

FABULOUS FRANK RETIRES AT NEARLY 70 AFTER 46 YEARS AS A TEACHER

St. Ambrose College is to bid a fond farewell to their immensely popular, veteran teacher Frank Azzopardi who though nearly 70-years of age, says the secret has always been 'to be young at heart.'

Born and educated in Gibraltar at the Sacred Heart Grammar School, a Christian Brothers school, Frank trained with the Royal Navy as an electrical technician, before being sent to the Chatham Training Base in Kent and ultimately studying Physics at London South Bank University.



Frank is pictured with sixth form students Sam Anderson and Shane Fox and the school's Vandergraph Generator

Frank said: “A teacher has to know their stuff, but they must also be incredibly well organised. It's also important to have a sense of humour and to be able to motivate the pupils.”

He is less than sanguine about some modern methods, “It is very prescriptive now. I suppose I was a bit of a maverick, but now everyone is expected to teach in exactly the same way, something that hinders creativity.

He said: “For all that, I do not think the pupils have changed. Perhaps they seem less anxious about their exams now and are happy for it all to come together at the end, but young people are much the same now as they were when I started my career 46 years ago and are a joy to work with.”

He added: “What I have really loved about St. Ambrose and why I have stayed so long is the attitude of the boys. One of the qualities of St Ambrose pupils which has always impressed me, is their caring behaviour towards each other. The stronger, more able, more confident boys look after the more vulnerable and I think that really is a product of the Catholic Christian ethos. I also have to say the vast majority of staff have been simply wonderful, kind, compassionate, professional people and it's been a privilege to be part of such a team.”

He taught in Kent, back home in Gibraltar for nine years, then Liverpool before joining the Catholic grammar school in Hale Barns 31 years ago.

A brilliant teacher, he was Head of Year and published a seminal A Level Physics text book, 'Accessible Physics', which has been a teacher's reference book for two decades and is still used worldwide. Frank said: “I am surprised how often I still get communications from Russia, Sweden, Africa worldwide really asking me about the book,” he said. “It took me two and a half years to write and was designed to aid the delivery of a complex subject at all ability levels.”

A passionate advocate of keep fit and a healthy mind in a healthy body, Frank held weight training sessions for the young men up until two years ago and has also run a popular film club for the last 10 years, often filling the school's lecture theatre with both blockbusters and classics.

A father of five, with two of his children living in Australia, Frank now intends to spend his retirement fishing, rowing and perhaps writing a novel. "Many of us want to write a book and I have many ideas, but we will see if I am good enough or have the discipline."

Frank continued teaching beyond the standard retirement age because he loved his work and it has been difficult to replace such a figure in a core subject when young teaching talent is sadly in short supply.

St Ambrose College Principal James Keulemans said: "Frank is the archetypal senior professional and has been a much respected and valued member of our school. So many teachers, especially newcomers, gravitate towards him to pick his brains, and ask for advice and guidance and he will be greatly missed."