

BRIEF BIO UPDATE.

Born just in time to inspire the army to take on Rommel at El Alamein I punched my first bully in the playground when seven. Are you reading this Jeremy? Sat in the next desk to the first manager of the Beatles, twelve years after him. He was bottom of the bottom class so that made me second from bottom. First book I read was Biggles Sweeps The Desert. Always liked the Boulton Paul Defiant.

'Failed' my 11-Plus. I felt sorry for my mother knowing what she would read when she opened the letter. Then I was dead lucky to go to a school that asked me what I liked and was interested in. Art and history. I kept quiet about my Observer Book of Aircraft from which I learned the difference between horse power and pounds thrust. For some 1953 meant the Coronation and the climbing of Everest but do they compare with the Stanley Mathews Cup Final?

In my teens I helped my Dad on the docks and did a variety of jobs before going to Liverpool University to study Political Theory and Institutions. Really enjoyed writing for the student newspaper. Then a career! Boys Secondary Modern in Bootle. It felt like home as my family saw themselves as Welsh Bootle. Before my first class came into the room the Head, who had been there since 1937, walked in waving a big stick, saying, "Here you are lad, you won't survive without using this." In my junior school I was caned almost every day and it made no difference to my behaviour so I never used that stick. Strangled a few kids though.

The merger with the girls next door was interesting. I had never before heard a young lady accuse her best friend of suffering from 'Farteritis'. Then eleven years in Catholic Scottie Road in Liverpool. Today people tell me it must have been tough teaching working class kids. I loved them. Perhaps I found it difficult to connect with the kids of the posh. My mother had been born just up the road.

Having written public exams on Government and Politics at CSE, 16-Plus and GCSE I retired from that a couple of years after I became a Local Authority advisor because I mistrusted my ability to connect with the current culture of 16-year olds who might not 'get' my phraseology. To write exam questions you must always seek not to confuse. This is not the same as making it easier. Have you ever gone into an exam, turned over the paper, read the first sentence and internally shouted YES, I KNOW ALL OF THIS! Then you read the next sentence and lose all your confident understanding. Have you? Not too different from attempting to write good journalism for The Word Newspaper. Try to be true to your reader.

I nearly forgot that in my late forties I lost faith in the intention of my Local Education Authority to resist the Thatcherite, led by Baker, onslaught upon education. I took early retirement. The phone went. Eventually I became Director of Continuing Professional Development in Education at the University. Also to work in other countries. And to chair ninety three universities doing similar stuff. Between the ages of fifty one and into my middle seventies I was so busy, including being inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors over two tough years, which led to an English national scheme for masters and doctorates for up to thirty five thousand schoolteachers in England per year. I wrote the paper that was the basis for the annual evaluation of

that programme. I am convinced that not one politician ever read one word written by teachers making sense of their professional lives and of the impact of frequent inexplicable changes of policy. Who abolished the programme? Gove.

In the middle of too many nights I composed a few extra sentences to my open letter to the Secretary of State against Education trying to bring him to his senses. Shortly after I sent it he was sacked. Must be my doing.

Essentially, I guess my career has attempted to endorse my conviction that educating young people must involve knowledge of government and politics. They must not be belittled and reduced to receivers of policy from the great and the good.

And emotionally and intellectually where remains my base? In those Secondary Moderns. How wonderful it was to discover that when examining a PhD it was such experience that I called upon.

I have left out my great footballing career. Just let me say that failure can be good for the soul.

Cliff Jones, 22nd. September 2021.

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