

ALAN GOLD

31 January 2012

I think Kopul always used to say that it wasn't our attitudes to Judaism at school that mattered but what we would take away.

As we all seem to be coughing up our misdemeanors, I can recall one Purim when the fourth form became prefects and we went for a revenge mission on the study block. Kopul decided that this was the mob taking over and we were barred from breakfast and told to pick up paper. Or when he didn't like the way I was talking and made me put some kind of wedge in my mouth and recite poetry. Good days...

STEPHEN GOLD

30 January 2012

Those of us who survived the terrible food and the expeditions to the tuck-shop where Ms. Aarons ruled supreme, may sympathise with following story. My late Father ran a Kosher restaurant and because his darlings shouldn't go hungry shipped food parcels care of Wallingford post office [poste restant] where I was delegate to shlap down to the village and rescue said food! Koppel got to hear of this wheeze and captured me one winters evening and confiscated said food parcel!! Oh the shame oh the hunger! and Soon after my leaving school, Koppel often ate in the restaurant and on one happy occasion I confiscated his lokshen soup! He of course saw the joke!! Good to remind oneself of those far off days. Anyone remember the Tale of Joseph Shmool who caused a bother once in shool? courtesy of Murray Roston. Am unable to be in Israel but would love to see and hear from any former class mates.

EMANUEL GRODZINSKI

30 January 2012

It is July 1953. I am standing on the platform at Newbury railway station. I am on my way up to Woburn House in London to take my barmitzvah test. In my pocket is a third class ticket. Just as the train pulls in, Kopul appears on the platform and when we get onto the train, he ushers me into his first class carriage. Somewhere before Reading, the ticket collector comes to inspect our tickets. When, nervously, I take mine out of my pocket, Kopul waves it aside and says, imperiously, "he's with me" and so I finish the journey in comfort. That was his positive side. On the other hand he wrote a speech for me to give at my barmitzvah party which was so dense and intellectual that it could clearly not have come from me. I tried desperately at least to understand what it meant, but half an hour before I was due to deliver it, I gave up, and quickly wrote one of my own. While I was speaking, I saw his eyebrow rise, but to his credit, he never said a word. Like all of you, I'm sure, I could go on. I was at Carmel between 1951 and 1956 (school no 132), and so attended all three campuses: Crookham, Greenham and Mongewell. I can't say that the years were the happiest of my life, but they have certainly left me with warm memories of teachers (some) and pupils (many) alike.

JONATHAN ISSERLIN

8 January 2012

Looking through the names, though is a walk down memory lane. David Robson and I opened the batting for the first eleven, as did Derek Zissman and I. Berny Markovic was the long suffering scorer for the team. Geoff Levy also opened the batting! How could we all have done it at the same time? Maybe we each got dropped every now and then...both actually on the pitch and from the team!

I recognize many rowers, Alex Habel and Neil Alton and Raymond Dwek seem to stand out. Some of those who wrote in so far I remember well, although, as I was there from 1957-1961, I don't understand why I remember Alan Rayne and Avrom Scherr when they say they were there either after I left, or for just a short time when I was there. Anton Dell I remember very well, as well as Nick Balcombe and Martin Alpren (although I seem to remember him as Charlie, I don't know why!).

Talking of Charlie, he, Mr. Marshall, was there at the last get together, spry, lively and sharp as a tack. He well remembered all of us who had anything to do with Phys Ed (as we say on this side of the pond.) He even remembered when I broke my leg high jumping and when I batted in a house match with the cast on because we were short of batsmen!

My memories of Kopul of course are still as clear as crystal. I have a hard time getting my head around the idea that he has been dead for half a century. He was, without doubt, the most influential person in my young life. I still quote him frequently despite the fact that everyone always reminds me that he used to call me "misserlin" and would shout insults at me from the touchline during first eleven football matches along the lines of "don't pass to him, pass to ME...I'm not playing either!"

Despite that, or maybe because of it, I loved the man. He wanted me to become a Rabbi, but I said that his sons would have to do that for him...which, of course, they did. When he was given his diagnosis, he asked all of the old boys who were either doctors or medical students, back to talk to him. I remember being in his office (I can only remember Richard Lament, now a psychiatrist in Vancouver, B.C. BTW) being there as well, but Alex Habel may also have been. He was convinced he was going to survive his illness (which he probably would have, had he had it now instead of then), and wanted to know if we would publish an article about him in the BMJ or Lancet to say that as a deeply committed Jewish Rabbi he had believed all along that he would recover. Sadly we were not able to do that.

25 May 2012

Like Neil Alton before me, I was at boarding school from the age of 8 in Brighton. No it was not the "well-known" Whittingham College, but the less-well known school along the way called Aryeh House School. Unlike Neil, and perhaps the majority of the former pupils of Aryeh House, I did not find that it was like Borstal or a prison camp. We have had reunions in Brighton

of the former pupils there twice in the past 5 years and are planning another in 2013. I am one of the few who really did not feel as if I was in prison.

As a result, when I was moved to Carmel in Mongewell Park in 1957, I was already quite an old hand at the boarding school scene, and didn't feel out of my depth at all. I had an interview and an exam and was given a bursary (a term that I had no previous knowledge of). When I arrived at the beginning of term I was examined again by a group of teachers to try to work out where to put me. I had obviously done well in the entrance exam, so I was tested in Maths, Latin and, Hebrew. I had come from an orthodox home and therefore the Hebrew was no problem for me, especially, as David Shaw has already pointed out, as Carmel really didn't go in for spoken Ivrit. The other two subjects were taught at Aryeh House by the fearsome principal, Mr. Eliasoff, and so they were my best subjects.

Following these really rather rudimentary tests, it was decided that I would be placed in the 5th form, a full 2 years above my age group. I was small for my age anyway, and it didn't take long for the authorities to work out that I did not belong in the fifth. When they demoted me, however, it was only by one class, so the rest of my time in Carmel was spent a year ahead of my age.

I was one of the people who did not come from London...in fact I hailed from, in Neil's words, "oop North". My father lived and worked in Middlesbrough, and it was from there that Michael Bharier and I travelled down to Carmel at the beginning of each term. This trip was in itself an adventure, maybe not quite as memorable as the train ride from Paddington to Didcot, but a marathon all of its own. In those days...and even now still, I think, you can travel by rail in Britain easily and well as long as you go up the East coast from London, down to the South-West or South-East from London, up to Birmingham and Manchester and points north (from London). But as soon as you try to get from the North East to the South West (or points in between,) you are in trouble.

So, the Carrs from Newcastle, Bharier and me from Middlesbrough, and someone else, I forget who but maybe it was David Robson,, from Leeds or Pontefract or somewhere around there, would make this cross country rail trip through Darlington, York, Rugby and all points to Oxford. From there we took a bus to Wallingford and, if the memory serves me right, a taxi from Wallingford to Carmel. Maybe Michael Bharier will correct my remembrances of the trip. He really seems to have a wonderful sense of recall! It took us all day and we started doing it when we were no more than about 14 years old. Would we allow our kids to do that today?

My wife Janet, wonderful lady though she is, has absolutely no time whatsoever for any sort of organized sports. She is convinced that all the old Carmelis (or Old Kopulonians if you like) are clones of one another, especially when it comes to football, cricket rowing, tennis, squash...need I go on? When Colan Linton called me out of the blue from his home in Fredrickton, New Brunswick several years ago, because he was coming to Ottawa on business and wondered if we could meet because he had heard that I lived here, he began by asking if I remembered him. How could I not, I replied, when I had dropped him when he had scored just 17 runs in a House match and he went on to score 117, the only time I could remember anyone

ever scoring a century in a house match (or any match for that matter) at Carmel. Janet heard just one side of the conversation and immediately deduced that I was talking to an Old Carmeli!

But we really did have a sporting tradition at Carmel. I met David Rosen (Buster) in Israel in, I believe, 1989, a full 28 years after I had left. He was just a young kid, hardly even in the Prep School when I left in 1961 but he remembered me clearly. I, of course, remembered him because of Kopul (and his Kopul-given nickname) but why, I asked, did he remember me. Because you were a "sporting hero" he said! And that just about summed it up. I played on a lot of school teams. I played for the first XI in cricket when I first came to the school at the tender age of 13 and scored 43 (a huge score in those days) against the same Rutlish School that David Shaw refers to, in my first game. I kept my place in the team for the entire season almost exclusively because of that innings, because I certainly never matched it for the next couple of years. Mr. Healy, a terrific cricket coach as well as his other teaching skills, never stopped talking about that innings. I don't even know whether we won the game, but we certainly did hold our own against them throughout my time at Carmel, as well as against some other very classy Public Schools like Reading School (who's pitch really was used for minor county matches and was, without doubt, the best pitch I've ever batted on,) and Leighton Park School, which had an Oak tree encroaching onto the pitch at mid-wicket (or extra cover depending on which end was batting) and which caused the boundary to be so short that they gave you 2 runs instead of 4 if you hit it!

The Rosen boys didn't play cricket. Football was their game. I played alongside Jeremy and Mickey (z"l) in the first XI, and against both in house matches. Mickey was a classy player for Montefiore and I enjoyed playing with him and against him. I enjoyed playing with Jeremy (Rooky, of course to all and sundry then, his father's love of nicknames again), but playing against him was another thing altogether. I really think he was one of the dirtiest players I ever played against. He had perfected the art of treading on your (my) feet in the penalty area when a corner or free kick was approaching, a trick that was extremely successful and rarely resulted in punishment. I was, however, once awarded a penalty for this particular infraction, and I managed to score from the spot against the then school goalie, Alexis Grower, with Kopul roaring at me from the sidelines. Heaven knows how I managed, because Kopul delighted in referring to me as "Misserlin". I suppose I just had to show him for once!

I also represented the school in tennis, actually winning the senior championship by beating Mickey in the final, 7-5 in the deciding set, having been 5-2 down! I played squash for the school, mainly against Oxford Colleges. This was always very strange because the squash court at Carmel was of the narrow (American) variety, a throwback to the school's being commandeered by the US army in WW2. When we got to the Oxford Colleges, however, they were the standard English width and were completely different to what we were used to. I remember playing against Richard Sharp when he was the outstanding England fly half in rugby but played squash for fun for whichever college he was at, I forget which. He was 6'2" tall and, of course, superbly fit. His squash skills did not match his fantastic rugby skills, but he still beat me handily! We also played against some Public schools. I remember playing Douay (sp)

religious Catholic school run by the Jesuits. When I was at medical school, one of my class had been there as a pupil and told me terrible stories about it. Somehow, I doubt if anyone would tell such stories about Carmel. I don't think anyone was that cruel on the staff at any time.

As far as studies were concerned, my memories are not nearly as clear. In the lower forms I remember Dr. Friedman very well and I also admired him greatly. I wish I could have continued with History with him, but if I wanted to go to medical school, as I did, I had to drop it and do Phys, Chem and Biology instead. I also missed out on being taught by Mr. Schmidt, who Michael Bharier praised so highly...except for the Horizon Club (?Society) which taught me the value of logic. Mr. Romney Coles taught us Chemistry as described by David Shaw with an OCD approach that is staggering if reviewed today. I can still quote the Periodic Table (and not Tom Lehrer's version) almost perfectly, say MOWLECULE instead of molecule, and can recite definitions that he had written on the wall of his lab word-perfectly without missing an "and" or a "the"! Mr. Bunney taught us Physics and was house master of Gilbert house when I was House Captain. He was very difficult to evaluate, an excellent teacher and somewhat of a cynic. In my last House cricket match he asked me what I intended to do if I won the toss. When I said I would put them in (Alexander, I think it was) he said that we needed to win this game to win the cricket cup outright and have a chance for the house cup, and if I did that he bet me 12 coca colas that we would win neither. I did. We did. I scored the winning runs. We won the cricket cup (but, I think, were beaten out by one point for the house cup), and he was there, on the boundary in front of the pavilion as I led the team off the field, with 12 bottles of coke in his arms and a wry grin on his face.

And then we come to Mr. Ernest Gray. I had no idea that he went on to be an author. I must look for the books that David Shaw referred to. He was sick during 2 terms of my final year in the Upper Sixth and we were therefore not able to take A-Level Biology. I had, fortunately, already been accepted into medical school without that, but I had to do an extra year in St. Mary's to catch up. All I remember of Mr. Gray were the dogfish dissections.

And now the one for whom this whole exercise started on the occasion of his 50th Yahrtzeit. Rabbi Dr. Kopul Rosen z"l was really an ever-present in my formative years. I remember him as well as, if not better than, my own father. I mean no disrespect to his own sons when I say that I felt as though I was another son of his. He only taught me elocution, but I felt that his hand was in almost all of the subjects that I studied...at least the arts subjects. He wanted me to be a rabbi. "Why?" I said, "I can't sing"... "well neither can I", he responded. I think he was genuinely proud when I got into medical school, one of the first, together with Richard Lament, Michael Bharier and Alex Habel, to do so from Carmel. We had lots of very bright pupils at Carmel, with lots of Open scholarships and Exhibitions and places at Oxbridge, but they were mostly pure scientists (like Clive Simons and Ellis Korn and Colan Linton and Raymond Dwek and...) but I think we were the first medical doctors. When he was on his deathbed, almost, he asked us to come up to Carmel and see him. I remember standing in his study (overlooking the tennis courts) while he told us the history of his diagnosis and how he hoped we would ensure that his story was told in the medical journals (by us) after he had recovered.

Kopul was always "one of the boys". He would be out on the playing field on Shabbat afternoon in summer playing cricket with us up against the roller! He was always on the sidelines when the first XI was playing, and he cheered the rowing crews on from the bank. I had not heard Neil's story about the day he died. The truth of it, I don't doubt. We may not have been able to win the "Head of the River", but we could hold our heads up proudly against the best schools in the country, many of them with centuries of tradition behind them. We certainly beat them at chess. Apart from Robert Eisdorfer, I remember Colan Linton also being in the team and beating the team from Eton to get into, I think, the last 16 in all England. Kopul's presence in the dining room on Shabbat was memorable. Through all the noise and chatter, he would start the melancholy tune of the 23rd Psalm that gradually stopped the talk and had the whole room singing. I use that tune whenever I (rarely) am asked to sing at a Levayah. It is a wonderful tune for me...full of poignant memories. I still sing toombay, toombay at havdalah, and I still think of him. I regret ducking down and avoiding being caught for layenning by him because I never learned how to learn to layen quickly and easily. I do it, but it is a real chore. Had I sat up straight and been seen by him on Shabbat evening more often, I am sure I would be better at it.

I don't meet many Old Carmelis in Ottawa. Whenever I do meet them, however, in various parts of the world, I am always amazed by the fact that almost all of them are involved with Judaism...even when they had not seemingly been so when I knew them at Carmel. They are often deeply involved in their shuls and their communities. They make up morning minyanim (as I do). They conduct services on the High Holidays (and on regular Shabbatot and Yomim Tovim) as I do also. I am sure that they all do so while, at least some of the time, thinking of Rabbi Dr. Kopul Rosen z"l

I am just about to retire from my medical practice of Geriatrics and GP in Ottawa. I intend to continue to do locums filling in for my former colleagues in my Health Group and at the Hospital, but I also intend to travel, especially to Israel where I have an apartment and family. I hope to get the opportunity of seeing some Old Kopulonians on those travels. I am also hoping that another reunion, maybe in London, where, it seems, the majority of you reside.

25 August 2013

The groundsman, Mr. Harper ... made the cricket square so beautiful. He was at Carmel for many years as I met him well into the 80's, 20 years after I left.

The other people I wondered about were a couple of sports coaches, (surprise, surprise coming from me). One was Don Banton who played cricket for Oxfordshire and coached the first XI in the nets once or twice a week. He was an excellent coach who bowled legbreaks for Oxfordshire but was able to teach all sorts of styles. I particularly remember him having special composition balls that he coated one side with some sort of substance that made them swing beautifully. Danny Bernstein and Harris Sidelsky particularly benefited lots from these balls.

The other one was a football coach who came for just one year. He was one of the best known players in England at the time, Jackie Milburn of Newcastle United and England. I don't remember much that he did to coach us, but I do remember him playing in the staff match against the 1st XI. He really didn't work up a sweat preferring to pass off to others in the team,

notably Kopul himself and Charlie Marshall, but he did let fly with a shot from about 35 yards that flashed into the top corner past our goalie, Alexis Grower, who barely moved.

ELLIOTT KATZ

8 January 2012

From the U.S.A, I perhaps the first Yankee to attend Carmel, 56-58 send regrets. Benjamin Klapper and myself brought the red, white and blue to Wallingford and tried to teach the Brits how to play basketball, alas to no avail. However my natural athletic skills allowed me to become Carmel's first Yank wicket keeper as well as a member of the football team. Unfortunately, Geoff Levy never passed me the ball and is directly responsible for prematurely ending my promising career. Along with Basil Jacobs, Leslie Nussbaum, Rodney Cholodny and Jeffrey Greenberg, I was leader of Carmel's first renegades. A remnant of my American heritage from 1776, I suspect.

HENRY LAW

Carmel College days – Part 1

It was late in the September of 1954, and there was a lot to be done in the three weeks before I was due to go to Carmel College. A list of items to bring arrived in the post, with instructions on where they should be bought. The grey flannel suit and purple blazer had to come from Harrods and were expensive. The ride to Harrods was in one of the unusual (to London) post-war Leyland Titan STD buses which were sold off a few weeks later. Most of the other things I already had – grey shirts, white shirts, and football boots. A roll of Cash's woven name labels had to be ordered and my name sewn on to every single item. A 1930s cabin trunk was obtained second hand from somewhere. I had a verruca on my foot which had to be frozen off, and an appointment was made in a hurry to get that done. All the things were packed into the trunk and collected from by a British Railways van for delivery to the school. That was a service costing five shillings, about ten pounds in 2012 prices, which made it excellent value for money.

I felt regret at having to leave the bustle of London. In many ways the capital looked better than it ever had done or would ever do again. There were hardly any tall buildings. Apart from war damage, which had largely been repaired, the Victorian areas had not been devastated by the large scale redevelopment by local authorities, most of it unnecessary, that took place from the 1960s. London had not been gripped by redevelopment mania by greedy property companies. Nor had it suffered from the effects of traffic engineering. The streets were quiet by modern standards. The Georgian and Victorian terraces could be seen unobscured by an endless stream of traffic in the foreground. The old Euston station still had its arch in Drummond Street, and the waiting room was the beautiful Great Hall by Philip Hardwick, completed in 1846. There was an almost – but not quite – uniform fleet of red RT and RTL buses. Private transport mostly meant a journey in one of the fleet of equally uniform black taxis. There was an authentic public

realm, recognisable by its icons and respected by the whole community. It seemed permanent. It would not survive the decade intact. Fifty years later the past had become a foreign country. It was a fresh, bright October morning when we made our way to Paddington and caught the train to Reading, where we changed to a stopping train and continued to Cholsey and Moulsoford. The stopping train was Great Western Railway diesel railcar number one, a streamlined vehicle with a futuristic aerodynamic form, having steeply raked windscreens at each end. Third Class only, it had a luxurious interior, the seats having deep foam rubber cushions covered with red moquette, wall panels in Art Deco marquetry, and glazed screens behind the driver. Passengers could enjoy the same view of the track ahead as the train driver. It had been built in 1933 and was vastly superior to any of its successors. But it was propelling me to an unknown future.

All too soon, that delightful part of the journey was over. It was a taxi ride through Wallingford, over the long bridge, up an avenue with mature beeches whose branches met overhead, and down a long winding potholed private drive to the school forecourt. There was a red brick mansion, a scatter of concrete World War 2 huts, and a lake, all in a park landscape well furnished with mature trees.

My mother and I went in through the front door of the mansion into a gloomy oak-panelled hall with parquet flooring. There were a few formalities and then my mother left me to my own devices. I was given a school number, 342, and interviewed by Romney Coles, the head master and chemistry teacher. He must have recognised straight away that I was going to be a promising pupil. A boy of my own age showed me where all the main facilities were in the school, I was introduced to that most important school institution, the Linen Room, shown my dormitory place and sent off to my classroom. I might have panicked but there was too much to take in and do.

The dormitory was a top floor room with a sloping roof and a dormer window. The heating barely worked. There was two rows of iron framed beds facing each other. They were all neatly made, army fashion, with grey blankets. A locker for personal items stood beside each bed. For some reason I was the first boy in the dormitory that night. The others arrived after prep.

The horsehair-filled mattress was hard. I eventually got to sleep. It was a chilly and dark autumn dawn when we were all wakened at seven next morning, washed and dressed hurriedly and shuffled down the stairs to morning prayers in Hebrew a panelled room on the ground floor. After what I thought was a miserable breakfast of cereal, bread, a knob of butter and the possibility of jam, which I had never liked, there was just time to return to the dormitory for bed making and a rushed visit to the lavatory, to be in class in time for the start of lessons. Some of this routine was familiar from the school camp, but they had given us a solid fried breakfast, there was not half an hour of unfamiliar prayers, it had been summer and I was with familiar faces.

I think it was mostly lack of courage and the fare money that prevented me from going straight home again. I missed my mother. I missed my father. I missed Flip. And I missed the constant procession of passing trains at Gospel Oak. But part of me was curious to see how

things would turn out. I liked the country environment. I looked forward to the prospect of having a well-equipped chemistry laboratory.

Me

A few months after my thirteenth birthday I was at the small end of average for my age. I had a mop of slightly wavy hair which I could never keep tidy, the colour of an old copper coin, and blue eyes. To judge from photographs taken at the time, I was a good looking and well-proportioned boy, on the skinny side, with regular features and nice teeth. However, I never thought so at the time, and particularly disliked my nose, which I considered was much too big. I moved clumsily, and tended to hold my head to one side. I wore spectacles to correct my slight short-sight. These were the classic wire-framed NHS children's issue, with plastic covered wire frames, springy curl earpieces and the lens shape known as pantoscopic. Though expensive and fashionable antiques today, I did not think they were flattering. The only thing to be said for them was that they hid a squint. It is a mystery how the opticians had failed to notice that after regular twice-a-year tests.

I was no good at ball games, and could neither ride a bicycle nor swim. None of this helped to bolster my self-confidence. By the autumn of 1954, I was wearing long trousers, being just tall enough to for them to be suitable. Puberty was just starting to push though. My voice was breaking to a horrible nasal mixture of uncontrolled squeakiness with an unpleasant timbre. It took year to settle down. Fluff was starting to grow on the side of my face, which needed to be cut off about once a fortnight. That was destined to cause trouble.

If I put on nice clothes they would be a mess within a couple of hours. I did not feel a credit to myself or anyone else.

In the classroom

The classes, held in the war-time huts, were of about fifteen boys, a better size than at William Ellis. The school was too small for streaming and the boys were moved around until they were in the class where they could cope with the syllabus. This meant that in each class there was a range of three years between the oldest and the youngest. In some ways it was a good system, but it had the disadvantage that mature, though un-academic boys could be put together with bright though immature ones. This led to tensions.

I was initially placed with my own age group, which was the third form, as I had been at William Ellis. But the work was much too easy and after a couple of weeks I was moved up to the fourth form, with mostly older boys, a few of whom resented my presence. I was then behind with the mathematics but made up after a couple of weeks. Classmates Raymond Dwek and Michael Poster between them taught me quadratic equations, which we had not covered at William Ellis. After that I was near the top of the class in most of the subjects that I was actually interested in, which was everything apart from Hebrew and Jewish studies, geography and history. If I was not interested in a subject, it would be because it was not being presented in a way that captured my imagination. The fact that I had caught up so quickly added to the initial resentment and that surfaced with endless discussion about who was mature and who was not. I just walked away from that stuff.

In the third form English and Latin were taught by Abraham Carmel, who had been a Catholic priest. He had the unctuous manner found amongst some clergymen, which may have been why I disliked him. He was an effective teacher and also a house master. French was taught adequately though I can not remember the name of the teacher. The Mathematics master was Mr Ellman, orthodoxly Jewish and another effective teacher but someone I could not warm to. I became friendly with his scatterbrained but very bright son.

Harry Schmidt taught geography, and Dr Friedman, a first world war veteran but still with a ruff of red hair, taught history. He was know as Yoshky because of his habit of opening his arms wide. "Sacramento", he would proclaim when surprised. Romney Coles taught chemistry with superb competence, and John Bunney did the same with physics. I might be wrong, but my impression with John Bunney was that he was not as bright as the best of the pupils and at times would defer to them gracefully. Or perhaps it was just his way of showing respect to the pupils. Either way it was creditable. Whatever the explanation, he could foresee any of the difficulties that might arise and explain them so that they could be easily understood. John Bunney had been in the Royal Navy during the war, and been involved, I believe, in radio and also instruction and training. He certainly knew a lot about that side of the subject. Coles and Bunney were to see me through most of the rest of my time at the school. Romney Coles made Chemistry interesting. Wherever possible he would allow the pupils to do practical work. We would prepare samples all the compounds on the syllabus and each of us had his own collection of labelled test tubes containing our samples. Some were very beautiful, such as the coloured crystals of ferrous ammonium sulphate and the various alums. Since boys like collecting things, this was good psychology. Where the materials were regarded as too dangerous – such as the manufacture of sulphuric acid by the Lead Chamber process, he would set up the experiments on his own demonstration bench or in the glass fume cupboard. He was also keen on digressing, and would spend up to a third of a two-hour session talking around and off the topic. This was a certain way of ensuring that we remembered what we needed to know. Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics involved then, as now, a lot of measuring and calculation. Nowadays the pupils would probably use the calculator application on their mobile phones, or enter their results on a spreadsheet. The generation before them would have used electric calculators. But none of these things were available. There were logarithms, which are sets of index numbers to the base 10, and they can be used to multiply and divide by adding or subtracting the index number. These logarithms were printed as a set of tables, which came at the front of the book of four-figure tables – forty-eight pages with a tough, pale blue, softback cover, by Godfrey and Siddons. The book also included logarithms to the base "e", reciprocals, trigonometrical functions such as sines, cosines, tangents, circular functions such as and radians, and much more. It was invaluable for physics and mathematics. I had the advantage of having learned the principles of trigonometry and logarithms long before, at my primary school.

There were also slide rules which could multiply and divide to three significant figures eg 1.23, 123 or 1230. These had logarithmically spaced numbers printed or engraved on them. The principle was ancient, the devices having been invented in the sixteenth century. There were

cheap ones costing a few shillings, with printed paper scales bonded to a protective layer of celluloid. These lasted well enough unless they got wet, which could often happen in a laboratory. There were more expensive ones with engraved plastic scales, bonded to mahogany in the case of the German Faber-Castell brand, and to crushed bamboo in the case of the Japanese make Hemmi, which were more difficult to obtain. I got one of the latter from the tool shop Buck and Ryan in Euston Road and still have it somewhere. There were also circular and spiral ones, though they were awkward and of limited value. A slide rule was essential equipment even for O-level science. They promoted a feeling and understanding of numbers which modern methods of calculation do not. First, you had to appreciate the limits of accuracy of your measurements. When calculations had to be done, they were first reduced to a simplified form eg 12.3 is 1.23×10 , 123 is 1.23×10^2 , 1230 is 1.23×10^3 , and so on. Numbers smaller than 1 have negative index numbers: thus 0.123 is 123×10^{-1} , 0.0123 becomes 1.23×10^{-2} , etc, so that in the latter case you are dealing with hundredths. The measurements, in this form, are then plugged into the calculation and the index numbers are added or subtracted as required. The calculation is thereby reduced to a set of small numbers multiplied by ten to whatever power of 10 has been worked out. Thus $\{(1.23 \times 4.56)/7.89\} \times 10^4$ This works out at 7108.745247 on a spreadsheet. What is often not appreciated is that most of those figures are spurious and an accidental result of the calculation, just as recurring decimals are. They add no accuracy. Working with a slide rule, however, the result would be read off as 0.711. Having already established that the calculation gives a figure of roughly 10,000, the final result would be returned as 7110, the final zero indicating its degree of accuracy. Working in this way promoted an understanding of the general scales of things, and also taught us to beware of meaningless accuracy. A particular hazard here arises when dealing with the difference between two large numbers each of limited accuracy. If this point were more widely appreciated today, I am sure that commentators and politicians would have a better understanding of statistics and trends and would be better equipped to decide what demanded attention and what could be safely ignored. As it is, we are living in a technical world in which bad decisions are made daily because the significance of numbers and the scale of numbers is not appreciated. We observe every day, for instance, much concern about things costing millions, whilst expenditures in the billions ie a thousand times greater, are coolly ignored.

Biology, with John Grey, was less of a success. This was a pity because I had liked the subject at William Ellis. It was also a problem for any boys who might have wanted to enter the medical profession. The laboratory was poorly equipped. I would guess that because he was a mild man, he was not effective in speaking up for himself and securing the resources he needed. Art was in the hands of Mr Cox, but in my class there was the outstandingly good Gabriel Chanan who put everyone else in the shade. Later on there was Roland Joffé, the well-known film director, whose works include *The Mission*. The difficulty with art is that the ability to depict a simple scene or object is a necessary skill, as important as writing, that most people can, and need to master, at least at a basic level. It is unfortunate that it has come to be regarded as a high-level means of self-expression for an elite. The teaching of Modern Hebrew was a

catastrophe. The teacher was Meir Gertner, an Israeli on a short fuse who could not teach or keep order and would knock the boys about. Years later I met him on a train and we had a perfectly friendly conversation.

The school routine – Religious observance

Religion dominated, or it felt as if it did. The day started at seven and prayers lasting about 25 minutes began at half-past. Breakfast was at eight and classes at nine. After breakfast we had to tidy up and clean our teeth. I was always dog-tired, rushed over breakfast and there was barely time to go to the lavatory.

These early morning services came as a shock. As a poor reader in Hebrew it would have taken about two hours to get through the readings. I do not particularly like the sound of the language. It is guttural, like German, Danish and Arabic and comes from well down the throat. I much prefer the vowelly musical sounds of languages like Italian and better still, Latin, with its open vowels and simple consonants. My response was to switch off and imagine myself somewhere else altogether. As far away and in as different a place as I could possibly imagine. A northbound train somewhere in the northern hills did very nicely. It would be heading fast towards Carlisle and the Scottish border, taking me in the direction I wanted to be going. This did not help me cultivate the good practice of living in the present moment. The post-Barmitzvah boys were expected to put on tefillin. At first, I used the set that had been given to me at my Barmitzvah. The lower school – classes one to three, had their morning service in a separate room under the watchful eye of one of the more orthodox teachers. After a few days he inspected my tefillin. They were, apparently, not up to standard. The boxes were too small and their condition rendered them too poor to be used. I was hauled up in front of everyone, made to stand on the platform at the front of the room, and harangued about the inadequacy of the tefillin. It was humiliating, although on reflection I doubt if most of my fellow pupils cared. But it was the most stupid imaginable way of dealing with the matter, especially when this was a new boy who must obviously have been lacking in confidence. I duly stopped using the defective tefillin. In fact I never used any tefillin at all. Ever again. From then on I sat at the back and made myself as nearly invisible as I could. If heaven was a place for Jews only, this teacher would have borne a large responsibility for making sure that I never got there. When, a few days later I was moved up into class four, the daily prayers were then in the large hall, where it was easier to continue with the strategy of keeping to the back and imagining myself far away. There were prayers after lunch and more prayers in the evening, these without tefillin. Mondays, and Thursday, and the New Moon days at the beginning of the Jewish months were a special torment as we had to get up twenty minutes earlier for the readings of the Torah and the special Rosh Chodesh prayers. If Rosh Chodesh was a Tuesday and ran over two days, it would be early rising four days in a row. From my perspective of being unaccustomed to this kind of thing, weekends were even worse.

There was the long Friday evening prayers before a rather late supper, and on Shabbat, a stint of nearly two hours on almost-empty stomach. We were supposed to wear a talis. I had one. Somewhere. I probably wore it sometimes, and would sit and fiddle with the knotty bits of thread. The religious boys wore what I misheard as “sitsar compass”. I had been given one once

at the North West London Jewish Day School but it was much too small. I was not going to get another one. I did not get on with the religious boys. They thought I was a bad egg and sometimes told me. They would parade their knowledge, cockily. And make a display of their observance.

The long Shabbat morning services were a misery, especially when it was a sunny day and I would want to be outside after a week spent cooped-up in a classroom. I could not make out what was going on. Worse still was that the breakfast on Saturdays was a small piece of cake and a cup of coffee. That was nowhere near enough for another three hours. If you were lucky you might get a second piece of the cake but I did not have a sweet tooth so it was a toss-up between eating something I did not like or going hungry. But growing adolescent boys are active and get hungry, and most of my two hours was spent thinking about lunch. Preferably one that you could buy for eight shillings and six pence in a restaurant car on a train, and so much the better if it was one of the twelve-wheeled LMS vehicles from the 1930s, with Art-Deco lighting. They had taken them off most of the best trains by 1954 and replaced them by British Railways Mark 1 stock which was spartan in comparison, though they were the height of luxury by today's standards. The service had started about half-past nine. Ten o'clock was time to pull out of London Euston. A hard and noisy climb up to Chalk Farm, past the engine sheds and into Primrose Hill Tunnel, then a steady run to Willesden Junction before accelerating past the semi-detached houses of the North London suburbs. Just after Bushey came the water troughs, then we would be through Watford Junction and its long tunnel, opening into the beautiful countryside of the Chilterns and climbing towards Tring. There was beautiful countryside right outside the window too, of course, but that was out of sight from a hard chair in the depths of the gloomy hall.

My favourite place was well out of sight, by the clock. This was a Synchronome battery operated master clock in a light oak glass-fronted case, linked to a pinwheel in another glass-fronted case, which worked the bells that rang at set times in accordance with the timetable. The school timetable, I mean, not the train timetable. The mechanism was a work of art, in lacquered brass and stainless steel. The hands advanced only twice a minute, with a loud bonk. The boredom could be alleviated by watching the swinging of the pendulum, the turning of the toothed escape wheel and the drop of the gravity impulse arm every thirty seconds. The bell was actuated by rotating a tube filled with mercury, which was inverted and completed an electric circuit until all the mercury had run out, when the circuit broke with a flash. But this was a poor substitute for watching the scenery go by from the comfort of cushioned seat in a mark 1 compartment coach. Rugby came just after eleven. By the time the service had ended we would be coming up for Crewe. Shortly after, the steward would come through and call out, "take your seats for first sitting". The rumble as we went over the steel bridge across the Manchester Ship Canal was the clue. Immediately after came Warrington (Bank Quay), oxtail soup, Wigan North Western, baked halibut in white sauce, Leyland, three slices of roast beef, roast potatoes, Yorkshire Pudding, carrots and peas, Preston, Hest Bank, baked pear with custard and a dash of sweet liqueur, Lancaster, Bolton-le-Sands, coffee with hot milk, Carnforth, pay the steward

eight-and-six-pence and go back to your compartment. I became adept at being hundreds of miles away from where I appeared to be sitting. All that was necessary was to stand up at the right places – too many to allow time to doze off – and listen out for the concluding hymn. It was, I suppose, as constructive a way as any of coping with being in a tedious situation that one cannot escape from, but really I would have been happy to go for a walk outside, or work ahead with a chemistry or physics textbook, or read the newspaper. But there would be no four-course restaurant car lunch, and at the end of it, I would not be north of Carnforth and closing the distance between me and the Scottish border at a mile-a-minute.

The ability to detach by visualising a train journey through attractive scenery turned out to be either a bad habit or a useful skill that could be applied during boring office meetings. One of the best stretches of line is between Exeter and Newton Abbot. It runs along the estuary of the river Exe, past Dawlish, through the tunnels in the red sandstone cliffs, along the sea wall at Teignmouth and up the estuary of the Teign. It takes about forty minutes, and in your imagination you can be sitting in whatever sort of train you fancy. You are not stuck with having to sit in a cramped modern train pervaded by the smell of the toilets. The other people in the meeting can prattle away to their heart's content and one emerges at the end completely unaffected. In the case of useless office meetings there was another option: to work out how much it was costing, in ratepayers' money, to waste the time of half-a-dozen highly paid staff for an hour or two.

At the end of Shabbat there would be more prayers and a period of meditation whilst waiting for the end of it. This was an altogether more positive experience. At dusk, it could be a time of intense and sometimes numinous quiet. Kopul Rosen cultivated this time and the spirituality got through to me. It might have got through to everyone. It was precisely here that Kopul achieved his aim. This was also true of the Shabbat afternoon Shiurim (seminars) that Kopul gave to the older boys. We studied and discussed verses from the Ethics of the Fathers (Pirke Avot) and the conversations encompassed a wide range of important ethical issues. That has stuck for life. It is a pity what was said was never written down. Kopul was forwarding a form of wholly orthodox Judaism that was in tune with, and answered the needs of, the contemporary world.

My estimate is that we spent about an hour and a quarter a day in prayers. That would have been only slightly too much if the services been anything like the one with the choir singing the lovely music I had once heard at Canterbury Cathedral, in its splendid Gothic setting. I might even have been inspired. But the Jewish style of prayer is not like that. I was uninspired. And I resented the time, especially as I always felt short of sleep. I am not criticising. It was the way I had become.

The school routine – Food

The rest of the daily round was fitted in between the services. Before meals we had to wash our hands. Outside the dining hall was a long vestibule, having a trough along its entire length, with push-button taps above. The water was cold and the towels, however often they

were changed, were never going to stay clean and dry for long. Dyson Airblade hand dryers would have solved the problem but they were more than fifty years in the future. The dining room had a stage running along the right hand side with a long table where all the teachers would sit, looking over the boys. The duty master had a bell with which to call for attention. We would stand behind our seats and wait until the short grace was said. The tables were, I think plastic laminate with steel legs. The chairs were of a type known as Rebel Stackabye. They had tubular steel frames and the back and seat was formed of a single curved metal sheet. They were cold and uncomfortable. Apparently they are now regarded as a vintage collectable. Meals were served at tables of six, plus a prefect or sixth former at the end who would be responsible for ensuring that fair shares were had. The food was brought by the kitchen staff, who put it on large serving dishes from which it was shared out amongst the boys. Breakfast consisted of a dry cereal and milk. A couple of days a week it was porridge. There was no main course. On the table was sliced wholemeal bread, specially baked for the school, and that was excellent. To spread on the bread were butter, which had to be divided into seven pieces, and something sweet, usually jam or marmalade, or that old British staple, Marmite. If there was only a sweet spread I would eat plain bread and butter. Sometimes there would be very overcooked hard-boiled eggs which I found inedible. The best things were cottage cheese or thinly sliced Dutch cheese, ordinary cheddar not being kosher. As the cheeses were unpopular, when they were served I could usually get what was meant for the entire table.

During the mid-morning break, a large pan of milky cocoa would be left outside the dining room, with a ladle and supply of mugs. Some of the boys would go to the tuck shop but I did not have a sweet tooth. Lunch was the main meal and consisted of meat and two veg, except on Fridays when it was fish and chips. Portions were generous. Post would be given out at lunch time by the duty master at the top table. In the afternoon, tea and sponge cake was left on a trolley in the vestibule outside the dining hall. The evening meal was usually a light supper of things like cheese, tinned fish, salad, potato salad, and plenty of the wholemeal bread. Sometimes there would be chips. These were by far the most popular dish. The Shabbat meals were different. There was soup and chicken on Friday evenings, and the sparse breakfast of coffee and cake on Saturday morning. Since cooking on the sabbath is forbidden, lunch was cold potato salad and cold meat, with salad. After a couple of years, something called chulant was introduced for Saturday lunch. This was was a lightly-spiced stew of butterbeans, meat and potatoes that had been left to cook at a low temperature since the previous night. Everything went to a brown colour. To my taste, it was just badly overcooked, but the fact that I failed to appreciate it was an indication of my own cultural inadequacies, since both the potato salad, as it was served, and the chulant, are regarded as good continental cuisine.

Meals always seemed to be rushed. It would take a while for all the tables to get served, and then the teacher would ping the bell to end the meal whilst I was in the middle of a mouthful, with half the meal still uneaten. On Shabbat it was worse because we kept breaking off to sing zemirot (religious songs) while the food got cold on our plates. I was not interested in singing songs. I wanted to get on with the meal. After the meal was the long grace after meals, even

longer on the Sabbath. A boy would be detailed to lead this but it was tricky and required more fluency in Hebrew than I ever acquired. I managed to avoid the duty throughout my time at the school. Later on in my time at Carmel I was able to grab more to eat after the meal had officially ended. If I was lucky I could get a full tub of cottage cheese and a couple more slices of bread.

The school routine – Lessons and sport

The week day timetable was straightforward and fitted in between meals and prayers. Classes began at nine and continued till about one, with a break in the middle of the morning. On most days after lunch came games or cross-country running. We bought our sports kit from the Oxford firm of Shephard and Woodward who came every so often and set up shop in the loggia. I purchased my coloured house shirt and shorts from them but that was to no avail as I was still useless at the usual team games of football, rugby and cricket. Nobody wanted me in their team. This was a deficiency which earned me no social kudos. However, at least I could indulge my talent at cross-country running instead. I was a lightweight and could keep up a decent pace indefinitely. It got me out of the school grounds. I did well in the annual competitions. My strategy was to charge up the hill out of the valley at the start of the course. This would bring me amongst the front runners. I would then ease off for the downhill stretches and maintain speed up the hills, which gradually brought me forward. But once the tall, skinny Colin Linton arrived at the school, I was never going to compete. Cross-country running on the 3½ mile course was for the winter. In the summer, the longest distance was a mile – four laps round the running track, which was not far enough to give me a chance to get going. But summer was also time for swimming. There was an outdoor pool but the filtration and chlorination system had long since gone defunct. The pool was filled up and dosed with buckets of bleach, which worked for a few days, and then the water started to turn green and had to be changed. There were no formal lessons but we had free access. By getting in the water often enough and long enough, I finally succeeded in swimming a tentative breast stroke, first half a width, then a width. I was not very good – barely seaworthy, but I was no longer a non-swimmer. This opened up another opportunity, rowing. The school had acquired a couple old wooden racing boats. It was part of the aspiration of becoming a proper English public school. The vessels were clinker-built for four oarsmen and a cox. A group of us – not the heavyweights who were in the school rowing team – learned how to handle the boat, to get in and out safely and use the oars, and we would take a boat out on a Sunday morning for a couple of hours. One fine summer morning we rowed, at a comfortable pace, all the way up to Benson lock, back past the school, down to the railway bridge at Cholsey and then back to school. We were pleasantly and satisfyingly tired after a couple of hours in the fresh air, and came back with hearty appetites. After the afternoon sports came more lessons. They began again at half-past four and went on till about six. Evening prayers were before or after supper depending on the time of year, then came an hour or two of “prep” in the classroom, and lights out by half-past nine or ten. In theory, nine hours of sleep should have been enough but I could have always done with another hour in bed. Friday afternoons were for preparation for the Sabbath – bathing and changing. Sabbath could start quite early in the winter. Saturday afternoons were free.

Twice a week there was an assembly in the main hall. A floor standing walnut-veneered radiogram had been acquired to play the recently invented long-playing 33 revolutions-per-minute vinyl records, and the assemblies began with a time spent listening to music. Kopul took the opportunity to try to introduce us to classical and early music, which in 1955 meant Bach and Vivaldi. I had always liked music dating from that period and responded immediately. Except that Kopul's comment on Bach was strange: that most of Bach's music was church music in which he had no interest whatsoever. Having enjoyed the music at Canterbury Cathedral years before, I was puzzled about that remark. It was uncharacteristically narrow. It eventually brought about the comical situation of a group of us listening to a broadcast of the St Matthew Passion as surreptitiously as if we were smoking behind the cricket pavilion! Also in the hall was the weekly film, with Mr Coles in charge of the projector and screen. Over the years, we got to see a good selection of the black and white classics, and probably missed nothing of significance.

Train spotting afternoons

During my first months at Carmel, on the free afternoons, I would go train spotting at Cholsey and Moulsoford station. Nowadays, boys who go train spotting are diagnosed as autistic or sufferers from Asperger's syndrome. In the nineteen fifties, however, nearly everyone still used public transport. The middle class children in the Narnia books, for instance, travel with their parents by train. The appearance of a new class of locomotives aroused as much interest as a new smartphone model would today. It was not odd and one book publisher, Ian Allan, got rich on selling books with up-to-date lists of every locomotive, its type, and where it was based. There were 18,000 locomotives and as new editions of the Locomotives ABC came out twice a year, it was a good business. I do not think there was a single other boy at Carmel who had these books, in contrast to the William Ellis School where they were common classroom currency and the interest was popular. No-one else in the school had the slightest interest in railways and so I was considered strange on this account alone. Trains on the Wallingford branch were sparse so I went on the Kemp's bus to Wallingford and then the Thames Valley/City of Oxford bus, which ran once an hour. One afternoon I got into conversation with the engine driver on the Wallingford branch train and I got a ride in the cab of the little 1400 class tank engine, all the way back from Cholsey. I still remember the number, which had four digits and I use as a PIN code. I arrived back very late for the afternoon lessons and was covered with coal dust. I cannot remember how I explained that away. At William Ellis I would have been regarded as a lucky devil to get a footplate ride like that.

Friends and enemies

Boys' schools are places where feeling can run intensely. Just before I arrived there had been expulsions, following an outbreak of sexual misdemeanours. This reduced, but did not put a stop to, the goings-on. Relationships between teenagers are always potentially problematic. They can become intense. The novelist Siegfried Sassoon described one such. On the one hand they are an important part of the development of the individual, but on the other, they can step over into a sexual relationship which neither party can handle. Some have inclinations towards same-sex attraction which are a passing phase, whilst others will stay that way for life. This is an issue

that has become a political battleground in recent years. That helps not one iota. But same sex attractions, if they step over the boundary, are not a good thing in an institutional context, especially if the institution is a residential one. Furthermore, if one wanted to keep one's closest friends whether of the same or opposite sex, one did not have sexual relationships with them. That is still good advice. I sense also that there were unhealthy overtones to the relationships between some of the staff and the boys. Like the master who a couple of times asked me to hit a junior with a slipper for misbehaviour and obviously enjoyed looking on. There was also smoking, in which I had no interest. The trouble with smoking was that if you did not participate you were not really part of the "in" crowd. There were other issues too, with power politics as some battled to dominate others. The social mix at the school was bound to cause difficulties. The sons of wealthy tycoons and captains of industry were in the same class as those of poverty-stricken widows, divorcees and single parents. When the former were academically struggling and the latter were very bright and taking the work in their stride, there could be trouble. There was. It took the form of subtle psychological bullying. I was at a profound disadvantage in this game. I was a small boy and would always come off worse if a dispute ended in actual physical violence. My knowledge of Jewish customs was sketchy, and I was not versed in Jewish ways of thinking. I also lacked the ability to engage in the sharp repartee which is the standard means of communication in many Jewish households. I was out of my depth. The strategy I adopted was to keep my head down and remove myself from the scene altogether. The cross-country running was one escape and the afternoons spent on the railway station were another. But the psychological pressure was there all the same. However, there were a few strong characters who would stand up against it, helped me over initial difficulties and protected me against the worst of this psychological bullying. At the top of the school there was also friendly collaborative rivalry which sharpened our academic performance, possibly making a critical difference to our eventual success. I am grateful for the benefits I received from that direction. And there was also a supportive network of relationships, many of which have continued for a lifetime. There were many threads to the stories that could be told. But religion intruded here as well. One half-term holiday a friend came back with me to stay in our London flat. He was more particular about prayers and kashrut than I had realised – he was one who did not make a show of his observance and at the school it passed unnoticed. My mother's kitchen was as kosher as she could manage to keep it in the circumstances, which I will discuss later. But milk and meat things were not kept as separate as they should have been and we thought it would be a good idea to wash the cutlery. She was annoyed when she found out.

Cast

In any community there are few who make an impression, amongst many who merge into a uniform background. I do not know how orthodox their families were but they seemed to cope with the religious routines and the Hebrew instruction. A few of the boys were the sons of tycoons, who had made their fortunes in retailing, or in the clothing, textile, and furniture

industries, and food: baking and confectionery. Most hailed from London, principally the prosperous Jewish neighbourhoods of Golders Green, Hendon, Finchley and Hampstead Garden Suburb. A significant number were from the northern cities: Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle and Sunderland and Middlesbrough, and one or two from Glasgow. A few more had their homes in the south coast resorts. Others came from places with tiny Jewish communities: Norwich, Andover and Winchester, for example. A variety of regional accents were to be heard in addition to the dominant “received pronunciation” of London and the South-East. There were a few day boys: the son of one of the women who looked after the Linen Room, teachers’ sons and one or two others from the town. There was a weekly boarder, the son of a Reading doctor, who was passionately interested in Reading Corporation’s fleet of buses and trolleybuses and whiled away boredom in the classroom by drawing, from memory, the different types of vehicles that ran in the town.

Reading buses were of a long-forgotten type known as “lowbridge”, to fit under the low bridge under the railway. The lower deck had a lump in the ceiling all the way down the right hand side and you had to be careful to avoid banging your head when you stood up. The upper deck had a passageway in a kind of well down the right hand side, and the seats were at a higher level in rows of four.

His skill in drawing Reading buses was impressive in its way and it encouraged me to try my own hand. I started off with Glasgow trams and progressed from there to a platform view of St Pancras with a train under the huge arched roof, all from memory, in single point perspective and properly shaded with a soft graphite pencil. None of this would have been misplaced in the Art Room, but the art syllabus could not, apparently, accommodate it. The same boy also knew all about the decrepit museum pieces in the Kemp’s fleet of buses. These had a coat of arms on the side with the words “Semper Eadem” – “always the same”, always as bad, but it was a small independent and a shoestring operation.

Eventually they got new vehicles and relaunched under the name of “Chiltern Queens”. But the decaying 1930s London buses could be seen long afterwards in the yard next to the garage in the village of Woodcote. There were significant foreign contingents amongst the pupils. There was always a handful of Israelis, who tended to be unpopular as some of them were considered loud-mouths and the bad reputation rubbed off on the others. In my time there were a few from Gibraltar, and the odd boy from France, Iraq, Iran, Aden, Morocco, Italy, Belgium and Sweden. The latter was Freddie Werbell from Stockholm. He later brought to public attention the rescue work done by Raoul Wallenberg in 1944. One of the Gibraltar boys was a Catholic and expected to go to Mass at Wallingford every Sunday. I will refrain, on the whole, from naming anyone, but a few figures were larger than life and worth mentioning. Michael Poster was the son of Harold Poster, who had built up a large-scale furniture manufacturing business, AVP Industries (Associated Veneers and Plywoods). I would guess that this originated with a timber trading company in the Baltic, perhaps somewhere like Riga, just as my cousins’ fur business had its origins in fur trading in Tallinn. AVP had grown big by developing mass-production techniques, and I am told that it was involved in the manufacture of the Mosquito aircraft and the

interiors of railway vehicles. The company eventually acquired property interests including the Metropole Hotel and Brighton West Pier, where plans for renovation were scuppered by Brighton Council and the pier was lost. The Dwek brothers, Joseph and Raymond, were the sons of a Manchester textile magnate, and whilst Joseph continued the tradition, Raymond achieved eminence in biochemistry but was also active in developing ways of enabling Oxford University to benefit financially from the discoveries that were made there. Not all the boys were from wealthy backgrounds, however. Probably about one-third were on scholarships and were typical the type who attended grammar school. There was a the son of a widow, George Mandel, who, like me, had been to the William Ellis school and went on to win a scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, a rabbi's son, Ian Rabinowitz, from Hull, a teacher's son, Colan Linton, who both later became head boys, a doctor's son, David Waldman who went on to St Catherine's, Oxford, Jeffrey Walker, son of the school secretary, and many more, who constituted the academic elite. The gulf in economic status within the pupil body gave rise to tensions. Having a tycoon as a father is no guarantee that one will do well in the classroom, and often they did not. But, as mentioned earlier, because the boys were put together in accordance with their academic attainment, not only was there a wide age range in each class, but within a class there would be some whose parents arrived on speech day by luxury limousine, draped in furs, and others whose parents had struggled to come by sparse Sunday public transport. At the end of the school holidays, there would be discussions about where the boys had gone for their holidays. Some had enjoyed weeks in villas and smart hotels on the French Riviera. Others were too poor to afford a holiday at all. The poorer boys could not but help feel deprived and inadequate. I was one of them. The three Luttwak brothers, Edward, Rudi and Mimi made a notable impact. They arrived from Milan some time in 1956. Edward, the oldest one was interested in world affairs, precocious and wore sharp Italian suits. Shortly after, in November, came both the Suez war, and almost simultaneously, the Hungarian uprising and invasion by the Russians, which brought a flood of refugees who took the opportunity to get away from communism.

Edward Luttwak must be amongst the best-known of the Carmel alumni. For many years he has been a well-known political analyst in the USA. The family had come from Arad in Romania, close to the Hungarian border, in that part of the country with a large Hungarian minority. It is a picturesque and historic fortress town, about the size of Oxford. Edward described himself as Hungarian. The family must have left their home in a hurry, presumably in late 1943 or early 1944. Edward wrote a wonderful and memorable account, of the night-time escape, probably in the school magazine. It described, evocatively, walking through the streets of the town on a clear, cold winter night, with the frost glistening on the ground and stars twinkling out of a velvety black sky. It gave just a hint of the traumatic event that must have been.

At the time I arrived, some of the older boys had achieved legendary feats. George Mandel had won the scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, and then Michael Goitein who had followed suit. This set a goal for the next generation in the school.

Carmel College days Part 2

A tour of the school and grounds

I have left a description of the physical buildings and grounds till now because they formed a background to life as it was experienced. Carmel was reached by taking the A4074 main road from Crowmash to Reading. The road climbed away from the Thames valley onto the chalk of the Chilterns in a beautiful avenue of beech trees whose branches met overhead to form a vault. The main entrance to the Mongewell Park estate and Carmel College was off this avenue on the right. The place is a barely recognisable devastation today. The road was widened and one side of the avenue removed. At the entrance, amongst the trees, stood a painted sign with the school shield, with a red brick lodge on the left. A winding potholed road led back down towards the river, beside which the school grounds lay. The road passed through the gates in a wall and to the right was a group of red brick buildings known as North Court, where the preparatory school was situated. It might at one time have been a stable block. A bridge over a stream brought one to the main forecourt of gravel, with a feature of some kind in the centre. To the right of the bridge was a lake. A flight of steps led up to the front door, which was only for the use of staff. The formal rooms on the ground floor were panelled in oak and had parquet flooring. The main hall area was used for assemblies and services. There was a carved formal staircase which the boys were not allowed to use. Leading off the hall was a room used for lectures, the staff room and a comprehensively filled library. Soon after I arrived, an old boy, Malcolm Shifrin, became librarian and, in a labour of love, catalogued all the books according to the Dewey system, with which those of us who used public libraries were familiar. Disappointingly for me, however, there was nothing on the shelves where the 625 range should have been. There were no books published by Ian Allen.

Also leading off the main hall was a loggia, an extension with a glazed wall. It faced south-west and became very hot in the afternoon, which was a good thing in the winter though not so in the summer. The loggia was used for teaching small classes, the newspapers were put out there and Shepherd and Woodward set up its sports equipment shop there a couple of times a term. The Manchester Guardian was still printed in Manchester then and did not arrive until the middle of the afternoon. Dr Friedman would be waiting for it and ask in his heavy German accent "Yah, where is the Manchester Guardian", and grab it when it eventually arrived. This made the Manchester Guardian desirable reading amongst the boys as the idea was to be reading it so that he would have to ask for it. The Times was also delivered. In those days it still had its front page filled with advertisements.

To the right of the hall, a corridor led off past a lobby where stood the entrance to the Holy of Holies, Kopul's study. This had oak panelling, shelves lined with books, a kidney shaped desk, and a strange punishment chair. A visitor would be confronted by the desk, placed diagonally across the corner, with Kopul behind, and behind Kopul to his right was a large window. This meant that Kopul got a better view of the visitor than the visitor got of Kopul, a powerful psychological advantage. It was in this study that the Sabbath shiurim took place. The room, and Kopul's presence, promoted an atmosphere of concentrated attention.

The corridor continued through a swing door to what would have originally been the servants' quarters. Here there was no oak panelling. Everything was painted cream. To the right, off this servants' corridor was the staircase to the dormitories. To the left was the office, occupied by the Bursar when the school had one, and Mrs Walker the secretary. She had a son at the school who was also incredibly bright. He had passed O-level mathematics at about the age of 12, and got a scholarship to read physics at Balliol College, Oxford.

Further along the corridor, and down some steps, was, on the left, a daunting room full of toilet cubicles and a range of handbasins, and on the right, the Linen Room. That had a characteristic fresh smell. Two middle aged ladies seemed to be spending their entire day sorting laundered socks and underpants and putting them in the numbered pigeonholes for each boy. Further still along this corridor, on the left, was a door through to the domestic staff quarters, and the coin-operated telephone, for which permission was required in order to make a call. The corridor then led to a doorway, opening onto a paved yard where the school van sometimes stood, and on the right, a covered area where cycles were stored. At first, cycles had been permitted but one day, a boy decided to follow a bird whilst cycling along the towpath. The bird turned and flew across the river. The boy continued to follow. And that was the end of cycling in the school, except for David Robbins who was slightly lame, following polio. He had special permission to use an old black single-speed bicycle with a ladies' frame. It was on that bicycle that I eventually learned to ride. For long after the ban, an expensive Raleigh Lenton sports with frame of Reynolds 531 tubing and a four speed Sturmey Archer Medium Range hub gear – a collectable item nowadays – stood against a wall, slowly decaying. It belonged to Robert Cholodny, son of the owner of an important Israeli pharmaceutical company. On my very last day at Carmel, I bought it off him and renovated it during the summer holidays. It served me well through my time as a student and for several years, afterwards, and was taken on a tour to Southern Ireland.

That was not the end of the corridor, however. It took a final turn to the right and on the left hand side was the room used by the school nurse to treat boys with cuts and minor ailments, and to weigh and measure them. My height crept up to five feet, five-and-a-half-inches and that was that, whilst my weight topped out at eight-and-a-half stones and has remained about the same ever since. I seem to recall there were also rooms for trunks and football boots in that part of the building.

The dormitories were upstairs in the main building. The top floor ones were under the roof, and had dormer windows and sloping ceilings. We were moved once a term or so. Most of the rooms had two-tier bunks. The mattresses were hard, though there were a few foam rubber ones to be had, if one was sharp, at the beginning of term. I managed somehow to get hold of one and keep it. The bathroom had washbasins and a few horrible cast-iron sit-up baths. We were supposed to bath once or twice a week. Why, I know not, because we could perfectly well have been provided with showers and had one every day, with a saving in hot water to boot. There was, in fact, one shower on the first floor, a luxurious Edwardian relic.

Most of the other buildings in the school grounds were World War 2 huts, built with concrete frames and asbestos cement roofs and wall panels. This material was safe as long as it was left alone. These days the buildings would be condemned, demolished by approved specialists, and the rubble sent for secure disposal. Such buildings were widespread throughout Britain in the 1940s and 1950s. I would be surprised if any of us have had our lives shorted by the experience. The biggest of the huts was the dining hall, described earlier. The others were standard modular buildings which were versatile and used in different ways. Some were class rooms. Others housed the very well-equipped chemistry and physics laboratories. Another, the study block, L-shaped in plan, was divided into rooms for use by the fifth and six formers as individual or shared studies. The study block had the advantage of showers, and an individual room in the study block was much to be coveted, since it was by far the best accommodation in the school.

Across from the study block were tennis courts, but that was another game at which I had no skill at all. Past the tennis court ran a path leading to the gymnasium block, a timber framed brick building with a red-tiled roof. This was arranged around three sides of a rectangle which enclosed the space where the swimming pool was. On the upper floor of one arm was the sick bay, with about half-a-dozen beds. The other arm contained accommodation and changing space for a gymnasium, which was quite well equipped. I was good at gymnasium activities as long as they did not involve jumping or catching balls. I was fine on the wall bars and could shoot up a rope like a little monkey. If I looked down I would get scared so I kept my eyes on the rope or the ceiling. In that block there was also a study room which I occupied with another boy for a term or so. Behind the school were the sports fields, which I would avoid if I could.

Towards the end of my time – at the beginning of 1958, the construction of two new dormitory blocks was commenced. These were designed by the well-known architectural firm of Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardell (YRM), who were committed Modernists. Amongst the best-known of their buildings is the first phase of Gatwick Airport. Eugene Rosenberg visited the school one Friday evening. Supervising the site work for YRM was a young trainee called Mario Maestranzi. A dozen years later, I found myself working with him in the same office. Mario was instrumental in getting my life back onto a proper track. Holes were dug and filled with concrete, steel posts were erected and joined with horizontal beams, and then this skeleton was filled in. Somebody from YRM came and gave an explanation of the construction work. All was complete and ready for occupation by the start of the autumn term on 1958. The furnishings, in a nicely figured ash veneer, were, I believe, manufactured and donated by AVP, the firm owned by Harold Poster. The new dormitory blocks proved to have shortcomings, of which more later.

There were a few other buildings of note in the grounds. The mill had a lower floor with a trap door which could be lifted and gave a view of the trout in the stream which ran below. We tried, never successfully, to catch them with nooses made of electric light flex. The rooms in the mill were occupied by teachers, including Dr Friedman, Michael Cox the art master, and the chain-smoking French teacher, Mr Phelps. The mill had a spacious loft space. Malcolm Shifrin, the librarian, set it up as a listening room with the best sound reproduction equipment one could

buy at the time: there was a deck with a Garrard 301 turntable and Tan II arm, a Quad 2 preamplifier and amplifier and a Tannoy corner speaker. Stereo was still in the future.

He invited groups to widen their musical taste by listening to contemporary music. It seemed daring and strange at the time, but it was mostly early twentieth century music by composers such as Shostakovitch, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Nielsen, Walton, and Britten, though he once tried the violin concerto by Alban Berg on us. The teachers who lived in the mill were available for dropping in on Sunday afternoons. During one visit to Mr Cox, the art master, with another boy, a Church of England vicar dropped in and asked for some bread to celebrate communion with. Mr Cox gave him a piece of the wholemeal school loaf. We had not realised that the ruined church in the grounds was still actively in use. The sanctuary had been made into a tiny chapel. This was St John the Baptist's, Mongewell, which was illustrated in the four volume set of books called Recording Britain: the buildings of England, produced at the start of the war.

How we travelled

Today, the Thames Valley between Reading and Oxford is close to the M4 corridor. The economy here is stronger than anywhere else in Britain. Despite the efforts of the planners, the towns are gradually merging into each other. Roads everywhere are busy and Wallingford is a bustling town in the middle of all this. In the 1950s, on the other hand, it was a sleepy rural place and quite isolated. It was connected to the railway system by a short branch line from Cholsey and Moulsoford, and the single-coach auto-train known as The Bunk ran perhaps half a dozen times a day. The coach was usually one of the ancient vehicle which had started out as steam rail-motors ie the locomotive was part of the carriage. Were the line still open, there would be a train or two an hour. The town's other links with the outside world were the hourly Thames Valley/City of Oxford bus between Oxford and Reading, which passed through and stopped by the market hall, and the ramshackle Kemp's Motor Services operation, referred to earlier. Consequently, the school had to make special arrangements for the transport of pupils. These were provided by Tappins, a private coach hire company in Wallingford. Although a few were collected from the school by car, by their parents, most of the boys would be transferred between the school and Wallingford station in one of the company's orange and black coaches. Transport between Paddington and Wallingford was in special carriages which were attached to the rear of an ordinary train. There were normally three, which would have been a significant extra load for the engine. At Reading, they were transferred to a stopping train and would be dropped at Cholsey, from where they would be pulled to Wallingford by the regular locomotive which worked the branch line train. This involved quite a bit of shunting at Reading and Cholsey. The return journey from Wallingford to London was an even more complicated procedure, involving a long wait at Cholsey whilst a stream of fast, steam hauled locomotives flashed by on the main line. Here could be seen rarities such as the then-new Britannia class Pacifics based at Cardiff, the only place on the Great Western where the crew were happy with them. At Reading, the carriages then had to be transferred to the front of a main line train to London, an awkward manoeuvre.

Had there been anyone in the school apart from me who was interested in railways, this would have been the subject of keen discussion. Even now, it demonstrates how enterprising the railway management was at that time. Nowadays, such an operation would be impossible, with Reading being at saturation point and the train companies' aim being to avoid doing anything out of the ordinary which might disrupt the regular flow of traffic. But nobody in the school was even aware of the special effort that British Railways made three times a term to get them on their way, at no extra charge other than the price of the tickets.

Nor did anyone notice what an interesting selection of vehicles was always provided for us to travel in. I was left to admire it all by myself. There seemed to be almost no rhyme nor reason in the choice of carriages used for the school train. I would guess that they just used whatever happened to be hanging around in sidings at the time. The railways were not the tightly-run operation they are today. There was a good supply of spare stock kept in reserve, which did not break the bank as the vehicles were simple and basic, and did not have all the space under the floor occupied with boxes of very expensive high-tech equipment. There is a lesson there somewhere. As it was a former Great Western route, we usually got GWR coaches from the nineteen thirties and forties. They included some of the first to have fluorescent lights, dim and bluish in colour. We also, however, had the opportunity to travel in some choice exhibits: a timber bodied GWR coaches of the type known as "Toplight stock", dating from the Edwardian period, and a London Midland and Scottish coaches dating from the early 1920s. These were becoming rare by the 1950s and I was pleased to have an opportunity to travel in one. By contrast, on at least on occasion we were given some brand-new British Railway standard corridor coaches. For some reason we often got ex-London Midland and Scottish carriages, dating from any time between the 1920s and 1950. These were much more comfortable than the GWR ones, being designed for the long journey between London and Scotland and with individual armrests between the seats. In fact, all of them were more spacious and comfortable than their contemporary equivalents.

Automobilian observations

The Tappin's coach fleet was also of its time. There was a Maudslay, a long forgotten make, with the drivers cab in front along side the engine under a bonnet, and an interior with art-deco marquetry and clock. This coach was powerful and good on hills. There was also a Bedford OB coach, with bullnose radiator and the classic Duple body. That seemed to make heavy weather of the hills. Eventually Tappins started to replace these with the more modern underfloor engine type of vehicle.

The school had a Reliant three-wheel van which was really half a motorcycle. Masters' cars were always a topic of discussion, especially when they got a new one. Hans Schmidt had a Messerschmidt bubble car, which was an aircraft cockpit on three wheels. Unlike the Reliant, the single wheel was at the back and the two wheels at the front, which made it more stable. Romney Coles had a pre-war two-door Austin Seven but he replaced it with a Triumph Renown razor edge saloon – a genuine classic. Kopul had a Rover, and if I recall correctly it was a Rover 75 with the "cylops eye" headlamp in the centre of the radiator. It seemed to be constantly getting

into scrapes. One of the masters – it might have been Mr Ellman – had a Jowett Javelin “fastback” saloon, a fine vehicle and an original choice.

Speech Day was the high point of automobilian interest. The car park was always worth a visit. There would be a handful of Rolls-Royce Type I Silver Clouds and Type R Bentleys – the classic version with single headlamps. These were essentially the same model apart from the radiators. Bentleys were preferred by those who thought that a Rolls was ostentatious. For those who wanted to tone down still further the impression they made, the car of choice could be an Armstrong-Siddeley Sapphire. Those of more modest means arrived in small saloon cars such as a Morris Minor or an Austin A30 or Ford Consul. Or perhaps a continental model such as the Renault Dauphine. The Mini was then still only an idea in the mind of Alex Issigonis. My mother always came by train or bus, or on the express coach to Crowmarsh, from which the school was a twenty minute walk across the fields. She was a good walker. She had to be. It must have been arduous for her to spend Sunday in this way when working full-time the rest of the week.

A chronology

I have left a description the chronology of this period to the end because to have done otherwise would have led to the account being too disjointed. I arrived in early October 1954, in warm autumn weather. Three weeks later came the half term holiday and I was glad to get home again. I was put up from the third to the fourth form which left me in the company of boys who were mostly a year older than me, though a couple were younger.

For the Christmas holidays I went to Scotland to stay with my aunt and uncle and three cousins in Glasgow. I am not quite sure how this journey was paid for. Usually, the train tickets were purchased by the school and added to the end of term bill, but my mother was never sent a bill. They were distributed in the dining hall, probably during supper the night before the end of term. My chronology of this is hazy but around this time my mother had begun working for the railway and I was allowed to travel at quarter-fare. So I do not know how the school could have obtained the privilege tickets....

I really looked forward to the Glasgow trip, as I never imagined I would be back in Scotland again so soon. The journey would involve a very early start to catch a train at seven in the morning. A week before, I began to count the hours to the end of term, another bad habit that persisted, and the time eventually arrived. It was a dark and damp December morning when I found myself alone in a taxi on the way to Cholsey station. It was a non-corridor compartment train, hauled by a Hall class, and it called at every station to Slough, then ran fast to Paddington. When I got on there were only a couple of other passengers in the compartment but by Slough it had filled up and the windows were covered with condensation. My mother met me at Paddington and we crossed to Euston on the underground, where we ate hard-boiled egg sandwiches in the beautiful Great Hall....

The return from the half term holiday in February 1955 was during one of the rare periods of snow in the 1950s. The Easter holiday in 1955 was spent at Southend on Sea where we had Passover. My recollection is of staying with a Jewish family in a council estate at the

back of the town. May 1955 saw the start of a three week national rail strike which meant a return from the school half-term holiday all the way from London by coach. It was a baking hot day and the journey seemed to go on for ever on the congested roads. But it also broke the dominance of the railways as a mode of transport. It was realised that the future was with road transport. Perhaps mistakenly. At the end of the Summer term came Speech Day. I think I receive a prize for something. My mother came from London with the usual difficulty of getting there on a Sunday and we went back to London together. That was another memorable journey as it was in one of the rare LMS carriages with luxurious seating in the third class and huge picture windows....

The autumn of 1955 saw me in the fifth form, the O-level class. I was down to do English Language, English Literature, Mathematics, French, Chemistry and Physics. Six O-levels was considered a good number. The English literature set plays were *The Rivals* by Sheridan and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. We saw the Shakespeare play in a London theatre. We also visited the Gauguin exhibition at the Tate that term, with the art master Mr Cox acting as guide. Chemistry continued successfully with Romney Coles but physics had become problematic. We lost the excellent John Bunney and our teaching was put in the hands of another teacher who was well past his best. As a result, we learnt next to no physics that autumn term. Around this time also, my writing improved. I think this was due to the encouragement of Mr Cox, who promoted the Italic style. All that was necessary was to buy a pen with a broad nib, such as a Platignum fountain, costing about 5 shillings – 25 pence. After a bit of practice, it was easy to produce attractive looking and legible writing. The mistake had been to get children to try and write with pens with needle-sharp nibs. Towards the end of the term there was a reorganisation of the classes and it was decided to put me in the Lower Sixth. It would mean me skipping a critical year and put me in a class where most of the boys were two years older. I was still only 14 years old. I was entered for O-level Mathematics at the December examination, and possibly English language also. I had no difficulty in passing them and obtained a good mark in the Mathematics....

In preparation for my premature move into the sixth form, I borrowed a set of notes from one of my future class mates, Moshe Benaim, from Tetuan in Morocco. His notes was the most assiduous and tidiest in the class and he already had the air of a responsible medical doctor, which I think is what he became. I spent the Christmas holidays working my way through the notes and text books and had caught up with the rest of the class in Chemistry by the time the term started in January 1956. We then got a new syllabus. For the first time ever, I had a teacher, Murray Roston, the English and Latin teacher, who was able to teach Hebrew in a systematic way. Some kind of deal was made between Murray and the class that we would have a go at getting O-Level Classical Hebrew that summer. We had just two terms. Less, actually. And we all passed.

Murray obtained a decent text book. We learned the grammar systematically. I discovered that behind the strange characters lies a language artificial in its simplicity. An eight year old could have learnt it if anyone had had the wit to try and teach it properly. But I was

fourteen before I came across someone who would. It was a heavy workload. French continued as before. Mathematics continued as “Additional Mathematics” – mathematics with an emphasis on applications in statics and dynamics – that is forces, acceleration, power and energy. Physics, on the other hand, remained in the doldrums, though fortunately there was an overlap with the applied mathematics.

Once in the fifth form, we were given studies or at least shared studies. I shared a room in the study block, which was cramped, with me in a bottom bunk, and another in the gymnasium, which was better....

By the time I had reached my fifteenth birthday my beard was starting to grow more vigorously and it was more than a twice-weekly trim with a pair of scissors could deal with. Electric razors being a luxury item, I just got myself a safety razor and used ordinary disposable blades. I made a little wooden box for it and the brush and soap, and painted it with red lacquer on the inside and varnished it on the outside. There was a pair of swing hooks to close it. I was quite pleased with my handiwork. But this method of shaving is strictly forbidden under Jewish law so I went off to a quiet place where I would not be noticed. One day Kopul popped up out of nowhere while I was carrying the box, asked to look inside it, frowned and told me to see him. The matter was forgotten and an old Remington turned up somehow, possibly from my Uncle Sydney. It did not do the job very well but it avoided any further trouble. I had that most unfortunate of combinations, a heavy beard and a sensitive skin. I tried an ordinary safety razor again, which worked for about two days but then left my skin looking like a war zone. In the end I gave up the unequal struggle and just let it grow anyway, and when designer stubble came into fashion, the problem disappeared. Also in Spring 1956 the poor quality of the food was taking its toll on my health. I was suffering an increasing number of boils, *Staphylococcus aureus* infections. I still have the scars. One of them turned into a huge pus-filled carbuncle with three heads and for a week I had to have penicillin injections in the buttock, which was also unpleasant. This was a result of chronic vitamin B deficiency. The nurse told me she had queried the meagre breakfasts, the forbidden pork and bacon being good sources of these vitamins. Eggs, when served very hard-boiled were inedible, whilst cheese, being strictly kosher, imported from Holland and fiercely expensive, was served sparingly. Being partial to cheese I would buy myself a lump of mousetrap cheddar from the village store at North Stoke. It was not properly kosher and therefore contraband, so I kept it in my tuck box, but that did not work when the weather was warm. The antibiotic cleared up the boils and the doctor ordered me to take “spent yeast” – the left-over yeast from the brewing process. This was duly arranged and once a week a Kilner jar full of the creamy frothing stuff arrived from Simonds Brewery in Reading, with the instruction that I must consume the lot before the end of the week and return the jar. Being full of hops it was intensely and disgustingly bitter but it worked. I got no more boils. I could just as easily have been given Marmite to put on my bread, and ever since I have been careful to balance my diet. Perhaps I was lucky to get a wake-up call so early in life about the need to be careful what I ate.

The school science club and school visits

Simonds Brewery was one of a number of visits made by the school science club, known as the Haber Society. Why it was named after Fritz Haber is a mystery as his reputation is to say the least mixed. Haber was a German chemist of Jewish origin but the family had converted to Lutheranism. A Nobel prizewinner, he had developed the process for using the nitrogen in the air to make ammonia, a key ingredient in fertilisers. This averted a looming shortage as reserves of natural guano fertiliser from Peru were starting run low. But he also pioneered the use of poison gas during the First World War and was personally present to supervise the release of the chlorine gas first employed for the purpose. Other visits were to the Morris Cowley car factory then owned by the British Motor Corporation and the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at nearby Harwell. The Haber Society also gave the boys an opportunity to develop their presentation skills, and like most of the members, I gave a couple of lectures during the course of my stay at Carmel.

The first trip abroad

I sailed through my four more O-levels: French, English Language, Additional Mathematics and Classical Hebrew and then it was time for holidays. We had my ever first trip abroad, using our free railway privilege tickets. We caught the afternoon boat train from Victoria to Folkstone Harbour. It was a hot day and all the windows in the carriage were open. Soon after leaving Victoria the fireman must have put a shovelful of coal in the firebox, as the engine starting giving off thick black smoke, the resulting smuts ending up on the passengers' light coloured summer frocks. Three ancient tank engines took the train down the steep line to the harbour and alongside the waiting boat to Calais....

Autumn 1956

Autumn 1956 saw me in the Upper Sixth, with less than a year to go to A-levels. I would then have been 16, two years before the usual age for taking them, so nothing was critical. I was put in a large double room in the study block. This should have been a good thing but it was not. It was next to the boiler room and there was a very noisy pump that was kept going throughout the evening until it was turned off at nine. It was impossible to work in the room. I complained about it and that enhanced my reputation for being an ungrateful nuisance. It would have been easy enough to fix the problem, either with new motor bearings if not a complete new motor, but nobody was willing to attend to it. I also shared the room with Edward Luttwak, who was worldly wise, sophisticated and passionately interested in politics, which I tended to despise and still do. It was a bad mix and we did not get on. The Suez War broke out and the Russians invaded Hungary following the independent stance taken by the Hungarian leader Imre Nagy. There was plenty to talk about but really anything that could be said at the time was speculation about what might happen.

For the Christmas holiday I travelled to Scotland on Christmas Day itself. There was a reduced though quite good service, with the 10.00 am Royal Scot making additional stops. I had my Christmas dinner in the restaurant car. They served the full works. There was a festive atmosphere, with the Christmas Pudding being served whilst the train was standing at Preston station.

For the Spring and Summer terms of 1957 I was moved into other accommodation in the gymnasium block and shared a room with a boy who was studying A-level Art. This proved to be a good thing because I had the opportunity to read his text books, including A History of Art by Ernst Gombrich. Following that, my interests developed and in the school library

I discovered several books by a writer called Trystan Edwards, a pioneer town planner and author of treatises on the principles of architectural design. This was the beginning of a lifelong interest which eventually led me to my principal line of work.

On the personal and academic front, then, life was better than it had ever been, or would ever be. There was a good camaraderie in the classroom, with a friendly rivalry which never got in the way of working collaboratively and helping each other with our difficulties. Chemistry continued to go smoothly, under the superb guidance of Romney Coles. Physics was another matter as we had learnt next to nothing during the Lower Sixth year and had to do the entire A-level syllabus in, effectively, two terms. John Bunney obtained the best text books of the time, including some by Nelkon who had been the Physics teacher at my old school, William Ellis. With his inspiration, and the camaraderie of what had become a group of friends, we passed and mostly with flying colours. That was A-level Chemistry, Physics and Maths in the bag, with distinctions in Chemistry and Physics, and I was still only 16 years old.

Also that year we had a few days at a Jewish hotel at Westcliff....

On to scholarship level

Autumn 1957 saw me in the third year of the Sixth Form, with the aim of taking a State Scholarship at the end of it. The Jewish holidays were late that year, and a group of the senior boys, myself included, went back to the school to celebrate the New Year festival under Kopul's guidance. The early autumn weather was beautiful – the last gasp of summer. I was at long last beginning to feel genuinely engaged in things Jewish.

We were the same congenial group as had been together in the Upper Sixth, I was allocated one of the coveted single rooms in the study block. I had been appointed as one of the prefects, but though keeping younger boys disciplined was not a job I relished or was any good at, I arranged things so as to avoid problems in that direction. That was usually successful. Although there was plenty of work to be done, I could not have wished for more. It was one of the happiest and most fulfilling and fulfilled years of my life. In fact, in retrospect, I cannot think of a year that was so completely lacking in anything that marred this contentment. I was with the people I wanted to be with, I was doing what I wanted to be doing. I was comfortably housed. A pleasant bonus for the Scholarship level year came about through the introduction of a "General Paper". The intention was to ensure that science students had a wider cultural background with a knowledge of politics and the arts. A newly qualified young English teacher, Mr Nelson, an Oxford graduate, was assigned to the task. There was a good relationship because the age gap between us was small. He stirred up our interest in a range of topics, including the philosophy of design and product design. This had always been a latent interest and I wrote an essay lauding the merits of the functionalist King's Cross station against the Victorian High Gothic of its

neighbour St Pancras. In retrospect I am ashamed of that effort but the point was that I was made to think about the subject.

I widened my reading that year. I read, amongst other things, a couple of books by Aldous Huxley, "After many a summer", "Brave New World" and "Ends and Means", Orwell's "1984" and "Animal Farm", and Bertrand Russell's "Why I am not a Christian", J B Priestley's "Angel Pavement", and Upton Sinclair's historical novels, the "Lanny Budd" series, including "Worlds End", "Between Two Worlds" and "Dragon's Teeth". These cover, in outline, many of the important events of the period from just before World War 1 to the first years of the Nazi era – which in the 1950s was too recent to be in the history syllabus since it covered events well within living memory. Apart from the Priestly, which I came across in the library by accident, this choice of books was the result of peer pressure, but all the same, it provided a reasonable cultural spread.

I also developed, or rather renewed, an interest in clocks and watches. There was a shop in Leather Lane, parallel to Hatton Garden, which kept a stall outside, selling movements from pocket watches that had been scrapped because of the value of their gold or silver cases. They were engineering works of art, often dating from the eighteenth or early nineteenth century, with hand-made English movements have decorative engraving on parts that would never be seen except when they were opened up for repair. Costing just a few shillings, they were usually in working order. They were also wound with a key and could be set in little wooden stands, when they would do good service as a bedroom clock. I picked up a real beauty, made a case for it and it kept excellent time for several months until one hot day it died with a broken mainspring. I opened it up, discovered what was wrong with it and reassembled it again without causing further damage but it would have cost more to repair properly than it was worth.

The Chemistry and Physics exams were straightforward and I received distinctions in both subjects. My mathematics, on the other hand, was at a stretch and my mark was little higher than it had been the previous year. Nevertheless I was one of several in the school to be awarded a State Scholarship. It was a satisfying conclusion to a fulfilling year....

The final year

With the State Scholarship secured, I was still only 17 and it was time to try for an Oxford scholarship, a much tougher assignment and one that it was not altogether possible to work for because the examinations were looking for more than learned information or even the ability to absorb information. There were further difficulties. The friends I had been close to for the previous four years had moved on, and that was tough. I missed their company and support. A further blockage arose from reflections on our visit to Harwell the previous summer. We had met and spoken to some of the scientists who there. Monty Finiston, the metallurgist, and from Glasgow, had impressed me favourably with his manner. He explained how metals could be brought to an extremely high level of purity through a process known as "zone refining" - which was critical to the development of semiconductors. We had stood on top of a nuclear reactor, known then as an "Atomic Pile". We had held plutonium in our hands, sealed in perspex, it felt warm to the touch. We had seen the special remote controlled systems used for handling and

processing radioactive substances. It was very impressive. But when one considered that this technology had mostly been used to kill a lot of people, and was being used with the aim of killing further people, wholesale, it was a much darker business that it seemed on the surface. The Cold War was still at its height.

Apart from Monty Finiston, I was not impressed by the people they met. They seemed to be devoted to their work to the exclusion of anything else. It was probably an unfair judgement but others in our visiting group noticed the same thing. The result was that my burning enthusiasm for science had cooled.

I also lost my pleasant single study-bedroom. I was put, with two other sixth formers, in one of the dormitory blocks – the three storey building. Each floor was open-plan, with a passageway around the outside. The three senior boys were allocated a space aside, by the entrance. The beds had the hard and uncomfortable horsehair mattresses. There was no study area and it could not have been used anyway because the younger boys were going to bed from about nine o'clock and lights out were at ten. The accommodation was completely unsuitable for students who were preparing for examinations. I mentioned the difficulty and was given a small room in the main building, which helped somewhat, but the lighting was poor and if I continued working after ten, I had to go to bed in the dark. I had also got into the habit of studying in bed – in fact I had always done that, and it was not possible if one could not read in bad as the lights had been put out.

The difficulty was eventually acknowledged and I was given a study-bedroom in the main building. But considering that the school management was aware that I was attempting an Oxford entrance examination and that I needed proper study facilities, I should not have been put in the embarrassing position, at that stressful, time of having to fight to obtain what I needed. There were two of us taking the examination for an Open Scholarship in Natural Science: myself and the Head Boy, Colan Linton. We had gone through all the options and decided to apply to Merton College on the basis that it was offering six Postmasterships, more than any other. It was surprising how many of the scholarships were actually restricted, for example, to the sons of Church of England clergy.

Early December in 1958 I made my way to Oxford for the examination. I think I must have come from London, as I distinctly remember travelling there on a main line train, which means that I would have had a short break immediately before hand.

Colan and I shared a set of rooms in Merton College in Fellows' Quad. We arrived on a dark evening. There was a large panelled sitting room with two bedrooms leading off it. Mine faced the quadrangle. I was, to say the least, nervous and off my food. Deciding what to eat posed an immediate problem, even though it was not an issue when staying at a hotel. The meat was not kosher and breakfast was cereal, bacon and eggs. The alternative was eggs, eggs and more eggs in the various ways that eggs can be prepared. Omelette and two-veg tastes as unappetising as it looks. The difficulty was, first that we were representatives of a Jewish school, and second, that we each were watching to see what the other would do, and third, that Colan

was also Head Boy. So we had several days of dreary food when everyone around was eating appetising things.

The examinations were held in the University Examination Halls. The questions were odd and not predictable like those in the A-level and S-level papers. They demanded an ability to think beyond and around what had been taught in the syllabus. Some of the questions included masses of data that was entirely irrelevant. Not only could it be ignored – if used, it would lead the unwary candidate up a garden path.

In the meantime, we were interviewed by a panel in the college. One of the questions concerned my interest in railways, which had been noted. One member of the interview panel asked my views on the impending replacement of steam traction by diesels and what were the advantages. I replied with typical obtuseness by giving the disadvantages – the use of imported fuel, the additional complexity, etc. I do not know how well that went down.

Not a few of the Oxford academics had an interest in railways, especially if they were Anglican clergy or musicians. Organists had a special relationship with steam locomotives.

Then came further practical examinations in the Chemistry and Physics laboratories which left me slightly stumped, and I was interviewed again whilst in the middle of doing some measurements. I went back to school convinced that I had failed miserably. This did not worry me unduly as there was an opportunity for another try in March. A few days later there was an article in the Times complaining about the poor quality of the science candidates!

There remained just a few days till the end of term. I had permission to leave early. I packed my trunk one and took a taxi to Wallingford. It was a cold frosty morning. The single coach ran with its little 1400 class tank engine was standing in the platform but would not leave for an hour and a half. I got into the compartment and turned the steam heating on full. I had nothing to read so went from one side to the other, looking through the window which gradually steamed-up on the inside.

I took a taxi from Paddington and arrived home at the new house in Kensal Rise in the middle of the afternoon. It was starting to get dark and I had eaten nothing since breakfast time. There were a few letters and a telegram on the doormat. There was not much food in the house so I went to the shop at the top of the road to buy something. When I had eaten my snack lunch, I took a look at the letters and the telegram. It was addressed to me.

+ CONGRATULATIONS OPEN SCHOLARSHIP NATURAL SCIENCE
RECTOR LINCOLN COLLEGE OXFORD +

I felt nothing. After a couple of hours, it sunk in. I had not applied for Lincoln College. What was a Rector? Was it a man in a dog collar? I recall putting Lincoln College down as number five on the list but knew nothing at all about it. When I eventually met the Fellows and Tutors at Lincoln College, there were none whom I recall having interviewed me. The Chemistry Tutor, Dr Rex Richards, might have liked the way I answered the questions in the papers. Perhaps he had set one of the questions himself and was impressed by my reply to that....

Carmel College coda

Back at school, I had to give up my comfortable room, there being an implied agreement that I would have it for as long as I needed it. I was back in the uncomfortable and inadequate new dormitory block. Fortunately, the two other senior boys with me were good company and we joked about the shortcomings of the building. All the way round each dormitory there were large, single glazed windows. Heating was by electric panels on the ceilings. The heating was inadequate, and the loss of heat through the large windows made the buildings icy cold on the clear winter nights. The centre-pivoted windows were liable to stick and then the glass cracked from corner to corner if one tried to open them. It was necessary to be careful when opening the windows if this was to be avoided. Toilets, washbasins and showers were in an area at the end of each floor, adjacent to the staircase. The toilet cubicles were hilarious. The partitions were clad in mirror finish aluminium which created an infinite regression of reflections. When seated inside, one had the impression of sitting in a hall of bogs. The staircase was noisy. At least the showers worked well and the water was hot, which was some compensation. It seems strange that such a reputable architectural firm should have got things so wrong, both the big ones and the little ones. There would, for instance, have been no difficulty in providing a few individual study-bedrooms in the building, and this alteration was soon made. And the science of heating buildings was hardly cutting edge. The housemaster in the three storey block where I live was Mr Carmel. One evening, he explained to us why he had left the Catholic priesthood. It was obvious that he had not believed in the fundamental Catholic teachings in the first place. He considered that Catholic doctrines such as the Real Presence in the Eucharist were an absurdity. I was later to discover that he was wrong. That really was a shock.

Why he had persisted with his vocation? I doubt if he was an unusual case. The post war period had been a period of expansion for the Catholic Church in Britain, but that men could be, or were willing to be, ordained as priests when they did not accept the fundamental doctrines of the Church could explain the many problems that bubbled up in the years that followed. At least Abraham Carmel admitted it and gave up. I do not know what kind of a conversation, if any, he had, or could have had, with one of the senior boys who was with me, who came from Gibraltar and was an actual believing Catholic. He was expected to attend Mass every Sunday at the little Catholic church in Wallingford.

Another actual believing Catholic was the housemaster in the other new dormitory block was a young English and Latin master with a clipped northern accent, J P C Toalster. He was a dour Yorkshireman. All those initials were intriguing and someone found out that they stood for John Peter Claver. That rang a bell. I had come across the name Peter Claver in Huxley's "Ends and Means". Others had read that book also and on following it up, discovered that he was a saint, a Jesuit who had worked amongst slaves in Colombia, where he was horrified at the harsh treatment they received. Making those connection in 1959 was more difficult than it is today, when one would just type the name into a search box and look it up on the internet. There was important existential discussions with him too. Another boy asked what was life for? Toalster answered, like an automaton, "to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy forever with Him in the next." I was not comfortable with this reply, having been

heavily influenced by Bertrand Russell. Nevertheless it seemed not unreasonable. I had not previously heard a better or more convincing one. I never heard a better one again. If it were not true, then life would be nothing more than a pointless accident. Toalster's reply came, I later discovered, from the old Catholic Catechism. Had he been brainwashed? Did it matter anyway if the reply was true and was what he really believed and intended to say? But Mr Toalster never made any attempt to push his Catholic faith on his Jewish pupils. It was a reply to which no Orthodox Jew could take exception.

My admission to Oxford was still conditional. I had still not got passed O-level Latin. There was a way round that, which was to take an examination called "Responsions". The examination was in Oxford and I stayed overnight at the college to take the paper next morning in the Examination Halls. It was the first time I had to wear the formal Oxford University examination clothing known as Subfusc. It consisted, and consists of a black suit, shoes and socks, and white shirt and white bow tie. I had to buy another suit for the occasion, a black one, which involved a trip to the East End where with much effort one was found to fit. The jacket was a size bigger than the trousers. The Responsions examination was much easier than O-level and I passed without difficulty even though I did not know much Latin and still do not. That completed the Oxford admission process. What little Latin I had learned proved useful later in life, and more importantly, the discipline of learning a well-structured language also proved useful later on.

Apart from that I did little more than mark time. I went rowing, and with the encouragement of John Bunney, built a two-valve radio from basic components – valves, resistors and capacitors. I travelled to Oxford one cold, sunny, February morning and bought them at the electronics components shop in George Street, Oxford. I had to cut holes in the aluminium chassis and bolt on the valve bases, the valves themselves being of the latest all-glass miniature type with pins at the bottom. Soon after came printed circuits and then transistors. A few boys already had transistor radios but they were expensive and sounded awful. Reception in the low-lying Thames Valley was poor, which is why nobody could get crystal radios to work, and it was necessary to sling a long piece of wire between two poles to make an aerial.

A new art master had arrived, Dennis Mills. He had been to sea and was keen on boat building. He got the boys to build kayaks by constructing a wooden frame and stretching canvas over. He also arranged for the rowing boats to be renovated, with plywood decks being fitted over the open sections fore and aft. These strengthened and stiffened the hulls and reduced the amount of water they took on board. I got involved in this, including the final painting, which was completed only just in time for a race.

During that last summer I learned to ride a bicycle – on David Robbins' old ladies' single speed, the only one allowed in the school. It was a simple skill I would need as a student at Oxford. Most evenings I would ride up the hill and then all the way along the quiet road to Goring and Streatley, and back. For part of the way the Great Western main line runs close to the road. The Kings and Castles hauling the chocolate and cream trains glinted in the golden evening sunsets. They, and the English elms were part of a landscape that seemed to have existed from

time immemorial. The trains, did, indeed, look much as they would have done fifty years previously. Within five years the Kings and Castles would all be gone. The elms did not last much longer.

There was just one more examination to be done: Preliminaries. This comprised two days of written examinations and two practical examinations to be taken at Oxford, again in Subfusc dress. For the first part of the examination we stayed in Lincoln College and I caught a glimpse of my future fellow students. It was just after the end of term. There were middle-aged and elderly men in dinner suits with black bow ties wandering around, probably returning to college for a Gaudy. Those elderly men must have been students just after the end of World War 1, in some cases even, when Edward VII was on the throne, in which case they would have seen action on the Western Front. Now I am one of those elderly men. That is a sobering thought. I was not so fussy about the food this time and ate what was put in my plate.

The practical examinations were on a Saturday and it was necessary for me to be kept under guard for the weekend so that I could take the examination on the Sunday instead. I stayed at the home of one of the teachers, Raphael Loewe MC. He had been awarded the medal for outstanding bravery in the Italian campaign in 1944, where had been injured, as a result of which he walked with a limp, being unable to bend his knee. He was not a good teacher but still relatively young and later had a distinguished academic career in Semitic studies, becoming Professor of Hebrew at University College, London. I was incarcerated with another student, George Willman from Sunderland, a town which had a small and very orthodox Jewish community. We spent a lot of time carrying buckets of water and pouring them round a recently planted fig tree in the garden. Raphael Loewe had previously won my respect with a reply to an officious boy who complained that someone else in the class was not wearing a kippah: "Oh, shut up, I'm not God's policemen."

At the Preliminaries practical examination we were given bits of wire, ether, dry ice, a timer, a simple galvanometer and a supply of glassware. The task was to measure the latent heat of freezing of mercury. Of course nowadays it would be strictly forbidden to handle mercury under Health and Safety regulations. How much toxic and valuable chemicals from the university laboratories and similar places ended up in the river and eventually in the water supplies of Reading and London? I ended up with a plug of solid mercury metal, something I had never seen before. I played with it, inside a glass test tube, watching it slowly turn to a liquid again whilst a thick layer of white frost condensed on the outside of the glass.

In April, my mother had married Ted....

When they came a visiting day, and again on Speech Day, I was embarrassed and a bit ashamed of Ted, with his working class accent and inability to converse. But it is rare for a boy and stepfather to establish a good relationship, and in fact I learned useful things from him, including French Polishing and how to sharpen a chisel and handle woodworking tools. The marriage also led, over the following couple of decades, to a round of invitations to Barmitzvahs and weddings in the then extensive Gelman family.

On one of their last visits to Carmel we walked to Benson Lock and caught the Salter's steamer to Goring. It was a beautiful afternoon in early summer. The joy of this trip is something that I would dearly love to recapture. That day remains as a blurred photograph and a fading memory.

The entire summer of 1959 turned out to be exceptionally warm and sunny, the fineweather continuing most of the way through September. So memorable was it, that at Portmerion, Clough Williams-Ellis had a plaque attached to the base of a statue, inscribed with the following words To the summer of 1959, in honour of its splendour

My days at Carmel finally came to an end. I had to remove all my accumulated things, plus the newly acquired but unrideable bicycle. They would have been too much to take on the train. I travelled back to London for the last time, not in a train, but in the back of a gown van sent to collect the son of one of the pupils, whose father owned a clothing factory in North London. They lived just round the corner from where we had move to. Britain's first stretch of motorway had opened a few months previously. The world was changing.

And after

I maintained a connection with the school for a while after leaving. Old Boys were always welcome and could eat at the master's table. The relationship between boys and masters suddenly become that between adults. After completing my degree I went to Carmel for a day a week to teach chemistry to the sixth form. This was in the newly completed laboratories. It was in the Spring and Summer Terms of 1964 and meant getting up very early in the morning to catch a train from Paddington. In the winter I took the bus from Reading and was given a lift back. In the summer I took the train to Didcot and cycled from there to Mongewell Park. The weather was beautiful every time. 1964 was one of those dozen or so exceptional summers of the twentieth century. After the class I would cycle to Goring and catch the train back to London. For years, there was an Old Boys' Day during the summer which was an opportunity to meet and catch up. Naturally too, with other boys at the same university, we kept in contact regularly and met at the weddings which were a feature of the following decade or so. But as the years have passed my remaining contacts have become sparse, more so since Carmel closed.

A few of the Carmel boys from my generation become well known: Matthew Engel the journalist; Edward Luttwak, the international affairs comment; Spencer Batiste, the Conservative MP; Rabbis Michael and David Rosen; Roland Joffe the film director; Raymond Dwek, who became a professor at Oxford University. No doubt there are a few more. Most of them, I think, went into the family businesses and lived quiet, prosperous lives. Which is as it should be.

Conclusion

The period up to one's eighteenth birthday is the prologue to life. Our initial deal of cards is complete by then and this shapes the rest of our lives, up to our final breath. In fact, as we get older, the early events exert a stronger influence. We are the products of circumstances, the times, ours inheritance, other people's decisions, and, from around the age of seven, our own decisions and actions. Some of them are good and others bad. It is impossible to say what would have happened if things had been otherwise, if other decisions had been made, if others had acted

differently, if we had acted differently. The whole of life is punctuated by decisive accidents and the outcome depends on who we respond to them. To end up with an Oxford scholarship at the age of 18 is as good a start as anyone has a right to expect. Nevertheless I had other baggage which was not going to help me in life and would rather not have had. Some of it was a result of circumstances. Some of it was of my own creation. On the academic front, it would soon become apparent that many of my abilities and interests had remained latent and undeveloped. The disciplines of a chemistry degree course, which includes long hours of practical work in a laboratory, would leave me frustrated and dissatisfied. My other talents had no means of expression.

At the same time my personal relationships were difficult and tended to be problematic. I had an underlying sense of insecurity. There was a feeling that things could suddenly and unpredictably go catastrophically wrong, either through no fault of my own or because I had inadvertently done the wrong thing. They had gone wrong, sufficiently often for me to come to the conclusion that the world around me was not a safe place.

All that was on top of the wrong things I was prone to say and do on impulse or out of cussedness. A major factor was my father's absence and his poor mental state when he returned from the war. Another was that my mother had tended to be over-protective and would rarely express praise openly, which added to the sense of insecurity.

On the religious front I was in a state of confusion. It had been a source of conflict between my parents. There was little congruity between my parents' attitude to religion and the ideals I had encountered at school. The difficulties of Jewish observance had also led to conflict from time to time and my experiences in that direction were largely negative. It was hard enough to believe in God, let alone one that imposed a lot of seemingly silly and arbitrary rules. Where had they really come from? The Jewish world itself was changing too. There was the state of Israel. There was secularisation. Eventually the middle ground that people such as Kopul Rosen had tried to hold would be abandoned in a polarisation of liberalism and extreme orthodoxy. Those attempting to keep to the middle ground were going to find their task increasingly difficult.

On the other hand, I had somehow picked up the idea that spirituality and spiritual values were important. My ideas on politics were at some level informed by notions of social justice. These values came from a variety of sources: my mother and her father, Kopul, other people I had spoken to and authors I had read. Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Upton Sinclair and Bertrand Russell were, in their different ways, formative. I was at the starting point for a long journey.

SOLOMON (MOMY) LEVY

25 May 2012

For me, in this world, after my parents, Rabbi Kopul Rosen, was the most special man in my life. All I know and even the way I dress, I owe it to him. He was one in a million. Modesty apart, I am considered in Gibraltar as a well-dressed man and this I have to thank Rabbi Rosen, who at College every day dressed impeccably regardless the occasion. My love of classical music is due to him. When I first arrived at Carmel College, I knew nothing whatsoever about classical music and, during the week after lunch, he would take a group of us to his study and play small excerpts of music especially Swan Lake which really gave us an insight and a love for classical music. About 15 years ago, I used to organise concerts in Gibraltar and the last one I organised was the Vienna Boys , whom I brought to Gibraltar and they performed in the beautiful cave which we have on the Rock. As far as the grounds of the school were concerned and the building both in Greenham Common and Mongewell Park were magnificent. I came from an orthodox family and I was delighted to see how Rabbi Rosen was able to mix boys who were not so religious with those who were religious. He should never be forgotten.

JULIAN LEW

6 January 2012

I was at Carmel from 1961 to 1963 – the most memorable years of my schooling. Rabbi Rosen zt”l was a yeshiva friend of my late father (Rabbi Maurice Lew zt”l). KR spent a Shabbat at our home in South Africa and persuaded my parents to send me to Carmel in the aftermath of the Soweto riots in 1960. From the day I arrived at the school his towering presence and personality was the driving force and a constant inspiration, and his warmth when he saw me made a small help to missing parents, home and the weather in South Africa. When he died I had been at the school just 6 month but his influence was already well inculcated.

GEORGE MANDELL

4 March 2013

I can give you a personal recollection [of the great row in autumn 1953, when several (perhaps all) of the Governors resigned en masse]: at the time there was a sort of joke, or bon mot, going round the school which went: "Everybody said that now either Coles will have to resign or Kopul will have to resign, but in the event it was the Governors who resigned." The row had to do with a dispute between Kopul, on the one hand, and Romney Coles, the Senior Master, on the other. The dispute was brought before the Governors, which is the background to the bon mot.

DAVID MARKS

11 January 2012

Starting in the Prep School in 1958 (school no 563) & memories of the famous Gabbai slipper but above all the memories of a man who taught us how to be a proud Jew without detracting from being an English Gentleman. I still use the thoughts contained in his “dear David letters” and some of the issues discussed there are still relevant today.

JOE MILLER

5 March 2012

I was nine years old when my mother told me that I was going to change schools. But, this time instead of it being a day school where I came home every afternoon, I was going to a boarding school. Immediately, I started to think about Tom Brown's Schooldays and began to panic, as I had never before left home.

The decision had been made due to the fact that my father had suffered a nervous breakdown a couple of years earlier. I did not understand his illness, but for all the right reasons I was about to be protected from the sadness at home.

It was mid December 1954 and the day had arrived when my interview to gain entrance to the boarding school was to take place. I was surprised when my mother told me that a Rabbi was coming to our home for the interview and that my father had known him in Glasgow. My father was the eldest of nine children, had been born in Glasgow to parents that had arrived from Russia at the end of the 19th century. The congregation where the Rabbi had officiated in Glasgow, included all the Miller family. The last wedding the Rabbi officiated at before leaving to set up Carmel College was my fathers younger sister Ann and her husband to be Julius.

The door bell rang and like it was yesterday I remember my mother going to answer the door to our flat that was located above Baker Street Station in Baker Street. I was hiding behind the lounge door, but peering out to view the visitor about to enter. I saw a tall slim man with a full beard, wearing a long coat and dark hat. As he entered the flat his first words were "what a beautiful aroma" to which my mother responded how nice of you, it's the coffee. Suddenly, my mother realised that we had Christmas decorations up in the hall and trying to make an excuse informed the Rabbi the decorations were for the staff !! The Rabbi smiled and told her that they looked very nice.

They both entered the lounge where my father and I were waiting for them. Some talking took place between my parents and the Rabbi. After a while he informed them that he would like to conduct the interview and could they kindly leave the room. As I write these memories it seems as if it was yesterday, being so clear. The Rabbi quickly put me at ease, as he could see that I was very nervous. He told me that he was going to ask me three questions which followed : Captain Cook sailed around the world three times, on which occasion did he die ! Did I like classical music? Did I like football? He then asked me to get my parents back into the room. Without delay he told them I had passed the exam with flying colours, could start the following September and the school uniform could be bought at Harrods. My memory indicates I was both pleased, but worried about leaving my home and family.

The months passed, we went to Harrod' and bought everything on the School List, that included some very strange black house shoes with elastic across the front instead of shoe laces that were to worn when we returned to the dormitory in the evening.

The first day of term at Carmel College was 14th September 1955, that coincided with my 10th Birthday. What a day to leave home! As a farewell my mother had arranged an early

birthday party during the day, as I had to be at Paddington Station to meet the train that departed at 4:00pm. We arrived at the station to find dozens of boys with their families, luggage and tuck boxes preparing to catch the train to Wallingford. Rabbi Rosen was waiting for us on the platform to greet us, but did not join us on the train, instead driving ahead to meet us at the school.

We arrived at Mongewell Park in Tappin's buses that had collected us at the station and brought us to Carmel College. It was pouring with rain and my new home was sharing a dormitory in the long dorm next to the gym. Our Housemaster introduced himself to us as Mr Bloch, never informing us of his first name. He turned out to be a very caring man, reading stories to us all in the long dorm nearly every night before we went to sleep. I went to bed and slept well, but when I got out of bed in the morning there were puddles on the floor as the rain had been so heavy, that water had got into the building.

Prior to becoming a pupil at Carmel I had been to regular Sunday classes at our synagogue in London, but had found it very hard to learn to read Hebrew. I do not remember where I met up with David Duke, but he is the person that worked with me within weeks of my arrival to learn to read Hebrew. I am certain he will not remember those times, but I did and still do appreciate the times he spent with me.

I was sadly not an academic student and did not realise until many years later that I was dyslectic and unable to retain information, often having trouble with words. It has not changed but I am now aware of the reason.

I was not a football enthusiast, but obviously needed to do sports. I recall playing football as a back and talking to a teacher Rabbi Young. The conversation will remain with me forever, as he told me he had recently had a car accident. When I asked what had happened, he just told me " that he didn't know as he was not looking"! A classic comment.

Running gave me the stitch and when it came to the cross country run that went through North Stoke, I was lucky to be able to jump into the back of that funny little van that Mr Bumpus drove and he brought me back to the school !

Because I was quite tall and strong, Charlie Marshall asked if I would consider taking up rowing, I did and never looked back. I often rowed in the school teams and won in Regattas. Rabbi Rosen had a special spot for the rowing crews. He often told us that sport was important and that whilst football, cricket and squash brought schools together to compete, it was usually just on a team against team. Rowing meant we went to Regattas and met up with many other schools at the same time. Rabbi Rosen wanted to get us known throughout the country, through sport and achievement.

I recall a lecture one Monday morning in front of all the boys in the Main Hall, he told us that he had been to a teachers meeting at Eton where he had been very impressed with the buildings and equipment that he had seen. But his off the cuff response to us, was that they had the buildings but we had the boys. I choked at the time and as I remind myself of those comments choke again. What a man to have in our midst.

I have many memories of Rabbi Dr Kopul Rosen, whether it be him shouting at us to win from the banks of the river as we rowed to the best of our ability. driving around the school grounds in a strange motor bike with sidecar in Carmel colours and stopping for a chat. Everyone will remember the sight of our Rabbi Rosen lighting the Havdallah candle as Shabbat came to a close with his shadow rather spookily moving on the wall behind him. I lived in the main building with Rabbi Rosen and his family at the other end of the floor and can hear him playing the violin.

There were many school societies that placed notices on the noticeboard outside the dining room. I formed a society that requested you to put your name on the list below if you wished to attend. But it was in fact a decoy for those wishing to order fish and chips. We ordered them and met Jims Taxi at the bottom of the back drive. On one occasion we had to hide in the ditch enabling Mr. Schmidt to pass in his bubble car without seeing us!

Finally, I remember assisting in laying up the tables one evening in readiness for breakfast the following morning. Rabbi Rosen came into the dining room and was very excited, informing us that his wife had just had a little girl that would be called Angela. He asked me if I had a Community Service badge to which I responded he had previously given me one. Never mind he said, tomorrow morning you are getting another Community Service badge and of course I got it and still have it to this day.

Like all his students at that time we were devastated by his terminal illness and attended his funeral in the grounds of the school that he loved so much.

Never was religion forced upon us but his guidance and concerns for our future has left an everlasting mark on me and I feel better and lucky to have known him.

I was at Mongewell Park during the years 1955 to 1962 where in retrospect I spent the most formative years.

9 March 2012

I was first introduced to rowing by Charlie Marshall and was taught both how to put the oar correctly into the water, preventing you getting hurt and also equally and possibly more important, the way to bail out the water that often came over the sides and into the boat. Those learning how to row and to prevent them damaging a better boat, initially used a very old wooden four that easily took in water !A couple of years later, I was actually able to show others and took four boys out onto the Thames, at that time being the cox in the boat. We returned after a tiring time on a Friday afternoon with the boat laden with water, but were unable to lift it out of the water. Fortunately there was one boy nearby that had super human strength and he just happened to be near us. I summoned the assistance of Arthur Fisher and he willingly came to our assistance. He told the five of us to go to one end and he stood at the other end. To my disbelief he was able to lift the boat up and out of the water at the same speed and level as the rest of us together that were all at the other end of the boat. We then turned the boat over and the water poured out. We were very late by that time, so thanked Arthur and rushed off to shower and get ready for Shabbat.

I should have realised he could do it by himself, as I had seen him lift up single handed the old style large red coca cola vending machine that was available for drinks at the back entrance to the Main Building. A feature of rowing was that for reasons unknown you became part of the elite and sometimes a rowing crew arrived in the dining hall late for meals. We sat at a table together and always got extra food, another great reason for being a rower! Meals were an important time and filling ourselves with food, being growing lads was always on my mind.

There was a Catering Manager and Food Buyer for a period of time who I believe was German man whose name was Mr Bittner. For obvious financial reasons unknown to us the time, he must have bought job lots of food. For several months and it seemed like an eternity, we had pilchards every Saturday and forever after, including now I cannot look at a tin of pilchards.

Going back to my first term at Carmel in September 1955, I can clearly remember all the pupils in the Prep School having to attend the Sanatorium for regular spoonfuls of Radium Malt. It was sweet and was supposed to help prevent us getting colds during the winter months. I actually think it worked for me.

On reflection I can remember my first housemaster Mr. Bloch who also taught us English classes, getting us during one class every week to write letters home to our parents and families. He even assisted with ideas for content and now realise the importance of keeping in touch with people on a regular basis and possibly for no ulterior motive. When the letters were all completed, he actually took the envelopes, making sure they were addressed correctly and that they promptly reached the post box.

During those early years I enjoyed the classes of another great teacher Dr Tobias. He made the classes interesting, but of course there were still those that sometimes liked to chat, including me. If it happened too often, it meant a penalty and you were summoned to the front of the class to stand next to the blackboard. In those times anything written on the blackboard was cleaned off with a small wooden cleaner about five inches long, that on one side was wood and the other side there was a cloth to clean the board. We had to hold a hand out three times for Dr Tobias to hit us with the wooden side of the brush. If you could pull your hand away quick enough, he missed and you continued for the three times. I am not sure if he missed intentionally each time, as I cannot recall him ever hitting anyone.

Purim was a time for fancy dress and it became harder each year for us to try and come up with an idea for fancy dress. I recall one year about ten of us not having any ideas, went as the Shoe Shiners of Shushan, with just shoes being cleaned by us as we walked through the staged area. At least we created a smile on our teachers faces that of course included Kopul Rosen! Our chemistry teacher and housemaster at that time as we all slept in the Main Building was Jackie Epstein, he had a wardrobe full of ties and was more than willing to loan us his ties for the Purim fancy dress.

Over the years I have looked back at the seven years I spent at Carmel with great affection. Of course there were times I was worried, one being when David Stamler insisted we all learn ten sentences from the Ethics of the Fathers, failing which we would not be allowed to go home for half term. I did not realise there was a reason for my inability to easily store things

in my memory, but was determined to do my best. I knew David Stamler would amongst others find me, to recite the sentences on the due date for learning them. Of course he caught up with me and I was actually able to recite the ten sentences, the shortest being something like Lefoom Zera Agra. There were some boys that failed and they really were not allowed to go home for half term, fortunately it did not include me !

I left at the end of the summer term in 1962 having only achieved five O levels. I knew it was time to leave as I felt I was not David Stamler's favourite pupil and best to leave under my own steam! I wanted to be a solicitor and became articled in London, but with memory issues stopped after two and half years. I got involved in property investment and management, retiring a few years ago.

DAVID MOND

30 January 2012

My memory of Kopul was soured after he caught me telephoning my parents from the Main Building public telephone box one evening. He banned me from seeing my parents at the showing of the Diary of Anne Frank and the Carmel Film (has anyone got a copy or does anyone know where one can be had?) and then 6 of the best on my behind in his study!

STEPHEN MORRIS

2 February 2012

How many remember: · The hot chocolate and buns in the corridor to the dining room during the morning break. · Standing by your bed for morning inspection. · The Jewish Lads Brigade travelling up in the Landrover to form a guard of honour at the main gate for someone's arrival – I forget who! · The taxi coming down the back drive, lights off, at night with the fish and chips from Wallingford. What was the name of that firm? · The steam train from Paddington taking boys back for the new term – later replaced by coaches from Regents Park, I recall. · The trips to the cinema in Wallingford and the film – ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’ – or the weekly? films in the prep. school. · The trip to London to see ‘Exodus’. · The break-in at the old church and the rope down into one of the tombs. · The pill boxes on a late Shabbat evening in summer and the absolute peace of a Shabbat afternoon. · The school's attempts to bring in girls for dancing lessons. · The call ‘KV’ when we were making toast in the 6th form studies. · Mr. Bitner in the kitchen and cold spaghetti sandwiches on a day out to watch the rowing on the Thames. · Dr Tobias – ‘Toby’ – who later went to live in The Bronx. He had a strange walk and a way of looking down and to the side, coughing nervously and twitching, as he walked. Not really ‘KR’ related but wonderful memories none-the-less

NEIL MYEROFF

24 July 2012

As we were going in for lunch Melvyn Green approached me and said 'I am sure I just saw the ex-Newcastle United and England centre forward Jackie Milburn get out of a car'. I said to him jokingly 'well the staff and teachers are playing the first XI this afternoon and you know how seriously Kopul takes these matches. May be he has pulled in an ex-pro'. After lunch I went out on to the playing field to watch the game and both sides were warming up. A few hundred yards away walking past the cricket pavilion Kopul was walking on to the playing fields and next to him was another tall gentleman with the same kit on as the staff and teachers. There was one particular moment in the game when from at least 35 yards (or was it 40!) this player shot at goal with the ball smashing against the crossbar. I can remember the school goalkeeper Roger Fierstone saying after the game that it was the hardest shot he had ever faced but somehow the crossbar survived. After the game Kopul spoke to all those who were present at the time and announced that the school had managed to get the services of the great Jackie Milburn and for approximately one year we had the pleasure of his coaching. Carmel's very indirect connection with England winning the world cup in 1966 was that Jackie left the school to take up the job as Ipswich Town manager when Alf Ramsey was made manager of the England team.

One other story that Danny mentioned was a house match between Gilbert and Montefiore. Montefiore were all out for 14 and Gilbert were 14 for 3. Geoff Levy who was the house captain of Gilbert turned to Danny Bernstein and said 'I am not moving from this spot until the winning run is scored'. Gilbert were all out for 14!

JULIUS NEHORAI

10 January 2012

I was at Carmel about 1951-1958 having joined at Crookham as a snotty nosed 7 year old. I'd got to the school a day before term started. The first night I shared a dorm with an even more snotty nosed Stuart Goldman who I have occasionally met in Marylebone High St. since but I believe he lives in Goa most of the year now. I pleaded with my parents to send me to Carmel because my older brother Anthony was there which made it seem the most exciting of places. Having joined, perhaps too young, I pleaded with them to let me come home and go to a day school in London which resulted in my leaving at the too young age of 14. Never the less I benefited enormously from my time at the school and am sure that most of the worthwhile education I received was gained there.... Do any of you remember the My Fair Lady saga? The Carmel Development Committee had secured a premiere for a fund-raising event and several boys were selected for the privilege of being Programme Sellers on the evening. Except some of them, who shall remain nameless absconded from school on Shabbat and were found fraternising with the local talent in Wallingford. Our dearly beloved Principal threatened expulsion but mercifully relented and instead cancelled the Programme Selling privileges.

7 June 2012

"Outside my studaay" boomed the rich baritone voice of which, one was in absolute awe if not fear. So, off one went petrified while thinking about what was in store. Was it the Chinese drip torture waiting for hours not knowing if he was ever coming to administer who knows what punishment or the quick immediate response of the ruler on the open hand or, for really serious offences the cane on the rear-end? There were occasions when I'd stood there for what seemed like hours and assumed I was forgotten so I slunk off wondering if that was the punishment; the anguish of not knowing one's fate and worrying, would I be missed if I dare leave? Or, maybe, he had a sneaking admiration for those that did not hang about indefinitely and took destiny back into their own hands.

Here was an unspectacular 7 year old up-rooted from the idyllic cocoon of peace, tranquility and indulgence that his loving Lebanese and Persian parents created for him in suburban Manchester. What I did not appreciate at the time was that West-Didsbury had become the UK Levant of Sephardi Jewry soon to make such a profound mark on Lancashire's textile industry. What a wonderfully sheltered existence it was with grandmother, uncles and aunties living directly across the road so that I could go from one house to the other without leaving home. The kindest sweetest matriarchal grandmother who made the best Kibbe, Houmus, Mashe, Macmoule and so many other delights that memory defies me. I can still smell the Turkish coffee permeating the house as much as the love for her family including the 11 grandchildren of which I was so lucky to be one.

At a time when I should have been at kindergarten what drove me to Jewish Tom Brown's Schooldays in the bleakness of faraway Crookham, Berkshire with its cold corridors and freezing dormitories and still colder food? Mashed potatoes with lumps and strangely tasting Kosher bangers, which must have been a Jewish concoction because they were shorter but fatter and the colour of no other meat I've ever seen since. That was if you were lucky enough to get one with Dr. Tobias, Toby behind his back, as head of table complaining how the boys "steal the very food from my mouth". But at least here you were out of range of his pinching your cheek till it bruised and affectionately exclaiming "Mushkalano", does anyone know what it means?

Then there was breakfast with the interminably fried eggs wallowing in oil. There were over 200 boys, did they have a gigantic frying pan to cook them all in? The eggs were only slightly more desirable than the glue-like porridge. The kitchen was capably in the control, or so we thought, of the indomitable Mrs. Aarons, she sporting the finest moustache at the school, who introduced me to homemade cream cheese. The preparation required two muslin bags of cream-cheese to be hung on a clothes line outside the kitchen to let the moisture drip out which were forever known as Mrs. Aarons knickers!

I'll move on from affaires gastronomique in a moment but first I must tell you about the cocoa. Carmel was in a culinary class of its own when it came to the beverage at morning break or "elevenses" as the Mums of the day would call it. We'd walk to the foyer of the dining hall, which wasn't finished until a year or two after the move to Mongewell Park. You clambered up over bricks to get there and finally you were rewarded with this lavender coloured drink; sugar

with a bit of cocoa and surely oodles of mauve dye, served from a giant pan with a ladle. The winters were so cold that you'd have drunk it if it were arsenic for the warmth it provided. Eventually they opened the tuck shop and you could buy a packet of Smiths Crisps for thruppence. Inside a little bag of salt was neatly tied in blue greaseproof paper. I'm not sure why because it was usually too soggy to use anyway. Boy they tasted good but was it because I was forever hungry or because, to me, they were the top of the line and like today's Kettle crisps which fetch premium prices?

One last reminisce about the food. In the early days at Crookham, every night before bedtime we were given a spoonful of Malt. Radio Malt it was called although I'll never know why, did it broadcast good health? There we were, all the boys in a line with the housemaster, or was it the matron, spoon in one hand and jar of malt in the other doling it out mouthful by mouthful. Was the spoon changed can anyone remember or, was that in the days when we were less fussy about such things? Gooley and sweet it was but then disaster; a new matron came on the scene and replaced it with Cod Liver Oil, Ugh, ugh, ugh but, she was the pretty young one who, rumour of a later year had it, one boy bedded! No such school day experiences for me, Mrs. Aarons affection was as close as I came to that sort of thing.

Of course the best treats were reserved for Shabbat and Friday night. It began with the wonderfully imposing figure of our Principal, as he was called, why not head-master I'll never know, making that moving blessing on every boy as he walked in line beneath his outstretched hand. Yivarechechah Adoni mishputecha – may the lord look after you and guide you, may he make his face shine upon you and so on. Then it was off to the dining hall with him presiding over Kiddush and Ha Motzi, but the best was yet to come. Carmel decided that its boys had to have ice-cream and Kosher it had to be. Once a week a messenger was dispatched to Didcot Station to collect the much favoured ice-cream but how was this to be kept frozen in transportation from London to Carmel? Dry-ice was the clever idea of the Snowcrest Ice-cream manufacturers, carefully packed around the containers. After it arrived the ice was discarded in the rubbish bin just outside the back entrance to the main house. You must remember it. It was where they put a Coca-Cola vending machine one furiously hot summer. Oh for one of those freezing drinks, so cold you could hardly bear to hold the bottle in your hand and just for sixpence in the slot!

Dry ice was a schoolboy's irresistible temptation and bound to lead to trouble. You couldn't touch it or it would burn your skin. Pour ink on it and it would colour beautifully, but that was one of its more peaceful applications. Put it in a sealed bottle with some water and you have a Molotov cocktail but no one told us that. We found out for ourselves when we threw such a bottle into the Thames and a few moments later, in an explosion of water and broken glass one boy got a deep cut in his leg and had to be rushed off to hospital for stitches. Any of my compatriots in that prank reading this?

Enough digression, so, what was I doing at Carmel? Well, it all began with my elder brother by 2 years, Anthony, alas no longer with us having passed away in September 2011 just short of his 70th birthday. He was first sent to a boarding school close to Manchester at Buxton

where he suffered from anti-Semitism. My parents must have heard about Carmel College from Rabbi Rosen's time in Manchester and so they decided he would be safer there and would get some religious training to boot, as we were not a terribly observant family.

If my older brother had something, I wanted a piece of it too so, I nagged until at the age of 7 I was packed off to Carmel. I remember those old steamer trunks, which were part of our kit, and of course the tuck-boxes each with its own padlock, which were carefully stored in the tuck, box room. No matter how you stuffed them you'd run out of tuck by the first week or ten days of term with nothing much left for the remainder.

Strange how my recollections of Carmel were happy ones but my brother was less sanguine about the experience. Perhaps that's due to my going willingly without his justifiable trepidation, being the first one of the family to go.

He was quite public spirited and joined the Cadet Corps for the short period until it gave up on its hopeless attempts to train pampered Jewish boys for becoming soldiers. He also joined Dudley Cohen's school choir, which was enthusiastically taken up by many boys until Dudley resigned. None too soon for me because once, in his class I'd misbehaved in some way and in a fit of temper he flung the blackboard duster, with its heavy wooden handle, right at me. I didn't see it coming and it hit me square on the forehead where an ugly purple bump soon appeared. These days I'm sure he'd be suspended and all sorts of enquiries and worse would ensue but as I think about it, with half a century's hindsight mind you, I was in the wrong. He probably didn't mean to hit me, I was too slow in ducking so, I learnt a lesson.

Anthony was a great sportsman and I well recollect that at the time of my bar-mitzvah he had to return to school early for sports day. He was in so many events that they had to hold up some while he finished so he could compete in the next one. Personally, sports were never of any great interest to me, he must have inherited all the family sports genes. I've thought of consulting a psychiatrist about it because I seem to be missing so much when I see the pleasure my friends get from following their team or actually playing themselves. Every so often I force myself to a football stadium but it's no good, more often than not I nod off. Strange really because my son is a great sportsman and played college football in the US and enjoys spectating as well as playing amateur basketball.

The teachers at Carmel were good. They must have been. I left the school at 14 years old and apart from a brief period at a London crammer, where I crammed little more than betting on horses, blackjack and Baccarat I had virtually no further formal education. I got it from somewhere and that must have been from the teachers at Carmel despite the fact they had the most reluctant of pupils in me. The only criticism I can think of is they might have tried a bit harder to motivate me or perhaps I played the ne're do well too well and they thought I meant it.

The religious instruction taught us too much by rote. It rarely seemed to inspire me and yet now, in the autumn of my years I have a fascination for it although I cannot claim to be devout. Why weren't we introduced to the Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism and why did we not get a better grounding in recent Jewish and Israeli history or were those the classes I was not paying attention to?

Our dear Principal did not make his handsome face to shine upon me as much as to others. It has to be said that if you were not one of his favourites you knew it. This was probably understandable in my case and a lesson of some sort because I realised you can't please everyone all of the time.

He probably had good reason; I didn't go in for volunteering. When he asked for boys to pick the boats up out of the water and carry them to the boathouse for winter storage mine was not one of the hands that shot up. I'd seen these centipedes struggling with heavy boats dripping with water hoisted above their heads and it seemed too much like work to me. Then there were the Community Service badges. If you'd been a super volunteer and picked up litter and done all sorts of other public-spirited things what do you think your reward was? More food, a pint of beer? No, a lapel badge of Carmel's coat of arms. There were many boys proudly sporting their community service badges in those days but to his disappointment the Principal had been unable to instill the point of them in me.

I wasn't too bothered about not being a favourite and, anyway, I got my revenge to some degree. Smoking was, if anything, fashionable in those days. When tobacco was first introduced to England about the fifteenth century doctors actually recommended it as being good for the health as it cleared out the lungs. While 500 years later they had figured this might not quite be the case they were still to arrive at the conclusion it was positively damaging and actually life-threatening. Consequently like most in those days the Principal was given to an occasional cigarette but, not for him a Woodbines which were sold in packs of two in some parts of the country to keep the price to a minimum for the working classes, nor even a Players or Senior Service puffed at in their numerous millions by the middle classes but the quintessence of smoking luxury, a brand that defined the very finest the tobacco industry could produce - the Perfectos Finos. The very name suggested how refined you must be to drag on this beautifully designed cigarette which had an oval shape instead of the circular design of all its inferior competitors.

Not many of my contemporaries may know this but the Principal kept a small stash in one of his desk drawers. I confess a guilty secret when I tell you that I, and a compatriot who shall remain nameless because I can't remember who he is, but would be very happy to hear from him if he is familiar with this tale, crept down to his study and became thieves in the night by helping ourselves to a supply from his hoarde. There, I've lived with it all of these years, catharsis, the guilt is expunged.

So, how come I left school at 14? Well, it was probably by default. My brother had left at about 16 and, by this time I had been there for 7 years and was getting a bit fed up with it. The school holidays were fun. The family were living in London by then and I had a separate circle of friends at home which included those other human beings one never saw at Carmel until several years after I had left, - girls!

I could see they were pretty nice things.

I got to work on my parents and once again I must have played the part too well because, to my surprise they agreed to let me leave Carmel and go to a day school in London instead.

After half a century of hindsight I conclude that I'd have been better off had I continued my education at Carmel and possibly gone on to University too as I think I would have benefited from it and if not, well I know I'd certainly have enjoyed it.

HARVEY ODZE

9 February 2012

What incredible memories of one of the genuine Gedolei HaDor, a man who cared deeply about education in all its forms.

I would add to these the time when he gave my class of 9/10 year olds a JS lesson sometime in March 1961, ie before Pesach, he brought with him a copy of the Sarajevo Haggoda and proceeded to bring it to life, amongst other things pointing out the wine stains on the pages and told us some of its history, relating it all to the lessons of Pesach and the concept of freedom in a way that to me, and I suspect to my classmates, was totally inspiring.

On another occasion he came into one of Mrs. Glover's lessons and proceeded to spell out a series of "Scottish" names beginning with MAC and asking for volunteers to pronounce them, when it came to the last one, MACHINE, I was the unfortunate volunteer that he picked out and of course I pronounced it as if it were a Scottish surname. I do not remember what he said but I do remember that it was something that was designed to encourage rather than embarrass.

But it's the people, you, that I remember the most. And, of course, Kopul. He was a force of nature.

IAN PANTO

20 March 2012

The story I wish to tell is regarding chess . I was a good chess player, having represented my County (Sussex) when I was just 10 years of age! So it came to pass that I was Captain of the chess team whilst I was in the fourth form. It was my duty to formulate the team and pick players for each match. In each year that I was captain ,we always reached the finals of the Sunday Times Boys Chess Competition and inevitably we played Eton. This competition allowed age to be taken into account—so if you had a low aggregate age you could win by taking only 2 out of the 6 games!!! In 1961 this is exactly what happened—I picked a prep.school boy to play the number 6 slot. His name was Cohen and he was about 8 or 9 nine years old. We won by drawing 3 3,as a result of our age. Kopul Rosen heard about the result and called me to his office. I thought he was going to congratulate me, but I knew things were not quite right when the first thing he said,at the top of his voice, was" PANTO what do you think you are doing putting an 8 year old into the Chess team? THAT IS GAMESMANSHIP NOT SPORTMANSSHIP." I, of course, replied that the prep school boy had obtained a half and indeed merited his place!!! Anyway I was read the riot act for at least five minutes and just as I was walking away I noticed a twinkle in Rabbi Kopul Rosen's eye! I am sure he was really proud of us!!

GEOFFREY PARADISE

2 February 2012

Ernie Grey, Biology teacher, was a Veterinary Surgeon who retired from the profession due to ill health. Romney Coles, Chemistry maestro, Ernie Gray, Biology (succeeded by Mr. Coombes, a seventh day adventist) and Mr. Bunney who never had a single A-level failure, made a formidably strong science team, but don't forget the Mathematics team, the Welsh Mr. & Mrs. Eggy Evans. Or the French teacher, Miss Whitfield, with her very useful habit of twitching up her right eyebrow whenever there was an E acute accent in dictation. I'm sure that got many of us through O level French! Then there was the very lame Mr. Raphael Loewe for Hebrew - who later became a very distinguished senior Prof at Oxford. We (or I certainly) didn't know that he was a war hero and was lame because of injuries received in the war. And remember Mr. Schmidt's little Messerschmidt bubble car? Mr. Bloch who lived in the flat above the swimming pool at Mongewell taught me my BarMitzvah and he used to warble away in his mellifluous bass voice. And I am sure many remember being entertained by Yoshke Friedman (was his red hair real or dyed?) in the mill house with jam sandwiches on a Sunday afternoon. There have been many mentions of Rabbi Rosen's (it still seems disrespectful to me to call him Kopul) punishments; the worst one for me - which I endured on many, many occasions, was being told to wait outside his study. The non-Jewish masters used to refer to him as "The Rabbi" as in "Wait outside the Rabbi's study". The wait was in a dark little annex to the main corridor and seemed interminable, with a fearful prospect at the end of it when "The Rabbi" finally turned up to enquire what I was doing there. Usually it just ended in a telling off though - or perhaps being told to learn a passage of Tanach by heart. You refer to R. Sidney Leperer and his wife Miriam also taught at Carmel and was a formidable table tennis player. Ah well just a few reminiscences of the old school. One of my sons went there and hated it - but it bore little relationship to the school we knew. Your notes have reminded me of something. I remember my leaving speech - I told a good joke quite badly and nobody laughed. So I muttered that it sounded better in Yiddish - and KR cracked up with his booming laugh of enjoyment.

IAN RABINOWITZ

February 2012

Introduction

I have four significant memories that I would like to share with my fellow Old Carmelies. I was at Carmel aged 14 to 18 from October 1954 to July 1958. I was School Captain for 1957-58.

As we know from "Memories of Kopul Rosen" [GJ George & Co Ltd, London 1970], Kopul was born in London in 1913 and attended Mir Yeshiva in Poland from 1934-38.

Inter alia, Kopul was a protégé [see Chapter 7 of the above] of my uncle, Louis Rabinowitz, born in Edinburgh 1906; Rabbi to the following London Congregations: Shepherds Bush 1926-28, South Hackney 1928-32, Cricklewood 1932-45; Senior Jewish Chaplain to the British Middle East Forces 1941-43 and to the British Forces invading Europe 1944-45, both with

Montgomery; then Chief Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State 1945-61.

Inter alia, Kopul was also a contemporary of, and knew in London and Mir, my father Eliezer Simcha Rabinowitz, born in Edinburgh 1913; Rabbi to the following Congregations: Kingsbury London 1935-38, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1938-53, Kingston-upon-Hull 1953-59, Sea Point Cape Town 1959-65, Gatley Manchester 1965-1976.

June 1954

My family moved from Newcastle to Hull in April 1953. In the summer of 1954, Kopul came to Hull to address the local JPA. When I came home that evening, my father asked me whether I would like to go to Carmel College. Despite never having heard of Carmel, and having no knowledge of its location, I replied that I would. Thus it was that in October, I found myself on the Yorkshire Pullman with an older Henry Goldstone (who initially scorned my comics), wearing a shirt from Harrods which had cost my father most of a week's wages. Thus began four years at Carmel which, both my wives have told me, have left indelible marks on my character, and which led to my 5 sons all knowing the School Song.

A pillow fight broke out in my dormitory on my first Friday night, and the formidable Kopul appeared on the scene. Although I was not involved, he sent me to stand outside his study where he left me for two hours, being very apologetic when he finally turned up.

I do not know my school number. My reports do not show one. I think that the only place one could have appeared would have been on my bills. I have to say that, because of the "Mir network", my father did not pay any school fees for me (or for my younger brother Lionel who joined in October 1955, or for my youngest brother Benny who joined in October 1956, before they both left in December 1956). My bills were for books and pocket-money only, so small that no bill was ever kept.

For taking me in "free", I say "thank you" to Kopul. I did give some value back, in July 1958 gaining Distinctions in Maths for Science, Physics, and Chemistry A Levels ("quite the best exam results obtained by anyone at Carmel so far" according to a letter from Mr Bunney), and being awarded for the Honours Board a State Scholarship from October 1958 to study Physics at Manchester University, the only university to which I applied, for its Jewish community and where I met my first wife Joyce o'h.

June 1956

Louis and Kopul kept in contact over the years, with Kopul being invited to South Africa to fundraise for Jewish Education (incidentally Louis and Kopul were equally the most powerful speakers that I have ever heard). In June 1956 (I think), Louis visited Carmel, and I had an order to meet him on the steps outside the main building. When I arrived, he and Kopul were standing there in bathing robes and with towels over their shoulders, having been swimming in the Thames (which at Mongewell had a very powerful current). After a chat, Louis presented me with a £5 note. I have always had a memory that it was a note that had to be folded so, for this article, I checked on the net, and was pleased to have my memory confirmed. The £5 note from 1793 to 1945 measured 195mm by 120mm (7.7 inches by 4.7 inches), being increased (why?)

from 1945 to 1957, when it was replaced by the blue £5 note, to 211mm by 133mm (8.3 inches by 5.2 inches).

I thank Kopul once again because I am sure that, if he had not been present, then Louis would not have given me such a large sum.

August 1957

I had skipped the 4th Form, taking English Language, Elementary Maths, Scripture, French, Additional Maths, Physics and Classical Hebrew O Levels in the 1st Year 6th, and took A Levels for the 1st time in 1957 in the 2nd Year 6th. The results would have allowed me to take up my offered place at Manchester University in the autumn. However, Kopul phoned my father and asked him to allow me to stay on for the 3rd Year 6th to be School Captain. After discussion, it was agreed and I returned to Carmel in October 1957 in that role.

I thank Kopul once again, for giving me what was a formative experience which included presenting Julie Andrews with a bouquet back-stage after a performance of “My Fair Lady” in aid of Carmel.

June 1958

I had to work very hard as School Captain. It may have been “chicken and egg” but somehow the staff seemed to leave everything to me, particularly at weekends. And I, out of necessity, became quite a tartar. For meals, the School Captain sat with any staff at the top table. If there were no staff present, and I was in charge, then I was not pleased if, when I stood up to make the announcements, there was not absolute silence within 3 seconds. Well, one Sunday the noise continued for 5 seconds. I told the boys (and, of course, it was only boys in those days) that, because of this lack of discipline, after the meal they should all go to the main building hall where they would stand in silence for 10 minutes. I am sure that pupils in modern times would not have complied, but, on this occasion, all the boys (I went through the school roll to check) went to the hall.

As the boys were standing there in complete silence, with me in the front facing the staircase at the back, Kopul started to descend the stairs from his flat on the first floor. He really was a majestic figure, tall and handsome and impeccably dressed. He slowly made his way to me at the front and asked “Ian, what is going on here?” I told him that the school had misbehaved and that they were standing for 10 minutes in silence as punishment. “Don’t you think that you should have told me?” he asked. “Well”, I answered, “I am the School Captain”. He nodded, and, without saying anything else, proceeded to his study.

The next day, to my utter consternation, I saw a notice on the board announcing the appointment of two new prefects. I ran to Kopul’s study, pounded on the door, burst into the study, and demanded of Kopul “how could you appoint two prefects without a discussion with the School Captain”. Kopul spread his hands and said “Well”, he answered, “I am the Principal”.

My final thank you to Kopul is for teaching me a lesson in humility. May his memory be for a blessing.

DAVID ROBBINS

14 March 2013

At one point, a new sanatorium was to be formally opened, and Kopul asked me to make a speech thanking the visiting donors and the school matron, Nurse Watson. I had decided to speak without notes, and a few minutes before I was due to begin, I agreed with the Head Boy, Raymond Dwek, that at a pre-arranged point I would stop speaking, and he would start a round of applause. At what I thought was the agreed moment, I stopped speaking, but there was no applause, only complete silence, and the rest of the speech went out of my head. I pretended to be overcome with emotion at the debt which I owed to Matron for her care of me while I was convalescing after an operation to remove an ingrowing toenail. This gave me time to recover my memory and finish the speech. As soon as the proceedings were finished, one of the boys came up to me and said 'You seemed overcome by emotion, but you can't fool me - you had simply forgotten what you were supposed to say'. Thinking that my cover had been blown, I went later that day to see Kopul in his study in order to apologise. You may remember that in the study was a large Jacobean carved oak chair, and if you sat on it after a catch had been moved, a couple of one-inch thick iron bars would drop down from inside carved side-pieces and pin your thighs to the seat. Well, I apologised to Kopul for my lapse of memory, and he replied 'You have nothing to apologise for. On the contrary. You know that my usual method with prospective donors to Carmel is to imprison them in that chair and then to demand a substantial release fee. But today such a strategy was unnecessary, as many of our guests came to tell me that I had been irresponsible in giving the task of making a speech to such a sensitive boy. You opened their hearts, and they opened their chequebooks'.

I came to Mongewell Park in 1956, after two years at an old-established English public school where there was a strict informal rule that no boy could speak to a boy who was his senior unless he had been spoken to first. Third formers couldn't speak first to fourth formers, fourth formers couldn't speak first to fifth formers, and so on. And if two boys began to fight in the playground, the proper 'etiquette' was to surround them in order to prevent the fight being interrupted, and then to bet (for cash only) on which boy would win. A few months after arriving at Carmel, I was astonished to see a junior boy go up to two boys who were clearly older than he was, and who were fighting, and say to them 'Come on, stop this nonsense'. Obviously Carmel was a very different type of public school, and I am very glad to say, it remained so even after it had been admitted to the Headmasters' Conference. Kopul taught us that we were indeed our brothers' keepers.

DAVID ROBSON

15 September 2013

In the 1961-2 football season Jackie Milburn, the absolutely legendary Newcastle and England centre-forward, came each week to coach the first eleven (including me). Even by Kopul's

standards this was a coup. His unannounced arrival, taking the field next to Mr. Bloch (and to be marked by me) in a school v staff game, was unforgettable. Kopul, as you may or may not know, was a football fan. He loved Milburn and offered him a permanent job at the school and free education for his son. In an unpublished biography of Milburn which I have read there is a wonderfully graphic description of Kopul by him. It is very moving (Kopul was of course close to death my then).

JEREMY ROSEN

(undated)

Introduction

This initial history and memoir (doubtless it will be added to) concerns Carmel College, a Jewish residential school (boarding school) that was founded in England in 1948 and ultimately closed in 1997. It was founded by my father. This is my memory, aided by archives, minutes of Governors meetings, reports that appeared in press, and Memories of Kopul Rosen, published by Carmel College in 1970. Like all history there are always _other stories.‘ I have documented facts I have been able to corroborate as well as my own personal memories. Those parts of this book that refer to me must indeed be regarded as subjective (that does not mean they are all and necessarily wrong).

Kopul Rosen, founded Carmel College as a boarding school for boys in 1948. He was at the time one of the leading rabbis in Anglo Jewry. He dreamed of a school for boys that would combine the best of two worlds, Athens and Jerusalem; the positive features of the English public schools and the passion and commitment of traditional Jewish Orthodoxy. He gave up the rabbinate and devoted his life to his dream. Sadly he died at the unreasonably early age of 49 in 1962.

Carmel struggled from the outset for pupils and financial support. It began to achieve academic success in the mid 1950s, but the nature of its Jewish programme was always problematic. The vast majority of the pupils were not from religious backgrounds. Their interest in the school was academic and social Judaism rather than the practice or even study of Judaism. The result was that the school never lived up the original ideal. This does not mean it failed. It can fairly be said that as far as the Jewish side was concerned, Carmel gave to most of its pupils information about Judaism they would not otherwise have had and an experience of living a Jewish life. In some cases it made them more observant, strengthened identity and gave a more positive impression of Judaism than they would otherwise have had. In its early years it was the example and charisma of Kopul Rosen which compensated for other shortcomings. He often said he was delighted to be told by an Israeli student that although his experience had not made him more observant at least for the first time he had an appreciation of the Jewish religion. However it is also true that some Carmel pupils ended up abandoning Jewish life. Some married out and others turned their backs on the community. Kopul’s early death robbed the school of its greatness. His inspiration lingered on but inevitably disappeared over time. The school had three

headmasters after Kopul, including me, and it closed in 1997. Can it be said the dream failed? Was the model in some way faulty or just the context? Of course this history is not disinterested. But I hope it will contribute to the debate about what kind of Jewish Education best serves a varied and plural Jewish community and what Carmel College's contribution to Jewish life around the world, was. I was involved with three phases at Carmel: my father's era from 1948 to 1962 (during all but three of which years I was also a pupil), his successor David Stamler's era from 1962 to 1970 (during which my mother tried and failed to establish herself at Carmel in her own right), and finally my own period as headmaster and principal from 1971 until the end of 1983. These phases differed in character and mood, primarily over the issue of whether Carmel was a Jewish school or a school mainly for Jews. Each period had its own heroes and anti-heroes, its saints and its devils, its successes and its failures. Each headmaster had, and continues to have his own following, and each teacher was loved by some and not by others. In some ways it is this loyalty to specific memories and persona, together with the circumstances of its closure, that prevented the alumni from uniting to help or save the school. I have noticed that often as pupils get older they tend to romanticize and to obliterate many unhappy memories. They may come to appreciate what at the time they rejected. Yet others nurse grievances and resentment and strive to remove Carmel from their consciousness. We are all biased. As my history teacher used to say quoting, I think, Collingwood, "There is no such thing as history, there are only historians." I know my own memory is both selective and sometimes unreliable. To give just one example; I have always instinctively recoiled at corporal punishment, perhaps because it was used rather liberally on me. When I became Headmaster I found the very canes used on my still in the Headmaster's study and I vividly recall destroying them. I can think of only two incidents of my using corporal punishment. Once I had to support an ineffective teacher and bolster his authority by slipping some young rebels. And on another occasion I used it half-heartedly to try to scare a young tearaway into behaving. But many years later I met two others who claimed that had I had used the cane on them too even though I am convinced I did not. I think faulty memory is at work here, but whose?

Memories are indeed fallible. This is why I have sought archival confirmation, wherever possible, for what I have written. I know there are people, staff and pupils, I should have mentioned, but have either forgotten or chosen not to. Here too one's own biases inevitably come to the fore. So as someone who has always loved art, I have very strong and positive memories of such art masters as Michael Cox, Herman Laangmuir and Michael O'Connor, not overly significant in the history of Carmel perhaps, yet they gave me a lot personally. The same could be said of those contemporaries who mattered to me but I have chosen to omit because I did not want this to be predominantly a catalogue of names. I played a significant part in various phases of Carmel's history and contributed poor decisions as well as good ones. At certain stages it was more successful, either religiously or academically, than at others. But it was a creature of its time, its place and the personalities who came and went. Carmel had its limitations and it failed some of its charges as did I. Nevertheless, I write this with both sadness and pride. For my

omissions and errors I apologize in advance and welcome corrections and indeed any memoirs of others that might be added to this. Please feel free to email me at jeremyrosen@msn.com.

Early Struggles (1948-1962)

In 1946 a small meeting of private individuals was called by Rabbi Kopul Rosen in his home in London where he proposed that they investigate the possibility of establishing a Jewish Public School which would provide a general education on a level with the Public Schools of Great Britain together with a comprehensive Jewish training.

The opening of Carmel College was announced in an advert in *The Jewish Chronicle* in April 1948. At that time the founder, Kopul Rosen, was the Principal Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues of Great Britain. The announcement declared that the school would "offer a secular education on a par with the best public schools in Great Britain together with a comprehensive traditional Jewish training". The address for further information was given as Rabbi Kopul Rosen's home address in Farm Avenue, North London. By August 20th a headmaster, James Ewart, M.A., had been appointed, and in October 1948 the school opened with 22 pupils at Greenham Common, just outside Newbury, Berkshire.

The first prospectus of the school declared that its pupils would be: "Young men who will be learned, enlightened and observant Jews with a sense of purpose and direction in life ... we are confident that pupils passing through Carmel College will be so equipped by their knowledge and training that they will develop into natural leaders of Anglo Jewry." Carmel College Limited was started as a non-profit limited company and then incorporated as a charity. S. London gave a deposit of five hundred pounds, and another ten thousand pounds was raised between Joe Gilbert, Alexander Margulies, Oscar Philipp, and Leslie Paisner. A mortgage was taken out, and when Kopul sold his house in London in 1949 the money went towards reducing the debt. The founding governors were Abba Bornstein, Joe Gilbert, Doctor Bernard Homa, Alexander Margulies, and Oscar Rabinowicz. Osran Philipp and George Shipman joined the board until 1950. Kopul was both principal and initially Chairman of the Governors. Alexander Margulies and Joe Gilbert were particularly significant in 'Carmel lore' because the school was divided into two "houses" which competed with each other, mainly in sport, but in intellectual challenges too. They were named "Alexander" (whose "colour" was red) and "Gilbert" (blue). Later, as the school grew, a third house was added: "Montefiore" (yellow).

In addition to the governors, Carmel had patrons. They were Professor Sir Isaiah Berlin, Lord Cohen of Birkenhead and the Hon. Sir Seymour Karminski. Initially Kopul commuted from London to Newbury, but after the first year he resigned from the Federation, citing his commitment to the school, and moved out to live at Carmel with his family. He took on day-to-day responsibility for the school. His wife, Bella, became the catering manager and household supervisor. He ceded chairmanship of the governors to Joe Gilbert but chose to retain the title of Principal instead Headmaster. After Ewart's departure the position of Headmaster was not filled. School Uniform Originally the school uniform was simple and non-descript. Two silver letters C faced each other on the front of a blue cap and on the pocket of a blue blazer. The uniform was available at a department store called Daniel Neale that used to be situated just off Oxford Street.

After the move to Mongewell Park the school designed a completely new outfit based on a purple blazer which was now available at Harrods.

Purple was dominant, together with red, blue, silver, and gold. These were the primary colours of the Biblical Tabernacle. The central motif of the school crest was the Seven Branch Candelabrum of the Tabernacle and Temple, which initially was also the official symbol of the State of Israel. Two smaller icons on either side of candelabrum represented the Ten Commandments symbolizing the Written Law and a book representing the Talmudic tradition. Below were seven Torah scrolls, the 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom' as referred to in the Book of Proverbs. The school motto, "Know Him (God) in All Thy Ways", also came from Proverbs (3.6) and was taken to mean that one should follow the values and ideals as laid down in the Bible in whatever one did in life. The acrostic of the three Hebrew words, Bechol Derachecha Daeyhu, also stood for the term that Balaam used to describe the Israelites in Numbers 23: "A people that dwells alone (BaDaD)".

The school tie was purple with silver, gold and blue stripes. Sub prefects had ties of blue with one silver stripe and prefects had ties of silver with two blue stripes. When School Colours were given for excellence in sports, special white blazers with the school crest could be bought. Later on Prefects were able to add a golden edge to their blazers. During the Mid-Fifties a grey bomber jacket was introduced for daily use, to replace the expensive blazer. It was required weekday dress for classes below the Sixth Form. Years later, a school scarf of purple with golden stripes was added. Not only was all this expensive but the supplier, Harrods, was not a cheap store. Each term a representative would come down to the school to take measurements and orders. A crucial item of school wear was its purple cuppel, required for religious services, meals and Jewish Studies but not obligatory at other times. Most pupils chose not to. The Newbury Estate Carmel College's first home as a beautiful estate of 70 acres outside Newbury that had been General Eisenhower's headquarters during the planning of the Normandy invasion. It was located at the edge of Greenham Common, originally an RAF base that was taken over by the USAF Ninth Division and then returned to the RAF after the war. The main building, in mock Elizabethan with a minstrel's gallery and grand staircase, was built at the turn of the century. It was reached by a half-mile long "drive" from a small lodge on the main road. The pot-holed track ended by circling around a huge oak in front of the main entrance. Behind the building, lawns reached down to a small ornamental lake surrounded by the most beautiful pink, scarlet and purple mature rhododendrons, which in the summer were home to huge flocks of starlings that wheeled and screeched as they rose and descended at dusk and dawn. Away from the main building there was a glade that had originally been a croquet lawn and tennis court. Beyond it were stables later converted to a synagogue and laboratories. There were a few staff flats above and dilapidated greenhouses to the side. The estate was bounded to the west by Greenham Common and to the north by Newbury racecourse, which was out-of-bounds, but an illegal attraction to pupils during the season. A rough and meagre football pitch was forced out of the common to the west. Pupils were press ganged into removing stones. Foxhunts often invaded the woods to the north of the estate by the racecourse. And gypsies regularly camped along the drive.

During those early years, Carmel tried very hard to emulate aspects of the English public school system. Amongst the Spartan demands of the Ewart regime were early morning cross country runs, and cold showers before services and breakfast. Sleeping accommodation was very simple. Large open dormitories with rows of beds and lockers on the second floor accommodated the majority of pupils. Some of the older pupils lived in converted stable lofts down by the greenhouses.

Jewish Life

From the start the school was run on Orthodox Jewish lines. From compulsory daily prayers, to observing Shabbat in all its strictness and of course the kashrut of the kitchens, everything ran according to the dictates of Jewish Law. Jewish studies were compulsory and they included Modern Hebrew. The school required a minimum academic commitment to Jewish studies from the average student, no more than a few hours each week. But at the same time it offered inducements and encouragement to those who wanted to study Judaica in greater depth, outside the main curriculum. The majority, having little interest or commitment to Jewish studies, left Carmel with a relatively poor Jewish education. Nevertheless many graduates did learn how to perform basic Jewish rituals, conduct services and have an awareness of the Jewish year and a sense of pride in their heritage. The strictness of the Orthodox "constitution of the school" imposed strains on non-observant pupils from the start and always posed a challenge to the religious character of the school. Shabbat was kept publicly, but privately many pupils found ways of secretly defying the school rules. During compulsory prayers it was clear that the majority was not actively participating. Finding ways to import non-kosher food into the school became something of a game of cat-and-mouse. The fact that the school required obedience to its religious regulations helped create an atmosphere that caused tension during term time and a kind of schizophrenia during vacation time when pupils returned to non-observant homes. It was always debated whether the gains of experiencing an alternative Jewish way of life outweighed the tensions which were exacerbated by parents tacitly undermining the values of the school through their own behaviour at home. But this was the essential spiritual challenge of the school.

Growing

The very idea of Carmel College came in for attack through the correspondence pages of the Jewish Chronicle. Objections ranged from religious to social. It was accused of segregating Jewish children from non-Jews, of competing with the Jewish home, of not offering an intensive enough Jewish education, and of offering too much Jewish education. Kopul and parents defended the idea of the school vigorously in the Jewish Chronicle. In a later prospectus written in 1957, Kopul argued against the claim of segregation thus: "Some well-meaning Jewish parents have said, 'How can a child be educated to live in this country where his neighbours are non-Jewish, if the most impressionable years of his life are spent in a wholly Jewish environment?' "I suggest that a minority group of Jewish children attending a non-Jewish school separated during religious services and prayers, absent from school for their own Religious Holy Days and exposed to the taunts, upon which I need not elaborate, endures segregation of the worst kind. I myself attended non-Jewish schools and have often discussed my experiences with friends who

were pupils at similar schools. It appears that although we were not unhappy, yet in varying degrees we felt that we were like our fellow pupils and yet unlike them. We were members of the whole and, at the same time, a minority within a majority, and in striving to belong completely to the larger community we tended to make our Judaism, which we regarded as being the cause of our difference, a sub-culture which we tried not to obtrude into our normal routine. This confidence sapping experience is the inevitable lot of the Jewish child in a non-Jewish school. "When a Jew with a positive experience of Judaism, with a learned awareness of what his distinctive heritage is, meets his Christian fellow human being, he does so as an equal; he does not apologize either to others or to himself for being different; he does not equate difference with inferiority. The ignorant Jew, who feels that he is like his non-Jewish neighbour and yet not wholly identifiable with him, can have no pride in the distinction which separates him, he must inevitably be plagued by a sense of inferiority. It is self-delusion to comfort oneself with the half defiant cry of 'I am proud to be a Jew.' What is the nature of such pride that has its roots in ignorance? "The authentic Jew can and will associate with his Christian neighbours with confidence and dignity; the ignorant Jew (the non-Christian of Jewish parentage) is ill at ease within himself and though he craves to be accepted in Christian circles, is in fact uncomfortable and awkward in their presence. "Without knowledge of Judaism the Jew is defenceless. It is criminal folly to expose a child to the piercing darts of discrimination and to defend such action by the totally false notion that defenceless as he is, he will nevertheless 'get used to it' and develop some power of immunity. The child will be wounded: scarred as a Jew and a human being. Carmel sputtered and groped towards its future in the early years. The first Speech Day was held at the school in July 1949. It was an internal affair. In January 1950, Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie officially opened the school's synagogue. J.C. Gilbert, Chairman of the Governors, spoke, as did the donor, Henry Freedman of Leeds. Malcolm Shifrin and Peter Cohen represented the pupils. The school was officially recognized by the Ministry of Education in 1950. The second Speech Day in November 1950 was in the presence of Dr. A. Cohen, President of the Board of Deputies. Maurice Lipsedge won the Jerrold Roston Cup (to be referred to in greater depth later but in effect the most prestigious award for the outstanding pupil of the year). By this time there were already 110 pupils, from age 7 to 18. Armin Krausz, Leslie Paisner, Ivan Shortt, and Jacob Braude joined the governors briefly in 1950. The third Speech Day was held in May 1951, in the presence of Viscount Samuel.

Speech Days became showcases for the school when parents and visitors would drive down to the estate. Kopul orchestrated the proceedings. He got pupils to declaim speeches or extracts from literature and classical texts, both secular and Jewish. He was anxious to grandstand them to show off the cultural mixture that Carmel wanted its pupils to aspire to. Pupils were drilled to walk in and out in a disciplined way and to sing the school song both in Hebrew and in English (see Appendix). To end the proceedings Kopul would always turn to the pupils and declaim "Carmel College, Ko Lechai". It was a quote from the Book of Samuel, a greeting that David sent to Naval, and the equivalent of saying, "This is the right way to live one's life." The pupils then responded by echoing, "Ko LeChai". Kopul always insisted it be a

united roar of enthusiasm. Something not all pupils were capable of. It was often forced. But Kopul's own voice was so powerful that he made sure there was enough volume in the reply. And with that, the proceedings would always end.

Kopul was very proud of the school and visitors, educationalists from Israel and Europe came down constantly to see how the experiment was progressing. But he also invited artistes ranging from the Israeli Yemenite singer Shoshana Damari, to politicians such as Aneurin Bevan and Jennie Lee and musicians. In 1951 the artist

Mane-Katz spent a day at the school and presented a large canvas which always occupied a central position in the Main Hall both in Newbury and later at Mongewell Park. Kopul's visitors reflected his eclectic tastes and loyalties. As the school grew in 1951, Carmel bought Thatcham House, a rundown estate two miles away from the main school on Greenham Common, as a junior school. The numbers of pupils rose in the fourth year to 120. And in 1952 Carmel was recognized by the Oxford and Cambridge examining board. Just as the two schools were getting into their strides, the United States Air Force returned to Greenham Common and prepared to convert it into an air base for the huge strategic Boeing Jets that were the lynchpin of the nuclear deterrent. The school could not continue under the prospect of the constant roaring of massive bombers. It had to sell up and move.

The Move To Mongewell

I remember, as a boy of 10, spending the summer holidays of 1952 driving around southern England with my father, looking at decaying stately homes and abandoned estates for a new home. I had a wonderful time exploring cellars and storerooms, with such treasures as suits of armour or piles of deer antlers and climbing up onto dilapidated roofs that housed jackdaws and crows. It was fortunate that after many false trails eventually Mongewell Park was found, across the river from Wallingford and on the banks of the Thames. It was altogether a much more suitable place than Greenham Common, with plenty of room for expansion.

The estate whose main building dated from 1890 was once the property of the Bishops of Durham. In the eighteenth century it passed to the Fraser family. Since the turn of the nineteenth century it had been the European home of American railroad magnate Jay Gould. During the Second World War it was taken over by the RAF and became the home of Number 2 Group of Bomber Command (being close to the Benson Airfield). It was at Mongewell Park that they planned the famous raid on the dams of the Ruhr valley, known as 'The Dam-busters.' After the war the estate had been used by the RAF as a rehabilitation centre for wounded pilots. Apart from an imposing main building, it had a once-elegant sports centre with small plunge pool, gymnasium, and squash court. Around the estate, prefabricated 'Nissen' huts had been put up by the RAF, as well as concrete pillar boxes on the banks of the Thames to help thwart a possible German invasion. The boathouse on the Thames was similarly reinforced internally with heavy concrete. A trout stream ran from hatcheries below an old mill house down to an overgrown lake that flowed over a small waterfall into the Thames.

To the south of the lake stood an old church of Norman origin that had been partly renovated for occasional use but was surrounded by collapsed masonry and an old graveyard.

Rumours persisted, in the minds of frightened schoolboys, of secret tunnels leading to the headmaster's imposing study and the ghost of The Green Lady who was thought to inhabit the ruins of the church. The place had been neglected since the war and the buildings were indeed ghost like.

The estate lay within the floodplain of the Thames and each year flood waters swept through the estate, including the temporary huts, by then used either as classrooms or dormitories. Only permanent buildings on raised grounds escaped the annual floods which came right up to the steps of the Main Building. Over time, all new construction was built on foundations that rose above the flood level. Despite the Spartan conditions, the school grew and flourished. One of the unforgettable features of Carmel was the headmaster's study. All pupils at some stage stood outside that heavy carved wood door in trepidation, waiting for the lights to flash an instruction to wait or come in or a loud resonating voice calling you in to your fate. The room was large, spacious and wood panelled. Straight ahead lay a huge kidney desk fronted with bookshelves that contained books ranging from Rhadakrishnan to C.P. Snow to the Talmud. On the left was a rococo bookshelf with glass doors covering other volumes. In the eastern corner a door led to a small toilet and then down to what was originally a classroom but later became the headmaster's secretary's office. A small door to the west led out to the back gardens and tennis courts, and also internally to the library.

To the right of the desk was the famous eighteenth century Highwayman's chair with a trapdoor seat. When it was engaged if one sat down on it, it released iron clamps that dropped over ones thighs and prevented escape (until released by someone who knew the mechanism). There was a primitive safety block that prevented the seat from sinking to release the clamps but invariably it was not in place. It was the joke of the school to see which new pupil or visiting dignitary would test the chair and find himself trapped. All the furniture had been bought at local auctions when the school moved in. But nothing was as intimidating as the presence of Kopul behind his desk.

The set-up of the study, the long walk in, was an excellent example of psychological intimidation. Many former parents let alone pupils have told of the trepidation with which they entered the study and walked to face the desk and the imposing presence behind it. The desk and the atmosphere of the study itself, typified the autocratic character of Public School Headmasters and the dignified and even awe-inspiring atmosphere they set out to cultivate at that time. The move to Mongewell Park coincided with Carmel's first full 'Sixth Form.' Now its curriculum spanned, for the first time, the full range of compulsory school education in England and Wales. The first Speech and Graduation Day at the new campus was held at Mongewell Park in December 1953. It took place in the big hall of the main building, which also served as the school synagogue. Later, as the numbers outgrew the hall, huge marquees were rented, until the new cavernous dining hall was built in 1974, where big events were held subsequently. The guest of honour was the Israeli Ambassador Eliahu Eilat. By then there were several Israeli students, who welcomed him in Ivrit. In addition, George Mandel, John Fischer, Michael Goitein, Garry Borrow, Abraham Levy, Ariel Shachter and Michael Ostwind participated in the

proceedings. The announcement was also made that David Perl, one of the earliest pupils and indeed one of the first to leave, was to be the founding president of the Old Carmeli Association. Kopul wanted his graduates to feel part of an Old Boy Network, sharing ideas and values and providing support for each other in careers and connections. The Old Carmeli Association, which confusingly was made up of Carmelonians (not Carmelites which was a Christian order), never really succeeded organizationally as effectively as Kopul had hoped, although informal and personal associations have persisted impressively spanning several continents. Kopul Versus The Governors

During the early years, relations between the governing body and Kopul Rosen were strained over the school's budget and administration. Because most of the founders were members of Mizrahi, the religious Zionist movement that Kopul was the president of. There was tension in the wake of his resignation when he had objected to the movement's involvement in Israeli party politics. Funding was a serious bone of contention. The move to Mongewell required more funds, and differences emerged over Kopul's insistence that many pupils from financially modest homes be given scholarships even though the finances of the school were precarious. Kopul was disappointed that they were not helping enough with the funding of the school. For their part, they expressed their dissatisfaction with Kopul, claiming he was not really qualified to arrogate to himself absolute authority and should confine himself to the Jewish side of the school. They were very impressed by Romney Coles and they felt that he should be the academic head of the school rather than Kopul. I never heard my father criticize Coles, so I assume he was not party to the intrigue.

In 1953, the governors sent a letter to parents expressing their disapproval of Kopul and demanding his resignation. Kopul countered with a letter of his own demanding that they resign. He carried with him the vast majority of the parents. The governors resigned and demanded their seed money back. Thanks to a loan from Isaac (later Sir Isaac) Wolfson, Kopul was able to pay back the original governing body and set up a new one under the chairmanship of Joseph (Jock) Collier. It consisted of Sam Stamler, Isaac (Norman) Cohen (Kopul's brother-in-law, not to be confused with the school accountant named Norman Cohen), Berl Wober, Israel Kleiman, Harry Hyamson, and briefly Leonard Wolfson. The school weathered the storm. As far as the pupils were concerned the only impact was that Alexander Margulies withdrew his son from the school and one of the most impressive of the early Jewish teachers, Robin Gilbert, the son of founding Governor Joe Gilbert, left to join ORT. First he went to the ORT school in Aden and was then promoted to Head Office in Geneva. Carmel continued to grow and celebrated a well-attended Speech and Prizegiving Day on July 25th, 1954 in the presence of the new governors. Jock Collier was the guest of honour and Maurice Lipsedge received the Jerrold Roston Cup for excellence.

Staff

The first headmaster of Carmel College, John Ewart, did not live up to expectations. He left in 1950 and the position of headmaster was not filled. In effect Kopul was now the head. Romney Coles, came to Carmel as Senior Master and became the most influential presence at Carmel

after Kopul. He was a distinguished chemist who had been passed over for promotion at Kings School Canterbury, despite having written one of the universally accepted textbooks of the time, a collection of drawings of Industrial Chemical processes. He had left the Kings School to become head of the newly opened Headfort School, but decided not to stay. He wanted to focus on teaching more than headmastering and in addition to his appointment as senior master he was also head of chemistry. He was assured that science would become a speciality of the school which in fact it did. Everyone who was taught by him remembered him as an inspiring teacher. On the first day of every term, all the pupils gathered in the school hall. Romney Coles, over six feet tall and resplendent in his long master's gown, would read through the school rules, in sonorous upper class English, warning amongst other things that knives and other possible weapons would be confiscated, and generally striking the fear of Heaven into the hearts of the pupils, especially the new ones. He was the master of intimidation. We pupils all admired Coles and regretted that he lived off campus and treated the school as work rather than a mission. Early pioneer teachers included Harold Nagley who had been a Physical Education Instructor in the Army and this skill was put to good use. He also filled in with teaching of both English and Judaica. He left to head the King David School in Liverpool and then went on to become headmaster of a school in Australia. His main claim to fame in student folklore, was rescuing one of the pupils _Scottie Freedman' who got into difficulties on a school trip to the municipal swimming pool in Newbury. Gitta Cohen was the only female teacher and she was responsible for the youngest pupils. Emile Schlezinger was head of French, and Ezra Shereshevsky (who later became a distinguished academic in the USA) was in charge of Jewish Studies. Already then he looked more American than English, favouring bow ties with check jackets and sporting a luxurious mane of hair. British teachers in contrast tended to slick down their hair with Brylcreem. Towering over everyone was first head of English, Gilbert Patrick Warner, a gentle man who was so idealistic and felt an obligation to teach the disadvantaged and underprivileged that he eventually left to teach English in Ethiopia. And there he and his equally tall wife worked for many years before retiring to their native Ireland.

While Kopul was still at the Federation he had summer schemes for young men under the auspices of the Jewish Youth Study Groups organization which was an attempt to offer a non-political alternative to the Zionist Youth Movements . Kopul quite consciously tried to groom young men to become future leaders of the community and he would seek out potential acolytes. His earliest protégé was Jerrold Roston. On one of the group's holidays in Switzerland, Jerrold tragically drowned in Lake Geneva.

Later the most prestigious and coveted prize the school had to offer was named after him. The Roston Cup, for outstanding pupils, was established to recognize those who best represented the twin ideals of the school, distinction in the secular and the Jewish. It was not necessarily awarded each year, only when Kopul felt a student really deserved it. The impact on Kopul of Jerrold's loss was profound and in looking for a replacement he focused on the less charismatic but bright and loyal David Stamler. After he finished Secondary school and before going to university, David Stamler joined the school as Kopul's aide de camp and trainee teacher. Some

contemporaries compared him unfavourably with Murray Roston (Jerrold's younger brother) who was also on the staff and a gifted English teacher. But Murray's mind was set on emigrating to Israel where he had a distinguished career teaching at Bar Ilan University. David Stamler became Kopul's understudy and Right Hand Man. Stamler started teaching at Carmel on and off during the early years before going to Reading University and then to Oxford, where he gained a Blue' in boxing for the University. He graduated and went on for a diploma in education. After a year at Brandeis in the US where he co-authored a book on the Middle East, he returned to become vice- principal in 1956. He was a chain smoker, read the Financial Times religiously and was an excellent teacher.

Carmel was founded at a time when many Second World War Jewish refugees were looking for work in the United Kingdom. Amongst the early staff were refugees from Germany, amongst them Messrs. Dahl, Kohn and Neuschloss, who lasted just one year. They were followed by others who stayed and contributed enormously to the school. The secretary Sophie Walker was small, efficient and dedicated, with brilliant a son, Jeffrey, at the school. The cook was the ample Miss Valerie Aarons, who always looked a mess and hurled imprecations in a German accent as she stirred the tea with her finger. And there was Nurse Reppon, a well-built, Spartan German matron who terrified everyone. Some of the teachers were just as eccentric. Even if they had never intended to become teachers, out of necessity found a haven at Carmel. They added an important cultural dimension as well as a remarkable commitment to the school and to Kopul himself.

Dr. F.M. Friedman had dreamed of a life as an actor in Germany but he escaped from Nazism and became a history teacher instead. He served the Kaiser in WW1, was wounded and decorated at Verdun. Before coming to Carmel he led some of the "Kindertransports" from Nazi Germany to the UK. After the war he took charge of a short-term reception centre for children who had survived Nazi concentration camps. He subsequently taught at a school in Kent that had moved from pre-war Germany, most of whose pupils were refugees from Germany. At Carmel he taught histrionically, acting parts and peppering his Germanic English with malapropisms. His solecisms often invited ridicule from insensitive youngsters. I still recall his regularly saying albeit to rhyme with the German word Arbeit, instead of the condensation of all be it. Silly really what insignificant things school children remember. But he was extremely cultured and worldly-wise, and many older more serious pupils gravitated around him. He was not at all religious, and this too gave him a cachet with the rebels of the school who found the demands of living an Orthodox life a constant struggle. They needed an outlet for their frustrations and Doc's apartment in the Old Mill at Mongewell was a haven for the intellectual dissidents, a sort of Berlin café in the Oxfordshire countryside. He was known as "Doc" Friedman until one day he gave a talk about Jesus and as a result was given the new nickname "Yoshke" (Yiddish for Jesus). That was how Doc Friedman was affectionately known from that day on, simply "Yoshke". He had no patience for younger pupils. He did not enjoy forced teaching and was not very good at controlling the rowdier, wilder youngsters. But he inspired many with a love of history. I was the sort of pupil who hated school, and I was a disaster when it came to anything

numeric or scientific. But if I was inspired I could become an absolute devotee. After his death in 1976 several former pupils contributed to a memorial volume "In Memory of F.M. Friedmann" published in 1978, 2 years after his passing, including George Mandel, Norman Feltz and Maurice Lipsedge.

Helmut Dan Schmidt, another German refugee, was a genuine academic. He was a pupil of Richard Koebner, the German political scientist who emigrated to Jerusalem before Hitler took complete power. When Koebner left Israel in 1954, Schmidt left too. He came to Carmel because it enabled him to find work and have free accommodation near Oxford University, where he would spend much of his spare time doing research. In 1964 he published a book about the thought of Richard Koebner entitled, "Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Word 1840-1960." He was a polymath. He could teach almost any subject so long as he had a day to read up on it before starting to teach. I recall he was able to help a Swedish student to pass his GCE exams by teaching himself Swedish from a simple Swedish grammar one step ahead of his pupil. If he had a defect it was that he too had no patience for stupid or disruptive pupils. But if one wanted to study, one could not find a more impressive teacher. He inspired me as my teacher of Geography, Economics and the importance of rational analysis and research. Helmut would never put in an appearance in the school synagogue except on the first night of Chanukah. He used to argue that Chanukah at least had a historically reliable provenance and besides it was more of a national holiday than a religious one. He seemed to harbour a degree of resentment towards Israel and he never went back. But he would never talk about it. We would argue amongst ourselves as to whether he simply opposed Nationalism or had suffered from backing the wrong political horse in Israeli academic circles.

Another significant character amongst the early teaching staff was a former Catholic priest called Kenneth Cox who had converted first to Protestantism and then to Judaism and took the name Abraham Carmel. He was a very good middle and junior school teacher of English and classics, and he encouraged his pupils to debate and to speak in public. He was also a dedicated housemaster and many pupils were very devoted to him. He was a strange character. The intonations of a priest never completely forsook him, despite his serious and on-going commitment to Orthodox Judaism. He would recite a Hebrew prayer as though it were the catechism. Eventually, he left Carmel reluctantly. He got involved in some hare brained scheme to bring Freddie Greenwood and another Jewish white-collar fugitive from the law for financial misdemeanours. Perhaps he meant well, trying to assuage anti-Jewish sentiment but Kopul felt he was courting publicity for his own ends. He asked him to leave Carmel to "reassess his options". Abraham Carmel wrote an autobiography entitled, "So Strange My Path: A Spiritual Pilgrimage" and ended up a successful teacher in Yeshiva of Flatbush in Brooklyn. Nevertheless he always dreamed of returning to Carmel and years later contacted me about the possibility of returning to Carmel. I would not have objected but simply did not have the funds available.

It was the mathematics and science departments that shone. Carmel employed efficient and proficient professional teachers; Coles of course and the physicist John Bunney. He was a strict humourless man but very efficient and dedicated to his subject. They were joined by the

biologist Dr. Gray, who looked like King George V. There was also the odd "crazy professor" such as "Doctor" Landau, who would blow smoke into milk bottles and seal them in order to inhale the stuff during Shabbat. Most of us did not know how distinguished a scientist he was and that he travelled regularly to Cambridge University to work on various technical projects. And there was the equally distinguished, scholarly Dr. Kant Rishi. An Indian, he too was an academic moonlighting. He looked and acted as if he had been part of the Raj. He was one of the gentler more dignified teachers we had at Carmel. He did not last long. The non-Jewish dominance of the sciences was only broken by Jacky Epstein, son of the distinguished head of Jews College. He taught physics. He was a good scientist and teacher and well liked if sometimes giving the impression of being absent minded. He also helped out on the Jewish side, and was particularly effective reading from the Torah on Shabbatot and festivals. Eventually he married and moved to Haifa. And there was the stern and humourless, but very effective, head of mathematics Morris (Moshe) Elman. After a few years he left for the Hasmonean High School in London and was replaced by Ron Evans, who together with his wife Mary became the longest serving and most loyal teachers in the history of the school.

In the humanities, new additions included Mrs. Whitfield as head of French (despite her French Canadian accent) who was a universally respected influence. Michael Cox was an effective head of art and had his studio in the —old Mill.‘ Dudley Cohen, who founded the Zemel Choir, was for a few years the head of music. He trained a very reasonable school choir which produced a record of various popular Hebrew and liturgical songs. Odd teachers came and went. Some like Gail Feldberg from Johannesburg were from families Kopul had a warm relationship with, or Pop‘ Gavron who went on to become a very wealthy publisher and Lord.‘ He came after Oxford to teach economics and clearly his heart was not in it. He was one of the boys not least because he cared little for formality. He was the handsome darling of all females on the estate. Actually he was a very good teacher for as long as his enthusiasm lasted. In the early days of Mongewell Park the Music department consisted entirely of an eccentric elderly man called Colquhoun who taught the piano. He was rumoured to be a brilliant mathematician who had had a nervous breakdown. His formidable wife would drive him to the school from Wallingford in a small black Morris for his classes and hover around to make sure no pupils took advantage of him. There was Mrs Gilbert who was employed to teach elocution, a thankless task and soon gave up. But still she instituted competitions for awards from the National Poetry Society and other worthy bodies concerned with drama, literacy and debate.

The sports department was led by Charles Marshall, ably supported by Tim Healy, ex-county cricketer. Charley recognized the potential rowing had for Carmel. He brought in Roy Hooper from the local Wallingford Rowing Club as the first part time rowing coach to get things going and then the colourful Wing Commander Hay from Benson who loved to roar obscenities through his megaphone from the temperamental school launch that, more often than not, stalled and required the rowers to tow back to base. Charlie then engaged a distinguished local oarsman Ted Field as an extra part-time coach. He was a double Henley Champion with the RAF. His coaching and enthusiasm infected the whole of the club and as a result the morale of the school.

Marshall also gained status when several of his charges won events at regional athletics competitions including Anthony Burton from Leeds who won a discus event.

The younger pupils of Carmel were fortunate to have the firm but kindly secular teachers Isabel Craston and June Glover to look after them and help them adjust. Their little primary department was a protective world of its own and often had a cluster of children of teachers including Israelis who need a lot of support. When younger pupils were no longer encouraged Isabel concentrated on English as a Foreign Language. Carmel, as any educational institution, functioned effectively with a full team of non-teaching staff. There were grounds men, matrons, laundry women, lab assistants, catering staff, nurses in the Sanatorium, visiting school doctors who all contributed to a greater or lesser extent. Even the only taxi driver in Wallingford during the early years, Percy Messenger, seemed to be part of Carmel life and to know more of what was going on than many inside. For so many years Mrs Purchase was the Senior Matron and ran the laundry. Ted Wetherall, irascible, cynical and constantly swearing was, when the school moved to Mongewell Park, the groundsman, gardener, boiler man and supplier of cigarettes. He went on working well into his eighties. His son in law Bumpass was the handy man, odd job man and the middle man between Carmel and the local _alternative society.‘ He was suspected of helping others remove lead from the roof of the main building and for the disappearance of equipment of all kinds but always plausibly deflected the blame. He had a hand in many pies and knew more secrets about the people on the estate and their private lives than anyone else. He seemed to be lurking behind every shadow at night and corner in the daytime. He limped, no one knew for certain if it really was a war wound or some less honourable accident. For a while he was given a small motor bike to ride around the estate but it soon disappeared. Ray Harper, the good natured, hard-working Head grounds man who took over in the mid-fifties, was universally liked. Despite having inadequate equipment he cared for all of the beautiful grounds that made living at Carmel such a special rural experience. The cricket square was his pride and joy that he tended with religious devotion for over 30 years.

Jewish Studies

The Jewish studies side of the school's education was not an unreserved success. The religious life of the school revolved around Kopul. He was a brilliant charismatic teacher and occasionally he would fill in for absent teachers in anything from literature to mathematics (not his strong point). He tried hard to provide additional extracurricular Talmud to the few pupils really interested in extra study. But he was regularly away in London and elsewhere, constantly trying to raise money for the school. For most of the Jewish studies program, Kopul had to delegate the teaching, and it suffered as a result. His magnetic personality was really felt only over weekends and festivals. In the mid-fifties Kopul started to bring teachers over from Israel to help improve the Hebrew department. Very few of them were able to make the cultural adjustment. Secular Israelis had no notion of religious life and religious ones often found it difficult to relate to nonreligious students. None of them were at ease in an English environment. Perhaps the most successful was Israel Alexander, who tried for several years to impart a love for Judaism, Israel, and Hebrew to the pupils. Various colourful individuals came and left the

Jewish Studies Department, such as the clever but pedagogically challenged Meir Gertner , and the academically gifted but short tempered Raphael Loewe. Loewe was not a success as a schoolmaster and his military bearing, as well as his walk, affected by a war wound, were much imitated. However Loewe played an important role in interesting the more academically motivated pupils such as David Saville and Mordell Klein in Classical Hebrew, so that the latter was awarded a scholarship to Cambridge. He was far too academic for the rough and tumble of a Jewish studies curriculum that was forced on reluctant students. The two consistent mainstays of the Jewish studies department were Alexander Tobias ("Toby"), and his nemesis, Mendel Bloch. Alexander Tobias was a brilliant man with a photographic memory and a mastery of many different disciplines, both Jewish and secular. He was, in his day, the authority on the Jewish calendar, something his mathematical brain delighted in. He had been a Minister of Religion, first in the United Synagogue in Edgware and then from 1945 to 1952 in Brixton. But he had left the ministry after a nervous breakdown and he escaped into Jewish education. The trouble was that Toby, as he was known, was really an overgrown child. He spoke his own private language with his favourites, upon whom he lavished attention and hospitality; but he could take a dislike to someone to the point of being catatonic. He would pinch pupils' cheeks and utter nonsensical cries of affection, malabush, maladendo. Most pupils were simply dismissive of him, amused but inclined to bait him, and he too often rose to the bait. I don't know why he hated Mendel Bloch as much as he did, but more often than not if he passed you on campus he would say something like, "And if you see Mr. Bloch, don't give him my regards." His childishness confined him to teaching the younger classes and I was very fond of him. He made history come alive. "Boys," he once said, "don't think that one day people woke up and said, 'Oh, goody, goody, the Renaissance has begun'." Those light-hearted observations carried within them wisdom most pupils at the school could not appreciate. He taught me how to read from the Torah and conduct services, but failed totally to interest me in Talmud. He was a sad, lonely man and suffered from severe psoriasis, which meant he was constantly twitching and scratching. Nevertheless he succeeded in turning one of his pupils John Fisher into a world expert on the calendar. It was he who encouraged John and his friend _Owlie_ Restan to take on responsibility for much of the religious ritual in the school. Both became magnificent readers of the Torah with precision and grammatical sophistication. They largely kept the religious side of the school on track. Alex Tobias was responsible for Carmel College Publication Number 1, "BeShir VeKol Todah", "Song and the Sound of Thanks", the school songbook. It contained the songs that were sung at the Shabbat table at Carmel, Grace after Meals, the Havdalah service, and additional Jewish and Israeli popular songs. Toby annotated and added commentaries on the text. With minor modifications, it remained in use throughout the school's life. In 1964 he accepted a position as librarian in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, where his brilliance and breadth of knowledge was really appreciated. After he left Carmel he kept in touch with those who remembered him affectionately and loyally. He died in 1996. Mendel Bloch too had been a minister of religion, in Portsmouth. He was a portly, gruff, angry, and sad man. Once he had been an outstanding soccer player, and well into old age he turned out for the "staff" team. His

remarks were always sarcastic and destructive. He rarely had a kind word to offer. He too taught in the junior classes, both Jewish and secular subjects. He was divorced and there was something of the misogynist about him. But he was immensely proud of his son, a successful lawyer and communal leader in Melbourne, Australia.

A later addition to the Jewish staff was Eric Hoffman, another refugee who had come as a child from Germany. He was pious and serious, completely devoted to his family and to teaching Judaism. Sticking to schedules or controlling classes were not his strengths, and over time was given responsibility for bar mitzvah teaching which he was excellent at and supervising the kitchens. One would always see him rushing somewhere, invariably late. He and his wife were kind, friendly, and hospitable. Many pupils owed him a lot for his humanity, morality, and concern. Another important presence on the Jewish side of the school came towards end of the fifties. Morris (Moishe) Dover was the gentle and kind head of the prep school. He and his wife Zahava opened their homes and their hearts to their charges, and were devoted to the school and helped generations of youngsters cope with the adjustments to Boarding School life. Towards the end of the sixties Hyam Maccoby joined the staff as Head of English. He was descended from an illustrious rabbinic family but had lost interest in Orthodox Judaism. He loved literature, was an excellent teacher. He had a lucrative side line in writing lyrics for popular songs. He often entertained his favoured students with examples. After a few years he left and became an academic specializing in early Christianity. He wrote a well-received play The Disputation about the confrontation between Judaism and Christianity in Medieval Spain.

Early Pupils

Some of the earlier pupils were unusually clever and had failed to find their places in more conventional schools. They included Charles "Charlie" Gale, school pupil "number 1" and the first Head Boy, followed in that position by Alfred Sherman, Peter Cohen (who changed his name to Burrell and enjoyed success as an actor) and Maurice Lipsedge who went up to Oxford and then became a well-known celebrity psychologist. Barry Winkelman won a place at Balliol and his cousin Anthony Oberman at Cambridge. Ivor (Aviezer) Wolfson, the brilliant was the son of one of the well-known Wolfson brothers of Great Universal stores. He won a State Scholarship to Oxford and a coveted place at Magdalen College, but gave them up to become a rabbi, scholar, and teacher. George Mandel was awarded the Domus Scholarship to Oxford in 1954; Harry Moss, John Goldsmith and the brilliant Sparky Sperber won places at Oxford. Dov Weinberger went on to become a successful jurist in Israel. Leon Yudkin from a well-known Anglo Jewish family and was one of the stars of Carmel cultural firmament involved in Drama, Debate and editing school magazines. Michael Goitein was outstandingly talented in so many areas. He was known as Hippy, a nickname Kopul gave him based on the first letters of the phrase he used of himself, a Highly Intelligent Person. He received the prestigious Brackenbury Scholarship to Balliol, Oxford in 1956 and enjoyed a distinguished academic career in the US. Two of the earlier pupils, Malcolm Shifrin and Ian Caller, later returned to teach at the school. Others such as Martin Law, Norman Feltz, David Perl, and Melvyn Harris became devoted to the Old Carmeli Association of alumni. Many of the earlier pupils came from Jewish

centres outside London that Kopul had held rabbinic positions in, Manchester and Glasgow. The Dwek brothers from Manchester were proud Sephardim. Joe was nicknamed ‘_Yossel’ a totally inappropriate name given its Ashkenazi provenance. He was ‘_well built,’ something of a Billy Bunter in his early years but developed into one of the most popular of the early pupils and was not only a good sportsman but a hardworking science student who later became a very successful magnate and Governor of the school. Raymond was the more restrained. He became an impressive Head Boy and perhaps the most effective Captain of the Rowing Club. Later he became a world renowned biochemist, professor at Oxford, a fellow of the royal society and headed his own research laboratory. He too became a Governor.

Amongst the Israeli pupils was Benjamin, Bennie Shalit from Israel. He went on to Edinburgh to study medicine where he married and then returned to Israel. He became the symbol of the secular identity crisis in Israel. His wife was not Jewish. His Israeli born children had Israeli citizenship through their father but were not Jewish according to traditional Jewish Law. He wanted them recognized as Jewish but Israel then as now was divided between secular Jews who defined being Jewish in ways the Orthodox Jews did not. The whole issue of whether Jews are a religion, a people, an ethnic group or imply anyone who claims to be on, remains a divisive issue. Shalit’s campaign came to symbolize the struggle to separate Religion from State in Israel. Although he rejected religion, Kopul was strangely proud of his former pupil’s fighting spirit. Other former pupils from Israel went on to distinguish themselves. Adi Kaplan also took up the cudgels for secularism. He fought in the Israeli courts for civil marriage and the separation of state and Religion. Did all of this mean that Carmel had failed? Perhaps, in the way that some of its pupils married out and left the community. Yet it also indicated a spirit of free open enquiry and individuality. Another Israeli who went to distinguish himself was Ram Caspi, today a very senior figure in the legal profession and Johnnie Hertz whose daughter has become an influential academic in Britain.

The numbers rose steadily to 180 pupils. But the fact was that many pupils were neither particularly gifted nor even stable. Some came from broken homes. Others had been asked to leave other schools and were given a second chance at Carmel. Some were refugees from anti-Semitism. A significant number of pupils were there either because their parents could pay or do some significant favour to the school. In many senses the school was a complete cross-section of Jewish life from around the world, foreign and local, metropolitan and provincial, rich and poor, intelligent and challenged, religious and secular, and the school really benefitted from the variety and the lessons learnt about the importance of recognizing and validating differences.

Mealtimes

In preparation for meals pupils had to assemble outside according to class in a vestibule in front of the Dining Hall with long metal troughs to wash hands. Officially everyone had to wash ritually before the meal. In practise most pupils tried to avoid it on the principle that any compulsion was to be avoided if possible. Prefects lined them up and ensured that no one moved in until instructed. Marshalling the restive students was no easy matter and it became a test of effectiveness that all new prefects had to go through. Everyone eventually filed in. Meal times in

the early days were dominated by the teachers sitting up on the High Table. A different master would be on duty during the week. A small hand bell was at his disposal to get the pupils' attention.

Some teachers commanded respect and could project their authority. Others struggled and a favourite pastime was to see how many pings of the bell it took to get the school to be quiet. Taking a meal was a sort of ritual blooding of new teachers who usually showed their inexperience right away. The student body was adept at testing and probing and seeing how far they could push a newcomer. One could tell whether the teacher in charge was respected or feared or not. Often the Prefects, zealous to protect authority, subtly kept control from the body of the students when teachers failed to do the necessary.

Seating was at tables of eight, arranged according to seniority. The most senior pupil, as head of table, exercised dictatorial powers and could send miscreants out and deprive them of food or dispense "seconds" to his favourites. Someone always had to do the 'piling up' of the dishes and carry them away to the kitchen hatches. Finally the meal ended with an abbreviated weekday Grace. School food was a constant irritant. It could never compete with home cooking of course. But over the years cooks and caterers came and went, some more successful than others. The pupils just wanted 'Chips with everything.' On the other the school wanted to offer a balanced and healthy diet. Often pupils demonstrated their dissatisfaction and whenever attempts were made to establish a School or Students council or complaints committee, food always topped the list of student complaints.

Shabbat and Festivals

Weekends at Carmel ran from sundown on Friday afternoons until darkness on Saturday night in accordance with Jewish tradition. Sunday was a normal working day. Members of the non-Jewish teaching staff had the Jewish Sabbath and Festivals off and an extra day off during the week. Jewish Staff had to suffice with the latter only.

The atmosphere over Shabbat was more relaxed than during the week and there was a sense of the whole school coming together as it did for religious services and meals. The relaxation of school discipline in the secular realm was balanced by religious impositions that many pupils, coming from non-observant Jewish homes found difficult to cope with. The synagogue services were shorter versions than those that one would find in community synagogues. They preserved the essential core. They were conducted in the main by pupils and involved communal singing and were livelier and less heavy than the norm. They were in Hebrew as was traditional and the aim of the school was to try to get every pupil to be familiar with and possibly able to conduct the services in Jewish religious life they might find outside the school. Knowledge of the tradition if not conversion to it, was the aim. Still it was for many a strain and something to be endured rather than enjoyed. Similarly reading from the Torah, something most young Jews did only for the Bar Mitzvah, was required of everyone in turn and rotas were compiled each term to ensure everyone did his duty (though an unofficial barter system enabled reluctant students to get more eager and proficient colleagues to stand in).

The communal meals on Shabbat were of a very different character to those of weekdays. Led invariably by Kopul. His charisma, his great singing voice, his passion for a Jewish life, his way of presenting Judaism as both traditional and modern impacted on the school. He managed to blend authority with sympathy and concern and found a way to make the Shabbat meals and services both intensely traditional and yet enjoyable, even on occasion light hearted. But he turned them into learning experiences and was very conscious of the need to teach everything. The students were expected to learn and join in with traditional songs and take verses. Sometimes this was voluntary and impromptu; on other occasions victims were given a week's notice to learn a verse.

Control was exercised by Kopul clapping his hands for attention. Finding a balance was hard. The relaxed atmosphere often misled pupils into thinking they could over step the mark. If talking rose to too high a pitch Kopul would clap and insist on silence for a few minutes. Sometimes the school was held behind after the meal was over as a punishment. 'Grace after Meals' was led by one of pupils. Then everyone filed out and dispersed to their dormitories or to wander the grounds until bed time.

On Friday evenings Jewish Staff on Campus would usually hold 'open house' or invite specific students to come around to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere. This aspect of Carmel, the unofficial curriculum, was in many cases the most effective aspect of Carmel life particularly for those pupils who missed family life. It was also an opportunity to teach skills of social behaviour as well as civilized discussion. But it is true to say that many of the younger pupils had to wait till seniority before being able to benefit from this more adult activity.

Friday night bedtimes were extended and on Shabbat morning one could sleep in longer than normal. Breakfast was a light one of cake and tea or coffee and then everyone had to go to the synagogue services. Afterward, once again, teachers' homes were open but the majority of the pupils filled their time before lunch by playing games or reading. Lunch followed a similar pattern to the Friday evening meal and then the Shabbat afternoons offered more leisure time than normal, particularly in the long English summers. The temptations of the long, relaxed and less supervised Shabbat afternoons enabled plenty of pupils to disappear or sneak out of the estate illegally. Some found willing non-Jews nearby who would allow them to come in and watch Television. Others just found ways of circumventing the Shabbat rules against doing written school work or listening to the radio. Often pupils got into trouble for breaking Shabbat. It was not easy to live a dual life with one set of habits, rules and rituals at school that were so different to the routines and the values the majority experienced home. In general the English Public School system set up a state of conflict between authority and the 'proletariat.' In part it reflected the British Class System, in part it was built into Public School hierarchy where senior pupils enjoyed privileges and power which they exercised with enthusiasm as their recompense for having suffered in their early years. The result was a mixture of fear and admiration for senior pupils and an inherent sense of 'them and us' which automatically extended to the teachers and school authority. Some pupils responded by being outwardly conformists and obedient. Others persistently rebelled against the system. But rebelliousness itself fell into two

categories. Some tested and probed and then retreated when faced with punishment and the prospect of suffering. Others, a smaller group, but more blatant, either did not care or actually courted and welcomed the ultimate punishment of expulsion from the school. These nuances played themselves out in the way different pupils reacted to the constraints and rules of Shabbat at Carmel.

Morning Services

Another source of tension was the compulsory morning service. Under the best of circumstances getting out of bed when one desperately wanted to sleep would not be welcomed. In winter having to face a freezing early mornings to go to face authority first thing in the day and pray in an alien language would be a challenge to the most dedicated of students. For most of the pupils at Carmel it was a painful chore. Even if the traditional service was relatively short, some twenty minutes, many pupils, instead of using it as an opportunity to familiarize themselves with an ancient tradition found ways of showing passive resistance. They would neither open their mouths nor their prayer books. They would put on their tefillin either incorrectly or disguising an incomplete procedure. This too became a game of cat and mouse that for some pupils set a tone for the day.

After services the school went into the dining room for breakfast. Then everyone had to return to the dormitories to make beds and tidy up for the daily _housemaster's inspection.' The weekday afternoon and evening services at Carmel were, unlike the morning services, voluntary. The vast majority of pupils were simply not interested. Barely ten boys would turn up. Often rotas were resorted to, to ensure the presence of the minimum number required for a quorum. Sometimes attendance was a punishment. The fact that the school did not insist on these services being obligatory reflected the school's realism in not expecting too much on the religious front.

Tuck Shop

The student body consisted of some children from incredibly wealthy homes and others from very poor ones. The school always tried its best not give any preferences to those from wealthy backgrounds. In the early years the school distributed pocket money each week to pupils, a fixed amount that rose with age and status. The money came out of school fees and the intention was to equalize the rich and the poor although it never really worked because wealthier parents always found ways of supplementing the weekly allowance. Pocket money could be spent on the one afternoon a week students were allowed into town. Naturally older pupils could in more often and as between parcels sent from home and illegal arrangements always went on to import illicit food from local take away stores. But otherwise the only way to spend money was at the Tuck Shop. For many at Carmel, away from home comforts and food supplies, the Tuck Shop played a very significant role, particularly amongst the more junior pupils. During the early years the Tuck Shop was an adjunct of the school kitchens and run by the indefatigable, outwardly tough but really soft Valerie Aarons. She and the rest of the kitchen staff were the target of the pupils' scorn and in particular the dissatisfaction with school food. Mass catering can rarely be as good as home cooking and for many, going long hours during the school day without snacks was a constant source of anguish. The school tried to balance financial and health

considerations in providing a balanced diet when most youngsters just wanted chips with everything. The Tuck shop therefore was where most pupils made a bee line the moment the bell went for mid-morning or mid-afternoon break. The main items were of course chocolates, Smiths Crisps and Lemonade. After Valerie left, various senior prefects took over the Tuck Shop with varying degrees of success until Raymond Dwek in 1959 became the supremo. For the first time commercial expertise and a surprising degree of professionalism was brought into running the Tuck Shop, expanding the stock, increasing efficiency and providing a really expert service. And in time the Tuck Shop acquired a permanent home of its own, in a prefabricated building at the back of the school near the dormitories.

Discipline

School discipline in the fifties was a modified version of English Public School tradition. Corporal punishment, the slipper for minor infractions, the cane for serious ones, was the norm. Initially prefects were allowed to use corporal punishment too, but over the years the frequency of caning declined. Some teachers however persisted in using corporal punishment freely and in general they were disapproved of for their devotion to hurting children. As a troublesome and rebellious pupil I was slipped and caned regularly, even by my father. It made little difference at all other than to persuade me that corporal punishment was not very effective. The more common punishment was detention. This meant being held back after school when the rest of the students had free time. One had to sit in a classroom under supervision and either in silence, write lines or an essay, depending on which teacher or prefect was in charge. I confess that in 1955 I held the school record for twenty hours of detention in one week. Many teachers and prefects simply handed out ‘lines.’ One had to write out some banal sentence in English or Latin to the effect that ‘I must not misbehave in school,’ anything up to a thousand times. Whenever I watch the Monty Python film ‘The Life of Brian,’ the scene where John Cleese gets Brian, the Judean rebel, to paint the lines ‘Romans Go Home’ in correct Latin, it always reminds me of my youth. One of the great benefits of the school was the large number of after school activities, ranging from extra sport, to chess, debating, model making, art, music, rambling, debating and many more. Being in detention meant one had to forgo those far more attractive options. But the worst detention was on an afternoon when one was allowed to go into town. On various afternoons different sections of the school could walk the two miles across the fields into Wallingford. There was not much to do in Wallingford. A few general stores and small shops, but there was an officially sanctioned café ‘The Copper Kettle’ where there was an arrangement that nothing unapproved of by the school would be served. Even if one had little or no money to spend in the small town centre, just the freedom of escaping the school meant that one looked forward to this limited release. Staying behind in detention was not something one welcomed. Any more than one did on Saturday nights when the school hired a film from a local supplier to project on to a sheet strung up in the school hall. It was primitive and the films were usually ancient. The reels often needed rewinding or fixing but this was the height of school entertainment in an era of few televisions and missing it really hurt.

At various stages saner voices pressurized for more constructive punishments such as community service. This involved picking up litter. Gangs of punished junior pupils could often be seen after school hours wandering around under the supervision of a prefect picking up leaves or any other debris. But that too had its ideological opponents who thought it ought not to be a punishment but a social service. At one stage 'Community Service Badges' with the school crest on them, were given out to pupils who helped around the school or assisted others with their work.

The school ran according to a strict timetable. Each pupil had to copy down his detailed daily program. But the timetable itself was regulated by the 'school bell' during the week. No other time piece mattered. Romney Coles was the master of a complex mechanism that linked an impressive pendulum clock to a series of bells placed at crucial locations around the estate. The clock was locked in his laboratory and regarded as a sort of hidden god that commanded ones daily actions. Reveille, meals, classes, everything was regulated by the school bell. Despite the discipline of the school, there were abuses both by pupils and teachers, It would be wrong to think there was no bullying or victimization. No group of youngsters or adults for that matter, avoids some being more assertive, aggressive, or mean than others. At Carmel it was, I believe, relatively benign. Over the years cases of sexual abuse emerged involving both pupils and teachers. Whenever they were discovered, they were dealt with expeditiously and firmly. Sadly, there were situations that were not discovered until much later and the prevailing school culture of not 'telling' meant that sometimes serious offences were not discovered. There was little doubt that Kopul wanted to emulate the great English public schools, combining as he put it "Jerusalem with Athens" but the question was whether he wanted this simply as a tool to give Carmel more status and make it more attractive to Anglo Jews still hung up on being fully accepted in English society, or whether he genuinely approved of the system. In 1955 the school was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors and was lavishly praised for its achievements under difficult conditions. In particular its science departments were singled out. Sport Carmel's first serious open sporting victory came in 1955 with the senior rowing four's victory. The crew comprised M. Goitein, J. Goldsmith, A. Rau, A. Krebs, and M. Rudd. Another victory came at Reading where the winning crew was, Michael Goitein, Johnny Herz , Garry Burrow, John Goldsmith and D. Solomons as Cox. John Goldsmith went on to become Captain of Boats. Each subsequent year the Rowing Club progressed and won more open competitions at national regattas. In time Carmel ran its own annual Regatta.

For most of the pupils, sport was simply part of the timetable. The twice weekly 'Games Afternoons' were looked forward to as a chance for letting off steam. Most of the teaching staff were involved in sports afternoons, either coaching a sport or supervising games outside. Pupils could only get off games with an 'Off Games Slip' from the school nurse at the Sanatorium. And then they were kept in the library while the rest of the school went out to play, to do some homework or read.

In the English climate outdoor games were, as often as not, a penance for all but the most dedicated sportsmen. Pupils who wanted to and were considered dedicated enough could opt for

rowing as a year round sport. For the rest, soccer was the primary winter sport and cricket in the summer. In the early days the pupils and staff were divided up into teams, the Ducks, Drakes, Coots and Moorhens and played each other in turn. It was one of the bonuses of being in a small school, playing together with staff, both proficient and clumsy ones. When the weather was good it was delightful.

There was a distinction between the afternoons of compulsory sport which were designed to engender team spirit and competitiveness and on the other hand the weekly Physical Education period, a requirement of the educational curriculum. The latter as an agony suffered at the hands of often ex-military men determined to force young muscles to do things they were not designed for. For pupils who were good at sport their position in the school pecking order or popularity stakes was guaranteed. Hero worshipping was inevitable. But for those who were neither athletic nor strong the ways to excel were more limited. Chess, music, drama and of course academic success were alternatives and indeed some fortunate pupils were good at everything.

Prep

In a Peters Sellars sketch of the 1960s he has an upwardly mobile English parent going to visit a possible Boarding School for his son which is in fact a Borstal. The overbearing, conman of a Headmaster is asked about 'Prep.' He replies —Oh yes our pupils speak it like a native. Everyone at Carmel 'spoke' Prep. It was an essential part of Carmel life. After supper every weekday evening all pupils spent between one and one-and-a-half hours on 'Preparation' or 'Homework.' They had to be either in their classrooms in the case of junior pupils or in their rooms or studies if older. Every teacher was supposed to give at least one assignment a week. Conscientious ones gave more. But even without an assignment one had to read or write during Prep (and writing could include a letter home which at one stage had a period in the timetable allocated to it but in the end became absorbed into the Prep system). There would always be a master on duty whose job was to be the first port of call for any emergency in the school that day. He or she also had to take the meals and supervise prep. But the prefects took responsibility for running of Prep and either sat in the allocated classroom or patrolled the dormitories and grounds. Apart from the Master on Duty, the reality was that after official timetable hours when most staff retired home whether on or off campus, the school was all but abandoned to its senior pupils. Of course there were those who took advantage and there were abuses but in general it worked well and it gave senior pupils a stake and a sense of involvement in the school.

Visiting Days

School terms at Carmel were intense. Pupils were involved from dawn to night seven days a week. Terms were broken only by a week's Half Term and visiting days. The arrival of Tom Tappins coaches to take everyone away was always eagerly anticipated. Even those who lived abroad went either to guardians or to stay with friends. There was a time when Wallingford had its own railway station. That disappeared and the coaches left for Cholsey or to Reading. But when the dreaded Lord Beeching took his axe to the British railway system, Cholsey station closed and henceforth coaches went to and from the car park in Regents Park London. Each

coach had a teacher on board to check the names and keep order. Groups of provincial or overseas students left in taxis to other transport hubs. A similar procedure of course also applied on the first day of term when coaches picked up in London for the journey out to the school, except then the mood tended to be one more of apprehension than exultation. The only opportunities to see one's parents were 'visiting days,' usually one a term, except for the summer where in addition to the visiting day there was a Sports Day as well as the final Speech Day that usually but not always ended the school year.

Visiting Days were fascinating occasions for those with a sense of the absurd and the bizarre. Pupils would either walk up the Main Drive to meet the incoming cars or on a wet day wait by the windows that overlooked the entrance drive. There was always competition as to who would arrive first and leave last. It was interesting and often surprising to see what a pupil's parents were like. Wealthy parents came in their Rolls Royces, fathers smoking cigars and mothers decked in furs. It was said that some parents hired luxury cars for the day just to impress. Lesser cars brought more modest parents and families. And other parents had to make use of public transport. Some came with sisters and cousins. For hormonally excited youth spending so much time in a 'boys only' boarding school the arrival of potential girl-friends was an important and exciting part of visiting days. Visiting Days were the times in the year when difference in family wealth and status was apparent. But the beauty of Carmel was that for most of the time, within the school, such distinctions were not felt at all. The rich parents tended to whisk their offspring off to posh watering holes like the Jolly Angler at Marlowe or elegant country hotels or pubs at Goring, Henley or Maidenhead. Others made do with a taxi into Wallingford and The George. In the summer a lot of parents bought picnics. Families gathered around food hampers and dotted the playing fields. For those who went off campus, there was something deliciously illegal about going with one's parents to eat non-kosher food in a luxurious setting as far away from the restrictions of Carmel life as possible. And this also tended to emphasize the differences between the observant or religious pupils who were in a minority and the rest.

Sports Day was always a highly anticipated special occasion and not only by the school athletes who went through several weeks of heats and tests to narrow down the field of competitors. There was often a distinguished sporting personality to hand out the prizes and because everyone stayed on campus to watch the races it was much more of a social occasion. The school went out of its way to create a carnival atmosphere by setting up marquees both for refreshment and shelter. The English Summer weather being so unpredictable one never knew if it would pelt down with rain or be a glorious day.

The Cadet Corps

In 1955 Carmel introduced an Officer Cadet Corps, under the instruction of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. At the time compulsory National Service required every able bodied UK male to serve two years in the Armed Services. All British Public Schools had Cadet Forces, sponsored and trained by different branches of the military. In many schools the Cadet Corps was the most elite and sought after of all school activities. It seems ironic that a Jewish

School in the Diaspora should want to participate in this very military activity but the major selling point was that pupils who succeed would join the trainee officer corps of the armed forces when they were conscripted, with obvious status and privileges. So the Cadet Corps came to Carmel and officers from the nearby R.A.F Benson arrived at the school twice a week to train the 'squaddies' and prepare senior pupils to become 'Commanding Officers.' Pupils were taught to polish their boots till they could see their faces in them, to spend hours greasing and priming their kit with 'blanco.' They were commanded to stand to attention, —chin in, chest out. They were drilled, to 'square bash' and march up and down the main school square. Old army Enfield rifles were handed out to take apart and learn to fire and trips to the Benson shooting ranges were the highlights. The Carmel soldiers in the making competed against each other for the title of expert marksman. Almost everyone joined the Cadet Corps at first, anxious to get on in military life. But when the Government announced in 1957 that National Service would end three years later, all but a few diehards abandoned the corps and gave its disciplines up for more pleasurable alternatives. Still the interest in things military continued and for several years Carmel had an active branch of the Jewish Lads Brigade. Over time that too gave way to modern indulgence.

Progress

Alderman A. Moss of Manchester was the guest of honour at Speech Day in July of 1955. The Roston Cup was awarded to Anthony Oberman. The decision was taken to strengthen the school's administration and Henry Lunzer became the resident bursar in 1956, but found the isolation too much and moved to London after a while. In 1956 the guest of honour at Speech Day was Israel Sieff. In that year too new dormitory blocks donated by Sir Isaac Wolfson and the Matilda Marks Kennedy Trust were opened. In May June 1957 an article appeared in the socially upper class Sphere magazine about Carmel's success, proclaiming it "The Jewish Eton". Despite continuing good publicity and a full supplement in the Jewish Chronicle a year later in November 1958, Carmel did not receive the financial support or the number of full-fee-paying applications it hoped for. It relied on increasing numbers of students from abroad. Anglo-Jewry was not that enamoured with the idea of boarding schools. The Orthodox world found Carmel placed too much emphasis on secular culture, while the non-Orthodox considered that Carmel was too Orthodox. Very few children of Orthodox parents applied and the standard of Jewish teaching was not as attractive to them as it might have been. The aim of producing well-rounded young Jews, combining the best of both worlds, reflected the dream rather than the reality. It was primarily the availability of scholarships, and they accounted for almost 30% of the student body, that attracted really able students to the school. Kopul was forced to spend more and more time away from his beloved school doing the one thing he hated, fundraising. Nevertheless, new blood joined the governing body and increased Carmel's profile in the Jewish community. Michael Sieff, Louis Mintz, Bernard Lyons, Harold Poster, Rosser Chinn, Gerald Ronson, Cyril Domb, and Samuel Birn all joined in the mid-fifties. A development fund, under the chairmanship of Harold Poster was established and held a series of successful fundraising dinners at the Dorchester. David Stamler returned from his year at Brandeis in 1956 and was appointed Vice Principal. A year later he married Micheline Lindenbaum from New York. He

worked closely with Kopul to strengthen the school's administration and the Jewish studies programme. He also began to get involved in the fund raising. Speech Day in 1957 took place in the presence of Justice Karminski. Nineteen fifty-eight had started off ominously with a fire that destroyed the cricket pavilion during vacation time, a surprise in itself given the amount of smoking that went on around it during term time. But in February the school chess team defeated Eton in the Sunday Times Regional Championship. Colin Linton was captain and other players were R. Ettisch, M. Cohen, D. Saville, J. Benaim, and R. Eisdorfer. A victory over what was regarded as the best school in England was a significant sign of Carmel's success. The academic results of the school continued to impress. That year also saw the Old Carmelis, under Chairman David Perl, have a cocktail party at the home of Michael Marcus, at which 70 former pupils attended. . The 1959 to 60 season brought 5 open competition trophies for the Rowing Club at regattas around the country.

1959

Both in Newbury and at Mongewell Park, the Rosen family had lived in a small apartment in the main building. Whatever advantages this might have had for a commanding presence at the centre of the school, it was hardly the most conducive to any personal life. In 1958 the governors authorized the building of a house for the Rosen family and a bungalow for the Stamlers across the lake at Carmel. For the first time since leaving London, Kopul and Bella Rosen had their own house.

In January 1959, Bella Rosen gave birth to Angela Faye (named after Kopul's late mother). Kopul was ecstatic after having had three boys and proclaimed a school holiday called Faye Day which was celebrated by arranging outings to sports and cultural events. In many respects that year was the summit of Kopul's life. The school was growing, support was increasing and with a home of his own and a full family he and Bella felt as if all the rewards for their struggles were now being reaped.

In the summer, friends of Kopul brought their cruiser down the Thames to visit the Rosens and moored alongside the concrete landing stage of the Boat House. Kopul went out for a boat trip up the Thames. On the way back he jumped from the boat, missed his footing and fell heavily onto the concrete landing stage. He was hospitalized with broken collar bone, thigh, ribs, and arm. He never completely recovered. One illness followed another. He was bed ridden for almost a year and then walked a cane. But during his convalescence he completed his Ph.D. thesis for London University on "The Concept of the Mitzvah". He went on a vacation to Gibraltar, but his health deteriorated. As it did, his assistant David Stamler, began to play a more prominent role in running the school.

During this difficult period I got into trouble. I was a prefect in school at the time. It was over Purim that my parents were away and I invited some friends back to my parents' house to celebrate. We raided the drinks cabinet and feeling merry decided to play a prank. It started by pushing David Stamler's car from in front of his house into my parent's garage a few yards away. The Stamlers were sitting in their kitchen but as their car was open and it was a dark night, it was an easy matter to get in and push it away silently and hide it. After some more wet

reinforcements we decided to go further. We moved five cars on the estate. Jacob Epstein's Austin ended up at the end of the playing fields. Helmut Schmidt's Messerschmidt bubble car was lifted and precariously balanced over the waterfall between the lake and the river. The sports car of Matrons boyfriend who has staying overnight went down to the nearest pub in Crowmarsh and another car ended up in North Stoke. The whole procedure took several hours. No damage was done and we parted company before dawn, mightily pleased with ourselves. The following day I was summoned to David Stamler's office. He knew, he said it was me because no one else would have dared move his car into my parent's garage. One of our party had handed in the other names. We were de-prefected and demoted to the junior ranks. It sounds laughable now. It mattered then. The Captain of the School Raymond Dwek was supportive of us and felt we had been punished too severely. When my father returned he smiled and said he thought it as innocent enough and David Stamler had over-reacted but he had to support him. A few weeks later order was restored.

Early in 1961 Albert and Henry Harris, Dickie Perl, John Freeman, Leo Graham, Lord Sieff of Brimpton (who later became chairman), and Seymour Miller added further support to the Governing body. Money began to arrive. Slowly, new buildings replaced the temporary ones. The Wix family donated a sanatorium, and plans were drawn up for a spectacular new synagogue designed by architect Tom Hancock. With unbelievable foresight, Kopul persuaded the governors to buy hundreds of acres of farmland to its north, with the idea of building a Jewish village as well as allowing for its future expansion.

Kopul Rosen Carmel was Kopul Rosen. He was not just the founder and Principal but he was an all pervading presence and influence. His presence was felt everywhere. His moods for better or for worse radiated through the school and affected everyone. During the weekdays Kopul was often away in London or elsewhere, at meetings to raising funds for the school. When he was on campus it was rather like the Queens presence at Buckingham Palace when the Royal Standard flies overhead. His tall figure, in a billowing long black gown seemed to be everywhere. He was present at morning services, in the dining room at lunch, on the playing fields or joining in debates in after school activities. He taught Jewish and general studies and even filled in for a while to replace a sick Mathematics teacher. And by the same token, his absence left a vacuum. When he taught during the week he was often clearly constricted by the subject matter and the curriculum. Still he was never boring. But when he held discussion groups or more free flowing classes on Shabbat and Festivals his powers of expression, breadth of sources and ability to win any argument were overwhelming. Even the most intelligent and confident teenagers felt awed and often cowed. But he was always entertaining and instructive.

Primarily it was Kopul's commanding presence on Shabbat and Festivals that had the greatest impact because every pupil in the school was under his spell and command at the same time. Pupils filed in to take their seats at tables of eight and he together with other members of staff sat behind the High Table on a raised dais. During the week a small table bell called the students to attention. On Shabbat it was a loud resounding clap. He started the meals off with the Kiddush and if any pupil deserved recognition, academic or sporting, he would call him up for

some wine. This was followed by the Motzi, blessing over bread during the week. On Shabbat he would start the singing at various stages during the meal, by giving the note and saying, "Achad, Shtayim, Shalosh", "One, Two, Three", he conducted the school and made sure they followed his rhythm. Otherwise, if he was dissatisfied either with the participation or the rhythm he would clap his hands loudly and start again. Indeed, his loud clapping was always how he got attention. Sometimes he would rub his palms together slowly and ostentatiously to give notice that he was about to call for attention. He liked to pick pupils to sing verses from the table songs. Some eagerly wanted to. Others were reluctant and tried to avoid his gaze. Similarly, he would select pupils or to say the Grace after Meals, but because this was more complicated he gave a week's warning or, later, compiled a rota. He wanted everyone to know how to perform the basic rituals of Judaism. And he used mealtimes for giving spiritual pep talks. At the end of every summer term the Friday evening meal had its own specific traditions. Those pupils who were leaving having gone through the school, each made a short farewell speech. Usually they were often humorous, complimentary, thanking teachers who had helped them. Occasionally they were critical or acerbic. There was always a frisson as rebellious seniors rose to speak and the junior pupils wondered how far they dared go in revealing their real feelings. Kopul introduced an end-of-the-year popular song from Israel: "Hayamim Cholfin, Shana Overet, VeRak HaMangina Tamid Nisheret" (The days change and the year passes and only the tune remains). The pupils always made a point of singing "monkey nuts" instead of "Mangina" and thus the "monkey nuts" song became an ingrained tradition. In the synagogue he was 'The Rabbi.' His commanding presence was felt in the synagogue, where he sometimes led services but more often than not encouraged pupils to try. He had a lyrical voice and took services beautifully to show how to do it.

On the rare occasions the school was in session for the High Holy Days his rendering of the traditional services, which he trimmed of many extraneous piyutim (medieval poems) was unforgettable. Ironically it made going to ordinary synagogue services back home, a rather painful experience for many Carmelis. On rare occasions he gave sermons, but usually argued that in a school where one had the whole curriculum and academic year to teach Judaism , it was unnecessary to prolong religious services by adding sermons. When he was not in the synagogue or in the dining room, and some other teacher substituted, it was never the same. It was a feature of the long summer Shabbat afternoons that he would gather the whole of the school on the grass behind the main building for what was called "Shaa Limmud", an "hour of study", but the pupils called it "Charlie's Mud". Everyone had to learn one short Hebrew saying from "Pirkei Avot", "The Ethics of the Fathers" by heart. The bright ones were away and free after a few minutes. The weaker ones stayed there for hours. Another example of Kopul's unique style was the way the school would gather on Saturday nights for the final service of Shabbat. Between the late afternoon and the evening prayers Kopul often spoke about some current theme and afterwards there would be a period of silent contemplation. He encouraged everyone to be reflective, self-analytical and self-critical. Then Kopul would start singing softly and slowly some contemplative Musar melodies he had learnt in Mir Yeshiva in Lithuania. These, combined with

moving tunes for Psalm 23, created a remarkable spiritual atmosphere all the more so as it slowly got darker as night fell. It would be followed by evening prayers and the final havdalah ceremony ending Shabbat. There too Kopul personalized the ceremony by calling pupils up to the dais to hold the Havdalah candle or the Spice box. The lights went out and the image of this tall handsome man singing, his face lit by soft candle light surrounded by students, unusually quiet and attentive was spellbinding. Then the school would sing the traditional songs to welcome in the new week and afterwards everything returned to its mundane routine as the students dashed off to hear the latest football results (if they hadn't already clandestinely been listening on sequestered radio sets earlier).

Shabbat and Festivals were an interesting insight into Kopul's religious position. On the one hand the school required strict adherence to orthodox law. On the other for him religion was something to be enjoyed more than suffered. Of course there were disciplines but the experience mattered and that was why singing, contemplation as well as fun and pleasure characterized his approach. Still relatively few youngsters take naturally to anything that prevents them doing what they feel like when they want to unless they have already experienced a good deal of what religion can offer that is constructive and pleasurable. Kopul tried to minimize the full force of religious obligation on the pupils. He stretched the limits of religious law to its most tolerant and permissive boundaries. Still with no family tradition of religion being anything than an out-dated collection of meaningless rituals, most pupils struggled with the religious life of the school and many only came to appreciate the value of being subjected to a religious routine years after they had left the school. Typical of his relaxed approach was the way he allowed games on Shabbat something religious authority frowned on. He realized that the long English Summer Shabbat afternoons created a problem for those pupils who came from non-religious backgrounds or for those for whom study was not really an attractive pastime. One solution was to encourage religious teachers to have open homes. But there were not enough to cater for the hundreds of pupils at a time. Kopul allowed sports to be played, non-competitively and not in sports clothes, so as to differentiate Shabbat from the rest of the week. This certainly helped keep most of the youngsters busy. Nevertheless some of the older and more hormonally excited pupils often used Shabbat afternoons as opportunities to sneak into town and make contact with local girls. The problems of a male boarding school were ever present. But if there were friendships and more, there was no discernable tradition of homosexuality often associated with English Public schools. That does not mean there was none at all. But these and similar issues were not ignored. Kopul made a point of discussing them openly with the older students and made it known that he was well aware of what was going on.

Although I slept in a dormitory and was treated like other pupils most of the time, when I entered the sixth form, I was privileged to be present at home on Friday nights. After most students had gone to bed Kopul and Bella held court and would invite the Jewish teachers who resided on campus to come round to his house. The conversation was always stimulating. Everyone was invited to contribute. It was an exciting intellectual experience especially for a young man like me. They would discuss currently popular books, ideas and theories but carefully

avoid school matters. This was one of the ways he ensured a common spirit and sense of commitment amongst the staff.

In many ways Purim was the highlight of the year, when dignitaries and favoured parents were invited down to the school to witness or judge a fancy dress competition, followed by a revue which always included teachers making fun of pupils and vice versa. Not even Kopul was immune. His sense of fun was infectious, as was his support for the football and rowing teams, which he enthusiastically encouraged and provided good coaching for. He made a point of coming out to support the teams whenever he could. He did actually play soccer in the staff/pupil matches held each year. He was an artful forward, but lacked stamina and aggression. He was more at home on the cricket field, where he excelled as slow bowler and competent batsman. His favourite sport was swimming, but that was something he did only when no pupils were around; he would take to the River Thames and swim strongly up river to Wallingford Bridge before hitching a lift on a cruiser back downstream to the school campus. Kopul's presence was not just felt in Jewish matters. He was constantly looking for ways to increase the cultural awareness of the pupils. He arranged for school outings to museums, stately homes, and places of historical interest. He encouraged school parties to go to the opera and theatre in London. He was eager to get pupils to appreciate classical music. He started by playing records of great classical performances during the lunchtime meal. When that did not succeed, he created an after-lunch club in the school library to listen to classical music. He was keen on debating and created a "Union Society" and a "Junior Union Society", modelled on the Oxbridge institutions, to encourage debate and public speaking. On Saturday evenings in wintertime, there would be school films. Although many were simply popular entertainment of the sort that the Ealing Studios produced, he always intervened to ensure that quality films with a moral message, such as "Twelve Angry Men", were shown to stimulate discussion and debate. He established the "36 Society", named after the Talmudic idea that in each generation 36 unknown saintly people sustained the world. He liked "secret" or "elite" societies. He wanted pupils to aspire to join and initially election was based on intellectual interest. The club continued for many years, bringing politicians and academics down to the school to engage with the pupils. All of this animated and excited Kopul. Teaching was his delight.

The financial pressures were constant. Kopul would spend more and more time in London trying to raise funds and often returned to Carmel dispirited and depressed. I was often asked what mood he was in that day, because unfortunately his travails had an impact on all of us. One of the people who refused Kopul help was Jack Cotton, a successful property developer from Birmingham. But he did, shortly after turning Kopul down, give a lot of money to build a monkey house at London Zoo. Awhile later, Kopul spoke at a Jewish Israel Appeal fundraising dinner and referring to Cotton's donation quipped that people naturally gave money to causes closest to their heart. Cotton was present and Kopul had to apologize.

A minor incident illustrates the variety of Kopul's interest in all aspects of school life. In 1960 the pupils of Carmel were playing the staff at football and were winning 5-0 at half time. I was playing for the pupils. My father was standing on the touchline, leaning on the stick that he

now used to get around. At half time he called our team over and asked if we minded his inviting a friend to join in the second half. We didn't of course. A modest looking middle aged man trotted onto the field. The sports teacher kicked off and tapped the ball to this newcomer who stood in the centre circle. He looked up aimed at our goal and shot the ball straight into the back of the net. We were stunned. Still we kicked off. The newcomer rushed at our man, took the ball off him and dribbled through our team before sidestepping the goalkeeper and netting for number 2. Ten minutes later the score was 5 -5. My father was roaring with laughter so I asked him who this great player was. He replied "Havent you ever heard of Jackie Milburn?" Jackie Milburn of course was a legend, one of the greatest English football players of his day, still a hero after his retirement. He had come to Reading, the nearest big town to us, to do some coaching at Reading FC and Kopul had engaged him to come down to Carmel once a week to coach us. He stayed for a season and then both he disappeared from the Oxfordshire countryside.

28 March 2012

In 1949 our family moved from London to live in an apartment in the Main Building of Carmel College at Greenham Common near Newbury. Life in the countryside was idyllic. The gorgeous grounds were full of adventures, lakes and pools alive with newts, frogs and water beetles. There were magnificent trees, Cedars, Pines and huge banks of Rhododendron bushes that received visiting hosts of noisy starlings that performed their massing whirls and chattering manoeuvres in their season. There were farms to visit and calves to pet and have their sand-paper tongues rasp your hands and cheeks. Gypsy caravans and fun fairs passed and sometimes stayed on Greenham Common. Fox hunts passed through our grounds too, the howling hounds, the horns and yelling of the hunters and occasionally a desperate fox itself scurried past looking for safety. Our grounds overlooked the Newbury racecourse and I could steal down to the field below and climb into haystacks to get a view of the races.

During vacation time, left alone, sometimes with my younger brother for companionship or competition, it was a child's paradise. I could explore, climb trees, fish for water beetles in the lake. Like most youngsters looking back on their childhood I only remember the sun. I was left alone for weeks on end to wander as I pleased. I was very conscious of how little time my parents had for me in the period they were preoccupied with building up the school and the basis of my life as a loner must have been laid then. Often the school was rented out to visiting Seminars. I remember those organised by Levi Gertner of the Jewish Agency Education Department with their Israeli atmosphere, the folk dancing, Modern Hebrew courses and the courting couples. My father always enjoyed the company of visiting scholars and as a passionate Zionist and philo-Israeli culture. He revelled in the atmosphere of the seminars.

I was completely unaware then of my father's problems and the tremendous pressures and worry he and my mother laboured under. She took responsibility for the catering, even for going into the local town to supervise the baking of bread for the school. Tradesmen were often banging on the doors to be paid. Things were often so desperate that on one occasion my

mother's engagement ring went to a tradesman to provide the pupils with breakfast. And yet there was an all pervading excitement, a sense that they were creating something very special.

Initially the school took in pupils aged 11 and up. When my parents moved to Carmel I was 7 years old. There was a brief effort at establishing a small preparatory class for me and some other young children of teachers. Gitta Kohn was in charge of this small preparatory class. But it floundered and for a year I was sent up the road to a small Church of England Village school. That was where I learnt Christmas carols and also got into trouble for making disparaging remarks about Jesus. I must have been responding to jibes about being Jewish but I still wonder how I came to be involved in theological disputes at that early age. On the other hand I got into trouble for throwing stones at a gypsy encampment near the school. They chased me. I cycled off down the potholed road to the sanctuary of Carmel's Main building where we all lived. I fell off my bike and cracked open my head. As I lay on my bed recovering my father came in and told me I was lucky I fell off and injured myself, otherwise he would have given me a beating for throwing stones at other human beings.

In August 1952 my brother David was born. While everyone was busy with him, I went off to the nearby farm and discovered the farm dog had just had puppies. I lied and told the farmer it was my birthday and he gave me a cute one which I took home and tried to hide. Unfortunately I had no idea of how to train it and on the day of the Brit it escaped to puddle on the floor in the main entrance as the guests were arriving. My furious father made me take the puppy back and admit I had lied.

I was constantly in trouble. And it was not just at home. My parents often sent me to stay with my grandparents in Cardiff during vacation time. In Cardiff I was left to my own devices. Some of the time I would be given pocket money to go down to Roth Park and take out a boat. On others I would go into Grandpa's warehouse and potter around and chat to the staff, many of who were long serving family retainers like Charlie Insol who walked with a limp and found time to give me little tasks to keep me busy. I loved going off to the huge indoor market round the corner from the warehouse and used to buy white mice which I took home to Mozanne which I kept in a box in the Greenhouse. That ended when one escaped and found its way into Grandma's slipper. My worst mischief however was attacking, vandalizing a magnificent stamp collection my uncles Isaac and Hirshey had put together. I don't know when my mother found out but I do know that years later she returned to her brothers my own very modest collection that was largely based on what I had stolen from them. My childhood kleptomania continued at home and I was constantly squabbling with my brother. Once when I had been confined to my room I waited till my father came to sort me out and I wrapped a sheet around my neck, went to the widow and threatened to throw myself out if he continued to punish me. My father kept on threatening to send me away and on one occasion I called his bluff and actually packed a suitcase. He found another solution.

Carmel began to expand. A junior school was acquired at Crookham Court, just across the Common and that was where I was sent to school as a boarding pupil. The large grey plastered building was not nearly as grand as the main schools and the grounds were

much smaller. But there were several really magnificent pine trees that we were able to climb up and slide down to the ground on the lush heavy branches.

I was now living together with the other pupils, sleeping in dormitories of twelve, having to make my own bed, stand by it every morning for inspection, and do as I was told. I was always in trouble. One of the teachers, crusty and grumpy, Mendel Bloch, delighted in treating me very harshly and told me my father had given him instructions not to let me get away with anything. The Headmaster a tall ex-military man called Hoffman, with a bristling moustache and an obvious eye for the young matron, was equally firm. On one occasion I complained to him that I was being bullied. He made my tormentor and me get into a boxing ring and with improvised gloves made out of socks we were told to slug each other and get it out of our systems. I did not get the better of my opponent. All it did was to give me a feeling of being hard done by and a deep revulsion for violence.

In 1952, although significant sums of money had been and were being spent on buildings and improvements to the two estates, it was announced that the American Air Force would return to Greenham Common. With the runway no more than a few yards from the school it would clearly have to move. And it was unlikely that many would rush to buy an estate so near the roaring exhausts of the massive U.S.A.A.F. bombers. So, with hardly any resources, a valueless estate and a student body approaching 150 Carmel had to look for another home.

I often used to go with my father during those months of searching, visiting decaying country houses and overgrown estates. While my father negotiated, I explored, finding antlers in cellars, dry rot, jackdaws and crows in open turrets. Eventually Mongewell Park near Wallingford was found and over the summer of 1953, aided by a gang of willing pupils the school moved. The estate was across the river from Wallingford and on the banks of the Thames. It was altogether a much more suitable place than Greenham Common, with plenty of room for expansion. The estate had once been the property of the Bishops of Durham. In the eighteenth century it passed to the Fraser family. The main building dated from 1890 when it became the European home of American railroad magnate Jay Gould. Over the succeeding twenty years he built it into an elegant pleasure dome. During the Second World War it was taken over by the RAF and became the home of Number 2 Group of Bomber Command (being close to the Benson Airfield). It was at Mongewell Park that they planned the famous raid on the dams of the Ruhr valley, known as 'The Dam-busters.' After the war the estate had been used by the RAF as a rehabilitation centre for wounded pilots.

Apart from an imposing main building, it had a once-elegant sports centre with small plunge pool, gymnasium, and squash court. Around the estate, prefabricated 'Nissen' huts had been put up by the RAF, as well as concrete pillar boxes on the banks of the Thames to help thwart a possible German invasion. The boathouse on the Thames was similarly reinforced internally with heavy concrete. A trout stream ran from hatcheries below an old mill house down to an overgrown lake that flowed over a small waterfall into the Thames.

To the south of the lake stood an old church of Norman origin that had been partly renovated for occasional use but was surrounded by collapsed masonry and an old graveyard. Rumours persisted, in the minds of frightened schoolboys, of secret tunnels leading to the headmaster's imposing study and the ghost of The Green Lady who was thought to inhabit the ruins of the church. The place had been neglected since the war and the buildings were indeed ghost like.

The estate lay within the floodplain of the Thames and each year flood waters swept through the estate, including the temporary huts, by then used either as classrooms or dormitories. Only permanent buildings on raised grounds escaped the annual floods which came right up to the steps of the Main Building. Over time, all new construction was built on foundations that rose above the flood level.

My parents and my two younger brothers moved into an apartment on the first floor of the Main building. I was given a room nearby which I had to share with other pupils but I could still always retire into my parents' apartment for sanctuary, which I often needed. I remember with a flush of fear to this day that when the teachers went home and the school was left in the hands of one or two housemasters, there was often a mood of anxiety. Diverse groups from Prefects downwards exercised authority as they saw fit and bullies had free reign. Younger or weaker pupils could be subjected to a range of verbal and physical cruelty that children are capable of inflicting on each other. It has always amazed me how many of my contemporaries appeared to have recovered. On the other hand, these experiences led me to have grave reservations about boarding schools unless there was a strong and numerous pastoral staff to keep a concerned eye on what is really going on. Even then one or two powerful gangsters could do a lot of damage. And being the Headmaster's son set me apart because it was universally believed I would report things back to my father. And any pupil who had a grudge against authority saw me as fair game to get his own back. If I was not bullied I was scorned. What was worse was that I got a double punishment every time, at school and then whenever I returned home. Another issue was that I was expected to be a good religious boy and set an example in a school where hardly any of the other pupils came from Orthodox homes. This was yet another factor that set me apart. I hated school in general, the boring hours wasted on badly taught subjects that did not interest me and longed to be out in the grounds and fields that surrounded the classrooms.

To make matters worse I bitterly resented having to share my parents with so many others. My mother was a surrogate mummy to so many youngsters sent away from home and missing a female touch. She was also busy with the kitchens. She was always trying to find ways of pleasing the schoolboys and saving money at the same time. I remember one incident in which several dozen ducks were bought at the local market and released onto the lake with the expectation that they would be served up as a Shabbat meal. But the school had become so fond of them, they would feed them scraps and fend off marauding foxes, that when a shochet was brought down to kill them, no one was prepared to eat them. I think I resented my father more though, particularly his closeness to his inner circle of pupils with

whom he would go for walks and talks. I found it hard to accept the fact that my father spent so much time in London trying desperately to raise money and often returned depressed and moody. Often he would go on Fund Raising or Lecture tours abroad and I would be deprived of him in holiday as well as term time. I was unhappy and I responded by being one of the most troublesome boys in the school. And yet the general atmosphere in the school itself was exciting. We had a feeling that we were helping create something special. We revelled in the successes academic and sporting that were achieved. We delighted at every article in the press that trumpeted us as the Jewish Eton. The personal Jewish and intellectual atmosphere of the school enabled us to have close relationships, if we were minded to, with many really stimulating and gifted teachers.

When I was twelve I ran away from home. Two other boys had decided to run away from school so I joined them, on a whim. My excuse was that I was being treated harshly, but in fact no more than everyone else. Besides I could not claim homesickness as the reason. We cycled to Streatley Station and one of them lent me money to take a train to London. At Paddington Station I called my aunt Frances. She was shocked but immediately took charge of the situation and instructed me to take a taxi to her. I poured out my heart to her about how badly I was being treated. She was very supportive and phoned my father to berate him for mishandling me. He had another point of view. He told me I could stay where I was until I apologized. After a few days of idling around, no friends, no football, I was bored. My father came into town for an appointment. He came to my Aunt's house but sat down with a newspaper and just ignored me. I could not stand it. I wanted to go home. I capitulated, apologized. My father relented. I went home, tail between my legs and the matter was never spoken of again.

In 1957 I completed my main run of O levels, surprisingly successfully. Several of the more unusual unconventional teachers, Doc Friedman, Alexander Tobias, Helmut Schmidt, Murray Roston, Michael Cox and David Stamler had succeeded in inspiring me where others had failed. With the exception of my dud subjects Maths and Latin I did better than predicted. But my father was concerned at my lack of Jewish knowledge and commitment so he decided, in his usual autocratic and unchallengeable way, to pack me off very much against my will to Yeshiva in Israel. I was for the first time beginning to enjoy school. I was becoming a successful sportsman, no longer an outcast. Besides I was frightened of being sent out of my comfort zone. I had spent most of my conscious life in the wilds of the English countryside. On several occasions I had been packed off to Study Groups or Summer Camps to meet other orthodox Jewish children, where I had usually disgraced myself by behaving with all the restraint of an escaped convict. But from August 1958 until July 1959 I had a welcome break from Carmel life.

Back to Carmel 1959-1960

I flew back to the UK in July 1959 and had the summer to adjust, to my new home, my new sister and prepare for the coming academic year. My parents told me how different I was and how much I had changed. I wanted to study with my father but he was so busy we only

managed a few times. Actually with hindsight I also realized that he was not well and was losing something of his vibrancy. He was aging.

And so I went back to school at Carmel. I had missed one year of the two year 'A' (Advanced) level course. Anyone familiar with the English Education system of the time, knew how fundamental was the difference between the 'O' (Ordinary) level and the 'A' level stage, what was called The Sixth Form. The style of tuition and the attitude of the teachers, of the School in general, were very different. One was no longer treated as a child to be crammed with information. It was an altogether different experience and for the first time I enjoyed school. I was in the final year, a prefect and one of the better all-round sportsmen. Whether one deserved it or not being at the top of any school gave one a special status and aura. It was good for the ego. In addition, the fact that I was relatively learned in Jewish matters made me a sort of guru to those pupils who were interested in such things. In the underworld of school life pupils often have far greater influence for better and for worse than many teachers. In my case I sought to use this influence positively on the religious and the social side. I was now experiencing the possibilities of what education could offer in terms of self-development and a career.

I enjoyed the way one studied now, less classroom talk and chalk and more tutorials with one or two others. In History the tutorials with that fiery ex-actor from Berlin, Doc. Friedman who did not really teach, but sat us down in his rooms, offered us coffee and talked about whatever historical period we were supposed to be studying and gave us books to read, to think about and come back with our conclusions. Hyam Maccoby taught English literature. Later he became an academic expert on early Christianity but then he was more interested in writing lyrics for pop songs to supplement his teachers pay. He too taught very informally even casually but he stimulated us to explore texts and read around the subject. He made English literature come alive and occasionally he even read the nonsense his pupils wrote. At first I also took French with Mrs Whitfield and I enjoyed reading Beaumarchais and Voltaire but it was obvious that the years I had paid no attention to the subject had left me with such a weak linguistic foundation I would never be able to pass the exam. I soon dropped out and concentrated just on the other two subjects.

Helmut Schmidt had taught me economics previously. I did not take the subject further with him at this stage but he was always available to chat about anything intellectual. He was the only serious academic on the staff with books on Koebner and Democracy to his name. Privately he was a constant source of stimulus if you wanted it. This laissez faire atmosphere suited me admirably and the disciplines I had learnt in Yeshiva enabled me to get on with catching up and coping with the work. By rights I should have gone back a year and started at the beginning of the course but it was felt I could catch up. I was in the same classes as bright students, some of them much brighter academically than I was who had a year's advantage. In technical subjects I would not have been able to cope but in the realms of ideas it was no problem and the disciplines I picked up in Yeshiva helped me study far more effectively than otherwise. I was used to being independent. In Yeshiva the only discipline was self-discipline or peer pressure. I could travel up to London unaccompanied. I bought a cheap Vespa which soon broke down and then started to

take driving lessons. When I had the free time I could borrow the cook's old banger and drive round the countryside.

The beginning of the end

My father had had a boating accident in the summer of 1959. Some friends of his had come up the river on their cruiser and had taken him out for the day. On the way back as they came into the Landing Stage, my father jumped to the shore but missed his footing and fell heavily on the concrete. He broke a shoulder, ribs and thigh. As the ambulance took him off to hospital he turned to my mother and said 'You see, things were going so well for us, something was bound to happen.' My father had always been a rationalist. I was surprised to hear this Yiddish reference to 'Opening ones mouth to the Satan' coming from him. He was human after all.

He spent several weeks in Hospital. To make matters more complicated he contracted pleurisy. He was given a whole pharmacy of drugs. When he came home he was confined to bed and 'held court' in the house. It was difficult for him being immobilized and he was in a lot of pain. But he took advantage of his incapacity to complete his Doctorate on "The Concept of the Mitzvah." He wasn't really in much of a mood to talk. But I recall vividly two particular conversations we had. He said that if I met a woman I wanted to marry any time from then onwards I should go ahead and he would support me. He didn't talk about marriage, what it meant, what I should think about in choosing a wife. He simply came straight to the point. I have often wondered why he chose to give me this information. He had not married early. Was he concerned from a religious point of view that I should get married early to forestall possible misbehaviour? Or was it to indicate that there were far more important issues than establishing oneself financially? Had he lived, would he have tried to interfere in my choices? Would he have seen the mistakes I would make and would I have let him advise me?

And then he asked me about a career. I told him I had been thinking about Education or the Rabbinate. He said that he did not want to dissuade me but neither did he want to pressurize me into following in his footsteps because I might have felt he wished me to. He thought I ought to have another career as a fall back. Although both education and the Rabbinate would be open to me regardless, it was important to have options. I guessed he must on occasion in the past have felt himself trapped in the Rabbinate or perhaps humiliated by his dependence on committee votes for a meagre wage or a token increase. The Rabbinate then, less so now, offered petty minds opportunities to humiliate their Rabbis and for all its rewards in non-material ways, the Rabbinate was and is not a career for anyone without a strong sense of vocation.

So we discussed an alternative. I had always shown some artistic talent. I was interested in people and I liked solving practical rather than abstract problems. My father suggested Architecture and I took up the idea enthusiastically. Architecture was very much on his mind because he was devoting a lot of time to the design of a new synagogue at Carmel. He wanted to find a shape and an idea for a building that would be symbolic as well as functional, something that excited him. His enthusiasm transferred itself to me. He was very closely involved, first with Eugene Rosenberg of Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardell. He was friendly with Eugene from earlier

contacts but thought his designs too pedestrian. In the end he chose a local architect, Tom Hancock who came up with a much more inventive and open form based on a hyperbolic parabola. He sent me to speak to Tom Hancock and spend some time in his office. He suggested I apply to the Architectural Association in London. I liked that idea particularly since it was a relatively easy option and would not need too demanding academic qualifications to get in. I could then have given up trying to pass Latin. But my father would not hear of it. He argued that were I to change my mind at any stage, a Cambridge degree would be an important stepping stone to other possibilities and I would not be burning any bridges. He clearly knew me better than I did. So it was decided I should apply to 'read' architecture at Cambridge.

During the winter my father began to recuperate and went on holiday with my mother to Gibraltar over Purim. I took advantage of their absence to invite some friends round to our house to help me empty the drinks cabinet. We did not get drunk, but we were certainly high spirited and in that heady state where one thinks one can do anything. As I was seeing them off we noticed through the window, the Stamlers engrossed in conversation in their house next door. For a prank we decided to push their car silently, under their noses and the cover of darkness, back into my parents' empty garage. Encouraged by our success and a few more celebratory drinks we set off to re-arrange all the staff cars on the estate we could get into. Helmut Schmidt's little Messerschmitt bubble car was easy enough for us to carry away and we balanced it on the rocks of the waterfall that connected the main lake to the River Thames. Jackie Epstein's Austin ended up at the bottom of the playing fields. The matron's boyfriend had a small MG Midget which we rolled up the drive and glided it down to Crowmarsh where we parked it outside a pub. And finally we retired exhausted. In the morning David Stamler who was deputizing for my father called us in. He knew who was responsible he said because only I would have dared move his car into my parents' garage. The impressive School Captain of the time, Raymond Dwek, pleaded our cause and argued that we were really responsible and helpful seniors but I guess Stamler had to prove himself and we were 'de-prefected.' When my father returned he thought the school had over reacted and a few weeks later we were back on the job. It did not do me much harm. In the following term I was elected Head Boy in a secret ballot of all the pupils. Normally the Headmaster would have made the appointment but as I was his son, my father had decided to open it up to a referendum. I really was surprised by the result. I worked hard and did well enough in my A levels in July to try for Cambridge. So although I had expected to return to Israel in August 1960 I decided to stay on for a further term to try my luck.

I was aware of my limitations and strengths. One year of A level work was not going give me much of a chance in open written competition against the best of the Public School candidates. So I chose those colleges at Cambridge (there was no Architecture faculty at Oxford) which accepted students on the basis of interviews rather than examination. The excitement of arriving at Cambridge for interviews was a mixture of awe at the age, traditions and buildings of this ancient university and the realisation that this was the very best I could aspire to academically. Carmel had been fun that past year and my secular studies had for the first time given me a feeling of qualified respect for academe and this was the summit my father had

wanted for me. He had always argued that one should aim high and go for the best if possible. This was why he preferred me to go to yeshiva in Israel and a good university in England rather than to Jews College where I could have continued my religious and secular education simultaneously.

From the first morning I woke up in a cold, damp ancient college room in Cambridge, I badly wanted to get in. I selected those Colleges that decided entry on the basis of interviews rather than exams. That I knew would enable me to play to my strengths. I succeeded in creating a positive impression. I talked my way in, both to the Architectural faculty and to Pembroke College. I asked for two years deferment to enable me to return to Israel to continue my studies there. And so in December 1961 I left for Israel and Yeshiva once again.

DAVID SAVILLE

(undated)

I was at Carmel from 1955-60 therefore I am sure that many of the personal reminiscences I write will not interest most of you, bearing in mind the average stay was about four years - sorry about that, but these lines are meant to encourage you to write about all the people at School I've unintentionally missed out.

1. Our own Kopul Rosen was almost universally referred to as Kopul rather than any other name, although formally he was known as Rabbi Rosen. He had one or two great lines such as "What you will be you are now becoming" and "There are two opinions you can have on this subject, boys, the wrong one and mine". On the other hand he could be extremely strict as for instance, when he was teaching Baba Batra in his Talmud class, when we were discussing Hezek Reia - "Overlooking in Property Law - does this cause damage or not?" Lebovitch, Hezek Reia, is it Shmei Hezek or Lav Shmei Hezek? Er, er, Lav Shmei Hezek, Sir. Out, out, and I don't want to see you again I am in touch with Moshe Lebovitch and I can assure you he now knows that Hezek Reia is Shmei Hezek - rather a novel way of teaching Gemara but it seems to work.

At a Purim skit on a staff meeting, played by the Prefects in 1956, Barry Winkleman, as Kopul, says, "I object to Wolfson walking about the school as if he owns the place. Ostwind, as Mr. Coles, He does.

In a Kopul survey to see which boys come from Orthodox homes: Does your father work on Shabbat? Answer given by Ian, Lionel and Benny Rabinowitz sons of the well-known Rabbi E.S. Rabinowitz, of Hull, Newcastle and Manchester - "sure he does, it's his peak day".

Kopul Rosen - An Appreciation

Despite his humorous asides which were not always given or taken appropriately he was a great man in many sense of the word - he occupied many positions in the Community, but in my view he was at his best when he was duty bound to no one. He moulded Carmel into the way he wanted - he was the antithesis of the ghetto Jew, though his happiest years were spent in pre-war Mir Yeshiva in Poland. His search for his "Authentic Jew" was all-embracing. On the other

hand one of his dreams was that the annual Oxford-Cambridge boat race be run on a Sunday instead of a Saturday as all the crews were Carmel boys. In the fourth form we gave him a Dave Brubeck record for his 42nd birthday - he really was a Rabbi for all Seasons.

I remember a new boy from an assimilated family telling me his father had a one hour session with Kopul - all they talked about was Kopul eventually persuading the father to join a Synagogue.

14 out of his 48 years were at Carmel, creating a sort of Kopul Aristocracy for those who were there between 1948 and 1962. Frankly I don't think Carmel achieved its former glory after his death. Professor Cyril Domb edited a fine book on Memories of Kopul Rosen, and the crowning chapters were on the Carmel period. He took notice of every boy in school, even if they did not excel in sport, were actively religious or generally played central roles in school activities. Of these less notable Carmelis, he used to say, like the poet Milton, "They also serve who stand and wait." Many boys he took specifically from broken homes and tiny communities - he literally rescued them from assimilation.

I remember Pildus' farewell speech - You are the only father I knew, and I also recall Sir Robert Menzies the former Prime Minister of Australia, speaking of Churchill after his funeral - We who have lived in his times have been touched with his greatness - how much more so the students of Kopul Rosen at Carmel.

2. Other masters:

1. Raphael Loewe: I was particularly close to him since he taught me Latin, Greek and Hebrew 14 times a week as I was being prepared for a scholarship at Cambridge University, which didn't happen. In fact when Loewe joined the staff I was Editor of the School Magazine and I wrote, We welcome Mr. Loewe - he teaches Hebrew, Classics and Saville. He once came up to Dr. Tobias - Toby, Toby, I've got something new. He replied, "If it's more than 2000 years old I don't want to hear it."

2. JPC. Toalster - the Huddersfield Gaon who also taught Classics. He said to me once "I am fed up with all this Latin and Greek, let's go to the library and learn a "Blatt Gemara". He also coined special Hebrew words for Masters taking a day off, LeDayef, and LiBloch - if you stayed the whole day at Carmel.

3. Mr. Healey - he once said to Geoffrey Levy: "Are you coming out to cricket practice now and Geoff said "Well actually I have O Levels and a special assignment in English and I am very behind in my maths prep". Healey then replied, "you boys have got the wrong attitude to sport".

4. Mr. Evans the maths teacher - he used to teach maths in the loggia to Raymond Dwek, , David Waldman and Harvey Lament and the first 5 minutes were always taken up with their reciting the Birkat Hamazon, following the "Aruchat Eser", as they had been to Miss Aaron's tuck-shop a few minutes earlier.

5 Malcolm Shifrin (Shif) - teaching Musica Viva: You can talk when I'm speaking but not when the music is on.

6 Charlie Marshall - once wrote on the gym floor, "3 press-ups, 2 vaults and 4 rope-climbs" and Izzy Gletzer said "My word sir, what a wonderful vocabulary you've got."

7. David Stamler - he once told us when he was studying at Oxford he went to a post box with a few friends and spoke inside as if there was someone there and said "Don't worry George, we'll get you out, the fire brigade is on the way, there is nothing to worry about, etc. etc." and after a few minutes when a considerable crowd had come, he and his friends simply slipped away. Another of his famous lines was, he was marking a boy's end of term report - he was very lazy and the boy came second from bottom of the class. He wrote, He could have come bottom but he was too lazy to try.

8. G.P.W. Warner - anyone who didn't understand was a "blithering yahoo" - anybody knows what happened to him after he left Addis Ababa?

9. Yehuda Ofir - broke the then record of driving from Carmel to Marble Arch in 59 minutes, in his Dauphine.

10 Mrs. Whitfield - in French "Dictee" she used to scratch her nose on the left side for "aigu" and the other side for "grave" - I can't remember what she did for "circomflex".

3. Carmel quiz:

1. How many Carmel boys came from Middlesbrough?

Twelve: Michael Bharier, Matthew Bookey, Joseph Brechner, Philip Breckner, Jonathan Isserlin, Anthony Markovic, Bernard Markovic, David Saville, Michael Schmulewitsch, Paul Stock, Philip Stock, Louis Wiseman

2. Name the following provincial towns from which these boys came

Jeffrey Greenberg - Stoke-on-Trent

Michael & Roger Rudd - Andover

Colin Leventhal - Nottingham

David Robson - Pontefract

John Goldsmith - Leicester

David Lewis - St. Annes

David & Victor Keller - Norwich

Alex Habel - Winchester Ian Panto - Eastbourne

Anthony, Richard and Matthew Engel - Northampton

3. Name the Head Boys from September 1955 - March 1960.

Ivor Wolfson, Michael Goitein, Ian Rabinowitz, Colan Linton, Raymond Dwek

4. What was Abraham Carmel's previous name - Kenneth Cox.

5. How was Ted Weatherall the groundsman related to Bumpus - the odd job man - he was his father-in-law.

6. Who starred in Mr. Nelson's production of "Happiness My Goal" - Robert Sabel

7. Who was “Hippy”? Michael Goitein, a Highly Intelligent Person.
8. Who was the greatest on Friday nights singing the last verse of Tsur Mishelo - Jacky Coleman
9. Which school defeated Carmel at chess in the finals of the Berks-Bucks tournament - Eton
10. Who gave the longest farewell speech - Raphy Ettisch - half an hour before Birkat HaMazon and half an hour afterwards.

4. D.S. Class of 1955-60

I still remember fondly all the guys who were in my year for most of the 5 years that I spent at Carmel, almost all of whom I have seen since.

1. David Waldman - formerly chief chemist at Boots in Nottingham, now retired professor in Cambridge
2. David Lewis - formerly solicitor in Manchester now retired
3. Robert Sabel - formerly legal advisor to the Israel Foreign Minister now lecturing at the Hebrew University
4. Norman Silverman - expert in antique furniture - lives between Ashkelon and London
5. Raymond Dwek - Senior research chemist in Oxford - should get the Nobel prize for chemistry as his brother Yossel got the CBE.
6. Izzy Gletzer - runs a yeshiva and building company in Jerusalem
7. Michael Poster - passed O Level Maths at 12 and hasn't looked back since
8. Ellis Korn - we all reckoned he should be a newscaster at the BBC.
9. Mordell Klein - L.A., Kuala Lumpur, Jerusalem and now Hendon - he told me that when at Cambridge he was asked by an American tourist, looking for colleges, Excuse me, where is Jesus? - Up there, the one in the middle.
10. Yosef Benaim - I met him recently in London - he tells me that in chess, when he's black, he still plays p-QB4
11. Michael Ellman - teaching in Moscow then in Holland
12. Harvey Lament - I think he married the sister of Malcom Samuels - how many of us took out the sisters of fellow Carmelis?

5. Old Carmelis in Israel

When I came to Israel David Duke and I started various meetings of old Carmelis which were very well attended in the early seventies, in particular at the first such gathering where without introduction we played one of Kopul's last records to a dramatic silence. There was a great discussion thereafter and we noticed that Dov Weinberger and Benny Shalit, both famous in their own right, were sitting next to each other as they had sat next to each other at school - then as beforehand with entirely different religious opinions.

There were other meetings including one at Herzlia at the home of Henri Ziamand but the best attended was given by Ami Federman at the family Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv which was hopefully a forebear to further meetings but nothing very much followed.

However Yakar was founded in Jerusalem and for 2 years before Mickey Rosen came over from England, David Duke and I ran the shul there which was popularly known as Duke's Place or Saville Row. Yakar Jerusalem has been a venue for Old Carmelis, especially on Kopul's Yahrzeit. I meet up often with my contemporaries in the legal profession, Ram and Asaph Caspi, Amazia Caplan, Elon Diskin and Jonathan Livny as well as Carmeli Solicitors in the UK.

6. Anecdotes

1. A few years ago Lawrence Cartier came round to us one Friday evening. I showed him the school photo of 1957 and he named everyone of the 350 boys plus Masters without stopping.
2. I met Yomtov Sabah at a school evening for one of our kids in Natanya - we spent the whole time on Carmel reminiscing - I particularly liked his story when they went to the cinema with Tchadorchi, where they thought he was 17 and Yomtov 14; in fact it was the other way around!
3. I was standing in parade next to David Reiss in the newly formed Cadet Corps when he was caught talking - The sergeant: Why were you talking? Reiss: I was just thinking, Sir. Sergeant: In the Army you're not allowed to think.
4. Up until my 2nd Sports Day I thought Victor Ludorum was related to the Keller brothers.
5. On my first ever visit to Israel I visited the renowned Yeshiva of Ponevez. Ivor (Aviezer) Wolfson tried to persuade me to stay on for a year and I've always wondered how life would have been different had I listened to him.
6. My Fair Lady, West Side Story, the Oxford Playhouse, the Old Vic Stratford-on-Avon - gosh we really got to see places!
7. A few years ago, Michael Bharier came over from Rhode Island. From 10.00 p.m. on a balmy Jerusalem evening, we walked the deserted streets of Katamon for four hours and covered Jewish Youth Study Groups, our mutual youth movement, Middlesbrough and Carmel.
8. My cousin, Mayer Cohen (Coren) from New York, tells me his son Danny studied with Toby and wrote a fine booklet in his Memory when he died.
9. Coming to Carmel in 1964 for Kopul's 2nd Yahrzeit, an Austin 35 burst a tire on the old A4 and smashed into Anton Dell's left hand drive Alpha 2600 with Robert Peters also in the front. The Austin passenger was killed and we three injured, but I was at Carmel the following week - Shif's wedding.
10. I miss my friend Tiki Hirshfeld - I was with him to the last and spoke over his grave - we were very close. There used to be a sign on the Hippopotamus Cage at the Tel Aviv Zoo - Presented by the Hirshfeld family of Kenya. I also have fond memories of Robert Peters - who knows there may be more who have passed on.

7. The Future of the Old Carmelis

Let's face it, the carpet has been swept from under our feet since the 1997 Closure, but there are two quasi Carmel centres, one in Hendon and one in Jerusalem. In my opinion, so long as the Rosen boys are running these shows they must be utilised to foster all Old Carmelis activities, otherwise we will be both closed and forgotten.

There are not going to be any more Old Carmelis so the list is fixed and the details of Mark Ohringer's 1991 Occupational Directory must be put on the Website as soon as possible, preferably updated and if not, then not updated; similarly the School Magazines and photographs and any other documents relating to Carmel's 49-year history.

So let's make one big attempt to keep the memories at least in Cyberspace and before we get too old to write to the Website and who knows, you may find your old sixth form school buddy from Iran whom you haven't seen for donkey's years. living around the corner in San Francisco.

To sum up the Carmel experience in one line, as Mimi Lutwak once wrote, In other schools, I was taught, at Carmel I was educated.

DAVID SHAW

20 September 2012

My first Days. Greenham Summer Term 1950

Why was I sent to Carmel! Well I was a bit of a Guinea Pig. My father was an idealist who helped found The North West London Jewish Day School where I was sent and then Carmel.

He had many a meeting with Kopul. Also my mother became ill, so at the age of 7, I was packed off as were many who had problems at home.

I use the name Kopul with respect. Only the most visionary Rabbis are known by special names... Rashi, Rambam, The Maharal, Kopul..

I did have a preview of the school the term before my arrival. I was sent to join a game of football whilst my father and Kopul talked. I did not get near the ball.

To begin at the beginning.. A little old, dirty, black steam engine took us from Paddington Station in unheated carriages with no loos, price 4/1d. My Stomach still churns when I pass that place. It chugged along slowly and haltingly and for some reason I recall the words, "change for Cholsey and Moulsoford, Reading etc.. Apart from Summer, it was often cold, gloomy and smoggy when feet and hands froze. Chilblains followed soon after. They blighted the winter, damp Thames Valley months throughout my school career that ended in 1959. I remember a snow flurry as late as June one year. How valuable was that summer warmth! When it came. It always seemed to rain on sports days and other "Parents" days.

Summer terms with their promise of sports, and cricket in particular made things better except that our joy was often tempered.

There was rationing for a few years and we started on 6d pocket money a week. On Fridays a man came round to sell sweets. A stick of rock was 1d.

Summer Term 1950 was wonderful but we were far from home. Sleeping was difficult because sobbing went on in to the night. We were only seven and communication with parents... Well, it just did not happen. My dorm was up the main stairs of Greenham Common and slept 6, the size of my class. Being so young we were sent to bed early. An avuncular Kopul would visit the dorm to say good night on Erev Shabbat.

Friday nights were magical. We sang tunes, some of which I have rarely heard since... Toombay Toombay Toombay, Lehavdil ben Kodesh..... Eliahu Hanavi.... and after a Shabbat meal, to be asked to say Hamotzi as a tiddler was a great honour. Leading the Benching was for the older boys. A sip of wine was for the few who were called to the top table for kiddish.

Our classroom was a gazebo or green-house tacked on to the main building. First form mistress was Mrs Coles, wife of the headmaster, Mr Romney Coles, the Science Master who specialised in Chemistry.

Being on the first rung was very intimidating. Mrs Coles was a delight, teaching us the rudiments of Maths and making sure we could do joined writing. Richard Lucas (aged 6) and Marcus Margolis were class mates... they were bright. Who were the others, there was Nigel Wilson and (or very soon after), Maurice Cohen (MC), Jeremy Rosen, Jonathan Levy, Anthony Nehorai.... Even then we were given our positions in class... every week, let alone every term. It was very competitive but I started well and enjoyed that Summer of 1950 which was sunny..... The calm before the storm!!

We were taught science by the tall imposing Head Master, Mr Coles. He collected us from our "Green-house" and we followed him, to the Science lab. He was impressively dressed in long flowing fur collared robes flapping like angels wings. The teaching staff wore robes and Mortar boards. Mr Coles took his class of children very seriously. For our first lesson was on electricity... yes! Electricity!! I can still see him pouring iron filings over a sheet of cardboard under which he had placed a magnet and explaining the patterns made by the magnetic field, North and South Poles etc. In his lessons he would occasionally do "Chemical Magic". There could be a bang followed by a purple plume of smoke from an unsolicited place in the lab.

I took my wife Jill and my young son, Robert to his beautiful retirement bungalow in Majorca. It must have been around 1975. He had just constructed a beautiful wooden front gate himself. He enjoyed playing with Robert, showing him wonders whilst Mrs Coles made a lovely tea.

We were in awe of the senior boys and watched inter-school cricket matches on the three acre field with great enthusiasm. They would sit on a bench waiting to bat whilst telling us that "they were playing the West Indies" and such stories. A School punishment was to be sent with a bucket to pick stones from that field for a period.

I am sure I remember a young "Stamler" learning his Bar mitzvah in 1950.

Kopul would often watch matches from the side-lines, sometimes ruling batsmen "out" if they did not score fast enough.

There was a waterfall and a pond in the grounds where pond life abounded. Mrs Coles used it in her "Nature Study" lessons.

Kopul was, at least to us littleuns, a frightening, giant, Gandalfian figure. Mr Coles came in a good second. Kopul did all he could to take care of us but we were still part of his greater plan to form a great Jewish, English public School where uniforms, rules, prefects and discipline were part of the formula and Oxbridge his main goal for us. Of course some public school type prefects and indeed sub-prefects were mature about their promotion but it did go to the heads of others who tasted authority for the first time. In reality there was little difference between prefects and sub-prefects

You stood when a teacher or adult guest entered the room and of course you addressed them as “Sir”, or in some cases “Miss”. I wonder if the term “English Jewish Public School” was something of a contradiction in terms. Like Israel, Carmel was a hard birth. Who but Kopul tried. Who but Kopul could have succeeded.

Impressed on my memory was a Shabbat Morning shul. If you were late, you stood outside in the porch for the duration. I was late and was parked outside in the porch. After a few minutes there was a low throbbing sound that increased in intensity. It was a squadron of spitfires, followed by Lancasters, Wellingtons, Mosquitos, then the jets, yes jets, in 1950 and planes of all sorts, Meteors, Vampires, Hunters, hundreds of them... thousands of them. Them inside could only hear the tantalising noise. I could see the flypast that went on and on, right overhead. Oh joy!!

Flight from Greenham to Crookham

In the Autumn Term Juniors were sent to their new preparatory school school, Crookham House, a large Georgian porticoed stone country mansion near to Thatcham. Wallingford followed much later. We were so young that a teacher, Mrs Glover, used to go round the dorm to kiss us all good night like a surrogate mother.

Before Carmel, my neighbour and childhood friend was Robert Peters. We used to play on the local bombed site getting knees scratched and fingers dirty. Our parents were friends and we were both packed off. Robert was very bright and my father was always using him as an example for me to aspire to. Not good for my confidence. So I got it at home and in school. Tragically Robert died very young.

When it came to my 11 plus Kopul himself took me in hand. It was easy... no problem... EXCEPT no one told me to work through the papers non-stop. So I started on the maths paper and then went back to check that all was right... “Pens down”..bbbut I am only half way through. Too late!!. What difference that I passed the English paper. My brother Richard passed and after only two terms used it as his escape route from Carmel to Hendon County Grammar and no fees.

Although I worked hard, I resented that it was not what you learned but where you came in from. In 1952, when I came 2nd in Form 2, I received a magnificent leather bound volume of “The Tower of London, a great and gory read about the death of Lady Jane Grey which includes graphic descriptions of “The Rack”. My worst position was second to bottom... to my shame. The Summer holidays were spoilt. I still have my report which actually was not that bad. In fact

I have found all my reports and I although was that bad I looked a lot worse amongst some very brainy individuals. I mean people like Henry Law were on a different planet.

One regular trip was to the dreaded unheated open air Newbury Baths. This was early on as I still have a beautiful hand written certificate dated July 1953 and signed by JSN Sewell saying that I swam one length. Actually at the shallow end and my feet touched the ground once. Because of the extreme cold, on the coach trip back ones frame reacted with an inner warmth. That was nice.

Fox Hunts came through the grounds and I delighted in sending them the wrong way. Farmers shot rooks in trees near the back entrance. I once gathered some friends and we pelted them with stones from very effective handkerchief slings. They were not happy. There was one older boy called Leon Norell who impressed us as being a life member of the RSPCA and he recruited some of us as members.

At Crookham we seemed to have a ready supply of caterpillars including Archibalds, a yellow and black striped variety which we collected in cardboard boxes with air holes. We added leaves and watched the magical metamorphosis to chrysalis and then to butterfly.

We had a suggestion box at Crookham, when it was under the excellent headmastership of 6'4" Mr Hoffman (Hoffy). He read the entries in the refectory once a week, and answered seriously. That was fine and we loved the entertainment. The practice was abandoned when questions became too numerous, repetitive and plainly silly. For a few summer terms, we enjoyed playing "rounders". "Hoffy" joined in and took no prisoners. We were little and he rejoiced in his powerful swing that sent the little ball miles.

The gym at Crookham had a concrete floor and the walls were lined with tuck boxes. At the beginning it sparkled with glass fragments and we often went bare foot. I wish I had not thrown my box out. It had a distinctive smell and every time I opened it memories came flooding back.

I was eight years old when Dr Tobias in the year 5711 (1951), told us of the Holocaust. The shock, burning anger and pain of it has never left me and has coloured my travels to Europe and Israel and buying patterns.

Miss Aarons from the kitchen staff, actually had a number tattooed on her arm. She was an expert cream cheese maker. We often saw her muslin bag hanging up and dripping away.

Dr Tobias lived on a different academic dimension to us. He seemed to spend all his time mumbling prayers and tossing his shoulders ion the air whilst doing so. His scholastic memory was so powerful that he could remember the calendar in a way that others could not. In a History lesson he gave a learned talk on Socrates. He then set that subject for Prep. We sat for half an hour, pens in mouths wondering what to write. Next day he stood before the class and pointed to a luckless individual and said "Tell us about Socrates". The poor chap said Socrates was..er.. Socrates w,w,w,... Dr Tobias, grabbed the poor boy by the cheeks... Socrates was Socrates? Socrates was Socrates???? I will not go on, you know what comes next. How on Earth were we, aged about twelve supposed to know that almost we know of Socrates came from his pupils such as Plato. We were spell bound by his stories of Jewish heroes such as Hillel that were new

to us and were often requested in class. I think that Hillel's wife was a hero unless she did not like her husband very much.

Cerebral high flyers who were all brain were called "Nyangs" accompanied by a Hunchback of Notre Dame Gesture. Most of us had very unkind nick names. We were once asked in class to disclose our original names. I should have kept my mouth shut. Kopul however called me Geoffrey.

My tree climbing enthusiasm started at Greenham. From the top of a large Cedar tree I could just glimpse Newbury Race Course. At Crookham a small band of us climbed the giant redwoods, with fearless enthusiasm. Very dangerous. I was proud of my telescope and remember seeing The Headmaster, Mr Ewart, in his two-seater, coming and going, for miles from my roost. Mr Ewart could often be seen working on Benjamin Britten scores as he was helping him with orchestration. There was a fir tree with close set branches where you could safely climb to the top and jump. You then flowed from one layer of fir to another until... one fine day my trousers caught and ripped. The result was that I was barred from climbing trees ever again. Indeed I was not allowed in my favourite parts of the grounds. Disaster.

We had interesting nature walks, often to the ford over the River Kennet near Thatcham, now often dry through excessive water extraction.

In the first term at Crookham a few of us, accompanying Bella Rosen, took turns to push the pram with new arrival, "Micky", in residence. That reminds me of a time, much later in Wallingford when I hit a cricket ball into a pram over the boundary...

One sports day, possibly after my time, Gary Sobers was guest of honour and was asked to present School House Colours. When you gained your colours you were given a new cap with a stripe at the back. Mine was gold for Montefiore. One boy decided to go to Wallingford during the Sobers presentation. His name was read out. No boy...no colours.....

The gravel path round a Crookham lawn often doubled as a race track and I was once pitted against Hamilton for a star. There were star charts on classroom walls to remind us to "try harder".

Sadly, much of our precious playground was sequestered for an American air base. One year they had a fair which we could attend. We had, just a sixpence and a ticket for one ride each.....

There were some priceless gold leafed baroque mirrors on one class room wall juxtaposed with a poster of a Camel Caravan on which some wag had added the letter r.

There were "Marbles" terms and "Cigarette Card" terms. We were allowed one comic, The Eagle. Norman Thelwell contributed a cartoon "Chico" to every issue. I once telephoned him to see if I could buy one. In my office I now have three of his original "Girls on Horseback" and two Beautiful original paintings for Punch covers. Thanks Carmel!!

I remember the death of King George VI being announced at a meal time, and the Minute's Silence, broken by a nervous giggle by a French boy.

Once I could not stifle a giggle during the Shema at bed time. That was the only serious caning I ever had...on the hand. I cried all night and the pain lasted. The teacher was Mr Bloch.

I saw him some time later, on a sports day when I was in an old boys event. He had a crowd of enthusiastic ex-pupils round him. He really was a scholar, not appreciated by some of us. Some of us understood the quality of the teachers that we had in our midst but genius was not always tempered by the ability to communicate.

A disaster was narrowly averted at my Bar mitzvah where Kopul proposed the main toast. I have a recording somewhere. Of course I had to be word perfect. Once Kopul came in to a class in progress and asked me to “see him afterwards in his study” to hear me read my Sidra. Terrified I asked for sick leave and spent the rest of the day revising it... I saw Kopul, sometime later. I was told to learn Bahalotecha instead of Nasau, the longest Sidra. I had to re-learn at only a few weeks’ notice. That was all I needed. The repetitive last half of the Sidra allocated to me. Another Bar mitzvah enthusiastic to do the rest saved me. The toast to my parents was given by Theo Fink’s Dad.

Every week Kopul doled out the Parshas at Assembly. I hid as best I could but occasionally got caught. The following year Kopul said “Up to Sheini” Shaw. It was Bahalotecha and I already knew it. Perhaps Kopul knew that I knew it too. I salute those who can lein at the drop of a hat. Most of us learned to daven as we heard it so often. Tefillin was compulsory every day except Shabbat.

Kopul’s oratory was something extraordinary.. He would come out with amazing lines, either borrowed or from his own head. One such was, “A half truth is worse than a lie. Like a half brick, you can throw it further.”

Winter skies, when clear, were magical and I remember anticipating meteorites. Once we were collected to see “Sputnik 1”.

The Schools were combined at Mongewell Park, Wallingford, where facilities were better and where there was room for the school to grow...so, to be positive. I loved the Summer terms, basketball, tennis, swimming, rowing and cricket. It was good to be in school teams that provided an occasional escape route and sometimes a tea.

Dudley Cohen became Director of Music from 1957-1959. I heard him rehearse what I believe may have been his piano sonata, on the grand piano in the hall at Mongewell Park. Later he was Choirmaster of the Hampstead Synagogue, Dennington Park Road. That choir together with the Chazzanut from Rev. Lowy who was operatically trained, made Shabbat Services and Yom Tovs a real Joy. I have recordings of both shul and school choirs.

Mr Shifrin had a Musica Viva Music Appreciation Society in the Old Mill where we were introduced to Modern Music such as Neilson’s 5th Symphony, his Violin Concerto, Aaron Copeland, Bruckner, Carl Orff etc.. Was it he who drove a black ford popular?

Do you remember the occasions when Kopul himself had groups to whom he played an eclectic range of recordings that included Gypsy and even Opera. A favourite to us youngsters was of course the Flea song by Mussorgsky. Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha A flea.

Samuel Sheldon said that he knew famous pianists including Shura Cherkasky. He was desperate to go to an LPO concert at the Festival Hall in the series “Music of the 20th Century”. The conductor and former Director of the LPO was Sir Adrian Boult. We asked the Head,

possibly Mr Sewell if we could go. He replied that we could if we did not miss any lessons... which of course meant No!!! If you crossed Mr Sewell, you spent the weekly film show in his study.... As far as I was concerned whether you did something wrong or not. I thought that class punishments were not exactly fair. It was a problem, but solved it was! We contacted our families for transport (a night at home and some decent food). We were ready, and directly after the bell ending the last period of the day we dashed to the station, met our parents at Paddington and were taken to the concert which luckily did not start till 8.00pm. Date was 11th November 1958. At the interval we went behind the scenes and told the Conductor, what we had done. He was most amused and signed our programmes, price 1/- plus a third one for the Headmaster for the following morning... just to rub it in. We were back just before class. The Concert included Jeux by Debussy, The Planets and Prokofiev's First Piano Concerto pianist Mindru Katz. When Samuel could not get to a piano he ran his fingers over anything he could find.. mantle pieces, desks, whatever.

Can you imagine a school outing to Covent Garden today! Well we went on one to see Joan Sutherland no less, playing Gilda in Rigoletto. The date was 28th February 1958. I have the programme. In the coach on the way back a group of Latin scholars were singing Postea te vidibo "Ill see you afterwards" to the tune of "La Donna e Mobile".

Howard Green was the first to bring a portable transistor radio to school. On my set I mainly tuned in to the ever fading Radio Luxemburg "208 Meters Medium Wave" and concerts on the Third program. One night, Kopul entered the dorm when I was listening under the covers. If you held the speaker to your ears the volume could be very low. I did not have time to turn the set off. Had I tried it may have made a tell-tale whine or, knowing me I would have turned the volume the wrong way and... confiscation.... Or the "Bastinado". As radios were disturbing after lights out, we blocked the signal by tuning in to a certain frequency.... Then, silence. If it was you, now you know!!!

Kopul once asked the class if we could recite any poetry by heart... silence. I knew the Shylock speech. A nervous hand went up.... "Many a time and oft".... Followed by Kopul saying the speech by heart as it "should have been rendered". Examiners came to the school to hear competitive (of course) "public" poetry recitals. I joined in and am glad that I can remember some important speeches. I preferred them to poems.

Once Kopul asked us who we would like to have been in History. The replies were, of course, Hillel, Mordechai, Herbert Samuel, Disraeli etc. till he came round to me... "Sir Thomas Moore" mmmmmm

Cross country runs in Mongewell Park were not a favourite pastime. There was always the temptation at the start to run up the hill to the cheers of your House mates. Not a good idea! We turned right, then right again past North Stoke then back, half bent and clutching our sides. We were often hungry and there was some good scrumping to be had on the out of bounds apple trees to the right of that hill.

I dreaded French and Hebrew lessons. Many of us felt that it was to Carmel's discredit that we were not exactly encouraged to treat them as living languages. I could translate the first

20 chapters of Shemot but Instead of conversation we were marked down for mistakes. O.K. let's say I was not such a good linguist.

The new shul and Wallingford had massive laminated beams, the main one with an ominous split.

Mr Healy who doubled as cricket coach joined us from teaching at Rutlish School. He arranged a fixture with them. What was he thinking of!! According to my Fixture List it was 27th June 1956. We arrived at a palatial public school with a perfectly manicured "county ground". I must have been in the junior team but in a later year I was allowed two overs and got two wickets for two runs. I remember bowling so badly that the batsmen took an almighty swipe..... and missed. The other wicket was a jammy LBW. Anyway out of the pavilion emerged the tall, tassel capped team, confident English Gentlemen all... followed by, well.. us... We had a saving grace in the form of one Henry Goldstone from Hull. You did not want to face him... neither did they. They were dismissed for 87, their lowest score of the season. Then it was our turn. Again, Henry was the backbone of the team but when he was out we had a problem, or so we thought. In the tail we had a great "goalkeeper" from (Seruya from Gibraltar?) abroad who doubled as wicket keeper. Their front line bowler ran up and delivered. Our "goalkeeper" danced up the pitch, closed his eyes and swung, and swung again.. and to the bewilderment of the bowler yet again, projectiles disappearing high in to the trees. The umpire later said "this is the first time I've witnessed a batsman hitting a ball without even looking". We had won and the coach journey home was surreal. We laughed all the way. Mr Healy could not believe it. David v Goliath... well we were a Jewish school "noch".

One sport I could do without was boxing. I was pitted against Maurice (MC) Cohen whose uncle was the Jewish Chinese General "Two Gun Cohen". I read his book. After three rounds we were separated, battered, exhausted and with mutual respect. I have not seen him since school days but I still remember the address in Whitefield because at the age of eight we helped each other compose letters home asking for water pistols, marbles and the like.

The purple school blazers were impressive and especially spotless for Shabbat. I was mortified when a shabby grey battle dress was introduced. Class mate David Reiss was often turned out in immaculate shiny blue suits. He said the family business was near to a pub in the City called Dirty Dicks. My wife has just come home carrying a Reiss bag. Well done David!

One really terrifying night an owl hooted from the window sill of an attic dorm. On more than one occasion, Matron, either the skinny one with red hair or "Battle-axe" came flying in, in a mad panic. Once an inoffensive small Pipistrelle bat was flying around in her bed room. I had to chase it off but sadly killed it with a racket.

It did my confidence some damage when I was booted out of the main stream and shoved in classes called "Shell" "The Remove" or "...M". It was almost like wearing a yellow star in pre-war Europe. At best it was insulting, especially when you had to explain it to your parents. On one report Kopul put "quite intelligent but not a student".

"Shell" was hell but in my head I was free. There were boys in that class who should not have been there. I could say and Vice Versa but no one should have been there. No one.

However Kopul did care, I know that. He was proud of his serious academics and I admit that I was not one of them at least until I was put back in to the main stream. Hang on I've just come across my all my reports from 1950 onwards. Actually I was quite good in those days and even had a "Congratulations" from Kopul... and a "will be a credit to the School" from my Housemaster. So what happened!!! There was a marked difference between the subjects that I liked and could do and those that I detested. When I retook my exams from the London board I found the Exams easy compared to the Oxford and Cambridge Board and then on to professional qualifications. What has that to do with Carmel. I was taught that nothing comes easy...but it came...eventually.

I keep on coming across bundles of memorabilia. There is a new cache that I have still to go through that includes a Roll and Calendar for 1958/9. It seems that at last I really was put in a decent class, form V A. with some very clever pupils. You know I had the same problem as my son. When you are with top students it can dim your candle. My son at Haberdashers was told that he may get a C in A level Geography. He achieved a First in Geography when President of his guild of students and of the Jewish Society... but sorry Robert you will have to write your own story.

I have an exchange of letters between Kopul and my Dad. I am reminded that I decided to leave, almost on the spur of the moment and gave a farewell speech. Kopul wrote to my father as follows "I was rather surprised to hear David's farewell speech..."

The tide turned and after a short while I was back at Carmel firstly to take my GCEs and then for a Seminar that took place in the Winter holidays where I met Kopul for the last time. This was followed by a wonderful letter to my Dad. He knew that I had gained entrance to the College of Estate Management and the rest is not for this book except to say that I am happy with my professional career as a Chartered Surveyor.

Kopul gave me my love of books. He once came in to the class and reeled off a list of Classics and asked if any of us had read any... silence. At the Seminar we went for a walk. He again asked what books I had read. I was proud to give him the list of books and authors that he had suggested, including Homer, Plato Thucydides, Suetonius, Plutarch, Apuleius and the rest mmmmmmm. I also read books influenced by Dr Friedman's teachings, The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists, Down and Out in London and Paris and similar subjects by Dickens, Orwell and Disraeli. I also tried Buber who seemed to write "what you would like to have said" and Berlin who had links with Carmel and whose genius still amazes me. I met him a few times.

At the seminar some of us went off to North Stoke Church to see what Midnight Mass was all about. We were staggered to see rare survivals of incredible mediaeval frescoes. The Priest was giving a sermon and when he saw us, he started on the "Jews killed Christ" bit.

There were interminable exams, mocks, tests, more exams... I have met some of my class-mates. They are mainly bright, have worked hard and have done well! Very well!! There is nothing worse than being told by a "mentor" that you cannot do it. At that age you believe them. After school it honed our ambition.

Mr George, the Mathematics Master was so well liked that when he was very ill, our class put its meagre pocket money together over time, and bought him a set of Gilbert and Sullivan LPs. I think Mr Evans, (Eggy), another very good and truly loyal teacher substituted for a term. I used to see Dr. Perly (Puddle) and his young family in Israel. I gave them some books from my childhood.

I have just heard from the JC that Mr Evens has just passed away at the age of 94. He was as loyal to the school as anyone.

Mr Ernest A Gray was not only a great biology teacher but also a brilliant author. I read his "Roman Eagle and Celtic Hawk" and have just re-read his "The Dog that Marched to Moscow" 1959. Apparently he was doing research on a subject to do with Jewish education... mmmmm. On one occasion he produced a skull. We called it "Wallace". He pronounced to the class, "Do you know that this skull is 3000 years old!".. followed by a simultaneous outburst of "happy birthday to you". Why was I always gated from the film show?

Now, I heard rumour that in the attic was a large and very heavy ammonite fossil that was being used as a door stop. To take it I had to find a substitute. I did, a few bricks. Unfortunately... and just before my bar mitzvah I fell whilst carrying the load. The bricks nearly severed a finger. I was rushed to the Radford Road Infirmary in Oxford, where they sowed the hanging digit back on in front of my eyes without an anaesthetic. My parents were told that I had had an accident and came rushing down. I would not let the surgeons reattach the tendon. I had had enough pain thank you. I could not play the violin anymore and any attempts at guitar were futile. In the waiting room was a journal. I picked it up casually and opened it and saw an article headed the Ghost and Poltergeist Bulletin, the first entry being "The Mongewell Ghost"... I am not making this up.

After "Shema" and before the night time "Silence" we were allowed one story. I fabricated a very scary Ghost story. The grounds man died at the time of my accident. Both events were brought in to "the encounter with the Mongewell Ghost" in the thicket by the Norman ruin... so that it ringed true. The bell (there was no bell) rang and the grounds man was startled to death. I was returning from rowing and I fell.... you get the gist!.. I "dined out" on this "true story" for ages.

To my relief that the Ammonite was still there when I had the strength to lift and hide it. It is very beautiful and has imprints of ancient plants, so it is a double fossil. It is in my garden and enhanced my love for the subject. I have also kept the scar and an un-mended tendon.

We had no television of course and one of our main joys was story telling. Jonathan Levy had a fantastic imagination and was the best story teller by far. He could keep us spell bound for hours in dorm, class or even assembly. I wonder what happened to him! Did he ever take up writing fiction? I came across a photo of him the other day that reminded me of the fact that we were often hungry (or fed up with pilchards). He is sitting in a cupboard next to an electric point. In one hand he has a tin of baked beans and in the other a "Boilette" heating element. No elf and safety then!!

I had to take a full tray of clean glassware to the Chemistry lab and walked carefully as if on a tight rope. A boy danced up and put a snake amidst the glassware and ran off. I knew there were snakes in the grounds including adders and my first instinct was to drop the lot and run. Our matchless Biology teacher taught us how adrenalin kicks in. As if in slow motion, I composed myself and considered. No school boy would knowingly mess with a poisonous snake. The specimen was green and probably a grass snake. So I put the glass down and picked up the snake and took it to the pond to the rear of the school where it swam off. The pond had a brick surround where one could sit. It had a grassy island in the middle. We often used to jump from the side to the middle as a game. We used to watch the water insects through the clear water. We chloroformed bees and put them in the teacher's desk before a lesson for them to be well alive and angry for when that desk was opened.

The school was located on a straight part of the Thames where the Oxford Crew could be seen practicing. There was a tree by the water with a base that made a comfortable arm chair where I used to study in peace, regularly. Mr Bloch once lent me a pristine book to read. When at "my tree", two very large hornets came by. I instinctively slammed the book on them. When I gave the book back, Mr Bloch, (the Montefiore House Master and indeed my House master), flicked through the pages and immediately saw the mess... and Mr Bloch was not someone you trifled with. I once took a particularly fine catch at cricked and he flicked a sweet in my direction.

As part of our 87 acres or so, there was a nearby ancient meadow full of many types of grasses, flowers and herbs such as sorrel. I used to nibble the sorrel to get some extra nourishment. It has probably disappeared by now along with most of this magnificent type of habitat in Britain.

After I left Carmel my family often invited Dr Friedman, the History Teacher for Friday Nights, as an honoured guest. What a privilege it was to have known him. He had a wealth of anecdotes and true stories. He started teaching me history with the Greek Classics at the age of seven, finishing with the Second World War with little interruption. He was brilliant. He had a good idea of the sequence with which GCE Exam questions came up and he saw to it that we were always prepared.

We had another ruse, especially for National English Exams. The Groundsman's name was Ted Weatherall. We all invented and learned anecdotes and sayings and pooled them. In our exams we attributed them to one Sir Edward Weatherall. How we must have confused the examiners.

As well as History, Biology and Geography, I enjoyed Art. I had a pen and ink sketch in the 1955 school mag and a London dealer offered me serious money for my work. BUT..... I kept my portfolio in a case that my Mother gave away being unaware of the contents. I was so distressed at the loss that I never painted again. About 6 works survive.

"English Public Schools" had Cadet Corps... so we had to have one.... Not for me!! Lift raa lift raa...bout... wait for it, wait for it turn. Naaaa.

One day Jill and I were at the Festival Hall to listen to Lieder (get a life) and there was Theo Fink (Caro) singing solo, centre stage. Why do I remember Theo? Well he had the key to the Cadet Force Armoury, where a few of us would go when we could, to play cards. He taught us to play Bridge. My goodness how this stuff is coming back. Theo once came out of an "O" Level English exam beaming from ear to ear. One essay question was "Birthday Presents". He related a wonderfully witty and sarcastic essay on the merits of receiving a toothbrush.

One GAME was to find a bottle with a good stopper and put some ink in it. We would then add ice, some water and seal it. At a clear and shallow part of the river by the Boat House we would throw the bottle in where it would explode with force sending a plume of colour down-stream. Our ordnance experiments on dry land could have been lethal.

One boy was caught under the bridge with a Wallingford girl, Mary, from the sweet shop. Someone sneaked to Kopul...I came across him some years later as the highly respected president of his Rotary Club and with a flourishing business. He led a group of us on a walk from London to Eastbourne to raise £10,000 for a new garden at "St Luke's Hospice". Our target was reached.

I swam the Thames many times and used the canoe which I capsized on occasion. The best I ever did on the River was to row in a four that beat Wallingford Coxes. I also had the distinction of being in the first Old Boys crew that lost to the school.

The main lake was once very beautiful and a serene wild life sanctuary. It is now built around and spoilt. I doubt if the once common water voles survive.

Professor R. Loewe was a genius and Jewish scholar but my abiding memory of him followed a classroom ball throwing incident. He was followed by a crowd down to the river where the "projectile" was ceremoniously discharged. I have the photographic sequence. It was like Tashlich.

Mongewell Park was in the Thames flood plain often flooded quite badly. Once Kopul came in to the class and said "I want a poem from each of you or By the Bones of Bohuncus I will have you Bastinadoed". The first verse will be "Ducks are Swimming on my front Lawn". I remember the poem but will not bore you with it. I have just come across my diaries for that period. As a sportsman I included weather. So many pages have the words, rain, rain, rain. I know that that part of the Thames Valley is damp, from my chilblains, that disappeared when I went home and did not return when I left. Half term was always spoiled by rain...or so it seemed.

Kopul was very sensible about doling out punishment. No! I do not mean his making you wait outside his study in terror. Instead of mindless lines he would make you, or your class learn a sentence from Perek or something in Hebrew. I can impress by quoting it to people who do not know the source of my "learning"..One hot summers day he had a number of us on the back lawn learning "hamakom shehein anashim hishtadel leot ish. In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man". Simple but very quotable.

We learned much by simple repetition and learning to song without effort. How many people today can recite the Shema, let alone, benching, Aleinu, yishtabach, Nigunim, Kabbalat Shabat, and so on.

I played for the old boy's cricket team when Danny Bernstein, of course, was Captain. It mainly comprised of younger players and Neil Myeroff was still firing in his overs. Sadly my Googlies were seldom in demand. At school, Danny usually had the upper hand but we had a record of taking each other's wicket.

One event will remain with me. It was sports day and Danny was on a bench, either reading or writing, with his head down below the level of the back rest. We had one or two good discus throwers and the discus itself was metal lined and heavy. To my horror, I saw one, flying way off course, directly at him. I had to think. Had I shouted "Danny!!" he would have raised his head. I elected to say nothing. The discus sailed over where his head would have been had I alerted him. Thank goodness he was able to continue to face my Googlies and I to face his fast bowling. He may not recall the event as effectively nothing happened.

Norman Feltz came in to my office one day. I met Brian Buckman selling jewellery and Anthony Jackson at a friend's house in Reading. They were much older but at Greenham with about 90 pupils one remembers the seniors.

I once let some office space to Accountant, Victor Zaum (Kenya). I remember his stories from Africa, for example about putting scorpions in a pit with burning grass where they would fight. He was a good cricketer.

I was at a funeral this March 2012 walking with a relative. On her left, was contemporary, Anthony Engel. We walked some way in ignorance. It shows how far many of us have changed. I would like to have exchanged a few words with him.

I meet Steven Foreman from time to time. His wife, Howard Green's wife and my wife, Jill, are all enthusiastic members of the same Wizo group. This youngster "unexpectedly" knocked me out of a school tennis tournament... easily.

At Carmel I "nearly" succeeded in so many things. I have just read in one of the school magazines that Issy Gletzer beat me by one point for the 1956 Junior Victor Ludorum Cup. Said Tchadortchi beat me in the finals of the school table tennis tournament. I still remember his spin service that sent replies sideways. To be fair they were very worthy winners. Carmel taught us to enjoy our sports and to do our best. How many youngsters today can boast squash courts, a swimming pool, a decent gym, sports fields and of course decent cricket grounds. Yes we complained but relatively speaking and in the context of the age, we were lucky.

I keep finding boxes with things in. I have just found three copper medals. Junior 100 yards sports day record 1956. 220 yards sports day record 1956 (Mont), Long Jump 1956 sports day record (Mont). You were placed in houses, in my day, "Alexander – Red" "Gilbert – Blue" or "Montefiore – Gold". If you were with a good team the chances are that it stayed that way for years.

Discipline and worthy deeds were rewarded of Merit Marks or in my case Demerit Marks. The winning house won the annual shield. Few boys had "Community Service badges".

Dorms had captains. At inspection, beds had to be perfect and shoes clean. Points were awarded out of five at each inspection and a score sheet kept. The winning dorm won the coveted shield. If a boy could not make a bed, we had to do it for him or lose points. After a few apple-pie beds he got the message.

A “Montefiore” team-mate who was a bewilderingly good Basket Ball player, along with others from abroad, helped us to a draw against the best school side in the UK. We were often pitted against very tall US airbase teams. That meant to odd elbow in the eye for smaller me. The tricks Bendrao got up to. He would turn his back on an opposing player and in an instant flick one empty arm in the air, then the other. He would then stuff the ball up his jumper and still with his back to his opponent fling both empty arms up in to the air to the astonishment of the opposing player.

Football was played with tough leather boots that we had to “Dubbin” and with a heavy leather ball. Of course the older boys graduated to Greenham. I do not know why we juniors at Crookham had to play them.. No contest. They had to be at least a year older..

School Food: After washing our hands in a vast trough and hamotzi we went to our tables. A story went around that Kopul had bought a job lot of pilchards, a regular menu item . Pilchards are a highly nutritious food indeed the rest of our diet was far better than almost any school you could mention, especially then. There was the “egg” meal, the slice of cheese meal and of course Friday Night chicken noodle soup and a slice of beef (rainbow meat) that never did one any harm. At the end of the meal the table monitor would select someone for “piling up”. We were often hungry however and tuck parcels were stopped. At tea time on school team matches we had our Kosher fare, watching the other side tuck in to all sorts of goodies.

Once my mother baked a birthday cake and unbeknown to me sent it to me at the school. We had a kosher home but it was intercepted “in case” it was not kosher enough and eaten by the kitchen staff. I threw a tantrum. What made it worse was that I was not told that that they had kindly made me another one. Too late.... No cake...just pain, anger and solitary tears.

From 1950 to 1959 we only saw chicken once at mealtimes. However, we made the most of it when our parents came down at half-term. In those days that meant a daytime visit, a picnic feast and a ritual visit to “The Lamb Inn” for tea. Otherwise communication with our families was by the once-a- week letter only. Much later, with consent, we would visit a payphone cubical.

We did see our parents on Sports Days which were taken very seriously and we did have some seriously good sportsmen such as Michael Selby (Dr Michael Selby) who went on the win medals in the outside world.

The school had many pupils who entertained in school productions. Jeremy Rosen was often to be seen lecturing, putting on puppet shows etc. One half-term I was posted to a position in the science lab, white coat and all. My job was to project a magnified drop of tap water on to a screen with the aid of an Epidiascope to illustrate that after a few days out of the tap it could be seen to be full of life. I sometimes gave illustrated lectures but...Oh dear! One time I got part of

a lecture on “The Digestive System” very wrong. I had the big and small intestines the wrong way round.

I remember a masterful performance of “Job” back in 1955 as described in school magazines that recorded a full cultural life.

Of note, particularly at Mongewell Park were the Yom-Tovim. It could also mean a very long weekend. I looked forward to them as well as the very smart Friday nights. Sometimes “Old Boys” would come down for Shabbat and sit at the top table as honoured guests. On Purim, we had fancy dress competitions run by Kopul and taken seriously by staff and boys especially when “cash prizes” were at hand.. Competitors would descend the usually out-of-bounds main stairs in order. At the top of the stairs at Wallingford was a vast and very valuable “Torah Scene” canvass by Mane Katz. Today you could probably resurrect Carmel on its value.

On Friday nights you had to be smart and ready for “davening” on time, Teachers in front, School in rows facing, discipline strict. We had ways to disrupt proceedings.... In the dorm was a wicker linen basket. “Somehow” we would “persuade” a luckless individual inside closed the lid and slid it under a bed. He was trapped.....

It was Friday Night Pre-Service Assembly. Kopul spoke!! “I want absolute silence for one minute”. Cough!... “start again”.. cough-cough... snif!.cough!... This went on and on and Kopul was getting very, very angry. He insisted on maintaining his formidable authority. He was in command.... Then it happened! One poor boy impossibly tried to hold back..... a “flatulence”. What sounded like a slow, loud, echoing machine gun reverberated for a full thirty seconds. Our faces contorted and there was even flicker of a smile from Kopul. The staff struggled to maintain their dignity and bodies contorted...prior to the eventual communal outpouring of utter relief. Whoever it was, the joke was on authority. You just cannot make this stuff up. The poor boy’s name is lost and it is not our purpose to resurrect it. We have all been there.

At the first Assembly of the Autumn Term, Kopul would always ask the same question to the school and no one ever put their hand up in reply. It was about the Three Haftoras of affliction that had just taken place followed by the seven Haftoras of comfort that coincided with the new term.... Or something like that.... New term... some comfort.

My sister in law’s brother is Old Boy, Michael Dale who forwards E-mails of Rabbi Jeremy Rosen’s sermons from America to me weekly. You should read them. I know many of us do. My niece, Lucy, is married to Rabbi Leo Dee from Radlett. Remember Tony Dee and Navy Mints now “Love Hearts”? Well Leo is Tony’s son. They really are a wonderful family growing at a rate of knots.

When I left Carmel, I did go to Yakar for a bit in the Late Rabbi Michael Rosen’s time and have visited his Shul in Jerusalem when in town for Shabbat. I could not believe the number of times we “Cohanim” “Duchened”. At Carmel I had more than my fair share of being called up.

My story relates to the 1950’s when no one but Kopul even attempted the task he set himself on behalf of the Jewish Community. I have spoken to boys from other public schools,

notably when our teams met. Many had a torrid time, with a liberal use of the cane. We would not have swapped places. Carmel alumni will no doubt tell of their scholarships, Exhibitions, ties with Oxbridge, victories at chess and so on. We are justifiably proud when we read of their successes in the real world, in politics, science, the professions and the arts.

Someone had to relate an ordinary story of a run of the mill boy. Those who may not have formed part to Kopul's Oxbridge aspirations worked all the harder to succeed. Many boys were removed from one environment, often in a foreign country to another, at a very young age and at a difficult time. Like Carmel, perhaps we were not so ordinary after all.

Carmel inevitably changed but I was still very sad to hear that it had closed and with it a dream. I have never seen so many helpless tears than at the funeral at Carmel. A few days later I was in Hillel House. There was Kopul's voice. I froze! A serious shock ran through my system. Henry Shaw came through the door. Kopul's legacy will live on.... and we all still miss him, his presence, his example, his oratory and his statesmanship. If only we had such a leader today. If only!!

Diary entries. Much repetitive and uninteresting stuff missed out. It seems I was obsessed with letter writing and the weather. Much illegible.

Tuesday 15th January 1957

Go back to school.. settle down OK..Radio OK Rain

Wed 16th May I will leave out things like wrote letter to girl friend because I remember my thoughts... we were absent....

Back to business... no prep

Started book "Adam and Eve and Pinch Me".

Fri 18th Jan Unpack... DID NOT JOIN CADETS

Sat 19th Jan

Maths prep.. quadratics OK.

Sun 20th Jan Free afternoon

Monday 21st Jan Pocket money 3/6

Rough basket ball game.. elbow in cheek.

Tue 22 Jan Saw Oxford crew. Rain

Wed 23 Jan No prep. Film. The Cruel Sea.

Thur 24th Jan. Charles falls in river.

Friday 25th Jan. Shabat comes in 4.45

Last week 4.30

Beat Reading in 1st round of Bucks-Berks chess tournament (1956 lost to Eton in finals). second round we will play Woody Hill Grammer School.

Sun 27th Jan Rain Rain Rain. Concert. Recorder and lute. Horrible and boring.

At this point I have a note. Nearly got diary confiscated.. What was that all about.

Wed 30th Jan Play 1st round of table tennis tournament c Ellman. No prep. Broke window. We play Wallingford under 16's basket ball. Katz, Greenberg, Bendrao, Tchadortchi, Sabah, Gletzer, Danny.

Thursday 31st Jan Kopul sees window. Rain Rain Rain.

Friday 1st Feb 1957 Drawn to play Linton in 2nd round (presumably table tennis). Told to see Kopul on Saturday. Rain. Play Chadorchich at table tennis. Lose.

Tea with Kopul. On occasion small groups had tea with Kopul in his study. It was all very nice but there were long silences when you could hear the biscuits crunch in your mouth and the tea go down with a gulp.

Rain Rain Rain River flooding rowing cancelled.

Mon 4th Feb Pocket money 3/6. Radio confiscated for keeping it on after lights out. Rain.

Tue 5th Feb Radio returned by Miss Chilcock. (I do not remember her). Go to town to get stamps.

Wed 6th Feb No prep. Film show. Romeo and Juliette.

Thur 7th Feb Union Society. War recordings and famous speeches.

Friday 8th Feb Epstein makes Coffee in a beaker. Rain.

Sat 9th Feb Rain. Water rises over boathouse bridge

Sun 10th Feb To play Jow Dwek in table tennis tournament round three.
River floods even more. Boats arrive.

Mon 11th Feb Stand outside Kopuls study for making noise and fighting. Hebrew test with Eppie. Floods worse.

Wed 13th Feb Help Eppie in lab with acids. Give in Hebrew punishment given to the form.

DAVID SHELDON

8 January 2012

I was at Carmel from 1953, when we first moved to Mongewell Park as a rather frightened and bewildered eight year old, until 1963 when due to my rather lack lustre performance in the LVI Science I did not return to complete my A-levels but passed them in 1964 in London. This meant that I did not have the opportunity to say "goodbye" to my many friends before I left, especially those with whom I spent many years in the Carmel College Boat Club. I am still in touch with some of my old chums across the globe and it would have been good to have re-made other friendships at this event.

I have many happy (and many not so happy) memories of my ten years at Carmel which encompassed all emotions and feelings from Miss Pickard's caring as Matron in the 1st year prep, Dr. Sewells' red biro through my early work, Charlie Marshall's slipping which turned

out to be a good kick up the behind instead and all the other masters. I could write for hours about my experiences (midnight feasts, the Shabbat evening songs in the dark of winter in the hall.....) but just to say that I have fond memories.

MARTIN SLATER

17 February 2012

Rav Kopul Z"L spent a number of years in Glasgow as Communal Rabbi.

His breadth of knowledge and oratory together with a flexible pragmatic attitude was at that time a breath of fresh air to a generally secular community. He endeared himself to many and I guess that was the reason that a 10 year old was dispatched to Carmel.

A few reflections:

Kopul had a very powerful voice! Speaking, shouting and singing.

I was mesmerised listening to his lectures and drashot, at times frightened if he was angry.

I can still hear him when standing on the boundary at a first team cricket match howling at our bowler "bowl a length boy"

His davening , haftorot and zemirot were memorable and I remember when we made the Carmel Boy's Choir record his " Bim bong , bim bong, bim, bim etc was the loudest.

His eyesight was amazing on three occasions he picked me out in semi darkness on motzie Shabbat cowering behind big boys for leining.

I loved my time at Carmel and feel very privileged to have been there.

NIGEL SIMONS

21 May 2012

On train was somebody I knew from Edgware who was not accepted (on hindsight that was a "nes nistar" for him). He was asked about TV program which he liked and gave an answer about a Friday night program. His mother thought that was why he was rejected- rubbish!!! They decided from the outset whom they wanted (my conjecture).

At interview Mr. Stamler asked about the budget since my father was accountant. Also asked which books I read- told him William books but forgot who was author.

Mrs. Evans waited outside study with candidates

Michael Beharier was invigilator - asked question about the man at the north pole. Father talked to Mr.Bloch.

In first term was new master for Latin and music Mr. Lawrence Joseph

Crosthwaite (?)- totally bald and nicknamed Buddha. Started choir and asked for volunteers. Those who changed their minds (like me) and didn't come to choir practice were reported to Kopul who called them to his study and asked why they missed practice.

DAVID (RALPH) WALDMAN

9 January 2012

I was at Carmel from 1955 to 1960 and was very happy there in spite of the tedium of having to get up early each morning to check one's blood pressure. Kopul was an inspirational figure if he liked you. I saw him just before he died when he told me the doctors had got it wrong. He didn't have leukemia but an aplastic anaemia. Sadly the doctors were right. I was also at the school at the last open day just before it closed and was greatly saddened to see such a wonderful idea disappear.

Many have spoken of Romney Coles who was a hero – the perfect English gentleman and the greatest teacher one could wish for. He transmitted his passion for chemistry to those of us who were privileged to do A-level chemistry. Mr. Bunney brought physics alive and made it all seem very clear. Of course I also enjoyed Maths with Mr. Evans. If only the Hebrew teaching had been as good.

But the person who made changed my life was Shif, when he came back to the school to transform the library. He started a Musica Viva club where we were introduced to the joys of so called modern music. For those of us for whom classical music was a passion, Sunday afternoons in Shif's room in the Mill were a haven of civilisation where our musical horizons were expanded beyond belief. At Oxford I met his then girl friend and would later be best man at their wedding at Carmel. We still remain good friends.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MASTERS

CHARLES MARSHALL

17 March 2013

Some Memories of Kopul Rosen and Carmel.

Throughout the years that I worked under Kopul Rosen as a member of Carmel's teaching staff I always found much to admire in the manner of his leadership. I was the first P.E. specialist to be appointed to the staff and arrived a few days after the beginning of the Summer Term of 1954, less than a year after Carmel moved to Mongewell Park. After welcoming me Rabbi Rosen walked with me around the building which was to become Carmel's first Sports

Block and I was told, "I want you to make this your domain." The building had originally been a personal recreation centre for the pre war owner of Mongewell, a wealthy American. It included a Real Tennis court, which was converted into our gymnasium, a skittle alley which became the "long dormitory" for Prep School boys, two self contained apartments originally used by the owner's professional staff and was used by Carmel first as staff accommodation [the Ellman family and Mr Mendel Bloch]. The larger of these was later converted into the school sanatorium. There were also a squash court, a small outdoor swimming pool, a hard tennis court, a grass tennis court and a large croquet lawn which could be used for a range of outdoor activities.

During the years which followed my arrival I always found Rabbi Rosen to be very supportive, encouraging and helpful in getting equipment and allocations of priority time for the activities of my department.

One Memorable Speech Day

It had become a tradition that the last day of each academic year was also the occasion of Carmel's annual Speech Day, attended by large numbers of parents. On the same evening after parents and pupils had left the school for the summer vacation, Kopul always hosted a formal dinner for all members of staff and their spouses. On one such memorable Sunday, Kopul had accepted an invitation from the BBC to appear on a prime time Sunday evening live discussion about the Eichman Trial which was due to take place in Israel. After a typically charismatic performance for Speech Day he drove to London and made a very impressive contribution to the TV discussion, along with a leading historian and two other authorities from different disciplines. Following the TV appearance he drove back to Mongewell and became the perfect host for our staff dinner.

Following the diagnosis of Rabbi Rosen's fatal illness.

I first heard about the diagnosis of Rabbi Rosen's fatal illness at a staff meeting convened by David Stamler [Vice Principal at that time] whilst R R was receiving treatment at a nursing home in Oxford. The news came as a shock for which none of us had been prepared. Following the meeting we all felt stunned and somehow three of us gravitated together. Jack Epstein [Science], Josh Gabay, [Modern Languages] and myself [P.E.] had very different roles at Carmel but had become good friends. We felt a compulsion to visit Kopul that evening and arranged to drive together to visit him at the nursing home. On the drive we all felt some apprehension about how our visit might be received. However, immediately after we were shown into Kopul's room our nervousness was completely dispelled. He welcomed us very warmly and with smiles he waved us towards chairs. Conversation flowed easily and included some details of discussions with his doctors about his illness.

The First Staff Meeting following Rabbi Rosen's return from the Nursing Home.

Again, there had been a general atmosphere of apprehension before the meeting which Kopul somehow dispelled immediately. He began by recognising that we were all aware of his condition and told us that he had been advised by his doctors to continue working normally and

he asked that we should all continue with our work and our dealings with him in the same way as before.

He wanted us all to know that he considered Carmel's financial future to be very secure and he could see no reason why those of us who wished to continue with our career at Carmel should not do so.[I formed the impression that news of Kopul Rosen's condition had stimulated a surge of financial backing from people within the Jewish community who wanted to help him see more realisation of his vision for the future of Carmel]. Kopul even joked that he wondered whether if he recovered from his illness, some of the donors would want their money back !

The Day of Rabbi Rosen's Death.

On the day of Rabbi Rosen's death our rowing crews had been entered for the Schools Head of the River Races on the Thames between Hammersmith and Putney. Before our coach left school for the journey to Hammersmith I received a message from David Stamler saying that Rabbi Rosen had asked that I should convey his good wishes to the crews and tell them that he hoped that they would " have a good row". The rowers and I heard that Rabbi Rosen had died that morning only after the races had finished. We had been invited to the home of Jeffrey Coorsh, a member of the crew, and heard the shocking news from his mother at their home. I learned later, that news of Rabbi Rosen's death had reached the school before our departure but had been withheld by Romney Coles [Senior Master] until after our coach had left. Some of the rowers were among the prefects who carried the coffin at Rabbi Rosen's funeral on the following day.

WILLIAM WARREN

22 May 2013

I can, for example recall being told (some years later) of Rabbi Rosen's death in 1962, but cannot recall who told - nor how I came to believe (incorrectly) that he died in a road accident ! I read of the closure of Carmel College in a brief report in a newspaper in 1997 : sadly many private schools closed about that time. Nor can I recall who it was among the teaching staff of Carmel College who happened to mention to me that he had met the (former) professor of Hebrew at Christ Church and had asked him if he knew of anyone who could teach Biology at Carmel College, to replace the young biology teacher there and that he had recommended me. I assumed that his conversation must have been with Dr Cuthbert Simpson, who had by then become Dean of Christ Church, for he knew me quite well and was aware of my interest in the archaeology and exegesis of the biblical scrolls recently found near the Dead Sea and at Ng Hammadi and had been reading the reports on them (in English, for my knowledge of Hebrew and Coptic was almost nil!) He knew that I had studied several languages (Latin, Greek, French, German Russian and Spanish) and may have thought, if I were appointed to teach Biology (as a stop-gap) at Carmel College, that I should be able to converse with pupils whose English was weak. He knew that I had taught Biology, part-time, both in Oxford and in Bexhill and at Stowe School.

JOHN TOALSTER

14 November 2012

Kindness, good nature, generosity of my colleagues, in particular of Rabbi Kopul Rosen, Dr. F. Friedmann, Mr. H. D. Schmidt, Mr. M. Bloch, Mr. Jack Epstein, Mr (later Professor) Hyam Maccoby, Mr. Joshua Gabai, Mr. Yehuda Ofir, and in particular from Mr (later Professor) Raphael Loewe לר from all of whom I received help in my efforts to learn Hebrew, including even an elementary introduction to Talmudic studies; and not forgetting several hilarious moments with the last-named, spent in the composition of scurrilous Latin and Greek verse.

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΕ ΚΑΝ ΦΘΙΜΕΝΟΙΣ, ΚΕΦΑΛΑΙ ΦΙΛΑΙ...

RABBI MOSHE YOUNG

20 November 2012

I was recommended to Rabbi Rosen by my good friend, the late Dr. Alexander Tobias (Toby), ז"ל. whom I had earlier met at a Summer School holiday. He was a brilliant person, a wonderful conversationalist, and extremely knowledgeable. I must say that the Staff members at the school were the most versatile and intellectually stimulating that I have ever come across in a staff-room. There was the brilliantly humorous Mr. Bloch with his anecdotes about Perugia. There was Mr. Schmidt and the eccentric Rafael Lowe who would drive his ice-covered car with a three inch diameter clearing in the frost on the windscreen. There was Mr Nelson who with Chaim Maccoby produced the play, 'The Dybuk'. I helped with creating a genuine Hassidic ambience for the play, replete with Hassidic *niggunim* and *streimlech*. Mordel Klein was the genuine article!

I was not married during my first year at Carmel in Mongewell Park, Wallingford. I was not much older than the pupils of the Sixth Form. To my 'bachelor flat' at the top of the main building would come four students where we would talk and learn Torah and talk again. There was food too. I think it consisted of Maneschewitz fishlets and Tam Tams, if I'm not mistaken. The boys were Meir Cohen, Michael Saville, Mordel Klein and Michael Baharier.

I married Doreen Pearlman in 1960, and as we didn't want to live 'on top of the shop', we moved to Oxford, and I would commute every day. Living in Oxford was an experience in itself being able to mix with dons and students. My first child, Yossi, was born in 1961, and Rabbi Rosen was the *Sandek*.

There were so many interesting little snippets, many of which I have forgotten. One thing I recall, and that was about the length of time week-day lunch took when I was on duty. I always made a point that it should not take longer than necessary. The boys loved it. Before you looked around, I would press the bell, the boys would *bentch*, and their break before lessons would thereby be extended.

Although Carmel accepted pupils from different religious backgrounds, what Rabbi Rosen achieved was to create an atmosphere where both deeply religious boys and uncommitted boys learnt to live together in a community where the ethos was predominately orthodox. The result was that many of its previously uncommitted pupils became aware of their ancient Jewish heritage, thus succeeding in perpetuating their Jewish identity. This was the legacy of Rabbi Kopul Rosen.