

Michael Aldous

Michael and I were together at Lancing College in Sussex between 1946 and 1952, Lancing is a Woodard School in the same foundation as Bloxham School here in Oxfordshire.

As I recall we never spoke to each other and probably didn't know that each other existed. He was one year ahead of me and in a different house. Michael was clever, I wasn't, he had won a scholarship to Lancing and was a classicist whilst I did sciences and sport. I don't ever remember Michael being at all interested in sport his interests were on a much higher plain. However as his school career drew to a close he decided he wanted to become a Doctor. So he left Lancing in December 1951 and went to a crammer and in a short space of time obtained the necessary GCEs in sciences to enable him to gain a place at St Thomas' Hospital Medical School, where they had in those days an enlightened policy of enrolling students with a wider background. I too was accepted at St Thomas' but only on the strength of my bowling and reading P G Wodehouse and the humour of PG Wodehouse and the fact we had been to Lancing drew us both together and we were more or less inseparable for the next 6 years, sharing our anatomy dissections and medical firms when we were on the wards. As I mentioned earlier PG Wodehouse was a common link between us and Michel had a terrific sense of humour managing to extract fun out of almost any situation and we had so many laughs together.

Michael lived in London, sharing flats with other students; my earlier years were commuting from home in Surrey. Michael would on occasions at Weekends come down for a Sunday roast arriving on his motor bike.

We shared the pangs of love life together and would discuss the possibilities of all the young pretty nurses that came within our view., they were heady days and I suspect much more relaxed and fun than the challenging times of today's hard working students.

For some reason Michael had to retake his Medicine final exam which delayed him starting his first House Job. But we came together again in January 1959 when we both had House Physician jobs At Burton-on-Trent, the home of Marmite, Bass and Ind Coope breweries who very kindly supplied the Doctors mess with beer.

I was married in that January and Michael should have been my best man but could not get away as one of us had to be on duty. We had a very demanding and challenging time at Burton looking after a male and female ward and also the children's ward, but it was a wonderful job and we had an excellent grounding in our medical knowledge. I like to think that at that time my wife and I were able to offer Michael .a bit of home life when there was time to relax.

Following Burton, Michael went to the Odstock hospital in Salisbury to do his House Surgeons job and then we both were called up to do our National Service. Michael went

into the Army and was posted out to Malaya where he became Regimental Medical officer to the Ghurkhas. I went into the Air Force for three years I thought it a safer Service.

On discharge from the Army Michael started on his General Practice career being an assistant at one or two practices before settling in Banbury. We kept very much in touch with Michael and Hilary in the early years, our families visiting and staying with each other and Robert becoming my Godson. Latterly we usually met Michael and Jenny up two or three times a year in a mutually convenient pub for lunch.

Michael always loved travelling and in, I think the early 1970's he and I had a holiday in Egypt together visiting all the sites and I do remember we shared a tiny cabin on a river boat in high summer with no air conditioning, I can assure you that was a test of true friendship. We used to talk very loudly about our wives when we were with the group to dispel any thoughts that they might have had about our relationship.

Jenny and Michael saw the world in their travels and in 1996 when they were doing one of their safari holidays in Africa, it so happened that my wife and I were living in Malawi at that time and Michael and Jenny took time out from their group holiday to spend some time with us in a very remote part of that country, it was lovely having them to stay and we were able to show them Africa from a day to day point of view and not just the tourist attractions.

I last saw Michael in October last year and could see that for him time was running out. Michael was a very good man; he cared for his family and was always on hand to offer whatever type of help might be needed for his children whether it was the advice of an experienced parent, moral or financial. He took an interest in all their activities and was there when needed, he was all that a father should be. I know he was a good Doctor a proper old fashioned GP who was prepared to listen and spare time with his patients.

And I have now lost a dear friend.