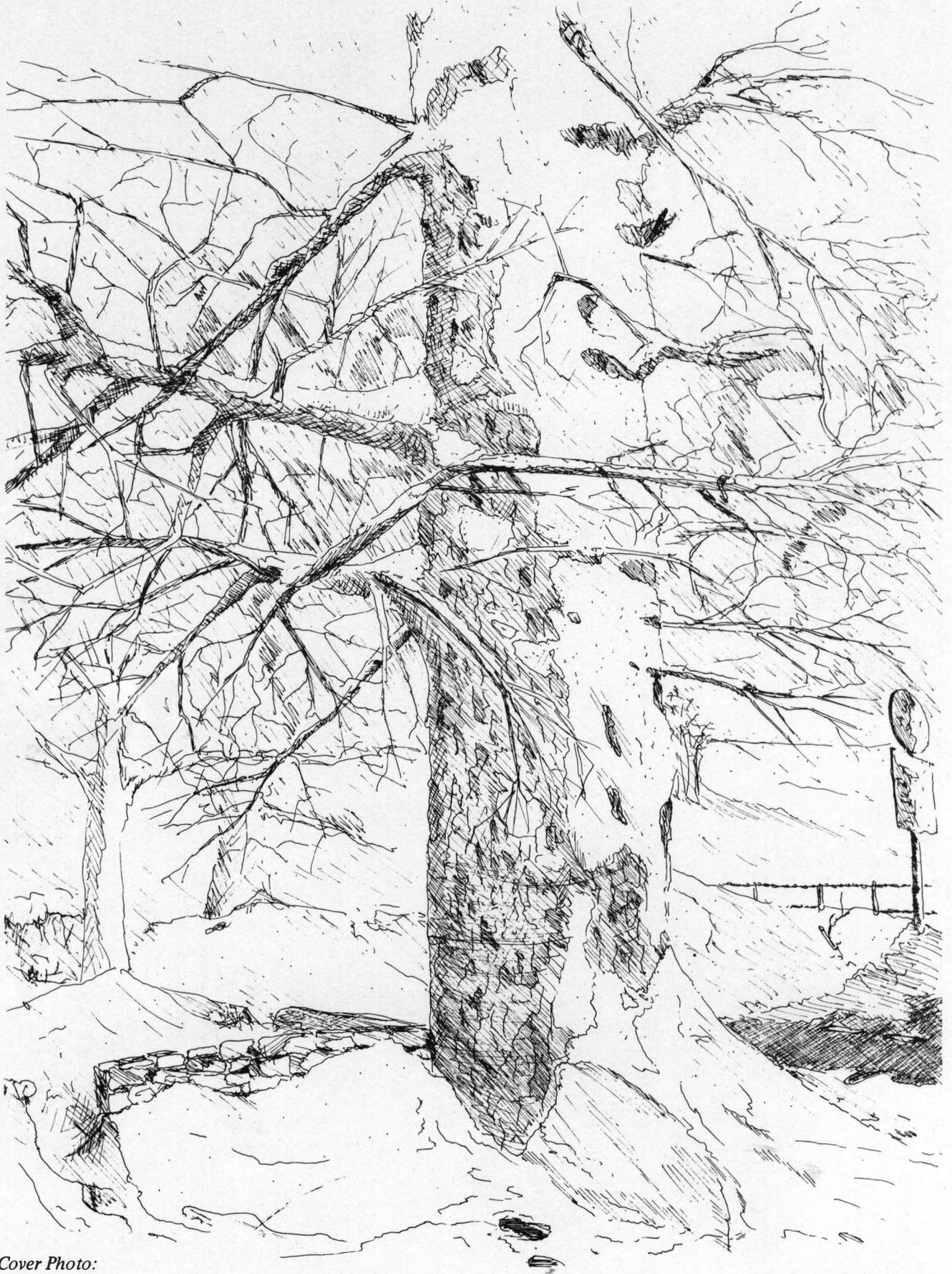




*Sibford 1982*

# The Elm in the snow



Cover Photo:  
Russell Steed

Adrian Sestini 6th Form



*Ray and Ann Bond*

# Sibford 1982

## *A year of renewal*

It was a year of innovation and of new beginnings. Sibford Open Day and Sibford General Meeting for the first time went their separate ways, the former as an informal occasion when parents friends and old scholars (their one-day reunion now in suspense) can ruminate over the more visible aspects of Sibford education and talk with members of staff, and the latter as the annual business assembly when representatives of monthly meetings all over the midlands and the south-east review the stewardship of the school and the broader aspects of Quaker responsibility in education, a subject without limits which will reappear in many of its specific manifestations on future agendas.

Within the school itself a tutorial system came to life as the academic partner of pastoral care, the new one-year sixth-form course became established, and rural studies began to extend and enrich the meaning of Sibford education.

Old scholars try to give back, not only in material ways, a little of what they have received. Thus, one old scholar became chairman of the school governing committee, another, his vice-chairman, while a third left his chair-

manship of 'finance and premises' to become the school's new estate bursar.

It seemed therefore that the time had come to forget 'old scholars' and 'school' in our approach to the magazine and to think of it as something that belongs to Sibford, which belongs to yesterday today and tomorrow. We hope that anyone, member of staff pupil or parent, will write to us about what they are doing, what they have learned, what they think, especially those with the most recent experience of life after school.

Meanwhile, we are grateful to everyone who sent us contributions. If we have not used all of the best it is because time imposed a deadline, but those left behind will be updated with their authors' help for use next year. We thank Maureen Mc Hale and Alan Clark for collecting the art work, Stuart Hedley for managing the advertisements, Russell Steed and Alan Clark for their photography and finally, and most thankfully, the following students for their help: Rawle Adams, Amanda Endersby, Catherine Granville, Vicky Haworth, Cathryn Muff, Amanda Quinton, Tom Rack and Tim Vallance.

# The school staff

	<b>Headmaster</b> Jim A. Graham, M.A.*	
	<b>First Deputy</b> Anne S. Muir, B.A.*	
	<b>Second Deputy</b> Kenneth T. Francis, <i>Teachers Certificate</i>	
<b>ART &amp; POTTERY</b>	(H) Maureen McHale, N.D.D., A.T.D.* Alan Clark, B.A.* †Angela Mortimer	
<b>CHILD DEVELOPMENT ENGLISH</b>	†Elisabeth Endersby, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> Geoffrey Higgins, M.A.* Anne Chalmers, B.A.* Michael Spring, B.Ed.	
<b>FRENCH/GERMAN</b>	Gilbert Todd, B.A.* Anne Muir, B.A.* Jean Rudge, B.A.* Anthony Rye, L.T.C.L.*	
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>	Brian Holliday, B.Sc.* Janette Skeath, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> Stella Wilson, B.Ed.	
<b>HISTORY</b>	Ian Charnock, B.A.* Kenneth T. Francis, <i>Teachers Certificate</i>	
<b>HOME ECONOMICS</b>	(H) Marion Higgins, B.A.* Jane Nussey, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> Lesley Luscombe-Jones, <i>Teachers Certificate</i>	
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	Alan Jarvis, M.A.* Frank Cookson, M.A.* David Goodwin, B.Sc., A.R.S.M.*	
<b>METALWORK, WOODWORK &amp; TECHNICAL DRAWING</b>	(H) Eunice Lemon, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> Graeme Sagar, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> M.C.C.Ed.	
<b>MUSIC</b>	(H) Stuart Hedley, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> , C & G Advanced Craft Certificate Pauline Roe, L.R.A.M., G.R.S.M.* Christopher Moore, B.Mus.	
<b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b>	(H) Michael Wollerton, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> , Dip. P.E. (H) Susan Faulkner, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> Stella Wilson, B.Ed. †Jennifer Wollerton	
<b>RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b>	Lisa Taylor, B.Ed.	
<b>REMEDIAL TEACHING</b>	David Foulds, B.A., <i>Teachers Certificate</i> (H) Eunice Lemon, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> †Merryl Muat, B.Sc.* Karen Turburfield	
<b>SCIENCE</b>	(H) Christopher Cox, <i>Teachers Certificate</i> Frank Cookson, M.A.* (H) Anthony Skeath, B.Sc.* Martin Wilkinson, B.A., PhD. †Elizabeth Cookson, M.A., PhD.* Sally Berry, <i>Teachers Certificate</i>	
<b>TYPING</b>	†Sylvia Manning	
<b>INSTRUMENTAL TEACHERS:</b>	Arthur Brown, L.L.C.M. Guitar John Nunn, Brass John Miller Michael R. Finch	
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<b>ESTATE BURSAR</b>	Shirley Ross, S.R.N.	† Indicates part-time staff
<b>MEDICAL OFFICER</b>	Pauline Bradshaw, S.R.N., S.C.M.	* Indicates Post-Graduate
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<b>SCHOOL CARETAKER</b>		

# School report

*The headmaster, Jim Graham recalls the Sibford experience in 1981 – 82, with some reflections on the kind of school it is becoming.*

The title 'Headmaster's Report' always makes me turn over quickly to find something less obviously tedious. School report is better because it does not have to be written by the Headmaster. This one is but we can hope for something more original in future years.

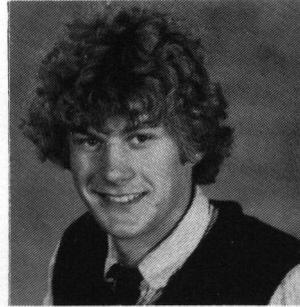
As this report is addressed, in the first place, to representatives appointed to General Meeting, some of whom may know little or nothing about the school, it seems right to try to draw a picture of the school as it now is. It will be a very personal view and as I have only been here two years, still something of a newcomer's reactions.

First impressions are often reliable and nearly everyone who comes to Sibford is struck by its friendliness. It seems as if it will be a straight-forward and easy place to understand. In fact it is not. It is very complex. The friendliness is there all right but at a deeper level the school is aiming, only partly consciously, at something much more ambitious. The world looks at schools in terms of goals and achievements but this pattern of judging sits badly on Sibford. That is not what it is really about though we must try to look at it in that way since that is what is generally expected. The school has not defined its objectives as far as I know since its foundations as a school for the children of those expelled from the Society of Friends for marrying out. What it does now is to provide for children of a very wide range of abilities and particularly dyslexic children in its remedial unit. It also gives a secure base to many for whom that is the greatest need – it can be a sanctuary, or if it is not careful, a backwater. It has to grow and evolve to changing needs and yet remain a stable community. To come to a full realisation of itself and its qualities it needs a change of gear; last year both demonstrated the need for this and saw the beginning of new steps forward alongside a continuation of some of its past strengths.

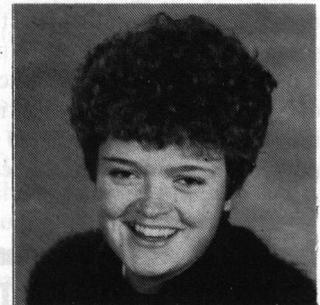
One thing Sibford will never be able to do is measure how successful it is being academically. The children who come range from the intellectually very capable to some very slow learners and in between are children with dyslexic difficulties which sometimes mask high ability. Our best should do well all round, and they do, others will have very humble CSE passes for which they may have struggled far harder than others with better results. 1982 was not a vintage year but nor was it at all a bad one. A third of the Year passed English Language, several got eight or nine good passes, others did less well than they should have done and a nice bunch of hard workers came out with better results than one would have expected. How they go on into the outside world is an increasingly difficult problem for us as for everyone else. A substantial number of those with lower results stay on for a one-year course which, through work experience, aims to offer some preparation for the world of work.

Numbers for A-Level are still small but increasing, giving confidence that the very slow improvement in our A-Level results will now gather momentum. It would be wrong to expect wonders of students who enter the A-Level courses with only moderate qualifications but the excellence of

this year's Art A-Level results show the way forward. However, though at all levels we are concerned to bring children to their academic best, Sibford cannot be judged by that criterion. Is it success or failure when a girl who one thought would get five or six O-Levels finishes up with three and her parents write and say that the Head of her previous school had said she had no prospect of ever getting any O-Levels?



**HEAD BOY**  
*Michael Herm comes from Hamburg and is studying Art (A) and English (A)*



**HEAD GIRL**  
*Nikki Venwell comes from Whichford in Warwickshire and is studying English (A) Food and Nutrition (A) and Economics (O)*

## School evolution

The clash between the need for stability and the necessity to evolve is very clear in the classroom. No school can ignore computers and we acquired our first last year. It was won for us in a government competition by some dyslexic sixth formers whose entry described its use in helping other dyslexic students. Now we need to go on and see that all students and teachers know something about computers. We have been looking at our curriculum too and devised a new one for the fourth and fifth forms which an H.M.I. studied and said was just the sort of thing the Inspectorate wanted to see. It makes it possible for less academic children to do fewer subjects without wasting time.

Boarding school (270 of our 340 are boarders) must be about a whole life experience, at least during term time. That should contain leisure, some of which is just relaxation and some of which is the active pursuit of hobbies and interests. As we are co-educational it is not surprising, and is certainly healthy, that leisure also contains a lot of social life. In fact a lot of it is within the separate sexes but that too is a useful part of living together. The school seems very happy and supportive which in my mind goes a long way to compensate for the fact that the young do not do as much with their leisure as I think they should. A few will use the countryside for walks or will pursue hobbies but many, too many, gravitate to the Box. A pity, but not I think something we can do much about, for too many

of our children (well not just ours, this is not just a problem only for Sibford) the damage has been done before they get here. Yet when we put on a big show like H.M.S. Pinafore at the end of last term (following a much smaller Trial By Jury the previous term) the standard of performance was superlative and the involvement wide and full.

Though Sibford is a happy school there are always a number who are not enjoying life. Disadvantages of one sort and another have frustrated them and our inability to be, perhaps, a missing parent has led them to kick against the community. These problems get no fewer and no easier and it is very hard for staff to be at the same time firmly consistent and yet loving and understanding. We lost too many children from our Third Year last year and this among other things made it clear that we need a more intimate system of tutoring so that we can handle the problems which we cannot avert more successfully. That grew during 1982 and has started operating this term.

### The Dring era ends, a new one begins

Activities can play a great part in helping the disadvantaged and enriching the life of the more normal. Games and sports are important in the school's life but because we often compete against much larger schools our list of results does not look as good as it actually is though a first eleven soccer team that wins every match except one against a league side does not leave much to improve on! This is one of the areas where we do not recognise our success for what it is. However team sports are not for everyone and we are now looking forward to the school grounds being developed

as a horticultural and animal resource. It should not be long before there are sheep on the campus again. When the great Dring era ended with Arthur's retirement after twenty-eight years in charge of the gardens (Margaret had done almost as long as Matron) there could be no question of finding a new Arthur. They do not breed them like that nowadays. So we changed tack and asked Sally Berry to take it on and really involve the children in a big way. She has started this term. With Mike Finch, the newly appointed estates bursar, dotting the landscape with Portakabins and fencing and Sally with her agriculture, the campus looks set for a lot of change.

### Stability

And what about the stability? One staff change only this summer is a good start. Then there is a calendar of social events and house competitions which fill the term with house concerts, house plays, etc., in a regular routine. Above all, there is the strong sense of tradition and continuity which appears, inconspicuously but firmly, in many parts of the school's life.

Sometimes I think the school approaches a balance and awareness which is quite awe-inspiring. I have written in terms of successes and goals; how much better if schools, individuals, even countries can find their justification not in results but just in the quality of living. It would be an exaggeration to claim that Sibford does that but I think it comes near it from time to time and is much closer to it than anywhere else I know.

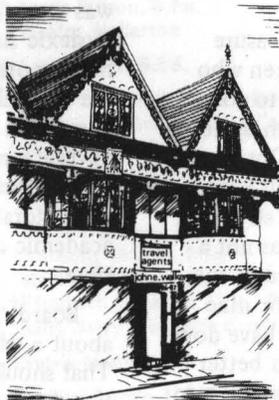
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# Private Mike's estate

*In April, 1982, Mike Finch became the new estate bursar of Sibford School, beginning what we believe will be a long and valuable contribution to its welfare.*



Mike Finch was at Sibford from 1949 to 1954. We have not asked him, but we suspect he would say he has never really left the place, and when he was appointed as the school's estate bursar, he was simply coming back to where he felt he belonged. Anyone who remembers his affectionate recall of Sibford history in his presidential address to old scholars in 1980 would agree with that.

He said he supposed it was 'unusual' for the chairman of finance and premises committee (he was one of the SOSA representatives on the school's governing committee at the time) to apply for it – "rather like applying for a job in the ranks". Step forward Private Finch! What he really did of course was to apply for the chance of becoming more deeply involved in Sibford.

True, there were other reasons as well, such as, for example, because "much of the joy and creativity has evaporated from pure engineering, and has been replaced by fear of inflation and statisticians, and if I was to make a change – with middle age pending – then the time had come".

Then the scope and potential of the job exerted an irresistible appeal, especially the idea of helping to develop the estate not only for the growing of food, but for teaching practical skills in an age when craft skills (not least in agriculture) are disappearing – "there are very few apprenticeships these days".

And finally, having started his working life with architects he had always been fascinated by buildings, and Sibford has such an intriguing mixture of buildings ancient and modern (with ancient and modern problems).

## The estate bursar

The demands upon the school's resources, human physical and financial, have grown immensely since Mike was a Sibford schoolboy in the fifties. Until very recently, John Miller carried the entire burden of school and estate administration with the help of an assistant bursar. When the assistant departed therefore, more or less at the beginning of a new phase in Sibford's history under the headmastership of Jim Graham, the committee felt the time was opportune for the appointment of a bursar whose sole responsibility would be the management of the school premises, a decision influenced also by ideas about developing the earthy potential of the estate.

So what will the new estate bursar do? It is after all a new appointment. As advertised, it was to include the oversight and direction of the grounds staff; responsibility for the maintenance of the school property; and oversight of the catering and laundry departments; to which was added the development and maintenance of the school premises and campus, in consultation with the teaching staff, 'as an educational resource for teaching practical skills'.

Sibford School, like any other, is a living community, always in transition. Changes in the curriculum, changes in the balance, say, between fifth and sixth formers, or in the demands of remedial teaching, invariably mean changes in buildings, expansion or modification or improvisation. Changing and re-arranging: a jig-saw puzzle that never ends. The old manor that became an agricultural school in the 1840s still serves the needs of the 1980s, while The Hill of the 1930s has grown like Topsy into an accretion of buildings, each belonging to its time, especially their heating systems. (Heating alone, housekeepers may like to know, costs nearly £70,000 a year).

There are now 340 pupils (120 more than in Mike's time), 270 of whom are boarders. Three houses are down in the old manor and farm area, and four are up at The Hill, including a mixed sixth form house, Fielding, where two students share each study-bedroom, similar to the system in some modern universities. Many old scholars, especially of pre-war vintage, may be interested to know that the estate staff alone now consists of five maintenance men, two gardeners and a groundsman, a catering staff of 18, a cleaning staff of 12, and a laundry and housekeeping staff of eight. School fees must meet many ends.

But the development that possibly arouses Mike's greatest enthusiasm is the re-emergence of a rural studies department which, it is hoped, will not only make a contribution to the school larder (least important) and facilitate the teaching of practical skills, but will broaden educational horizons (a wise unfolding of what nature teaches us.?). Sally Berry has already assumed her responsibilities for rural studies, and Mike sees a partnership developing between estate and rural studies, in which the 30 acres of school grounds gardens and greenhouses (and in the future perhaps the 40 acres of pasture?) will be used to give Sibford pupils an insight into the meaning of the husbandry of plants and animals that will contribute, as Mike says, to their general education and to richer and fuller lives. ■



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# The President's address to old scholars

*Four times a headmaster's wife, Marjorie Fielding was herself deeply involved in education. After taking First Class Honours in Latin with Greek at Leeds University she ended her teacher training with a Diploma in Education. Although she had also taught music, Latin became her main subject. With Jonas she joined Friends soon after the war, and came to Sibford in 1962 when Jonas was appointed Headmaster and remained until his retirement in 1972. They now live across the valley at Hook Norton. In Jonas Fielding's first three headmasterships home and school were separate worlds.*

And then we came to Sibford.

On the very first day, while we were still moving in, we were visited by Miriam Carter with a welcome from Old Scholars. Old Scholars – who and where were they? Soon afterwards the Sibford branch gave a party at the home of Eric & May Flinn, two very good friends of the school, and we were introduced to some of you, and we immediately became aware of a difference – we were becoming part of a continuing tradition in which the headmaster's wife can play a valuable part, privilege and responsibility going hand in hand.

Firstly one was privileged to live in an interesting old house – one in which George Fox is believed to have slept on his visit to Sibford when it was the home of Joseph Harris and his family (some of their initials can still be found in the stones at the side of the entrance door). A sense of awe is aroused by walls that have been here so long. We were just passing through. Studying the actual fabric of Holly House, its mullion windows and its three beautiful doorways, has led me to a continuing interest in Cotswold domestic architecture. There are signs of its history on the walls like the traces of the night bell which roused the doctors who once lived there.

Then there is the garden, mainly laid out by these same doctors. Discovering the little walls and paths was almost like doing archaeology, and we found near the pool the descendants of the original bulbs they planted, scyllas anemones, Star of Bethlehem, autumn crocuses and a beautiful bee orchis, a reminder perhaps of the collection of wild flowers made by Joshua Lamb in this very area.

It was a great joy to see so many birds coming to the lawn, thrushes, robins, wagtails and all the finches, and for one notable half-hour a green woodpecker hunted for insects among our trees. Blue tits, coal tits and long-tailed tits came for our bags of nuts and even the sparrows learned to hang on for long enough to get a share. Squirrels would run along the walls without fear and owls kept us company at night.

## Looking in and looking out

The two windows of Holly House kitchen symbolise the life of the headmaster's family – one looking in on private family pleasures and the other facing outward to the school and the wider community beyond.

Where does the headmaster's wife fit in?  
Somewhere in the middle. She tries to keep family life as

normal as possible though there are days when she feels like a telephone answering service. There can be no 'working to rule', for there are no rules. She is rather like the oil advertised on television as 'liquid engineering'.

But with privilege goes responsibility. She is hostess for the school welcoming guests such as the School Committee on Committee day. The bursar's wife and I used to join them for lunch, and as we knew little of the subjects of their discussions perhaps it was helpful for that hour that conversation should be general and relaxed, before they returned to their labours. Often one or other would stay the night, and we grew to appreciate the devoted service these Friends gave to the school, and their loving concern for Sibford. We tried to see that they went away happier for their visit, and more confident that the school's affairs were proceeding well.

Other visitors were the speakers who came to Sunday tea. Here I never knew quite what to expect. It might be a weighty Friend who had never visited Sibford before and needed to be prepared for our unusual mixture of children. I remember one strange afternoon when we were entertaining a speaker from a community which worked with "down-and-outs". "I get on very well with them personally" he said, "because I have been in prison for two years myself" "Whatever for?" one wondered, "forgery, arson, grievous bodily harm . . .?" Was he a fit person to talk to the little innocents up at the Hill? "For bigamy actually". Then seeing our nervous glances at the attractive young lady by his side, he said cheerfully "Oh it's all right now, my wife died, so we've regularised the situation". We used to enjoy staff supper on Sunday evenings when we could all laugh at such incidents.

There might be a ring at the doorbell in the middle of the holidays and we would find an old scholar asking permission to show his wife and family round the school – or visitors over from Ireland for a few days who would like to see where they once used to live. So many people have lived in Holly House. Not only descendants of Harrises and Lambs but housemasters and their families, and members of staff, when girls were boarded in the upstairs rooms.

## Coffee and emergencies

A pre-requisite for a headmaster's wife is her stock of tea and coffee ready for any emergency. It might be the local policeman checking on night security about the school who would be glad to drop in for coffee and a chat, warming himself by the Rayburn before returning to his lonely round. It might be a member of staff returning with a runaway, or reporting some crisis in one of the houses, or the doctor who has paid a late visit to a sick child. One might have a bereaved child in Holly House for a few days, a refuge in their most difficult time from the rough and tumble of school. I remember one day from the kitchen sink seeing an agitated group of juniors at the bottom of the drive, and one distraught little boy standing in the middle of the road shouting "Kill me, kill me" to passing traffic. It is easy to overlook the intense feeling of unhappiness a small newcomer can experience. But tea and sympathy

helped to calm him down and he survived with us for another five years.

After that we used to invite groups of new children to tea on Sunday afternoons so that we could get to know them, and they could feel the normal world of home-made cake and games-in-the-garden was not far away. I tried to learn their names (with very limited success I am afraid), and if I met them in the next week or two it was a pleasure to see their new-found confidence and self-reliance as they settled into school life.

There was the black side too. I shall never forget the day when an unmanageable girl was being expelled, but her social worker had asked that she should not be told this until he arrived to collect her, in case of further violence. We were giving her lunch, and the sense of our failure and betrayal made a lasting impression on me. The headmaster's wife is relieved of the necessity to take these difficult decisions. She only helps the one who takes them to live with himself afterwards.

We would welcome staff back after the summer holidays with an informal party to renew old friendships and to meet nervous newcomers who were never quite sure what sort of school Sibford would turn out to be. I should here mention staff wives. At that time many more were resident on the campus and there were fewer cars. For a staff wife with young children, life could be lonely and I saw the value of the coffee mornings, and 'Wives' nights' enjoyable evenings when we met for coffee and conversation, and it was so interesting to see the school from quite different points of view. (Gossip about families and exchanges of experience was also good therapy for post-natal depression).

The headmaster's wife has time also, to notice the work of all the supporting staff – cleaners, nurses, gardeners, maintenance, laundry and office workers without whose service no boarding school can function. Sibford school has been well and truly served. Their influence on children over the years has been far beyond the call of duty. How they beam their gratitude when their work is appreciated and they are treated as people, making a valuable contribution to the well-being of the whole community. In the world of industry, if managers could spend more time showing their appreciation of work well done than in issuing ultimatums to workers, I feel that industrial relations might be in a much healthier state than they are.

### The village community

The headmaster's wife has time also to move about the village and make friends with some of those whose memories go back into the distant past. The more I came to know of their lives, the lives of those who are still with us and of others who are dead, of whom I heard and read, the closer I felt to the tradition of this village, of which the Friends School has been a central feature for so many years, its reputation jealously guarded and its standards respected. Friends in Sibford meeting, though a few in number, give never-failing support and encouragement. A host of unseen observers have expectations of this school and its continuing witness to Christian values.

It is not the role of the headmaster's wife to compete with the full-time professional staff, but if one has trained for teaching there might be gaps to fill in the time-table which give one the entrée to the staff-room. In the staff-room we feel the pulse of the school. The most strenuous times are often the happiest. In comes one in paint-spattered overalls, after working with a group of youngsters on scenery for a play; in one corner musical effusions are being prepared for a house concert, in another ingenious fancy-dress costumes are being put together for the end-of-term dance. Most of the time it is a room of busy and purposeful activity, but sometimes one senses a weariness and irritation with the many difficult young people in our care. It is not easy to keep adults fit for children to live with. I remember many staff-room discussions which have forged bonds of friendship and understanding at a deep level, and which have taught me so much for which I am grateful.

Should our school be "a mill for grinding rogues honest and making idle men industrious" as Jeremy Bentham put it? Friends' schools have never been so. Example and gentle persuasion have been their only tools. Many children are struggling to survive against goodness knows what difficulties in their homes, in their environment, in their own natures. We should not be misled by an appearance of affluence and possessions. It is not the physical environment that counts, but the human beings among whom the child is living, on whom he depends, and with whom he gradually develops relationships. How grateful we should be for those members of staff who have stayed at Sibford for long years, channelling youthful vitality into creative ends, sowing the seeds of life-long enthusiasms for sport, for art, for bird-watching, for woodwork, for music, for drama and so much else. The self-giving of staff in time and energy cannot be over-valued.

But the love and respect we would give to each one will not necessarily be returned. The immature person will often indulge in orgies of defiance and aggression. The ability to feel and respond to loving care is one of the last

*Clifford J. White*

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and most mature emotions to develop, and it is not surprising that many people have not attained it when they leave and become young Old Scholars.

Privilege tends to be a dirty word these days, but if your school was small enough for you to be known as a person you were privileged; if you were given opportunities to develop your talents, however limited, they might be; if there was someone to care about you, your progress in lessons, sport, hobbies, even your personal appearance, you were privileged; if you were taught to wrestle with your dislikes, your anger, and all the contradictions inside you; if you were encouraged first to tolerate and later to befriend the handicapped in your midst, you were being equipped for life; if your eyes were opened to the wider family of nations and you came to hate intolerance and injustice wherever it is to be found, you were privileged indeed.

I remember my husband once saying that in our marriage we had received so much, much would be expected of us. So you who are old scholars of this Friends School of Sibford, where most, if not all of these privileges were yours, much, in your world, will be expected of you. ■

## June Ellis replies

*June Ellis was deputy head at Sibford from 1964 until 1977, when she was appointed headmistress of The Mount School, York. During her time at Sibford she became a member of the Society of Friends.*

June described Marjorie Fielding as 'a very special person' who fulfilled her role as headmaster's wife in a wonderfully supportive way, for them all, and who, whenever she was called upon to teach the younger children, had the capacity to inspire them to enjoy their work "because she is the person she is". Her approach to privilege, as something to accept with the responsibility that goes with it, is the sense of privilege we should all share.

As to being a headmaster's wife — "Well, I think it must be terrible, and I'm very glad for their sake I haven't got one. It must be very difficult," Recently one of her friends had lent her a hand with a painting job at home and had then departed leaving her with the 'fiddly bits'. June felt that's what a headmaster's wife so often had to do deal with the 'fiddly bits'. She has seen Marjorie cope with them all.

"When I was trying to anticipate what I could say tonight, one of the things that came to me was that I had never heard anyone say anything derogatory about Marjorie, and when you come to think about it that is a very unusual thing indeed, because I'm quite sure that most of us have an awful lot said against us, but I've never heard anything like that said about Marjorie, and it is because she is a person of integrity. She has always done what life has given her to do with the whole of herself, with the support of Jonas. So, Madam President, Marjorie Fielding, we thank you". ■

## The guest:

Joshua Watts, the school committee's guest for the weekend and chairman of its finance and premises committee, briefly and pleasantly accepted Mike Finch's invitation to say 'how much he had enjoyed the weekend' with old scholars. ■

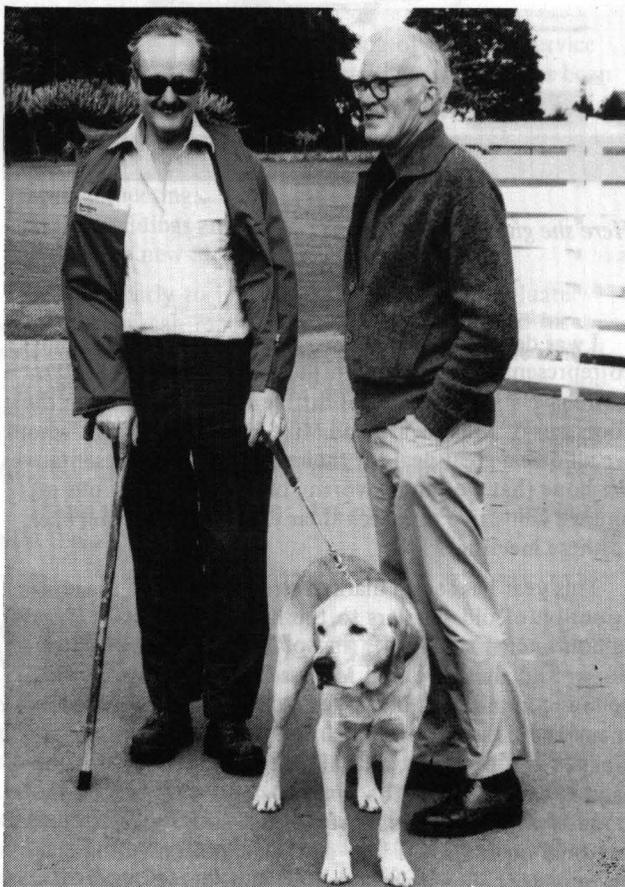
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"Joshua, I will go with thee and be thy guide."  
(Joshua Watts and friend, and Norman Coxon)

# A year on the school committee

*At the 1981 AGM one of our best known old scholars, Jeanne Southam, was appointed for four years as one of the two SOSA representatives on the School Committee. Jeanne was at Sibford in the thirties and went on to the Bath College of Domestic Subjects for her Teacher's Diploma. She has been extremely active in the SOSA (she organized all the catering at the 1947 and 1948 reunions, as well as being general secretary for three years) and busily engaged in Quaker work in the Bristol area. Married to an industrial scientist, she has four children and lives at Nailsea.*



*Here she gives her first report.*

I was delighted when I was elected with Leslie Thomas to represent old scholars on the school committee. We both have strong feelings of diffidence in following in the footsteps of Lilian Ward and Mike Finch, to both of whom we all owe a great deal for their work as our representatives. We hope that we can be worthy of the work they put in, and we will strive to match their excellent reporting back to these meetings.

This year has seen a marked strengthening of the contribution of old scholars to the life of the school. Two appointments stand out, that of Mike Finch as estates bursar and that of Philip Manasseh as chairman of the school committee. Mike's years of excellent work as a member of the committee and latterly as chairman of finance and premises, and his long association with the school ensured that his appointment was universally popular with the committee. We are sure that with his personal qualities and love of the school he will make an outstanding contribution. In Philip Manasseh we have an old scholar of distinction playing an extremely important role. His knowledge of life in an agricultural area and of the

educational world must surely be unique. He has made both Leslie and me very welcome on the committee. In our book he is a first class chairman – having had plenty of practice as the long suffering general secretary of our association. Just recently we have been joined (or re-joined) by one of the best known local old scholars who has already done much for the school – Vera Rollett. I have had plenty of experience in organising catering both domestic and large-scale, but I am amazed at Vera's effortless magic in providing hospitality at home for so many unexpected callers. Why is it that old Scholars returning to Sibford always bring a rapacious appetite with them – invariably shared by their spouses.?

## Independence and Quakerism

Membership of the committee has given us both a new perspective on the school and on the nature of the awesome responsibilities resting on the headmaster and his staff. The school leaps into perspective as a living community in which pastoral care is as vital as teaching – a thought that passed me by completely when I was here myself. The complexities of striving to produce healthy minds in healthy bodies in the society we live in, suddenly becomes very real. To me one of the most important matters that has come before us is the future of the school itself. Our society is changing at a faster rate than ever, and these changes are profound. They are political, economic and social and all of them affect Sibford in one way or another, and we must be ready to meet these changes. Sibford is not merely an independent school, it is a Quaker school so we must give a lot of thought to the implications of independence and Quakerism in education today and tomorrow. We have to weigh up carefully the fact that most parents, most scholars staff and, indeed, old scholars are not Quakers.

The boarding fees at Sibford are now £3,600 a year. Can we continue to justify that expenditure on a Sibford education? Can we continue Sibford's commitment to remedial teaching – to the arts and crafts – and above all to the development of the whole person? Can we continue to run an independent school with a Quaker ethos aimed at enabling children to fulfil themselves? In a future marked by social change, inflation and the need to justify expenditure in a harsh climate, what will Sibford's role be? These are some of the very fundamental questions that we have to ask ourselves – and the committee is beginning to face them. In so doing they will seek advice from informed outside sources as well as from their own contacts. These long-term and fundamental questions may seem rather abstruse but they are not: we have problems of filling Sibford this year and in the future. We could fill the school easily by turning it into a residential remedial school in idyllic (if cold) surroundings, but that is not the Sibford you went to, and it is not the Sibford that most of us would wish to send our children to. So we have to maintain a balance between children needing special educational care and normal children. There are many other balances that have to be achieved and decisions affecting these are being taken each time the year's intake of children is agreed.

One hard fact about the future is that Sibford does not have any foundation funds. We were not around when Henry VIII was handing over the spoils from the monasteries and we would probably not have been offered any if we had been. We lack established wealth, this makes the development fund which has been launched this year, with its aim to provide important improvements to the school all the more significant. We trust that Old Scholars will support it generously.

As you will remember from previous reports, the committee has two sub-committees, finance and premises and education. Leslie and I decided early in the year that he would attend the education committees and I would attend finance and premises. In the event we have each attended both as well as the general committee because we found it all so interesting.

### Means & ends

The finance and premises committee under its new chairman Joshua Watts continues to concern itself with a wide range of financial responsibilities and practical considerations. Considerable alterations and improvements have been made to the San, which include a flat for the sister in charge, a room for the nurse, smaller rooms for the patients and a day room for those on the mend. Mike told you last year in some detail of the work that was necessary in Gillett House, which has been going on throughout the year, and which now includes two full sized staff flats, while the accommodation has been adapted for a mixed house should this become necessary at a later date.

As the newly appointed estates bursar Mike has produced a preliminary survey of the needs of the school buildings as well as many suggestions for their improvement. This will provide a long term plan which will help to keep the fabric of the school in good order. Those of you who know the school will not be surprised to hear that heating problems in many of the buildings come high on the list of jobs needing attention. A new heating system has been authorised for the science block and should have been commenced during the holiday, but I understand this has now been deferred. Increased numbers in the sixth form have made it necessary to re-think plans for its future use, which could include major alterations to the foyer to make it suitable for a sixth form study area. (As a temporary measure you will see a portakabin outside Fielding).

Those of you who know Mike well will not be astounded to learn that the most pressing item on his list for urgent attention was the provision of a suitable office for himself. He has managed to convince himself so thoroughly of his need that he has carried the committee with him, so that the portakabin suite of bursarial offices is already in position. Seriously Mike has analysed a real need and made some low cost and flexible proposals for meeting it, which all add up to good sense and will benefit Sibford.

I am sure you will all be interested to know that the school entered a government-sponsored competition for a computer worth £1200. The entry was made by three lower sixth pupils, two of whom are dyslexic, and dealt with the use of a computer as an aid in the teaching of dyslexic children. I am delighted to say that this superb imaginative effort won a computer which has now arrived. The education committee has supported the headmaster in the successful inauguration of the one-year sixth-form

course which includes regular work experience, and we are encouraged by developments in the tutorial system in the fifth form, an important aspect of pastoral care which is being further discussed among the staff.

One of the most important events in the year was the change in the method of school government along the lines which Mike described in his report last year. Briefly, the stewardship of Sibford school has now become the responsibility of Sibford General Meeting as it was before 1966. Sibford General Meeting will now be responsible for appointing the school committee and for receiving and approving the annual report and accounts. The main business meeting will now be held in October, with an open day in June – held very successfully for the first time this summer – when parents of friends of Sibford School and old scholars can see the school in action, see the kind of work that goes on, and ask questions. It is of course much too early for the committee to assess the effect of this change in responsibility.

In July Arthur and Margaret Dring retired after 28 years of service to the school and there was a very happy occasion before the end of term when they were presented with gifts from school and committee. I have had the pleasure of staying with Arthur and Margaret during the year and I am amazed by their fund of Sibford stories. I am sure Margaret will now be able to write her book of stories of Sibford.

Arthur's retirement has given the committee the chance to reconsider the future development of the grounds and gardens. Broadly, they will remain much as they are, with some small modifications, but the greenhouses will be administered by a new rural studies department to be run by Sally Berry.

So, coinciding with the beginning of my own service with the committee, it seems to me that this year has been one of new approaches in the school itself—

- to the long term future;
- to a new reporting responsibility to Sibford general meeting;
- to the buildings and fabric of the school;
- and to the new ideas on the academic side.

It is too early to judge their impact or to evaluate them. But we can report that the headmaster and his staff continue their able and dedicated work in the school, that the committee's efforts on its behalf continues, and that your new boy and new girl have begun to get some feel for, and understanding of its work – a year of beginnings for us both, rather than of achievement.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity of serving with the committee. ■

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## SOSA 5 v School 2

SOSA's Colemantator, insisting on anonymity, sent us a graphic description of the old scholar's victory over the school in the football match played on November 7th. Unfortunately, the magazine was on its way to bed, and all we can report is that in a wet and cold and windy game old scholars led by the only goal at half time and six more were scored in the second half. Caesar (4) and Simon Barfoot scored for SOSA and Peter Doney scored twice for school. Colemantator called it 'sweet revenge'. ■

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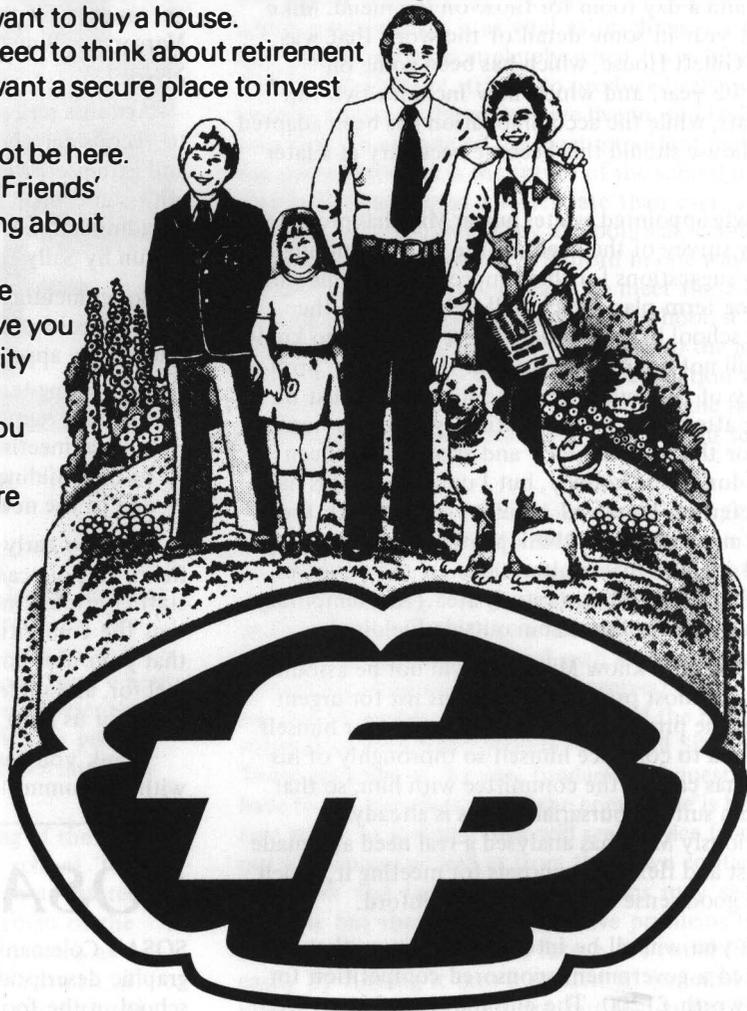
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# Life after school ~ what happens?

*We would like to hear from new and older old scholars about their post-school experience, from those who are just setting out and those who are well on their way, or have arrived. Like Sarah Barfoot and Paul Eddington.*

## Sarah Barfoot begins

*Sarah Barfoot, who left Sibford in 1980 ignored the advice given to Mrs Worthington, huge unemployment in the performing arts, and warnings that a place at drama school would put her only 'one small step' ahead of thousands turned down every year, and goes her own way.*



*She is now in the United States. She writes:*

After leaving Sibford, without the 'A'-Level grades I had hoped for, I decided to rest from academic subjects, and to pursue my desire to go on the stage. I studied for a one-year pre-Degree Foundation Certificate in art at Nene College, Northampton.

Through an interest in stage set design I became involved with the Royal Theatre, Northampton. I incorporated the theatre into my college timetable as well as working evenings and holidays. . . eventually receiving wages, and a mention in the programme. In future college interviews it was this practical experience and first-hand knowledge of live theatre that made up for my lack of high academic qualification, and even put me ahead of those who had them.

At the end of my year with the theatre I had been offered a degree course for stage design. I was also encouraged to apply for acting. The round of drama college auditions that followed was very harrowing, very expensive, and very competitive. Drama schools can charge between five and ten pounds for an audition that need only last about five minutes.

When the month of auditions was over I had the offer of places in Birmingham and London, one of which was a special entrance on to a B.A. Hon. degree in Drama and Performing Arts in London, despite poor 'A' levels. I turned down four drama schools and accepted the degree in drama with its extensive facilities, such as T.V. studios; individual voice, singing and music tuition; a guaranteed grant as well as a B.A. Hons. degree.

Experience after my first year includes working in fringe theatre and recording poetry for Southern TV. I then won the opportunity, in competition, of going to America – with one other student – to spend my second year in a college of performing arts, beginning in January 1983. (Shades of TV 'Fame'!) Hopefully my time in the States will provide me with more interesting practical experiences with which to persuade potential employers. Or at least something to remember as I 'rest' between jobs! ■

## Paul Eddington arrives

*Paul Eddington, forty years on, has become – who does not know? – one of our most successful actors in theatre and television. He left Sibford, where he first appeared upon a stage, in 1943, and he has never forgotten school or village. In 1979 he came back again to give the Leslie Baily lecture.*

*Paul first appeared in the West End in 'The Tenth Man' at the Comedy Theatre in 1961, and in New York in 'A Severed Head' in 1964, and he joined the National Theatre in 1981 to play in 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf'. But most of us, and millions more, will know him best in the BBC television series 'The Good Life' and 'Yes, Minister'.*



*He was a member of the council of Equity in 1972-75, and became a governor of Bristol Old Vic Theatre Trust in 1975. Busy as he is, he found time to look back for us at the way he had come.*

I feel sorry for anyone starting in our profession now. I myself started at a time which was perhaps unique in the history of the British theatre. It was during the war and there was actually a shortage of actors.

I had left Sibford not knowing how I was going to earn my living. After years of heavy irony directed at my mathematical abilities, Arthur Johnstone suggested that I might be capable of working in a bank! I was sufficiently astonished to refuse even to consider the possibility, the only time I think I had seen A.J. taken aback.

Under the tutelage of the irreplaceable Gladys Burgess I had appeared in several school productions and had felt happy and at home on the stage. It had never occurred to me, though, to take the matter any further until having kicked my heels for several months I heard that Enid Whitehead, with whom I had acted in some of these productions, had gone to R.A.D.A. in order to train to become a real actress. I suddenly realised that it was possible to work at something you enjoyed doing and actually get paid for it.

I knew nothing about academic matters; formal training, bursaries, grants and so forth (I wonder why nobody helped me about this?). So the first step I took was to join the best local amateur theatrical company I could find. This proved to be the Crescent Theatre, Birmingham. After a year of doing nothing very much at the Crescent, one of the members kindly suggested that I ought to go to Drury Lane, which was the war-time headquarters of E.N.S.A., to ask them if I could join that organisation. This I did, and E.N.S.A. seemed quite grateful that I had done so, offering me a job on the spot as assistant stage manager and small-part actor in a drama company which was appearing the very next week at the Garrison Theatre, Colchester.

There followed a hectic year playing all over the British Isles at a different theatre almost every night; each performance being followed by an enthusiastic party in the officers' mess. At the end of a year I knew all there was to know about Life and was viewing it through eyes, as Dylan Thomas once said of his own, "like rissoles in sand". I was nearly 18.

We asked him, what were the worst moments on his way up?

"Getting a bill from the Income Tax, after eight months being out of work, for just over double what I had in the bank" he replied.

And what is most essential for anyone starting out on a career in the theatre (or TV or films)

"To remember" he answered "that ALL life is uncertain and insecure and to be careful not to be seduced by a 'safe' job into thinking differently."

Today he looks back in amazement. "Nothing would have stopped me, but I knew that what I was attempting was impossible. Every sensible person said that it could not be done.

"As I cross the Strand every evening, I glance up, and there twinkling away is my name in lights.

"Evidently it can." (At the time, Paul was playing the lead in Michael Frayn's comedy "Noises Off".) ■

## School to University

*Helen Smith left Sibford in July 1980 and is aiming to become a clinical psychologist. She has some advice for future leavers.*

I left Sibford in July 1980 having taken 'A' levels in English and economics together with sociology at Banbury Technical College.

By this time, I had already applied, through UCCA, to various universities offering degree courses in psychology for 1981, having decided to take a year off.

Looking back I think this was a sensible decision, although it might not work now, as so few jobs are available. I gained valuable working experience during that year, both in the antique business and in nursing, which has proved useful when I've wanted vacation jobs. I also saved enough money to go travelling in Europe.

Psychology was a discipline which interested me because, although I'd looked at medicine as a career, I realised after my 'O' levels that I wasn't competent enough at pure sciences to take them to degree level. I learned a little about psychology on my sociology course and I wrote to the British Psychology Society to find out about possible careers.

With a degree in psychology there should, in theory, be many sorts of career open to you, from market research, through social services, to clinical counselling. The latter is the sort of career I should like to follow; however most of them require some post-degree training, and clinical work is no exception. To become a clinical psychologist you must enter a further training programme, usually attached to a hospital.

This is where the present (un)employment situation really makes itself felt. There's so much competition for places that would-be employers can pick and choose; you now need a very good degree pass in order to be a likely candidate. Not only this, but you must give the impression that you really want, and are interested in, the position. I have found that your attitude has a great effect on your chances where interviews are concerned.

The main problem faced by any student is lack of money. It can prove difficult to find holiday jobs and if you can cultivate some sort of marketable skill, this is always useful. Because I worked as a nursing auxiliary in 1981, I have usually found a job in a local hospital at the end of term.

Attending university is very different from life at school. You have to learn to monitor your own work. There is no one who will notice whether or not you attend lectures, until, of course, the exams arrive, and it becomes immediately apparent. Each year must be passed in order to continue in the system and it's your responsibility to see that you can do so.

In London, there aren't as many organised student activities as in campus universities. This is because there is so much to do in the city itself. However there is still a lot of student cohesion. I would strongly recommend living in university accommodation in your first term so that you have the chance of meeting as many fellow students as possible.

I am now starting my second year at the City University (London), living in digs with friends I made last year, and have no regrets about the career I have chosen — so far!

Helen Smith ■

# Minutes of the annual general meeting

Held in the old scholars' room at Sibford School on 28th August 1982, with the President, Marjorie Fielding, in the chair, and 44 old scholars attending.

In our silence we remembered with thanks the lives of: Morland Braithwaite, Nicholas Goodwin and Geoffey Long.

Greetings were received from:

Howard Champion, Elin Baily, Sister Williams, Joan Long, Alice M. Green, Lilian and John Ward, Philip Morris, Gladys Burgess, Margaret Baily, George Edwards and Marjorie Edwards.

1. *The minutes* of the annual general meeting of 1981 having been printed in the magazine were taken as read, adopted and signed by the President.

2. *Matters arising.* Nothing arose.

3. *General secretary's report.*

The general committee and reunion sub-committee meetings, well attended, continue to produce intelligent discussion, the unexpected thought, demanding point of view and a measure of constructive criticism. The result is continuing improvements in the association's structure and various sound amendments to the reunion programmes.

*Membership.* The concessionary three year membership extended to recent leavers, payable by parents, whilst producing short term income largely fails to secure long term membership of the Association. The committee consider that a longer initial membership period at a substantially higher cost requiring parents' authority may secure longer term membership whilst discouraging those whose temporary membership places considerable control demands on both the association and the school.

*Accounts.* One of the objects of the association is to provide assistance to the school whenever possible and with a very satisfactory financial position we are delighted to be able to donate £500.00 to the school's outdoor pursuits programme and at the same time float the Bursary Fund.

*Reunions:*

a) *Old scholars' Day.* The one day reunion, held again on a Sunday, attended by some 65 old scholars in fine weather proved an enjoyable day. There were however a number of unwelcome visitors who arrived on Saturday evening and created a number of overnight problems for the school staff which resulted in them being asked to leave the school.

Jim Graham has confirmed the school's wish that old scholars' day reunions continue; the school enjoy them. However, a requirement of the school is that the committee make some members available on the Saturday evening to exercise effective control over unwelcome visitors.

The change of day from Saturday to Sunday, resulting from a special meeting with the school, was an attempt to improve the problems of 1980, but it is clear

some recent, even not so recent, leavers whether members of the association or not cannot resist the opportunity provided by Old Scholars' Day to visit the school in order to demonstrate their moral and behavioural freedom.

The future of Old Scholars' Day therefore depends either on the association's willingness to accept this responsibility, assuming of course there are old scholars prepared to undertake the task, or the school being prepared to exercise their statutory powers prior to and after the day reunion programme.

The level of co-operation, understanding and mutual respect between the school and the association has perhaps never been higher, in part due to the problems we face, but there can be no doubting the future of this event is uncertain.

After some discussion it was agreed that we suspend Old Scholars' Day for 1983 and the Headmaster invited old scholars to attend the School Open Day on *June 25th 1983.*

b) *August reunion.* Simon Barfoot and his reunion sub-committee have produced an excellent programme making several amendments. We are very grateful to George

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Gibson and his catering staff, and to Lorraine Spencer for the weekend's art exhibition. I would also like to thank Frank and Vera Rollett for hosting the sub-committee meetings and providing very welcome refreshments.

*Magazine.* Leslie Thomas and Anne Muir are beginning to determine the nature and content of the 1982 magazine. The editors hope to produce a 'SIBFORD' magazine, one which illustrates the school committee's problems and one which reflects Quaker thinking within the framework of a school – we look forward to it.

*Branch reports.*

a) *Midlands.* Irene Coxon-Smith continues her excellent Midlands branch work with the traditional New Year party at Selly Oak Meeting House, a measure of culture at Graham Trout's Opera and they are looking forward to a forthcoming luncheon date at Philip and Grace Beckerlegge's on September 12th. (Glorious weather, reports Irene, with 25 at lunch. A delightful day, thanks to the generosity of Philip and Grace. Many more OSs would enjoy these regional reunions).

b) *London.* Report presented by Allan Kidney. "Since the previous meeting in April 1980, 80 Old Scholars thought to be living in the London area were contacted by letter and invited to share an August afternoon and evening at the Welwyn Garden City home of Allan Kidney. 25 replied. Due to holidays only fourteen were able to come, but it was still a good party. The numbers were boosted by five neighbours who joined the group. We were particularly glad to welcome three Old Scholars who are currently not members of the main branch and who have not been in contact for over 30 years. They

were Ralph Parkes-Pfeil (1938), Philip Baker (1941-46) and his sister Elizabeth (1939-43). We were also pleased to meet two recent leavers, Chris and Jon Leo. George Edwards sent his greetings and good wishes and we wished him a happy 90th birthday on August 23rd.

We were sorry to hear of John Taylor's recent accident and hoped for his speedy recovery.

The secretaries of the London branch would like to hear from any Old Scholars who live near enough to be interested in our events. Allan C Kidney and Margaret Fairnington, Joint Secretaries."

*The Elm.*

Having been advised last year to review the condition of the Elm this year, it is recommended we fell the Elm as soon as possible. Failing to do so detracts substantially from its disposal value whilst endangering the public. We are fortunate to have received an anonymous donation of a Groene Veld Elm approximately 6/8 feet high which whilst not being entirely immune to Dutch Elm disease does represent the most resilient species. This tree will be planted at the appropriate time. With much regret the meeting agreed the necessary arrangements be made and it is hoped some cuttings from the Elm will be retained for memento/plaque purposes and possibly some used in the School woodwork shop.

*Elections.*

Mike Finch has served on the committee for 23 consecutive years and I feel in no way equipped to describe his contribution to the association. Fortunately in his new role as estate bursar he will be available to assist and guide us. It's nice to know he's here – mind you he is not renowned for sitting on the fence!

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*Leslie Baily lecture.*

We are delighted to have Godfrey Baseley with us this year and we look forward to his lecture. Next year's lecturer will be naturalist Arnold Darlington and we thank Frank Rollett as Chairman of the organising Group.

May I finally thank the school on your behalf for allowing us the opportunity to meet here and the SOSA Committee for their help and support over the last twelve months.

4. Treasurer's report.

John Miller presented the audited accounts of the Association for the year ended 31st December 1981. Arthur Harrison proposed the adoption of the accounts, seconded by Jeanne Southam and unanimously accepted by the meeting. The question of income, namely subscriptions, the cost of printing the magazine and the association's ability to provide financial aid to the school were debated at length following which the following proposals were made by the treasurer.

1) *Subscriptions.*

- (a) (i) All Ordinary Members: £7.00 per annum.
- (ii) Life Membership: £100.00
- (iii) Married Couples: jointly £9.00 per annum.
- (iv) Scholars leaving school: for a five year period £25.00 which could, with the Parents' authority, be included with the School's final account.

2) *Gifts to the school.*

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3) *Bursary fund.*

John Miller circulated copies of a draft agreement drawn up by the School's solicitor in respect of the Sibford Old Scholars' Association Bursary Fund. In operating terms, gifts of money given for this fund will be treated as outright gifts to the School and become part of the School's investments. The capital of the fund will be invested and only the interest distributed by way of bursary awards. It is clearly important that the fund's capital needs be substantial in order to provide worthwhile awards, and members and friends are encouraged to support the fund. John Miller then proposed:—

That a sum of £750.00 be allocated to start a fund to be known as the Sibford Old Scholars' Bursary Fund.

All the treasurer's proposals were adopted by the meeting and John Miller was warmly thanked for the report and his work.

5. School committee representatives' report.

An excellent report was given by Jeanne Southam. (Page 10)

6. Headmaster's report.

Once again this came in the form of a question and answer.

We were told of the worthwhile and successful remedial help given at Sibford which continues to provide an environment which enables children who had perhaps come to the school looking and feeling abnormal to look and feel normal.

Some children in the remedial group had entered and won a national computer competition and the headmaster expressed the view that the school has to introduce more equipment and work of this nature in the future.

On a 6th form question Jim Graham confirmed a need for the school to improve 'A' level results in order to make the movement to another 6th Form school unnecessary although he recognises that brighter students may well continue to go and they are perhaps to be encouraged to do so.

Whilst old scholars enjoy the Sibford countryside the current young do not use it as much as they should do, largely because of television; not many walk and the headmaster outlined a new Wednesday afternoon activity programme.

Jim Graham was warmly thanked by the meeting.

#### 7. Election of President and Vice-President 1983.

The names of Irene Smith as President for 1983 and Robin and Kenneth Greaves as joint Vice Presidents were warmly applauded by the meeting.

#### 8. Election of S.O.S.A. committee members.

(a) Treasurer:

John Miller,  
1.1.83 until 31.12.85 (three years),  
Nominated by the general committee.

(b) Recent Leaver:

Julia Walton,  
1.1.83. until 31.12.85. (three years),  
Nominated by the general committee.

(c) One Ordinary Member:

Jim Thelton  
1.1.83. until 31.12.85. (three years),  
Proposed by Paul Frampton and seconded by  
Mike Finch.

#### 9. Forthcoming Dates.

Football match — Sunday November 7th, 1982,  
at 2 pm.  
School open day — June 25th, 1983.  
August reunion — Saturday 27th August / Monday  
29th August, 1983.

#### 10. Any other business.

Old Scholars agreed to purchase 50 SOSA ties at a cost of £1.60 each which Mr. J.G. Hughes of Bristol has agreed to hold in stock for us to purchase as required.

Philip Manasseh suggested we consider giving a book prize each year in memory of Geoffrey Long for the best article or poem written by a scholar printed in the magazine. The suggested value being £10.00 under the title of "The Geoffrey Long Book Prize". It was left to the committee to consider the proposal.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 18.10 Hrs.

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#### SOSA rules

The rules of the Sibford Old Scholars' Association will be found in the 1981 magazine.

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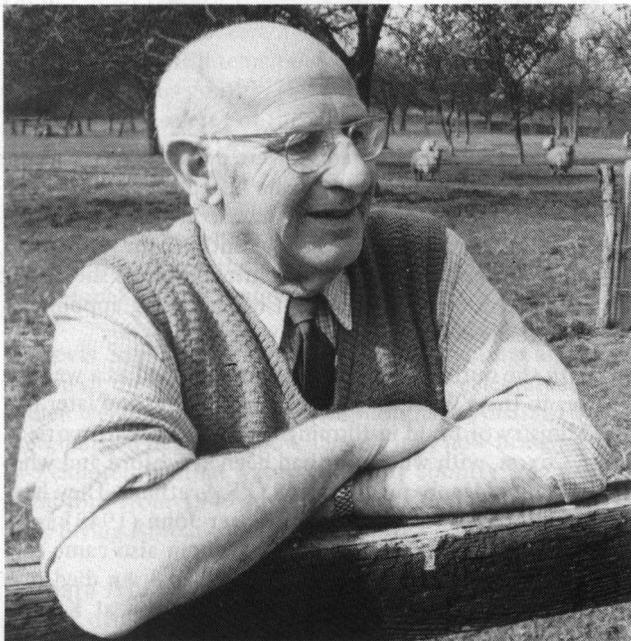
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# Godfrey Baseley and the Leslie Baily lecture

*During the first world war Godfrey Baseley was sent to Sibford to be tamed (James Harrod's pacifism, he has reason to recall, did not preclude the occasional use of a long-handled clothes brush) and to Bootham to be polished. Whether he feels either objective was achieved, he does not say, but he certainly remained a non-conformist. His father, a Quaker butcher in the Worcestershire village of Alvechurch, was devoted to Shakespeare and to the village Shakespeare society he created (the late Sir Frank Benson invited them to play a matinee performance at the old Stratford theatre), and passed on to Godfrey a love of the performing arts which has never left him. His Leslie Baily lecture therefore became a lively, and, at times, hilarious performance, which delighted and fascinated old scholars with unfamiliar glimpses of the most popular radio serial, which he did so much to create, in the history of the BBC.*

*Bootham failed to make him an academic and Alvechurch failed to make him a butcher, but the Birmingham and Midlands Institute's training in speech and drama led to a prolonged spell at the Birmingham and Alexander Repts, followed by three years as a war-time staff speaker with the Ministry of Information and 13 staff years with the BBC (Midlands) before he returned to freelance lecturing and writing. There were times in the early days when Godfrey was almost down on his uppers, and like so many media professionals he has turned his hand to many aspects of communication.*



## The beginning

Anyone who was born with 'The Archers' is now 32 and, like the Archers themselves, are more than likely to have families of their own. It all began, in typical BBC fashion, with a big conference of rural VIPs and aspiring VIPs, in the Birmingham Council Chamber. In those days few farmers listened to farming talks, mainly because they tended to be academic and given by agricultural dons and college lecturers

or others remote from working farmers. The conference produced no really new ideas until, just before the end, a voice from the back called out "What we want is a farming 'Dick Barton!'". Roars of laughter. 'Dick Barton' was a highly popular soap-horror radio serial ending on a cliff hanger every evening. When the laughter died down Godfrey realised the voice belonged to a man he knew, Henry Burt, a large and successful Lincolnshire farmer whose son and daughter had been to Sibford (the former, now, also a successful farmer).

The idea was nonsense of course. Yet Henry Burt was a quiet and thoughtful man never known to speak without thinking. It nagged away in Baseley's mind. He telephoned Henry Burt. Within a few days they were walking his farm, and as they walked, the technique of the 'Dick Barton' daily serial began to project in Baseley's mind the idea of a father-figure farmer and his family living their daily lives. ('Dick Barton' was full of suspense. So is farming and village gossip). While immersed in many other regular radio commitments on rural affairs, including the (at last) down to earth 'Over the Neighbour's Hedge' farming programme, Baseley's brooding over the mythical family assumed firmer outlines, and many internal memos and conferences later, in which the 'Barton' writers Edward Mason and Geoffrey Webb joined, the powers-that-were gave cautious approval to a trial run of five morning episodes in Whit week 1949. The response was encouraging, and a longer trial of 13 weeks was scheduled for the following year, and Baseley began the task of planning 65 Monday to Friday broadcasts. That was the beginning of a daily serial which soon replaced the evening 'Dick Barton' horror show, and has never stopped.

'The Archers' could be described as the offspring of the real-life 'Over the Neighbour's Hedge' and the myth created by the soap opera technique of 'Dick Barton'. The problem for Baseley was to use that technique for the communication of accurate farming information; the problem for Mason and Webb was to adapt their myth-making technique to facts. In Henry Burt's mind there was almost certainly another factor – the enlightenment of an overwhelmingly urban audience about the facts of modern farming. Without any conscious effort 'The Archers' became a mixture of about 10 per cent education, 30 per cent information and 60 per cent entertainment, the first two ingredients giving authenticity to the entertaining myth which held the mass audience, a myth based on seven or eight main characters created by the script and contrasting human voices.

## The farming cycle

Programmes, on radio or TV, are created by people behind the microphone or camera. In their planning, Baseley and the script writers had to bear in mind such factors as: each would write four weeks' episodes alternately, recordings would be made three weeks in advance of transmission (the early ones went out live), that weather and the seasons are reflected in nature and farming, and that farmers more often plan in five-year cycles rather than from year to year.

It is no coincidence, perhaps, that 'The Archers' has covered a period of thirty odd years in which farming has changed more rapidly and profoundly than in the preceding 100, from a craft-based to a science-based, industry of high productivity, and that 1950 was the year in which tractors finally outnumbered horses on our farms. Since then, two out of every three farm workers have left the land. All these changes had to be reflected in the daily exchanges of family conversation and village and pub gossip. Skilfully, the writers created one human situation after another to carry the technology. As the programme grew and extended its human and technical environment, it seemed to Godfrey that every rural organization in the country wanted to get on 'The Archers'. Many did, and stayed there, like the WI, and the Young Farmers.

The potential of the programme for communication to farmers and between town and country can be judged by the fact that many outstanding men would lend a guiding hand: men such as Sir John Hammond, the geneticist and pioneer of scientific live stock breeding; Sir George Stapledon, the apostle of ley farming who made us realise that grass is our most important crop; Professor Bobby Boutflour, the explosive little genius of the Royal Agricultural College, who made a science of feeding for milk; and Geoffrey Sykes who replaced beef cattle on his farm with poultry and was the pioneer of intensive egg production.

When the programme began the Shorthorn was the popular dairy breed. Today it is almost rare, and when Dan Archer decided to switch to Friesians, (closely watched by breed societies), how did they do it? Why, Dan's farm was struck by foot and mouth disease, the Shorthorns were slaughtered (while Doris Archer wept) and in due time in came black and whites. (You can do that on radio).

But perhaps the most extraordinary thing about 'The Archers' is the creation of the myth itself. When Dan Archer fell upon hard times, listeners sent postal orders. When Grace Archer died they sent flowers to her funeral, the press went into a fantasy of mourning, and Grace occupied the whole front page of the Salvation Army's 'War Cry' (Who would send flowers to a TV funeral?).

And more than 32 years and 8000 programmes later, the everyday story of country folk Godfrey began goes on.

*Note:* Tapes of Godfrey's talk (one hour) can be obtained from Russell Steed. £2.50 inc. p & p. Profits to the O.S. Bursary Fund.

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## President 1983

Irene Smith belongs to Birmingham, where she was born into the Quaker family of Wagstaffs. She came to Sibford in 1930 as a very new pupil in a new school (The Hill had just been opened) under a new headmaster, Arthur Johnstone, opening a new chapter in Sibford's history. She was preceded by elder sister, Olive Dalley.



At Sibford, her real interests were music, crafts and sport, and soon after leaving Sibford she began playing hockey for Worcestershire, but her playing career was ended by the war almost before it began. Her enthusiasm for hockey, begun at Sibford, continued at Bournville where she trained in the confectionary department before being appointed to the outside staff.

With the outbreak of war she was seconded as a welfare officer to the YWCA under Sir Charles Eddy, and later to the Ministry of Food in Birmingham. In 1942 she married John Coxon, with whom she had been at Sibford and who later became deeply involved in S.O.S.A. affairs. They had three children Christine (1945), Frazer John (1948) and David (1951), the first and third of whom also came to Sibford. David is now in the R.A.F. When John died in 1961, Irene began 10 happy years as matron at King Edwards High School for Girls until, in 1972, she married John's cousin, Frank Smith, of Birmingham. In 1980 Frank also died.

Irene is now retired, much involved as an overseer and member of nominations committee at Bull Street Friends Meeting in Birmingham, and with the WRVS, for whom she is an instructor in the emergency services. Irene remembers with gratitude the discipline and caring attitude to life she found at Sibford School. ■

# News of old scholars

**David Podmore** (1974 – 1979) is studying at the Shrewsbury College of Arts & Technology. Very keen to continue his membership of the SOSA.

**Phillipa Gillett** (1973 – 1979) is studying nursery nursing at college in Reading.

**Howard Campion** (1912 – 1916) send his greetings to “all who remember me”. There are still some of us around, Howard.

**Eric Brown** (1973 – 1978), spent two years in London working for his Intermediate Dental Technology Certificate, failed to find a job, except looking for one, and went off to Austria where he now works in the packing department of a refrigeration plant. Starts work at 7 am and finds life enjoyable now that he is speaking German. Lives near Lienz, between the Alps and the Dolomites, about 30 miles from the Italian border, where the scenery is ‘breathtaking’. Would like to see any OSs who come his way. Eric quotes memories of his father (Gerald), of Miss Burgess reading the whole of ‘The Christmas Carol’ to the assembled school in the old Gym opposite ‘Littleboy Dormitory’ in the earlier days of ‘AJ’, so he found Mike Finch’s article on ‘The Changing Face of Sibford’ especially interesting.

**Linda Eaton** (Watkins) (1919 – 1924) unfortunately unable to attend reunions, but finds reading the magazine almost as good. As a result of the appearance of her letter about old Sibford has found herself in correspondence with Dolly Cemm (sister of Roland Herbert) with whom she was at Sibford. “We were demon hockey players and sports fanatics and we still remember those days. They were the times of glorious youth”. (I remember you Linda, when I joined the ‘squealers’, of the class of ‘23. –Ed.)

**Leslie Bissell** (1920 – 1924), sending a cheque for the next three years’ subs, also enjoys the magazine, especially the pictures of change, and notes on OSs of his (and Linda’s) time. Leslie retired three years ago after a life-time in cabinet-making and engineering.

**W Bevis Savage** (1915 – 1918) sends greetings and appreciation of the magazine. Bevis and his wife celebrated their golden wedding by spending two months in Australia with their married daughter (now Janet Winn) now bringing up two children “in that warm and sunny country”. Janet was at Sibford from 1949 to 1953. Her address is listed in ‘OSs Living Abroad’.

**Barbara Abercrombie** (1939 – 1943), catching up on her subs, is delighted with the magazine “but could do with more news of OSs of the last war. I often wonder where they all are and what they are doing?”. (So do we). Barbara says her father’s vines, descended from cuttings given to her great uncle (Charles Seccombe) by the head gardener at Hampton Court are flourishing “at the old home near here.” (Tanworth in Arden).

**Bryony Denton – Williams** (nee Veysey) (1950 – 1956) says she is now a cub scout leader and is running a cub pack

at Eynesbury in Cambridgeshire; trains them for football competitions and takes them camping. Her three step-daughters are married, her step-son is working with deprived children in London, and her own son (14) is at school locally and exchanges school and home visits with a French boy. Bryony is a member of Godmanchester PM and as an overseer visits the elderly on her bicycle. Thanks to Bryony we have news of:

**Jean Halstead**, née Ingram (1951 – 1955) who went to Australia in 1963 and is now married to an artist and living in New Zealand. They have a son of 11 years and “Jean always seems to be on the gardeners’ committee with her home-made bread and home produce”.

**Liz Covey**, née Penn (1949 – 1956) is a theatrical costume designer in New York and between commissions in various parts of the US does TV commercials. She has published, with a friend, a book on theatrical costumes. “She hasn’t any children but a houseful of dogs and cats”.

**Susan Thomas**, née Smith (head girl in 1956) has lived in Canada for 20 years, and her two children David (18) and Cynthia (15) are doing well, the former hoping to read geology at university. Susan, who is a nurse, still does voluntary work with sick children and is in touch with Rachel Smith (née Eavis).

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# Obituaries

## Geoffrey Long.

*Geoffrey Long died on 30th January 1982. An old scholar remembers him:*



No one who knew Geoff Long will ever forget him. He was a man of warmth and affection, of tenderness and high spirits.

Geoff came to Sibford in 1912 and left in 1915, and within three years, as a boy of 19, he was wounded while serving with an Irish regiment in France. His love of Sibford, of the school the village and its countryside, remained with him all his life and he never failed to return at OS reunions until his final illness, following a stroke, in 1977.

He was a happy man whose gaiety came from the heart. He loved reading to children, and in his presidential address on Dickens in 1948, he expressed his belief that reading aloud in the home contributed to its warmth and happiness. (Many of us remember his readings from the Bible after Sunday morning breakfast at reunions). Geoff's first wife, Alice, who died in 1957, was also President of the OSA, in 1953, and both their children, Tom and Judy, came to Sibford. In 1958 Geoff married again and Joan nursed him devotedly in the last years.

After Geoff retired from the dental laboratory he founded with a partner, he gave more time to golf and marquetry, a hobby at which he became so expert that the BBC invited him to broadcast on the subject. Characteristically, he called his talk "Cutting out the Purple Hearts". A serious man, with the gift of laughter.

To Joan our love. To Geoffrey our thanks for happy memories.

## C. Morland Braithwaite.

Those who have been associated with Sibford School for a long time will, at some time or another, have come across a Braithwaite. It is very much a Sibford name, and a Sibford family, who have given untold service to the school and to the community.

Morland was no exception. His contribution to the school can seldom have been equalled. A member of the school committee for no less than 31 years (1927-78) he had held office as treasurer and chairman of the general purposes committee and was the invaluable convener of five appeals which over the years raised £500,000.

In 1928, with Leslie Baily, he made a film about the history of the school – 'Sibford: a film of school life' – which was the first full length 16mm film about a school in this country. It was shown all over the country to raise funds for the new building at the Hill, then about to be built. It is still shown to new students when they arrive at Sibford.

Morland was born at Banbury in 1907, the son of William Charles Braithwaite and Janet Morland, both long-serving members of the school committee. He was educated at Sidcot and Leighton Park, and studied music at the Royal College where he gained his ARCM. But his professional life was devoted to photography, which he studied at the Regent Street Polytechnic and at Kodak, before starting his very successful business in Birmingham in 1934.

So heavily committed to his business and to Sibford as he was it is a wonder that he found time to be treasurer of the Barnt Green Meeting, treasurer of the village hall at Burcot, where he lived, and a member of the Bromsgrove Light Orchestra, to name just a few of his other interests. He had an enormous reputation with the local society for handicapped children, where his enthusiasm and zest for life inspired so many of the less fortunate. A lovely story illustrates the kind of man he was. If a child couldn't stand or was confined to a wheeled chair he would get down on the floor beside them so that, as he said, "we can talk on level terms".



His humorous, caring approach to life was an inspiration to all who knew him, and he will be greatly missed by the school, by his friends and his family, all of whom however can rejoice in the qualities he shared with us all.

M.F.

**Raymond Matchett** (1927 – 1930), Raymond died on September 17th 1981 after a life of service with boys in approved schools, especially the Red House Farm School in Norfolk. Throughout his career he remained strongly influenced by Sibford traditions and by the Harrods, Frank Parkin and Roland Herbert.

**Herbert Calcraft** (1906 – 1909), Herbert spent most of his life in Canada, where he died on August 3rd 1981, but kept in regular touch, and always came back to Sibford when in England.

**Dorothy Robson**, who taught the violin at Sibford for many years, and conducted the Banbury String Orchestra for 40 years, died on Boxing Day 1981, at the age of 89.

**Jack Edwards**, younger brother of Ralph, died at Charlton-on-Otmoor in March 1981. He will be remembered by OSs of the mid-twenties as a kindly and quiet man and a good Friend. He spent many years with the Milk Marketing Board. He bequeathed £2000 to Sibford School and £1000 to Oxford PM.

We remember, also, **Getrude Ostler** (1915 - 1919) and **John Parsons** (1932 – 1937) who died during the last year.

## Marriages

### POULTON-MILES

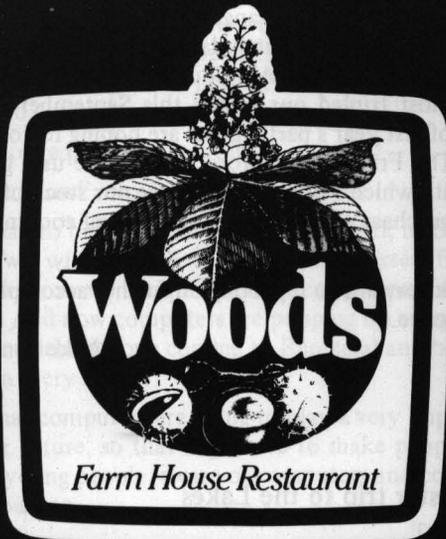
At Bodicote 24.10.81 Fiona May Poulton of Sibford to Stanley Miles of Hook Norton.

### DICKSON-GOODWIN

At Bicester on 10.7.82 Alison Dickson to Clyde Goodwin.



*The end of The Elm.  
The Elm, stricken by Dutch elm disease, is felled (right)  
26th November 1982. The timber earned £200 for SOSA  
funds.  
F.R.*



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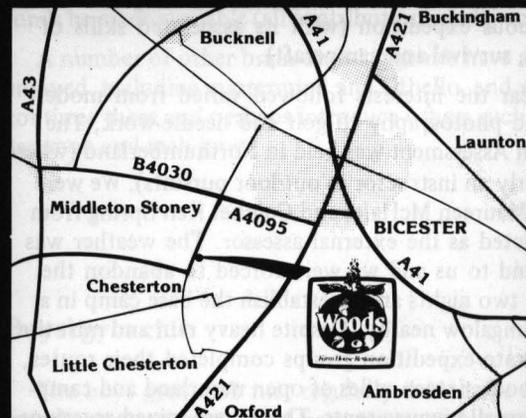
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# In and out of school



## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

I inherited the somewhat daunting task of running the scheme from Gordon Wright a year ago, and although taking part in the award several years ago I had forgotten the value of such an activity in a place like Sibford.

I intentionally kept my recruitment fairly low last year in order to find my feet and establish a workable training programme. To this end I have been helped by Alan Fitzgerald-Clark who has taken some of the burden of the expedition training and has also accompanied me on both practice and assessment camps.

The Award is essentially designed to encourage the individual to pursue hobbies and sports, to provide some useful service to the community and to take part in a fairly arduous expedition (with its associated skills of navigation, survival and campcraft).

Last year the interests followed varied from model making and photography to golf and needle-work. The Expedition Assessment was held in Northumberland (where I was latterly an instructor in outdoor pursuits). We were joined by Maureen McHale, and Colonel Ken Spring from Bloxham acted as the external assessor. The weather was most unkind to us and we were forced to abandon the tents after two nights and re-establish the base camp in a wooden bungalow nearby. Despite heavy rain and mist the three separate expedition groups completed their routes, crossing about sixteen miles of open moorland and camping out in small bivouac tents. There were mixed reactions to the dehydrated food, but route finding and accurate timing of each 'leg' of the expedition was carried out with

great exactitude. These achievements impressed the assessor, together with each member's written and oral logs of the walk, sufficiently for him to announce, during their last night party, that everyone had passed their Bronze Expedition. We did manage to fit in a day "doing" the Roman sites and a half day's orientation exercise on the moor, which proved very much 'the real thing' as a thick mist descended and visibility dropped to about fifty yards.



*Boy's Bronze Expedition Group leaving the dropping point. Allendale Moor, Northumberland July 1982.*

This year I hope to arrange a Police Service course with the Thames Valley Constabulary in Banbury and a St. Johns Ambulance First Aid Course to be run at school. We have almost tripled our intake this September whilst several of last year's participants are hoping to go for their Silver. The Friends of Sibford kindly gave us a grant of £500 with which I intend to improve our stock of tentage and to purchase equipment for the central cooking in base camp.

I look forward to reporting on further accomplishments a year hence.

*Mike Spring (Staff)*

## The Easter trip to the Lakes

We left Sibford in two tidy mini-buses and arrived several hours later at Glaramara Hotel, Seatoller in two dusty vehicles, knee deep in crisp bags and sweet packets. There were mountains all around us and after a tea of cakes and scones we went out to have a closer look. There was a river quite near the hotel and during the week several people ended up with a ducking. We were allocated to our rooms — boys upstairs and girls down — they were very comfortable with modern furniture.

On the first two days I walked in Miss Nussey's and Miss Wilson's group. The second day's walk ended at the bottom of a waterfall and, of course, a water fight was enjoyed by all. We walked about eight miles that day, while Mr Spring took his group on a fourteen mile 'killer'.

Day three was a rest day from walking and our group was taken to the Lowther Wild Life Park while the other group went to Windermere and went on the steamer.

Days four and five were walking days, and some quite good distances were covered and high altitudes climbed. It was always nice to come back to the hotel after a slog up the mountains and have a hot bath. One night we planned to have a midnight feast, so we all put money towards it and bought the food, but we were all so tired after our "mountain day" that no-one woke up!

A lot of people were asleep on the way back to school, but we arrived safely after a great trip.

Chris Wollerton.

### Winning a computer.

'How a microprocessor could help in the teaching of dyslexics in our school' was the title of an essay that John Davies, Simon Lethbridge and I wrote the M.S.P. competitions in which we won a 380Z research machine.

The essay took ages to write, so we missed the closing date, but with a bit of luck and gentle persuasion the closing date was extended and our essay was accepted. Nothing more was heard for months, but then, one day, just as we were beginning to forget about it, the headmaster came into our physics lesson and told us we had won one of the top prizes. After much initial excitement we settled down for a long wait.

Then one day out of the blue came two huge boxes. With great excitement we ripped them open and there, nestling in vast amounts of polystyrene chips, was the long-awaited computer.

"How do we programme it Sir?"

"I don't know".

There had to be a hitch, nobody could work it! So we settled down with a book of words and started from scratch. And now we are quite competent computer programmers. And now computers are popping up everywhere, with one in Fielding, one coming to Remedial and before long one in every house.

I feel that computers are going to play a very important role in our future, so that any move to make people, especially young people, aware of computers and computing is a good one.

Tom Rack.

### The badminton club

The club has enjoyed a good deal of success this year, attracting over thirty members from 1st to 6th form. Due to other sporting commitments we did not arrange any inter-school matches, but a fiercely contested staff/pupil tournament was held at the Spiceball Sports Centre in Banbury. The result was a narrow victory to the pupils.

We were extremely pleased to participate in the county selection trials – the first round was held at Banbury

School and the second at Matthew Arnold School in Oxford. The School was represented by Bobby Egbuna, Patrick Clacy, Philippe Lachelier, Stephan Rostman, Carlotta Adams.

Practice and coaching sessions have taken place weekly during the winter terms and attendance for the new season has been most encouraging already. Badminton has been described as a game anyone can play, but few can play well – I'm not so sure. Sibford has a good number of talented and determined players – you may be one of them, so come along and give it a try!

Mike Spring & Stella Wilson (Staff)

### Squash club

Some people call it masochism, some call it unadulterated insanity and in the words of a master, Jonah Barrington, 'The only way to win is to murder, on the squash court'.

Squash is a lively activity in which Sibford takes an equally lively part. Not discouraged by the fact that there are no squash courts on the campus, a bunch of energetic youngsters go most Wednesday afternoons to the Regents Squash Club in Chipping Norton. The club itself is adorned in tropical splendour with carpeted changing rooms whose corners boast plants in considerable numbers. On top of this there is a sports shop and Jacuzzi facilities.

The Sibford Squash Club itself comprises about 20 regulars, teachers and pupils, and numerous others. There is a wide variety of abilities ranging from 'first-timers' to more experienced, perhaps even county standard players. So whatever a person's ability we are sure to find a slot for them. And it really is all fun and games, (and sweat!).

R. Adams & T. Houghton

### Chess club

The School chess club has had a successful season with a good number of regular players. A most useful introduction to the club has been a Sargon chess computer which has greatly benefited the members. The machine is at present on loan from a member of staff but it is hoped that we may be able to purchase one of our own should funds be made available (all contributions gladly accepted!).

A number of other brain-draining games have also been enjoyed, including mastermind and Othello, and we hope to continue these and perhaps introduce others such as backgammon and mah jong.

(A.S.)

### Boys' gym club

The boys gym club met regularly during the winter months. Attendance varied between a mere handful and, on occasions, about twenty. Activities were generally geared towards the B.A.G.A. awards with a number of

rather less organised sessions when some of the better gymnasts amused themselves with various stunts and tests of strength and agility.

M.R.W.

### The sailing club

The sailing club got under way again this year with a crew of 24. We hoist our sails on Banbury Reservoir every Saturday afternoon (barring special events) as part of Banbury Schools' Sailing Association. There are five Otters and one G.P. in the fleet, although after our first outing when the G.P. capsized (it was blowing rather hard!) we have kept to the Otters which are more stable. Most of the members have had little or no previous experience so we have appreciated the rather calm conditions of most weeks to make mistakes without catastrophe. Latterly we have enjoyed the expert help of Christian Notley and our thanks go also to various members of staff who have buckled to and helped out. During the winter months we hope to brush up on theory, learn to tie proper seamen's knots and possibly see a sailing film. Next season should promise much more knowledgeable seamanship!

Pauline C. Roe  
Bo'sun

### The cactus club

The club has had a mixed year. On the growing side we have had a record number of flowers on the cacti and some of the younger members of the school have taken a more than passing interest in the club. Let's have some more of you. The *Selenicereus* 'Queen of the Night' bloomed this year. The interesting about that is that the bloom is very large and sweet-smelling but only lasts from dusk to dawn for one night only. Fortunately this year we managed to take some photographs of it.

The cacti have been moved from the rural studies lab. down to outside my door in Penn Boys. The arrangement suits me as I can see them several times a day but they are not so accessible to the rest of the school.

On the bad side several very rare cacti were injured during one of the summer camps – one of them dying.

We also had a trip to the Stoneleigh Craft Show and met some representatives of the National Cacti & Succulents

Growers Association and we hope to organize further trips in the future.

Finally, goodbye to Martin Yeomans, and Nick Towey, two of the original stalwarts who have now left.

Ian Charnock

### Photography club

The photography club under the new management of Mr Clark is now well under way, meeting twice a week in the art room. One group is for beginners and the other for those with slightly more knowledge.

Previously we met in the old darkroom, which is now a store cupboard, a place certainly not for the claustrophobic. The new darkroom is much improved, containing two working enlargers! This darkroom is situated in what was the 'pottery' and has all the basic facilities that a darkroom needs. Vast stocks of chemicals and paper were got in well on time and safelights and the like.

On top of all this the school also invested in two cameras, both of which came in for heavy use, both during club meetings and lesson times. Recently a third was added to the collection – a large camera bought from Mr Hedley.

For me these improvements are welcome additions to the facilities at school. I don't get claustrophobia, but the old cramped conditions were not conducive to good photography.

Tom Houghton

### Spanish club

Every Sunday at 3.30 the Spanish club meets in Miss Muir's sitting-room in the Manor. At present it consists solely of Harriet Gifford and myself, but we enjoy it. We learn conversational Spanish and it is very useful if you ever want to go to Spain. At least then, you'll be able to make yourself understood a little!! I think it would be nice if more people came. It is for 3rd years upwards and is great fun. I've been in the club since it began and I haven't regretted it yet. So come along and see what you've been missing!

by Sara Binns

## Arthur & Pamela Harrison

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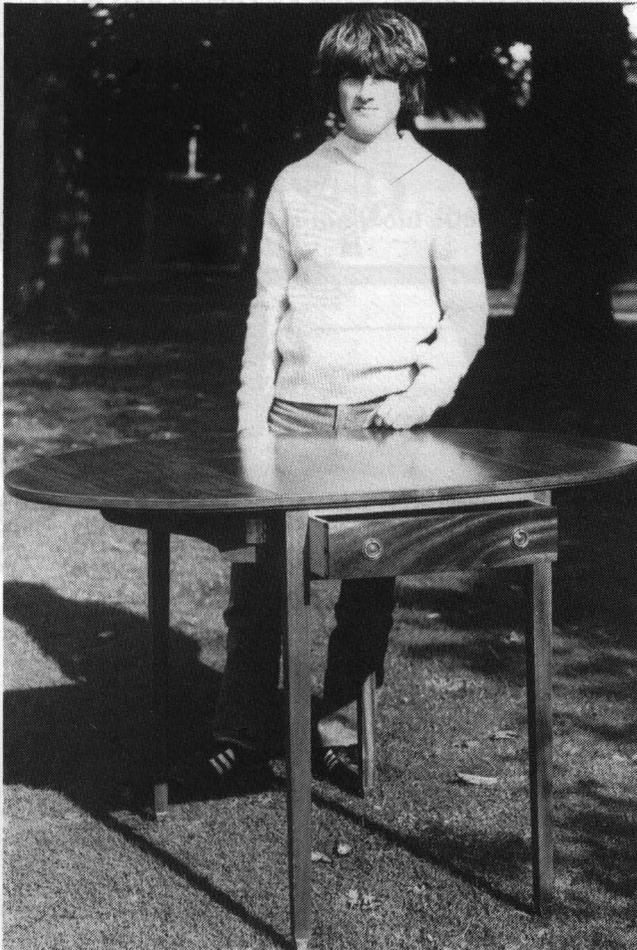
## Typewriting

This year we entered fifteen pupils for the Pitman Elementary Typewriting Examination and each one was successful. At Pitman Intermediate three out of four pupils were successful, two obtaining 'Pass with Credit'.

## Workshops

We have introduced jewellery making from the first form upwards and silverwork is gradually being introduced with senior pupils. It is hoped also to introduce "lost wax casting" of precious metals during the year.

A shoulder plane designed and made by Adrian Sestini attracted some very favourable comments from an H.M.I. during the September Exhibition of Excellence in Craft, Design and Technology held in Oxford. Adrian also won the Design Woodwork Senior section for his fine bow ended Pembroke table.



*Adrian Sestini with his Pembroke table.*

We are pleased that Christian Notley has been accepted for a course in Furniture making and design at Rycotewood a year after leaving us and wish him well.

Kenneth Spring will take over Stuart Hedley's teaching time table for the summer term 1983 and hopes to concentrate on carving techniques for most groups and we look forward to seeing the results of an artistic approach.

Stuart Hedley

## The tuck shop

The tuck shop began life in September 1968 with a loan from the school of £50. The loan was repaid from the profits in January the following year.

Stock is ordered every two weeks from the representative who calls on alternate Mondays. The order is then delivered on Wednesday, checked and unpacked. The large bottles of drinks come from Corona, pens and pencils from the Banbury Cash and Carry, and most of the sweets and chocolate from Moffat at Northampton.

The question is often asked "What happens to the profits?" It is given back to the school in various ways. Sweets for the summer camp and money for a number of items have been given over the years. This year the tuck shop has bought new five-a-side goal posts and nets costing £120 and basket ball equipment which will cost nearly £300. The tuck shop has also joined with three school departments to buy new video and T.V. sets.

Thanks go to all the shop staff who give their help. So continue to SUPPORT YOU TUCK SHOP.

Jenifer Wollerton

## H.M.S. Pinafore

The production of H.M.S. Pinafore by Gilbert and Sullivan reached its culmination on the final two days of the summer term. The two performances were on Wednesday for the village and school and on Thursday for parents. It represented the climax of about ten weeks work, the last three weeks of which were very hectic. We had, the previous term, performed a concert version of another Gilbert and Sullivan opera 'Trial by Jury' which had proved popular, and it was thought that a stage production was the logical progression. As a principal it meant a lot more hard work than before in the form of learning speeches as well as songs. On top of which there were, of course, stage directions to be taken into account.

Mr Rye originally set the ball rolling organising rehearsals and auditioning people for principal parts. Later, however Mr Higgins took over the stage direction and production in this opera in which he had performed himself many years ago! A few other members of staff including our head who had got 'roped in' also helped in the organisation. The set was designed and produced by stage managers Michael Herm and Julie Greenhill with the help of woodworkers and artists led by Mr Hedley, Mr Clark and Mr Spring.

The costume rehearsal on the Friday of the penultimate week heralded a whole host of new problems like those incurred when trying to get through narrow gaps with hooped skirts as some of the girls found to their cost. However by the following Monday, the day of the dress rehearsal, all the problems seemed to have been ironed out and it all ran very smoothly.

By the day of the first performance everyone seemed suitably 'psyched up' to coin an actors phrase, and it went very well. On the second night we performed to a more receptive audience and nerves were less in evidence. A fitting end to all of ten weeks enjoyable work.

Thomas Houghton (*Capt. Corcoran*)

# H.M.S. Pinafore July 1982

*"The Standard of performance was superlative and the involvement wide and full"*

— from Jim Graham's school report.



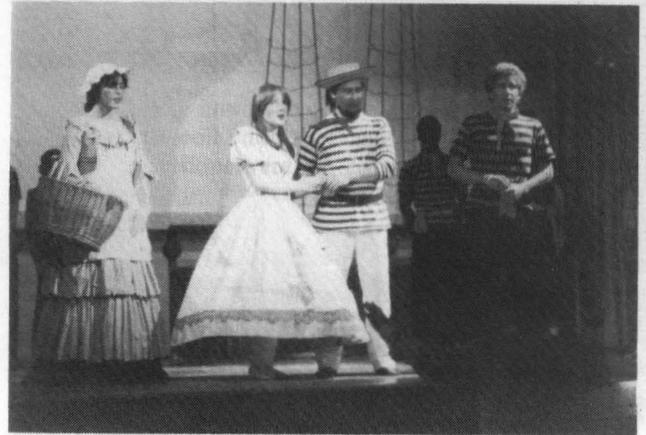
*Female Chorus with Ralph Rackstraw*



*Josephine (SARA BINNS) Ralph Rackstraw (CHRIS MOORE)  
and Bosun*



*Captain Corcoran (THOMAS HOUGHTON) Bosun and  
Ralph Rackstraw with male chorus*



*Buttercup (CATHERINE DAVIES) Josephine, Ralph  
Rackstraw and Bosun*



*Captain Corcoran, Midshipmite (CHRISTOPHER WOLLERTON)  
Sir Joseph Porter KCB (SHERIDAN COLDSTREAM)*



*Bosun (PETER DONEY) Ralph Rackstraw (CHRIS MOORE)  
Dick Deadeye (TONY SKEATH)*

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# Inside the houses

## Penn

Overall I think the atmosphere in Penn House is very good. Quite a few new things have appeared since I arrived. For a start there's a new pool table and as we still haven't got rid of the old one it sits in the hobbies room used by many as an improvised seat. Also in the hobbies room, its been joined by Penn's football table kindly donated by some parents. Then in the kitchen there's a new toaster, again donated by parents. A newish sofa has appeared on Mr Charnock's landing amongst the spikey cacti, placed there by the cactus club for no apparent reason.

The newest thing in Penn is the telephone. No, this wasn't bought by parents, but by HOUSE FUNDS.

Some things people want include: a video recorder, a food dispenser, new chairs, working central heating, cinema screen, more supper, better table tennis facilities, house magazine, Banbury leave for the younger years and more posters.

Of course the house funds can't afford all these things, but maybe the time will come.

James Binns.

## A New Boy in Penn House

When I first came to Sibford I was amazed how friendly everyone was towards me and I was made to feel at home straight away. During my first term, which was after Christmas, I found the dark evenings became lighter and we could go out on the field after prep, so I enjoyed it more.

Life at Sibford is very different from my previous school and getting used to having supper at 7.30 p.m. and strict bedtime is sometimes annoying.

Guy Kingham

## Three terms in Penn

September 1981 saw the Penn dormitories repainted and the House looking at its best for the start of the School year. The term ended early with candles, singing around the gas fire, and blizzards blowing outside. The house party was a success but other Christmas festivities were lost.

Spring saw two popular additions to house facilities, a new snooker table and a music centre in the hobbies room. However, modelmaking to music did not win the Eisteddfod.

Summer saw some lovely weather early in the term and also the arrival of the 'Grey Lady', Mr. Charnock's latest acquisition, an Alvis of elderly years. The house cricket cup returned and another year had ended.

Pennman.

## Nansen boys

Nansen on the whole has had quite an active 'social year'. Initially, we bade farewell to Mr. Holliday who completed his "sentence" of several years as housemaster in the summer of '82. Mr. Holliday was replaced by Mr. Skeath former assistant housemaster, and Mr. Alan Clark our new art teacher became our deputy housemaster. After christmas Mr. Clark and his wife produced a baby boy Edward, for which we were truly thankful as it provided the school with a half-day. Mr. Clark soon after took up residence in the manor. Mike Finch the new estate bursar occupied the assistant house master's flat from easter until summer. Most recently however Mr. Clark has left the management of Nansen boys entirely, and a 'new import', Mr. Martin Wilkinson, a science teacher took up the post of assistant housemaster.

The house itself was renovated during the holidays, with repairs and repainting being carried out in the upstairs part of the house, which makes it considerably more presentable, but not quite in keeping as yet with the plush carpeted splendour of Nansen girls. The house has also acquired a pay-phone and a new stereo out of house funds.

Last but obviously not least, we ourselves have had a mixture of success and failure in the 81 - 82 academic year. Briefly, we won the football trophy, the cricket trophy, the eisteddfod cup and for several years running we have the Gilchrist trophy for chess, regrettably however we came last in the athletics, and swimming events. With the mixture of results last year and our new potential (students) we hope to make as much better showing of ourselves in the 82 - 83 year.

R. Adams

## Nansen Poppets strike back!

The year got off to a good start when the headmaster tasted (literally) the delights of Nansen Girls in our Fun-house one open night. He was subjected to having ice-cubes put down his back and eating mud (we took the worms out!), tomato ketchup and jelly.

We came second in the house concerts but did not perform the plays - due to the bad weather.

Throughout the cold winter Nansen froze with help from the poor heating and inadequate hot water. We had numerous Bars when we sold pop-corn, ice-cream and sandwiches and we sent money to various charities including a local hospital to buy a life-saving machine for babies. We continued to support our adopted child in Central America, Antonia, with money, cards and presents.

In the spring term Miss Lemon was away for a few weeks and we would like to thank the staff who came in to help. It was then that Nansen girls had a first; we received the most Valentine Cards! (and we did not send them to ourselves)

At Easter we had a party with Lister girls which was a great success, if rather noisy.

In the summer term we got our own baby, (with some help from Mr & Mrs Clark). We also had a keep-fit craze and some very keen people braved the cold early mornings to run up to the Elm!

We hosted many hops in our common room and two of us went to help at the Home Farm Trust at Cherrington which we enjoyed very much.

All in all a great year!

Helen Trathen

### Lister girls

At the beginning of the year we welcomed Miss Taylor into Lister as the new house-assistant, and after a quiet term we said our farewells and gave our best wishes to Miss Edwards. Mr. and Mrs. Higgins then joined us in the spring term. After these changes everything seemed to settle down very well.

During the year we collected money for charity, mainly the N.S.P.C.C.

Sports events of the year which we won were the senior hockey and netball, the juniors also played well in their matches. We also won the cross-country, in which Susan Gillett took first place, although it was not officially announced. After seven years since the last victory we came first in the swimming gala. A lot of work for these successes was contributed by our games captain Catherine Davies.

In the Eisteddfod house concerts we came third, although a lot of effort was put into it and it was thoroughly enjoyed by most. Due to bad weather at the end of the autumn term the house drama plays were never finished.

We regained our first place in the hobbies exhibition.

The entertainment that we arranged for several open nights was successful and appreciated by all.

We finished the year giving the position of house captain and deputy for 1982 - 83 to Cathy Muff and Sarah Clacy respectively. The position of games captain was given to Kerry Wratten and Helen Fenton.

Natalie Hall, Phillippa Wright.

### Lister boys

At last we have a pay phone in the house! so house council has decided to spend some money on a plastic sound hood and we hope to make the phone area pleasant and comfortable in due course.

We are looking forward to having some sort of computer in the house and hope to make an area for this on the landing but we are not sure how advanced the installation will be at this stage.

Under the leadership of Jonathan Wallis, our house captain this year, the atmosphere is positive, friendly and very pleasant, and the continued use of a house council for the second year has proved useful and worthwhile.

Stuart Hedley.

### Gillett house

Last year this house was slowly, but surely sliding down the hill. But workmen came to our rescue to re-build the end although we were inconvenienced for a while. When we came back after the summer holidays a metamorphosis had taken place. The whole house had been re-decorated, carpeted throughout and central heating had been put in, which keeps us nice and warm.

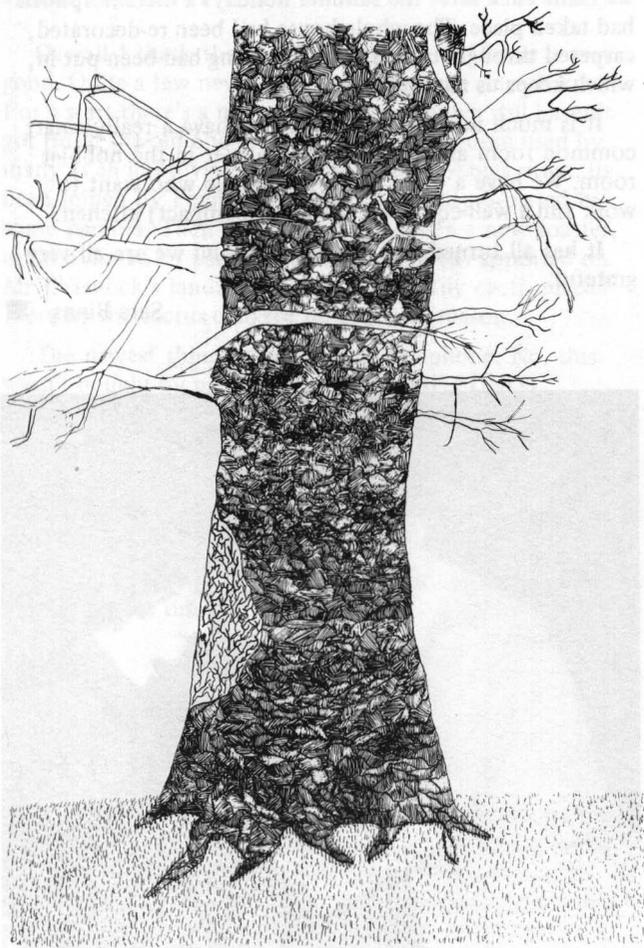
It is much more homely now. We have a really smart common room and a new record player in the hobbies room. We have a quiet room for people who want to work and a well-equipped (although compact) kitchen.

It has all turned out marvellously and we are all very grateful.

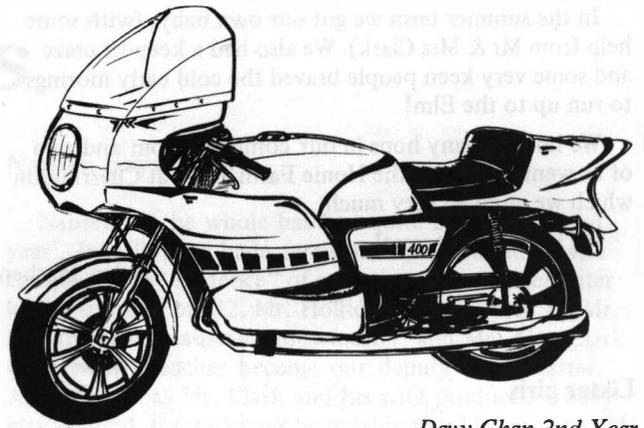
Sara Binns ■



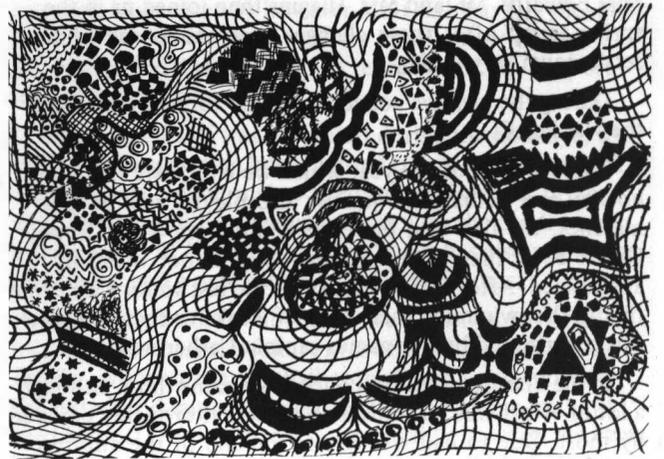
*Adrian Sestini receives a major award for his Pembroke table (Senior Design, Woodwork) from Professor Urry of Brunel University, at the Educational Institute of Design and Technology Exhibition at Westminster College, Oxford, September 1982.*



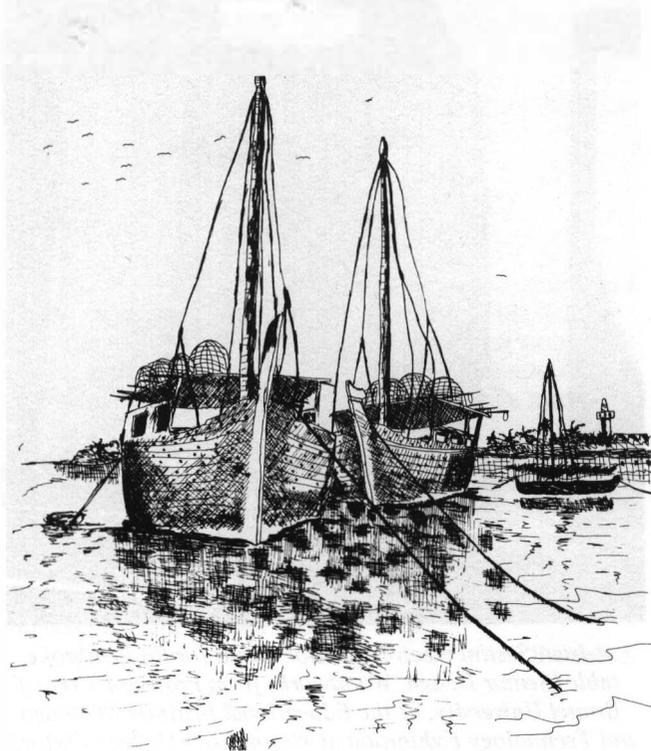
Jocasta Crofts 1st Year



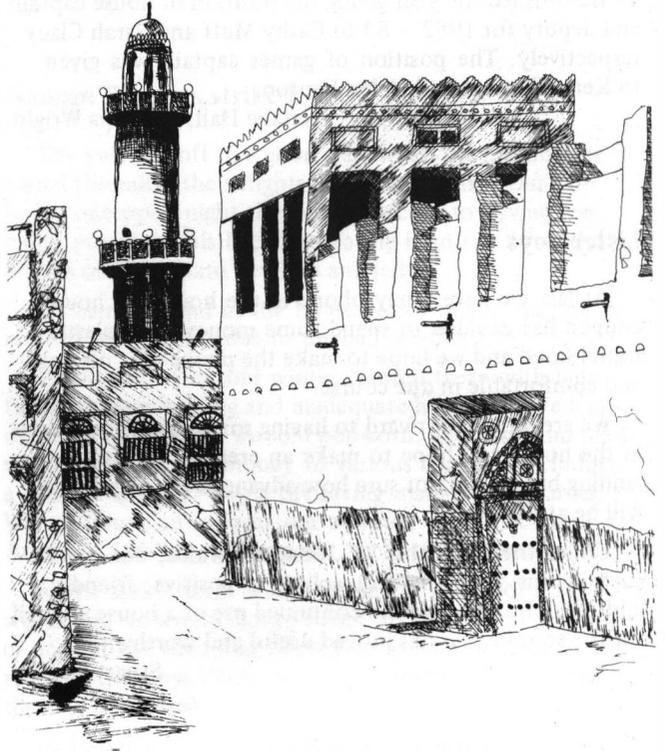
Davy Chan 2nd Year



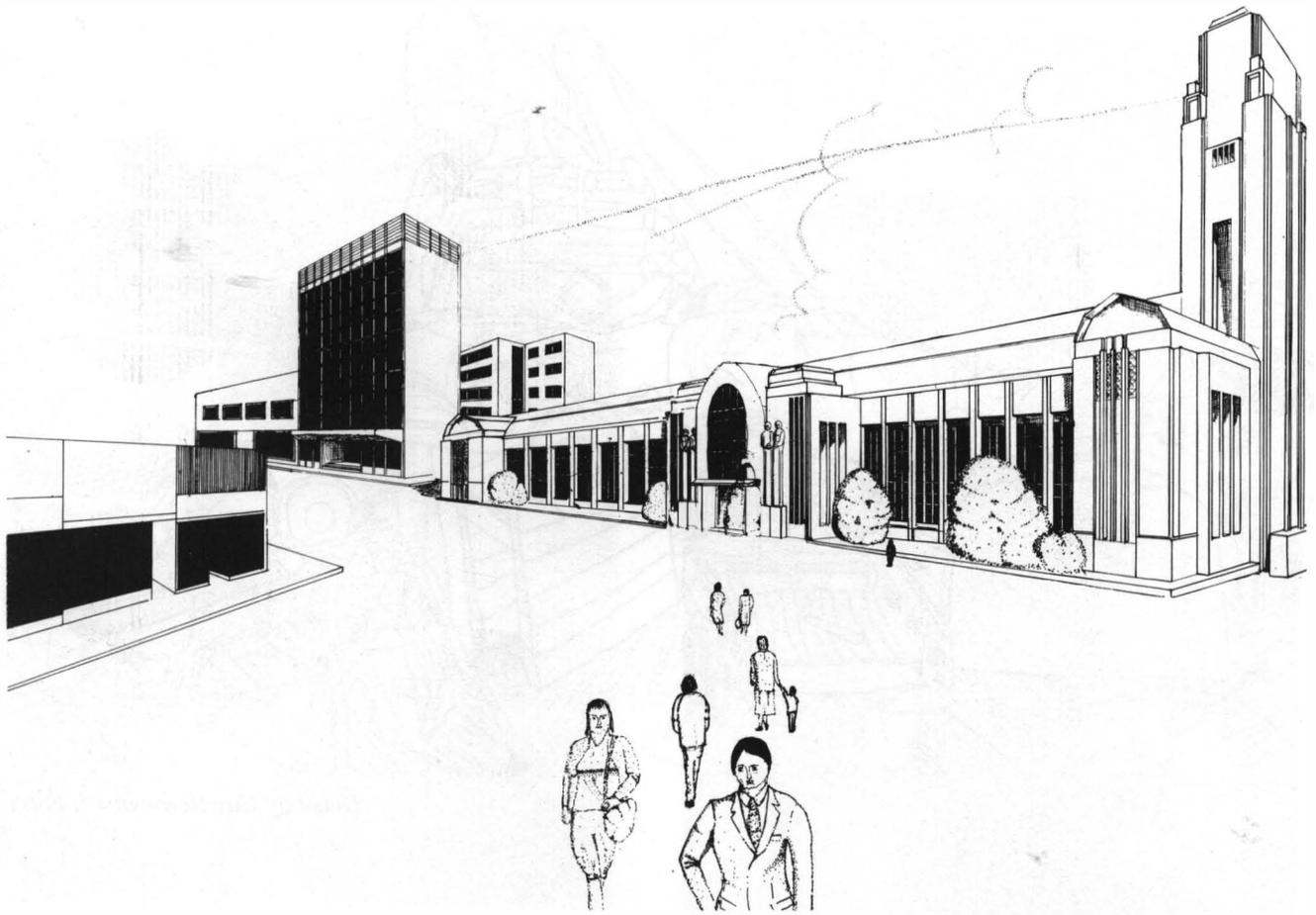
Clodagh Glaisyer 2nd Year



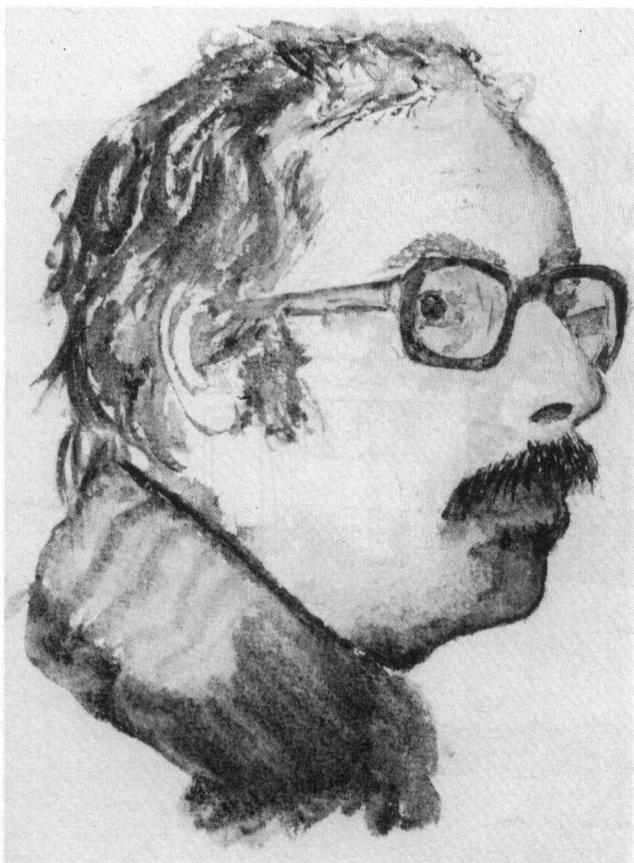
Nigel Jackson 6th Form



Nigel Jackson 6th Form



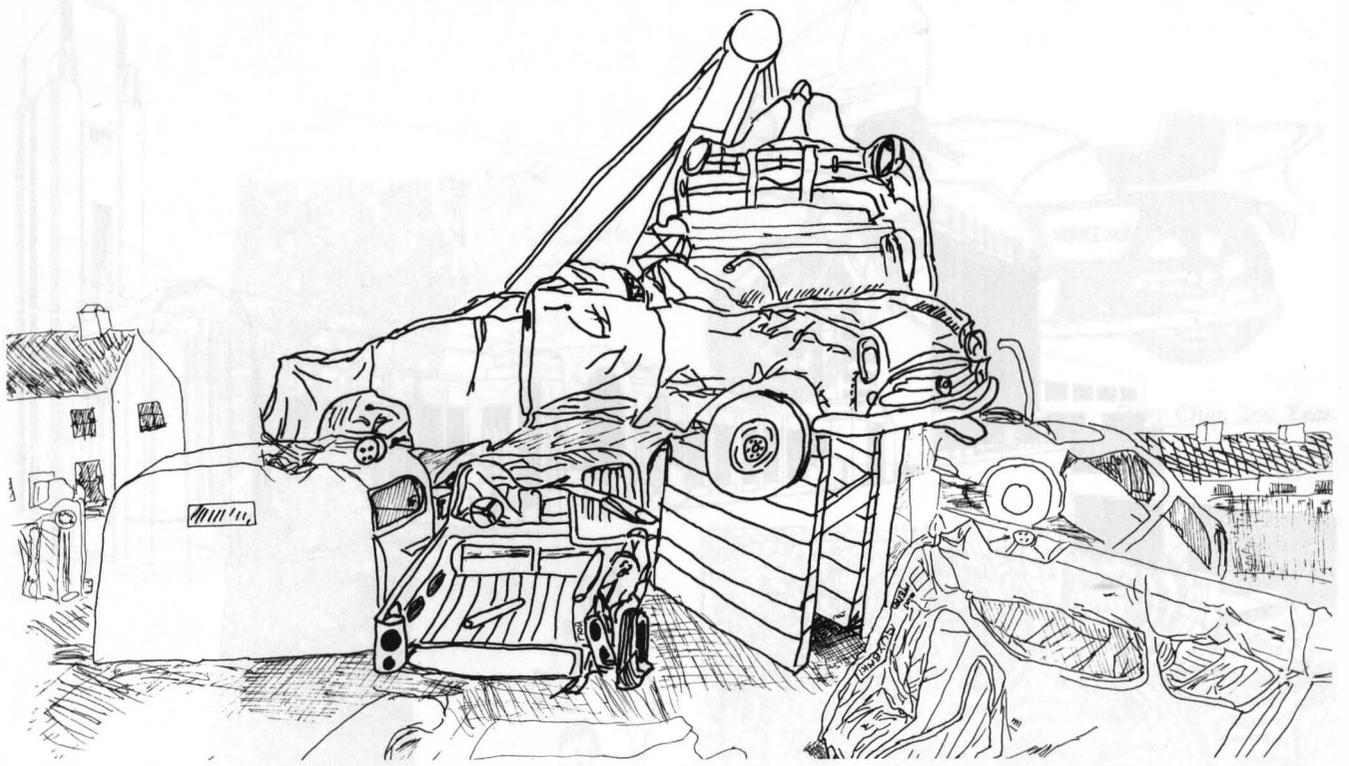
*Jonathan Arkless 6th Form*



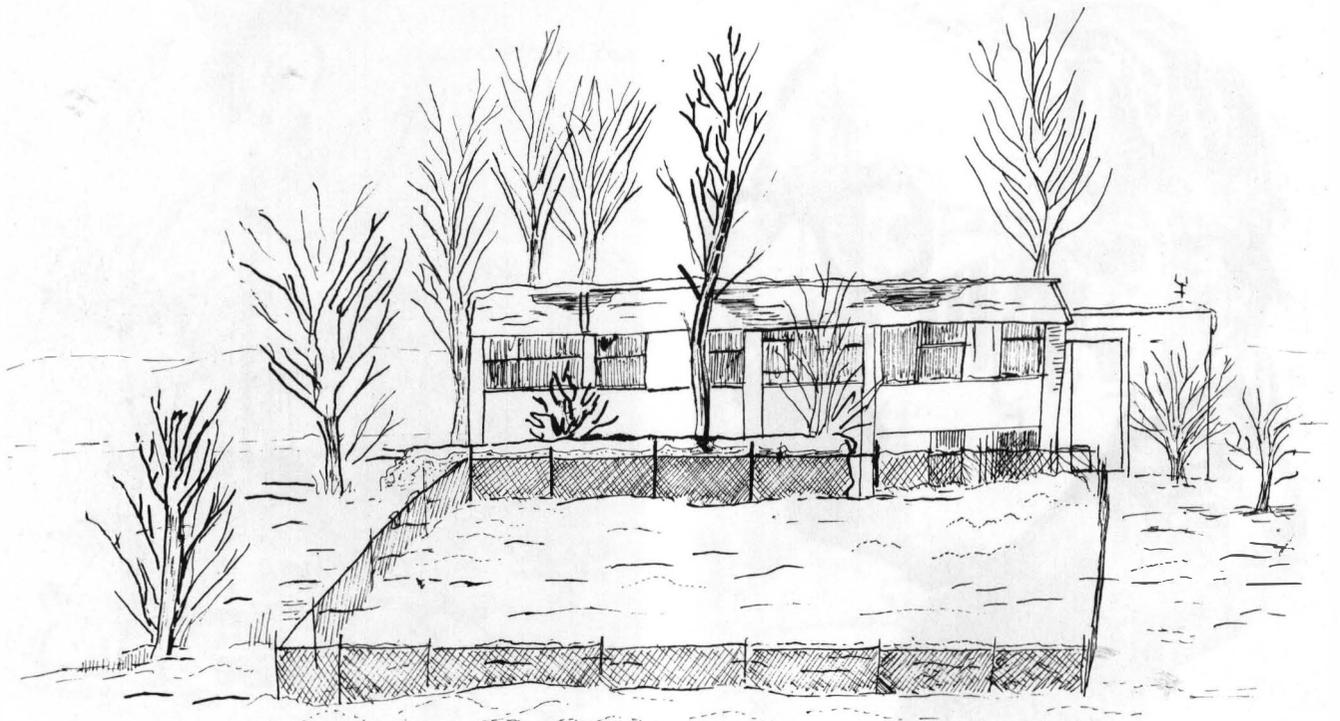
*Peter Doney 6th Form*



*Edward Garnier 4th Form*



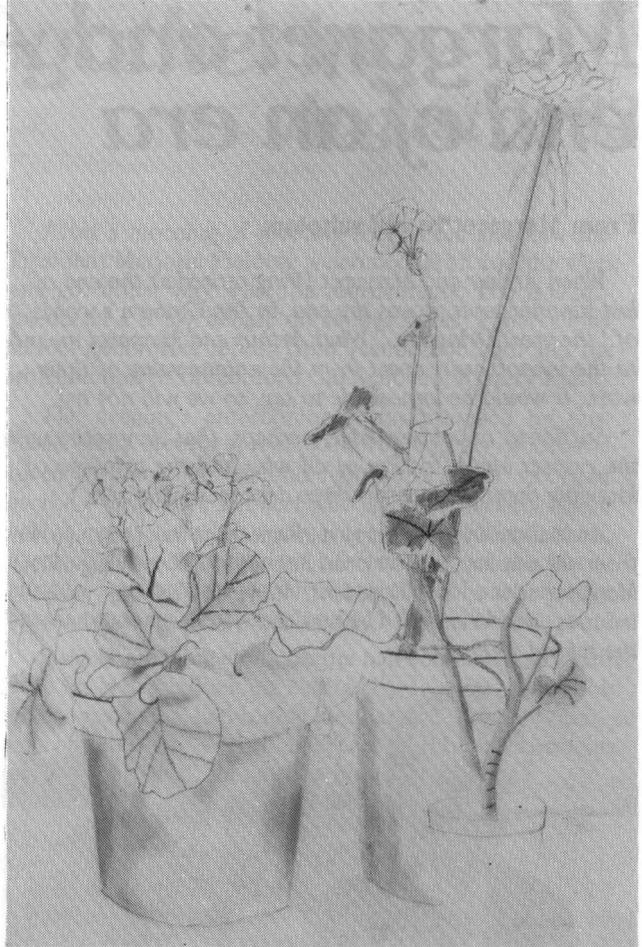
*Detail by Guy Bearman 4th Form*



*Alex Komlosy 1st Form*



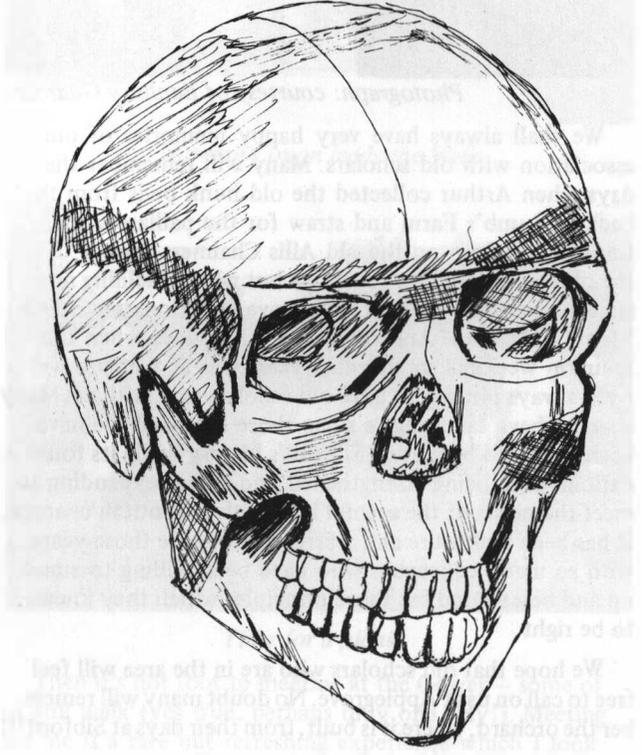
*Kate Jupp 5th Form*



*Tom Houghton 4th Form*



*Edward Gamiar 4th Form*



*David Glover 4th Form*

# Margaret and Arthur Dring ~ end of an era

## From Margaret to old scholars

*When Arthur and Margaret Dring retired at the end of last summer term, it was the end, in Jim Graham's words, of "the great Dring era." What Arthur and Margaret meant to the school, quite apart from the unique value of their work, it would be impossible to say, so we will not try.*

*Sufficient to acknowledge, perhaps, that they retire with the respect and affection of all who had the privilege of knowing them over nearly three decades at Sibford.*

*At their retirement party a cheque was handed to them from old scholars, and we print below the acknowledgement Margaret sent to the President, Marjorie Fielding, with tributes from Kenneth Greaves and a former member of the school committee.*



*Photograph: courtesy of Banbury Guardian*

We shall always have very happy memories of our association with old scholars. Many will remember the days when Arthur collected the old bunk beds from the back of Lamb's Farm and straw for the palliasses and transported them on the old Allis Chalmers tractor to the old boys' common room – a hut where Fielding now stands, warmed by an old coke stove affectionately called "Joey", I believe. And of course in the days when the re-union weekend in alternate years was at Whitsun we were always pleased to have old scholars stay with us. Many changes have taken place since those days and we have been happy to be part of Sibford's history while its foundations were being strengthened and it was expanding to meet the needs of the second half of the twentieth century. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to share those years with so many colleagues who have been willing to stand up and be counted for those principles which they knew to be right.

We hope that old scholars who are in the area will feel free to call on us at Applegrove. No doubt many will remember the orchard, where it is built, from their days at Sibford!!!

Many thanks to you all.

Margaret Dring.

## Former headmaster Kenneth Greaves writes:

Sibford without Margaret and Arthur Dring must be a very different place. Not just because for most of us they have always been there – 28 years on the staff is a long stint, but long service in itself is not necessarily a virtue – but because they have had such an important influence on the quality of life in the school. Sibford can seldom have had such unfailingly loyal and devoted servants.

By his rare skill and vision Arthur created a beautiful environment that was an important part of the education that the school offered. Perhaps few pupils actually stopped to admire the flowerbeds or the superb flower arrangements in centre hall, but many must have been influenced by them. And there were some who actually became Arthur's pupils and under his kind and patient guidance learnt how to tend plants and appreciate their beauty.

"By their fruits ye shall know them" might be a suitable text for Arthur, but for Margaret it would have to be modified. "By their socks" or "By their underwear ye shall know them" would be more appropriate – but know them she did, just as she knew every detail of every item of household linen the school had ever possessed. Her large and complex department was a model of efficient organisation and control, and her staff – "my ladies" as she always called them – could not have had a more formidably articulate and determined champion to protect their interests.

If ever anyone truly earned their retirement Arthur and Margaret Dring have done so. We hope that theirs may be a long and happy one and that for many years yet they will continue to be part of the Sibford community.

## A former member of the school committee writes:

We have always been conscious of the great contribution all members of the staff have made to the school; but I do not think it is invidious, at this time, to single out the particular gifts of Arthur and Margaret Dring whose combined period of service to Sibford totalled a formidable 52 years. Since Arthur's appointment in 1954, and Margaret's in 1958, we have been very aware of their special talents; and have long been accustomed to seeing the steady improvement and development in the gardens and grounds. And we have constantly been delighted by the often splendid, and always delicate, floral arrangements at our several functions. If it has not always been an indefinable atmosphere in the school that betokened keen supervision and care over the physical wellbeing of the pupils. Truly our house has been well-kept: and few children can have passed through the school without coming under Margaret's watchful and compassionate eye.

But, perhaps, even more valuable to us all have been their belief in, and love for, Sibford which has virtually been at the centre of their lives for so long. We have been fortunate indeed; and are glad to know they will be staying on in the village where we wish them many years of happy retirement. ■

# The old scholars gathering ~ August 1982

Recalled by Ruth Frampton.

This was our family's fifth consecutive August reunion, a weekend we and the children look forward to, and, just as the others before, we thoroughly enjoyed it.



*Ruth and Paul Frampton with Charles & John and Jim Thelton.*

Arriving on Friday evening for committee business has two advantages. The first is George Gibson's marvellous curry and salad supper, the substantial remains of which are discreetly lodged at Lister to provide late night refreshments throughout the weekend. The second is to meet our 5th/6th form helpers who once again actively and enthusiastically participated in the weekend. The fact that they were rarely seen at breakfast was perhaps evidence of the level of their enjoyment.

After supper we found our quarters and proceeded to unpack, always wondering why we brought so much but still never having quite the right gear.

Saturday, for the very few energetic committee members, started at dawn with 20 lengths of the pool, and a dash back to shower before breakfast.



*Brian Wright, Diana Lloyd, Ethel Wright and Nick Bennett.*

After a morning of meeting friends old and new the President Marjorie Fielding welcomed us all and the weekend got under way with the tournaments. The A.G.M. produced a lively debate on several issues, a marvellous school committee report from Jeanne Southam and the introduction of the Sibford Old Scholars' Bursary Fund.

The evening's entertainment was provided by our Leslie Baily lecture speaker Godfrey Baseley of the well-loved 'Archers'. A splendid fellow this, kept everyone awake – even Nick Bennett who claims he usually listens with his eyes closed. It really was an outstanding lecture, describing the development of farming over the years and the human requirements demanded of such a radio programme in a most amusing and honest fashion.

Sunday morning choral in the hall conducted so beautifully by Marjorie Fielding assisted by Jean Morley on the piano was lovely, combining familiar and harvest hymns, so appropriate with the rolling spaces of Sibford cornfields surrounding the school at this time of year.



*Norman Coxon leads the Walk.*



*Time for a picnic.*

Then it's hot foot to meeting at the Gower – some of us still walk (yes true, perhaps only one way!). Meeting for me is a rare but refreshing experience which I look forward to each August. Sadly I missed this year but enjoyed myself reading Bible stories at the children's

meeting. (Perhaps next year). After meeting coffee offers us the opportunity to meet again local friends and forms an enjoyable part of meeting itself.

Sunday is not a Sunday without a roast and if one feels one has over-indulged the afternoon walk soon takes care of that. It is a joy to walk in the Oxfordshire countryside, although the ridge always reminds some of the cross-country runs they *walked* at school. Russell Steed arrived with sandwiches for those who could manage them and on returning to the school many found the swimming pool of comfort to their aching bodies.



*Joy Rann and Margaret Fairmington at picnic.*



*John Adamson and friends*

President's Choice on Sunday evening sympathetically reflected Marjorie Fielding's love of music, poetry and drama and who will forget the 'Model of a Modern Major General', namely Ken Francis?

After a short pause for coffee came Chris Grimes and country dancing: a most enjoyable item in the programme, one which offers fun and involvement to all ages. Breathless, we proceeded to the Elm for Rockets, a particularly sad Rockets as the Elm must come down. Grace Beckerlegg led the singing and, yes, we even saw 'Little Rabbit Foo Foo'.

Water Polo at 8 am with Jim Thelton is a cruel start to any day, particularly in the deep end but to then have Frank Rollett's Treasure Hunt after breakfast — some say it's his age, some distracting 6th form female researcher, but really to find a house with no chimneys — even I noticed two! It's a marvellous event won by the Riccis — Thanks Frank.



*Words to the treasure-hunting President from Frank Rollett.*



*Treasure-hunting Wendy Van Blankenstein Lorraine Brown and Margaret Fairmington — missing a clue.*

The table tennis and tennis tournaments produced breathtaking finals; Jim Thelton cunningly winning the table tennis and Maureen Graham, handicapped by Pip MacManasseh, the tennis.



*Getting ready for the group photograph.*

The usual unusual hockey match for the new highly coveted Baby Trophy umpired for the first time by a neutral referee Martin Higgins brought about a predictable first-ever victory for Paul Frampton's Green Fairies, more widely known as the Somerset Yokels, over the Aston Brummies led from the rear by Mike Finch.

Due to a shower, the only weekend weather interruption, tea in Holly House, a brave invitation by the Grahams,

was followed by the reunion photograph on the lawn and a visit to Jeanne Southam and Irene Smith's excellent 'Bring and Buy'.



*Vera Rollett arranges flowers for the President's dinner.*

George Gibson produced a marvellous meal for the presidential dinner ably served by our weekend helpers. Marjorie Fielding's sensitive, charming speech on the life and role of a headmaster's wife will always be remembered, and the evening with fitting contributions from Hugh Maw, June Ellis and school committee guest Joshua Watts proved a great success.

Auld Lang Syne followed by Rockets officially closed a really excellent weekend: a mini break with a real difference, one to be enjoyed and sampled by all those who appreciate and understand the meaning of SIBFORD. ■

## School Visits!— Where will you stay?

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## Quakers

My first impression of Quakers was of dotty old ladies who spent all their time talking about hamsters. That was when I was much younger and used to go to meeting with my parents, and for the last quarter of an hour the small children would come into the main meeting from the play group, and we would sit there fighting and giggling, and in an effort to keep us quiet the old ladies stood up and rabbited on about hamsters.

The idea that Quakers were people who ate vast amounts of porridge and talked about hamsters stayed with me for many years. But since coming to Sibford my ideas have begun to change, and when I went on the pilgrimage (the southern schools pilgrimage to the George Fox country) it suddenly dawned on me that a lot of what Fox said was good relevant advice for today. For example, his Declaration to Charles 2nd in 1661: "We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end and under any pretence whatsoever, and this is our testimony to the whole world". This is the basis of what we now call pacifism.

The ideas that grew from Fox's thinking such as this form the General Advices of 1928: "Carefully maintain your own conduct and encourage in your families truthfulness and sincerity" — which again is solid advice for today.

When we were on the pilgrimage, not only did we get to understand all this meaningful stuff, but we managed to have a good time as well. Being thrown in with a lot of people from different schools and getting to know them in such a short space of time was really good experience.

Tom Rack.

## Friends of Sibford

During the year John Endersby succeeded Vera Rollett as chairman, and we welcomed John Baseley and Margaret Le Mare to the committee. Overall membership numbers are slightly down. The committee met three times, and the usual two excellent newsletters from the headmaster were circulated to all members. Gifts to the school included mats for the gymnasium, a motor-car lift for the crafts department, and cassettes, blackout curtains screen and projector, and a video recorder for other departments.

In May, a Tanners busload of otherwise confined long exeat pupils were taken to Bourton-on-the-Water for the annual outing, and here we must express our hearty appreciation of the continued co-operation of the Tanner organisation. Finally, the parents' weekend in November produced a total of about £75 from snacks and a bring-and-buy sale.

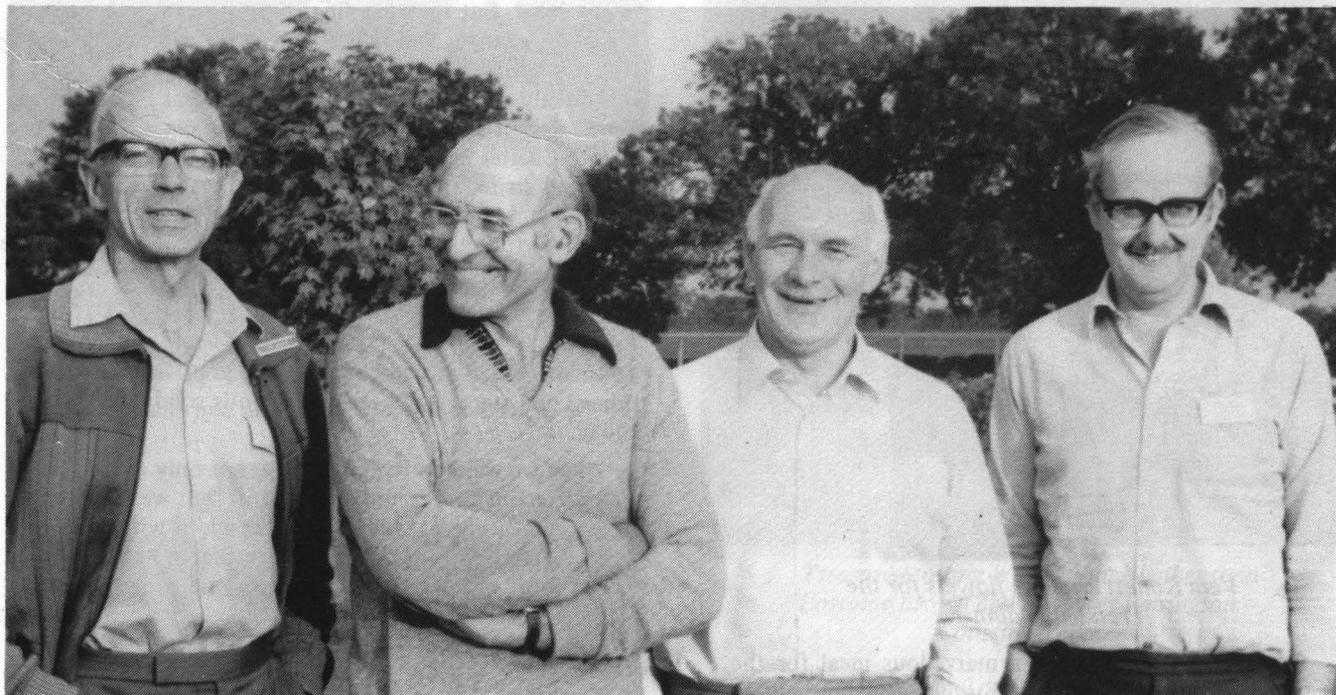
FR.

## Benefactor anonymous

Frank Rollett announced that for the ninth successive year our unknown friend had made another gift to SOSA funds, this year for £65 — news which was received with grateful applause.

# The government of Sibford School

*We thought those of you who are not Friends – and you are in the majority – might like to know more about how Sibford School is governed so we asked Philip Manasseh, chairman of the school's governing committee, and an old scholar, to explain.*



*John Adamson (education) Phillip Manasseh (chairman of committee)  
Joseph Sewell (treasurer) Joshua Watts (finance and premises).*

Sibford is one of nine schools in England, and one in Northern Ireland and one in Eire, owned by the Society of Friends, the Quakers. They were established to educate children from Quaker homes, but with Sibford there was a slight difference. It was founded, in 1842, (with a little girl named Endall from Northampton as the first pupil) to give a Quaker education and 'training in habits of industry' to children from families in which one parent had been 'disowned', according to stern Quaker custom of those days, for 'marrying out' – for marrying outside the Society of Friends. But that was 140 year ago.

Today, only about one-fifth of pupils at Friends' schools, and probably no higher proportion of teachers, are Quakers, but nonetheless they are a very important part of Quaker witness in the social and educational life of the country.

Friends' schools vary considerably in their approach to learning. Sibford's curriculum, for example, is adapted to a wide range of abilities, and significant features are the remedial teaching, which is fully integrated into school life, and the successful one-year sixth-form course, embracing outside work experience, and a tutorial system in studies which complements the pastoral care in the residential houses.

## School management.

Policy and management of the school are the concern of a governing committee appointed by, a responsible to, the Sibford General Meeting, which has only recently been re-constituted to take over overall responsibility from Berks and Oxon General Meeting. The committee itself recommends its chairman and treasurer, and two representatives of the old scholars' association, to the Sibford General Meeting.

It may be helpful to explain how the pattern of government and business in Quaker affairs evolves. Local Quaker meetings (by which I mean, basically, the meetings for worship) are linked with others into small administrative groups which we know as monthly meetings, which meet every four weeks to consider business affairs within their areas. In their turn the monthly meetings come under the umbrella of general meetings which are broadly responsible for general oversight and such matters as the calling of conferences on matters of concern to all the member meetings. They can also be a source of inspiration. (The final and topmost rung of the ladder, is the Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, a kind of annual Quaker parliament). Sibford, being in Oxfordshire, has, since its foun-

dation, come within the orbit of Berks and Oxon General Meeting, which has within its care the monthly meetings of Banbury, Witney and Reading.

### The new Sibford general meeting.

Sibford school is actually owned by the three general meetings of Berks and Oxon, Bedfordshire, and Warwick Leicester and Stafford, with seven other general meetings less closely involved in a supporting role. But Berks and Oxon General Meeting was directly responsible for the school. In recent years, however, there has been a growing awareness that neither the other two owning general meetings, nor the seven supporting general meetings, had any opportunity of sharing in that responsibility, and this is why it has now been transferred to the specially constituted Sibford General Meeting, while leaving the actual properties of the school still in the ownership of the original three general meetings.

Sibford General Meeting, therefore, which represents Friends' meetings in an area from Stafford to the Isle of Wight, and from Berkshire to East Anglia, is concerned solely with Sibford School, and its main functions — agreed by the three owning general meetings are:

- (a) to appoint the school committee and its chairman and treasurer;
- (b) to receive and consider that committee's annual report and audited accounts; and
- (c) to discuss broad issues of education and financial policy.

Under its constitution, the membership of Sibford General Meeting, comprises:

- (a) members of the monthly meetings within the 10 owning and supporting general meetings;
- (b) the school committee;
- (c) the head, deputy heads and bursars;
- (d) up to six representatives of the school staff;
- (e) such representatives of parents and old scholars as Sibford General Meeting decides.

A nomination committee, appointed by Sibford General Meeting every three years from the ten owning and supporting general meetings, guides the selection of members to the school committee, and ensures a balance of talent and experience, continuity, and the infusion of fresh blood. Thus, the names of four Friends to serve for the ensuing four years, are brought to the attention of the General Meeting at the beginning of each year, as well as the names of a clerk and assistant clerk or clerks, for the following year, of the general meeting itself.

### The staff.

The effectiveness of the school, however, clearly depends upon the headmaster and his staff. But they cannot sustain their momentum without the backing of a deeply concerned committee, and this, in turn, depends upon a truly representative Sibford General Meeting overseeing the committee's, general management and ensuring that it comprises the right kind of people, representing a good balance of personal experience. Two things, in fact, quickly impress anyone privileged to serve on the committee: the reality of the shared concern for the school, and the continuity of old family associations.

We are now witnessing the opening of a new chapter in Sibford's long history under the leadership of Jim Graham, ably supported by an excellent staff, and we are confident that the new Sibford General Meeting will stimulate an active interest in its welfare and progress in the challenging times ahead.

### The committee members.

What kind of people are they? They are all members of the Society of Friends (not a necessary qualification where old scholars' representatives are concerned), mostly of Quaker background and education, with growing or grown up families who have usually been to, or are at, Quaker schools. Half of them are themselves involved in education, three are chartered accountants, and others are in industry or commerce. The full committee, and each of the two sub-committees, meet three times a year.

The chairman, **Philip Manasseh**, is an old scholar of Sibford (1938-46) and of Harper Adam Agricultural College, who has spent his life in the practice and teaching of agriculture, and is deputy head of the department of agriculture at West Oxfordshire Technical College. The treasurer is **Joseph Sewell**, an Ackworth old scholar of 1928-33, a chartered accountant who was a partner in the well known firm of Price Waterhouse and Co., of London, when he retired in 1977. Now married to Janet Eavis, well known to Sibford, and is deeply involved in the Society of Friends affairs in London. **Joshua Watts**, the chairman of finance and premises, is a Sidcot old scholar and son of Harold Watts of Bournville, a committee member in 1945-50, and father of a Sibford pupil, Sarah (1973-75). A chartered accountant and member of Gloucester Meeting. **John Adamson** chairman of education, is an old scholar of Bootham and was senior tutor and teacher of A-Level French and German at Littlemore Grammar School, Oxford (now Peers Comprehensive). Now retired from professional life and living in North Wales, he was closely involved in Quaker affairs in Oxford. **David Sanderson**, vice-chairman of the committee, is an old scholar of Sibford and Bootham, now a research physicist with the UKAEA at Harwell, and formerly clerk of Berks and Oxon General Meeting.

Members involved in education include **Margaret Nash** an old scholar of the Mount and daughter of the late Wilfred Littleboy, one of the best friends Sibford ever had, and wife of the late Professor Kevin Nash who was Assistant Principal of Kings College, London. Formerly a hospital almoner, she now teaches music and is a member of Jordans Meeting (Bucks) as, also, is **Liza Phipps**, a teacher of English and drama in High Wycombe, who is a member of London Yearly Meeting's Working party on Quaker involvement in education, and is married to a civil servant in the Department of Education and Science. **Roger Baker** is a Bootham old scholar and is assistant master at Abingdon School (physics and maths), author of S.M.P. O-Level texts, and is a member of Oxford Meeting. **Cynthia Greenwood** is head of remedial education at Northumberland Park School, Tottenham, and clerk of Hoddeson Preparative Meeting. **Mary Blaschko** is an old scholar of Sidcot (1920-26), who taught at the Dragon and Crescent Schools at Oxford, then worked on social surveys for the Department of Social Medicine and travelled extensively with her husband, who was in medical research in Oxford University's Medical School. Member of Friends' Education Council for 20 years, and is clerk to Witney Monthly Meeting

overseers. **Margaret Le Mare**, housemistress at Walthamstow Hall, Sevenoaks, for 14 years and at Sibford (French) for eight. Former member of committee and of Friends' Education Council. Member of Sibford Meeting. **Jeanne Southam**, is Sibford old scholars' representative, (see 'First year on school committee').

Other members are: **George Bunney**, an Ackworth old scholar and chartered accountant in London, who is a member, and former clerk, of Amersham Meeting. **Dorothy Birtles**, former hospital secretary and now at Friends House, two of whose seven children went to Sibford and are now at Kent University. **Vera Rollett**, Sibford old scholar and former member of the committee (11 years), deeply involved in local Quaker and Sibford affairs for very many years and former president of the S.O.S.A. (1962). **Jack Wood**, re-appointed for four years from January 1983. Formerly with National Coal Board (director general of industrial relations and managing director of coal products), now 'retired' and working still harder with voluntary organisations such as Oxfam and Third World interests. Author of 'Involved in Mankind', and clerk of Broad Campden Meeting (Glos.). **William Waddilove**, an agricultural engineer in training recommendations unit of Agricultural Training Board at National Agricultural Centre at Kenilworth. Member of Coventry Meeting. Re-appointed from January 1983. **Leslie Thomas**, Sibford old scholar (1923-27), and former journalist and broadcaster.

**Ronald Robinson** and **Brian Walker** retired from the committee at the end of 1982, and were replaced by **Alan Jackson**, an educational psychologist of Welwyn Garden City, and **Tony Yellowly** of Fenny Compton (Wks), who is involved in business affairs for the Society of Friends in Birmingham. ■



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## From teaching to hotel keeping

*Gordon Wright, who taught rural sciences at Sibford for many years, writes about the contrast between teaching and running a hotel in the Scottish islands.*

"Aren't you lucky".

"You're taking a bit of a risk, aren't you".

These were the two main comments which came our way when colleagues and friends heard that I was going to give up teaching and run a hotel on one of the Scottish islands. I have taught for 30 years – 9 wonderful years in Kenya where I was privileged to start and run a secondary school for African boys, – 3 years in Lanarkshire and 17 years at Sibford. If I was to change for another career, it was now or never!

The offer to manage the hotel was made and everything fell into place. It seemed as if all things had been planned for us. The house was sold – our daughter and son-in-law agreed to come and help us run the hotel – and here we are.

And what is it like? Well I don't have the frustrations of preps not being handed in on time, or of having to put people into returned work. Nor do I have the duties of preps, weekends etc. It is, of course, like running a business (or a school for that matter!). There are many sides to be looked after; buildings and maintenance – I've just spent a week putting a new roof on part of the hotel; catering – menu for tonight's dinner celery and walnut soup, scallops, Jura salmon, raspberry pavlova, coffee; cleaning – do we need to employ any extra staff this week? bar supplies – will we run out of whiskey before the next order arrives? bookings – into which room shall we put Mr and Mrs Smith? – did they want a private bathroom? Accounts – will the books balance this week? Then what about plans for 1983 (and 1984)? Special weeks (reminds me of curriculum development meetings) – How many shall we have? What specialities shall we have? Who shall we get to lead them? And so it goes on with never a dull moment. – and I sometimes wish there were 36 hours in the day.

It's not all hard work, however. There are the lighter sides – the people we meet – the American lady who had never seen coal before "Oh my, is that coal?". – The trips into the hills to take visitors to see the Corryvreckan whirlpool or the raised beaches on the west coast. – Fishing for salmon trout and mackerel – then smoking the mackerel for serving in the hotel – the annual sailing regatta in the bay on the first Saturday in August – Then there is the view.

The view from the hotel is almost beyond description. The bay with its Islands and the Paps of Jura. The sun setting behind them. The sky flecked with red and an ever changing sea. This is a place of peace and quiet where the visitor can seek the solitude of the hills and moors or relax on broad sandy beaches. An island unspoiled by the hordes of tourists and visited by only a few. The bustle of the world has passed us by.

Do I want to go back to teaching? No thank you! I'm working hard but enjoying every minute of it. ■

# SOSA accounts

## SIBFORD OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION BALANCE SHEETS AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 1981

	1981	1980
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Land at Elm	45	45
<b>ASSETS OF SPECIFIC FUNDS</b>		
Quoted Investments (cost)	2991	2991
Leslie Baily Memorial Fund	256	162
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash at Bank	1378	653
Cash in Hand	5	5
	<u>1383</u>	<u>658</u>
	<u>£1675</u>	<u>£3856</u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>		
Accumulated Fund	1695	1019
Life Membership	2414	2414
Recent Leavers Membership	310	261
Leslie Baily Fund	256	162
	<u>£4675</u>	<u>£3856</u>

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 1981

	1981 £	1980 £
<b>INCOME</b>		
Profit from sale of Bowater Corporation £1 shares		329
Donations	85	165
Subscriptions	996	1206
Investment Income	204	201
Reunion	257	
Bank Interest	146	198
	<u>£1688</u>	<u>£2099</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Net cost of Magazine	742	753
Postage and Stationery	158	242
Grass Cutting		10
CPRE		10
Travelling	13	5
Reunion		115
General	22	47
Bank Charges	2	6
Contribution to Leslie Baily Fund	75	
Expenses - Re: Purchase of shares		11
Gift to School - Ride-on Mower		400
- Swings for Childrens' Playground		400
Surplus for Year	676	100
	<u>£1688</u>	<u>£2099</u>

### LESLIE BAILY MEMORIAL FUND

Balance brought forward 1.181	162
Contribution from SOSA account	75
Bank Interest	19
	<u>£256</u>
Balance to End 31.12.81	256

£256

# SOSA Officers

President 1982: Marjorie Fielding  
President 1983: Irene Coxon-Smith  
Vice Presidents 1983: Robin and Kenneth Greaves

<i>General secretary</i> (to 31.12.84)	Paul Frampton, Manor Farm, Horsington, Templecombe, Som.
<i>Treasurer</i> (to 31.12.85)	John Miller, Sibford School, Banbury, Oxon.
<i>Ass. treasurer/membership secretary</i> (to 31.12.83)	Grace Beckerlegge, 'Standswell', Kempsford Road, Whelford, Fairford, Glos. GL7 4DZ. 0285-712069
<i>Reunion secretary</i> (to 31.12.83)	Simon Barfoot, Cedar Cottage, 147 Harborough Road, Kingsthorpe, Northants.
<i>Ass. reunion secretary</i> (to 31.12.83)	Russell Steed, 37 High Brink Road, Coleshill, Nr. Birmingham, B46 1BH 0675-62543
<i>Registrar of births marriages and deaths</i>	<i>Norman Coxon</i> The Carriers Cottage, Burdrop, Sibford Gower, Banbury.
<i>Magazine editor</i> (to 31.12.84)	Leslie Thomas, The Barn House, Horley, Nr. Banbury, Oxon.
<i>Local Branch Secretaries:</i> Midland	Irene Coxon-Smith, 37 Redditch Road, Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove, Worcs. Bromsgrove 31857
<i>London joint secretaries</i>	Allan Kidney, 7 Longcroft Lane, Welwyn Garden City, Herts. Margaret Fairnington, 140 Fellows Road, London NW3.
<i>School committee representatives</i>	Jeanne Southam (to 31.12.85) Leslie Thomas (to 31.12.83)
<i>Representatives from Friends of Sibford committee</i>	Frank Rollett, Grassholm, Sibford Gower, Oxon.
<i>School staff representatives</i>	Stuart Hedley (to 31.12.83) Marion Higgins (to 31.12.83)
<i>General committee members</i> To 31.12.83. To 31.12.84 To 31.12.85	Nicholas Bennett & Helen C. Smith Leslie Harrison and Edwina Bezant Julia Walton & Jim Thelton
<i>Hon. auditor</i>	Margaret Blythe

## SCHEDULE OF INVESTMENTS AS AT 31st DECEMBER 1981

	Purchase Price
£1359 Treasury 10½% 1999	£1189.02
£227 Treasury 10½% 1999	£200.55
£650 3½% Conversion Stock	£502.32
£830 Barbican Investment Fund Income Units	£646.28
£213 General Investors Trustee Ltd 25p	£145.41
£190 Globe Investment 25p	£120.33
£100 Electra Investment 25p	£87.00
	<u>£2990.91</u>

AUDITED AND FOUND CORRECT

M. BLYTHE ■



Among those attending the August reunion were:

John & Helen Adamson, Dorothy Angerson, Loraine & Philip Brown, Eddie Bezant, Nick Bennett, Grace & Philip Beckerlegge, Godfrey Baseley, Simon Barfoot, Sally Berry, John Baseley, Diana & Philip Casson, Norman & Marjorie Coxon, Clem & Margaret Cox, Frank Cookson, Olive Dalley, Arthur & Margaret Dring, Martin & Dorothy Dodsworth, June Ellis, Andrew Finch, Mike Finch, Ian Finlayson, Marjorie & Jonas Fielding, Rosemary Fielding, Paul & Ruth Frampton & Charles & Harriet, Ken & Elizabeth Francis, Margaret Fairnington, Miriam Guest, Chris & Pat Grimes & Michael & Nicola, Jim & Maureen Graham, Leslie Harrison, Arthur & Pamela Harrison, Lucy Hatcher, Marion & Martin Higgins, Alan & May Jarvis, Allan & Katherine Kidney, Kate Long, Margaret Le Mare, Diana Lloyd &

Hywel & Owen, Philip & Janet Manesseh, John & Edith Miller, Anne Muir, Mary Mascaro, Hugh & Daphne Maw, Christian Notley, Nevill Nichols, Constance Phillips, Mabel & Wilfred Pollard, Jean & Lewis Poulton & Cindy, Lily Rutheram, Harold Rose, Frank & Vera Rollett, Mario & Eleri Ricci, Robert Rose, Tony Rye, Irene Smith, Joseph & Janet Sewell, Jeanne Southam, Jim & Joan Shields, Russell Steed, Claire Shufflebothm, Jim Setna, Jim Thelton, Betty & John Thelton, Michael & Wendy Van Blankenstein, Brian & Ethel Wright, Margery Wells, Joshua & Ursula Wells, Ian & Jennie Wright, Amanda & Simon Lewis, Tom Rack, Lucy Sheardown, Rachel Buxey, Julia Walton, Stephanie Reynolds, Michael Herm, Julia Greenhill.

*B/White copies, 10" x 8", can be order from Frank Rollett, Grassholm, Sibford Gower, at £1 each plus postage.*

