bamboo pole. The changing room walls were grass at first and burned down after a pipe smoker dropped his match. Cubs with Peg Lloyd. I could never pass my 'draw the Union Jack' badge, but thanks to Brexit this problem will probably go away!

# Janina (Legg) Seabrook

I was at Kitale School from about 1950 to 1956, in Falcon house, and it was a very happy time. I was head of house in 1956, with **Sue Shields, Biddy Doughty and Diana Fulton** head of Kestrel, Eagle and Hawk. I think my claim to fame was my ability to walk on my hands - on one occasion doing over 400 steps during break time! I owe Miss Macdonald, Standard 3, a debt of gratitude, having taught me my times tables so well. She really instilled them into us. I wish my grandsons had a Miss Macdonald in their lives now.

I remember doing PT first thing in the morning in our vests and shorts (or was it pants?) and spending a lot of time on the bars doing knee hangs etc. and climbing trees before that was stopped after a few arm breakages. Break times were spent looking for Oxalis weeds to put in our bread and butter — delicious! We were also good at gym and every year we would put on a display for the parents in the main hall, doing all sorts of acrobatics. The main hall had a large stage where we would sing our hearts out - mostly Scottish songs as Miss Yuille was the singing teacher and an avid Scot. The hall was also used by the Kitale Theatre Club in the early days to put on pantomimes, and also my mother produced The Women there, involving 40 women and no men - that was quite a show!

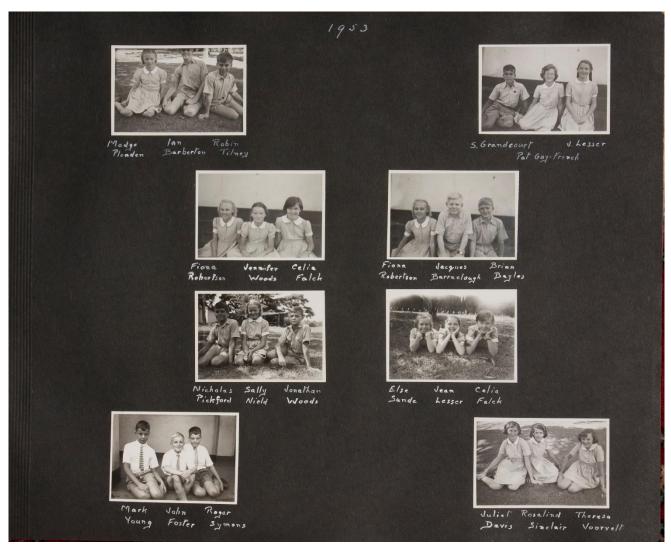
The highlight of my year was sports day. I think they were rather competitive occasions. I remember when the Black Watch came to the school and marched up and down the sports field in their kilts.

They were very happy days, in spite of being beaten by the assistant matron with the hairbrush for being caught out of bed after lights out with no clothes on, as a dare. The next day my parents were summoned to the school to inspect my black and blue backside!

### **Peter Woods**

As the headmaster's son, I was at Kitale School (KS) from my birth in 1937 until I was sent to school in England shortly before my father's retirement in 1954.

Things which were particularly memorable at KS included gymnastics, top form allowed to climb the jacaranda and Nandi flame trees in front of the main school building, my brother **Bernard** becoming the only pupil who fell out of one of these trees and broke his leg, weekend trips to Bowker's Dam, going in a hired Kitale lorry to see a dead rhino which had wandered into Renshaw Barberton's farm buildings on Mount Elgon. Not too sure about which house (perhaps it was Falcon).



Children of 1953 from Jay Pickford's Album

### Elizabeth (Morgan) Tottenham

Kitale School: My best memories are of things that Health and Safety would forbid ...!

Saturday mornings at Bowkers Dam, all scattering out on rubber rings or just swimming, Woody fully dressed sitting on the diving board (could he have been reading the paper?) tossing us occasional advice – "don't swim into the reeds, they may pull you down". The great treat was on the homeward journey when we swarmed all over the bus, mudguards, bonnet, back - most of us managed to cling on outside - while we bumped along the farm road...such adrenalin. At the main road we became a conventional busload of school kids, singing our way back to school.

Torrential rain flooding the place and instead of games we were sent out to splash barefoot in lakes on lawns and games fields.

Tree crossings along the avenue - jacaranda, Nandi flame - were daily entertainment. Again, Woody's laid-back advice - "test a branch before trusting your weight to it - if dead it'll break off." I remember only one broken arm.

They applied for government funding for concrete paths between all the buildings "to keep the children's feet dry". Not really necessary, but Woody thought they'd be so good for roller skating. They were.

# Ann Attwood (Totty) MBE

I left Kitale School in 1951 with a heavy heart believing nothing would be ever the same We were all young when we had to go to Kitale and the Boma – it was sad because we didn't see our parents for long periods and so the other girls were like our sisters.

Margrit Eichler Neé Liechti. I attended Kitale Primary School from 1954 until 1960.

#### Memories:

- being so alone the first weeks at school
- initially struggling with the English language since we only spoke Swiss-German at home
- the long dorms with the mosquito nets
- reading under the blankets at night never knowing if we would get caught.....
- the days at the san reading, listening to records....
- sports days

#### KITALE PRIMARY SCHOOL 1959 - SENIOR GIRLS BOARDING HOUSE



**Front Row:** Patricia Greaves, Susan Hufford? Moira Bridson, Christine Luck, Susanna van Rensburg, Janet Morgan, Anne Barrett, Annette Neilson, Wilhelmina (Tina) Boshoff, Francesca Pellissier, Catherine Black, Eleanor Underwood.

**2nd Row**: Mrs Munro, Patricia Gaye Moore, Evelyn Ruthman, Susan Chapman, Hilda van Rensburg, Veronica Josslyn, Jenny Northcote, Susan Barton, Pamela Hissey, Elna Buckholtz, Veronica Plunkett, (?), Christine Jensen, Susan Flutter, Ms Kay Yuille.

**3rd Row:** Vanessa White, Liz Statham, Yvonne Chapman, Cherry Roberts, Lindy Northcote, Jenny Coombes, Liz Knight, Catherine Coulthard, Dolly Watts, Rosemary Whittock, Gillian Leach, Caroline Barton, Anthea Dudin.

**Top Row:** Janice Dietrich, Sandra Dyce, Margrit Liechti, Susan Forrester, Jessie Barbour, Bridget Hufford, Sarah Humpries, Desiree Herbert, Susan Barrett, Ann Heath, Pauline Crampton, Sussanna Croukamp, Madge Watts.



Liz Statham & Anne Heath



Gay Moore, Caroline Barton, Pauline Crampton.



Susan Fuller?



Liz Knight & Cathrine Coulthard

# Mr Mortimer's Standard 4 Class 1959



Back row: Alistair Ulyate, Geoffrey Allen, Brian Sparks, Richard Chorley, Ferdinand Bischoff, Jan de Richleau,

Michael or Raymond Forrester

Middle row: Veronica Josselyn, Wilna Boshoff, Susan Wilson, Jenny Northcote, Pam Hissey,

Greta Lees

Front row: Cheryl Ulyate, Hilda van Rensburg, Suzanna van Rensburg, Linda Olivier, ???. Veronica Plunkett, Janet

Morgan

### Mr Mortimer's Class Standard 6 class of 1961



**Back Row:** Chris Luck, Anne Barnley, Sue Barton, Sue Chapman, Pam Hissey, Sue Garrod, Petrie Bosman **Middle Row:** Bruce Bellinge, Peter Liechti, Michael Charles, Michael Raymer, Bill McCormick and Cindy, Nigel Sinclair, Horace Horsey, John Beghetti, Tim Page

Front Row: David Leach, Barbara Bowes, Biddy Partridge, Claire Roberts, Annette Nielsen, Frank Pearson

Below left: **Julie Robertson** on her roller skates – Hawk House, **Patricia Edge** – Eagle and **Tina Hearne** – Falcon, alongside the concrete roller blade path between the dorms and the school block, late 1950's, and





above right: **Gillian Poultney**, **Tina Hearne** and **Patricia Edge** 'the horse riders' outside the little block dining room.

#### **Michael Brookes**

The Brookes family went to Kenya in 1949, with my father Edward Brookes under contract to the Education Department of the Colonial Office. After teaching posts in Nairobi Primary & the Mombasa Arab Boys School, he was appointed to the Kitale School Headship, taking over from Mr Woods in 1955, & remaining there until early 1964. I was a pupil at the School from 1955 to 1958.

As well as the School teaching staff including Biddy Crowcombe, Tom Jacob's Mother & Kay Yuille, memories are:

My mother Vera in the School Office typing up official letters, having to decipher my father's illegible writing

Driving my father's Landrover on my own around the empty school grounds during the holidays, with our two dogs (Whiskey & Soda) in the back.

The School swimming pool, and the retired askari who maintained it.

The gloriously colourful flower beds and trees in the School grounds, with masses of butterflies .... & hornet's nests & the odd snake as well!

The long L shaped grove of v tall gum trees that partially enclosed the sports fields

The School sanatorium overseen by Velia Tellatin as the Nursing Sister.

The weekday Morning Assembly in the School Hall.

The visits to the surrounding farms and the very kind & generous hospitality provided, invariably a delicious Sunday roast!

At the conclusion of my father's Colonial Office contract, we returned to the UK in 1964, where my father continued teaching.



George Brookes 1950 in Nairobi

#### Mr Mortimer's class 1961



**Back row:** Alistair Ulyate, Richard Chorley, Geoffrey Allen, Veronica Josselyn, Peter Leichti, Raymond

Forrester.

Middle row: Cheryl Ulyate, Annette Nielsen, Jenny Northcote, Janet Morgan, Greta Lees

In front: Wilna Boshoff.

#### **Niels Sunde**

I have led an extraordinary and privileged life. Far from being moneyed, I have just been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to do most of the things I have dreamed of and enjoyed. How much of this do I owe Kitale School? Much has been said about the dark side of this little school and I'll add nothing more. The jewels remain with me to this day, and it is with pleasure I take out those memories and dwell a little on my singularly undistinguished career as a pupil.

The black and white 'B' films that we saw fairly regularly and re-enacted on the play areas during break and leisure times. What a wonderful escape that was. The kindness of Jean Hallet, Bridget Doenhoff, beacons for a lonely, rather introverted little boy. 'Ma' Valpy kind and patient, taught me nothing I can recall, excepting when I told her I couldn't find time to do my homework she smiled at me and said "Niels, you have all the time in the world!" I have found this to be so.

Mr. Mortimer terrified a few, walloped me a couple of times (I didn't care, for I was too desensitized by the time I joined his class). I loved him, he opened whole new worlds up for me, particularly art and history. I am ashamed to this day that I laughed as, one day, he was led weeping to the san. I thought in my emotional ignorance it wasn't manly to cry. Old 'Crowbar' took me into the world of books and poetry,

travel "Chimborazo, Cotopaxi took me by the hand..." Then McCormack continued what Biddy Crowcombe started and followed me through to Prince of Wales engaging me in a lifelong love of English Literature, amateur dramatics, film and poetry.

Sport passed me by, as I dreamed and wandered about on those green and meaningless fields. Music only interested me much later, although I did play a little piano. Hiding in the hedges around the pool, playing marbles, carving my name in the Nandi Flame trees with a penknife. Breaking bounds. Teasing the girls, **Lindy Northcote**, as was, cannot recall bashing me on the nose with the school bible – these years later I reckon it as probably well deserved. I remember my first ever kiss from **Francesca Pellissier**? She left, however the memory of that chaste peck lingers some sixty odd years later.

Kitale School? Well it has furnished me with lifelong friends and some kind memories, that is plenty enough.

# **Lindy (Northcote) Wilson**

The whole Northcote family were in Eagle house and if my memory serves me correct we ONCE won Cock House!! I boarded with the lovely Miss Gray as our house mistress then in seniors was with Mrs. Munro.

## **Richard Northmore**

KPS January 1955 to December 1961.

Kitale School memories: I started when I was 5 and at least for the first term I was a day boy staying with the Hallett's during the week who lived near the school. Alan is my age — it was fun. I then boarded. It was only at the 2008 reunion that I realised that I was younger than most of my class because they were celebrating their sixtieth birthdays — that is why I was smaller!! I am rather large now though! I was in Eagle. I used to get home sick at the beginning of each term but not for long and only when I first when to KPS. I loved having all my friends around. My parents came with ice cream from The Bakery at least once a week at morning break - delicious.

Skating along the path between the dining room and main block.

Marmite and butter mix sandwiches – I still occasionally have these even now.

Swimming pool - I nearly drowned there before I could swim - Bridgette saved me. Thanks!

Dens in the Kei Apple hedge around the tennis court.

Chug chugs – my son was given a physics homework to make something which moved, a chug chug was a great hit.

Climbing over the partial walls in the junior dorm.

No mosquito nets on the last day of term and throwing shoes at each other in the dark.

Corporal punishment - Crowbar and her ruler, Brookie and the cane, Dowson and the tackie.

### Aiden Doyle

I was at Kitale School from 1955 – 1961 and was in Eagle House which was yellow shirts. My memories of Kitale School were many especially being a boarder as many of us were. I remember I used to get very home sick at the beginning of each term but was able to see my parents every week or so when they came to visit.

Other memories:

Skating along the path between the dining room and main block.

Marmite and butter mix sandwiches at break time.

Swimming pool.

Dens in the Kei Apple hedge around the tennis court.

Chug-chug craze.

## **Roger Dudin MBE**

I was born in Kitale Hospital on 28 March 1947.

I was at Kitale School from January 1955 to December 1960 with my brother **John** and sister **Anthea**. We were in Eagle House. My memories of Kitale School were many, especially being a boarder. My grandparents farmed on Mount Elgon and looked after us during term time with weekly visits to the school at break times on a Wednesday. Our parents lived in Kisumu on Lake Victoria.

I learnt to swim in the school pool. I was taught how to box. We had great sport with the scouts playing wide games in the forests below the school. I learnt to ride as an extra activity and to play tennis. I was awarded the Endeavour Prize in my last year at the school.

#### Michael O'Hanlon

Kitale School 1957-63; Falcon House. Memories of school too many to recount; among them: close friends; games of 'One, Two, Three Block'; 'nyabs'.

# Lisbeth (Jensen) Mandel

Recently reading John Le Carre's biography, he detested the cruelty and punishment in his boarding school during the war, just a decennial before us at Kitale school. I haven't thought much about punishment but was surprised to hear at the Reunion in Devon, that a man felt the punishment had practically ruined his life. One does not forget punishment. I remember Mr. Mortimer hitting me over the knuckles with a ruler because I couldn't make out how to divide into pounds, shillings and pence, this was standard three. 'Crowbar' once lifted my skirt and hit me between my legs because of some mistake in Latin, standard 6. I remember the cue in front of Brookies office, what at horrible job for a grown up to have.

In standard 6 we had algebra, geometry, Latin and French. I loved the clean white paper and the fine lines and angles of geometry. I hoarded paper, and had quite a stack, that I wasn't allowed to take home to Denmark with me. I remember Bridget reading "Our Island Story" to us, some King was having his nephew's eyes torn out, the thrill and horror of it all.

## Roz (Williams) Graham-Smith

I went on to Limuru (LGS) after Kitale School.

Kitale must have primed me well as apparently it was deemed the first year there was unnecessary and I was bumped into the next form up. School life went downhill for me after that. Never felt I belonged the way I had at Kitale. Boarding was very restrictive there... So, couldn't wait to get out and left as soon as I could after School Certificate. Not even 16!

My memories of Kitale school are happy and many and I list those that first come to mind...

Brookie rattling his keys in his pocket as he walked along those verandas (on the war path no doubt)

The sliced bread at break time, spread with the (mixed with great care) marmite and butter so that it looked like peanut butter!)

The "bar" that we did knee hang from (one knee when we got brave and clever) and "eggs in the basket". Never did get the hang of that going around and around thing, as did people like the very limber **Jenny Northcote**... rats!

Ballet in the assembly hall with (Jenny and Lindy's mum who had very impressively I think once been a Windmill girl)

Swopping sweets outside the dining room after lunch with whoever one was 'hitched to' and hitch bracelets of course

Army worm all over the playing fields... Revolting, squelching between your toes

TAB's and walking around the rest of the day like a windmill. Don't remember it making any difference to the arm seizing up

"Midnight feasts" on the concrete floor of the loos... the only place with light. How sad.

Making ourselves faint on the bed at rest time. How stupid!

It was a great school. For all his seemingly terrifying ways Brookie must have been a good guy. We came out well.

By the way ... I was in Falcon (blue). **Chris Hearne** (Hearno) and I ended up as House Captains... And I ended up with his hitch bracelet.

What was it ... Persevere. Good advice if you ask me.

## Jenny Field (Duirs)

I attended Kitale School up to 1962. I loved my school days as a boarder at Kitale pretending to sleep walk or even sleep talk if an adult intruder was on the prowl! Bending over the bedstead for the tackie was not such a terrible calamity either, not even a scar to show for it. I was in Hawk, simply the best! I loved competing on sports days and swimming club with pomegranates as a treat.

(Jenny, I seem to remember standing outside the box room/music room near the swimming pool and being so impressed as you played the piano. Paula Allen.)

### **Horace Horsey**

I was in Kestrel House from Standard 1 (Jan 1956 when I was but 5 and left in 1962 in standard 7. Having had children, I really don't completely understand how my parents could drop off a shy and definitely crying child to the mercy of bigger boys and unknown teachers. But I wasn't the only one and slowly I settled into the routine.

One recollection of the junior dining room was long tables with a teacher at one end and a regular forced helping of about the most revolting spinach piled high onto my plate for lunch and supper. The skill was to carefully check out the teacher and dispose of this green gunge onto the floor without being caught. To this day I cannot abide spinach!

#### **Kevin Northcote**

I was at Kitale School as a boarder from 1956 - 1963. My 2 older sisters **Lindy, Jenny** and younger brother **Clive** also went to Kitale School. I represented the school at boxing on 2 occasions against Manor House and won the tennis and gymnastics cup in 1962.

I remember the roller skating on the concrete path but also incorporating jumping the steps at the end of the main school corridor onto the path!! Unfortunately, this popular event led to me breaking my arm just before sports day. I remember the marble craze with fond memories.

# Jenny (Troward) Botto and Liz (Troward) Vorster

We were at Kitale School from 1957 - 1963 and were in Hawk house with the red shirts, later renamed Cherangani. Although our parents farmed just outside Kitale we were full boarders and only got to see our parents on visiting Sundays.

Other memories - many!

**Liz**: Break time activities.... marbles (I was banned from playing with the girls!), jacks and pick up sticks (using porcupine quills - the white quill being the prize) as well as skating, hoola hoops, stilts and hop scotch.

Jen: I usually found myself trying to keep up with my twin. She always came home with the good reports and better marks, but I guess I didn't quite put the same effort into my school work, so only to be expected. Whilst she was jostling for top spot with Adrian Hilliar, Kevin Northcote and I took it in turns to take bottom spot. I remember messing around in standard 7 waiting for I believe Miss Crowcombe to take class and Roger Hissey was up at the blackboard messing around with the blackboard compass and thrust it towards the class and the point flew out and embedded itself in my chest, what a mess by the time 'Crowbar' walked in. There were a few raw hides that day.

We both joined the Brownies and flew up to Girl Guides. Helen's mother (Mrs Nicholson) was our Brown

Owl and later our mother took over the Brownies. When the Queen Mother came up to Kitale we were all lined up at the show ground to meet her. The guides spent a weekend on the Nicholson's farm where amongst other activities we had to cross over the river using ropes. I (Liz) twisted my ankle and had to be carried back to the farm house.

**Liz**: I enjoyed all the sporting activities and we also took ballet lessons (Jen was the graceful one!). My (**Jen**) sporting activity was at its best when I was busy legging it out of the Sanatorium with nurse in hot pursuit with the dreaded TAB (fondly? Referred to as Torture after breakfast).

# **Contribution from Jenny (Troward) Botto**



Kitale European School



Jen and Liz Troward's first day at school - January 1957



One of Betty Northcote's Bally productions at school



Liz and Jen, with big brother Peter, he would have been going into standard 6 I think



A music lesson in the hall.

#### **Kitale School Memories!**

Obviously, memories are blurred over the last fifty years or more, but these are some that still remain.

- 1. Feeling so disappointed and irritated that 'Kids' Block' could only watch half the film on a Saturday night in the school hall. One film that really stands out was the original black and white version of King Kong. We were petrified as tiny kids, but still were fascinated to see how it all ended. As usual we were shunted off to bed at half time, while 'Big Block' could stay for the remainder of the film. The next day I couldn't wait to ask my sister, Sally in Big Block, what happened to King Kong!
- 2. Was it my imagination, but did we always get baked beans on toast every Saturday night before the film?
- 3. I always suffered from ear aches at Kitale School and had to submit to our ferocious matron (did she seem like Hattie Jacques in 'The Carry On' films?) jabbing me in the bum with a huge penicillin injection. Was it because the pool was always so filthy and green, or because sometimes water scorpions and dead rats were found floating around.
- 4. The fun we had retrieving tennis balls from that 'magic hedge' next to the swimming pool; it seemed to have tunnels inside, so we could play all sorts of games, plus hide and seek.
- 5. Did we have an infestation of army worm the one year? I remember it all over the playing fields and maybe sports day had to be postponed because we were slipping and sliding everywhere.
- 6. The excitement sitting in the school hall and hearing which of the four houses had won the annual 'Cock House'. How proud I felt when my older brother and sister were both captains in different years and won 'Cock House' for our green Kestrel house. The dining room was turned into a huge 'K' for the Kestrel House to attend the feast.
- 7. Who remembers the creative game we played in the dormitories? It was called 'chug chugs' and how simple and cheap compared to what kids expect to play with these days. It was made from cotton reels, elastic bands and a lolly pop stick. The chug chugs were wound up and then raced across the floor what fun we had to see whose chug chug was the Sterling Moss of the dormitory!

**Tim Eager** 



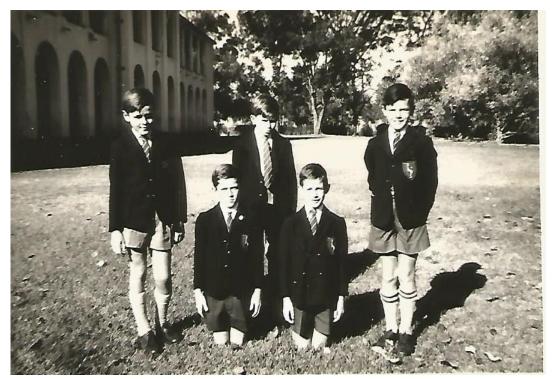
September 1965 and is probably the rugby team playing against Manor House. **Alex Liechti** is front row second left; I am in the middle row second left; **Barney Gaston** top row left; **Peter Hissey** top row third left; **Antony Burch** with the rugby ball.



Swimming pool and the flimsy changing rooms constructed out of gaping bamboo poles - great fun for the giggling little girls on the left and naughty 'peeping Toms' on the right!



This photo shows a group of us attempting to build a dam below the outflow pipe from the swimming pool. Alex Liechti is on the right in the school hat; Peter Hissey is sitting across the plank, and I think it is Antony Birch at top right.



Outside the classrooms. **Barney Gaston** is standing on the left and **Alex Liechti** is kneeling on the right. I am not sure about the other boys, but it could be **Julian Shorten** standing in the middle.

# Doreen Drakes and Kay Yuille's Standard 7 class probably 1958



**Left to right**. Back row: Peter Troward, Eric Ulyate, x, Ian Neild, Ian Clay, Robert Munday, Graham Duirs, x, Alan Dale, Georgina.

**Middle row**: Jenny Coombes, x, x, Howard, x, Jeremy Kidner, Robert Cunningham, Johnnie Barbour, Peter Symes, David Skinner, x, ?,

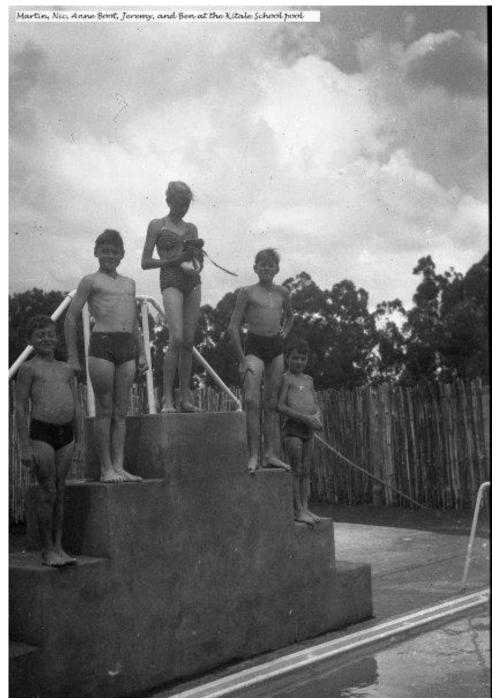
**Front row**: Sarah Humphris, Jessie Barbour, Doreen Drakes, Susan Forrester, Bridget Hufford, Kay Yuille, Margaret Sinclair, Gillian Leach

Others look familiar but can't put names to them. Perhaps you can?



Anticipation as we await the arrival of Sir Patrick Renison, April 1960 How serious can one get?

Are you able to recognise friends from the past? I can see several familiar faces — **Biddy Partridge** peeping out, serious **Sue Barton** stands tall; **John Beghetti**, dark haired and far right — who else?



Martin Pickford, Nic Pickford, Ann Boot, Jay Pickford and Ben Pickford at Kitale School pool.



Courtesy Peter Rosa – are you there?



Jay Pickford, David Fletcher, Nic Pickford, de Bromhead, Ian and Drucilla Barberton, Robertson, Anne or Pam Matthews

### **Kitale School Pool**



# Veronica (Plunket) Blennerhassett

I was so pleased to be going to Kitale School with my brother **Patrick** in 1957 as I had already had one year at Loreto Convent Eldoret. I was miserable there.

Hawk house was red t-shirts

Jacks, stilts, marbles, hopscotch, autograph books.

The jumping sandpits with the boy's tarantula fights.

Sweets after lunch from our tins, licking Oxo cubes.

Flavoured straws.

The green room and plays.

I remember the brownie uniform, I was a Sandpiper, each six had a turn as duty six. Their duty was to create a floating flower arrangement in a bowl of water with flowers picked from the school garden.

(There were several Brownie packs that met in different parts of the school. I was in the Weaver Six and we met in the school hall. I remember baking rock cakes for a badge at someone's house in Grasslands, possibly Mrs Bumpus, who taught us gymnastics. **Paula Allen**)

French toast on Sunday's.

The flying ants, that flew into the dining room during the wet season, then lost their wings. Some people would east them between their bread. I had one put under my bread!!!

Others put marmalade on their breakfast eggs.

We sat boy girl boy girl at the table.

The plague of army worm. Every blade of grass was attacked by the caterpillar and the games field became a bright green skidding slime. Our white tackies turned green. Small planes overhead sprayed the farming area to get rid of them.

The same large games field had a couple of long jump and high jump sandpits where a gathering of 'bad boys' had a collection of tarantulas they had tickled from their burrows. Well, they had tarantula fights. If us girls passed by, we had a grey felt hat full of them chucked at us!!! Nasty, very nasty. Young Mrs