



OBITUARIES & DEATHS

2022



Remembering
the lives that
helped shape
the UCS
community.

Alan Blaikley

23 March 1940 – 4 July 2022

Alan and I met at the UCS Junior School in 1947. As he writes in his unpublished memoir, “our association has something of the quality of a *folie a deux*, but it is also the start of an enduring and deeply satisfying, though often turbulent friendship.”

In the Senior School each break time, we would pace up and down the rose terrace, endlessly discussing the meaning of life and, more pressingly, how we could get into the media, which we recognised was becoming all-powerful. In opposition to the official *Gower* magazine, Alan and I ran a duplicated newspaper, *The United Press*, which was promptly banned by the Headmaster C.S. Walton. We began to write music, using my father’s office reel-to-reel tape recorder and were dancing around a blossoming school cherry tree to our first composition *The Yellow Dance* – when Walton appeared and promptly gave us both detentions.

Later, with Paul Overy, another school friend, we founded the quarterly magazine, *Axle*, which at two and sixpence published work by emerging writers such as Philip Whitehead, Gavin Millar, Ray Gosling, Gillian Freeman, Simon Raven, and David Benedictus. *Axle* sold respectably but we soon realised that far greater sales could be achieved from short booklets, *Spokes*, priced at a shilling on controversial subjects such as drugs and addiction, sex and pop music.

Both of us were soon working at BBC TV and walking down the Balls Pond Road one evening we popped into the Mildmay Tavern. As we sipped our pints, a pop group came on stage and, unusually for the times, settling behind the drum kit was an attractive young girl.



Her name was Honey Langtry and the group were called The Sheratons. After their set, we went backstage and announced “We’re from the BBC. Are you looking for any songs?” Honey told us they had an upcoming audition with a famous record-producer, Joe Meek and they were short of material. We sent them several songs and Meek picked out *Have I The Right?* immediately. “That’s a Number One,” he said. The group were renamed The Honeycombs and the rest is history.

Alan, a former child chorister, had an uncanny ear for melody as well as a flair for lyric-writing. After our initial pop hits, and movie titles for Eartha Kitt, Frankie Howerd and Miss Marple he steered us into writing much more ambitious work with themed albums such as *Ark 2* performed by Flaming Youth with a then unknown Phil Collins and *Private Parts* for Peter Straker. We became the first Brits to write hits for Elvis Presley – *I’ve Lost You* and *Heart of Rome*. Our first West End musical, *Mardi Gras*, with book by Melvyn Bragg was followed by *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole*.

Alan’s fascination with psychology resulted in an association with the controversial psychiatrist R.D. Laing and the music for his album of poems, *Life Before Death*.

From Ken Howard

Paul Borysenko

28 April 1957 – 25 December 2021



I remember Paul as a friend and a colleague. I first met him in 2014 when I started at UCS and in the succeeding 7 years we got to know each other very well. We enjoyed regular visits to the bar in the “Quality” Hotel in lower Froggnal (chosen because it was always empty and we could actually hear each other talk) where we, together with Stan Rynkowski (an ex-UCS teacher) would set the world to rights over a few convivial drinks.

Paul joined UCS in 2008, initially as a part-time cleaner, before moving to caretaking and then being promoted to Head Caretaker in 2011. He was very committed to UCS and nothing was ever too much trouble for him. I think pretty much everyone who has been at UCS for more than a few years has benefitted from Paul’s kindness and willingness to go the extra mile to help them.

Paul loved gadgets and frequently added new ones to his collection. This, combined with his refusal to throw anything away “in case it was useful later”, meant his office, at times, more closely resembled a bric-a-brac shop than a workspace. Paperwork was anathema to him but Paul had an encyclopaedic knowledge of how the school worked and what needed to happen behind the scenes to ensure that the School ran smoothly. He always ensured that even last minute events were set up and ready to go on time.

Paul had a very dry sense of humour which was appreciated by everyone he worked with. He was the source of frequent laughter in the Bursary, particularly when concocting yet another fanciful story to explain why he had again missed the payroll deadline for submitting timesheets. He was loved by all and is sorely missed.

Paul was first and foremost a family man, he enjoyed cooking and experimenting with new recipes and loved nothing more than spending time with his partner Jackie, their five children and grandchildren. Jackie, and their sons Danny and Ben continue to work at UCS.

Paul died on Christmas Day in 2021. His funeral on 31st January, a school day, was attended by more than 30 of his friends at UCS, a mark of their love for him, and the school flag was lowered to half-mast in acknowledgement of the esteem in which he was held. Nigel Stock, previously Director of Operations and Paul’s line manager, told me he thought Paul might be “...watching the events and would have been chuffed to see what great affection he was held in by so many...”

From Nick Murgridge

Ian Macdonald

2 December 1950 – 30 November 2021



Ian joined Michael, his older brother, at UCS in 1963. He was happy there, though possibly he enjoyed rugger and cricket more than writing essays! He was a brilliant mimic and was full of jokes he had heard on the radio. It soon became clear that he had a phenomenal memory and, to the frustration of many of his fellows, read very fast and remembered virtually all he had read. This lasted him throughout his life and he never learnt not to correct statements by others which he thought were inaccurate with “Well, actually ... !”

At an early age he developed a love of cars, particularly old ones, and shortly after he learnt to drive he acquired a 1951 MG B, which he kept to the end of his life. After a year at Atlantic College, in south Wales, he went to Chelmsford Technical College to study law, but after qualifying decided not to practice and instead went to work for a syndicate at Lloyds. After some years there he decided to “retire” and, having the good fortune to have private means, devoted himself to charitable work. He married in 1977 and he and his wife moved to Coldred, a small village in Kent where he lived for the rest of his life. Unfortunately, the marriage did not last and they had no children.

Ian was incredibly generous both with his time and money, and UCS has benefitted from this as well as Atlantic College, and a large number of other charities and individuals. For example, in 2002 he and another former pupil from Atlantic College heard of a young Zimbabwean girl who was very bright but whose mother could not afford to continue sending her to school after her GCSEs. Together, Ian and his friend set up a scholarship fund for her at Atlantic College. She is now a senior physician in the USA. Countless other individuals benefitted from his help and interest. He also spent many years working voluntarily in various sections of the diocese of Canterbury and for his local churches. He enjoyed shooting, playing and umpiring cricket, and going for long country walks with friends. He was a very social person and was often the life and soul of evenings in the pub, which he would leave at closing time still able to walk back to his house!

His humour, warmth and kindness meant that he was liked by everyone in his village and his wider circle of friends and he is fondly remembered by all those who knew him and the many who benefitted from his generosity.

From **Michael Macdonald**

María Dunn

21 November 1952 – 13 April 2022



María Dunn joined UCS in 1987, appointed by Jack Watson the Head of Science at that time. María was appointed initially on a part time basis. As the school evolved in the 1990's and the number of pupils increased at the Senior school so the laboratories became busier and more fully utilised, more technical help was required. Maria was then taken on full time and divided her working week between the three Science departments. All the Senior Science technicians at the time, namely Brian King, Rory Bolger and Anne Bull (Chemistry) and Tina Pantelis (Biology) and the late Don Mackinnon (Physics) helped Maria to develop her skills and knowledge to those of an assistant Science technician. Latterly in the Science Department, she took on some responsibility for preparing equipment and helping the teachers for the Lower School Science lessons.

In her later years at UCS, from around 2010 until her retirement, Maria worked in the library being taken under the wing of Penny Davison and Rebecca Hemming. She also helped out in the school office, being supervised by Sheila Samuels.

María was a very kind individual, always polite and helpful to the pupils and this came over in her work in the library where she would often research and look

up information and data for individual students and members of staff. Certainly, she was generous with her time, often staying on after school to help tidy up or to help supervise any extra assessed practical work or pupils using the library.

In fact, María absolutely loved UCS – she attended many school plays and concerts during each academic year as well as general lunchtime talks and as many lectures and demonstrations as she could during the annual Science Week. She was also a dedicated member of the Choral Society and proudly sang alongside many members of staff and pupils at the annual Christmas event for many years.

Maria enjoyed Hampstead and Belsize Park, where she lived. She was fully involved in local events, particularly after she retired from UCS. She enjoyed senior citizen's yoga, local arts (a particular passion) and visiting local properties such as Keats House which was a firm favorite of hers.

Maria worked at UCS for many years and under three Headmasters and, despite not being physically all that well, she hardly ever missed a day at work and always gave her very best efforts and time to the school.

From **Ian Barr** (Head of Chemistry 1991 – 2016)

David Francis Paul Cowell

18 September 1948 – 20 August 2022



David ('Big Dave') was born on 18th September 1948 to 'Slim' and Nancy Cowell who lived in Marsworth Avenue, Hatch End, Middlesex. Marsworth Avenue was flanked by farmland where David, as a boy, was able to roam at his leisure observing the natural environs of the area. Sadly, 'Slim' and Nancy were divorced when David was a young boy and he and his sister, Susan, were brought up principally by their mother and maternal grandmother.

David attended St. John's Preparatory School in Pinner. At the age of 13, David went to UCS following in the footsteps of his father, 'Slim' (Old Gower 1930–37). By the age of 14, he was already over 6' tall and, naturally, an absolute must for the Boat Club which became an immense and joyful part of his life. He rowed in the 1st VIII in 1965 when still 16 years old (and 6' 5" tall) and then again in 1966 when he was Captain of Boats. The 60s were a very strong era for rowing at UCS and David's dedication and skill certainly helped in the success enjoyed by the Boat Club and the School during that time. After UCS, David continued his interest in the River and, for many years, an invitation to join him in the Stewards' Enclosure at Henley Royal Regatta, immaculately attired in boater and blazer, was an annual summer treat for friends.

In addition to rowing, he started his love affair with History. He was an avid reader of historical books and, blessed with a remarkable memory, he quickly became a font of historical knowledge. English language was another great love for David, and he would always use words accurately without repetition, deviation or hesitation!

After leaving UCS in 1966, David read History at Queen Mary College, London where he continued to row and started to play rugby. Following university, he worked as a water warden on the river Test in Hampshire, and then for the Home Office as an administrative Officer for a short while. However, David's career was as a legal executive for many years in Holborn and, later, the City, specialising in finance contracts for leasing companies and banks. During his twenties, David became a regular stalwart for the Old Boys' rugby club where his height and strength, like his father before him, put the 1st XV at a considerable advantage.

History was never far from David's thoughts and deeds. For several decades, he maintained a fascination for the American civil war. His library contained no fewer than 300 books on his pet subject and he was a regular contributor to the letters page of "History Today"... woe betide any author of books about the American Civil War who perhaps got his/her facts wrong! In later years, David studied the Spanish Civil War in depth which accompanied his great love of Spain. In retirement, he moved from Harrow to the ancient city of Lincoln where he lived a few minutes' walk from the medieval splendour of St Mary's Guildhall, the venue for some memorable birthday parties. He was a familiar face at an antiquarian bookshop on Steep Hill where he worked part time and was able to indulge his passion for old books.

In addition to History, he adored Spanish flamenco and spent many holidays visiting Spanish cities of architectural beauty and historical significance, in particular Seville, Salamanca and Cadiz. He loved the colour and vibrancy of the Spanish people and became a great admirer of the artist, Joaquin Sorolla. Spanish delicacies of the edible variety, washed down by a glass or two of chilled Albariño, were also an enduring passion!

People saw David as a fearless mountain of a man but, in truth, he was a gentle giant. His intellect, generosity and loyalty were considerable, and his close friends very much envied his many qualities rather more than he realised. He was a fine friend to all who had the pleasure and privilege to know him well. He was a wonderfully dedicated son to his dear mother, Nancy, and much-loved brother to his half-sisters, Patty and Alison, and cousin, Erica.

Following a few wretched months of illness, David died in Lincoln County Hospital on 20th August 2022, 4 weeks short of his 74th birthday. He will be greatly missed. He was cast out of a mould labelled "they don't make 'em like this anymore".

From **Philippe Bobroff & John Hall**

Old Gower Deaths

Ian Macdonald OG

1963 – 1968

Philip John Harman OG

1950 – 1955

Stephen Macfarlane OG

1936 – 1945

John Brian Smith OG

1946 – 1951

John Anthony Vickey OG

1948 – 1954

Ian King OG

1942 – 1952

David Festing OG

1975 – 1982

Gerald Smart OG

1948 – 1959

Alan Blaikley OG

1928 – 1936

Jeffrey Watson OG

1949 – 1957

Peter Wiggins OG

1947 – 1955

Michael James Lineton OG

1952 – 1958

David Cowell OG

1961 – 1966

James Nicholson OG

1945 – 1951

Paul Borysenko

Former Staff

2008 – 2021

María Dunn

Former Staff

1987 – 2015

ucs.org.uk

  @UCSHampstead

UCS
HAMPSTEAD

