

1980

The year that beer was brewed at CIS

John Mundy was a biology teacher who was passionate about his subject. Anything that would challenge, stimulate, or intrigue his students was a legitimate teaching tool. The two square meter, massively complex schematic diagram of the chemical processes of the cell was something he wangled out of the Biologifdeling of Københavns Universitet and was still hanging on the wall of the CIS biology lab 20 years later.

So when his students asked about the exact process which turned water, barley, hops and yeast into beer, he came to me to get permission for a group of legally underaged students to carry out a controlled experiment with alcohol. "With all the students in the biology classes, each one will get just a little sip," he said, "and since they will have crafted the brew over a period of weeks, they will savour the taste rather than belting it down." What could I say? This was Denmark, where brewing had a long and noble tradition.

The organic ingredients were easy enough to come by, and the pharmacy that sold the brewing kits also had "wine balloons", giant fat glass bottles that could hold about 15 gallons (60 litres) of beer. These "wine balloons" could either be had in a wooden frame so that two strong people could lift them, or without a frame, which was somewhat cheaper. As usual, the school was financially challenged, so we went for the frameless version.

John kept me posted on the excitement of the kids as they mixed the ingredients and added the water, and saw bubbles start to rise from the mixture after a couple of days. In order to make sure that a brewing mixture ferments evenly, it is necessary to stir it slowly and regularly. Since the mouth of the "wine balloon" was too small to insert a stirring stick, it was decided that the bottle would be gently rotated on the floor, sloshing the contents back and forth. The floor was unfinished pine, soft enough so that the bottle could be safely rotated as long as it was done cautiously. A schedule of senior boys was made so that the "wine balloon" could be rotated every couple of hours, even on weekends.

Everything went smoothly for a couple of weeks, and then one Monday morning John Mundy appeared in my office with a regretful look. "We had a little accident over the weekend," he said. "I don't know whether the rotating was too rough or there was a tiny pebble between the floorboards, but the "wine balloon" has burst." Sure enough, when I went over to take a look, the broken glass and oatmeal-like mash had been removed but there was no doubt that many gallons of sweet, unmistakable proto-beer had soaked down into the floor of the biology lab. "Open the windows, I'm sure the smell will disappear in a few days," I said glibly. But it didn't. It was still there the following week, it was there when Spring came, and it was still there when school opened the following August. There are even some who say that the reason the schools moved from Gammel Kongevej to Hellerup was because of the faint but indelible odour of a biology experiment that suddenly went wrong.

Jim Keson



1981

The book spaces go

You wanted to know what CIS was? The one on Gammel Kongevej? Mr Keson once allowed us to completely and totally destroy the old (wooden) locker system on the second floor because it had to be removed to some containers downstairs in order to be replaced by a new (metal) system. Today you probably know that you should have never done that. Three people had concussions, I ruined my writing hand - which lasted for a month - and A. (name withheld) got a splinter in his eye.

Volkher Hoffmann

1981

Lunchtime activities in the 80's

It was the '80s and students took pride in defying or provoking the establishment. One girl told me that the person she admired most was her mother – who, when she graduated from high school, held a party so wild that a grand piano got pushed into the hotel swimming pool.

One beautiful Spring day, I heard a lot of whispering in the CIS corridors after lunch. This self same girl and her boyfriend, the rumours said, had gone off to the town hall and gotten themselves married. She was going to be in my maths class last period, so I decided to wait until then to approach her. She walked into the class but wasn't carrying a bouquet and didn't have any rice on her clothing, so I went through the lesson normally, albeit without being able to concentrate fully. Afterwards when the other students had left the room, I asked her about the rumour. "It's true," she said, "but we didn't miss any classes, so we didn't break any rules."

For one of the few times in my life, I was completely speechless.

Jim Keson, Headmaster

1985 CIS teachers

Most of the CIS memories are very personally tinted. When I was at CIS, I was experimenting with relationships and with alcohol. I had to find a balance between wanting to be a good girl and revolting against authority. Mr Hall's maths lessons were a disaster for me, because he was so organized. He had the whole year planned out for us at the beginning of the year. So what did I do? Nothing. I refused to do the homework he'd planned out for us. I did pay attention in class, because I was basically a good girl, but at home did nothing. As a result I had only a 3 for my IB higher, not a very good result for someone who had such a natural talent ;-) for mathematics. The more organized a teacher was, the worse it was for me. For that reason, Mr. Pierce was bad for me (I only had to take his English classes until my O-level results came in) and so was Mr. Cronshaw (French teacher). I didn't like to be told off, so I did do what Mr. Pierce and Mr. Cronshaw asked me to do, but revolted deep inside and hated their classes. French classes were the only classes I occasionally skipped. Whereas I did like school!



And – I didn't like TOK lessons J (sorry Jim) and disagreed with the way the pluspoints were allocated. My impression was that only the students who said what you wanted to hear got a +1 for TOK, not the students who opened their mouths most of the time and had a different opinion.

Our biology teacher, Miss Jeavons, was an English woman who always told us during the lesson, that in crisis situations she would just “have a cup of tea”. That always made us laugh.

I loved chemistry lessons the first year (1984-1985). I decided to take the IB lower in 1985 because the teacher, Dr Cline, left after that year and I didn't want to waste everything I'd learned from her. She was great. An American lady. Always wore baggy jeans. She had massive long black hair and wore glasses.

Judith (Frikkee) Hora

1985

A CIS student saves a life

The health teacher at CIJS had arranged for the Junior School pupils to get some training in first aid, so the Senior School students were invited as an afterthought. Stopping bleeding, fixing splints for broken bones, carrying out cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, everybody got to practice everything. The CIS kids enjoyed an afternoon without classes, and the next day they went back to their normal academic life.



About six months later an old man collapsed on the Holte-Copenhagen train. Most of the passengers in the compartment looked the other way, hoping that it wasn't anything serious. But without really thinking about it, a CIS 12th grader, Susan Sandberg, went over to him and knelt down. She could see that he wasn't breathing and she could hardly feel a pulse. Immediately she started mouth-to-mouth

resuscitation while the other passengers watched with astonished expressions. At Lyngby Station, someone called the conductor who summoned an ambulance to take the man away and Susan continued on to Vesterport.

Later she that her swift action had actually kept the man alive until he made it to a hospital where he was treated for a heart attack At the end of the year the faculty voted unanimously to give Susan a citation for her bravery and resourcefulness.

Jim Keson, Headmaster