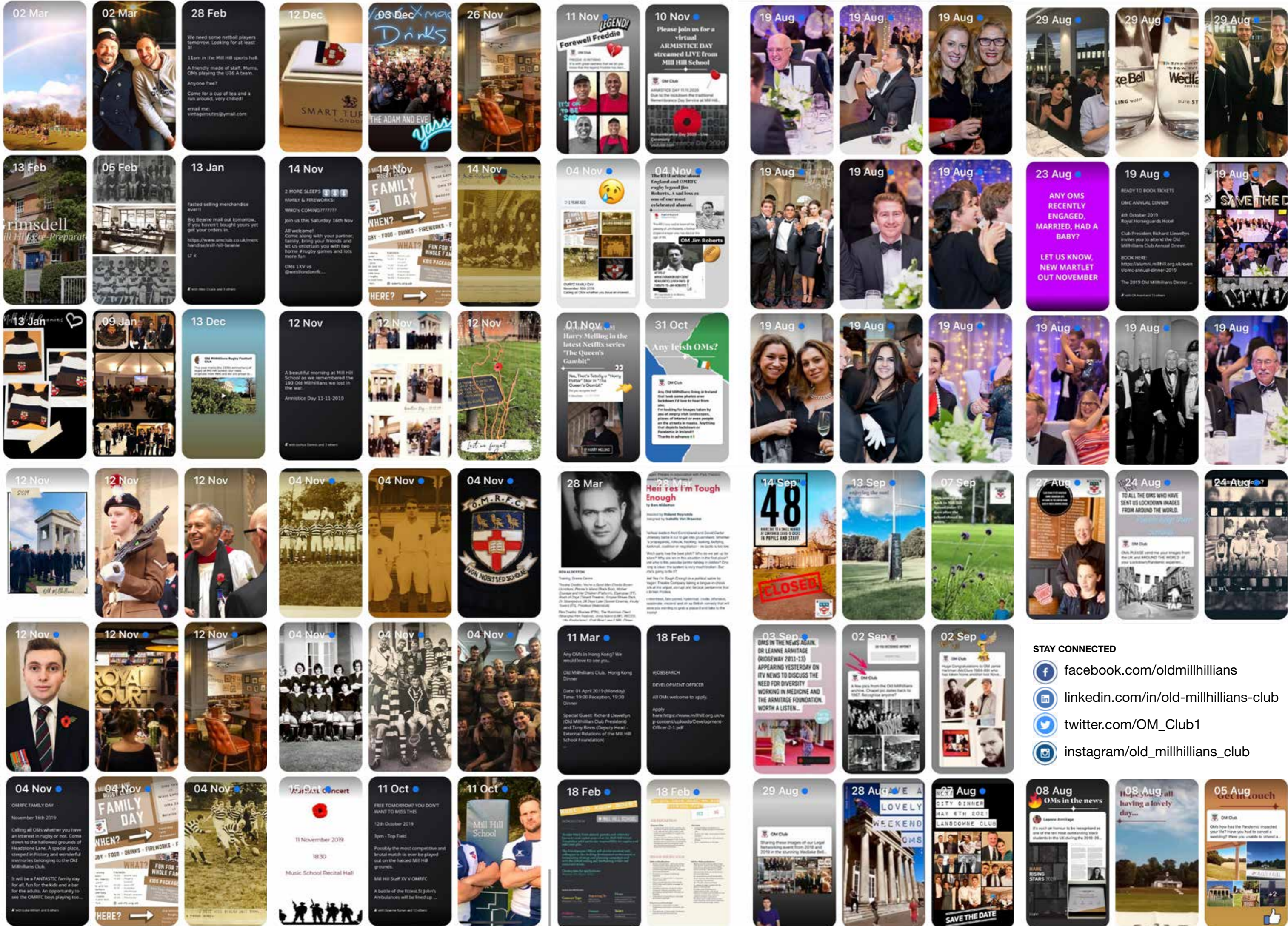


1950 J. Roberts, 1978 W.J.G. Roberts

The club enabled me to continue, for more than seventy years, the friendships I made at school.



Clockwise from Left: Playing for England against France, 1963 Wales v England team photo, Scoring a try for the Barbarians against Leicester, MHS First XV 1950, Jim with his children (Guy, Windsor, Karen, Fiona), MHS Athletics team 1950.



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