



NEWSLETTER

Edition No: 7

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Letter from the Chairman

Dear Old Tauntonians, welcome to the latest edition of our Newsletter.

Recently and out of the blue, I received a phone call from an OT on a mission! His name is David Hallum (1954-1959) and his mission was to buy an OT tie. Having lost contact with our Association, his search took him to the schools in Somerset which have the Taunton name attached to theirs. It was clearly a great relief when he found he had reached the right OT association. I agreed to see if there were any ties remaining and was pleased to find Brian Osman (our Treasurer) had three, one of which is now on its way to David who was overjoyed when I told him the news! We have also added David's name to the mailing list and hope that he and wife Jenny might be able to come to the Summer Lunch. I wonder how many other 'lost' OTs there are? Welcome back David.

Before Christmas we had two very promising meetings with staff from the Southampton Civic Centre Archive Department regarding the taking of the substantial memorabilia we hold. Hopefully there will be an update very soon.

Finally, confirmation that the date for the Summer Lunch is **Thursday 16th July** at Ampfield Golf Club, full details will be sent closer to the date.

Best Wishes

Roger Parsons
Chairman

The 100 Club

Recent Winners

January 2026	£20
Peter Muddiman (1954 –1962)	
February 2026	£20
David Defty (1956 –1961)	
March 2026	£20
David Watson (1962 –1965)	

Memories of 1966

In 1966, after A Levels, we were encouraged to continue coming in to school and were given the chance to mount an entertainment one evening in the Hall. I'm afraid I can remember few details, and even fewer names.

I remember performing with 'Codge' Orchard (later a doctor in Australia) an improvised 'Pete and Dud' sketch and a silent Laurel and Hardy scene, both of which were well received. There was a band, and I wish I could remember the name of the chap who organised the music as he did a great job. The whole cast had fun singing a drinking song, swinging beer glasses full of water (honestly!). The next day we were told that the stage was meant never to get wet and we had probably done considerable damage. We then left school!

Keith Rumsey (1962- 1966)

Some Tauntonians I have known

There is a longer piece on the website about Tauntonians I have known but I thought that at this stage and with space at a premium, I might concentrate on the most famous names.

Alas, I have voluntarily produced the proverbial can of worms for you to pick over with several alternative claims (BBC royal correspondent Ronald Allison for a start) put forward. But I need to have known and/or interviewed those included and that made it easier for me to go straight out for Ken Russell and the now sadly departed Martin Chivers.

I love walking around Southampton and greatly regret my heart's insistence that three stents would soon be required rather than sturdier shoe leather. But I keep going back to Belmont Road, where Ken lived a few doors down from off-course bookmaker Johnny Denton.

Russell may or may not have been the greatest British film director but he was arguably the most imaginative (Women In Love, The Music Lovers, The Devils, The Boy Friend etc) and unquestionably the most controversial.

He was one of our own, of course. He had his hair cut in Portswood at the Elite, where I had mine done as well. There were three barbers and the middle one was called Mr Shearing; I am not making this up.

He loved the Palladium cinema with its 'baronial foyer beneath artificially faded murals of Arthurian legends', where he'd pay strangers threepence to get him a ticket so that he could see a film with an A certificate. And, of course, like so many of us, as a youngster he made his way up Highfield Lane to school.

Denton's 'runner' in those days was a bus inspector called Ern, who stood outside the Palladium where they showed old westerns like The Man From Laramie and Shane. Harry Spooner ran a film club and loved Shane, partly because Brandon de Wilde, who played Joey, was a far more engaging child actor than most.

When it came to announcements at assembly, Harry allowed himself the occasional wry aside while Mr Challacombe referred to Martin Chivers as 'our most expensive Tauntonian' when he left Southampton for Spurs for £80,000, a record between British clubs at the time, with Frank Saul travelling in the opposite direction. Many years later I tried to track Frank down for a magazine article and located a tailor called Frank Saul on Tottenham High Road. He was charm personified, offering me a smart new suit with an extra pair of trousers for nothing ('because you sound a nice man') if I'd like to drop by. Sadly, he wasn't 'our' Frank, who'd returned to his Essex roots and was working in the motor trade.

I had no such problem with Martin, who was running a hotel out Waltham Cross way. 'Taunton's School!' he smiled. 'I loved it, just as I loved my time with Ted Bates and the Saints.' Anyway, we put a piece together and included fellow Tauntonian and uncompromising centre-back Paul Bennett. It was in the matchday programme when we played Spurs several years ago. I hope I've done Martin and his career proud elsewhere in this publication.

Benny Hill maintained a tumbledown old mansion in Shirley and his mum sat next to mine at the bingo in Portswood. But my walks took me along Shirley Road to Janson Road, where Julian Taylor and his family lived for many years. What a family! The old man, Royal Navy through and through, saw three separate centuries while his third son, my great friend Austin from Shirley Junior Boys School, went off to naval college and later sent us cards from Oman and elsewhere.

But what of the boy Julian himself? Well, he was forever young for a start. He was mischievous, very funny, no great respecter of authority, a shrewd judge of character, well above-average footballer and not one to sit on the sidelines when the beer was flowing. He died suddenly in 2021, which cut us to pieces, and Roger Parsons and Stu Wilson attended a wake (more a celebration of life, really) at the Hop Inn by Woodmill Lane. Death, where is thy sting? People loved Julian and you really can't ask for much more than that.

He went too soon but not as frighteningly early as Paul Godwin, who went up to Cambridge and ran the university jazz club. He was probably the most talented musician ever to study at Taunton's, though I guess Mike Cornick, a transfer who played at the Bassett in its shady days, would have run him close. A heart attack claimed Paul well over twenty years ago and fellow Tauntonian Alan Saunders delivered a fitting eulogy.

I haven't even got as far as the Corlett clan and 222 Winchester Road, which became something of a haven for Jim Corlett's friends at school over many years. But there is more about that and other much-loved characters on the website and I hope you will find it interesting.

Ian Carnaby (1960 - 1967)

Martin Chivers - A tribute

It was sad to hear about the passing of former Saints star Martin Chivers at the age of 80. Beyond doubt he ranked alongside Terry Paine, Mick Channon and Matt Le Tissier as one of the best-ever players the club nurtured and brought to national attention.

Martin was born and raised in Southampton and arrived at Taunton's from Foundry Lane. Those of us three years behind him remember a tall, not to say gangling youth who had yet to develop his immensely powerful physique and shoulders.

He was quiet but told me in a joint interview (Paul Bennett appeared as well) for the matchday programme several years ago that he had fond memories of the school before his application for a trial at the Dell proved successful. A short spell in the nursery was soon followed by a first-team debut against Charlton at the age of 17.



My favourite memory from the early days is an FA Cup match against Manchester United in 1964 with 29,000 plus packed into the Dell. It was pure theatre as Paine scored with a header - a true collector's item - and Chivers, seemingly sideways on and only just inside the penalty area, sent a ferocious drive well beyond David Gaskell. Two-nil at half-time and thoroughly deserved but United hit back through Bobby Charlton and also had a young George Best, making only his second senior appearance, causing problems. They won 3-2, of course, but the Chivers goal still stands out.

He was always going to be a goalscorer. Indeed, the lack of confidence which some identified in him - wrongly, I think - only revealed itself when he hit a barren patch. In Saints' promotion to the old First Division in 1965-66, he scored a phenomenal 30 goals in the first 29 games before a bad back intervened. Fascinatingly, a young Mick Channon came on the scene at that time. Heaven only knows how many goals Saints would have scored with a 'front four' of Paine, Chivers, the ultra-prolific Ron Davies and Channon. It only happened a couple of times before Tottenham manager Bill Nicholson finally had his way and took 'Big Chiv' to White Hart Lane. Martin loved Saints, especially Ted Bates, but had actually looked for a move and understandably so.

In all he scored 106 times for Saints before Mr Challacombe memorably drew attention to the transfer - a record £125,000 taking replacement Frank Saul's valuation at £45,000 into account - by referring to Martin as 'our most expensive Tauntonian' during assembly. It brought the house down.

The move brought Martin everything he desired - medals in the League and UEFA Cups and a call-up to the national squad. He played for England 24 times and scored 13 goals, no mean percentage, but fell out of favour following failure to qualify for the 1974 World Cup when the Poland goalkeeper, labelled 'a clown' by Brian Clough, kept them at bay. Jimmy Hill was hard on Chivers, who wasn't selected again. It was extremely harsh but he was never selected afterwards. Typically, he kept his own counsel.

Back at home Nicholson felt he could be more direct, more aggressive. Switching top scorer Alan Gilzean out wide and using Chivers' powerful, surging runs through the middle meant a shoal of goals for both players in the 'glory, glory' years. The crowd adored them both and it meant Jimmy Greaves, no less, was allowed to leave for West Ham.

Chivers went to Servette in Switzerland after his eight years at White Hart Lane. He was effective there but returned to play briefly for Norwich, Brighton and Dorchester before a stint as player-coach in Norway. It was fitting that he called it a day at Barnet because his heart was in north London by then.

He was mine host at the Brooklands Park Hotel and blossomed as an analyst on BBC Radio after a hesitant start. Recently back at Southampton he gave an excellent half-time pitch interview during a Saints v Spurs match and was warmly applauded by both sets of fans. He never really changed at all - he was simply a quiet, private man who happened to be a very fine footballer. Southampton should be proud of him.

Ian Carnaby (1960 - 1967)

Memories of Ron Sizer

Like many of you I have kept in touch with a few schoolmates from my happy days at Tauntons Grammar School in Highfield Lane. I was there from 1948 to 1953, a long time ago and feel lucky to still be in contact with the following Tauntonians.

David Harrison who many of you will know was the top amateur golfer in Hampshire for many years.

Laurie Hopper who was also no slouch at golf in previous days and is my oldest friend.

David Laurie and I have met up a number of times in recent years for lunch and a few holes at Ampfield, Corhampton or Alresford golf clubs. Always very enjoyable. We once set ourselves an exercise to recall as many names as we could from our 1948 intake. In those days about 120 boys joined Tauntons each year resulting in forms of 30 each in 2A1, 2A2, 2B1 and 2B2. We were pleased to reach 87 before our memories failed us.

Mike Watkins who is a fine artist and sculptor living in the New Forest. He has exhibited for many years at the New Forest show and has returning customers from far afield. I remember envying the quality of his work even at Tauntons.

Maurice Pratt who lives in the Seattle area having left the UK in the 1960s. Maurice spent most of his career at Boeing as a Systems Engineer.

Dick Griffiths who hailed from Sholing but now lives in Lee on the Solent. A good friend of mine for many years spending numerous family holidays together on the continent. Dick became a Senior Pressure Vessel Engineer in the oil industry. He played local football into his 50s and five-a-side past the age of 70.

Tom Noyce but not the one who was an OT. I believe that there were three Tauntonians with that name. This Tom was a paratrooper when in the army. He was always braver than most saving a young girl from drowning in the river at Mansbridge for which he received an award. I remember Tom diving in fully clothed while I was all too cautiously taking my shoes off first.

Several of the above were scholarship boys who lived on council estates. I once spoke with Ted Colenutt about the feeling of equality that reigned at the school no matter what your background. Ted confirmed that this was the school policy that was set up and followed by all staff. A wonderful thing.

Ron Sizer (1948 - 1953)



In the form picture Tom Noyce is second left front row. The other picture left to right is of Dave Wilkins, Maurice Pratt, Ken Leach, Ron Sizer and John Hooper.