

# Hello me

Each week we ask someone with a connection to Courier Country to write a letter to their younger self. What would they tell themselves? What lessons have they learned? This week, author **Paul Teague** describes how he rediscovered the lost pleasure of writing

“I’ve always found old photographs fascinating; I would like to know what the person was thinking and feeling at that moment in time.

I’d love to be able to step back through the years and recapture the sights, sounds, smells and conversations of that precise moment.

This picture must be from about 1968 in our garden at Hamstreet, Kent. It’s funny to think how few photographs were taken when I was a toddler, before the age of digital cameras and selfies.

Would you believe that the swing in the photograph is still going strong?

It’s in my sister’s garden at the moment, forever preserved by the lavish coats of paint I applied to it when given the refurbishment task by my dad as a teenager.

As adults, we lose so much of that life-affirming joy experienced by toddlers. We become doubtful, self-conscious and unsure of our abilities.

At that age, I would have been drawing pictures and playing all of the time, running from one activity to the next. I certainly remember that playing Batman figured highly in my life at the time.

I’ve always loved fantasy TV series and films, even from that young age when the media featured much less in our lives.

So, I guess it was inevitable that, at some point, I would end up making my own small contribution to the genre.

I’ve been writing since nine and I even tried to get my debut story Mr Plum and Mr Apple published by Penguin books in the ‘70s.

I received an extremely nice and supportive rejection letter from one of the editors, — written on a typewriter of course.

I wrote plays, short stories for village magazines, entered writing competitions and then, one day — I’m not sure when — it all dried up.

I became an adult, engaged with my



Paul on a swing in his parents’ garden.

20-year career as a broadcaster with the BBC, got busy bringing up my young family and became completely distracted by everyday life.

What happened in between? Well, fortunately, taking voluntary redundancy a few years ago has given me the chance to revisit some of the things that I love and one of those ‘lost’ pleasures is writing.

Things have also been hurried up by turning 50 in March. It’s had the inevitable impact of making me think about my life so far and reflecting on how I want it to be in the years ahead.

So, in the past year, I returned to writing. Things have changed since I last scribbled in a Basildon Bond writing pad, or banged out the words on a cheap Corona typewriter.

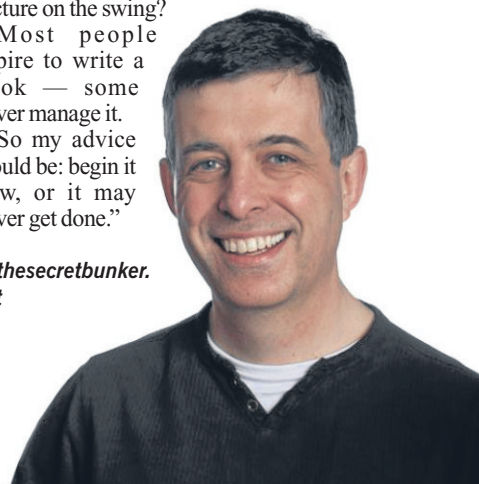
Now, I type away on a PC in my study and having written the first 50,000 words, I moved straight on to the next book, then then to the final part of The Secret Bunker Trilogy, which was inspired by a family visit to Scotland’s Secret Bunker at Troycwood, near St Andrews, a few years ago.

So, my questions to my younger self would be: Why did you stop that imaginative flow when you left school? How come you waited until you were nearly 50 before you finally squeezed out that creative work, the seeds of which were already there in that old black and white picture on the swing?

Most people aspire to write a book — some never manage it.

So my advice would be: begin it now, or it may never get done.”

● [thesecretbunker.net](http://thesecretbunker.net)



## Family events around Courier Country

● **Jurassic Adventures**  
Adam Smith Theatre,  
Kirkcaldy  
March 14

FUN FAMILY show about dinosaurs and the people that study them. Follow the footsteps of Doctor Grant and his team of explorers in their hilarious attempts to try and find proof that dinosaurs still exist.  
Time: 3pm.  
Admission: £17/£15, family £14.50.  
Tel: 01592 583302  
[www.onlife.com](http://www.onlife.com)

national titles across five sections. On from 9am on March 14 and 10am on March 15.  
Admission: £10/£8.  
Tel: 01738 621031  
[www.horsecross.co.uk](http://www.horsecross.co.uk)

● **Community Theatre**  
Taster Session  
Dundee Rep  
March 12

GET A taste of the am-dram life with this theatre taster session.  
Time: 7pm to 9pm.  
Admission: Free.  
Tel: 01382 223530  
[www.dundeerep.co.uk](http://www.dundeerep.co.uk)

● **Camperdown Wildlife Centre, Dundee**

**Daily**  
FANCY A fun family out with lots of amazing animals? Meet the otters, bears, owls, porcupines and more!  
Time: 10am to 3.30pm.  
Admission: £4.50/£3.50/£1/family tickets £16.  
Tel: 01382 431811  
[www.camperdownwildlife.com](http://www.camperdownwildlife.com)

● **Dunfermline Farmers’ Market**  
Glen Gates, Dunfermline  
March 14

SPLENDID MARKET with up to 20 stalls, including produce ranging from beef, lamb and pork, to vegetables, bread and chocolate.  
Time: 9am to 1pm.  
Admission: Free.  
Tel: 07773 280105  
[www.fifefarmersmarket.co.uk](http://www.fifefarmersmarket.co.uk)

● **Ice World Skating Club**  
Suttieside Road, Forfar

**Daily until March 29**  
PUBLIC ICE skating sessions in a friendly and popular environment. Learn to skate sessions also available. Call for times of sessions.  
Admission: Adult £5/child £3/skate Hire £1.  
Tel: 01307 468668 or Email: [skating@forfarindoorsports.co.uk](mailto:skating@forfarindoorsports.co.uk)

● **Scottish Brass Band Championships 2015**  
Perth Concert Hall  
March 14 and 15

A WEEKEND full of brass band music to enjoy — performed by more than a thousand musicians and brass bands from across Scotland. The musicians perform set works to compete for their

● **Doctor for a Day**  
Museum of the University of St Andrews  
March 14

FIND OUT what it’s like to be a doctor, as you learn to take a pulse, measure blood pressure and make your own stethoscope and doctor’s bag.  
Time: 1pm to 2pm for three to six-year-olds; 2.30pm-3.30pm for seven to 12-year-olds.  
Admission: Free.  
Tel: 01334 461660  
[www.st-andrews.ac.uk](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk)

● For full listings see What’s On every Friday.

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