



SOCIETY OF OLD PASTONIANS

2026



Spring is Sprung

After another fairly mild Winter, we just saw temperatures of 25 Degrees Centigrade, or in the 80s in old money. Amazing really.

I am starting this newsletter like I start all my Teams calls for work – updating on the weather. I talk with colleagues and customers all over the world and yes, it's a very British stereotype.

“De Mieux En Mieux, Pourtout”

State of the Nation

And what a state it is! Whether you are looking within the UK or further afield. The mood feels more 1930s than nearly 2030s. Maybe nationalism and fascism comes in 100 year cycles. You would hope that we learn the lessons of the past, but sadly it looks like the 1970s is returning economically and hope that the 70 years of relative peacetime will persist, for the sake of our legacy.

The Ukraine War Effort

Not to be too political or continue the negativities, but the tragedy of this wholly unjust war continues. It has taught the world that warfare is forever changing, and yet the results remain sadly all too familiar for the civilians who are caught up in it.

There are many projects to assist Ukraine, the victim of Russia's unprovoked aggression, in its war efforts: Our own old Pastonian and Chair, Iain Maxted has donated and delivered personally to the Ukrainian military several 4x4 pickups to be deployed to the front line to support drone crews and medivac work. The next trip in May will also include over 100 sets of clothing for soldiers who have been badly injured, evacuated to stabilisation points, been stripped of both their uniforms and their dignity while being treated and often being left with nothing more to wear than a flimsy medical gown.

Iain would like to deeply and sincerely thank all those fellow Pastonians who chipped in and enabled over 100 sets of clothing to be bought. Iain will make this delivery in May – good luck and come back alive!

Nelson was a ...

...local lad, but not sore afraid when he sought vain glory and ultimately saved Britain from Napoleon. Did you know that Old Boney had already minted British coins with his profile on, assuming conquest of London was a formality! Invasion nowadays is in the form of doctors and engineers if you believe all the social hype – where is Nelson now.

Nelson wasn't a....

...slave trader.

The pAlston sCHool

AI is everywhere. It really is amazing to be able to have a natural language conversation with an expert on EVERYTHING. At its simplest, it is smart search. Every time you 'google', you get an AI summary at the top if you want to refer to that (other search engines available). For full feature AI, try one of the many clients such as ChatGPT, Grok, Claud, Gemini....but beware you have to pay for the premium versions and advanced tools.

But much, much further, AI has the potential to perform many jobs, and frankly every company will be exploring if they need 10 headcount or 2 to manage it. New jobs will inevitably arise, but just imagine coming out of Paston now, with your A-Levels, and having to adapt. This is not just a Calculator replacing the need to know your times table, this is a faceless but very very smart automaton.

Anyway – this is what AI has to offer for the 'History of the Paston School in 250 words:

The **Paston School** in North Walsham, Norfolk, was founded in **1606** by Sir William Paston, a wealthy landowner and descendant of the famous Paston family known from the medieval Paston Letters. Sir William established it as a free grammar school on land purchased after the Great Fire of North Walsham. Its purpose was to provide education in "good manners, learning and the true religion" for up to 40 boys from north-east Norfolk, not limited to the town itself.

Sir William died in 1610, but trustees appointed in his will ensured the school's continuation, independent of the Paston family line, which faded after the Civil War. The school operated as a traditional boys' grammar school, emphasizing classical education. A notable early building, the School House on Grammar School Road, was constructed around 1765–1766 and still stands today.

Its most famous pupil was **Horatio Nelson**, who attended from 1768 to 1771 before joining the Royal Navy. Other distinguished alumni include Thomas Tenison, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in the late 17th century.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the school expanded with new buildings (including one opened in 1904) and came under the Norfolk Local Education Authority in 1908, evolving into a public secondary

school. It remained a selective boys' grammar until the 1980s.

In **1984**, Paston School merged with North Walsham High School for Girls to form **Paston Sixth Form College**, focusing on post-16 education. It later became part of City College Norwich while retaining its historic identity and the motto adapted from Sir William: "From Good to Better Everywhere." Today, Paston College continues as a sixth form provider offering A Levels, T Levels and vocational courses in the original buildings, preserving over 400 years of educational heritage in North Norfolk.

Nuff said – I have not edited the above and could not have done better.

To EV or not to Be?

With the rising costs of fuel, I am taking the leap and switching to Electric. I am not convinced and will miss the smell of CO in the mornings (not as dangerous as napalm). So here is a case for the move:

Electric vehicles (EVs) make strong financial and environmental sense for UK drivers in April 2026. Battery electric vehicle (BEV) registrations hit a record 86,120 in March 2026, with forecasts suggesting around 580,000 sales for the year (roughly 29% market share). While this trails the ZEV mandate's 33% target, uptake continues rising steadily, supported by policy driving the phase-out of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and full zero-emission new sales by 2035.

Running costs deliver the biggest immediate win. Home charging on an off-peak EV tariff typically costs **2–8p per mile** (or around 6–7p on standard rates), compared to **14–20p per mile** for petrol at current pump prices. For 10,000 annual miles, drivers save £600–£1,500 on "fuel" alone. Maintenance is 30–50% lower thanks to fewer moving parts and regenerative braking. Total cost of ownership often favours EVs, especially for company drivers benefiting from low Benefit-in-Kind tax.

Environmental benefits are clear: EVs produce zero tailpipe emissions, improving urban air quality. Lifecycle emissions (including manufacturing and UK grid power) are typically **50–75% lower** than petrol equivalents, saving around 1.5 tonnes of CO₂ per year per vehicle. The greening UK electricity grid widens this advantage over time.

Government support remains active. The **Electric Car Grant** offers up to **£3,750** off eligible new EVs. Home and workplace charger grants rose to **£500 per socket** from April 2026 (extended to 2027), helping renters, flat owners, and businesses install private charging easily. The public network exceeds **118,000–**

119,000 points as of early 2026, with ongoing growth in rapid and on-street options—more than enough for most daily needs when combined with home charging. Modern EVs offer 250–400+ mile ranges, instant torque, quiet operation, and over-the-air updates. With falling battery prices and more affordable models, upfront gaps are closing faster. Future-proofing against rising fuel costs, new road taxes from 2028, and resale risks makes switching rational now.

In short, EVs provide lower ongoing costs, cleaner driving, policy momentum, and improving infrastructure. For private buyers, fleets, or company car users who can charge at home or work, the case is compelling in 2026.

If you thought that was a joke...

Why did the electric car go to therapy?

It had too many **current issues!** ⚡

(And don't get me started on its range anxiety...)

Here's a bonus UK-flavoured one:

Why don't EVs ever get lost in Britain?

Because they always follow the **current** route... and pray the next rapid charger isn't out of order again!

One more for the road...

Why did the student eat his homework?

Because the teacher said it was a piece of cake! 🍰

(And yes, he still got detention for it.)

For whom the Bell tolls

My Shakespeare quips are running thin. But I have never mastered when to use 'whom'. I think I missed that lesson at Paston.

Here's a clear, practical guide to **who** vs. **whom**:

The Simple Rule (that works 95% of the time)

- **Who** = **he / she / they**
- **Whom** = **him / her / them**

If you can substitute "he/she/they" and the sentence still sounds correct → use **who**. If you can substitute "him/her/them" and it sounds correct → use **whom**.

But, in everyday spoken English and most informal writing (emails, texts, social media), many native speakers now use "**who**" in almost all situations, even when "whom" is technically correct. Example: "To who did you give it?" (very common and widely accepted)

Whom is still preferred in:

- Formal writing (academic papers, business reports, legal documents)
- After a preposition ("With whom are you going?" sounds much better than "With who...")
- When you want to sound polished or professional

Was I therefore 'polished'?