

GRAHAM KEELER – *personal profile*

I was at Harlow College from 1954 to 1958. I can't say I particularly enjoyed the early years. I was the youngest in my class and suffered somewhat at the hands of some of the older ones – not mentioning any names like Gabriel and Evans. But I also made a number of good friends, some of whom I still see at reunions

Things improved in later years, though I still remember considerable trepidation in Vb when a craze developed for hurling darts around the classroom in breaks, with most of us sheltering behind desk lids. I'm amazed no-one ever got hurt.

A weak feature of the College was lack of much career advice. As a result, due to my preference for maths at school, I mistakenly thought that accountancy would utilize that interest, and left to take up articles to be a Chartered Accountant. It soon transpired that the 'maths' consisted just of adding up numbers, with much more emphasis on company law and theory of auditing.

After two years I threw in the towel, and followed some of my contemporaries to South West Essex Tech to take A levels, followed by a BSc and PhD in physics at Queen Mary College.

In 1970, by then married with my first daughter on the way, I took what I intended would be a short term University lectureship up in the frozen North, at Salford University. (I took early retirement from Salford at 59 in 2002, and continued in a much more relaxed part-time position for another ten years.)

I found the north west to have plenty of good features, and like Wimbledon it will be great once they get it fitted with a

roof! I developed many interests over the years, from computing and gardening to a number of sports – badminton, tennis and skiing. A particular passion has been flying, I had a share in a 4-seater Piper Arrow for 25 years and had many memorable flights, including the Isle of Wight, the Scilly Isles, two tours around France and the biggest highlight, a trip to France, Spain, Morocco, Gibraltar, Portugal and back through Spain and France, with my wife and another (more experienced) fellow pilot.

In retirement I continued with badminton and tennis (and gardening), returned to an earlier interest of philately, and spend a lot of time with my three daughters and five grand children. I managed to write and get published a science fiction novel (sales racing towards the three-figure mark, so I'm not rushing to write another yet). More details of this and other interests on my website, www.grahamkeeler.co.uk.