Friends Remember
Anthony Hughes
(1950-1973)

from St Michael’s College and beyond
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Introduction

This memoir is the result of an initiative by Michael Fajardo who recently contacted the St Michael’s College website asking if there was any information in the archive about his uncle Anthony Edward Hughes, who attended St Michael’s College between 1961 and 1966. Michel also asked if there any former school friends who might be willing to recall their friendship with Anthony, who died in 1973 on his 23rd birthday.

This memoir is the result of that request.

Anthony’s father, Joe, who is now aged 96, still speaks lovingly about the son he lost and the uncle that Michael never knew. Michael and his grandfather are very close so this memoir will be especially important for them. Hopefully just reading it together will create memories for them both, as did this photograph taken in 2019 when Michael and his wife chose Joe’s 95th birthday to be their wedding day. As well as sharing the information with his grandfather, Michael and his siblings will also learn more about the uncle that they never knew.
It’s Not the Days We Remember, It’s the Moments

Psychologists say ‘It’s Not the Days We Remember, It’s the Moments’. Recall of those experiences is prompted by visual images, words, smells, tastes, sensations etc and we have less recall of the actual dates.

That is certainly borne out by the contributions to this memoir where the contributors have been consistent in their recall of the same event but have sometimes differed when it comes to recall of the actual date. The contributors to this memoir are now all aged 70+ and have recalled events from more than 50 years ago, so they can be forgiven for a few small differences about the dates. However, all may not be lost. If you have kept old documents or passports, please check for any date stamps etc so that we can have better recall of the dates.

In compiling this memoir, there have already been instances where one person’s memory of an event has triggered further recollections in other people. Hopefully, this will continue to be the case. The memoir has been designed to allow further contributions to be easily added at any time so please continue to submit further recollections. Any photographs would also be most welcome.

It has been an absolute privilege and pleasure to be asked to produce this memoir but it would not have possible without the contributions of old school friends and the encouragement of Anthony’s family, particularly Michael and his mother Jean. An added bonus for us has been in re-establishing contact with school friends from more than 50 years ago.

The initial feedback from Michael is that his grandfather Joe has loved hearing the stories and they have only served to whet his appetite for more.

It has been necessary to use a small degree of editorial licence in this memoir, for the benefit of Anthony’s father Joe. Joe has always called his son Anthony, even though he was known to his friends as Tony. Joe has another family member called Tony and, at 96, he found the references to his son as both Anthony and Tony to be confusing. In the circumstances it only seemed right that all references to Tony be changed to Anthony. It is hoped that this does not adversely affect the enjoyment of other readers.

Michael Sugrue and Stefan Orszulik

October 2020
Acknowledgements

This memoir would not have been possible without the contributions of others. Special thanks to:

- Jean Fajardo
- Michael Fajardo
- Frank Hancock
- Paul Henry
- Stefan Orszulik
- Dennis Prior
- Francis Prior
- Tom Reilly
- Michael Sugrue
- Richard Wallace
In Memoriam

The years have taken their toll and sadly Anthony is no longer the only one mentioned in this memoir who has passed away. Please remember:

**Pat Reilly**
Pat was the younger brother of Tom and features in the ‘Cool Dudes’ photograph.

**Alan Blow (1949 – 2016)**
Alan was a classmate of Anthony’s at Our Lady’s and throughout their time at St Michael’s. Alan was also in More House and played alongside Anthony in the House and School football teams. He features in the football team photographs with Anthony. Alan passed away on 5 August 2016.

**Michael Connolly (1947 – 2020)**
The Connolly family lived in Welwyn Garden City and brothers Tom and Michael attended St Michael’s as well. Although Michael was two years older than Anthony they played together in the 1st and 2nd XI football teams in 1965/1966. In the 1st XI team photo Michael is the goalkeeper standing next to Anthony. Michael passed away on 3 November 2020.
Biography of Anthony Hughes

Anthony was born on 15 April 1950 in New End Hospital, Hampstead to mother Kitty and father Joe.

Kitty and Joe were living in rented accommodation but when the landlady discovered that Kitty was pregnant with a second child she said she didn’t want any more children in the property and asked them to leave. Joe promptly despatched Kitty and Anthony to Ireland to live with her parents while Joe stayed in London working three jobs to be able to afford a flat for the family.

Kitty and Anthony spent eighteen months in Co. Mayo before returning to London in June 1954.

Anthony attended St Dominic’s Priory school, Hampstead from September 1954 until December 1960.

The family moved to Welwyn Garden City in December 1960. They initially lived at 48 The Wade (near QEII hospital) before moving across town in summer 1964 to 48 The Ingles (Knightsfield area).

Anthony attended Our Lady’s primary school in Welwyn Garden City from January to July 1961 during which time he passed the 11 plus, which enabled him to attend grammar school.

Anthony attended St Michael’s College, Hitchin from September 1961 until July 1966. He was a good successful student passing a number of GCE ‘O’ levels including his first 3 ‘O’ levels at age 15 and more at age 16. Anthony elected not to enter the 6th Form at St Michael’s but instead chose to study ‘A’ levels at Mid Herts College of Further Education, which offered a wider range of subjects and with less petty rules.

Anthony started at Mid Herts College of Further Education, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City in September 1966 but left in summer 1967 before completing his ‘A’ levels.
From age 15, Anthony had various temporary jobs during the school/college holidays. He also undertook factory work after leaving Mid Herts College. Jobs included, amongst others, working as a petrol pump attendant (in the days before self-service became the norm) at Waters Garage, Barnet-by-pass, Hatfield, and in Nabisco and the Suchard Chocolate factories in Welwyn Garden City.

In summer 1968 Anthony, Dennis Prior, John Bentick and someone else, drove from London to Morocco in a Morris Minor car that had been owned by his father, Joe. Most of their time in Morocco was spent camping on a beach in Agadir and just enjoying themselves. One day when they were taking Anthony’s Canadian girlfriend to the airport, the car was in an accident in wet conditions. Shortly afterwards they decided to leave Morocco and head home in the damaged Morris Minor, which just survived journey through Europe but had to be towed from Dover.

After Morocco, Anthony travelled to Amsterdam with Tom Reilly where they worked on a boat named the Caledonian. They were still there in May 1969.

Dennis Prior had made provisional plans with Anthony to spend the summer of 1969 in Greece so Dennis, Peter Harding and Michael Sugrue set out in May 1969 to meet Anthony in Amsterdam. With correspondence in those days limited to letters sent Poste Restante, they were unable to find Anthony in Amsterdam. Dennis, Peter and Michael found work in the docks, renovating a ship and remained in Amsterdam until August 1969, but never managed to locate Anthony in that time.

It is thought that Anthony may have gone to Copenhagen with John Bentick at some point although the date is not known.

After returning from their travels, Anthony and Dennis (and a lad named Eamon) shared a flat in North London (possibly Muswell Hill area). They worked as dumper truck drivers on a building site in Russell Square in central London, during which time they enjoyed dumper truck races in the square.

In the summer 1970, Anthony and Paul Henry decided to go to Scotland in Anthony’s Austin A35 van. They had a stopover in Liverpool to pick up Paul’s friend Rob. They also had a stopover in Renfrew with Anthony’s aunt and uncle who offered them use of their caravan at Inverary for a week. It was a great spot in good weather but after 4 days of non-stop torrential rain they decided to move on. They also spent a couple of days in Inverness and headed further north. On the way back they returned via Edinburgh where they took in a visit to The Fringe.

Paul Henry recalls that it was on the Scottish trip that Anthony gave him an update about his life since leaving Mid Herts college. A lot of it was a pretty hippie-style life.

- He’d been to Morocco.
- He’d lived in Amsterdam on a boat with a woman who had lived for a while with Leonard Cohen.
- Anthony was also interested in philosophy and was very well read. I’ve still got some Gurdjieff books I bought because of his influence.
- Anthony was very heavily into a veggie diet so we frequented a great veggie restaurant called Hendersons.

It is thought that Anthony stayed for a while in Grantham with Ian Simpson, who he knew from St Michael’s. During this period Anthony applied for and was offered a place at Teachers’ Training College but he changed his mind, and never accepted the offer.
Paul Henry returned to Welwyn Garden City in 1971 but thinks that Anthony must have been on his travels as he can’t recall him being around at that time. It is possible that it was during this period that Anthony was in Grantham.

In early 1972 Anthony went to Toronto, Canada to visit relatives and from there he spent 6 months in the USA, returning to WGC in late July/early August 1972. His symptoms started to develop while he was in USA and the medical advice was that he should return home to UK. Due to there being a cat in his lodgings, his condition was wrongly diagnosed in USA and UK as Cat Scratch fever.

Despite being ill, Anthony travelled to India in November 1972, fulfilling a long-held ambition to do so. He was deeply affected by the abject poverty and was very thin upon his return.

Anthony was admitted to QEIi hospital in late March 1973 where he spent about 10 days. Paul Henry was working as a hospital porter at this time and visited him whenever he could. Around 8 April Paul learnt that Anthony was to be transferred to Middlesex hospital that same day. Paul asked the ward staff to contact him when Anthony was ready for discharge, so that he could wheel him down to the ambulance. But they failed to contact Paul so when he checked he discovered that Anthony had already left in the ambulance.

Anthony was transferred to the Middlesex Hospital, London a week before he died. While there he was visited by Michael Duggan, who was the last of his school friends to visit him. Anthony’s father Joe travelled up to London every night after work to visit him. For his impending birthday Anthony had asked his mother to bake him her Irish soda bread and apple pie. On the Sunday Anthony’s uncle (husband of maternal aunt) had gone in early to visit him while the other family members travelled from Welwyn Garden City. Sadly, Anthony died before they got there but thankfully his uncle was with him at the end. The family were in deep shock as they had absolutely no idea just how ill he was.

Anthony died on Sunday 15 April 1973, his 23rd birthday

Anthony had been diagnosed with Cat Scratch Fever* which manifests many of the same symptoms as Hodgkin’s Disease**.

*Cat-scratch disease commonly presents as tender, swollen lymph nodes near the site of the inoculating bite or scratch or on the neck.

**The most common symptom of Hodgkin lymphoma is a swelling in the neck, armpit or groin. More general symptoms can include unintentional weight loss, a high temperature (fever), night sweats, a persistent cough or feeling of breathlessness and persistent itching of the skin all over the body.

Hodgkin lymphoma can occur at any age, although most cases are diagnosed in people in their early 20s or 70s. The condition is slightly more common in men than women.
An Independent Mind

Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma—which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow know what you truly want to become.”

Steve Jobs (1955-2011)

There are some similarities between Anthony and the young Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs attended a local school in California and later enrolled on a two-year course at Reed College but dropped out within a year. His education was characterised by excellent test results and potential. But, he struggled with formal education and his teachers reported he was a handful to teach. At the age of 19 Steve Jobs travelled to India in search of spiritual enlightenment and while there became aware of Buddhist and Eastern spiritual philosophy.

Anthony Hughes attended St Michael’s College, and later enrolled on a two-year course at Mid Herts College but dropped out within a year. He had excellent academic results and potential. He felt stifled by the petty rules and pressure to conform. At the age of 18, he travelled in Morocco and later Europe, Canada and USA and India (while ill). He read widely on subjects such as philosophy and practised Veganism.

We didn’t know Steve Jobs, but he touched our lives by the products he invented.

We did know Anthony Hughes and he touched our lives because he was our friend.

Both were highly intelligent young men who made similar decisions at a similar age and who defied convention by following their heart. Both died from cancer, at different stages of their life, before they could fulfil all their dreams.

So, what prompted Anthony to abandon the traditional path to higher education?

Anthony has been described by those that knew him as a free spirit with a quicksilver brain and a kindly heart. He was well liked and made friends easily. Many considered him to be their friend. He was self-confident, funny and entertaining but never arrogant. He was easily bored by the mundane and seemed most satisfied when he was being intellectually challenged and creative.

I think that there were four primary reasons that influenced his decision to tread a different path.

Firstly, I think that the main reason that Anthony left St Michael’s at the age of 16 was because he hated the petty school rules, and felt that they existed to force blind obedience and constrain individuality rather than because they served any meaningful purpose. Although the 6th Form offered greater freedoms, it was still not enough for him plus the choice of ‘A’ level subjects was still very much geared towards subsequent entrance to University or Teachers Training College.
Secondly, Mid Herts College of Further Education offered a wider choice of ‘A’ levels and in a much more relaxed atmosphere, in which Anthony would be treated like an adult in control of his own destiny. Anthony and I continued our friendship at Mid Herts College and would sometimes chat about the life of work but neither of us knew what career we wanted to follow. Anthony couldn’t bear the thought of working in a bank, or similar, with lots of rules, where individuality and spontaneity were discouraged and making it much like school but with a salary. Although we didn’t know what we wanted to do, the 1960’s was a period of great optimism and we felt that anything was possible, if we could find it. These days, a degree seems to be a prerequisite for most jobs but in those days it was possible to get a good job with 5 ‘O’ levels and progress through hard work and ambition. For many jobs ‘A’ levels and a degree brought a higher salary but weren’t a prerequisite to entry or advancement.

Thirdly, British society was changing. In 1963, Prime Minister Harold Wilson gave his ‘White Heat of Technology’ speech, in which he spoke about the new Britain forged on a scientific revolution. We hadn’t seen much of that technological revolution in Hertfordshire by 1967. However the post-war social reforms, such as the 1944 Education Act, the introduction of the NHS and the mass house building programme, had borne fruit and the early beneficiaries were now adults who had started to influence society. Most noticeable were the changes in music and fashion brought about by the creativity of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and other bands. Bob Dylan and others in USA were singing about social change.

Fourthly, there was the ‘hippie’ counterculture which was a growing movement in USA and whose influence had also spread to Britain. By 1967, the Hippie culture had already interested both Anthony and myself. In Paul Henry’s memoir he spoke of Anthony as having led ‘a pretty hippie-style life’. Hippies opposed orthodoxy, choosing instead a gentle, non-doctrine ideology that favoured peace, love and personal freedom. Hippie culture embraced a more spiritual lifestyle (spiritual in the sense of human spirit not religion), becoming aware of other cultures and philosophies, including practising meditation and yoga, and alternative diets such as veganism. Its ethos influenced music, literature, art, fashion etc as well as influencing politics, civil rights and the anti-war movement. John Lennon’s song ‘Imagine’ reflects many aspects of the hippie counterculture and creates a picture in which the hippie lifestyle will be ideal. Lennon also became a very outspoken anti-war campaigner. Travel was a big part of the Hippie experience as was the phrase ‘taking time out to find myself’ or as Steve Jobs puts it, ‘follow your heart and intuition’. Travel provided the opportunity to meet people from different cultures and life experiences. This is illustrated by some of Anthony’s girlfriends who were much different from those he would have met around Welwyn Garden City. One was a friend of Leonard Cohen and another has become an author and also appears on TV. He read widely including subjects such as Philosophy which may have been as much about understanding himself as more complex issues. Its literal meaning as a ‘love of wisdom’ reflects Anthony’s appetite for intellectual stimulus and freedom from constraints.

We now know that when Anthony let Mid Herts College he had less than six years to live. If we had known that at the time, we would have advised him to spend his time living his dream. Thankfully, he made the best choice; he followed his heart and lived the life that he chose.

Perhaps the best tribute that can be paid to Anthony is by Paul Henry who said ‘I viewed him as my best friend ... I loved him as a brother’. Paul also spoke of visiting Anthony at QEII hospital in his final days and chatting, as best friends do. As I tried to imagine those conversations and thinking of the words spoken between friends, and of those conveyed but left unsaid, the following came to mind:
And now, the end is near
And so I face the final curtain
My friend, I'll make it clear
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain
I've lived a life that's full
I travelled each and every highway
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

Regrets, I've had a few
But then again, too few to mention
I did what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption
I planned each charted course
Each careful step along the byway
And more, much more than this, I did it my way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
When I bit off more than I could chew
But through it all, when there was doubt
I ate it up and spit it out
I faced it all and I stood tall and did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and cried
I've had my fill, my share of losing
And now, as tears subside
I find it all so amusing
To think I did all that
And may I say, not in a shy way
Oh, no, oh, no, not me, I did it my way

For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels
And not the words of one who kneels
The record shows
I took the blows
And did it my way

Hopefully you will have realised that these words are the lyrics of ‘My Way’, written by Paul Anka but made famous when sung by Frank Sinatra, although also sung by others such as Elvis.

The introduction to this memoir reminded us that ‘It's Not the Days We Remember, It’s the Moments’. As you prepare to read the rest of this memoir, why not create your own moment. Load YouTube, search for ‘My Way’ and listen to the song, while you read and remember a very special friend.

Michael Sugrue
School Life

WEBSITE; https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/

More information about the school and its life can be found on the St Michael’s College website which is managed by former pupil Stefan Orszulik. Former pupils are known as ‘Old Michaeleans’.

The Hitchin School closed in 1968 so all those who completed their education there are now pensioners.

HISTORY OF ST MICHAEL’S by David Shaw

David Shaw was both a pupil and later a teacher at the school. He wrote an excellent book entitled The History of St Michael’s and the Catholic Parish of Hitchin which is now available in pdf format via the school website and via this link.


Pages 230 onwards deal with the period from 1959 - 1965 which gives a very good understanding of the school during the period when Anthony was a pupil.

Below is a summary of some aspects of school life.
SCHOOL ORGANISATION

In the period that Anthony was a pupil, St Michael’s College was an Independent Catholic Grammar School run by Priests from the Order of Augustinians of the Assumption, but also employing lay teachers. The Hitchin school opened in 1903 and closed in 1968, when it relocated to Stevenage.

The Hitchin school had a capacity for 350 pupils who were a mixture of Boarders and Day-pupils either as fee-paying or those who had passed the 11+ exam in their last year of primary school and were funded by a scholarship from local authorities. It was recognised as a Grammar School by Hertfordshire and the neighbouring counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

Day-boys commuted from these counties, usually by train as Hitchin railway station was a stopping point for Express and all-stations trains. Boarders came from a wide area, including a few from abroad. There was also a Prep School adjacent to the main school for boys aged 7 - 11.

The 350 pupils were split into 5 year-groups of 60 pupils each which were subdivided into two Forms of 30 boys per Form. There was also a 6th Form which spanned two academic years. Roman numerals were used to identify year groups and Forms.

To encourage academic and sporting competition, each boy was assigned to a ‘House’. There were 3 Houses up until 1961 when a 4th was added. The House names were Stone, Fisher, More and Rigby. Anthony was in More House.

COMMUTING TO SCHOOL

While some pupils from Letchworth and Stevenage used to commute by bus, there were many from further afield who travelled by train, including those from Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. Hitchin was ideally situated by having its own railway station which was on the main line from London to Scotland and also a key stopping point for express trains. It was also ideally placed for the branch line to Cambridge. The importance of the University being the reason for frequent express trains between Cambridge and London. This meant that day-boys could commute quite a distance in a reasonable amount of time. This was still the period when both Steam and Diesel engines were in operation so there was a degree of choice for the interested pupil. The express trains tended to have diesel engines and the slower trains tended to be steam powered. There were also a mix of carriage types with some carriages being the modern type with the aisle down the middle but it was more common for the carriages to have a corridor on one side and a sliding door to the compartment or to have single compartments (no corridor at all). It was these latter two that were favoured by the pupils as it was possible for a carriage to accommodate to 8 to 12 pupils in privacy, and without bothering any other passengers.

The journey from Welwyn Garden City to Hitchin was about 15 miles and took between 20 minutes (Cambridge Buffet Express) to 35 minutes (steam train stopping at all stations).

On arrival in Hitchin there was a walk of 10 – 15 minutes from the station to the school (about ½ mile), along Nightingale Road, along which we passed the flour mill and pig slaughterhouse, and into Grove Road.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

All pupils were required to wear school uniform. Pupils were also required to have a sports kit in the House colours. Both of which could only be purchased from a specific shop in Hitchin, making it
expensive for our parents. Most boys hoped to be able to eke out two years wear from their blazer so leather patches to the elbows and cuffs were added as a cheaper option than replacing the blazer part way through the school year.

The uniform for pupils in Forms 1 to V comprised a maroon blazer, with blue flashing and school badge, a school cap, dark grey trousers and black shoes. Pupils were required to wear a school cap in the same colours as the blazer. Wearing the cap was compulsory when outside of school premises. Pupils in Forms 1 and II were required to wear short trousers with older pupils wearing long trousers. There were slightly different rules for pupils in VIth Form who wore black blazer but no cap.

https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/school-badge-and-logo/

At St Michael’s we were required to wear our school blazers in lessons, with shirt and tie to be done up. Pride in appearance was seen as very important and especially when travelling to and from school, when uniform infringements brought punishments. This dress code had its advantages in later life. I can remember attending many business meetings and observing the other attendees. It was easy to spot those who had attended private schools or grammar schools as on a baking hot day they would be entirely comfortable dressed in their business suit with shirt and tie done up.

The school cap was widely disliked, as it seemed outdated now that few adult men wore a cap, and was the main cause of uniform infringements. Many pupils, like Anthony, tried to wear their cap as far back on their head as possible so that it was almost invisible when viewed from the front. The school cap was so disliked that it became tradition that on the journey home after the last day at school, pupils would throw their cap out of the train window as it passed over the Digswell Viaduct.

Another downside of the journey to school was that we were under the watchful eye of the school prefects who could punish boisterous behaviour or uniform infringements. The friendlier ones just had a quiet word rather than a formal reprimand. With our distinctive school uniform we were easily identified, and occasionally a member of the public would contact the school and report some activity they considered unbecoming. Such reports often resulted in the pupil being caned.

ARRIVAL AT St MICHAEL’S

The annual intake of 60 pupils at age 11 was split into two mixed ability Forms of 30 pupils known as Form I and Form IX. Pupils tended to be split by geographical area of their primary school so that classmates had some friends in the same Form.

ACADEMIC STUDY

During that first academic year, mastery of Latin was seen as a key indicator of academic potential so at the end of that year pupils were streamed into A and B Forms. Anthony was in the A stream, who studied Latin with an option to study Greek if desired.

The subject range available up to ‘O’ Level was:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Maths</th>
<th>Chemistry</th>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Woodwork</th>
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<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>X.D.</td>
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<tr>
<td>English Literature</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Art</td>
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Note: X.D. is shorthand for Christian Doctrine (Religious Education).
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE (1959/60)

There were two headmasters during Anthony’s 5-years at the school. Fr Bernard Ricket was headmaster for Anthony’s first three years and Fr Benedict Sketchley for the remaining two. Fr Bernard had previously been headmaster from 1944-1948.

Fr Bernard was very committed to driving up educational standards and to boys achieving their potential. He strongly encouraged competitive activities and publication of results as a means of encouraging motivation and achievement. I was sorry to see him leave as I felt the school had lost a good headmaster. I don’t think I ever had a one-to-one conversation with Fr Benedict so felt that he had less impact on my education.

The following article makes interesting reading. It is an extract from the Headmaster’s Report that Fr Bernard gave to parents and pupils on 1 December 1960, so just over a year after he had become headmaster and reflecting on the academic performance of the 1959/60 academic year. He says:

'It is, of course, by academic progress that the college must be judged. The ultimate test of a grammar school must be the number and quality of its pupils proceeding each year to University and other fields of higher education. A further test is success in public examinations, especially the General Certificate of Education (GCE). These are by no means the only tests of academic progress, though they are the most important. By both these criteria the year 1959/60 was not a good one. The VIth Form was small both in numbers and quality, and no one this year has gone on to University. The Vth Forms were, on the whole, good sportsmen but poor scholars, and only seven out of 45 have been promoted to the VIth Form. In the G.C.E. examination the Vth and VIth Forms between them presented 25 entries at Advanced Level and 260 entries at Ordinary level, with 13 successes in the former and 112 in the latter. Compared with the figures published for other grammar schools in the local press, these results might seem to be average. They might even seem to be favourable if it is remembered that the college is a small school on grammar school standards, and that half its pupils were considered unsuitable academic education at the 11-plus stage......’.

In a later part of his speech he refers to ‘the great furore caused by a recent book’. Although not mentioned by name, he was obviously referring to ‘Lady Chatterley’s Lover’ by D.H. Lawrence which was the subject of an obscenity trial in October 1960. Fr Bernard continues his speech by quoting the Latin phrase ‘mens san a in corpore sano’ (meaning “a healthy mind in a healthy body”) and then going on to talk about pagan standards of moral judgement before saying:

‘The great furore caused by a recent book emphasises the contrast that exists between modern England and Catholic ideals of chastity...... ‘No boy, no teenager, could read that book and remain chaste. I feel it is little short of insanity for parents or teachers to jeopardize the very delicate and precious flower of boyhood purity by advising or perusal of so crude a book and of similar degrading works masquerading as literature’.

Of course, Fr Bernard’s condemnation of the book only made it more attractive to teenage boys. Needless to say, it was not available from the school library but its notoriety may still have encouraged some boys to read this book and other works by D.H. Lawrence and thereby improve their literary skills!

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE (1960-1966)

Fr Bernard had a belief that pride in one’s appearance and sporting achievement also contributed to academic achievement. After his arrival, he set about making changes to improve academic performance. On 9th November 1961 he gave his Headmaster’s Report for the 1960/61 academic year in which he updated parents about the changes that he had implemented. His speech also describes the pathway through the school from the pupil’s arrival in Form I.


Last year the report I laid before you was criticised for being too frank. Criticism, I suppose, is inevitable, and indeed it is to be welcomed as a proof of genuine interest. After all, Headmaster and Staff criticise boys in season and out of season, and we do not hesitate where necessary to criticise parents. ....

In striking contrast to last year, the examination results were most encouraging ....... I must forestall criticism by my colleagues in educational circles by hastening to add that the multiplicity of subjects at Ordinary Level is not necessarily a good thing, nor is it to be encouraged for all boys.... In the case of the four I have mentioned, they just would not hold back or agree to limitations of their efforts. In general, however, I fully agree with the view that a good G.C.E. at Ordinary Level is one endorsed with five subjects, and a very good G.C.E. one endorsed with seven, provided that in both cases they include languages, mathematics and science.

So, Fr Bernard was of the view that attainment of 5 ‘O’ levels was acceptable for the average pupil.

As well as being Headmaster, Fr Bernard taught Latin, so I had the opportunity to be taught by him when I was in my first year. Although I failed Latin, I nonetheless liked him. His favourite phrase, (which pre-dated Dad’s army but was in the same vein) was when he would announce in assembly that ‘Volunteers will be appointed’, which is obviously a contradiction in terms.

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

The school operated a formal system of corporal punishment (the deliberate infliction of physical pain) with Fr Gerard appointed as ‘Prefect of Discipline’ to administer the ‘cane’. He was required to keep a record of any such punishments with the seriousness of the offence dictating the number and severity of strokes to the buttocks. Offending pupils were required to attend Fr Gerard’s office during the morning break to await their fate. There was usually a queue which snaked around the corner and down the stairs. Of course he had more than one cane so the choice of cane, number and severity of the stroke were all parameters to be considered depending on the seriousness of the offence.

Some teachers had their own informal methods of administering instant punishment. Fr John (Maths) used a ruler (known as a toolly). Fr Richard (Woodwork) carried a piece of 2” x 1” wood so the pupil learnt to develop very quick reactions to avoid a rap over the knuckles. Mr Laing (Sport) used a plimsol or would demand ‘10 press-ups’ as punishment.

Teachers and Prefects were also allowed to administer non-corporal punishments for minor infringements. These could take the form of ‘The Penance Walk’ in which the pupil was required to spend their morning break time or lunchtime walking around the lawned area in front of the school. Teachers and Prefects could also administer ‘Lines’ in which the pupil was required to write out a
sentence, say, 100 times ‘Such as I must wear my school cap when outside of school’ or ‘I must not talk in class’. Mr Badshah (Chemistry and Physics) had the most enlightened attitude by making the pupil copy a chapter from their textbook so that at least the pupil might be learning something while completing the punishment.

SPORT

Sport played a big part in school life. Mr Laing, the Sports Master, was a strict disciplinarian. A smart appearance in sports kit was considered just as important as a smart appearance in full school uniform. Boys were punished if the appeared with dirty boots, dirty kit or the wearing their underwear in place of P.E. vest. Errant boys were often required to remove a plimsol and would then be reunited with it after a wallop across the backside. Mr Laing also insisted that boys showered after every sports lesson, regardless of whether the showers were hot or cold!

A variety of sports were available with a strong emphasis on competitive sport. Football, Cross-Country, Basketball and Table-Tennis during the winter. Cricket, Athletics, Tennis, Croquet and swimming during the summer. The main sports field was off Old Hale Way which was about half a mile from the school but there was also a small football pitch adjacent to the playground that was used for lunch-time intra-house football matches. Most boys who had interest in a particular sport volunteered to play for the ‘House’ team but the better sportsmen were selected to represent the school in inter-school competitions.

This is a photograph of the school hall which also doubled as the school gym. Although the photograph is dated 1946, it was the same layout in 1961-1966.

In the foreground is the wooden beam on which ‘pull ups’ and other exercises were performed. Behind that are ‘the ropes’. To the left are the ‘wall bars’. And, to the right are benches that were used to ‘step-ups’ etc. Also visible in the background are the ‘vaulting horse’ and the wooden box.
The favourite P.E. lesson was 'Pirates' which Mr Laing offered as a treat about once a month, if he felt that it had been earned. All the equipment was utilised, a little like the photograph above. It was essentially a game of tag with the pupils having to move speedily between the various items of equipment but without putting a foot on the floor, while being chased.

Swimming replaced P.E. during the easter term and took place at the Hitchin open air (and unheated) swimming pool. Pure torture in the month of April!

PLAYGROUND FOOTBALL

Informal games of football were very popular all year round on the tarmac surface of the playground. It was quite common for a number of games of football to be taking place at the same time in different areas of the playground. The most frantic game was always played by the first Form pupils who occupied the area that spanned the width of the playground adjacent to the school building. Players could join a game at any time, with the newcomer being assigned to the team with fewer players.

Summer 1961 – Richard Wallace with friends with playground football in the background

A number of other pupils, particularly the older ones, would favour just strolling around the playground or just standing around chatting. It was quite common for a frantic First Former to come barging into the group as he chased the miskicked football. In such cases the older boys would form a circle around him to block his escape and frustrate his exit for a few minutes. The purpose was really to try and teach the First Former to be considerate of others and not just barge in. When I was
in the First Form the practice had been in place some years and everyone treated it as part of school life. However when I reached the 4th or 5th Forms, one of the First Form pupils complained to his parents that this amounted to bullying. Rather than the headmaster and Fr Gerard explain to the pupil that it was his inconsiderate behaviour of barging into other pupils that was the issue, the parent’s complaint was accepted without any opportunity for us to present our case. We were told the practice was bullying and each boy who was part of the circle was asked to own up, myself included, and then sent to be caned.
Extracts from School Magazines relating to Anthony Hughes

The purpose of the school magazine was to be a record of school achievements and encouraging pupils to contribute articles about their interests and experiences. It also included a Chronicle section which was often a satirical recorded of events and anecdotes that pupils would remember many years hence.

The school magazine entries relating to Anthony are sub-divided into 4 categories:

- Academic Achievement
- Sporting Achievement – Football
- Sporting Achievement – Athletics
- Miscellany
Extracts from School Magazines
Anthony Hughes Academic Achievements

School Speech Day was held usually in the Autumn so the school magazine records the awards given for the previous academic year.

1963 Magazine p. 17 - PRIZE LIST, 1961-62 A Hughes 1st prize Form 1x

First prize in Form 1X. Awarded to the pupil with the best academic achievement across all subjects.


Paul Osborne was achieved best overall performance in for IIA plus the best performance in English. Anthony and Philip Galvin were joint second place for Form IIA achievement.

1963-64 academic year: Form IIA – The Form prizes were awarded to Paul Osborne and Paul Henry. https://stmichaelshitchin.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/1965-michaelean-ocr.pdf  (page 23)

1964-65 academic year: Form IVA – the Form awards were omitted from the school magazine.

1965-66 academic year: Form VA – the N Form awards were not published as there was no magazine was published covering this period.
The number of ‘O’ levels sat would usually depend on the ability and interests of the individual pupil. The ‘A’ stream pupils typically sat about 10 – 12 ‘O’ levels which were sat in two tranches. Usually 2 or 3 exams were sat while in Form IVA (June 1965) with the remainder sat during the Vth Form, that is December 1965 and/or June 1966.

Anthony was one of only two pupils who gained the maximum of 3 passes while in Form IVA (see below).

Unfortunately, the exam results for December 1965 and June 1966 exams were not published in the School Magazines.
Anthony Hughes Football Achievements

Anthony was selected for the school football team in each of the five years that he was a pupil, as well as playing for More House.

Photographs are available for some of the teams and are included in a separate section of this memoir. Also see photo archive on the school website.

1962 Magazine p.32 – Under-12 XI –SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS


Anthony was a member of the school football team. Although the full team names are not listed, it is fortunate that Anthony is listed amongst the goal scorers.

1963 Magazine p.7 – Anthony is thanked for being More House team captain.


Anthony was captain of the U13 More House football team (See article below).
The names of the team captains appear to be listed in Form year order. Anthony was part of the 1961 intake, Scholey was 1960 intake and McKee 1959 intake which aligns with the above narrative.

There were two pupils at the school named A. Hughes and both in More House. However, the other one was three years older (part of the 1958 intake).


Again Anthony is listed amongst the goal scorers.

UNDER-13 XI FIXTURES AND RESULTS, 1962-63

Sept. 24 v. Bessemer (away). Lost 8—1. (McKenna)
  29 v. Bushey G.S. (home). Lost 5—1. (Hawley)
Oct.  1 v. Bessemer (home). Lost 4—1. McKenna)
  6 v. Welwyn G.C. (away). Lost 4—2. (McKenna, Larkin)
  13 v. Welwyn G.C. (home). Won 6—1. (Larkin, Hart 2, McKenna, Hobbs)
  17 v. Willian S.M. (away). Won 3—2. (Hart 2, MyKenna)
  20 v. Hemel Hempstead (home). Drew 2—2. (McKenna, Larkin)
  27 v. Arnold School (home). Won 12—1. (Hawley 4, McKenna 3, Hart, Larkin 2, Prior)
Nov. 10 v. Hatfield Tech. (away). Won 6—3. (Prior 2, Hawley, Hart, McKenna, Hobbs)
  17 v. Arnold School (away). Won 4—0. (Larkin 2, Hawley, Hart)
  24 v. Wolverton G.S. (away). Won 4—3. (McKenna, Prior, Hawley, Larkin)
Dec.  1 v. Welwyn High (home). Won 3—1. (Hart 2, Hawley)
  15 v. St. Christopher’s (home). Won 14—2. (Hart 3, Solich 3, Prior 2, Hawley 2, Williams, Harding, Hughes, Hobbs)
Mar.  5 v. Bessemer (home). Won 2—1. (Hawley 2)
  9 v. Luton G.S. (away). Match abandoned when losing 2—1. (McKenna)
  16 v. Luton Tech. (home). Lost 5—0
  23 v. Welwyn High (away). Lost 5—4. (Larkin 2, Hobbs, Hawley)
Apr.  2 v. Luton G.S. (home). Lost 7—0
Hobbs 4, Solich 3, Williams, Harding, Hughes 1 each.
1964 Magazine p. 80 Under-14 XI – SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM 1963-64


There is only the briefest of mentions (see below) of the Under 14s football team in the 1964 school magazine as no fixtures or results were listed.

A photograph of the team is available (see Team photos section of memoir).


No match reports or results are included in the magazine although there is a team photograph with names (see Team photos section of memoir). Perhaps this was an even leaner season than the previous one!

1966 Magazine 1st and 2nd XI FOOTBALL TEAMS


(The pages of the magazine were unnumbered hence the pdf page references).

Anthony features in the photos of both the 1st XI and 2nd XI teams but there are no match reports or results for either team in the school magazine. There is a pen picture of the 1st XI team and a brief summary on pdf pages 33 – 36 of the magazine, although Anthony is not mentioned by name.
As Anthony appears in both photographs it is likely that he played mainly for the 2nd XI with the occasional appearance for the 1st XI. The notes say that the 2nd XI were plagued by injuries and results were poor as they were often playing against the 1st XI team from other schools.

The quality of the team photographs printed in the magazine is very poor as they were printed on the back cover. Fortunately, there is a colour photo of both teams in the archive, although in the colour photograph of the 2nd XI, Anthony has his hand in front of his face.

1965/66 2nd XI Football team (photograph from back cover of the magazine)

1965/66 1st XI Football team (photograph from back cover of the magazine)
Anthony Hughes Athletic Achievements


Anthony was placed 2nd place in U12 220 yds and his success in that race probably meant that he was also a member of the More relay team, who won first place in the Junior Relay race.

Under-12 220 yards: 1st, Jackson; 2nd, Hughes; 3rd, Hawley.
30sec.

Junior Relay: 1st, More; 2nd, Stone; 3rd, Rigby. 57-4sec.

1963 Magazine p. 46 and 47 - SPORTS DAY 8 JUNE 1963 - ATHLETIC RESULTS


There is an error in that the summary text below does not align with the event results.

The Magazine entry should have read:

‘Another Junior record was broken when Hughes (IIA) extended the long jump record by 8in. to 14ft. 7½in’.

The following is an image of the original text from the 1963 magazine.

Note: The previous Junior long jump record was 13ft. 11½in. which was set by Galenski in 1962.

The existing Junior high jump record was 4ft.7in. which was set by Frost in 1959.
Note: Anthony Burley was in the same year as Anthony but was much taller and bigger than Anthony.

Pupils were required to wear a school cap whenever in uniform and outside of the school premises. This included the journey to and from school as well as any trips offsite at lunchtime. There is a typing error name written as Huges instead of Hughes.
School Football Team Photographs

1961/1962 Under-12 XI – St MICHAEL’S SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Currently unable to locate a photograph

1962/1963 Under-13 XI – St MICHAEL’S SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Currently unable to locate a photograph
School Football Team Photographs

1963/1964  Under-14 XI – St MICHAEL’S SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Back L-R: Brian Belgrave; Sean McKenna; Peter Harding; Peter Jackson; Michael Sugrue; Paul Hobbs; Simon Lander
Front L to R: Denis Ives; Michael Hawley; Greg Hart; Roger Larkin; Dennis Prior; Anthony Hughes.

1964/1965  Under-15 XI – St MICHAEL’S SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

THE UNDER-15 SOCCER XI
School Football Team Photographs

1965/1966  2nd XI – St MICHAEL’S SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Back L-R:  P Espinasse;  M Hawley;  P Jackson;  M Connolly;  K Unwin, A. Hughes; J Allen
Front L-R:  M Bartley;  T Reilly;  B Belgrave;  P Huggins;  M Duggan;  P Kavanagh.

1965/1966  1st XI – St MICHAEL’S SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Back L-R:  M. Connolly;  A. Hughes;  E. Lynch;  E. Egan;  R. Larkin;  S. McKenna; J. McKenna;
Front L-R:  A. Blow;  R. Wallace;  M. Jones;  G. Hoare;  G. Hart
OTHER PHOTOGRAPHS

These photographs were taken at Tom Reilly’s childhood home in Warren Close, Hatfield probably about 1968 - 1970 and were discovered in 2010 when Tom and Fran Prior) were clearing the house after the death of his mother. Tom’s brother Pat emigrated to Sweden in his teens and passed away a few years ago.

COOL DUDES!

L-R: Tom Reilly, Anthony and Pat Reilly (deceased)
Anthony and Tom (or Pat) in the back garden of Tom’s home (about 1968-1970)

John Bentick with Anthony
Anthony and John were friends at St Michael’s, Mid Herts College and travelled to Morocco together
Website Links

The following links connect to the documents featuring Anthony Edward Hughes for years 1961-1966. You may need to scroll down to select the individual document by year or name.

The website features many varied and interesting articles and photographs about life at the school, all written by former pupils. All of the entries relating to Anthony E. Hughes have been extracted and included in the memoir. This includes team photographs etc and his individual photograph from the school panoramic photographs. The links below will allow the reader to see the full photograph etc.

If the reader wants to keep any of the files long term, it is recommended that the files are downloaded from the website to the reader’s PC. Space on the website is very limited (in order to minimise running costs) so high quality images may not always be available. If you experience any problems please contact Stefan.

St Michael's College website: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/
St Michael’s Database: scroll down to Mr Anthony Edward Hughes.

Database profile was written in 2018 when updating Anthony’s entry which had previously contained references to an older boy also named Anthony Hughes.

Photo database: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/2018/04/15/photo-database/
Choose ‘To view faces sorted by name’ and then scroll down to Anthony E. Hughes


Panoramic photographs: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/panoramics/
Panoramic with names: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/about/photos-with-names/

Original panoramic photos are in jpg format while those with names added are in pdf format. Names have not yet been added to all panoramic photographs.

Anthony’s position in each photograph is: (front row is row 1; Position counted from left):

1962: panoramic missing
1963: April 1963: Form IIA: Row 2 position 37 (which is the last person of Row 2)
   https://stmichaelshitchin.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/smc1963new.jpg
1964: June 1964: Form IIIA: Row 6 position 31
   https://stmichaelshitchin.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/1964-comp.jpg
1965: May 1965 : Form IVA: Row 6 position 19
   https://stmichaelshitchin.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/smc-1965-complete.jpg
1966: panoramic missing

The references to Anthony have already been extracted and included elsewhere in the memoir.
During Anthony’s period at the school the magazine was published in June/July at the end of the academic year. So 1962 Magazine covers the 1961/1962 academic year.
It is worth reading the whole magazine to get a better understanding of school life at that time.
https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/michaelean-magazines/


Form Photos: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/form-photos/
There are currently no Form photos for Anthony’s Form during the period 1961-1966.

Football Photographs: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/football/
Many individual photographs not labelled. Those that include Anthony are included in this memoir

Sports day: https://stmichaelshitchin.wordpress.com/sports-day/
There are currently no photographs or sports day programmes for the events involving Anthony.
Anthony Remembered by
Paul Henry

Anthony came to Our Lady’s Primary School when we were in our final year there, 1960-61. His family had come from London to WGC like several other families at that time. We became good friends from primary school on.

He made an impression straight away as very likeable and funny, and also good at sports, a particularly good footballer. I think he was a Chelsea supporter, whereas most ex-London WGC folk were either Arsenal or Spurs fans. I was never good at football but can recall Anthony was the first person I’d seen skip over a tackle, carry on his run and get a good pass away or whatever he intended. That may have been when we were at St Michael’s rather than Our Lady’s but anyway the memory is clear.

As regards sports achievements, others will recall better, but I’m pretty sure that when at St Michael’s Anthony played football for the school team and possibly the county and also ran in the county cross-country championship.

Anthony, Pete Wearden, Alan Blow (died 2016) and I all passed the Eleven Plus and got into St Michael’s, to the relief of our parents. There may have been a fifth one of the group but I can’t recall.

All the others we were mates with initially were from Hatfield i.e. Michael Duggan, Michael Sugrue, Pete Harding, Denny Prior. We had originally met at Our Lady’s which they attended before moving to a new school in Hatfield. That was pretty much our group who travelled up to Hitchin on the train as mates, along with others from different towns and from years above and below us.

I didn’t see a lot of Anthony out of school in our earlier years. He lived in The Wade (number 48 I think) and I always had commitments at home. But I know he used to play a lot of football with Ray Booth (a year younger but also a friend at both Our Lady’s and St Michael’s) and others, often at King George V Playing Fields. Later on the family moved over to “the other side” as we called it. (Ingles, off Knightsfield, I think). I liked his mum and dad and younger sister, Jean. Whenever I visited in later years Mrs Hughes was always very kind to me. She, the whole family I believe, always called him Anthony, of course, but to me he was always Tony, I’m afraid.

At school Anthony was always very bright and well respected, and popular, a bit of a leader. I viewed him as my best friend, though he was no doubt just as close to others. I had no brother and probably would say I loved him as a brother. I certainly admired him for being both very intelligent, and quick-minded, and for being so darn good at sport. An all-rounder.

He wasn’t perfect, of course. I remember him telling me he’d upset his poor mum when she asked him one day to get a spider out of the bath and he used a bad swear word about the huge size of it. A funny story for us teenagers in some ways, but I know Anthony didn’t like upsetting his mum and dad and was regretful really. He also lost a good relationship or two at school, I reckon, but that’s pretty normal.
I can’t think of many actual noteworthy episodes or escapades at school to recount. It was just a generally buzzy atmosphere and good fun, with Anthony in the thick of things.

The first year at St Michael’s wasn’t all fun though. I seem to recall that Anthony and I were fed up for always getting into trouble with the woodwork teacher, Fr Richard, (certainly in my case as I was hopeless at it) and with the maths teacher too who was also our year 1 form master. Mr Ryan could really take against you, for no obvious reason. One afternoon we came off the train at Welwyn to go to the bus and there was a huge mound of snow so we took our frustration out on that by stamping and kicking it. I think we got reported to the school about that by some adults who were waiting for the bus and knew the school uniform; alternatively it may have been that we got into trouble with our parents as a lot of people knew our families. I have blanked that bit from my memory but recall the satisfaction of letting rip together on that snow mound.

Something I recall even better is one of the occasions during a week when we had a series of activities like plays, debates and shows for general entertainment- I think it must have been an end of summer-term thing. One of the events was to get up on stage and mime to a song. It was 1965 and Tom Jones had his first big hit and was on TV a lot, often wearing an open shirt, tight trousers and a lucky rabbit’s foot hanging from his belt. Anthony was hilarious miming to It’s Not Unusual with all the moves, his white shirt open and a banana hanging from his belt.

I think we had a pretty good time as a group and didn’t too badly academically (I think Anthony was usually in the top 6 or 10 in the class overall.). So I was disappointed when Anthony and quite a few others decided to leave school at the end of the 5th and go to college rather than go into the 6th Form, as I did. But in some ways I think he was more adventurous, and mature than I was, certainly that was what I felt at the time. He had a new life there and, as we didn’t go to the same youth club either at that time, and lived in different parts of WGC, I lost a lot of contact with him in those years.

I heard he’d gone off doing some travelling after college but we met up a few times and certainly did so in summer 1970. That summer was the end of my second year at Liverpool University and in the vacation I worked at the Sunblest Bakery in WGC (I did so in 69 & 70 and also 71 after university through to early 72 as I couldn’t find a job. I mention that as it explains why I was around again in WGC.)

In that summer 1970, at his initiative no doubt, Anthony and I decided we’d go off in his A35 van to Scotland but via Liverpool for a few days where my house- mates and I had a place, ready for the next term. The idea was to go camping in Scotland and we picked up a mate of mine in Liverpool, Rob, to join us. I had a tent and a large comfy mattress as well as sleeping bags so the deal was that, as Anthony did all the driving, he had the mattress in the back of the van and Rob and I slept in the tent.

I can’t remember all of our stop-overs but we ended up for a night (or maybe two) at Anthony’s aunt and uncle’s house in Renfrew. It was quite intimidating going to the pub that first night because, when we walked in, everyone in the bar looked around and stopped talking, and parted to leave a corridor for us to get to the bar. The place was pretty quiet till we’d drunk our pints and left.

Anthony’s aunt looked after us well and said we could go up to Inverary and use their caravan there for a week. It was a great spot and we even had access to a small rowing boat. We set off in that to cross the loch and about half way across Anthony decided he’d had enough and jumped off and swam back to shore, while Rob and I carried on.
I was getting water out of my wellies as Rob pulled the boat to a position we could row back from, when something huge leapt out of the water and sank back down. We couldn’t make out what it was but were pretty worried as we rowed back to the other side.

In the pub in Inveraray that night we mentioned it and some fellows told us it would have been a basking shark, which are harmless to humans but are huge and can flip a boat over if they come up underneath it. That had happened a few weeks before when 3 night-time fishermen had drowned as a result, or so we were told. We were set to enjoy the rest of the week there but then it rained torrentially for 4 days non-stop, so hard that we couldn’t even go over to the camp toilets but had to pee in a bottle and throw it outside. So we’d had enough of reading, listening to music and chatting after 4 days and left.

I think it was during this 1970 period that Anthony told me some of what he’d been doing since giving up college. A lot of it was a pretty hippie-style life.

- He’d been to Morocco.
- He’d lived for a while in Amsterdam, even, he said (unless I’m misremembering), on a boat there with a woman who had lived for a while with Leonard Cohen. All seemed, and seems, entirely likely to me.
- Anthony was also interested in philosophy and was very well read. I’ve still got some Gurdjieff books I bought because of his influence.
- Anthony was very heavily into a veggie diet so we frequented a great veggie restaurant called Hendersons, which produced better food than the lentils that had been their usual diet on the trip.

Other adventures on our trip included a few days spent camping just outside Edinburgh at the time of the Fringe. We were walking down Princes Street when a weirdly dressed guy with a beard came walking towards us and he turned out to be someone I knew from Liverpool Uni. He was managing a touring theatre company so we got to a few plays and after-performance sessions with Paolo. But, despite us trying (as I’m sure we must have done, however coyly and unimaginatively), I don’t think even Anthony managed to get any dates with any of the actresses. We had a good time though.

Anthony was very heavily into a veggie diet so we frequented a great veggie restaurant called Hendersons, which produced better food than the lentils we had been having a lot of.

We saw the premiere of a film called Bronco Bullfrog, which used entirely amateur actors as the cast. We went out from our seats saying to each other that we thought it was rubbish only to see the director sitting proudly with two girls and looking at us as we passed. I don’t think it did very well on release, though someone unearthed it for TV recently. Heaven knows why. But we did get to see at least one good film there, I’m sure. In short we had a great time in Edinburgh. A city you can fall in love with, and I thought of moving there in November 1973, as a result of our trip. (But plumped for Nottingham instead.)

We also spent a couple of days in Inverness and headed further north. I don’t remember the whole itinerary, so I’m not sure whether it was Glencoe or somewhere else where we camped by the roadside just above a bubbling river, which we washed in. We also used the river water to cook brown rice, which was a first for Rob. Anthony and necessity were influencing our diet significantly. We set up for a fried breakfast the next morning, which was great in the open air. Luckily we’d got up quite early as some other tourers passed and told us we shouldn’t be camping on that land and that the lord’s bailiff would be along soon and would charge us. We cleared off quickly.
Further on we were on a narrow hilly road and the car ground to a halt. It was probably a Sunday around 11am or mid-day, as there was no passing traffic. We hadn’t a clue what was wrong or how to fix it, so Anthony decided the best thing was to walk to the nearest village and see if he could find someone. Rob and I had to stay with the van and managed to eke out what little we had to eat and drink. About 4 hours later Anthony turned up with an AA man in his van and he fixed the A35 in no time.

We wondered what had taken Anthony so long. It turned out he’d found the AA man’s house and his wife had taken Anthony in and insisted on giving him Sunday lunch before they came to fix the car. Needless to say we were very happy for Anthony the charmer.

I’m not sure if it was that night or later when we drove into the northernmost point on the west which we’d been aiming for, Durness. It was about 11pm or midnight when we arrived in the village. There was a group of bikers hanging around, probably chatting after closing time. We asked them if they knew of anywhere in the village we could camp. They pointed to a patch of grass nearby and said, “Just pitch your tent there lads.” So we did. We woke up the next morning to find we were in a small area that was effectively a village green. But no one seemed to mind. We had a great day just walking over the rocks and whatever beach there was, sitting on the rocks and watching seals and so on. All in all it was a great holiday, with lots of good chat and experiences and it was really good to spend so much time with Anthony.

Soon after, I was back doing my last year at Liverpool and Anthony went off again- travelling I think. I came back to WGC in summer 1971 but don’t remember if Anthony was around much that year. I was still doing bakery and other labouring jobs into mid 1972 before starting as a hospital porter in autumn 1972.

I met Anthony once or twice around that time as he was back from some travels. He had got a neck swelling and told me he thought it was cat-scratch fever which he’d caught somewhere. I think he said he recalled being scratched, but I may be wrong. I do remember he had read quite a bit about, and had a belief in, homeopathic medicine and I think he was going to go to the Homeopathic hospital in London and follow treatment they advised. But he was also being seen at QEII. (Of course I learned later that Anthony in fact had incurable Hodgkin’s lymphoma, poor lad.)

How often we saw each other over those months in 72 I can’t recall. But the next thing I remember is seeing him at QEII and then finding he’d been admitted as a patient. This was 1973.

I saw him on the ward a few times and then one morning when I went up he told me he was going to be transferred to St Alban’s and they were waiting for an ambulance. I told him to tell the ward staff when he was ready for discharge to call me and I would come up and wheel him down to the ambulance. But they didn’t and he’d gone when I went back up to the ward. The next I heard he’d died. It was either that day or the next. Whichever, it was his 23rd birthday, I’m sure.

Very sad to have lost him - a lovely fellow with so much intelligence and talent, could be very serious and studious but also very funny and entertaining. I think of him often, and wish I’d seen more of him in those years from 1966. But I’m extremely pleased that I knew him.

Paul Henry

October 2020
Anthony Remembered by
Michael Sugrue

Primary School

I was born in Ireland but due to the timing of my emigration I did not start school until just before my 6th birthday. I attended Our Lady’s primary school in Woodhall Lane, WGC from April 1956 until July 1959. I remember Paul Henry, Alan Blow and Peter Wearden as fellow pupils but can’t recall if we were in the same class. In fact, the only classmate that I can actually remember from Our Lady’s was Dennis Prior who I met on the school coach on my first day and we became close friends for many years afterwards.

In September 1959, many of the Hatfield pupils transferred to Philip Howard, which was a new catholic primary school that had opened in Hatfield. Shortly after the start of the 1959 academic year, there was a rebalancing of pupil numbers so Dennis Prior and I (and a few others) were moved into the top class where we were taught for two years by Mr Rowan. My late start to school meant that I lacked confidence at Our Lady’s but the change of school gave me a new found confidence which resulted in my passing the 11 plus and being selected to attend St Michael’s College, along with Peter Harding, Peter Jackson, Michael Duggan and my friend Dennis Prior.

St Michael’s College

I first met Anthony in September 1961 when we both started as ‘day boys’ at St Michael’s College. He was a friend of Paul Henry and the other boys that knew from Our lady’s. Richard Wallace and Francis Prior (Dennis’s brother) were a year older so acted as our guides as we settled into life at St Michael’s.

A well s requiring a school uniform, we would need sports kit with the colours being dictated by the ‘House’ to which we had been assigned. I think that Anthony, Peter Harding, Alan Blow and Paul Henry were assigned to ‘More’ House (white football short with black trim), while Michael Duggan, Peter Jackson and I were assigned to the newly introduced ‘Rigby’ House (Gold shirt with black trim) while Dennis Prior was assigned to ‘Fisher’ house (Blue shirt with black trim) and Peter Wearden to ‘Stone’ House (red shirt with black trim).

Many of the Hatfield boys lived some distance from the railway station so those of us who were ‘Altar Boys’ at St Theresa’s church in Old Hatfield arranged with the parish priest, Fr Savage, that the boys from St Michael’s could leave our bicycles behind the church before walking the short distance to Hatfield railway station.

The journey to school was by train and usually enjoyable. In the early 1960s, the morning trains had either steam engines or diesel engines pulling the carriages, which were either single compartments or compartments where the corridor was on one side of the train. The role of the Hatfield boys was to lean out of the carriage window as the train approached Welwyn Garden City platform and attract the attention of our friends. Depending on the carriage type, it was usually possible to get about 8-12 boys to a carriage which meant that in the morning we were usually able to share the same
carriage to discuss the previous night’s homework etc. Trainspotting became a hobby for many boys although I can’t remember if it was one of Anthony’s.

Boys in the First and Second Forms were required to wear short trousers so in the winter my thighs would be red from the cold and biting wind and rain. Fortunately, the waiting room in Hatfield had been built in Victorian times so had a large open fire which allowed us to get warm and dry before the train arrived. The respite from the cold continued on the journey before we again faced the elements as we walked from Hitchin railway station to school. The winter of 1962/63 was one of the coldest winters on record in the UK with temperatures so low that lakes and rivers began to freeze over.

Form 1X

The boys who travelled by train from Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Old Welwyn, and Knebworth were assigned to Form 1X. Our Form teacher was an Irishman named Mr Ryan who taught us Maths and English and possibly other subjects (History and Geography?). I enjoyed being taught by Mr Ryan as he loved the Irish poets so introduced me to the poetry of W. B Yeats and Padraic Colum, amongst others. The Old Woman of the Roads and the Lake Isle of Innisfree have been favourites of mine ever since, as they remind me so much of my childhood with my grandmother in Ireland.

Old Woman of the Roads, by Pádraic Colum

O, to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all-the-day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house - house of my own -
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.
On one occasion, Mr Ryan caught Dennis Prior talking in class, or some other minor infringement, so decided to make an example of him. I think that it was done in quite a light-hearted way although Dennis might disagree. Much to the amusement of the class, Mr Ryan told Dennis that he would have to recite the lesson from the playground (which immediately was outside the classroom). No matter how loud Dennis spoke, Mr Ryan would say that he couldn’t hear him and he would need to repeat it but louder. I think that Dennis was hoarse by the time he returned.

On another occasion Mr Ryan questioned Dennis about why he spelled his names as Dennis and not Denis. I can't remember Dennis’s actual answer but I think it might have been along the lines that it was his name so he could spell it how he liked.

We were taught Latin by Fr Bernard, who was also the headmaster. I liked Fr Bernard and am glad that he was headmaster during much of my time at St Michael’s.

Paul Henry, Anthony’s father Joe and I can each remember part of this story so have been able to form a composite by combining our individual recollections.

There was a parents evening held at the end of the academic year 1961/1962. School exams started on 17 July and school broke up on 26 July so I have estimated that parents evening was probably Monday 23 or Tuesday 24 July 1962. Paul’s father, my father and Joe travelled to parents evening together in Joe’s lorry. After the parents evening, they stopped for a pint on the way home before recommencing their journey. As they were driving along they were overtaken by a wheel which they quickly realised was the rear wheel of Joe’s lorry, which had come off the lorry. Joe can remember the wheel coming off his lorry but couldn’t remember who was with him, I could remember my father telling me about the wheel passing them and Paul could also remember the event as Mr Ryan had given him a bad report and his father was not best pleased when he got home.

**Beyond Form 1X**

I had failed to master Latin to the required standard so after Form 1X, I was assigned to the ‘B’ stream while Anthony and some of my close friends such as Dennis Prior and Michael Duggan went into the ‘A’ stream. Thereafter we were educated separately apart from the double sports period when the A and B streams combined, under Mr Laing.

Anthony and I both loved the winter sports of football and cross country. Cross country was a useful standby when the football pitches became water-logged and unplayable. Many boys hated cross-country but I loved it as it brought back memories of running in the countryside in Ireland with my family and friends.

Although I also loved football, Anthony was much more skilful than me. We both played (on opposing teams) in the inter-house football matches that took place at lunchtime on the school pitch adjacent to the playground. Anthony was selected for the school football team in each of the five years that he was at St Michael’s. I think that he played in mid-field and even as I write this, almost 60 years later, I can still visualise him with the ball. Although he was thin, he was skilful and tricky to play against with the ability to twist and turn to shield that ball.

In Paul Henry’s memoir he recalls the story that I had long forgotten about Anthony’s mother and the spider. Paul is obviously too polite to retell the story in full but I can remember Anthony retelling it and how it made us laugh. I think that Anthony was about 13 at the time and had never sworn in front of his mother. On this occasion Mrs Hughes had found a large spider in the bath and asked Anthony to remove it. Anthony must also have been scared of spiders, because when she
asked Anthony why he hadn’t removed it, he replied ‘Have you seen the size of it, it’s f****** enormous’! Anthony was mortified at having sworn in front of his mother but it was just a momentary loss of concentration. I can also remember how shocked my mother was, the first time that I swore in front of her.

In the 3rd year, I had a major falling out with Fr John which resulted in me being banned from his Maths class for almost 18 months. Fr John had a habit of calling pupils ‘idiot’ or ‘imbecile’ if they failed to answer a question correctly. On this particular day, he was teaching a new topic and nobody was able to give the correct answer. When I failed to give the correct answer, he called me imbecile. When I said that I objected to being called an imbecile he accused me of being insolent. I tried to explain that I was being respectful but it degenerated into an argument which left him almost purple with rage. He was a large man and walked over to my desk, caught the collar of my blazer and lifted me out of my seat, before marching me out of the room. I was banned from his class until I apologised. I felt that I had been treated unfairly but there was nobody that I could trust to arbitrate. The only possibility was Fr Bernard but I was sure that he would take the teacher’s side and I would get ‘6 of the best’ for my so-called insolence. Although I had been trying to teach myself the Maths topics that I was missing, I eventually realised that I would only pass my Maths ‘O’ level if I returned to lessons. I swallowed my pride and asked to return, to which he agreed. Although I passed the ‘O’ level I had lost so much ground that I later struggled with ‘A’ level Maths.

Anthony possessed many gifts. It was clear that he was extremely intelligent yet humorous and friendly. He was self-confident and independently minded. He seemed to be able to absorb knowledge with little effort and to pass exams with less revision that his peers. His academic ability is reflected in the fact that he was awarded first prize for academic achievement in Form 1X and the following year was awarded joint 2nd prize in Form IIA. He passed 3 ‘O’ levels at age 15. I can’t remember how many he ‘O’ levels he passed in total but it was easily enough to qualify him for the Vth Form.

There was one exam, which I can’t remember whether it was a school exam or ‘O’ level, in which Anthony read the exam questions, wrote his name on the top of his exam paper and then walked out. Whereas I would have remained and attempted the questions only to fail, he was independently minded enough not to waste his time when he knew he would fail.

The chronicle section of the 1965 school magazine records that on 1 October 1964 that Huges [sic] (IVA) allergic to wearing his cap because it gives him pimples!

I remember that day. Anthony had never liked wearing the school cap and used to try and wear it as far back on his head as possible so that it would not be visible from the front. However that had resulted in it being an irritant to his neck so he decided that he would ask Fr Gerard if he could be excused from wearing his school cap. The request was treated with a great deal of hilarity at the time, a fact that is reflected in the mocking entry in the school magazine. I often wondered since if that was an early sign of Anthony’s illness, as swollen lymph nodes in the neck are one of the symptoms of his illness.

**Mid-Herts College of Further Education**

Although being a member of the 6th form at St Michael’s brought greater freedoms, Anthony still regarded the school environment too stifling so he left in July 1966 after completing his ‘O’ levels.

In September 1966 Anthony, John Bentick and I all signed up at Mid Herts College of Further Education (MHC). It offered a wider syllabus that St Michael’s so I was able to study subjects that interested me. Around Christmas, we were joined by Sean McKenna who had started the Vth Form
at St Michael’s but then decided to switch to Mid-Herts College. Sean only stayed about one term as he found a job as a computer programmer with one of the Banks.

After Sean left, I remember chatting to Anthony in the cafeteria about the life of work. The problems was that neither of us had much idea about what we wanted to do. Anthony was adamant that working in a bank, or similar, doing the same thing every day would drive him mad as there would be too many restrictions that would deny him the opportunity to be himself.

At St Michael’s I had found many of the subjects boring and was only motivated by two teachers both of whom taught English. They Mr Ryan who had introduced me to the Irish poets and Mr Cook who taught me Animal Farm for ‘O’ level English literature. Over the next couple of years I read all of the works of George Orwell.

I found Mid Herts College to be completely different. I was now studying subjects that interested me, and I was motivated by the fact that many of the lecturers were enthusiastic about their subjects. During my time there I was introduced to mechanical calculators (the electronic pocket calculator wasn’t available until 1972) and computing, which would later become my career. When the maths teacher explained binary arithmetic, she brought in a home-made light display which made the subject come to life instead of just being read from a book. There was a downside, which I found very strange, in that the English Literature teacher wanted us to act out the part of the character rather than just reading the lines.

Lunch breaks at Mid Herts College were also quite different. The was the opportunity to play sport in the gym but many students met in or around the Main Hall at lunchtime where music was played. The only song that I can remember from those days is ‘Reach Out, I’ll Be There’ by the Four Tops.

I can’t remember what subjects Anthony or John chose to study or how long they stayed. I had originally planned to stay for two years but left in June 1967, after one year. I had been working part-time during my time at Mid Herts College so I decided to leave and work full time rather than spend another year studying. In those days jobs were plentiful. It was easy to get a factory, or unskilled job that paid well but with little prospects. It was still possible to get a good, career-based job with 5 ‘O’ levels and there didn’t seem to be a huge advantage in having ‘A’ levels unless you wanted to go to Teachers Training College or University.

The Life of Work

The difference between School and Life?

In School, you’re taught a lesson and then given a test.

In Life, you’re given a test that teaches you a lesson.

Tom Bodett

I had been an errand boy for a local shop from about the age of 12 and had been ‘potato picking’ in Smallford when I was 14, when Dennis Prior, Fran Prior and a few other friends.

I had my first summer holiday job at age 15 when I worked at Chrome Alloy Company. When I started work my father told I should use every job as an opportunity to learn something. It is a lesson that I have never forgotten and applied many times. Sometimes a job gives you new knowledge or teaches you a new skill but equally valuable are the lessons that teach you about yourself or about the type of work that you won’t want to do again. Quite early on I learnt that I had a knack for spotting efficiency problems and offering solutions, so trouble shooting became an aspect of my future career.

After leaving Mid-Herts College, I got a factory job in Welham Green for the summer. While there I had managed to negotiate a move from the factory floor into the finance office. Once in the office, I discovered that the people working there didn’t really know what they were doing and often made
I then got a job with Lea Valley Water Company, in Hatfield. The pay was low but it claimed to offer a career. Although it was a modern office environment it was Victorian in outlook. I was required to address each of my colleagues formally (as Mr, Mrs, Miss) and progression was ‘dead man’s shoes’. After a colleague left I had been ‘promoted’ (extra responsibility but no extra pay) but everyone else was middle aged so it was going to be about 15 years or more before the next vacancy. They were preparing to introduce a computer system and although I was interested there were no vacancies. As I began to ask questions about what was planned, I realised that my work was ripe for computerisation so there wasn’t really the career that had been promised.

I lost contact with Anthony after Mid-Herts college, but he remained close friends with Dennis Prior. After Dennis completed his ‘A’ levels in June 1968, he and Anthony (and others) went to Morocco, travelling in a Morris Minor car that had been owned by Anthony’s father. They appear to have had a good time in Morocco and returned in early February 1969. The journey had taken its toll on the car and I think it had suffered a major problem (possibly with the steering) on the return journey so the car basically limped back most of the way from southern Spain.

Dennis came to see me shortly after his return and said that he and Anthony were intending to spend the summer touring the Greek isles and I was welcome to join them. He wouldn’t be leaving for a few months as he need to earn money to fund the trip.

I didn’t need much encouragement to join them as I had been thinking of leaving Lea Valley Water Company but hadn’t plucked up the courage to tell my parents. I handed in my notice the next day and within a couple of days, we had managed to find jobs as petrol pump attendants at Waters Garage on the Barnet-by-pass in Hatfield. I knew that Anthony had worked at Waters Garage (on the South side) but think that it must have been a holiday job while he was at Mid Herts College.

Dennis and I worked on the North bound carriageway. The pay was about £17 basic per week plus overtime and tips which compared to the £5 per week that I was earning at Lea Valley. The downside was that any till shortages would be deducted from our pay.

Dennis and I worked at Waters until May 1969 when we set off for Amsterdam with Peter Harding. The plan was that we would meet Anthony in Amsterdam at a pre-arranged place and date. Correspondence was very haphazard in those days as all communication was by letter which was sent 'Poste Restante' to a pre-arranged town or city but was reliant of the recipient calling in to collect the letter. Not surprisingly when we arrived in Amsterdam, we went to the boat where he was supposed to be staying but nobody knew him. Despite our efforts we couldn’t find Anthony and had no way of contacting him. While looking for him we managed to get a job in Amsterdam docks renovating a trawler that had been grounded and needed a new certificate of sea-worthiness. We were even allowed to sleep onboard so had no additional accommodation costs. The few days turned into weeks and we never managed to meet Anthony and never got to Greece but at least we were earning money. We were still in Amsterdam in July 1969 but with no access to a TV, we only learnt about the about the death of Brian Jones (ex-Rolling Stones) and the Moon Landing from the newspaper headlines. I stayed in Amsterdam until August and took advantage of a lift to London
before hitch hiking to Ireland to visit my grandmother. I had considered returning to Ireland to live, but I discovered that my childhood friends were struggling to find work so I returned.

After the summer of 1969, Dennis and Anthony met up again got a flat together in London (possibly in Muswell Hill). I remember visiting them during the winter. The flat only had single glazing and no heating so it was like an ice-box. I think that they were labouring outdoors as the cold didn’t seem to bother them.

I lost touch with Anthony after that and later heard that he had gone to America. I kept in touch with Dennis for a while but lost touch after he married, had a child and emigrated to Australia.

These days it is almost obligatory to have a good degree before ending formal education but things were much different in the late 1960s. In some ways we were naïve in that we received no career advice so we didn’t necessarily know what career options might be available or what career we wanted to follow. On the other hand we had been able to get summer jobs from the age of 15 so by the time we left formal education we had already experienced different types of jobs and were confident in our abilities to try any job. It was also time of great optimism when it was possible to get a good job with 5 ‘O’ levels and subsequent progression was based on aptitude and ambition.

I don’t feel disadvantaged by not going to university as it never seemed that important to me. Perhaps that’s because I also worked hard to ensure that it wasn’t a disadvantage, and because I had a stroke of luck along the way.

In the three years that I would have been at University (1968-1971), I had a number of factory and office jobs, I had worked on a sewage works (and fallen into a sewage tank!) and had also worked abroad. I had also attended evening classes to study management and to try and decide on a career.

In 1970 I had lucky break when I got a job in Computing (now called I.T.) which I loved from day one. It was a great place to work and I was learning something new every day. My bosses were great, and the top man insisted being called by his nickname, which was so refreshing compared to Lea Valley Water Company. I was with a great group of people, who were mostly my age so we worked together and partied together. For the first time I felt inspired by my work and whenever there was something that I didn’t understand there was always somebody willing to pass on their knowledge. I was promoted after the minimum period of two years and was working alongside graduates so missing University had not been a disadvantage. I enjoyed a lengthy career in I.T. during which time I became a Chartered Member of the British Computer Society, thus redressing my failings at St Michael’s.

Undoubtedly attending St Michael’s changed my life. It gave the appetite for learning which has served me well since.

Michael Sugrue
October 2020
Anthony Remembered by
Dennis Prior

My name is Dennis Prior I was at school and in same class as Anthony until he left for Mid Herts College in 1966. I like to think we were good friends all that time.

When Anthony left we didn’t see much of each other till we both finished school in 1968. We worked at least one summer holiday job together in a Hatfield factory. Anthony’s dad took us to see Chelsea a few times in and around 1966.

In Early 1969 Anthony, Eamon ????? , and I shared a flat in North London probably for a few months. Anthony and I worked on a building site in Russel Square when it was going through a huge rebuild. Anthony and I were both dumper truck drivers. It was not unknown for us to have dumper truck races around the square.

In April 1969 Anthony, John Bentinck, someone else and I drove from London to Morocco in Anthony’s Morris Minor. We spent most of our time camping on a beach in Agadir. Unfortunately one wet day I was driving the car to take Anthony’s Canadian Girlfriend home and had an accident. It caused a few problems. All was resolved and shortly after that we called it quits. I headed home and I think Anthony headed towards Amsterdam.

Attached is a football team picture of 62 or 63. [Editor’s note: The photograph has been identified as 1963/64 Under 14s school football team].

Front Row: Denis Ives, Mick Hawley, Greg Hart, Roger Larkin, Dennis Prior, Tony Hughes.
Anthony Remembered by
Francis Prior

My brother Denny has lived in Australia for many years now. As I remember, he and Anthony were in a group who drove to Morocco and were involved in a road accident, details of which my memory is sketchy to say the least. As I said earlier, Denny and Tony were in the same class so he knew Anthony much better than I. He will send his own recollection of those events.

Tom Reilly, also knew Anthony very well, having lived with him in Amsterdam for a while. Tom has been unable to receive emails for some time, but I have telephoned him and told him about the quest for information about Anthony. As an aside, he says he remembers getting a lift once in your grandfather’s lorry. I wonder if he can remember?

My own main memory of times with Anthony:

Our youth club (St Peter’s Catholic Church in Hatfield) had organised a contest based on a so called “Initiative Test”. In pairs, we were required, over the space of a weekend, to visit and check in at the guard-house of six British Army posts in the South-East of England and we had to do it with no more than the princely sum of five shillings (25 pence in new money). I can’t remember if it was five shillings each or shared. Either way, although it’s very little now, it wasn’t a great deal then. Basically, it meant hitch-hiking and a deal of map-reading. I doubt it would be allowed these days. Although we were not special friends, Anthony and I always got on well and happily agreed to go together. There were probably a dozen or so other teams. At one stage when we had been waiting a long time on a quiet road for a lift and getting quite hungry, we decided that Anthony would continue to try to get a lift while I walked into the nearby village to try to get something to eat. I came upon an old lady struggling to reach the top of the hedge she was attempting to cut. I offered to help and while doing so, explained our situation. While I finished off the hedge, she had kindly made us a very fine packed lunch of sandwiches and fruit. I hurried back to the main road only to find Anthony leaning into the window of a car he had stopped. Somehow, Anthony had used his not inconsiderable powers of persuasion to get the driver to wait for me. After the last check-in, we got back late on the Sunday afternoon to find that we were the first team to return and as we had spent none of our money, we had definitely won the contest.

Francis Prior
October 2020

Editor’s Note: by Michael Sugrue

I had forgotten about these events until Fran’s memoir reminded me. I participated in two of these events in which I was partnered by his brother Dennis. I think that that were probably in the spring of 1964 and 1965. I don’t remember much about the first event but do recall the second.

The events involved all the youth clubs in Hatfield (The Breaks, Downs Farm and St Peter’s) and were organised in conjunction with the Army or Army Cadets. The challenge was to hitchhike 500 miles in
24 hours with a number of checkpoints at pre-determined army camps. The objective was to test our initiative, navigation skills and application under unfamiliar conditions. We weren’t allowed to do anything illegal and we were only allowed to take five shillings (like Fran I can’t remember if it was five shillings each or per team). Five shillings was about enough to buy a couple of drinks and a bag of chips but not enough to buy a meal. Having learnt from the event the year before, I made a sign saying ‘500 mile army test’. We started at the Hilltop in Hatfield and had to travel on a circular route through Bedfordshire, up to Norfolk then onto Suffolk, Essex then south of the Thames to Kent and along the south coast before returning to Hatfield. Dennis and I started off at a great pace and were offered a lift by the first car passed us. It seemed to continue like that which meant that we had reached Dover in probably not much more time than if we had driven ourselves. However that’s when our luck changed. It was early evening when we left Folkestone, by which time it had started to rain, and we spent ages trying to get a lift but without success. We even went to a village hall where an event was being held but had no joy. We ended up finding a pair of telephone boxes in which to spend the night. I can’t remember how far we got after that but we were forced to give up at one of our checkpoints as we knew that we couldn’t get back in time.

As Fran says, it probably wouldn’t be allowed today but it was great fun and a way of learning about ourselves.
I attended St Michael’s from September 1961 until July 1966. This memory is from 1961-62 when we were in Form 1X.

I joined Form 1x in 1961, travelling in from Bedford, so I didn’t get to mix with the ‘soccer-mad’ mob from WGC, etc. Hawley and Hughes were the footballers who dominated the ‘quad’* during breaks and the team on the pitch. I’m afraid I endured the sport in my 29/11 boots....haha. That’s 29 shillings 11 pence in old money so £1.50 in today’s money which was more than the cost of my school shoes. Happy Days!

How I disliked football; scored a goal once (I know.....shocking!). Stunned the others.

A story that I remember from our French lessons with Fr Gerard O’Leary, who was nicknamed ‘Bugs’ but never to his face.

Bugs, sorry, Father Gerard, was going over the verb Manger; to eat. He said to us all  "Manger is the verb To Eat", but the way he said it was Tweet.

He then looked at Hughes and said "Hughes, what’s the past participle of Tweet?" Silence. Five seconds later came the reply....."Twitter, Father". We all collapsed in laughter.

Of course, that was a LONG time before Social Media.

Note: * ‘The quad’ was the area of playground immediately adjacent to the side of the building where First Formers played football during the lunch break.

Frank Hancock
October 2020
The End

For now