

The Eagle

(A NEWSLETTER OF ONA)

ISSUE NO. 27

(For Private Circulation)

April, 2010

(The Golden Jubilee (1960-2010) Issue)

Fifty years ago in the small town of Nabha, in Punjab, a school was born. It was called “THE SAINIK SCHOOL”. After creating a movement to start Sainik Schools all over India, this school was rechristened “THE PUNJAB PUBLIC SCHOOL, NABHA”, to make it unique by proudly adding the name of the state in which it was born and maintaining its distinct nature.

Soon it became a school to be talked about in the country. This did not happen overnight. There were visionaries who dared to dream and create this School by a unique collaboration between the “Punjab Govt” and the “Post War Services Reconstruction Fund” (PWSR Fund) for the welfare of the state and to provide future human resource for India and Punjab. These visionaries were giants in their respective areas. Lead by Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon whom Nehru called the best administrator in the country, they included Lt Gen Kalwant Singh “The saviour of Kashmir” and Sardar Naunihal Singh Mann, MBE, who motivated Kairon and agreed on his bidding to see their baby through with inputs from likes of Gen PN Thapar. They were the Foundations of PPS.

Having given birth, the next steps were to get the baby to crawl, toddle, and stand till it attained adulthood and maturity. For this they had selected a dynamic man called Mr. JK Kate. It was he and his team of able assistants who not only brought it to maturity but made it an individual to be admired and talked about. He was the Architect who was adept in moulding and educating students into fine mettle. His dedicated team of teachers who worked day and night to make this dream come true were the Pillars of his strength and that of PPS.

This issue at the time of celebrating 50 years of PPS is dedicated to **The Founders, The Architect and The Pillars** of PPS.

The Foundations

The Founders and 1959

A.

Below is an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of “Committee for administration of PWSR Fund” of which Governor was the Chairman and Chief Minister a member. This document is part of the personal file of Lt Gen Kalwant Singh in 1959. It mentions the first formation of committee for starting Sainik School.

Item No. IX (Establishment of a School or College on the model of Doon School; involving an initial outlay of Rs. 39 lacs from the Punjab PWSR Fund to be set aside as Endowment Fund of the School).

The Scheme for a Sainik School as formulated by the **G.O.C.-in-Chief, Western Command** was approved in principle. A sub-committee of the undermentioned individuals, was appointed for the purpose of

(a) **selecting** a suitable location for the School out of three places viz., Nabha, Malerkotla and Kapurthala,

(b) **choosing** a competent Headmaster as early as possible

(c) **preparing** a detailed prospectus and curricula for the school in consultation with the Headmaster-designate and

(d) finalising other details of the Scheme:-

- | | | |
|--|-------|----------|
| 1. General Kalwant Singh | | Chairman |
| 2. Col. Naunihal Singh Mann | | Member |
| 3. Nominee of the C.M. Punjab (most likely to be a representative of the Education Department of the Punjab Govt.) | | Member |
| 4. Nominee of the G.O.C.-in-C, Western Command (most likely to be G.I. Education). | | Member |
| 5. Honorary Secretary Punjab PWSR Fund, Secretary to Governor | | Member |

B. Historical Document

In absence of any proper records(from either school or PWSR Fund which has been wound up) the loose paper below from the file of Lt Gen Kalwant Singh of 1959 maybe taken as retrospective evidence of the sequence of events that occurred before the school was set up. It is not clear who has written this to who but it appears to have been copied to Gen Kalwant Singh

“In para 13 of my letter No. F.N. 11/59, dated **3rd August 1959**, I made a mention of the quarterly meeting of the **Punjab Post War Services Reconstruction Fund** held on the **25th July**. A copy of the agenda and proceedings of that meeting had also been enclosed for your information. One of the main decisions taken in that meeting was to set up a Doon type school for which a sum of **Rs. 39 lakhs** was to be endowed by the Fund. **A Sub Committee with Lt. General Kalwant Singh as Chairman** had been appointed to decide where the school should be located and to select a suitable Headmaster. The Sub Committee considered several alternative

sites in capitals of former Princely States as well as Kunjpura near Karnal and finally **recommended that the school should be located at Nabha**. For this purpose, they suggested that the **New Secretariat building as well as the Guest House and the land attached** to it will be required. This recommendation has been unanimously approved of by the Committee of Administration of the Punjab Post War Services Reconstruction Fund in their meeting held on the **9th of November**. **The Chief Minister, Punjab, who is a member of this Committee has made a commitment on behalf of the Punjab Government that the required buildings will be placed at our disposal by the 1st of January next**. As for the post of a Headmaster, the Sub Committee interviewed over 20 candidates out of nearly 80 who applied in response to an advertisement in leading newspapers of Ambala, Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The Sub Committee has recommended the names of **Sarv Shri J.K. Kate**, at present Bursar of the Lawrence School at Sanawar **and H.S. Kashyap**, Vice Principal of the Delhi Public School in the same order of preference. **The Committee of Administration have approved of the selection of Shri J.K. Kate** and a request is being made to the Chairman, Board of Governors of the Lawrence School, Sanawar (Shri K.G. Saiyidan, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India) for permission to **Shri Kate** to take up this appointment. I am glad that this ambitious scheme is showing promise of early fruition mainly due to the **enthusiastic support of our Chief Minister and the initiative, energy and drive of Lt. General Kalwant Singh who has evinced very zealous interest in carrying out this scheme**.

C. The First Members of the Sub Committee for Sainik School Nabha were as mentioned below in one of the meeting documents.

Proceedings of the first meeting of the Sainik School Sub Committee of the Post War Services Reconstruction Fund held at Chandigarh on the 5th September 1959

Present:-

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 1. | Lt Gen Kalwant Singh | -Chairman |
| 2. | Lt Col Naunihal Singh Mann | - Member |
| 3. | Major J.B. Bhagat Officiating SOI (Edn), | |
| 4. | HQs Western Command Simla | -Member |
| 5. | Shri H.S. Achreja, IAS | - Member Secretary |
| 6. | | |

(Secretary to Government, Punjab, Education Department, who had been nominated as his representative by the Chief Minister, Punjab was unable to attend).

Those who envisioned, conceived, planned and executed to bring into existence The Sainik School, Nabha (PPS)



The Board Members and Founders with Board Secy, JK Kate (extreme right) on First Founders Day, 1961. Col NS Mann is in centre, Lt Gen Kalwant Singh between JK Kate and Col Mann.

FOUNDER MEMBERS OF PPS NABHA

CHAIRMAN H.E. V N Gadgil, Honourable Governor of Punjab

MEMBERS

Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister, Punjab
Shri E.N. Mangat Rai, ICS, Chief Secretary, Punjab
Lt Gen Kalwant Singh, GOC-in-C, Western Command

Chaudhary Raghuvinder Singh, Member, PWSR Fund
Brig Gurkirpal Singh, Sub Area Commander, Punjab
Col Naunihal Singh Mann, Member, PWSR Fund

MEMBER SECRETARY Shri J K Kate, Headmaster



President Dr Rajendra Parsad- on his right is the Governor VN Gadgil; on his left are CM, Pratap Singh Kairon, Lt Gen Kalwant Singh and Col NS Mann. Mr JK Kate is at the podium. Included are Chief Secy Mangat Rai, GOC-in-C western Command and Raghuvender Chowdhary (First Founders' Day)

**The man without whom there would have been no Sainik
School, Nabha (PPS)
Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon
(1901–1965)**



Pratap Singh Kairon (1901–1965) was the Chief Minister of the Punjab province (then comprising Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh), and is widely acknowledged to be the architect of post-Independence Punjab Province (or Punjab, Haryana and Himachal as of today). Moreover, he was an Indian Independence movement leader. He was jailed twice by the British Empire, once for **five years** for organising protests against British rule. His political influence and views are still considered to dominate Punjabi politics, sometimes called the "*father of modern Punjabi politics*".

Early life

Pratap was born on October 1, 1901, into a Dhillon Jat family of the village of Kairon in the Amritsar district, province of Punjab during the British Raj. His father, Nihal Singh Kairon, was a pioneer in initiating women's education in the province. Pratap studied at the Khalsa College, Amritsar and then went to the U.S., where he supported himself with work on farms and factories. He did his Masters in political science from the University of Michigan. He also did his Masters in Economics from University of California at Berkeley before going to Michigan. He

was influenced by farming methods practised in the U.S.A and hoped to replicate the same in India later.

Political career

Entry into politics and contribution to Indian Independence Movement

Kairon returned to India in 1929. On April 13, 1932 he started an English weekly paper *The New Era* in Amritsar. He joined politics and the newspaper eventually shut down. He was at first, a member of the Shiromani Akali Dal and later of the Indian National Congress. He was jailed in 1932 for five years for participating in the *Civil disobedience*. He entered the Punjab Legislative Assembly as an Akali nominee in 1937, defeating the Congress candidate, Baba Gurdit Singh of Sarhali.

From 1941 to 1946, he was the general secretary of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, a period of acute crisis in the freedom struggle. He was jailed again in the 1942 *Quit India Movement* and was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946. He was president of the Punjab Congress from 1950-52; a member of the Central (All-India) Working Committee from 1945, and was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946.

In Power

After Independence in 1947, Pratap Singh Kairon held various offices in the elected state government including Rehabilitation Minister, Development Minister (1947–1949) and Chief Minister (1952–1964).

Much of his work in the government was concerned with vital details, the removal of hurdles, the creation of opportunities, and the psychology and will for work, and the belief in change. Several of his programmes carried the mark of his individuality.

Minister for Rehabilitation

As Minister for Rehabilitation in the days immediately after the Partition, Kairon ended the chaos and confusion and handled the tough task of resettlement of millions of refugees who had migrated from West Punjab. Over three million people were re-established in East Punjab in new homes and often in new professions, in a very short period of time.

Pratap Singh took up the consolidation of land holdings, which was made compulsory by law, and by completing the operation at a high speed, laid the base on which was founded the spurt in production on farms in the 1960's. He belonged to, and was of, the Punjab village which ensured for him strong mass backing. He experimented, worked, and tried everything that was new and possible. He became the tornado round which the new and the old clashed in contradiction and friction, and yet merged briefly and decisively in action, He certainly changed the administrative structure and methods of decision-making inherited from the British system.

Chief Minister

Pratap Singh Kairon was a man of vision. He laid the base on which Punjab prospered. Pratap Singh was deeply influenced by the American way of life. Mile upon mile of oranges, grapes and peaches he saw in California, planted in his mind the vision of a fruit-laden Punjab. He believed that affluence on farms was within reach of the Punjabi villager only if he had an independent and vital government. Pratap Singh evolved a pragmatic, determined approach to political, economic and social issues. In his role in implementing land reforms, the late leader established the Punjab Agricultural University, which played a key role in the Green Revolution. He also placed Punjab on the industrial map of the country. He was behind the creation of the city of Chandigarh and the industrial township of Faridabad (in present-day Haryana). Kairon made primary and middle school education free and compulsory. He opened three engineering colleges in the State and a polytechnic in each district. He was responsible for establishing much of the state's basic infrastructure in terms of irrigation, electrification and roads. Punjab was the first state in the Indian Union to have all its villages electrified.

Demise

In 1964, following the publication of the report of the commission of enquiry which had exonerated him of the bulk of the allegations made against him by his political adversaries, Pratap Singh Kairon resigned from his position as chief minister of the Punjab. On February 6, 1965, he was assassinated by Sucha Singh, in his car on the main highway (the G.T. Road) from Delhi to Amritsar. Sucha Singh was later hanged.



S Pratap S. Kairon flanked by Mr & Mrs Kate in front row, listening to the President.

LT GEN KULWANT SINGH,

(FORMER GOC-IN-C, WESTERN COMMAND)



Lt. General Kalwant Singh

Lt. General Kalwant Singh was born on 23rd of April 1905 at Rawalpindi. He was the son of the Late Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sant Singh, of village Zaffarwal, Tehsil Raya, District Sialkot, now ShriI Khupura district, West Pakistan. Sardar Sant Singh joined the Punjab Civil Service in 1890 and had a very distinguished career. His outstanding work was as E.A.S.O., during the Rawalpindi Settlement, as Assistant Colonisation Officer, Lyallpur and as President Council of

Regency, Kalsia State. He was keenly interested in the education of the Sikhs, was a prominent member of the Chief Khalsa Dewan and was a member of the Court of the Hindu University, BENARAS. He was granted the title of Sardar Bahadur in 1913, and a Sword of Honour in 1918. His premature death in 1919 was a great loss to the Govt and the Sikh Community.

In 1923, Lieut General Kalwant Singh was selected by the Govt of India for the Royal Military College; Sandhurst. He was commissioned in 1925 and was attached for one year to 1st Bn, The Gordon Highlanders at Secunderabad, Deccan.

In 1926, he was posted to 2nd Bn 1st Punjab Regt. at Kohat, NWFP.

In 1935, he took the Staff College entrance examination and secured a competitive vacancy thus having the distinction of being the first Indian to have passed into the Staff College, by competition. He was the youngest Officer in his division at the Staff College. He did the prewar two year course. During the first year of the course the Chief Instructor at the Staff College, Quetta, was Colonel B.L. Montgomery. Col. Montgomery's uncle Colonel J.A.L. Montgomery, CSI, at one time Financial Commissioner in the Punjab, was an old and great friend of General Kalwant Singh's family. Col. BL Montgomery, therefore, took more than the usual interest in General Kalwant Singh's training while at the Staff College.

In 1937 he passed out of the Staff College and after a few months service with his Bn – 2nd Bn 1st Punjab Regt at Multan, he was appointed as a staff officer at Bannu, NWFP. For his work at Bannu, he was recommended for accelerated promotion to Brevet Major. The Area Commander in his recommendation said, "Capt Kalwant Singh is exceptional amongst officers of his age and seniority".

In 1938, he was appointed Staff Captain to the newly raised Brigade at Thal, Kurram, NWFP.

In 1939, he got married to a daughter of Sardar Bahadur S.S. Gyani, Indian State Railways.

In 1940, he was promoted Brigade Major of the same Brigade. At the time when he was Brigade Major, during World War II, there was a threat of invasion of India by the Germans, coming through Afghanistan and the Kurram valley N.W.F. and therefore, extensive defences were prepared in the Kurram Valley. General Kulwant Singh as Brigade Major took a prominent part, in the planning and sitting of these defences. His work as Brigade Major was appreciated by the then GOC-in-C and the then Governor of the NWFP.

In Jul 41, he was selected to be an Instructor at the Staff College, Quetta. He added another 'First' as he was the first Indian Instructor at the Staff College.

In 1943, he had a serious riding accident and was placed in low medical category for almost a year. On leaving the Staff College, therefore, he was appointed Assistant Quarter Master General (Operations) HQ Northern Army, Rawalpindi. After a few weeks in that appointment he was asked for by name to be Assistant Quarter Master General (Plans), Indian Expeditionary Force, a special Combined Operations Army which was raised for the recapture of Burma under General Sir George Giffard, GCB. But as General Kalwant Singh was keen to see active Service, as soon as he was medically fit, he applied to revert to regimental duty. He asked for a Battalion of his own Regiment in Burma but was given command of 7th Bn 1st Punjab Regt at Razmak, NWFP. After commanding the battalion for 1 ½ years, he was specially selected by the then C-in-C for training in Jungle Warfare in Burma, with a view to early promotion to the rank of Brigadier.

In May 1945, whilst serving in Burma he was recalled to serve as a member of any Enquiry Committee appointed by the then C-in-C to look into the grievances of ex P.O.W. Viceroy's Commissioned Officers from Italy.

In July 1945, after two terms of training attachments in Arakan and Burma he was appointed Second – in – Command (Colonel) of 114 Indian Infantry Brigade (7 Indian Infantry Division) in Burma.

In Sep 45, as officiating Brigade Commander, he took this Brigade by Air from Rangoon to Bangkok, Siam. In Siam he was Commander of the troops in Bangkok and in addition to the task of commanding the troops, he was entrusted with the disbandment of the Japanese 18th Area Army which he did very well.

In Nov 45, he was posted as Deputy Director Resettlement, Welfare General's Branch at General Headquarters, Simla. In Jan 1946, he was given command of 20 Indian Infantry Brigade (10 Indian Infantry Division) at Rawalpindi. Shortly afterwards his Brigade was selected to be the first experimental Brigade to recommend new organization and equipment for troops to fight in the Mountains against guerrilla enemy. In December 1946 he was ordered to take his Brigade to Oghi, District Hazara, NWFP to punish the Black Mountain tribesmen who has raided Oghi and Batal and had burnt, looted and kidnapped non-muslims from those places. His Brigade Group consisted of 17 units – the biggest command given to any Indian Officer so far. On the successful conclusion of this operation his work was appreciated by the NWFP Govt. The Government of NWFP asked the GOC-in-C Northern Command, Rawalpindi to convey their thanks to "The Brigade Commander and the troops who participated in quelling the disorders and restoring confidence".

In March 1947, his Brigade Headquarters was moved from WAH, District Campbellpur to Nowshera, NWFP where the Pir of Manki Sharif was trying to create trouble. By his firm handling of the Internal Security situation at Nowshera, he saved that town and the Cantonment.

In May 1947, he was appointed to the very important appointment of Brigadier General Staff, Northern Command, Rawalpindi, adding yet another 'First' as an Indian had never held such an appointment before.

On attainment of Independence, he was appointed Director of Military Training at Army Headquarters, New Delhi. A good deal of pressure was put on him to stay on in the Pakistan Army but as Lord Birdwood in his Book "A Continent Decides" on page 88 says "Had he remained he would certainly not have been alive ---".

In October 1947, General Kalwant Singh was appointed officiating Chief of the General Staff, Army Headquarters vice General K.M. Cariappa, on leave. It was at this time that raiders sacked Domel and were advancing on Srinagar. The Government of India decided to go to the aid of the Maharaja of J&K on 27 Oct 1947. General Kalwant Singh as Offg Chief of the General Staff had to organize the dispatch of troops by air to Srinagar. There was no previous plan to send any troops to the aid of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. It, therefore, required organizational ability and capacity and he carried it out, as is well known, very successfully.

On 1st November 1947, he was to take over as GOC UP Area but was appointed GOC JAK Division instead. This was a new Divisional Headquarters raised for Jammu and Kashmir.

On 4th November, he was ordered by the Govt of India to go to Kashmir and to re-capture Baramulla. He went to Srinagar without a proper HQ and a few staff officers only. On arrival in Srinagar after studying the situation he decided to go on to the offensive immediately and clear Kashmir Valley of the raiders. On 7th November, he fought the battle of Shelatang, the most decisive battle of J&K Operations. Having served for so many years on the North West Frontier he understood the tribesmen and their characteristics extremely well and was best qualified to deal with them. He had, in a written appreciation for the then C-in-C General Sir R. Lockhart started that knowing the tribesmen as he did, he felt that they would spend 24 – 48 hours in

looting Baramula which would help us to send sufficient troops to Kashmir and thereby save Srinagar. He received the appreciation of the Prime Minister and others. General Bucher, the then C-in-C placed on record his high appreciation of the very great military qualities possessed by Major General Kalwant Singh. The appointment in Jammu and Kashmir was literally thrown at him when the military situation there was indeed serious.

The Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in his farewell address to General Kalwant Singh said "In bidding farewell to you today, we are sorry to part with a friend who came amidst us at a time when the enemy was battering at the gate of Srinagar And no sooner had you set your foot on our soil then the situation compelled you to go into action.

The enemy was driven back; Pattan and Baramula were re-captured and the front advanced to URI. This is an achievement of which you, your officers and men under your command may justly feel proud

The Public Relations handout in 1949 about General Kalwant Singh says "was the organizing genius of the Jammu and Kashmir force that stemmed the first treacherous assault of the raiders". Mr. V.P. Menon, on page 411 of his book "The Integration of Indian States" says "Major General Kalwant Singh left Kashmir on 1 May 1948 to take the appointment of Chief of General Staff. Before his departure, the Jammu and Kashmir Force was split into two divisional commands. The six months of Major General Kalwant Singh's command were perhaps the most crucial in the history of Kashmir operations. He had to handle an extremely difficult situation, which he did with the utmost skill and credit leaving a secure and stabilized military position for his successors".

Lord Birdwood in his book "Two Nations and Kashmir", says, "This fine officer in May 1955 had moved on to take charge of India's Western Command with his Headquarters in Simla".

Shri Prabodh Chandra in his book "Pilgrims Progress", on page 44 says "Maj Gen Kalwant Singh, GOC J&K Force had to build up a fighting machine from scratch, even while he fought a well prepared and resolute enemy. Now he gradually geared that machine for planned offensive operations".

The Sikh and Hindu refugees of Poonch at a Dewan in the Gurdawara at Jammu presented General Kalwant Singh with an address and a sword.

His name was mentioned in Despatches for "distinguished and gallant services rendered as Commander JAK Force during operations in 1947-48".

In May 1948, he was appointed Chief of the General Staff, Army Headquarters at a very difficult period in the history of the Indian Army. J and K operations were still on. During this tenure as C.G.S. the Indian Army was re-organised. The Hyderabad Police action was planned and mounted during the summer of 1948, the protection of the border in East Punjab, was put on a better basis and the integration of the State Forces with the Indian Army was carried out.

In 1950, he was selected for command of a Corps, with the rank of Lieut General. He raised the Corps in 1950 and trained it. The C-in-C held Exercise VIJAY, in May 1953 for his Corps. It was the biggest exercise ever held East of Sues. Over 50,000 troops took part in it. At the conclusion of the Exercise the C-in-C publicly congratulated General Kalwant Singh for his tactical skill and administrative knowledge and ability and for so well handling the Corps.

In 1950, he was appointed a member of a Government of India Committee and again in 1952 on the Reorganisation Committee set up by the then Defence Minister in 1952.

In 1955, he was appointed General Officer Commanding – in – Chief, Western Command, the most important operational Command in India...

General Kalwant Singh was Colonel of the Dogra Regiment and Colonel Commandant of the Army Ordnance Corps. He was a member of the Himalayan Club having been very much interested in Mountaineering.





Mrs Kalwant Singh, who became member of the Board of Governors of PPS after Gen. Kalwant Singh's demise. She served on the board till her last.

Col Naunihal Singh Mann



(1899-1989)

A life less ordinary: Naunihal Singh Mann, Founder Board Member of PPS, Nabha

Born in 1899, in Sheikhpura district of united Panjab, Naunihal Singh Mann was a scion of affluent and powerful landed gentry. Early education was at home, through tutors, with emphasis on languages and communication skills. Later, understanding the functioning of the Administration and Law Courts – essentials for a future hereditary magistrate; daily regimen included games and riding; finished college at F.C. College, Lahore excelling in languages.

Politics and campaigning was part of daily life and soon after finishing college he was elected one of the younger MLAs to the State Assembly, and worked under some of the country's most powerful leaders. This exposure vastly broadened his horizons and thinking and, being in a position of power, fuelled his constant desire for **change and betterment of the underprivileged**. Election to the Assembly was not enough and very soon, he along with a handful of friends, took the plunge to join the army on an '**honorary**' commission. Training, though staggered over two years, was demanding and many dropped out. He graduated with a **King's Commission** and joined a unit in charge of recruitment and training.

He worked and interacted with a diversity of people including civil servants, politicians, professionals, captains of industry, ruling princes, governors, feudal lords et al and, with missionary zeal, campaigned for the education of the masses as the only way to progress. It is said his personality was overpowering, and ability to empathise with all ages and levels made him unforgettable. He was at ease dealing with anyone **from the Viceroy to a patwari**.

The early 1930's were the good years; meeting and working with powerful, affluent close friends to build a new order for the enhancement of the state and country through creating educational institutions; mechanising agriculture; upgrading canal systems; improving roads and connectivity. He was also inducted into the **Service Selection Board (All India)**. This hectic activity was interspersed with '*shikar*' parties in UP and Panjab in winter, and 'garden' parties in Simla and Gulmarg in summer.

1936 saw him foray into the sugar industry helping a close friend set up Simbhaoli Sugar Mills in UP. Two years later, in 1938 when the maiden dividend was declared he suggested they celebrate by attending the coronation of the King & Emperor in Britain. It was on this, his first trip abroad, that he met Louis Mountbatten, the future Viceroy and visited Germany with its enormous industrial and military might.

1939 saw the start of World War II, an inflection point in world history. Not to be missed as an opportunity to help in the war effort, he was drafted fulltime and while recruiting and training on a huge scale, mostly the Panjabi '*musalman*' and sikh, was elevated to the '**Viceroy's Defence Council**'. As a member of the Defence Council he extensively toured Mesopotamia (Iraq), North Africa and Burma where Indian troops were concentrated; back home he organised assistance and camps for families of serving / retired servicemen. He was also a **senior member of the Civil Services Selection Board (Pre cursor to UPSC), Dehi and the Defence Services Selection Board, Dehra Dun.**

For his services in the "War effort" he was honoured with MBE by the queen.



Founder Member of PPS **Col Naunihal Singh Mann** being interviewed by Chronicle editorial board 1967 from left **Gurmeet Kanwal (J-68, 1968), Rupinder Chhachhi(S-77,1968), Shresh Kathatvate(S-108,1968), Vijay Kanwar (Beas-113,1967) and Gurinder Chhachhi (S-76,1967)**

During his visits to Delhi to attend the meetings of the 'Council' he was able to use his clout in the administration, as well as, military **to bring succour and hope to millions** affected by the ongoing war. It was here in Delhi that he met and interacted with almost all important political

leaders of diverse political parties and civil servants. He was a witness to the interactions and goings on leading to India's independence from three points of view, Hindu, Muslim and British, having close friends and confidants with players on all sides. During one of Viceroy Wavell's Banquets the Vicereine introduced him to the most successful and biggest 'builders' of Delhi; they became friends and later his eldest son was married to the builder's eldest daughter.

1947 saw the Independence of India, a great event; however, this came with a heavy price – 'Partition'. He **vehemently opposed partition** to the very end being very close to key players from west Panjab including the Governor Sir Evan Jenkins, Sir Khizr Hayat Tiwana and others. What eventually ensued was the largest forced migration in human history and under horrific conditions uprooted millions of people and lost countless lives. Overnight he found himself without any assets, generations of toil lost and a majority of friends on the wrong side of the border, an extended family to look after and the bleak prospect at starting from scratch. However, an iron will and ethos remained and a great opportunity presented itself – **to help millions of displaced and needy.**

The Viceroy, Field Marshal, Ministers, Civil Servants etc were met immediately and appointments regularised: **Chairman of the Defence Services Selection Bd, Member UPSC, Resettlement Commissioner under the Prime Minister.** This was followed by various state boards and commissions for Ex-Servicemen and families, Housing, Transport, Development, Education and many more. While interacting with the Prime Minister as a part of the 'resettlement commission' **alongwith the Panjab Chief Minister,** the two were able to convince the PM to do something substantial for the refugee settlers; eventually the efforts bore fruit into building **dams and a city like no other in the country.**

Life was harsh, but there was no time to waste brooding and so much had to be done for so many worse off - most of whom were in refugee camps. At home 'partition' was never ever mentioned and children grew up as if little had ever changed – the emphasis, to build a value system coupled with integrity and capacity for selfless hardwork. Family values remained intact even though all material assets were lost.

The sustained, selfless effort to help ex-servicemen in particular brought him into close proximity of the Panjab Govt. where the largest numbers of servicemen were located; in addition he had close bonds with Ministers (former colleagues), ICS & Defence officers (**many who he had recruited**) and ofcourse the Princes – in short all that mattered to get things moving.

*While travelling from Simla to Delhi he encountered Pratap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister of Panjab, whose car had broken down and offered him a lift to Delhi. During the drive he suggested putting up a public school in the best tradition of fine schools – the CM agreed on the condition that he devotes time to the project and be personally involved in its formation and running. **He agreed and the rest is PPS history.***

There are many anecdotes told by various people regarding him, the man as was his wont: of the person who went to meet him for a single bus permit, when he discovered he was a fellow refugee he gave him two bus permits and asked him to come back for more if he ran the buses honestly – that helped the family eventually become a major force in politics; or the small town mechanic who met him for assistance in bettering his lot, he was told that while I can do little for you I can make your son an army officer, bring him to me in four years- he made it to Brigadier; or the person with a tremendous reference to join the army, he was told you would be a misfit in the army so I will make you a civil servant where you will do exceedingly well- he went on to become the Foreign Secretary.

The twilight years were spent writing (to friends in India and abroad), bridge (avid player), travelling abroad and catching up with friends –Evan Jenkins, Louis Mountbatten, H. Seaward (former commissioner Lahore with whose family he shared a special fourth generation relationship), at their estates in UK, Count Gratry in Geneva, Golfing upto his 89 birthday with people often twenty years his junior. He was never in hospital and his mind was alert and clear when he passed away at age 90.

The Man who prepared the final Model of Sainik School, Nabha
Gen. Pran Nath Thapar
(May 23, 1906 - June 23, 1975)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



(Picture of a portrait courtesy Lt Gen TK Sapru from Western Command office)

General **Pran Nath Thapar** (May 23, 1906 - June 23, 1975) was the **fifth Chief of Army Staff** of the Indian army.

Personal life

General Pran Nath Thapar was born on May 23, 1906 into a prominent Punjabi family. He was the youngest son of Diwan Bahadur Kunj Behari Thapar of Lahore. After graduating from Government College, Lahore, he trained at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. His wife Bimla Thapar (née Bashiram), whom he married in March 1936, was the eldest daughter of Rai Bahadur Sahgal Bashiram and grand daughter of Rai Bahadur Ramsaran Das. General Thapar had four children, including the veteran journalist Karan Thapar. The historian, Romila Thapar is

his niece and the conservationist and tiger expert, Valmik Thapar is his great nephew. The writer, Nayantara Sahgal was his sister-in-law, the second of the three daughters born to Jawaharlal Nehru's sister, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. His grandson, the gay and race activist, Siddo Deva, lives in Oxford.

Career

He was commissioned into the 1st Punjab Regiment in 1926. He did his regimental duties with the 1st Punjab Regiment for ten years and later attended the staff courses at Quetta and Minley Manor in England. He served in Burma during the Second World War in 1941 and later in the Middle East and Italy. He was appointed as Assistant Military Secretary in 1945. He commanded 1st Battalion of Punjab Regiment in Indonesia in 1946 and later went on to serve as the Commander of the 161 Indian Infantry Brigade in East Bengal. During the Partition of India, Thapar officiated as the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence. In November 1947, he was promoted to the rank of Major General. He served as the Chief of the General Staff for a few months and later as Military Secretary till August 1949. He was appointed Master General of Ordnance on August 1949. He commanded an Infantry Division for four years till 1954 and was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General in 1954 as Commander of a Corps. He was selected to attend the Imperial Defence College, London in 1955. After successful completion of the course, he was appointed General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command. He became General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Western Command in 1959. Thapar took over as Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army on 8th May 1961 and served till 19th November 1962. He was also Colonel of the Rajputana Rifles.

Later life

After retirement he was appointed as Indian Ambassador to Afghanistan from August 1964 to January 1969. He died on his farm in Chhattarpur, New Delhi on 23rd June 1975 at the age of 69.

What's in a name?

The name changeth to "The Punjab Public School, Nabha"

(Selected minutes have been taken)

Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Governors, The Sainik School, Nabha held at 12:00 noon on 19th July 1960 at Raj Bhawan, Chandigarh. The following were present

1. Shri N.V. Gadgil Chairman
2. S. Gurdian Singh Dhillon
3. Lt. General Kalwant Singh
4. Lt. General P.N. Thapar
5. Shri E.N. Mangat Rai, ICS
6. Dr. A.C. Joshi
7. Brig. Gurkirpal Singh
8. Lt. Col. Naunihal Singh Mann
9. Lt. Col. F.A. Von Goldstein
10. Rao Bahadur Choudhary Lal Chand
11. Shri V.P. Gautama, IAS

12. Shri J.K. Kate

Secretary

The following main decisions were taken in the meeting:-

Vide Item 8: The Board decided to charge non-refundable registration fee of Rs. 5/- per boy.

Vide Item 9: The Board considered the scholarship scheme submitted by the Headmaster and appointed a Sub Committee consisting of the following members to finalise the scheme:-

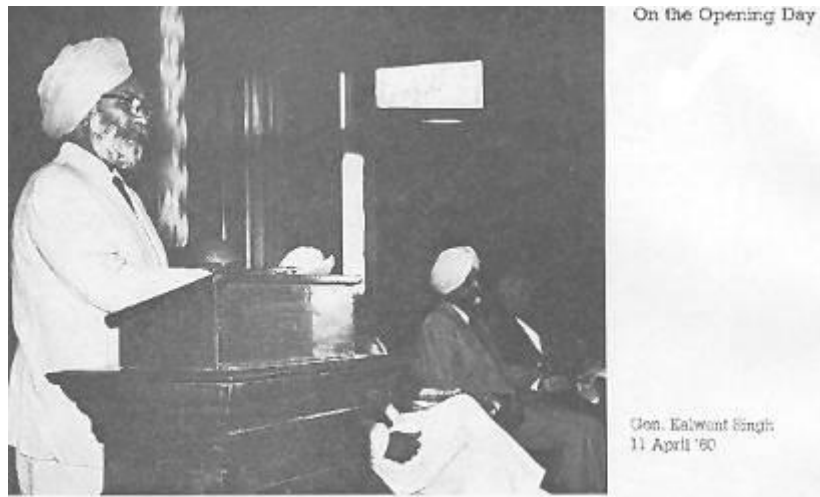
1. Lt. General Kalwant Singh
2. Sh. E.N. Mangat Rai
3. Dr. A.C. Joshi
4. Shri J.K. Kate
- 5.

Vide Item 11: The Board decided to appoint M/s A. Ferguson & Co. as School Auditors provided they did not charge more than Rs. 1000/- as Audit fees.

Vide Item 12: The Board Decided to **Change the Name of the School from “The Sainik School” to “The Punjab Public School”**.

Sd/- J.K. Kate
Secretary

Sd/ N.V. Gadgil
Chairman



SPEECH BY LT. GEN KALWANT SINGH on Day One of PPS April 11, 1960

I am here today, at the request of and on behalf of the Chairman, Board of Governors of the School – The Governor of the Punjab to preside at the beginning of this term – which is really the start of this School.

A year ago, our Chief Minister, at a meeting of the Post War Reconstruction fund at Raj Bhawan, Chandigarh, suggested the starting of a School in the Punjab on the lines of the Doon School. I fully supported him. I was asked to formulate a Scheme to start this School. I gladly accepted this undertaking as I felt there was a definite requirement for a School, run on Public School lines for the sons of serving officers, J.C.Os., and O.Rs. as also the Retired officers, J.C.Os and O.Rs.

I was particularly interested in the Scheme as the bulk of the money which has been set aside for this School by the P.W.R.F Committee had been put into a Fund during Second World War for the collective benefit of the O.Rs. , who had served during that War, or their dependents. It is,

therefore, in the fitness of things that this School should be started as a sort of a memorial to those belonging to the Punjab and who served during the Second World War.

I mentioned earlier that a year ago the decision was taken to start the School. It is no ordinary achievement I must express our gratitude to the Chief Minister and the Punjab Government who had given the School these palatial buildings as also the Guest House. My successor in Western Command – **Lt. Gen. P.N. Thapar** is to be thanked for getting the Scheme for the establishment of the School worked out. I had only given the outline plan to the S.O.I. Education – **Col. Mukand**. He worked out the plan in detail. I am so happy that I have been able to implement it. I was assisted by my old friend **Col. S. Naunihal Singh Mann, Mr. Achreja**, Secretary to Governor, and **Major Bhagat**, officiating S.O.I Education, in selecting the Headmaster and to select the site.

We owe it to him and to his staff who has been here since 1st Jan, who have been assisting him to get the show going. I know the amount of work he has put in, initially single-handed, to start the school. For example he has had to get each and every bit of furniture that we are using today. I would like to thank him very much indeed for what he has achieved in such a short time with a limited number of staff.

Now, the AIM of the School; it is to provide a Public School education to deserving sons of ex-servicemen, serving personnel of the Defence Services and civilians, with a view to developing them in body, mind and character and preparing them academically for entry to the National Defence Academy or for any other suitable career. Another object of the School is to instill in its students a spirit of loyalty, devotion and patriotic service to the country, and to inculcate qualities of leadership, personality, and discipline and team- spirit.

Military bias is intended to indicate that joining the NCC is compulsory for all boys. We will prepare you to take your place among the leaders of the future and will try to equip you for the Battle of Life. **You are free to choose a Military Career if you want to.**

You, my young friends, especially those who have been awarded scholarships, must work hard and take full advantage of the opportunity you have been given. In our country there is a great requirement for young men to come forward and help in the development plans being initiated by our Government.

I hope you will have a pleasant stay here and you will take full advantage of the facilities being made available not only as far as studies are concerned but also hobbies, games and outdoor activities.

Thank you very much, Mr. Kate for the welcome you have given to my wife and me.

D.

Correspondence between IJS Arora (J-40, 1967) and Ex-English BS Bhatnagar who later served as Headmaster in famous schools. Subject is honouring the Founder Members .

Dear friends, I trust with the Golden jubilee coming close, a lot of action plans must be moving forward. I had a subject on my mind for quite some time. A few days back I was in NY and having lunch with **VP Bindra (my class mate)** and the subject was again touched. **VP** as you all know is a virtual walkie-talkie encyclopedia of history from the school days! So it was good that this subject again came up. And the subject: **General Kulwant Singh** and his role in the very formation of our school in particular and the Sainik Schools in the erstwhile Punjab. If one of the very efficient and largest armies in the world has so many Generals hailing from PPS and the main command of the Navy the Western Command is under an ONA it is a matter of pride to all

of us. We all owe so much to our education. But I wonder if the man behind all this has somehow been forgotten.



Lt Gen Kalwant Singh (cup in hand) and Col NS Mann (tall with white turban) interacting with a school child

Gen. Kulwant Singh's vision and forethought and far reaching recognition of the middle level and lower level echelons of the army and the desire to see that the grateful nation should pay homage to them by educating their children proved correct. A large number of us rose from those middle class roots to higher levels to serve our nation. I wonder if many of us are aware of the General's role. As we plan the table top books and mementos, I would suggest and submit that this subject be taken as a research project funded by our ONA philanthropists **and a suitable way of recognizing the General's services be found.**

After all, what binds us all as ONs? Where does the spirit come from? What is the fountainhead of this inspiration? Most of us are nostalgic about our days in Nabha and quote from our wise teachers. There is a presumption of greatness, quality and good inherent in age. That historic association binds us. It nourishes the bond and inspires us to continue to do well and serve the nation in our own ways. "...inspired by glories past..." So why we are stuck to the past is because the past has the retaining power, is a proof of our capacity to overcome adversity and march on to greater glory. It is wisdom born of experience. Somewhere in our past **General Kalwant Singh** played a major part. It was he who picked the bursar of Sanawar as our first HM and so on...

I would like to leave this thought with you all. And of course request my friend VP to contribute further to this thought process. And then let us see how we can respect our past and the General's contribution to this cause.

Sincerely,

IJS Arora (J-40, 1967)

Dear Inderjit,

It was a pleasure to read your mail to the members of ONA in response to Dr Jashanjot's invitation to the ONA Day celebrations. With regard to your comments on **General Kulwant Singh**, I could not agree more with you. I would give all help and support - material or otherwise - to the PPS alumnus who takes up the task of writing about the General. In fact, I would dare to suggest that the fittest tribute to this great personality would be to name the Senior School auditorium as **General Kulwant Singh Hall** at the Golden Jubilee celebrations next year. Blessings and best wishes to you all.

Yours affly.

B S Bhatnagar

(Former Ravi Housemaster-PPS; Headmaster, St Paul's School, Darjeeling; Principal, The Daly College, Indore; Headmaster, The Lawrence School, Lovedale; Founder-Principal (1991-2005) and, later, Director, The Indian School, Muscat, Oman; and, presently, its Director Emeritus)

The Architect

The appointment letter which set the ball of Sainik School (later The PPS) rolling

20th November, 1959

Mr. J.K. Kate Appointment

From:-

Shri H.S. Achreja, IAS,
Secretary to Governor and
Honorary Secretary, Committee of Administration,
Punjab Post War Services Reconstruction Fund.

To

Major R.Som Dutt, ABC, M.A. (Cantab),
Headmaster, Lawrence School,
Sanawar (Simla Hills).

Dated Chandigarh, the 20th November, 1959.

Subject: Headmaster Sainik School.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter dated the 22nd October 1959, forwarding application of Shir J.K. Kate, for the post of Headmaster, Sainik School, I am desired to inform you that the Committee of Administration of the Punjab Post War Services Reconstruction Fund, on recommendation of the Sainik School Sub Committee, have decided to appoint the applicant as the first Headmaster at a salary of Rs. 1300/- in the grade of Rs. 800-40-1000/50- with free furnished residential accommodation. It was further decided that Shri Kate should be asked to take charge of his office from the 1st of January 1960, and to arrange to draw up the prospectus and the connected literature of the School by the 31st January, 1960, as also to take further steps for the renovation and equipment of buildings, recruitment of staff, etc., so as to start the School from April, 1960. I am, therefore, desired to request you kindly to obtain his release / deputation and make his services available to the Sainik School Sub Committee on the 1st January, 1960, so that the programme laid down by the Committee is carried out without any delay. Shri Kate may be asked to report for duty to the undersigned at Chandigarh, where his Headquarters will be located for a few days before shifting to Nabha which has been selected as the site for the School.

Yours faithfully,

Secretary to Governor and
Honorary Secretary, Punjab
Post War Services Reconstruction Fund.

No. : PWF/954 dated 20.11.1959

Mr JK Kate joins and history begins

Mr JK Kate formally joined as Headmaster on 30th December, 1959, and reported to the Governor's Secretary. He then returned to Sanawar and drafted the rules, regulations, prospectus and advertisements for various posts.

29th January 1960 First Meeting of the Committee Appointed to take Preparatory Steps to Start the Sainik School :-

The following were present at the meeting held at 11 a.m. on 29th January 1960 at the Chairman's House.

1. Lt. General Kalwant Singh.
2. Shri H.S. Achreja
3. Shri J.K. Kate.

Padamshri Mr. J.K.Kate: A life sketch



Mr Kate was born in a small town in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra on 12th August 1914. He moved to Pune at an early age and then moved to Baroda where he passed his matriculation. He studied in the well known Baroda High School and started his teaching career in the same school.

Baroda was a princely state in those days. He did his masters in Pali and as his first love was teaching he completed his teachers training as well. In his college he endeared himself to the teachers and Principal by his sincerity and hard work. He would take tuitions even when he was studying. The Patwa coaching classes where he taught were a cause of jealousy among the other teachers as his class was always full!

The Principal of the college, an Englishman by the name of Mr Romanc, would later recommend him to the Principal of Daly College Indore. After completing his teachers training (B.T.), he started his teaching career at Baroda High School, where he earned the reputation of being a good teacher.

He joined Daly College, Indore, also known as the Princes College, in 1943, as a teacher. In a reply to Mr Romanc's query regarding Mr Kate's interview, Mr Merchant the Headmaster of Daly College replied, "I didn't interview him, he interviewed me."

He served in the Daly College for ten years. The Principal of Daly College, Mr Jack, was to later write from England and tell Mr Kate, "**One day you will be Principal of this college.**"

Right from an early age he was interested in literature and poetry and wrote many poems, which were published. He also started '*Sharadutsav*', a poetry meet for poets. He wrote a poem detailing the history of the Gaikwads on the birth of Sangram Singh Gaikwad, the son of Pratap Singh Gaikwad, H.H of Baroda State, and thus came in close contact with the royal family of Baroda.

At Daly College, he started many new schemes including a House System for day scholars, which was much appreciated by the parents. He started a tuck shop for the school; this was also highly praised as everyone lived on campus, and would have to go a good five kilometers to get even a packet of biscuits! Thus his administrative skills got a fillip. By the time he left Daly College for Sanawar he was a House Master.

In 1953 Mr. Kate joined The Lawrence School, Sanawar, as a bursar. Apart from teaching he took over the administrative reins of the school. He introduced new ideas and brought about many changes in the school, whether it was replacing the western diet for an Indian one or hiring tailors to stitch uniforms or going to Bhakra Nangal to ensure the school got electricity (it got electricity for a few hours each day). In a short span of time he earned the respect of the teaching fraternity not only in Sanawar but in other public schools as well. In 1958 he was selected by The British Council to study the Public Schools in England.

In 1959 he was selected as Headmaster, to start the first Sainik School of India in Nabha, as envisaged by Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon, the then Chief Minister of Punjab. Though, with Mr John Martyn at Doon School, and Mr JTM Gibson at Mayo, English headmasters were the norm in those days, Mr Kate's name was recommended by Dr Dipak Bhatia, a renowned surgeon and the doctor to the governor of Punjab and a parent as well. Mr Martyn and Mr Gibson also recommended Mr Kate.

In 1961 the school was rechristened as The Punjab Public School. With his vision and dogged determination he brought the school at par with other well established public schools in India. In 1972 he was conferred the Padmashri for his contribution to education. **When asked how he felt when he met the President he said what gave him greater happiness was to see that the three aides who escorted him to the President were his ex students from PPS!**

In the same year his old school, Daly College called him to take over as its Headmaster to reestablish its former glory. For Mr. Kate it was like going back to his roots and he brought about sweeping changes which helped the school re-establish some of its credentials.

In 1978, the government of Haryana beckoned him to head their prestigious Sports Institute at Rai. He always loved the North and decided to join the Motilal Nehru School of Sports Rai, as Director. Not the one to take things easy he worked as hard as ever, in spite of his ill health.

In 1981 he retired and set up residence in Pune with his family.

This life sketch would be incomplete without a mention of Mrs. Nirmala Kate who stood by him through thick and thin and helped his dreams come to reality. By her calm and helpful nature she lent grace and dignity to whichever post Mr. Kate held, and worked as hard for the benefit of the school.

As was his nature he kept in touch with his old schools and school boys. There was a steady stream of visitors. It was then that he was in his element. The people of Nabha were close to his heart, his face would light up if they called or came and in the end it was they who took care of his heart with their care, magnanimity and love for him. For his boys and his teachers life had come full circle.

The end came on 5th August 1990. If he could live his life again, it is definite that he would still love to go back to Nabha and serve the boys he loved and cared for so much.

MEMORIES OF NABHA AND A GREAT HEADMASTER

By John Mallon (British Council)



John Mallon with 1967 ISC Batch. Second on his right is Vijay Kanwar who got motivated by his French lectures to take up writing in French and now lives in Paris. Next to him is Dr Jashanjot

In 1984 The British Council posted me from Caracas as Representative and Director in Portugal, and I decided to take my local leave on a visit to India and to see again JK Kate.

In 1968 I had left Nabha to take another degree in Edinburgh. I had wanted to stay on in India and there was a tempting possibility of Mayo where Headmaster Gibson was nearing retirement. But universal advice was that the Indian Public Schools were under threat. It was forecast by our senior officials in Delhi that the Schools would inevitably decline. True, there were anti-foreign demonstrations in the capital and Moraji Desai had set his face against the Public Schools, but I could not go along with such views, coming from The Punjab Public School where a dynamic headmaster, **J K Kate**, was embarked on expansion in an institution producing young, confident and able students who could lead the development of the largest democracy in the world.

Thus, in my return to India in 1984 to visit **JK Kate**, I was curious to see how the Indian Public Schools had fared. In the autumn of that year, I visited the Doon School on my way to Mussoorie, and of course that school was thriving and had greatly expanded. Sadly I could not get back to Nabha, as Punjab was a troubled state after the invasion of the Golden Temple; however, everywhere there was evidence that the Indian Public Schools, far from being in decline, had hugely prospered and were in great demand. By 1984 great changes had already

taken place in India, and the population of 500 million I had known in 1968 had now in 1984 grown to 800 million. The role of the Public Schools in this progress was self-evident, a role to which **JK Kate** had contributed so much.

In early 1964 I landed at Bombay in transit for Hyderabad where the Public School was an uneasy mixture of old Jagirdar traditions and the transition from a British headmaster, Arnold Brown, of the Everest crowd. Mukram Jah, the enlightened heir to the Nizam, was Chairman, but there was a melancholy air of decline which perhaps, influenced the impending withdrawal of British support for the Public Schools. It was decided to transfer me. My new posting to Nabha in 1965 was a revelation. Our Delhi Office had described **J K Kate** as the most impressive headmaster in India, and the Punjab Public School was bustling with new projects and an enthusiastic student body who represented all the optimism that would take India forward. What was extraordinary was the infallible direction that **J K** brought to the management of the school. He assembled a talented Indian staff with a minority of British subsidised teachers, and welded them into a cheerful and happy family. The school was housed in old imperial buildings but the whole atmosphere was one of modernity and new ideas. Its Headmaster had innumerable high level contacts and was indefatigable in promoting his school. The strong links with the Punjab State, the Sikh community, and the legal and civil and military institutions, gave the school a prominent and influential position in Punjab and nationally. I visited other Public Schools with **J K**, among them Mayo and Sanawar which had been long established and successful schools, but the **PPS** was up with them in all the traditional Public School virtues, and surging ahead with the imaginative leadership of **J K**.

A new and recent pleasure has been receiving the newsletters from the immensely successful former student association, run by people like **Dr Jashanjot Singh Bhangu**. The obvious enthusiasm and evidence of the huge success of the School, and the reminiscences of old Nabhaites brought back my own memories of '65 and '68: of **Sam Cowell**, who used to dine with us frequently to listen to Bach and our music collection, and **Miss Malkani** and her young staff who lived below our flat in the Primary School and gave such devoted service to young Nabhaites. The senior staff and housemasters were an outstanding and dedicated body of teachers. As a former sixth form master in Britain, I admired the success of my senior students in the Cambridge Certificate, and on the cricket and football fields where they soundly beat me. Reading through the correspondence from old Nabhaites, I was struck by how many of them now occupy prominent positions in India and abroad, and the obvious pride in their old school and its headmaster.

The Indo-Pakistan war was a bizarre interlude when I patrolled as warden with the VSO, **Janet Anderman**. In 1964 I had travelled over by ship to Bombay with Indian and Pakistani graduates from Sandhurst and the memory of their camaraderie and esprit de corps made me a little sad at the hostilities that were developing during my time in Nabha.

Founders' Days were always spectacular: in one of them, the India CIC, General Chaudhri, arrived by helicopter and expressed indignation about his namesake's book, *Continent of Circe*, until I gave him a copy at his departure. An odd event was a production of Drinkwater's Robin Hood play, which **J K** asked me to take over with **John Rigby**, although I secretly sympathised with the unfortunate students who had to take part. Students of my time will remember the visit

of Geoffrey Kendall's Shakespeare players with the small company running on and off stage in a variety of costumes and parts. We gave them dinner and saw how that extraordinary group was kept alive by the strange enthusiasm of the English medium schools for Shakespeare. As a counterbalance I have to confess to displaying British newspapers and comics in the school entrance hall – younger students lapped up Thunderbirds, but the most vociferous applause was for the Miss World report in the series of British films I got from the High Commission.

The **Mallon** family life was full of friendship and hospitality, largely due to the **Kates**. My wife, Ann, developed skills in Indian cuisine, helped by Nirmala Kate and her friends, and I acquired a preference for Indian and vegetarian food. Our third child, Margaret, had been born in Hyderabad, and our fourth, Mairi, in Delhi, while we were at Nabha. The last involved me with **J K** in my new MG in a collision with a military convoy on the Grand Trunk Road. Predictably, **J K's** contacts provided me with a jeep and a complete rebuild of the front of the MG - as a safeguard, a Puja was carried out on the car on its return. **Mr Oberoi, Sam Cowell's** replacement, became a great friend and tried to revise my written Urdu, while my sons became fluent in Hindi, Punjabi and even Tamil (the last from the ayah). But when we returned to Edinburgh they ran wild at school and their weakest subject was English! We were greatly helped by the Horlick's management in Nabha, although I declined their invitation to head in convoy at dawn for Delhi during the Indo-Pakistani war.

It was a great delight to meet up again with **J K** and Nirmala, their family, and all their friends in Poona during my return in 1984. I went on to Goa to visit the Portuguese archives and to meet their daughter, **Jyoti Kate (Mrs Mahajan)** and her family. It was a blow to learn in Lisbon later of **J K's** death. He had seemed so lively and well in Poona.

There are a host of memories which would need a book to recount.

I have had many fascinating and happy postings. Africa was a culture shock. We went on to Madrid and later South America – a lovely and exasperating land, and most recently Lisbon. There were visits to Singapore, Korea, Ceylon, South Africa, Rhodesia, Greece, Italy, Iran (under the Shah) and Baghdad before its troubles. But the most memorable experience was my all too brief three years in Nabha. **It was a privilege to serve under J K Kate in The Punjab Public School, which remains as his enduring legacy.**

John Mallon (Head of English, British Council, 1960s)

Remembering J.K. ...

By Mela Singh (The first office Superintendent of PPS)



Mela Singh (Office Superintendent) on left of JK Kate at later's farewell. On his right is young Madam Keerat Tandon child in centre maybe her daughter Amita?

It is difficult to sum up my experiences with Mr. Kate in just a few words. I shall, however, try to recollect just a few that have direct bearing on the life of a public school in general and our school in particular. When I joined the school in early sixties as an Office Superintendent, I was rather over-confident that it would be a very easy job to handle office work of such a small school. So far as the office work was concerned, there was no problem and I was often patted on the back by the then, Headmaster who was known for his expert handling and management of finances.

But this was not enough in a public school. I was told by Mr. Kate on more than one occasion, that the office cannot live a life different from the life of the school. Everything, every department of the school has to be public school like. I remember one instance when he virtually pulled me up for not arranging to send some peon to the Post Office for a teacher who had to send a money-order. He later explained to me that if the master had to run errands for small jobs like that and if he had to teach under tension and anxiety, what good work was he going to do in the class? He emphasized that if we were doing one small job for the master or anybody else who was on duty, we were helping the school in so many ways.

During Mid-Term treks and tours, it was my duty to send a peon to the residences of all the masters and find out if any service was required. During holidays and vacations we in the office had strict instructions to deliver the personal mail of staff-members at their respective residences. Mr. Kate told me that this served two purposes: one-a sound tradition of family life was established and two-no one could sacrifice school work on the pretext of a pressing domestic work. To me the logic seemed convincing.

The office culture in a public school has to be quite different from the much abused "babuculture" of ordinary offices. Mr. Kate was successful in achieving this right in the beginning. We were involved in almost every aspect of school life. "You must come out of your files and ledgers and live a more varied life," he would often say. Though membership of the Staff-Club was optional for the office staff, each one of us became a member and we never thought we were a different class.

Although we did not know most of the boys as closely as the housemasters and masters did, we had to deal with their parents on many occasions and this brought the office people also in the larger picture of the school family.

Now I can realize that strong foundation of human relationship goes a long way in the shaping of a school's total personality. When it was emphasized that human beings are more important than life-less files and ledgers and that clock-watching of eight hours is not better than honest work of a few hours, we felt proud of ourselves. The sound foundation of work based on this philosophy has paid rich dividends ever since the school started. Our accounts and management of budget have been envied even by well known schools like Doon, Sanawar, and Mayo. In fact all this was the result of teamwork and a strict watch by the people on the top. This practice has lived till now and worked well. Before doing anything, Mr. Kate's maxim was, "ask yourself whether it is good for the school and whether we could do without it. If it is good, go ahead."

The most difficult thing for most of us including masters was to go on casual leave unless it was unavoidable. I do not want to say that the rules were very strict. In fact there was no need for one to go on leave for small domestic work because they were taken care of by the school.

Some people have a remarkable memory about old boys and Mr. Kate is one of them. While sorting out the school mail, I was once unable to trace the house number of one boy to whom the letter was addressed. As usual I sought Mr. Kate's help and I was surprised to find that he not only knew his House No. but also his parents, home, and habits. He knew almost everything about all the old boys. Another such person was the late Ms. Malkani whom we often referred to as the school directory.

Often people talked about Mr. Kate's miserliness with regard to school expenditure. He was miser about time too. Once I was sent to Shimla to get the scholarship money released. He chalked out my programme himself in such a way that I had to spend two nights in the train and do the work in one day. In this way I was away from duty only for one day. Mr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, Speaker Lok Sabha once said, "Mr. Kate knows how to create interest in work whether it is teaching, office work or outdoor work." After trekking expeditions, he used to call a staff

meeting for 'stock-taking' as he would call it. He had a word of praise for those who kept the per-capita expenditure minimum and something else for those who exceeded the limit.

My first duty every morning was to, give him the upto-date financial position. "This," he would say, "helps me in taking decisions that involve money." The Accounts Section had strict instructions not to spend a single paisa more than the sanctioned limit. Once the Board asked him to bring down expenditure, including the salaries, by ten per cent. Without touching our salaries, he managed the accounts so skilfully that the Board in its next meeting called him a 'wizard of accounts.'

At the half yearly get-together, the entire teaching and office staff used to be the personal guests of the Headmaster and the Bursar. Mr. Kate had established personal relationship with everyone and while he drew strength from this relationship, the staff in the bargain got a constant stream of inspiration from him.

MR J K KATE - THE HEADMASTER

Obsessed with innovation and efficiency, Mr Kate had the unconscious expectation that great educationists and administrators always have - that he should be at the centre of any orbit. And he was. He was a visionary whose imagination was fired by grandiose projects, the more seemingly impossible, the better. When he arrived in Nabha in 1959 to establish the Punjab Public School he imposed his own granite discipline over its 'crew'. Never the curmudgeon of myth, he had a droll, genial personality that made supreme intelligence and formidable self-control.

Few would dispute that he was seen as a demanding, no-nonsense headmaster who aroused a mixture of respect, awe and fear. His intellect and fervour made a strong impression on all of us. "What counts is what you deliver," he said. He would say, "Yes". He would say, "No". But he never said, "Maybe". He used to say that efficiencies in the educational world were infinite, a faith grounded in the belief that there are no bounds to human creativity. He did it through sheer force of personality, coupled with an unbridled passion for a keen attention to details many heads would often overlook.

He had the gift of presence. When he walked into the Staff Common Room, people straightened their ties and held their breath in anticipation and he dazzled them with effortless command. No one worked harder at his job to prepare more diligently for each challenge. His stellar career, inspiring personal history and reputation for integrity had endowed him with a unique moral stature. He sometimes revelled in a good laugh and took a warm, caring and - there is no other word - paternal interest in the lives of the students and all those who worked with him.

When in early 1967 I was interviewed by him in Nabha for a teaching position at PPS what made me fall for him was his excitement and enthusiasm for his seven year old school. He talked with fire and grace and with apparently a profound knowledge of school education but was never didactic and did not at any stage monopolize the conversation. I feel incredibly privileged to have known him, and fortunate to have spent six years under him. Once I joined PPS I found that he could be gentle, kind, humorous and sympathetic, all at the same moment.

He never gave orders, only occasional suggestions and frequent keen insights into school matters. He was an astonishing man - truly a dazzler, brilliant and, when you were able to catch him in a reminiscent mood, an interesting raconteur - filled with restless energy, initiative and passion. He could be our toughest critic, restlessly and relentlessly urging us to examine what we had done and how to do it better next time often leaning in to ask the tough, embarrassing - and central - question the rest of us had been dancing around. He could actually be quite demanding and he expected all of us to not only keep our lockers clean but also to dress well and be supremely punctual and he was not concerned with being liked as much as he was concerned with being ethical and doing the right thing for everyone.

He was completely down to earth, otherwise, and closer to it than most. This seeming paradox dissolved in the face of admiration and affection all of us felt for him as a person. And, at the same time, somewhat reserved, appreciative of humour, unobtrusively purposeful, never bitter and always brave, matter-of-factly, loyal to his friends and deeply devoted to his family, he ennobled all his human relationships. At the regular meetings with housemasters we could see that he was a consummate host with the grace and dignity of a statesman. He and Mrs Kate agonized over the smallest details that might affect the happiness and success of others, unaware that they were naturally one of the most delightful and accomplished presence in our lives and those of the thousands of their admirers.

Looking for recognition and appreciation was not one of his preoccupations. He treated his election to the chairmanship of the Indian Public Schools' Conference and the award of Padma Shree with modesty and humility. He was like those wise men, a rare trait indeed, who remember the good deeds of others and forget their own. I think of him as essentially a man of goodwill, that is someone who wanted life to be worked according to the highest values and truest principles available to us; these were reflected and expressed in his professional life, public engagements and private family home.

He was a man of extraordinary fertility. All was grist to his mental mill. His bright, intelligent and persevering secretary, Pushapraj, would confirm that when he spoke he cut clean through the matter and never wasted words. Although there was a prominent sign, PLEASE BE BRIEF, on his table for the visitor/caller to see he listened with total concentration to what one had to say, a sympathetic grin flickering at the corner of his mouth. People stood in awe of his sagacity. I know better than anyone else that he never lost his temper. What he did do, albeit rarely, was to misplace it. He would not suffer fools gladly and he disapproved of inefficiency, tardiness and plain garden-variety stupidity. Most of us who learned the ropes of headmastering from Mr Kate have tried to imbibe from him the value of time, the pleasure of working, the obligation of duty, the courage of convictions, the virtue of patience, the power of kindness, the dignity of simplicity and the strength of character but how much of these, we do not know. Our gratitude to him is exceeded only by his generosity.

How should I describe Mr Jagannath K Kate - the 'juggernaut' amongst headmasters? "He was a tradition - no, more than a tradition. He was an event in the lives of hundreds and thousands of Nabhaite students, staff and parents." A splendid Indian!

There is an old Irish saying that goes something like this: "Take a good long look, my son, for once he's gone, you'll not soon see his like again." Will there be another headmaster like Mr Kate? I wonder!

B S BHATNAGAR

(In chronological order, formerly Ravi Housemaster; Head of English and Editor-PPS Chronicle; Headmaster, St Paul's School, Darjeeling; Principal, The Daly College, Indore; Headmaster, The Lawrence School, Lovedale, Ooty; and, Founder-Principal, The Indian School, Al Ghubra, Muscat, Oman.)



A young Mr JK Kate being introduced to the President at Nabha Railway Station.



In step with the President.



With one of the many dignitaries that came to PPS, Gen JN Chaudhari Chief of Army Staff



Digging for a Swimming pool, one of the innumerable structures that he added to PPS infrastructure

Finally time to leave PPS

It is not sure what made Mr JK Kate leave PPS but he in his own words felt that school needed a change of Headmasters to progress. Some felt that he had been hit by the death of his elder son **Jeevan Kate (Satluj)** in IMA at a promising age. The School where Jeevan grew up, kept reminding him of his son. Another reason could be the longing for roots in the last phase of life-- for he went back as Principal to Daly College, Indore, where he had started his Public Schools career---True to the words of its English Principal under whom he had taught earlier,

When he had earlier served in the Daly College for ten years, the Principal of that College, Mr Jack, had later written from England to tell Mr Kate, “**One day you will be Principal of this college.**”



A parting gift from Mr GS Punia, the Bursar.



The final pull through gates of the PPS before hitting the road. Mr Katyal and Mr Nigam are on the right holding one side of the rope.

ONA and JK Kate

Mr JK Kate had a flair for doing everything that was required in a Public School. He got the ONA started in his time in 1965 as the first batch passed out. Mr OP Bhatnagar was appointed Staff Secretary for it. The words Nabhaite and Old Nabhaite's Association took root from that day.



Mr JK Kate with Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh and wife with some Old Nabhaite's at an ONA Day, 1968.

In 1980s when Mr Kate developed bad Heart condition, the Old Nabhaite's who loved him so much collected funds to send him to USA for Surgery. After his return he wrote a long letter to the Old Boys and the PPS which was published in the "ONA NEWS BULLETIN" the then name of "The Eagle". Below is a scanned copy of it. It mentions how different people came around to help him in his hour of need. Being an honest man he had no financial reserves when he retired. All he had was a wealth of his ex-students and their love.

Mr. Kate Writes

I must confess that I had little hope of being able to go U.S.A. for this surgery, when Dr. Parulkar, an eminent heart-surgeon of Bombay, advised me to get operated by Dr. Johnson at Milwaukee. Noticing my hesitation on account of my financial position, he made enquiries about my background. On learning about my association with Public Schools, he encouraged me to raise funds.

Thereafter he wrote to Dr. Johnson to give me maximum concessions. Dr. Johnson set January 26 as the date of operation but the cost of operation were so staggering that I was not sure whether the required amount would be forthcoming on time. Mr. Y. P. Bharadwaj of Raj. (O.N.) Mr. S. R. Das of Sanawar and Mr. K. C. Tandon and Kishore Musale, both O.Ns. were very optimistic and advised me to go ahead with my plans for the operation. The Government of India took a sympathetic view of my request for passage to U.S.A. a letter was issued to Air India to fly Vilas as my escort, and me, from New York and back.

Meanwhile Mr. Pushp Raj (O.N.) informed me that the O.Ns. settled in U.S.A. were keen to help me financially and otherwise. The O.N.A. supplied him and me with the addresses and Phone numbers of O.Ns. settled in U.S.A. whom I was thus able to contact. The O.N.A. also supplied me addresses of O.Ns. in India too. I was thus able to write to them for help.

Group Captain A J S. Grewal, Head Master, P.P.S. took the lead in the campaign to raise funds. Munjal Brothers, Kishore Musale, (Sutlej) Kamjit Chauhan, (Ravi) Jashanjot Singh (Sutlej) made frantic efforts to contact other old Nabhaites and raise funds. Pravara Nagar Public School, Sanawar, Rai and Daly College Indore also collected some funds. Mr. Prasad of Bhavan's Public School, Baroda & Dr. S D. Singh of Scindia School, Gwalior also were successful in raising funds. To my surprise the response was very encouraging and gave me confidence that the minimum target could be reached before I left India. Kamaljit Chauhan (Ravi) arranged for foreign exchange and Kishore Musale made travel arrangements. Col V.S Bhardwaj (Brother of Mr. Y.P. Bhardwaj) took the trouble of calling on me in Poona and ensured that my journey was quite comfortable. Bedekar (Sutlej) arranged a car for my journey from Pune to Bombay on 19th January.

Vilas and I left Bombay at 0500 hours on 20th January by Air India flight. We were given most comfortable seats in the plane. After we left London, I got an attack of breathlessness. We were carrying all emergency medicines and injections. As the oral administration of drugs did not bring any relief, I was required to take some injections. The Air India Crew made an announcement to find out whether there was any doctor on the plane. An American lady doctor was first to reach and when she injected the required medicine, I felt much better.

At New York, though the Air India Staff had made all arrangements for my comfort I breathed a sigh of relief only when I saw Jaspal Chatha (Ravi). He had made arrangements for us to spend the night at his friend's luxurious flat. His friend and he really took a lot of trouble and saw us off, next morning on a flight to Milwaukee.

Darshan Singh Dhaliwal (S-6) of Rakhara Village near Nabha, had made all arrangements to receive me at Milwaukee Airport. His younger brother Charanjit Singh (Jamuna) was waiting for us. I was amused to see the number plate on his car

bearing the name RAKHARA. Darshan, a big oil dealer in that part of U.S.A. took me to a friend Dr. Manmohan Singe for lunch at his house and later the family who were to be our hosts till I was admitted to St Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee.

Within minutes of my admission to St. Mary's Hospital on 23rd January, the hospital staff, started carrying out various tests. On the morning of 26th at about 7 a.m. a nurse took me to the operation room (they don't call it "theatre"). Soon after Dr. Johnson arrived and introduced himself to me. They started the operation at 7-30 a.m. and finished at 3-30 p.m. Vilas was anxiously waiting in the adjoining room. Later on he told me that the assisting doctor would come to him every hour and report about the progress of the operation. The operation involved by passing of six blocked blood vessels and cleaning of the two.

Immediately after the operation I was shifted to the Intensive Care Unit which is far better equipped than any one I saw in Indian Hospitals.

On the second day I was informed that I would have to undergo another operation to arrest the peruse internal bleeding. This operation lasted two hours and I was back in the I.C. Unit.

Nurses there were so well trained and courteous that within a week they made a bad patient like me to move about with an oxygen cylinder trailing along. But the drugs administered to me caused nausea and consequently complete loss of appetite. Moreover my being a vegetarian caused the catering staff a great headache. In the end doctors allowed me to get Indian food from the Indian families in Milwaukee. Darshan Singh who visited me very frequently, arranged for "Mah ki dal and Tandoori Roti". and gave me 7up which I really liked. I was discharged on the 20th February i.e. nearly four weeks after my admission.

Later when ONA was formally formed he wrote a personal letter to Dr Jashanjot advising him on how to run the ONA and how to manage its finances.

On a personal note, I would like ONA to be a selfless association giving back to almamter and the PPS community. This is what Mr JK Kate would have wished.

Below are copies of his letter (dated 14-10-84) inside and out side. Note how he has used every inch of space even on the sides. He was hoping to be in Nabha at the Silver Jubilee in 1985. He talks about ONA finances and advises about Life Membership and fixed deposits and Income Tax exemption etc to keep ONA viable. He has even given calculations on how Rs 300 LM fee will bring Rs 36-45 annual interest and only 50% of this should be used for ONA activities.

Following this advice, in spite of the fact that ONA has passed through several hands, not a single penny of Life Membership has been used. Only part of the interest is used. This has helped ONA build some semblance of a corpus.

Inside

T. No 51635 Pune 14¹⁰/₈₄

Dear Jashrajot,

Many thanks for your letter. Though I did not receive my copy of O.N.A. Bulletin, I saw the one received by Vilas & read it.

Please accept my thanks for editing my letter so well. Rest assured that I shall try to contact O.N.A. in Pune & Bombay.

I am sorry my health does not permit me to undertake journey to Nabha this year. But if all goes well I hope to be there in 1985.

I am glad the school is doing well. Please do convey

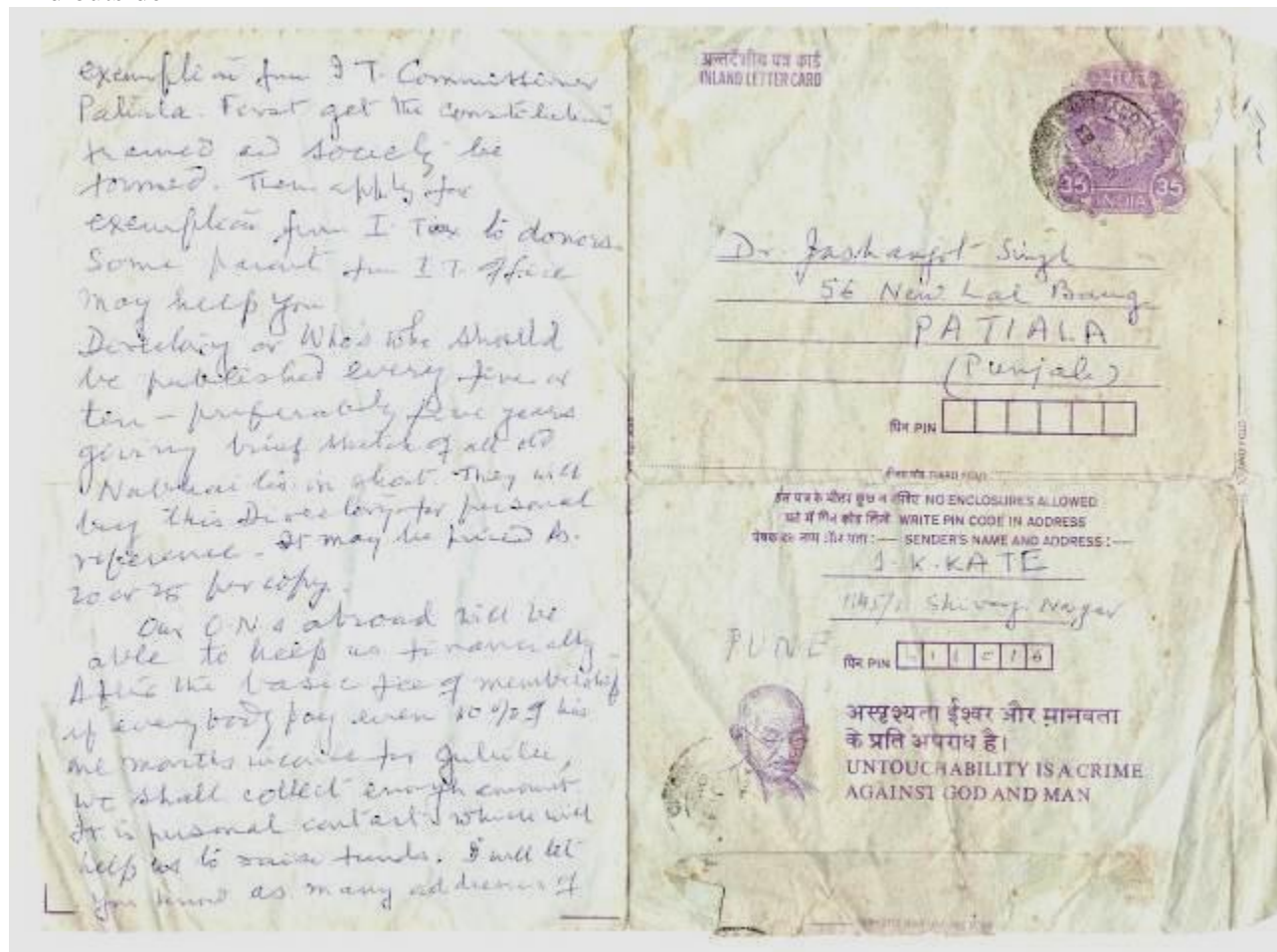
My happiness over it to Prof. Kapote & Grewal.

The way you are getting response I am sure your efforts will be successful. It is rather difficult to pay the subscription every year. Therefore a boy should be persuaded to become a "Life Member" by surrendering his Current Money or part of it. I do not know what is the C.M. now. But if each student gives Rs 300/- at the time of leaving school, the amount would be enough to carry on O.N.A. activities. It will bring an interest of Rs. 36 to 45 depending how we invest it of this Rs. 50% should be spent on Bulletin and half should be put in an endowment fund. You should also get Income tax

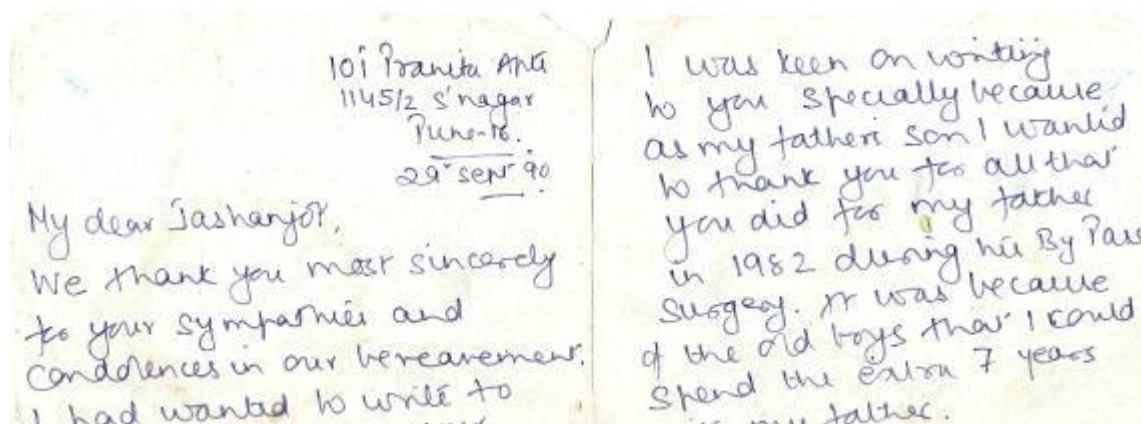
Please accept my Congratulations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the School.

Prakash

And outside



Below is a half torn letter addressed to Dr Jashanjot by Vilas Kate son of Mr JK Kate on 29th Sept, 1990 after “The Great Headmaster of The Punjab Public School, Nabha” passed away. The second half of this letter expresses his gratitude to all Old Boys for helping him spend seven extra years with his father.



Dr Jashanjot(S-52,1967)

The Pillars(*Gurus*)

(In this part only those teachers find mention on whom we could get material written by others and who were teaching in the first few years in PPS. It is by no means a complete coverage of 50 years. If you were impressed and inspired by a particular teacher or teachers, write to us. We would like to print about them in future editions of The Eagle.)

“I think a building is a not a school or a home. Any institution exists or survives by the people who run it. In school, it was the teachers who gave us their unconditional love which has made us what we are today.” (Anonymous quote)

The staff that started the ground work of PPS

Shri J K Kate, M.A., LLB. BT

Dr. Surjit Singh, M. Sc., Ph D.

Mr. S.C. Cowell, B.A. T.T.C.,

Shri Joginder Singh, M.A.

Shri M N Tankha, M.A., B.Sc.

Mrs. I.S. Lyall, T.T.C.

Miss. K. Pannu, M.A.

Shri S.C. Vishnoi, M. Sc.

Shri G. S. Punia, B.A., LLB

Shri Y.P. Bhardwaj, M.A. B. Ed.

Shri O.P. Bhatnagar, M.A.

Medical Officer: Dr. Ishwar Swarup, M.B.B.S. Civil Surgeon, Nabha

Office Supdt.: Shri S K Jain, B.Com

Follow up 1960

To start a new school with no staff, no infrastructure, and no students, demanded vision, intelligence and the co-operation of a dedicated team. **Mr. JK Kate** began to build one with **Mr Samuel Charles Cowell**, an English teacher, who had recently retired from Sanawar. On **Mr Kate's** request to join him at Nabha and help him in kickstarting the new venture, Mr Cowell came out of his retirement to lend a helping hand to his former colleague. **Mr Cowell**, former deputy Headmaster of at Sanawar, had the reputation of being a strict disciplinarian at Sanawar and he brought every bit of it to Nabha. Interviews were also conducted for the post of Senior Master, teachers, administrative staff, matrons, nursing sister and other ancillary staff.

Though **Mr Cowell** had promised to join PPS, the credit for officially reporting first on duty goes to Mr **Mukut Narain Tankha** who had started his career as a Geography teacher at Modern School, New Delhi. Though the exact dates are unknown, both **Mr Cowell and Mr Tankha** joined PPS in the month of March, 1960. It was the trio of **Mr Kate, Mr Cowell and Mr Tankha** that prepared the blueprint for functioning of the school. Mr Kate's unique ability to spot and nurture talent ensured recruitment of promising and passionate teachers. Under the leadership of Mr Kate, these very teachers were to make PPS, Nabha, the envy of all leading public schools in the country.

The Core Team of the School



From left, Miss GB Malkani, Michael Vodden, SC Cowell, GS Punia (bursar), Dr Surjit Singh (SM), Mr JK Kate with YB Chavan, Defence Minister (1961) followed by MN Tankha.

The English Department was spearheaded by **Mr Cowell** and he was ably assisted by **Mr Joginder Singh**. For Commerce it was **Mr Mathu** while **Miss Jasbir Lamba** (later Mrs. Butalia) and **Mr OP Bhatnagar** handled Punjabi and Hindi respectively. **Mr Tankha** as mentioned earlier taught Geography and Mr YP Bhardwaj was the first history teacher of the school. Mr S C Vishnoi took charge of the Physics department. It ought to be mentioned here that in those early days, teachers taught not only their own subjects but a few more as well.

Meanwhile, teachers showed a keen interest in the overall development of the boys and took initiative to start many new activities. The school's first music teacher Mr S R Chatterjee started the Music Circle.

“When I compared our ISC results with those of reputed public schools like Doon, Sanawar, Mayo and Lovedale, I found that our boys did better in Mathematics and Science subjects than boys from these schools. We were beaten in English Language and Literature but this was understandable taking into account the social and economic background of our boys.” **Mr JK Kate**

Having started from scratch in 1960 amongst ruins of erstwhile rulers' buildings and having faced a flood in its very first year, Mr Kate and his team of hardworking, sincere and dedicated team of teachers was, by 1965, delivering some of the best ISC (Senior Cambridge) results. This made established Public Schools which prided in taking Senior Cambridge exams, sit up and take notice of PPS, Nabha. In the following years it started beating everyone.

THE PUNJAB PUBLIC SCHOOL
NABHA
CLASS XI A (December 1966)



Chairs:—Harmander Singh, Jaspal Singh Chattha, Preet Kamal Bedi, Navinder Kohli, J. K. Kate, G. P. Sharma, Vijay Parkash, Muljeet Singh Mehni, Har Amol Singh
 Head Boy (Headmaster) (Form Master)
 Standing 1st Row:—Charanjeet Singh Aulakh, Preetinder Singh Lamba, Hardev Singh Sajwa, Vipin Bakshi, Ashok Kumar Bolwani, Lakhinder Singh, Ravi Narula,
 Jasvinder Singh Panaych, Inderjeet Singh Aulakh.
 Standing 2nd Row:—Vinay Chhapkatti, Manjeet Singh Datta, Atvinder Singh Bubber, Ashok Duttia, Bhupender Singh, Suresh Sofat, Pawanbeer Singh, Parampal Singh Coonar

Class of 1966. 24 students: It had one of the best Senior Cambridge results in India. Three went to AFMC, One to AIIMS, Two to state Medical Colleges, One to IIT, One to BITS Pilani, Two went for Marine Engg, One is Prof of Eco in a NY college, One is CA from UK with his own firm in Canada and is Chancellor of Kwantlein University, BC. One is an advocate, one died young, the rest went to Defence Services, attaining ranks of Col and above.

This pattern was followed in later years, making other schools envy The Punjab Public School at Nabha.

Michael Henry Dodsworth Vodden

(*The man who gave us our very own original School Song to be proud of!*)

March 13, 1962 saw the arrival of a man who was to play a very important role in PPS. He was *the teacher* most admired by Mr JK Kate for bringing new ideas into PPS on English teaching for non- English students and on handling children in a boarding school. He is also credited with authoring “The School Song” when PPS was an all boys school.

Mr Vodden conducted a seminar for the teachers in English in the second week of the same month of his arrival. Mr Vodden had made teaching of English in India his special field of research. He summarized his findings and suggestions in the following seven points:

- 1) Teach beginners a nucleus of structure and vocabulary
- 2) Teach structures which are troublesome because they are liable to incorrect and unacceptable usage
- 3) Observe faults and take steps to remedy them
- 4) Give the pupils opportunity for free oral expression in English even at a stage when they will make mistakes.
- 5) Teach the pupils to comprehend precisely what they hear and read
- 6) Teach the pupils to think and express themselves accurately and logically.
- 7) Help the pupils positively to enjoy reading and writing.

Interestingly Mr Vodden felt that the role of one's mother-tongue was extremely important for the child to learn English. He felt, "*Mother tongue is a device available for the use of the teacher of English. It is not a plague to be avoided at all costs.*"

Mr Kate expressed his deep admiration for Mr Vodden in the following words:

"There are great men in whose presence we feel an overwhelming sense of smallness. There are greater men who have the gift of making us feel that we are not without potentialities of greatness. One such was Mr Vodden".

A farewell party was organized for Mr Vodden when he left in December 1964 .

Immediately on his return to England, Mr Michael Vodden's services were recognized by the British Government which honoured him with the award of MBE for his services in PPS (see below).



MV outside the back of the Junior School.

A Tribute to Mr. Vodden

J.K. Kate

If I am ever asked to write the early history of the school, I shall mention three dates as being of outstanding importance. The first, 14th April 1960, when the school actually started functioning; the second 11th April, when Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Late President of India, formally inaugurated the school; and the 13th of March, 1962 when Mr. M.H.D. Vodden arrived in Nabha to work as a teacher of English for two and a half years.

When we approached the British Council with a request to lend us the services of an Englishman to teach English in the Senior School, we hardly expected to get a man whose impact on the life of the school would be so far reaching and whose contribution to its life would be so unique as Mr. Vodden's has been.



The staff (early 1960s) that gave PPS such a sound base that it has withstood ups and downs in the decades that followed. Mr JK Kate and Mr Vodden are in the centre (sitting row)

From what I have come to know of Mr. Vodden, I can say that his first love is India, his second is teaching. In Nabha he found both and that is why, I think, he was able to give his best to the school.

His approach to the teaching of English is an entirely new one, one which has proved very effective. Since we do not insist on any knowledge of English on the part of a boy at the time of his admission, we get quite a few boys in class V, which is our lowest class, from Hindi and Punjabi medium schools. These boys don't know the ABC- of English when they come to us. We are expected to prepare them for the Indian School Certificate Examination in seven years. Thus the problem of teaching English in our school is more difficult than it is in other preparatory or Public Schools where boys start learning English at the age of five. We have had, therefore, to devise ways and means of solving this problem.

In addition to taking senior classes, Mr. Vodden, devoted most of his time to this problem. The English syllabus he has left with us covers all the problems that generally face us. Having had to confront these problems himself, he has been able to plan a syllabus that is an answer to all of them. It has proved to be a boon to all my teachers of English.

As a teacher Mr. Vodden was simply superb. The boys thoroughly enjoyed his lessons, which invariably opened up new spheres of interest for them.



With class of 1964: Treman Dhillon (Beas), Head Boy on his left and Ishpal Ghai (President's Gold Medal winner and first PPS student to get into AIIMS) on his right; Tej Kumar Sapru (Lt Gen-Retd) is seated second from right; Gurinder Dhanoa (Security Advisor to PM of Mauritius) is seated second from left

His term with us was to expire at the end of May 1964, but the class, which he had been teaching since his arrival in 1962, was to sit for the Indian School Certificate Examination in Dec. 1964. I therefore requested him, with the consent of the British Council, to extend his stay to December so that he could see his class through their final examination. He readily agreed to do so, though it meant a separation from his family. During this term he also worked as Senior Master. The help and guidance he gave to all the teachers in planning their lessons, setting their papers, correcting home-work and so on has resulted in marked improvement in our teaching standards.

Apart from his contribution in the field of teaching, his creative approach and his sensitiveness to the needs of children has brought about a very close relationship between the staff and boys. He was one of the most popular teachers and the boys simply loved him. In the school building, in the boarding-house, on the playgrounds - he was seen surrounded by boys every where. On Sundays his house was a haven where everyone felt himself welcome. The boys would come to borrow books, play records, and use tape-recorder or his film projector. Because of his sympathetic and genuine interest in every one's problems and troubles, those who went to him invariably came away feeling greatly benefitted and relieved.

He took an active part in organising the School Council and participated in all its meetings. The frankness with which the boys spoke at the meetings of the council was largely due to the encouragement they got from him. The council meetings have proved very useful. It was his idea to have representatives from the junior school on the council and our experience has proved that was indeed a wise step.

Mr. Vodden has given many things to the school but one, which every member of the school community will remember forever, is the school song.

We were all happy to hear that immediately after his return to England from Nabha, he was awarded the M.B.E. by Her Majesty's Government. Seldom could an award have been so richly deserved. I had come to rely on Mr. Vodden so much in such matters as the selection of staff, disciplinary problems of the school, and the introduction of new ideas both within and outside the classrooms that I miss him very much. He had adjusted himself to the conditions in this country and identified himself so much with the school that for all of us he ceased to be a foreigner. This, I think, is the greatest tribute I could pay him: He was a great man in whose presence, instead of being overwhelmed, we felt our own potentialities of greatness.



Michael Vodden outside Buckingham Palace gates with wife and sons after being honoured with MBE

BELOW IS COPY OF THE LIST OF MBE AWARDEES 1965, Micheal Henry Dodsworth Vodden's name has been made bold.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE LONDON GAZETTE, 1ST JANUARY 1965

Arthur Vivian THOMAS, Esq., Senior Experimental Officer, Forest Products Research.....

.....Joseph George TURNER, Esq., General Manager, Suprema Poultry Farmers (Western) Ltd.

Joseph Gordon TURVEY, Esq., lately Senior Field Secretary, National Association of Boys' Clubs.

Elijah TWIGGER, Esq., B.E.M., J.P., Chairman, Coventry, Nuneaton and District War Pensions

Committee.

Miss Agnes Mary UNSWORTH, Principal, Newsham Drive Women's Centre, Liverpool.

John Joseph VICKERSTAFF, Esq. For political and public services in the County of Durham.

Irene Agnes, Mrs. CAUSABON-VINCENT, Regional Civil Defence Organiser, Kent, Women's Voluntary Service.

Michael Henry Dodsworth VODDEN, Esq., lately Master at Punjab School, Nabha, India, British Council.

Miss Alice Mary WALKER, General Secretary for England, Girl Guides Association.

Vodden, 1921 – 1990.

By Roger Miall (VSO 1962-63)

Michael Vodden had a wonderful capacity for friendship, regardless of who you were. Thus during the time he taught at Nabha from March 1962 to December 1964 he became very popular with everyone at PPS and those in the local community. He spoke quietly, never raising his voice in class, and commanded natural respect from all he came in contact with. He hated pomposity and was always happy talking to interesting people in Nabha's bazaar as he loved India.

In recognition of his excellent work at PPS he was awarded an MBE. At first he thought about not accepting it as he felt he had just been doing his job and considered he had done nothing spectacular. However Michael, his wife Vera, and their elder twins, Christopher and Paul, duly went to Buckingham Palace in 1964 to receive his honour from the Queen. When she was pinning the medal on him, there was some difficulty so, to relieve the embarrassment, Michael started to talk to Her Majesty and soon she was giggling. Vera's comment was "Typical – charming all the women; he is even chatting up the Queen!"

Michael Henry Dodsworth Vodden came from a strict Edwardian family and grew up in East Yorkshire. His father was a vicar in The Church of England and in due course was appointed as Bishop of Hull. Michael went to Repton Public School and was head boy in his last term. He was an excellent squash player, cricketer, won medals at rifle shooting at Bisley, the National Shooting Centre, and always tried to do things to the very best of his ability.

He won a place at Exeter College, Oxford, but World War II intervened and he joined the British Army. Michael fought in North Africa and in Italy where he came to love the Italian language. Thus, on returning to England in 1945, he decided to read Italian at Oxford. He was also disillusioned by war; over time became a pacifist, and joined The Society of Friends (commonly called Quakers).

When on vacation from university at his parents' house in Yorkshire, he met an attractive girl in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (popularly known as FANY). It was love at first sight for both and Vera and Michael got married in September 1948.



b) Michael and Vera Vodden in 1987.

Their twin sons, Christopher and Paul were born the next summer, later to be followed by William, and then twin girls, Emma and Sarah, who were just 2 ½ when they came to Nabha. William, not being a twin, soon adopted Matti, a puppy of 57 varieties and in the evenings we used to take the dog for walks along the canal near the Junior School and throw sticks into the fast flowing water for Matti to retrieve.

Michael's first posting with The British Council was to Mumbai and he soon fell in love with India. He learnt to speak Hindi, enjoyed the culture and above all the people he met. After a while Michael became restive at being stuck behind a desk. His love of languages and literature found its proper outlet when he became head of the language department at St. Peter's State School at Panchghani in Maharashtra during the 1950s.

Michael enjoyed sharing his love of poetry and literature with others. He encouraged creative writing and hence motivated students to use their imagination when writing about what interested them most. He believed that grammar and spelling should not be allowed to get in the way of expressing oneself, and he was reluctant to use a red pen where to do so might inhibit a boy's imaginative writing.

Five months after the Voddens arrived at Nabha, Michael and William met me at Palam Airport. I was the first of what turned out to be a number of VSO volunteers to teach at PPS during the 1960s. They and all the teachers made me most welcome, and Michael soon taught me the basics of how to teach Class VIA. (I had only left boarding school in England the month before and, at 18, was hardly older than some of the boys in the Senior School.)

I recall that often a twinkle would come in Michael's eye and, with gentle humour, he would suggest where I should also best direct my energies in the Senior School. Sports were a weekday activity, but at weekends we started swimming in the canal, going for rambles through the woods where we "discovered" the Maharajah's garage full of vintage cars, and the tanks where Nahba's army elephants once bathed.

Messrs Kate and Vodden would spend hours in the evenings talking about the running of the school and teaching. It was even known for Mrs. Kate to send Guti or Kalu down to the front

door of the Junior School where JK and Michael were still talking in the car hours after they had arrived, and tell them that supper was getting cold. Michael privately told me that, whilst these conversations in the car were very worthwhile, the headmaster would sometimes get so animated that he would completely ignore where he was driving and they were lucky if they got round the only two bends between the Senior and Junior Schools.

It was through Michael and my getting to know the Peace Corps volunteers working on community development nearby that Dick Pine helped set up a poultry unit with 300 day old chicks outside the Junior School.

Lila Kak (now Bhan) and her family very kindly invited the Voddens, Mike Binnie, who was teaching in Patiala, and his family, and me to their summer home in the Kashmir hills in July 1963. We camped in Pundit Kak's orchard and were regularly woken early in the mornings by herds of huge goats passing our tents. Michael once found himself facing one of these monsters whilst sitting on a toilet in the orchard. At other times he led fishing trips and swimming in the Dal Lake. The Kak family looked after us marvellously well and took us for picnics in interesting locations.



Family fishing in Kashmir whilst staying with the Kaks in July 1963

When Michael Vodden left Nabha in December 1964 he went home to Yorkshire where he studied at Leeds University for two years and wrote several educational books. These include:-

- **New English Workbooks: book 7 by Vodden and Ridout. 1966.**
- **Rhythm and Intonation. 1967.**
- **The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language. 1970.**

1967 saw Michael Vodden based in The British Council office in Kolkata running courses and seminars for post graduate students specialising in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). This was his last posting in his beloved India.

Whilst on leave in the UK in the summer of 1970, Michael started having blackouts. Fortunately his condition was correctly diagnosed and he was fitted with one of the early pacemakers.

However he was advised not to return to India as there was no support for such patients there at that time.

Michael next turned his hand to teaching in his native Yorkshire. The local authorities were having difficulty recruiting someone to teach “traveller” children, as they were seen as dirty and marginalised members of society. Michael loved it and the only drawback about the job was the lice. He had to strip off every evening and put his teaching clothes in an airtight bag to be washed. He did not mind.

With regret Michael and Vera separated in 1972, though they always remained on friendly terms. Michael found a new partner, Valerie, and they were together for the rest of his life. They set up a children’s book shop in Beverley, East Yorkshire, which was popular but not commercially successful.

In the late ‘70s he became a disciple of Bhagwan Shri Rajneesh and took to wearing maroon clothes. He got rid of all his worldly possessions, except for his Sony Walkman on which he listened to Bhagwan’s teachings, which he likened to those of Christ. He also started visiting long term offenders in prison.

Some of Michael’s happiest times in the mid ‘80s were when he and Valerie became summer caretakers of William Wordsworth’s former home, Dove Cottage, near Grasmere in the Lake District. There was little or no pay for this job and the cottage was very small and Spartan, but this all had great appeal to Michael as he knew Wordsworth’s poems well. Whilst in Grasmere, they befriended a family and Michael particularly connected with their eight year old son, Rowan, who had a terminal disease. Michael was struck by Rowan’s candour about death and it made a great impact on him. Michael had a great ability to see people as individuals and to make friends with folk of all ages and social standing. He often talked about his chance meetings with interesting people. No doubt they felt the same about him.

In early May 1990 Michael Vodden was not feeling well and it was discovered that he had liver cancer. He died six weeks later with peace and dignity surrounded by Valerie, her son, his daughters, Sarah and Emma, and his three months old grandson, Joseph. Vera died ten weeks later to the hour also of cancer.



Michael and his daughter, Sarah Baskerville, shortly before he died.

The Vodden children, who were raised in India, now live in the UK and the USA and have families of their own. My thanks to them for much of the above information about Michael Vodden's later years, and for the photographs.

The School Song

In a special function organized on **January 28th 1963**, Mr Terry, Principal of Thapar Polytechnic Institute (now Thapar University of Technology, Patiala) **unveiled the School Song** composed by Mr Michael Vodden and the tune was set by none other than Mr Terry himself. Mr Vodden mentioned that when he sat down to write the School song, he started with the idea of co-operative service, beginning with the individual and then widening it to School, country and ultimately the entire Mankind.

*While we are boys in School,
We learn our lives to mould
By learning how ourselves to rule
Alert and self-controlled
Moving ever onwards inspired by glories past
We'll build a worthy future striving upwards to the last.*

*In Class and House and School
Alone we are sure to fail,
We must our many talents pool
United we'll prevail.
Moving ever onwards inspired by glories past
We'll build a worthy future striving upwards to the last.*

*In work as well as play
Our friends are close at hand,
With all of them to help we may
Uplift our Motherland.
Moving ever onwards inspired by glories past
We'll build a worthy future striving upwards to the last.*

*In India is our pride;
Courageous, just and true
We'll serve our fellows far and wide
Here and the whole world through.
Moving ever onwards inspired by glories past
We'll build a worthy future striving upwards to the last.*

Samuel Charles Cowell



Mr Cowell was one of the veterans who had joined the School along with Mr Kate. In fact he had been with Kate in Lawrence School Sanawar and had retired. At Mr Kate's bidding, Mr Cowell came out of retirement to lend a helping hand to his colleague and friend at Nabha.

Despite being elderly, he was always an imposing personality due to his penchant for discipline and order. He put all his experience to good use and played a monumental role in laying strong foundations of the school. After the departure of Dr Surjit Singh, Mr Cowell shouldered the responsibility of Senior Master too for the interim period before Mr Vodden took over the office. After Mr Vodden left for England, Mr Cowell once again occupied the chair of Senior Master and continued to hold the post till his retirement.

The boys (mainly of Punjab) affectionately referred to him as "*baba*" in Punjabi and in private with respect for his age and his authority. He is still fondly remembered by Old Nabhaites for his varied moods, fondness for the eternal Punjabi sweet "*pinnies*" and maintaining a diary that he called "*VOLTAS*", an acronym for "*Volume of Liars, Thieves and Scoundrels*". All students lived in perennial fear of having their name entered in the *VOLTAS* since it meant "*nomovies, no pocket-money, extra PT, but eating those dishes that they least liked*". On 8th December 1966, a farewell party was organized to bid farewell to Mr S C Cowell on his retirement.



The strict disciplinarian who moulded many a village bumpkin of PPS. Nowadays one hears PPS has too many rural students. Actually, it was always that way.



Mr SC Cowell with Mr Punia at the playing grounds.

Remembering Samuel Charles Cowell

By Jaspal Singh Chatha (R-89,1966) Presently Prof. of Economics at Lehmann College, NY

Along with J.K. Kate, S. C. Cowell was present at creation and gave our school shape and structure in the crucial early years. While Kate dealt with the board of governors, political patrons and parents to make the school a viable educational experiment that thrives to this day, Cowell was responsible for its day to day functioning. Our daily routine from the rouser to lights out was chalked out by him and the senior masters that followed him did not need to change it much. In the final instance it was this routine - the life we led in our houses, in our classes and in the playing fields - that made us, for better or worse, into public school boys. This was a fortunate division of labor between these two remarkable men. Kate had the strategic vision and Cowell the tactician freed him from the day to day headaches of running the school so that he could focus on the long run.

I know very little about Cowell's life and Jashanjot Bhangu has asked me to rely on my memory for this piece of writing. Memory we all know can be treacherous, specially, after a lapse of over forty years but still it has some advantages over history and I hope I will be forgiven for any transgressions. The first impression in this palimpsest is of an avuncular figure limping along at a surprisingly brisk pace dressed in a half sleeve bush shirt on a chilly January morning towards the dining hall for morning tea while we shivered in our long sleeve sweaters. There is a faint frown on his face for he is worried about the day ahead of herding his recalcitrant charges from one activity to another. If we were late or were not lined up properly we had to face his wrath and his famous left upper cut.

I doubt if there is anyone in my generation who did not face his upper cut at least once. Most of us were deserving candidates and perhaps some innocents were punished unjustly. Cowell, at times had a short fuse but he was not a petty tyrant though I am sure he would have agreed with Machiavelli's advice ('oderint dum metuant' Accius) to the Prince that it is better to be feared than loved. He never hit anyone for being academically deficient and mostly exploded when we showed what he considered bad form or ungallant behavior like being rude to women teachers. Over time he mellowed down and the infamous visits to the physics lab for caning were

phased out. He did not seem much bothered when corporal punishment was banned during Michael Vodden's tenure as Senior Master. Some lesser teachers used to threaten us that they will teach us a lesson when the 'white skinned foreigner' is no longer around. Not he, for he had a natural authority which was not grounded in cruelty. I heard him mutter once that Vodden's experiment was not going to work and he was right. For soon after Vodden left our teachers regressed and I recall one of them hitting some poor sod and taunting him to call for his white skinned savior.

During Vodden's tenure corporal punishment was replaced by detentions when we had to copy pages from dictionaries or have our Diwali home weekend taken away which most of us found more onerous than other forms of punishment. My next memory is of one of those weekends when we saw a gentler side of Cowell's personality. He made sure we the detainees had good dinners and let us have our fireworks as well. I can't remember who was responsible for getting an adequate supply but it is likely that he paid for them from his own pocket.

I was often called to his office after some offence or the other. I recall once getting caught reading when we were supposed to be doing something else. I tried to hide my book under the mattress which was a mistake for besides what I was reading, he also found a copy of Kama Sutra. He told me that he had no objections to the book but it was meant for married couples or the ones about to get married. Once he found out that I was a 'reading type' he asked me what I had read recently besides age inappropriate books like Kama Sutra. I mentioned Hemingway. He approved but did not think I was justified in calling one of his books a modern classic and I learnt from him what an oxymoron was. He, unlike John Mallon or Michael Vodden who were great teachers in their own way, laid a lot of emphasis on building our vocabulary. At the same time he insisted that his initials stood for good prose: simple clear and concise. As I write this I feel him hovering over my shoulder. I wonder, have I been too pedantic? Perhaps I should delete the Latin fragment from Accius. I do not know what Cowell read for his own pleasure but I heard his eyes got wet on occasion when he read Noyes's poem "The Highwayman."

Overall Cowell was a private person and kept his emotions to himself. I recall his admonition to a student to refrain from 'vulgar gesticulation' while explaining something to him. There were occasional flashes of dry wit and humour which have been documented by some of his former students in the ONA ezine. His last day at Nabha was also the last day for my class. I do not recall any special function to say farewell to a man who molded our characters. There was his usual matter of fact talk. He did not need to give us any parting advice for his job was done.

Rest in peace Sam under 'the jewelled sky' and I hope you understand my calling you by your first name.



He could be fun when it was time for it!!!!
With Boys, KC Tandon, Jagdish Singh (librarian) and Mr Kumar, the tough PT instructor.



Mr Punia, Kumar, YP Bhardwaj and Mr Cowell (partly covered by YPB) seated behind the dignitaries on 1st Founders Day. Mr Kate is in foreground

A Measure of Immortality

(An article by Harishpal Singh Dhillon, Headmaster YPS, Mohali, on the immortal sense of Humour of Late SC Cowell, Ex Senior Master PPS. It appeared as a middle in The Tribune a couple of years back)

What is the measure of immortality? I do not mean the Teresas, the Tendulkars, the Bahugunas, the Hussains, the Subhalakshmis, the Oshos, the Bachhans and the Vikram Seths of this world- their immortality is immeasurable. I mean the ordinary people, like me, the school teachers, the railway clerks and writers of the middles, who lead ordinary humdrum lives, with no special talents, no special calling, no special passion. People whose sole achievement is making both ends meet, giving their families a comfortable life, bringing up their children as decent human beings and saving enough for their retirement to be spared the indignity of seeking financial help. Is there a measure of immortality to our lives or do we fade quickly away as soon as our funeral ceremonies are over? This question had haunted and troubled me with increasing frequency in recent years. Then I found my answer four days ago.

There were three of us at Lunch- Norman, who had studied at Sanawar in the thirties, I, who had been at Sanawar in the fifties and Jashanjot, who had studied at PPS, Nabha in the late sixties. The conversation veered around to the recent change of Principal at PPS. Jashanjot bemoaned the decline of discipline.

“How I wish Mr.Cowell was back, it would all be sorted out in no time”. Both Norman and I remembered Sammy Cowell too. He had been a teacher and then Senior Master in Sanawar before moving on to PPS. From his awesome reputation as a disciplinarian, we moved to his sense of humour.

Norman remembered a 1936 report which read “Norman works in fits and starts. Unfortunately at the time of the exams he failed to have either a fit or a start.”

I remembered an August mark-reading in 1954. I was never good at anything in school but did, sometimes when Mr.Cowell pushed too hard, achieve a good academic result. He opened the register for Upper IV A. “First Harishpal Singh Dhillon”. He paused and looked out of the window for a long moment at the steady downpour outside, then turned back to look at the children and added in a soft, but clear voice that carried to the back of the hall, “Hence the rain”.

Jashanjot remembered an incident from 1965. The Kendalls, with their Shakespearean troupe, would visit all the major schools of India and stage plays, mostly Shakespeare. By the sixties they limited themselves to playing an assortment of scenes, rather than full length plays. After one such performance at PPS, which had featured, amongst others, the witches scene from “Macbeth”, Mr Cowell came onstage congratulated the actors on a fine performance and turning to the student audience asked “which witch was which?”

Almost 25 years after his death, three individuals had come together purely by accident, and shared memories of him which spanned 40 years. It was a fair measure of immortality. I had found my answer and was content.

Gopi B Malkani

(In November, 1961, PPS and Mr. Kate “the talent headhunter” bagged yet another jewel in **Miss Gopi Bala Malkani** who took over the Junior School from **Mrs Kate**, who had been looking after it after **Mr Cherian’s** departure in the interim period. **Miss Malkani** played a pivotal role in moulding the young minds of children of the Junior School and her pupils vouch for her dedication and zeal even to this day.)

The Lady With The Lamp

A Tribute

By Lila Kak-Bhan



It is May 2009 and Swine flu is flooding the newspapers as I write this article. Many boys I teach are down with flu like symptoms. What, you must be thinking, has flu in the U.S. got to do with Miss Malkani? Well actually it has a lot to do with her as far as I am concerned! The precautions that one needs to take to avoid catching it have, in fact, got everything to do with her.

When the epidemic struck us here, instructions were posted everywhere to wash one’s hands frequently and to clean door handles and computer key boards and mice regularly. For me these instructions were old hat. Miss Malkani had an obsession for cleanliness and all of us who were fortunate to come within her orbit learned to wash our hands several times a day as she did, clean our eating utensils with our napkins and chew our food twenty four times before swallowing it! All her teachings provided a sound basis for healthy habits and because of her, I routinely cleaned the phones in my dormitory, keyboards, door handles and any other objects that were used by many people. It was Miss Malkani’s training that made it so easy for me to do all the “right” things as precautionary measures against the flu. Miss Malkani’s wisdom permeates to so many facets of life, from daily chores to classroom teaching.

Before I got to know Miss Malkani really well I had already developed a great admiration for her. Every night, before she slept, which was never before midnight, I would spot her, lantern in hand, going from dorm to dorm making sure each child was covered and comfortably asleep. A Florence Nightingale in the middle of the Punjab. This is one of my earliest images of Miss Gopi Malkani, the amazing pioneer headmistress of The Punjab Public School, Nabha.

Gopi Malkani was born in 1920 in the area of Sind which is now Pakistan. After Partition her family moved to India and soon after she went to England for a year where she observed and picked up many innovative teaching techniques.

She joined The Punjab Public School as the Headmistress of the Junior Section in the early ’60’s

and was there till July 1975 when she left and joined Mr Kate in Daly College, Indore, once again, as the Headmistress of the Junior School. She sadly found out that she had cancer in 1976 for which she was operated upon. She continued to work almost to her dying day. She finally succumbed to the disease in September 1982, in Bombay in her brother's house. She has left behind the admiration, gratitude and great affection from all those who came in touch with her.



Miss GB Malkani (The Lady always in spotless Whites) being introduced to Mr. Dharamvira, Gov of Punjab, by Mr JK Kate

My first encounter with Miss Malkani was in the winter of 1963. I was fresh out of college, having just graduated and also done my teachers' training from St. Bede's College, Simla. My father and I were first led to Mr. Kate's office from whence he took us for me to be interviewed in the Junior School. My earliest memory of that first encounter was of a pair of very large eyes looking at me with curiosity. Not many words passed between us, but a mutual bond was established which developed into a very deep and special relationship of a mentor, philosopher and valued friend. Because of Miss Malkani's shyness and quiet exterior, some people missed out on knowing the soft, humorous and extremely kind and sensitive person that Gopi Malkani was. The students were another case. They all fully understood her because of her total dedication and devotion to each and every one of them.



Introducing the Guest to Ladies, SM Dr Surjit Singh, from right Ms GB Malkani, Keerat Pannu(Tandon), Jasbir Lamba(Punjabi) and Mrs Singh(Matron).

Miss Malkani was a master at teaching English as a second language. Hundreds of boys have passed through her caring hands. They arrived from far flung corners of the Punjab, not knowing a word of English, and mastered the subject within two years under her masterful tutelage. They will all remember the series, “Look, Listen and Learn”, whose pages contained funny anecdotes and amazing information all woven together to produce exciting and excellent exercises to teach them English. She immersed the students, and everyone in the Junior Section, in English so that speaking the language gradually became second nature to them. Her whole life was dedicated to education. She was always thinking of the students and how to motivate them. She even devised “punishments” that contributed to this goal. So one would see a group of little boys, relaxing on a summer’s afternoon, sitting outside her door, legs outstretched, reading books they had chosen from the library. They had not completed their homework and this was one of the consequences. I often used to wonder if they rather enjoyed their punishment! Alternatively, they might be found reading to her or trailing behind her as she went on her evening rounds chatting to them incessantly about all the landmarks they passed by or permitting them to participate in the conversations she had with the people en route. Unwittingly she was employing the contemporary ‘direct method’ of teaching, thereby enhancing the children’s speaking and comprehension skills.

Miss Malkani’s entire life revolved around her students from the moment she woke up at the

crack of dawn to her last round of the dorms at midnight. These boys actually understood her better than anyone else. They were never intimidated by her sometimes stern demeanor for they knew the tender heart that lay under it. It was a moving sight to see Miss Malkani's large eyes soften and often fill with tears when she was moved or amused by what a child said to her. So many of her students be they army generals, eminent doctors, engineers, business men, or whatever careers they chose, still remember her methods for innumerable things. One that comes to mind is her insistence that they should wash their socks and underwear every day as they showered and the socks should be squeezed to get the excess water out before hanging up to dry and never wrung. She explained that the elasticity would last a lot longer! She was equally particular that the children turned their mattresses each day before they made their beds so that they were aired on each side. Simple things that left an indelible impression!

Another prominent characteristic of Gopi was her desire to avoid the limelight. Her philosophy was to work, "like the artist unseen and unheard". She did this to her dying day; worked round the clock, but avoided all recognition or praise. She considered her high standards normal and was surprised if anyone thought otherwise. Whenever there was an occasion where Miss Malkani was asked to be centre stage she invariably managed to get someone else to do it! When she spoke it was always a powerful and well-considered comment or idea. She spoke little, always preferring to lead by example.

Ms. Malkani's personal and professional life was basically rolled into one. Her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Malkani lived with her after they all had to move from Sind, now in Pakistan, to India. She also looked after an aged aunt, her mother's sister. All three of them became a familiar sight in the Junior School of P.P.S. They added a family touch to the school and Father and Mother (as Gopi referred to them) would interact with the boys and Peace Corps and V.S.O. volunteers from the U.S. and the U.K. In fact Gopi was a home away from home for all the young volunteers. I, being in the same age group as they were, joined them every night when we would be fed lightly sweetened home set yogurt, nuts and "kakri" cucumbers, as we regaled each other with tales of our day's experiences. It was then that a whole different side of Gopi would surface, when we discovered her humour, heard her laughter and saw her disarming and animated expressions as she listened to our stories! Every now and then she would find an appropriate moment to give us advice or recount an experience of her own from which we learnt more than any text book could teach.

I decided to ask a variety of people who knew her as her colleagues or as her students of what came to their minds when they thought of Miss Malkani. Interestingly, all of them corroborated what I have said, in their different ways :

"Purity, spotless, dedicated, sincere, hard working, an astute reader of children and very good at coming up with ways to change the child without hurting his feelings or using physical punishment."

"Miss Malkani was quiet, stern but very kind. She had a great presence. I remember this particularly when she walked in to Assembly in her always spotless, white sari."

"A tireless dedication to service. She was always there when needed.

She would save time by using roll up chalk boards, which had her meticulous handwriting in English. All the exercises ready to go!"

To take young boys from non-English medium homes and give them a foundation in the English language to a level equivalent to those from an English medium school within two years of her teaching (through 5th and 6th grades) was a miraculous feat that only she could manage! Such

was Miss Malkani's involvement that I could not imagine the Junior School without her. She was physically there through rouser, morning inspections, breakfast, classes, tea time, lunch, rest, evening tea, dinner, lights out, and I can never forget her lantern which she would carry through the dorms in her all-white dress. Who knows when she slept and when she got the time to print on those rolled up chalk boards! I wonder what her pedometer readings might have been with all the walking she did through that entire Junior School building!

"Continuing with my memories of Miss Malkani in a lighter side", continues this devoted student, "I remember that my younger brother (who joined Junior School along with me) was much loved by Miss Malkani. Her love for Savi was so great that on one occasion she built him a cubicle of shelves in the enclosed verandah outside her suite of rooms. He had been so naughty that he was removed from his dorm and placed right under her watchful eye for a couple of days! I only know that he never felt that he had been dealt an unfair punishment. In fact I think he felt extra special instead!"

" I often think of Gopi . She was totally dedicated to the students' welfare and learning, strict, but kind and fair. She made the Junior School a very safe environment to be in, away from home. She looked serious most of the time but then her face would light up with a brilliant smile. I'll always remember her gliding along the corridors in her white sari, with her lantern at night, to check on every dormitory. How comforting that must have been to anyone still awake!"

reminisces one of the V.S.O.s

Another V.S.O. says, " I have many fond memories of Gopi but the one that always comes to mind is when she would take her lantern at about 10 p.m. and walk round the dormitories of all the houses to make sure the boys were tucked up in bed and asleep.

I recall sitting in the late evenings in her sitting room, she marking books with a small towel next to her because it was hot and she could wipe her hands on it. Often one would spot her sitting alone in her classroom apart from one small boy with whom she was deep in discussion. This was the way she gave individual attention to each of the boys by rotation, discussing their corrections and getting them to speak in English."

Yet another fond memory of a V.S.O., " My memories of Gopi (initially Miss Malkani to me) are deep and dear. Gopi looked after me when I first arrived for all the non-curricular concerns of a callow English boy. I think the first important lesson was the life giving powers of a glass or jug of 'lassi'. She exuded calmness, care and wisdom – which were frequently accompanied by a dash of amusement or even mischief. I grew to respect her immensely. I also recall being fairly ill with a fever and a temperature which would have been off the scale of European thermometers. Gopi summoned her father who stayed with me for a long part of the night massaging my head. It seemed like his fingers were absorbing whatever troubles had invaded my head.

Such anecdotes and memories are endless and they all share a common thread; that of a quiet, strong woman, passionately committed to education. A stalwart through whose hands generations of young boys have been educated, loved, cared for and who are now extremely successful adults. What is more, each of us, who had the good fortune of coming in contact with Miss Malkani, has a special word of gratitude and affection for her - the person who made such a difference to each of our lives.

Excerpt from The Chronicle:-

The first term of 1975 saw Miss G.B.Malkani leave the School and join The Daly College, Indore. For those who have had the fortune of staying in the Junior School under the parental care and guidance of Miss Malkani, there would never be a better example of selfless service and compassionate care. She was a perfect role model for the entire school community and her nun like lifestyle evoked a strong sense of aura and respect for her from the staff and students alike. A special assembly was organized and the students bid an emotional farewell to her in these words:

“All the generations of boys and girls who have passed through the impressive portals of the Junior school, right from the oldest old boy to the youngest present boy, will remember you not just as a teacher and an administrator. More than that, you have been an affectionate guardian, and a sincere well-wisher. It is hard to reconcile ourselves to the thought that such a dynamic and beloved personality will not be amongst us when we return here next term”

Below is a note for a possible plaque in memory of Madam Malkani written by Mrs Lila Bhan (Kak), who considers Gopi B Malkani her mentor.

Gopi B Malkani (The Lady in White)

1920 (Sindh , Pakistan) -1982 (Bombay, India)

Headmistress, Junior School, The Punjab Public School, Nabha, 1961- 1975

Devoted, Tireless, Dedicated, she always led by example, leaving an indelible impression on all the children she taught.

‘Miss Malkani hame wahi sikhati hain jo khud karti hain ’

An eternal inspiraton, Miss Malkani believed in working, “Like the artist unseen and unheard!” Exemplary role model and true educationist, she will always be an integral part of P.P.S.

Tall In Deeds; Tall Indeed (A tribute to Mr MN Tankha written by Mr OP Bhatnagar)



Mr MN Tankha(MNT), may his soul rest in peace, was the first teacher who arrived at the then Sainik School, Nabha; rechristened as Punjab Public School Nabha, in 1961. The pioneer Principal, **Padmashri JK Kate** and **MNT** prepared the blueprint of the new school while sitting on the majestic marble staircase of Junior School building, which was the erstwhile Maharaja’s guesthouse. There were no students, no staff members, and no offices, not even a chair to sit on. Gradually furniture arrived, office started, classrooms and dormitories were fitted up, playgrounds were made and staff residences were furnished. Beds with extra length were ordered for MNT because of his very long legs. On 14th April 1960 the new school started with a bang. The sleepy Nabha town woke up to the towering presence of a new school with an all India character. Within 3 years PPS was shining brightly on the Public School map of India. Public Schools were amazed. Pioneer staff brought laurels. **MNT** was our **spearhead**. Tall, versatile and highly committed, **MNT** was a pacesetter. He made Geography Deptt. a fine show window decorated with charts and teaching aids. He himself made charts and got many made by me in the Art room. He made maps, models, and relief maps and even produced a “World on a

pitcher". During the Annual Function, Geography Deptt. had a pride of place. We worked by nights for exhibitions.

MNT was a keen mountaineer trained by HMI Darjeeling. He organized the first trekking expedition of the school. I was with him in the first two expeditions. I took over this activity from him while he was away to England and to USA. We were surprised by his stamina and sure-footedness. He would never sit down during a trek. He took rest while standing. Every evening during campfire, he gave useful tips. He was always helpful and cheerful. His jokes and anecdotes kept everyone happy. It was a joy to be with him on expeditions.

MNT was an athletics coach trained by NIS, Patiala. He used to put his heart and soul into planning and organizing athletics. He told us how to coach uninitiated students. He told us about exercises and lead up games. He single-handedly maintained records in every detail. Annual athletics was nearly as big a function as Founder's day. It was all because of **MNT's** imagination and efficiency that the whole school community was proud of the show that we were able to put up.

MNT gave the first house show, the Ravi House show. Other Housemasters followed the pattern. **MNT** had played Basketball and Badminton for Allahabad University during his university days. He taught Hindi assembly songs before the first music teacher **Mr SR Chatterjee** joined PPS (**Mr SC Cowell** taught English songs). He taught drawing before I joined. He became one with students. He played with them, danced with them, sang with them and laughed with them. He was loved and revered.

MNT became Vice Principal of St Paul's School, Darjeeling and worked there as acting rector when the rector left. He later took over Assam Rifles Public School, which flourished under his stewardship. This tall man with tall deeds is no longer with us. But he will endlessly live in the memory of his colleagues and his pupils. This tall man is unforgettable. I pray to God to grant eternal peace to his soul and give sufficient strength to the bereaved family to bear his loss.

OP Bhatnagar (Ex-Hindi & Art), Principal, Indian School, Nizwa, Sultanate of Oman

From Mr OPB's notes sent by post on his memories from his days in PPS and Personalities he encountered:-

Mr. M.N. Tankha

Being an IPSC member for 18 years, I have seen nearly all the Public Schools of 60's, 70's. I am proud to say that Mr. Tankha had created the best Geography Department I have ever seen. He made "World on a pitcher", relief maps and charts. Models and several types of globes made the room very impressive. Mr. Tankha was a fine example of versatility. Player, athletics coach, singer, dancer, artist, mountaineer and what not! Annual Athletics used to be a grand show. His planning and recording was meticulous. He was the first to join the PPS, after Mr. Kate. Mr M.N.Tankha also decided to accept the post of Vice-Principal at the Birla Public School Pilani. It was a sad day for everyone since Mr Tankha was one of the first teachers to join PPS. He later headed the Assam Rifles Public School, Shillong.



Mr Tankha a keen mounaineer with PPS students including Jeevan Kate foreground and Jeevan puri face on the left and Towering man with towering personality Mr Mukut Nath Tankha(MNT) in the background, with PM Jawahar Lal Nehru in the first ever trip to Rohtang by PPS students.

“Mr Tankha has an aesthetic sense and this could be seen in his class-room, in his House, in fact in all the departments which he looked after in the school. He always thought of some new ideas but as they meant a lot of financial burden on the School I had to curb his enthusiasm but he always took it nicely” Mr JK Kate.

Mr. S.C. Cowell



The grand old man had an unlimited stamina to work. He knew all that was required in a good public school. He laid sound foundation of various systems and practices. Most of us had no knowledge of public school work. Only Mr. Joginder Singh was a public school product and Mr. Tankha was an ex-teacher of Modern School, New Delhi. We all observed Mr. Cowell and learned from him. He was a continuous source of inspiration. A dedicated teacher, wedded to PPS (He was a chronic bachelor). Nothing would escape his keen eyes. He made quick decisions and filled every gap. He was a strict disciplinarian and had a heart of gold. He believed in 'firm kindness'.

Changing medium of instruction (from Punjabi\Hindi to English) was a herculean job. Mr. Cowell accepted the challenge and went on raising the standard of English of Senior School boys. He, and Mr. Joginder Singh, won't go to sleep without completing the day's correcting of exercise books. Rare examples!

Mr. Cowell was very much fond of tea and Indian sweets. He used to drink 60-70 cups of tea

everyday. He would polish off ten *ladoos* or half a kilo *burfi* in five minutes. In spite of being an Englishman, he enjoyed Indian food. He was a father figure for us.

Mr. Y.P. Bharadwaj



An outstanding player of hockey, cricket, basketball and every other game, he played Ranji Trophy for Delhi for eight years and for Southern Punjab for six years. He was a national player of basketball too. His body alignment, stamina, agility and game-sense made him the most useful man in the playground. He was an excellent coach. He was so much known as a sportsman that not many people knew that he was an outstanding subject-teacher too. He had organized his subject (History) extremely well and ensured 100% learning. No one could match his popularity. He was highly intelligent and possessed problem-solving ability. His wit and humour were devastating. He would give the best possible advice even to his adversaries. I was never surprised by his success as Principal in India and abroad.



Mr JK Kate introducing Sardar Ujjal Singh, Speaker Lok Sabha, to (from right) YP Bharadwaj (History and Sports), Rajinder Sibal (English), KC Tandon (Music) and PN Mathu (Commerce)

Dr. Surjit Singh



Dr Surjit Singh SM watches as Mr YB Chavan gives away a trophy to a house captain.

Dr Surjit Singh was a saintly person- very pure in his body, heart, mind, soul and words. In him I found a real well-wisher. He loved me.

On 14th May, 1964, a grand supper was laid out in the Junior School lawns to bid farewell to Dr Surjit Singh, the first Senior Master of the School. Dr Surjit Singh, popularly known as “Doctor Sahib” (a PhD) was an epitome of gentlemanliness and politeness. Before he had joined PPS as Senior Master, he taught at the National Defence Academy. Well liked by the students for his accessibility and affectionate nature, Dr.Surjit Singh’s departure was a sad day for the school community. According to his son Madanjit(S-22) he was on deputation from Punjab Education Service. He retired finally as Principal, Sports College Jalandhar.

Mr DK Dighe



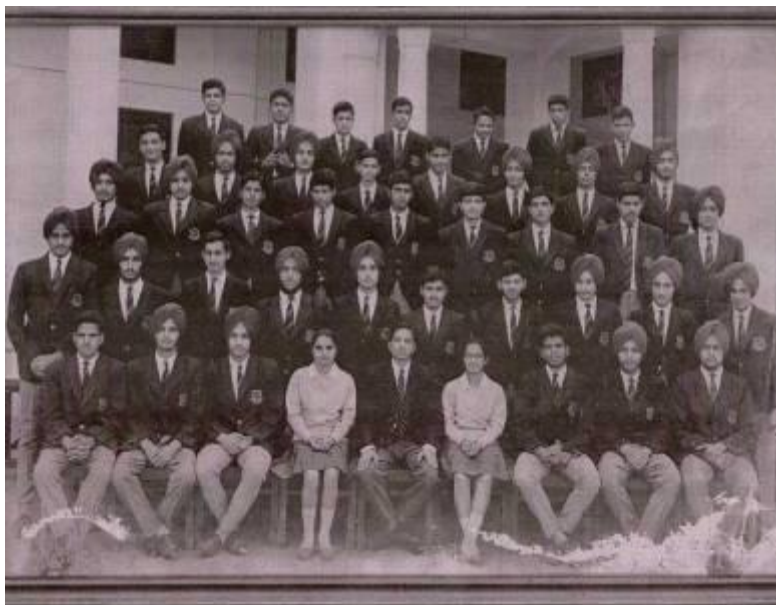
Mr JK Kate introducing guest to staff from right Mrs Singh (matron), Mrs Macmillan (nurse), DK Dighe(Maths), IB Kakkar(Physics)

Mr. Y.P. Johri had gone to England for his B.Ed. **Mr. D.K. Dighe** was appointed in his place- a superb teacher with unlimited GK and amazing communication skills. Once chicken-pox epidemic arrived in Nabha. It was spreading fast in the dormitories. Alleopathy had no preventive medicine. I told Mr. Kate that there was some in Homoeopathy. I did not know the name. Mr. Kate immediately called Mr. **Dhurandhar Keshav Dighe**. He was a 'Dhurandhar' in Homoeopathy too. He immediately gave the name of the medicine. It was "pulsetilla 30". Pulsetilla immediately controlled the epidemic.

Mr. V.N. Bhave



Mr Bhave joined in 1962. Some teachers found him unimpressive. His spoken English was pedestrian. But in two years he blossomed into an outstanding teacher. His Chemistry lessons were thoroughly understood by all boys. He proved to be a 'touchstone'. Whatever he touched turned into 'gold'. When he coached hockey, we won every match. When he coached cricket team, we ran through every team. When he became Housemaster, his House was trouble free. He was highly methodical and thorough in his work. He later became a successful Headmaster of Vikas Vidyalaya, Ranchi.



Mr Bhave, Class Teacher of 1967 ISC batch, which again produced one of the best Senior Cambridge results in India.

“ Mr. Bhave was so good at teaching Chemistry that we not only had a large number of distinctions in that subject but most of the boys scored higher marks in Chemistry than in any other subject.” –Mr JK Kate

OP Bhatnagar



In all humility, a few words about me. Being a poet myself, I organised Kavi Sammellans, Mushairas and Kavi Darbars. I worked in all the branches of dramatics and organised and participated in Brain Trust sessions. I played Tabla in every musical item during annual functions and other celebrations. I designed the school crest and memento. I organised treks and excursions, sometimes for the whole school. School picnics were often organised by me. Star watching and astronomy has been one of my hobbies. I taught boys to recognise several constellations, stars and planets. I used to read a lot about universe and shared my information with students, may be as incidental learning. I organised table-tennis, carrom and chess tournaments single handed. I gave lot of help to the craft department. Papier machie was my special area. I used to get "Ravan" made for *Dussehra*. It was often 40 ft. tall. Library books of Hindi language were selected by me. I would read every single book before it went into the hands of the pupils.

I am a qualified Hockey coach, trained by NIS Patiala. I have done the advance course of Scoutmasters. I have worked with Rajasthan Public Service Commission to interview candidates for the Principalship of Higher Secondary Schools. I also worked as an examiner of RPSC. I have worked as an examiner and paper-setter of Railway Recruitment Board. I have attended 5 courses on school administration. I have worked as a resource person in several seminars and workshops. I have been an IPSC member for 18 years. I am a defence pensioner for 15 years. I have thoroughly enjoyed my 50 years of service period (19 1/2 as a teacher and more than 30 years as a Principal). 1960-70 was my best period and that was in PPS. **What I am today is all because of PPS. So, PPS is very close to my heart.**

Padamshree JK Kate's comments

Foreign Teachers

"The credit for starting the school poultry goes to **Roger Miall**, the first V.S.O. **Richard Pine** took charge of the Swimming Pool. **David Goldberg** organised the Library and looked after the pool after Richard's departure. He was very strict in enforcing the rules framed by him for the users of swimming pool. **Lowell Edward** set the textbooks store in order and made the whole system of lending textbooks to the boys more methodical.

The staff

Apart from a well-staffed English Faculty we had equally competent teachers like **Mr. Johri**, **Mr. Dighe**, **Mr. Nijjar**, **Mr. Bhalla** and **Mr. Ram Singh** for Mathematics. After the departure of Englishmen from the Faculty of English, it was looked after admirably well by **Mr. Oberoi**, **Mr. Sibal**, **Mr. Bhatnagar**, **Mr. Chandola**, **Mr. Onial** and **Mr. Bhatti**. **Dr. Surjit Singh** and **Mr. Bhave** gave a good account of themselves as far as Chemistry was concerned. **Mr. Kakkar** worked very hard to improve upon Physics results. **Mr. Katyal** too produced excellent results. **Mr. Mathu**, though very old-fashioned, taught both Commerce and Geography to Arts students all of whom were not very bright. His ISC results of both these subjects were very impressive. When I compared our ISC results with those of reputed Public Schools like Doon, Sanawar, Mayo and Lovedale, I found that our boys did better in Mathematics and Science subjects than

boys from these schools, We were beaten in English Language and Literature but this was understandable taking into account the social and economic background of our boys.”

The appointment of two Ranji Trophy players, **Mr. Y. P. Bhardwaj and Mr. M. S. Bhatnagar** as teachers of History and Biology respectively solved our problem of coaching in cricket. **Mr. M. N. Tankha** who was our games-master, had an experience of coaching boys in athletics. He organised the Inter-House Athletic meet on a grand scale.

The contribution of **Mr. H. Kumar and Mr. P.S. Gill** in raising the standard of P. T. and Gymnastics was very commendable. Therefore P.T. display formed a popular part of Founders' Day Celebrations

With the impetus given to House plays, Class plays and School-plays, our achievements in the field of dramatics and music were above average. **Mr. Katyal's production of, "Godan" a Hindi play, was praised by one and all.**

I must acknowledge the grand performance of **Mr. Khan**, who introduced so many crafts and inspired boys to develop them as their hobbies. Mr. Khan, our Art-Master who was educated at Shanti-Niketan, worked quietly to build up the department.

If, I am not wrong nearly fifteen teachers who joined the P.P.S. in the early sixties are now Principals or Vice Principals of reputed schools run on Public School lines all over India.

Tributes

“Time like an ever roaring stream bears all its sons away.....”(from School Assembly prayer)

KK Katyal

To Sir with Love

The year-1967, the month-**May**. It was time to fill the examination forms along with subjects for each student appearing in ISC (Senior Cambridge), in **December**. The newspapers were full of strikes and riots by engineers due to unemployment. Five of us (Additional Maths students, worried about our future as engineers), **Bhupinder Grewal (S-50)**, **Shivinder Athwal (B-108)**, **Inderbir Khokha (ex Ravi)**, **Gurjit Dhillon (B-69)**, and I, approached the Headmaster, the great **Mr JK Kate**, to allow us to take up Biology as an additional subject. **Mr Kate** agreed but let the final word rest with the Biology teacher whose job it would be to take extra classes for only five of us and prepare us for the Biology exam in 5 months. With apprehension, we approached the Biology teacher. To our amazement, he readily agreed. He was none other than **Mr KK Katyal**. Popularly known as **K³ or 3Ks** – average height, obese and balding, he had the finesse of drilling into his students the subject he taught so well. Thus began a period of hectic classes in the afternoon. The extra class at times lasted more than an hour. We would be sleepy after a heavy lunch but **K³'s** energy kept us awake. We could see beads of sweat on his forehead. He taught us so well that two out of the five topped our class in Biology in ISC exam. Three of us, **Shivinder (USA)**, **Inderbir Khokha** and I became doctors later in life. **Bhupinder** became an Engineer in the Army and **Gurjit** (now a Maj General) is heading for great heights, having successfully attended National Defence College. Likely to be DG Supply Corps some day.

Many years later I visited Mussoorie with my family. I knew Sir (KKK) was there as Headmaster of Mussoorie Public School. We all went to meet him. I was proud to be able to introduce my kids to the Sir who changed the course of my life. We had a wonderful lunch with him and his family. Few years earlier he had been troubled by a growth in the neck and had been successfully treated at AIIMS, courtesy **Dr Satish Jain (R-107,1970)**, another of his students from PPS. Now his weight was significantly reduced, movements were slowed and even a little exertion made him breathless. His once forceful voice became subdued. When things became difficult for him in the hills at Mussoorie, where he was continuing to serve at the insistence of the management, he decided to come down to his native Hoshiarpur to settle down.

Last year I got a phone call from him that he was very unwell. I immediately asked him to come to Jalandhar and got him admitted with a physician friend. My friend Dr Kapil would joke with sir and say to him, *"I have to make you fit again because I want you to teach my son Biology the way you taught Jashanjot."* He recovered to a large extent and went back to Hoshiarpur. But as doctors we knew his failing lungs could not support him for long. When he was better he even went to see the 'ONA Equestrian Show' in Chandigarh with his son but thereafter he went downhill. During his time of illness, Mrs Katyal was always by his side – a picture of Indian womanhood. His children – all Old Nabhaites, were however far away and could be with him only in patches. **Puneet**, his son, was on the high seas in Merchant Navy and his daughters, **Archana and Vandana**, flew in and out of India to see him, having settled in USA. In the last few days, he was again admitted in my friend's hospital – this time a little more serious. On the morning of 25th May, I got a call from Dr Kapil Gupta that *"Your Sir passed away this morning."* When I reached the hospital I went to the bed, where his body (it had been curtained off) lay. I had to say good-bye. I picked up his cold limp hand and kissed it with a prayer for his soul in my heart.

Dr Jashanjot (S-52,1967)

MR PN MATHU

My Housemaster and Teacher, and PPS Bonds Bikram Dev Singh (S-84, 1969 batch)

Sad to learn of Mr. **PN Mathu's** demise. He was a Great man and a dedicated teacher who shaped our lives. Below is a letter I just wrote to **Basanti (R-73)**, in the memory of **Mr Mathu**.
Dear **Basanti**,

I was reading the Oct issue of the Eagle and learnt of the sad demise of **Mr. PN Mathu** who was my House Master and a father figure at school. He was a great man who really loved his students and went out of his way to help them understand whatever he taught. I was posted in Jammu in the Air Force helicopter unit from 1979-82 when I met him just by chance. It was late in the afternoon when a newly posted-in Officer **Flt Lt RS Saini, an ON (ex Ravi 67 or 68 batch)**, walked up to my room and asked if I could help his wife get a seat in the B Ed College. As a helicopter pilot I used to be flying the state ministers pretty often so he thought I could do him this favour. With Saini on my pillion, I drove my motorcycle to the college. Though the college was closed, the watchman guided us to the residence of the Principal. We drove to the said house and low and behold, **Mr. & Mrs. Mattu** received us at the door. It was really a great

surprise and we hugged each other. **Mrs Mattu** gave us a lovely cup of tea. We spent an hour plus talking of good old days at PPS and I enquired about you and learnt that you were married to an army officer from the Signals. **Flt Lt Saini** was promptly given a seat for his wife. **The PPS bonds are so strong.** Soon after this meeting I moved out of Jammu to NDA as an instructor and never had the chance to see the great teacher again.

In his passing away, the world has lost a Great Teacher. However, he has left behind footprints in the sands of time for the PPS fraternity to follow. May God bless his soul. ,

To Sir With Love

(A student's tribute to his teacher, **Mr SM Nigam**)

On a very ordinary Friday afternoon I received a call from **Seepja**, my schoolmate and a close family friend that her father, **Mr. Nigam** had passed away a few hours before. Like I said, it was an ordinary Friday afternoon but the man who had just passed away was nothing but that.

Mr. SM Nigam was a teacher, mentor, role model and a pillar of the PPS community who in spite of his advanced age remained a larger than life figure to many of us who were fortunate enough to grow and mature under his tutelage.

While his passing away was not unexpected (he had been courageously battling metastatic lung cancer for the last few months) it did not diminish the sense of loss that I personally felt at that moment.

My thoughts went back to my last few years of high school especially the years 1976-79. Ours was the 1976 batch, which was the first batch to sit for the ICSE exam. Consequently our batch would be the first batch to stay in school for the 12th class as a part of the newly introduced 10+2 system.

At that time **Mr. Nigam** taught physics to the senior classes. He had a special unhurried way of teaching that somehow made even the most complex theorem seem like a fun thing to learn. He would start out with a topic, expand it during the course of a lecture and encouraged people join in with their views till it appeared that we had discovered something new all by ourselves during the course of that lecture!

He always encouraged ideas and participation and listened attentively even when some of us came up with absurd and outlandish theories. I don't recall him ever putting any one down.

While on one hand he was a strict disciplinarian yet he was never intimidating. **Mr. Nigam** was a teachers' teacher, approachable in class and out of class, on the playing field and in the dining room. With this kind of dedication and a genuine interest in his students, not surprisingly, he became a personal mentor to many of my classmates. We flocked around him to discuss, not only Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry; but also our personal lives, careers, hopes and dreams for the future.

Years later many of us **old Nabhaites** got together in California and formed an ONA chapter. **Mr. Nigam's** daughter **Seepja** and son-in-law **Dinesh Khurana** who live in Fremont became the pillars of this California chapter. **Mr. Nigam** came to visit **Seepja** and **Dinesh** from time to time and through them we were able to see him again.

Surprisingly while many of us boys had now become and looked middle-aged, **Mr. Nigam** still looked almost the same as he had looked a quarter century ago. Not only did he look the same, he easily again became a mentor and a father figure for many of us in California as he had been

for us many years ago in Nabha. People who could not come to see him often called him from places as far as Canada.

By an almost unanimous decision he was requested to preside over the 2nd Annual US-ONA meeting as a chief guest.

While by his own kindness, humility, and simplicity he taught us how to live and enrich our lives, the greatest lesson was yet to come. About a year ago, he was diagnosed with a metastatic and incurable lung cancer that was met with sadness by the extended PPS community. **Mr. Nigam** however remained calm and stoic as ever and hardly complained.

I went to see him in Nabha and enquire about his health last December, while on a visit to India. He had lost weight and looked weak and tired yet he smiled his usual smile and asked about my welfare instead!

At that moment I knew that my mentor and teacher, whom I had idolized from childhood onwards, was also a man of character and iron discipline. Nothing, not even the thought of impending death could shake his unassailable charm and good manners.

While I know that he is gone in the sense that we can no longer see him, he lives in the lives of many of the students he helped shape into what we are today. Years ago, in our final year at school after we had our house pictures taken for the last and final time, someone suggested that we have some unofficial pictures with our favorite teachers as well. Several of us wanted our pictures with **Mr. Nigam** since we felt it was he above all others who had motivated us to become something when we grew up.

I still have a faded black and white picture showing four scrawny teenagers staring into the camera with **Mr. Nigam** standing in the middle. I was one of the four and the other three were **Dr Rupinder Boparai (B-325)**, **Arvinder Sandhu** and **Dr Yashbir Dewan (J-297)**.

I came to USA and now direct the Non-invasive Cardiology department in Marysville, California. **Arvinder** went to Canada and joined the Canadian police. **Rupinder Boparai (B-325)** is a general surgeon in England and **Yashbir (J-297)** is the head of neuro-surgery at CMC, Ludhiana.

Not bad when you consider **that we were all small-town kids once** and the only thing going for us was the motivation and self confidence given to us by people like **Mr. Nigam**. It is only fitting that **Yashbir (J-297)**, in spite of a very busy schedule went out of his way to take care of **Mr. Nigam** in his final months. It was his way of saying thank you to our Guru for the rest of us.

While I know **Mr. Nigam** is gone and makes another place a better place, as long as any of us lives, we will always carry a little part of this gentle inspiring man within us.

Sir, you will continue to live in us, your students.

Rupinder Brar (S 291,1976)