



OLD BOYS RELIVE MEMORIES OF BEING YOUNG BOYS

Former students of St John's Boys School have met up for a reunion.

Old students and a teacher from the now-defunct Margate school assembled in the old playground to restage a school photograph

originally taken 40 years ago.

Retired art-teacher Brian Gilham and many local Isle of Thanet lads were joined by former schoolmates who had travelled from as far as Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire, Devon and Cornwall

for the photograph.

They then retired to the pub to share memories of old times.

Labour district councillor Clive Hart was one of the former students to go along.

He said: "It really was brilliant to see old mates again after so long. Many, myself included, had grown by a few pounds in weight and sported different hair-colouring, but the individual personalities and body language

remained and the numerous amusing memories came flooding back throughout the evening."

The reunited group now intends to hold an annual school outing in towns across the country in future years.

Life-saving lurcher proves that he really is man's best friend

A FAITHFUL dog saved his owner from possible death by waking him from his slumber in the middle of the night.

When the motorhome of 77-year-old Paul Volante started to fill with poisonous fumes, the hairy hero repeatedly prodded his master in the neck with his considerable snout to rouse him. It may have saved both of them from being poisoned by the carbon monoxide in exhaust fumes.

The incident took place three weeks ago when Mr Volante's motorhome was parked on Cliftonville seafront at Palm Bay, near the primary school and pitch-and-putt golf course.

He said: "I had bedded down for the night and fallen asleep as usual but was woken a few hours later by Almut, nudging me hard in the back of the neck with his big, wet nose. He was clearly scared and knew he had to wake me."

Mr Volante was amazed to see a car at each end of the campervan. Both vehicles' engines were revving hard and filling his home with smoke and fumes.

The effects had already started to kick in and a woozy Mr Volante just managed to escape.

He said: "I just clambered into the front

■ BY TOM BETTS

seats, which wasn't easy because of how awful I felt. I started the van up and the two cars took off into the night. It was pretty scary, but thanks to Almut I'm OK. He hardly barks or makes a noise, as lurchers don't really, but he knew what to do to wake me."

Mr Volante, who is half-German and half-Italian, fears he was the victim of a robbery attempt by thieves who might have been trying a new tactic of thieving from people.

Vigilant

He says the incident has left him shaken and for the time being he has decided to pay a monthly fee at the Quex caravan park in Park Road, Birchington, rather than try to sleep while his van is parked on public roads.

He said: "I want to tell people what happened as I don't want this to happen to anyone else. It is important people are vigilant."

"I reported what happened to the police, but without me being able to identify the cars I don't think there is much they can do. It was really dark, though, and the fumes had made me feel awful."

Almut, who Mr Volante says understands English and German commands, has always sported a Superman logo on his dog-collar and he now lives up to the title.

Tune into a Thanet state of mind

A LOCAL take on the Alicia Keys song Empire State Of Mind is living on YouTube.

The loose cover version laments the fate of the towns of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate to the famous tune.

The song, entitled The Thanet Anthem, and an accompanying video have been put on the site from an account called TheThanetLoops.

It is not yet known who produced it or sang the lyrics to the four-minute track.

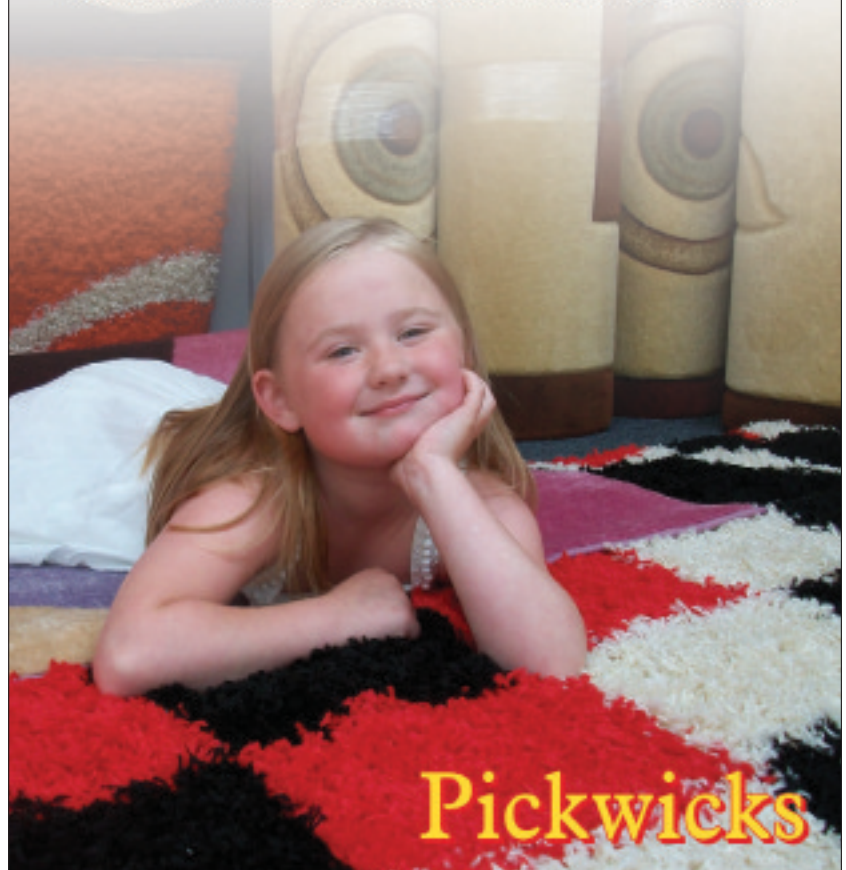
It has already notched up thousands of hits, with the words sung by a distinctive female voice over a piano.

Among other things, the song mentions that the area's best club Escape is "always shut", the Turner gallery is something no one wants and that "dreams are trampled and robbed by the council".

To see the video for yourself, visit YouTube and search for 'The Thanet Anthem'.

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