



One Year in Valley Stream

—James Rumsey, September 2025

Sixty years ago, September 1965, I arrived in Valley Stream with my wife, Anne, as part of the teacher-exchange programme between the USA and Britain. We were both 25 and had been married two years. I taught Physical Education in the four District 24 elementary schools. My exchangee was John Koronakos. We further exchanged homes and cars.

In September, I joined the staff at Harbor Road and Brooklyn Avenue. Subsequently, I taught at William L Buck and Franklin Avenue. The respective principals were Sally Rumpleton, Gene Kuhn, Robert Carbonaro (District Principal) and Louise O'Rourke.

It was a culture shock for me. Not only did I have to adapt to a different educational system, but I had never taught in an elementary school before. All my training and previous teaching had been at the high school level. Fortunately, my wife was also a teacher and had experience teaching younger children.

I was welcomed and helped by the staff of all the schools, and, in some cases, made lifelong friends, some of whom came to see us in England. Names I can easily recall, as well as those listed above, are Larry McCue, Jerry Huppert, Carl Laurino, Kathy Busby, Gertrude Hanson, Stella Marrota, Ed Zito, Virginia Farmer (who only drank coffee once it was cold!) and Bob Berg. For my birthday, the staff presented me with a home-made cake.

The wife of John Koronakos was unable to settle in England and returned at Christmas with her son, Jason. We moved out of their home and went to live with Rose and Arnold Buchsbaum at 3 Rosedale Road in part of their home vacated by their two sons who were at Cornell University. Arnold was chair of the Board of Education for District 24.

At the graduation event, held on the Village Green at the bandshell, I was presented with a pair of binoculars for our forthcoming trip around the USA. Later, one of the parents said that they were disappointed that I had not used the opportunity to say something in my English accent. I could not do that at the time since I was so overwhelmed by the occasion, knowing that it was the end of a significant part of my life. I still have the binoculars!

By chance, in 1994, I had attended an academic conference just outside of Washington, D.C. I flew in and out of JFK. By then, I was working at a college in Southampton. For old times' sake, I hired a car and drove to Harbor Road to see if there had been changes. I arrived after the school day ended and made my way to the office area to explain my mission. Imagine my surprise when I was directed to the staff room where a reunion of staff members was taking place, celebrating the school's foundation. In that room, I was able to catch up with so many of the colleagues with whom I previously worked. The experience was surreal and could only have happened on that one day!

About the Author

Jim Rumsey was born in Wallsend-on-Tyne in 1940, where his mother's family lived. Southampton, where his parents were living before his birth (his father's hometown), was heavily bombed during the Second World War, hence the couple's escape north. Except for two years in Leeds, and one in Valley Stream, Jim has lived most of his 85 years in Southampton.

When the newlyweds came to Valley Stream, they first lived on Pine Lane—three blocks from the Valley Stream Fire Department on Cochran Place. Jim can still recall the "shock when the 7:00 a.m. fire station hooter was sounded." He has memories of the 1965 North-South game, where he "rode on one of the floats at the match." He also shot film at the 1966 Memorial Day Parade. Unlike Jim, his wife Anne did not have a teaching position lined up when they arrived in the States. Once here, however, she pursued a teaching position and was hired as a music teacher at Davison Avenue School in Lynbrook.

After the Britain-New York teacher exchange (1965-1966), Jim taught for seven years at the high school level, followed by a 26-year stint at a local college as a course leader for postgraduate studies. During that time, Rumsey also assumed a management position with the Solent Stars, an English National League basketball team based in Hampshire. He retired from both careers in 1999. Since then, he has written three novels, all based on family history: [Divided Families](#), [Allure of the Sea](#), and [Backboards and Blackboards](#), published in 2011, 2021, and 2022. [A Sporting Rollercoaster: The History of Solent Stars Basketball Club](#), published in 2021, is a factual account, an insider's look, at the Solent Stars.



June 1966 - "P.E. Thickie" birthday cake presented to Jim from the staff. "P.E. Thickie," was meant as a joke—academic superiority over athletics.



Anne Rumsey