

Debts owed

Learning from others

I am writing in response to Brian McEwen's email (*ACT Now*, Autumn 2006) which was, in turn, prompted by Jane Stratford's ably written story about 'Jeremy' (*ACT Now*, Summer 2006). Over the years the students I have taught have taught me in return. As I look back over my career, I can see times God used conversations, situations and incidences to teach me more about 'joy' or 'patience' or 'peace' or 'self-control'. At other times God used individual students to ignite new interests or develop latent gifts in me.

One summer afternoon in 1967 at Henfield Church of England Primary School, at the foot of the South Downs near Brighton, Jane (aged 9) approached me with a slim book. 'Mr Kaye,' she said, 'You ought to read these poems. I think that you will like them.' The poet in question was John Clare, the Northamptonshire peasant poet of 200 years ago. Indeed I did enjoy them.

Later that year I took up a post as a lecturer in Social Environmental Studies at Kesteven College of Education, located at Stoke Rochford Hall, near Grantham. We had an annexe for mature students at Westwood, Peterborough. Not only did I visit Peterborough museum, especially to see items connected with John Clare, but a few years later I was invited to help direct the excavation of a Roman villa site in Clare's own home village of Helpston. Thank you Jane!

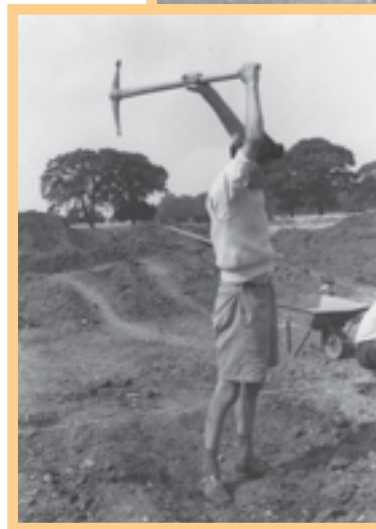
Trains and planes

I loathed Monday afternoons, and all because of 13 year-old Cox. Then I learnt in the staffroom that he had been before the juvenile court on a charge of changing the labels of wagons in the sidings at the local Boxmoor goods yard, whereby some of the coal trucks had gone back to Newcastle upon

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Peter and Jim trowelling (1962)



John breaks the topsoil (1962)



David Kaye on all fours (1962)

Tyne! So on the next weekend as I travelled down from Waterloo to Southampton by steam train, I noted the names of any locomotives seen. On the Monday afternoon, I said, 'Green Knight.' Cox's eyes lit up. Mr Kaye was a fellow railway enthusiast. But, if the truth be known, it was he who had lighted what was to become *my* life-long interest in railways. Thank you Cox!

At Walton-on-Thames Secondary School a student named Lance joined my Transport Club – but only as far as airport trips were concerned. He knew a great deal about passenger airliners in particular. Armed with telescope and receiver to pick up what was going on in the control tower, we sat on the balcony of Heathrow's Terminal 1 (back in 1957 there was only one terminal). Lance taught me all about Viscounts, Vanguards, Constellations, etc. Nowadays I can still tell the difference between a

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Boeing 737 and a Boeing 747, let alone an Airbus A320. Thanks Lance!

Digs

Even more of an influence was David Tomalin, a Walton-on-Thames second-former (year 8 in modern money). In our very first History lesson he asked me whether I would take him and his friend, Malcolm, on a 'dig' next summer. On the spot I agreed, little knowing or imagining what would grow out of this! In July 1958 the three of us camped in my ex-landlady's back garden in Hemel Hempstead. We cycled over to St Albans each day to work on the evidence of the sacking of the city in 61AD by Boadicea, under the direction of Professor Shepherd Sunderland. We returned to St Albans in 1959. In 1960 we joined Ashbee's excavation of a Bronze Age round barrow at Fargo Plantation, near Stonehenge. In 1961 it was Barry Cunliffe's first season on the site and the Palace of King Cogidubnus at Fishbourne, near Chichester. By now we felt confident enough to undertake our own 'digs' in the Holbeach St John area of Fenland with its Roman-British culture. David Tomalin later persuaded me to study for London University's Diploma in Archaeology. He himself ended up in charge of archaeology on the Isle of Wight. Thank you David!

Learning with others

Finally, for a rather different form of mutual learning. In 1965, teaching in Littlehampton,

I introduced a GCE 'A' Level History course. When I gathered the small group of takers together our first task was to choose the special in-depth study topic. We looked at the list of options and they decided on 'The Spanish Civil War 1936–1939.' I confessed that apart from seeing the bombing of Madrid in a newsreel at a Worthing cinema as a small boy, I knew nothing of this subject. So I ordered a set of the Pelican history books of that conflict and we studied it together. Likewise, years later in Louth, with a class of adult students tackling the GCE 'O' Level 'Law, Government and Politics' course, I learnt with them the legal element.

When I first started teaching, one of my senior colleagues boasted to me that no pupil could teach him anything he did not already know. How sad! If anything, my years as a teacher have taught me three things:

- how little I actually know and how much more is still left for me to understand, experience and do
- that God can take a shared interest and a kind word and use them to kindle mutual respect and build positive relationships
- that learning is best done in community with others.

■ David Kaye



Lance's eye-view
from Terminal 1 at
Heathrow (1957)



Waiting for the Reading train (1960)



A steam excursion (1958)