

I very much regret losing touch with Peter. I think I felt that he might not wish to be troubled with past pupils, or perhaps I didn't feel confident he would remember me after a long interval. A while back, my year group had a reunion at the Dagenham school. I met up again with Chris How who had emigrated to Australia. He was a keen pilot, initially encouraged by the school ATC squadron. Peter Cork was taken flying by him during his period in Oz and they had kept in touch.

Peter's style was unique and because us budding musicians spent many out-of-school hours at choir, orchestra, instrument tuition etc we got to know him in a more relaxed environment than would have been possible with other members of staff.

Although Dagenham County high school took its pupils from a very working class area, expectations were high and the quality of teaching was first class across the board. This had been a tradition of the school from its early beginnings. My 89-year old cousin met her husband at the school and I met many of their friends at a party they held in 1974. All had been taught at County High, and the guest list read like a page from Who's Who. Maggie Thatcher's PPS sat next to the UK MD of Access credit card (predecessor to Mastercard), and we met others including high ranking Civil Servants and Consular staff.

Peter Cork shared a staff room with bright teachers who knew their subjects, could teach their subjects, and cared about their pupils. During my time at DCHS, my Religious Education master, Mr Dakin, was BBC radio 'Brain of Britain' for several years in succession.

Peter Cork was selected to join this illustrious group as a young music teacher and I feel he must have interviewed well and satisfactorily demonstrated his capability to have been offered this appointment at the age of just 23. Certainly, he inspired many of us who joined his music classes and groups. Music lessons were looked forward to and there was always a full complement in his choirs and orchestras. I also knew Dudley Moore in his last years at the school, and on one occasion shared a piano with him as we played a duet version of Summertime from Porgy and Bess.

I am still a very active musician at the age of 72 (just contributed to my first CD!), and many is the time I pull up short, 55 years on, as I hear myself using one of Peter's phrases as I tell a choir to breathe at a certain point, or a pupil to scribble notes over new music in pencil and to rub them out again when the piece is mastered.

Colin Heaviside