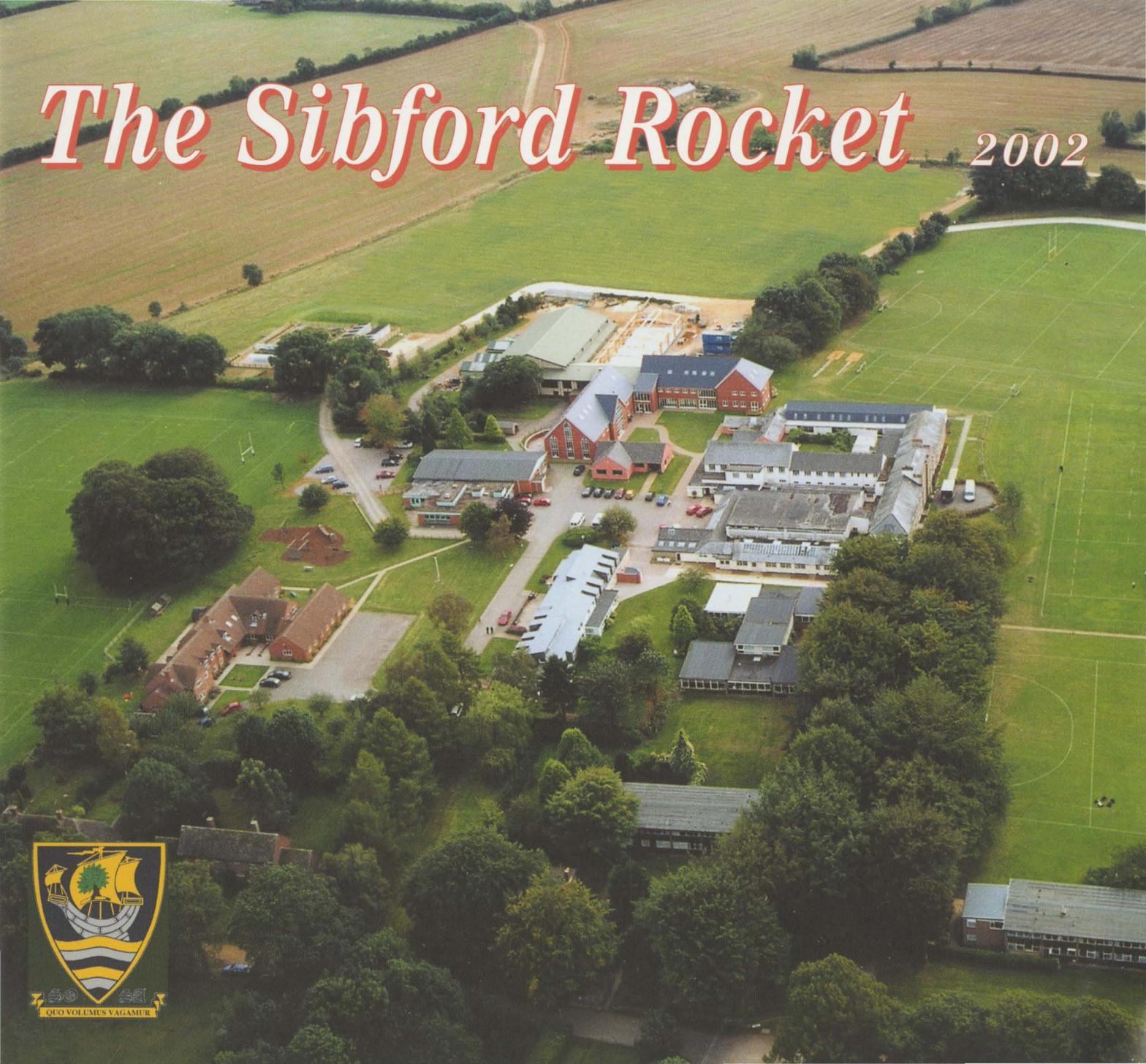


# *The Sibford Rocket* 2002



# THE SIBFORD ROCKET

## The Annual Magazine of the Sibford Old Scholars' Association

### EDITORIAL

Hello again! I do so hope you will enjoy the third edition of 'The Sibford Rocket' which propels us into the SOSA Centenary Year. It is very much an issue in which the past, the present and the future come together. Not just of SOSA, but also of the Association's help and support to the School. So we move through news of members, the early years of SOSA, our 2002 Reunions, and School/SOSA links. Many constituent parts, together making a whole.

As always, any Editor relies heavily on contributed material; on other people's hard work. I thank everyone who has supplied items, by post or e-mail. Of the many involved, I am particularly grateful to: Philippa Harrison for her typing; Raymond Bond for his imaginative layouts, (stepping in at short notice to undertake all the design); Caroline Mills for proof-reading and Mike Finch who has, without complaint, patiently answered my endless requests for archive material. Any remaining factual or typographical errors are mine.

As SOSA is nearly 100 years old (on June 19th, 2003), I felt it appropriate to research its history, and spent many fascinating weeks reading every SOSA magazine, cover to cover, back to the very first; (thankyou Norman Coxon for loaning me your comprehensive collection). Had we had the space for a large book, 'Fragments of History' could have covered all hundred years; alas, there is only room for the first five. Sadly, too, exigencies of cost and required placement of those pages which really must appear in colour mean that in a couple of instances sections are not contiguous.

Please keep sending me your news. 'The Rocket' is your magazine, and your input is vital.

*Ann Bond, Editor (December 2002)*

### Contents:

Presidential Profile . . . . .	1
Committee Jottings . . . . .	2-3
News of Old Scholars . . . . .	4-7 (& 30-31)
Head's Report . . . . .	8-10
Fragments of History . . . . .	11-19 (& 22-23)
SOSA/School Links . . . . .	20-21
2003 Reunion Announcements . . . . .	24
Sibford Development Appeal . . . . .	25-27
Leslie Baily Address . . . . .	28-29
The Writing on the Wall . . . . .	32
2002 Reunion Weekend . . . . .	33-43
SOSA AGM . . . . .	33-35
Reunion Report . . . . .	36-38
Greetings Mr President . . . . .	39
Picture Gallery . . . . .	40-41
President's Address . . . . .	42
Guest Speaker's Reply . . . . .	43
The World Gone Mad . . . . .	44-45
In Remembrance - Obituaries . . . . .	46-47
Officers & Committee . . . . .	48

### Dates for your Diary:

Sunday 19th January: SOSA Committee Meeting
Saturday 25th January: Midlands Branch 'New Year Party'
Sunday 30th March: SOSA Committee Meeting SOSA v School Football Match (afternoon)
Saturday 14th June & Sunday 15th June Sibford School Open Day (Sat) & SOSA Centenary Reunion
Thursday 31st July: 'copy date' 2003 magazine
Saturday 23rd August - Monday 25th August SOSA Annual Reunion Weekend

*Photography: Ian Weatherhead, Russell Steed, Raymond Bond, Ann Bond. Front cover aerial: Raymond & Graham Bond.*

# PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE

Guy Kingham, SOSA President for 2002-2003.



I was born in Harpenden and was brought up with my two sisters and brother in a village not far from Luton. My father was in the legal profession and became a circuit judge based in Luton and was very involved in the local community. My mother had a full time job bringing up four children, and later on became a magistrate.

My first taste of secondary schooling was at a comprehensive in St. Albans. I didn't work to the best of my ability at this school, and subsequently my parents were looking for an alternative type of schooling. Sibford was highly recommended to my parents by Eric and Joan Morecombe, and after visiting the school and being interviewed by Jim Graham, the Headmaster, I became a Penn House boarder in January 1982, under the guidance of Mike and Jenny Wollerton.

I thoroughly enjoyed my years at school, and remember vividly helping to organise the school hops, playing a part in several Gilbert and Sullivan productions, and fostering a real identity with all manner of sporting games. Ironically, my interest in the superb extra-curricular activities offered at the school did not lead to a clutch of academic certificates, but I feel my time at Sibford was extremely worthwhile in developing me as a whole person.

From Sibford I went to a Sixth Form College and studied a two-year City & Guilds course in leisure and recreation management. This vocational course developed my passion in sports coaching. I was now at a crossroads in my career and was keen to get into sports coaching in a professional capacity. I was applying for jobs in leisure centres and sports parks, and also wrote a hopeful letter to Jim Graham to see if there were any opportunities at Sibford. Jim offered me a one-year post to help develop sport and extra-curricular activities, and at this time I met Stephen Bunney, who was then the Deputy Head. At the end of the year, Stephen organised an interview for me at a sister Quaker school, Sidcot, and I was employed there for four years as a house parent in charge of the weekend programme of activities. Whilst in these posts, I gained various coaching qualifications and some GCSEs, which

enabled me in 1991 to embark on a four year Bachelor of Education course at Cheltenham. In 1995 I was offered a job in Eastbourne as a teacher of Physical Education in a large comprehensive school. I am still very happily teaching at this school, and have gained promotions and responsibilities along the way, as well as embarking upon a Masters degree.

On a personal note I was very fortunate to be given a sabbatical, and travelled with my partner Jane across India, Asia, Australasia and much of Europe. This was a most enlightening, educational, stimulating and rewarding year. We were married in 2001 in Eastbourne, and since we met (in 1996) Jane has regularly attended and actively taken part in the SOSA reunions.

My hobbies and interests will not surprise you in that they are sports based. They include skiing, mountain walking as well as playing and coaching basketball, football and cricket. I must not forget of course the great passion that was introduced to me by my parents when I was very young: that of supporting Luton Town Football Club. I can still be found on the terraces, following Luton, at certain times of the year.

I have kept in regular contact with Sibford School since my days as a pupil as well as on the staff and have made many friends along the way. I am fortunate to have been involved in every one of the Old Scholars' August (and May!) reunions since I left and am very honoured to be your President in this, the Association's Centenary year. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during what will be very special celebrations in June and August.

## Committee Jottings and Notices:

Your SOSA Committee has had another really busy year, as outlined in the AGM Report given on pages 33-35. A full list of Officers and Committee, with contact details, appears on page 48.

Much of the Association's 'business' is undertaken by sub-committees who work tirelessly in support of both the Association and the School; e-mail is a godsend for it saves much travelling for members who live a long way from Sibford. Membership has exercised our minds much of late, and plans are well-advanced for the SOSA Centenary Year in 2003. We will be holding two Reunion Weekends: one to coincide with the School's Open Day in June (14th and 15th - the nearest weekend to the date SOSA was inaugurated in 1903), and our usual ebullient get-together over the August Bank Holiday: 23rd to 25th. Preliminary details of both weekends are given on page 24 and we hope to see as many old scholars as possible, together with their families and friends.

### Hello and Farewell:

We welcome three new Committee Members this year: Stephen Bunney, Maggie Guy and Di Howes. We sadly say goodbye to Raymond Bond, Mike Farr, Brian Holliday and Paul Ludlow, all of whom have given so much service to SOSA over the years. We thank them.

We asked each new Committee Member to write a short profile of themselves, so that all SOSA members could 'get to know them':

**Stephen Bunney:** "I was born into a Quaker Family in 1956. As a child I regularly attended Amersham Meeting, along with my parents George and Margaret Bunney. At the age of 11 my direct association with Quaker Schools began when I went as a boarder to Bootham School in York. After University I trained to be a teacher and for a while taught in the State system. I then went into residential education as a teacher and house staff at Sidcot School and then as Deputy Head at Sibford. I am currently a member of The Leadership Team and in charge of Boarding at De Aston School - a state run Comprehensive school. My family have a number of connections with Sibford. My mother taught at the school for a while (Margaret Scaife) and my father was Treasurer on the School Committee for a number of years. My aunt, Ann Scaife, was a pupil and of course my Great Aunt, Dorothy Brigham, taught at the school for a number of years."

**Maggie Guy:** "As one of the new staff representatives on SOSA I find myself in the strange position of greeting old friends, whilst making introductions as the 'new kid'. Having avoided the infamous

tradition of Rockets for all of my eighteen years at Sibford, I felt well and truly rocketed at the Reunion weekend dinner/dance. Now it is my turn to offer a blast through my past. How I came to sleepy Sibford from my birthplace of San Diego, California is a long tale that I will condense considerably under strict instructions from the editor. My roots are in the USA, having spent my formative years in the most Quakerly of states - Pennsylvania. My home was in a place called Devon, reflecting its English ancestry and beauty. After four



years in my first teaching post, I got itchy feet and came to England to do post-graduate work in Steiner Education, in Sussex. It was there that I met my future husband, Chris, and eventually made England my home. In the Orwellian year of 1984 I came to Sibford as house assistant in Nansen Girls, and taught English and PE. I felt Sibford was the place for me from my very first visit; my initial intuition has proved to be true as I have moved from Head of Middle School to Senior Mistress to my current position as Deputy Head.

As a teacher of English I have a passion for literature and a love of the theatre. I have always focused my energies on a variety of sports, being a founding

member of the Banbury Ladies Lacrosse Club and player for many years. My efforts to keep fit now are usually restricted to running when I can find the time. However, it is my children, Jenny age 13 and Pippa age 10, who really keep me on the run! Both are pupils at Sibford and thoroughly enjoy life at school despite the drawback of having their Mum as Deputy Head. As we all know, Sibford is the kind of place that gets under your skin. Before you know it you're attending Meeting for Worship and enjoying the silence. Quaker values become your values and something you want to pass on to your children. The school becomes more than an institution, it is a centring point for all our lives."

**Diane Howes:** "I was born in Swindon, Wiltshire and grew up in Bloxham with my older brother and parents. My parents were Master Butchers in Bloxham for forty years. They are now retired and live in Banbury. While I attended Deddington Secondary School I played hockey against Sibford. The memories of Sibford were very cold winds in front of the Hill Building and the fantastic teas. I left school with no qualifications and MAD about horses. After a few years working with horses, I decided to get a proper job!!!! I became an animal technician at the Nuffield Dept of Medicine in Oxford, researching in B12. As soon as I walked through the doors I knew this was for me. This was followed by Pathology Technician at the Horton Hospital and the Public Health Laboratories in Oxford, specialising in Haematology and Bacteriology. I married Chris Howes in 1971. Our son Jonathan was born in 1975 and our daughter Victoria in 1978. Jonathan and Victoria attended Sibford between 1988 and 1993. I started working at Sibford in 1985 as a Science

Technician. Once again I walked through the doors and I knew this was the right place for me. I became a Quaker in 1991."

#### NOTICES:

**Newsletters:** an innovation in the last few months has been e-mailed newsletters to keep everyone in touch with SOSA activities between magazines. It also enables us to let you know about School events which are often announced at the last minute. We have 'published' two e-mailed newsletters so far (in August and November) and others will follow whenever there is news to impart. If you are not yet on the free e-mail mailing list, and would like to hear from SOSA and the School more often, just e-mail your name and years at Sibford to [sosanews@aol.com](mailto:sosanews@aol.com).

**Address Lists:** Our aim is to maintain as accurate an address list as is humanly possible, but this requires your co-operation and input. Vital information: years at school, maiden name (if applicable), full postal address including post-code, telephone number and e-mail address. If you move, PLEASE don't forget to notify us; we still have over fifty members whose addresses are unknown.

**History of Sibford School:** Ted Milligan, the Quaker historian, has been writing the History of Sibford School. He has covered most of the period up to the mid-1960s but feels that it would be better to have a different author for the last forty years. As announced at the 2001 AGM, Mike Finch has been invited by the School Committee to carry out this task. Mike would like the basis of his contribution to be personal recollections, so if any Old Scholar or friend of the School has some personal recollection or any suitable photographs that they would like considered for inclusion, send them to Mike, as soon as possible (address p.48). This request was made in the last Magazine and the response has been disappointing so far; it doesn't matter how small or insignificant - it is important!

**Magazine:** The magazine is your 'vehicle' for passing information to other members, your chance to make contact, to bridge the years or miles. News of what you are doing, your travels, meeting up with other old scholars etc etc. We would like to know. Plans are already in hand for the 2003 edition, so send your news in as soon as possible. Latest 'copy' deadline is July 31st, 2003, (14th September for items relating to the Reunion). All material should be sent to the Magazine Editor, Ann Bond (address p.48).

**Links with the School:** The SOSA Noticeboard (in the main corridor of the Hill Building) is one of our links with current pupils, staff and visitors to the school. We change the display once or twice a term, outlining SOSA activities, aims and other information. We are now a definite part of Open Day with our 'SOSA Hub', information display and Bazaar. We now also have a regular slot in the School's newsletter which is sent to parents four times a year. Other links are currently being forged to ensure that all staff, parents and pupils know that we are a vital part of the School.

**SOSA and the APPEAL:** SOSA has continued to support the School Development Appeal during 2002. More details of ways in which you can help during 2003 are given on pages 26 and 27. And

don't forget the 'Silver Mile' - we are already half-way to our target of £4,500 - it would be so good to achieve this in our Centenary Year. *Everyone* can save their small change and convert it into a cheque (made out to SOSA - in £sterling if you live abroad). Send it to anyone on the Committee, clearly indicating that it is for the 'Silver Mile'. Thankyou meanwhile to all who have saved so assiduously in 2002. Please keep going!

**SOSA Ties:** We now have a new 'making' of ties, fully lined and very smart, in SOSA colours - royal blue, gold and silver stripes. Price £7.50 each plus £2.00 p&p. Cheques made out to SOSA to Mike Finch, please (address p.48).

**Special Reserve Fund:** The Treasurer would like to remind members that we still have a small amount of funding available for use by a Recent Old Scholar. If you know of anyone who would like to apply for financial assistance to carry out some worthwhile project which may require additional funding, please get in touch. Or apply on your own behalf. Any applications should be made directly to the Treasurer, Mike Finch (address p.48).

#### Visiting Sibford from afar? Need a local B&B?

*You might find the following list of local B&Bs useful (we published it for the first time last year). SOSA has no links with any of the places listed; neither can we vouch for their style, price or standard. Please tell us if you know of any others. Contact the Reunion secretary, Ellen Sawday (address p.48)*

Judith Hitchens, Gower Close, Sibford Gower;	01295 780348
The Bell, Shenington;	01295 670274
The Lampett Arms Hotel, Tadmarton;	01295 780070
La Madonette, North Newington;	01295 730212
Roberta & John Ainley, South Newington House, South Newington;	01295 721207
Barbara Taylor, Grange Farm, Swalcliffe;	01295 780206
Erica & Malcolm Brown, Partway House, Swalcliffe;	01295 780246
Ed and Hester Sale, Mine Hill House, Lower Brailes;	01608 685594
Maggie and Alan Witherick, Bow Cottage, Brailes;	01608 685056
Maggie and Richard Cripps, Agdon Farm, Brailes;	01608 685226
Janet Haines, Ascott House, Whichford, Shipston on Stour;	01608 684655
Shipston Guest House, Church Street, Shipston on Stour;	01608 661002
Diana Richardson, Tallet Barn B&B, Yerdley Farm, Long Compton;	01608 684655
The Red Lion Hotel, Main Street, Long Compton;	01608 684221
Eileen Whittaker, Butlers Road Farm, Butlers Road, Long Compton;	01608 684262
Southcombe Lodge Guest House, Southcombe, Chipping Norton;	01608 643068
Crown & Cushion Hotel, Chipping Norton;	01608 642533
The Peartree Inn, Scotland End, Hook Norton;	01608 737482
Sun Inn, High Street, Hook Norton;	01608 737570
Cotefield B&B, 1 Cotefield Cottages, Bodicote;	01295 264997

**Calling all LOCAL old scholars:** could you provide a bed for old scholars wishing to visit Sibford? We anticipate an influx of visitors in our Centenary year and would like to compile a list of local O.S. who would like to help in this way. Contact Ann Bond (address page 48) with details of anything you can offer.

# News of Old Scholars

## Honorary Life Members:

We start by acknowledging four stalwarts of the Association, upon whom **Honorary Life Membership** was conferred at the August 2002 Annual General Meeting: **Alfred Holland** (1939-43), **Margaret le Mare** (staff 1959-67), **John Taylor** (1940-40) and **Lilian Ward** (née East 1928-34). They have provided invaluable service to SOSA and the School over the years and the Committee was delighted when they accepted. The General Secretary received the following letters which we would like to share with all members.

"Dear Lucinda, It was a great and pleasant surprise to receive your letter offering me Honorary Life Membership of the Association. It gives me great pleasure to accept. Please express to the Committee my appreciation of this honour. Yours sincerely, **Alfred Holland.**"

"Dear Lucinda, Your letter has come as a wonderful surprise. Sibford has been part of my life for so long. It was in 1948 that I was first appointed to the School Committee and this gave me an interest I have never lost. It has been my privilege to serve for several years on the Committee and for a short time on the Staff. It now makes me very happy to receive this kind recognition from your Committee and I accept your offer with gratitude. In friendship, **Margaret Le Mare.**"

"Dear Lucinda, I was delighted to receive your letter telling me that the Sibford Old Scholars Association Committee were offering me Honorary Life Membership. It is exactly thirty years since I was the Association's President, and although through various circumstances I have not been so regularly involved over the last few years my interest in, and my love of Sibford, has never waned. I am very honoured that I have received this offer and I am pleased to accept. Doreen and I hope to be at Sibford for at least part of this year's reunion when we look forward to once again meeting a lot of old friends. With kind regards, Yours Sibfordially, **John Taylor.**"

"Dear Lucinda, How thrilled I was to come home to your letter of SOSA's offer of Honorary Life Membership which I am delighted to accept. Just recently I have been making an effort to get rid of papers etc and came across plays which John and I wrote for the OS gatherings. Some of which were

rehearsed at our home in West Wickham - and included Jennifer Wilson who became an actress and with whom I am still in touch. She will be on TV this summer when Granada have brought together those who were in the long running series 'The Brothers!'. Thank you again for your letter. With kind regards, **Lilian Ward** (née East, 1928-1934).

## Welcome to New Members:

The Association has again been busy in the last year encouraging former pupils and ex-staff to join SOSA. We are pleased to welcome: **James Atkinson** (1986-88), **Ann Baily** (née Tulk, 1953-59), **Roger Baily** (1949-55), **Stephen Brown** (1966-69), **Judy Davies** (staff 1990-95), **Michael Gilmour** (1954-60), **Stella Goodwin** (née McIver, 1951-53), **Jim Grubb** (1946-52), **Paul Ludlow** (staff 1993-2001), **Alison** (0000-00) & **Simon O'Gorman** (1980-83), **Timothy Phillips** (1955-60), **Alistair Scott** (1962-66), **Vaughan Southam** (0000-00).

**Thomas K. Wheeler** (1919-23) had less than a year's membership as sadly he died on July 30th, 2002, a few days short of his 95th birthday, and not long after his son, Andrew, had taken out a subscription for him. When Andrew wrote to us, he told us how much his father had enjoyed looking through the yearbook, which helped to bring back pleasant memories. An obituary will appear in next year's magazine.

From this year's leavers (2002), all the following have had Life Membership taken out for them by their parents - a gift that will last a lifetime:

**Emma Cobb, Harriet Cooper, Naomi Hall, Hannah Mills, Juliana Statius-Muller, Suzie Wright & Tamsin Young.** We hope to see them back at Sibford before long at events and reunions.

## Keeping in Touch - Making Contact:

We have had so many letters and e-mails over the last year from SOSA members, across such a wide age-range - from the over nineties to this year's leavers. We have also heard from many former pupils and ex-staff, sending or seeking news. Some are just trying to make contact with former friends, some visited the 'SOSA Hub' during Open Day in June, some the August Reunion. Some, not already members, even

JOINED. All subscriptions are such a help: they enable SOSA to assist the School in so many ways; a love of Sibford that will ensure future generations benefit. *It's good to hear from all O.S. and even better when we meet.* Apart from those whose messages and anecdotes are published, the following also made contact ('M' denotes 'member'):

**Ann Cahill** (1946-73), **Martin Dodsworth** (1941-46, M), **Jon Harper** (1988-91, M), **Rob Inglis** (1988-91), **Deb Jenkins** (née Price, 1972-76), **Ruth (Lizzie) Jones** (1948-54, M), **Bryan Lee** (staff 1986-90), **Alison Leeland** (1971-1977), **Ann North** (née Farrell, 1964-69), **Wendy Salmon** (née Holden, staff 1983-92, M), **Susan Thomas** (née Smith, 1951-56, M), **Jeremy Whittaker** (left 1990), **Mike Wollerton** (staff, left 2001), **Mark Wright** (1989-91).

## Messages from Members . . .

**Ann Bailey** (née Tulk, 1953-59) & **Roger Bailey** (1949-55): Ann e-mailed: "Thanks very much for the welcome and will look forward to receiving the magazine and the list of members for 1945-65. I will see if I have any gaps that I can fill in with our information of Sibford contacts. Must dash - got to feed the five little chicks I am rearing. I have always kept hens and some have lived to twelve years old and still laid eggs!" [rogerann@world-net.co.nz](mailto:rogerann@world-net.co.nz)

**Elizabeth Bent** (née Gray, 1949-53) e-mailed "Not really anything further to add to the news I sent last year but please convey my greeting to all at the August reunion. I hope you have a good weekend and the weather is kind. My television tells me you are not having too good a summer. My elder son has just acquired another piece of land and is consequently looking for cheap labour while he gets it established so I have found myself doing some things I had put behind me like getting up at five in the morning to go and fetch the second mob of cows while he is milking the first. Why is it that when it is my turn they are always furthest from the shed and it is raining? I suppose it is one way to celebrate being mobile again after having both hips replaced last year! That is one reason why I am grateful to receive news from S.O.S.A. I have also been in contact with Jim Grubb who has I think been in contact with you. Also I have been in contact with Ruth Lightfoot, now Keys. We spent Coronation Day together. Her folks had a shop in Hook Norton and as Coronation Day was a holiday she invited me to their place and her parents took us to Western-Super-Mare for a picnic. In spite of being 30 years now in Godzone I still miss my kippers! [e&l@bitworks.co.nz](mailto:e&l@bitworks.co.nz)

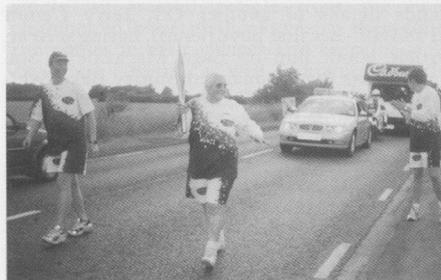
**Cecily Coetsee** (née Hynard, 1934-37) e-mailed 'A Sibford Anecdote, 1935': I was saddened to hear about June (Ladell); she stood out clearly in my memory, a lovely young girl... June loved horses; so much so that she had on her bedside table a beautiful china model of a pony. June loved that pony. One day I decided to take a closer look at that china ornament, even though I knew only too well that it didn't belong to me and that I should not touch it. Temptation got the better of me however, and I couldn't keep my hands off. In the blinking of an eye it happened! I thought I was being so careful, but in a split second it slipped from my hand onto the floor, landing in smithereens! Guilt overcame me, but I knew at once what I had to do. With tears streaming down my face, I sought out the poor girl, who I knew would be devastated at the loss of her special treasure. Apologising profusely, I didn't know how I could possibly make it better for her. I knew that what little pocket money I had couldn't buy her a new pony, but something had to be done. Then an amazing thing happened that I will never forget. Smiling, she put her arms around me, and it was she, June, who was trying to comfort me, when it should have been the other way round. That day I learned the full meaning of 'forgive and forget'.

*miles-co@worldnet.att.net*

**Ben Coleman** (1990-95) is now a 'Master of Engineering'. He graduated in 2001, with a 'First' in mechanical engineering from Sheffield University. He now works for A.M.E - product development solutions, and continues to live in Sheffield.

**Brigit Compton** (née Moriarty, 1952-58) e-mailed: "I look back at my time at Sibford with very fond memories, and am grateful for the solid background it gave me, with so many happy memories! I so enjoyed reading the Rocket, which I think is an excellent title! - and I was extremely impressed by the Leslie Baily address given by Kageha Marshall which I read avidly in the magazine, as at the end of last year I took myself to Kenya, where I fell in love with it (and a Kenyan Man!). I have been back once since, and am going back armed with two cases full of clothing for the grown-ups and children out there. I help out in a local Charity shop, and at the moment they are short of room, so everything cotton, I've been taking home, washing and ironing, and packing in the cases, some most beautiful things. I feel so strongly about the poverty out there, and would like to do something, however small to help. Also going over are LOADS of colouring books and coloured pencils, which is something the children clamour for! I buy a couple each week, so they mount up!! *firewitch81@hotmail.com*

**Bryony Denton-Williams** (née Veysey, 1950-56) writes: "My news is not really Sibford - I was chosen to carry the Queen's Jubilee Baton in the relay held 27th June at the small village



of Fordham a few miles west of Newmarket. This was the twenty-second day of this relay that started in the U.K. on the 6th June and finished today (27.07.02) at the Opening Ceremony in Manchester for the Commonwealth Games. The baton had already been to twenty-three Commonwealth countries. It was really an honour to carry the baton 500 yards, especially as Lester Piggot did the final length in Newmarket that day."

**Simon Everest** (1972-77) e-mailed in the New Year: "I trust you had a pleasant festive season? We spent the time in Dubai having taken the children to Lapland to 'hunt for Father Christmas' - thankfully having endured -30°, we did find him!! After seventeen years working in the Middle East for Coca-Cola, we shall be moving on. Coca-Cola have offered me the Country General Manager's job for Slovenia." An update followed in May: "We have been in Slovenia for about three weeks now and are really quite settled. The last pictures are on the walls and the final plug has been changed! The three dogs and two cats arrived safely from Dubai and the children have settled well into school. From what we have seen so far Slovenia is a real 'gem' - beautiful, clean, wealthy and things seem to work. I look forward to returning to Sibford in the near future. Being now only a two hour flight instead of seven, hopefully we shall make it. If any other OS are passing through, please look us up." *simon.everest@cchbc.com*

**Mike Farr** (1938-43) e-mailed that he had learned, via his Canadian nephew, the origins of the piece known as 'Desiderata', which he used as an 'anchor' for his 2001 Presidential Address. Mike can give you the web-site details if you e-mail him. *mefarr@lineone.net*

**Basil Franey** (1936-41) writes, "say hello to old scholars in my generation when you next

get together. Also do give my regards and best wishes to Erica (Sessa, née Bond, 1939-43) - we had some fun times together in the early post-war years."

**Mike Gilmour** (1954-60) writes: "Thankyou for your warm welcome into SOSA and especially for sending the latest 'Rocket' and address listing. The memories of Sibford and people are now flooding back. Just looking through the addresses has reminded me of so many names I'd forgotten about through the passing years. Sibford certainly has changed a lot in understanding, and attitude - that pupil sitting shyly at the back of the class could be a hero of tomorrow! 'All valued' is the perfect branding."

**Eddie Goudge** (1951-56) has run a dance school in South Africa for many years. His father and uncle were well-known in SOSA between the wars. Eddie e-mailed: "our retirement is nearing; end November is D Day. We have our house on the market and our new house in Mossel Bay is due for completion November. We are looking forward to the move at end of the year to a part of South Africa that has been called paradise on earth. The climate it has been said is the second most temperate in the world next to Honolulu. Our new house will be situated on Golf Estate which in turn is part of a nature reserve. There is friendly wild life resident in the reserve so it is quite normal to see springboks whilst playing golf. Where ever a person might be on the course the sea is visible. We are therefore expecting visitors and indeed hoping that a number of you will decide to visit us. Visitors will always be welcome to share some food, wine, sunshine, views of our country and hopefully our company. We intend to visit the UK in 2003 for approximately six weeks around Mid August / September. This will give us the opportunity to see all the family, friends and also see and enjoy some of the beauty of the UK." *edsdance@webmail.co.za*

**Michael Grimes** (1984-91) has moved to Birmingham and e-mailed: "Hello All. Sorry to those of you who haven't heard from me for a while / ages / ever (delete as appropriate)." *michael.grimes@dsl.pipex.com*

**Jim Grubb** (1946-52) is trying to trace Michael S Dickens (Sibford 1946). Jim lives in New Zealand and hopes to visit the UK in 2003. *jimgrubb@xtra.co.nz*

**Ronald Kennedy** (1928-33) writes that he needs respite care three or four times a year, and some day soon will have to go into a respite care home; He needs crutches to walk which he does as much as he possibly can, even doing a sponsored mile-long walk recently. "I can still help people who are worse off than I am when

I go to the Day Centre, mostly due to my long experience as a first-aid instructor with the Red Cross. Sometimes just to sit and talk to someone worse off than me helps. I did my first first-aid at Sibford aged 15 in 1932 (when I had not even had a first-aid lesson). On a Sunday afternoon school walk, a girl sprained her ankle. I bound it up, and three other boys and I carried her on a hurdle across fields to the Brailes road. Then I ran across country about 3/4 mile to school to get Mr Parkin and another teacher to go in their cars to collect the others. Years later during the war I qualified as an animal first-aid. Then I joined the St. Johns first-aid at work and did 22 years with them, finishing as an instructor. I also did 25 years at home with the Red Cross, first as a first-aid, then as an instructor and for a short time as a Training Officer. I was very disappointed when at the age of 70 I had to retire. Please let anyone who was at School 1928-33 who are still about know that I often think of them." Ronald kindly sent a generous cheque towards the Silver Mile 'Bucket' Appeal.

**Mike Ladell** (1939-44) writes that his publishers in Holland have had their financial investment withdrawn which has left his book in limbo; so printing and selling on the internet has been stopped. He is trying to find a new sponsor and publisher to complete the job, needless to say this is not easy to accomplish.

**Grace Lewis** (1947-53) has sent us news of her relatives who also attended Sibford: "I was at Sibford with my twin sister, Mary (Nicholas) and have just returned from a holiday in Kenya where my sister is based. Her two sons and two daughters were all at Sibford (as was our Aunt, Frances Brookhouse, 1935-41). My nieces and nephews are Julia (now Tatton, 1970-73/4), Christina (now Harris, 1971-77), John (J.J., 1976-82) and David (1979-85). They are all doing well, married with children. David and his wife, Mary-Ann, had a baby son on 10th September, 2002, Lloyd Christopher. I also saw Maggie Vella (née Smith, 1946-53) whilst in Kenya; she was visiting my sister." And Maggie Vella e-mailed us the following: "Mary herself has designed and had built a beautiful and spacious stone house about two hours' drive north of Nairobi, at an altitude of 7,000 feet with a marvellous view over the Rift Valley and Lake Naivasha. Two of her grandchildren are at boarding school only about a mile away down the hill. Grace Lewis and younger sister Jean have moved from Bristol to a very nice house in a tiny, but undistinguished, village in Pembrokeshire, surrounded by beautiful countryside and marvellous expanses of sandy beaches. Cold water, though!"

**Pam Manasseh** (née Boast, 1944-48) writes,

Tony and I seldom get to Sibford reunions but have called casually from time to time when en route elsewhere. We recognise and applaud the school's progress, and wish you well in your work for it, and in keeping us all "related". She sends details of another OS, Terry Cemm (1943-49 - her first boy-friend!), having seen an article about him in 'Saga Magazine'. She remembers that he married Shirley Baker who was in the same form as her. Terry now lives on the Isle of Wight where his beach-combing lifestyle has made him something of a celebrity.

**Philip Manasseh** (1938-46) has sent lots of news: "Thanks for the first e-mail SOSA newsletter and for getting us this online communication, which we have enjoyed and appreciated. It looks as if we will be prevented from attending Old Scholars this year as the family is coming here over that weekend. We are hoping to go to Cornwall this autumn to see brother Tony (1938-45) and Pam his wife (née Boast). My sister Meriel (1937-42) came over here recently and is in good health. My lovely Jo is doing well (Janet, née Oldham, 1940-1946) and we are now one year in the clear. We have appreciated the good wishes coming from all the Old Scholars over the past year. We also see and are in constant touch by e-mail with Janet's sister, Marjorie (Young, née Oldham, 1937-41). I had a phone call recently from Vaughan Southam who would welcome visits from OS. Our Oxford Friends, Barbara and Ralph Molland had a daughter at Sibford who now lives in Australia (Clare, now Hunton, 1960-65). Barbara is visiting her right now, and Ralph was telling me that a group of OS were having a get together. Ralph by the way has just been appointed to Sibford School Committee." [manasseh@euphony.net](mailto:manasseh@euphony.net)

**Kageha Marshall** (née Gay Watts, 1974-79 and Deputy Games Captain for Nansen Girls) has also sent us interesting news: "Believe it or not, I am still doing talks about Culture and Identity, and often use my experience at Sibford and 'The Leslie Baily Address' as a learning experience. My oldest daughter, Natasha, would like to be an actress and has just secured a major part in the BBC1 'Tracy Beaker' series which she is thrilled about. I am still in touch with a few OS: my cousin Geoff Greeves who now lives in Australia, Anne Farr (1976-80), Helen Painter, Julie Manning and Anthony Wingfield .... the list does go on.... In January, I received an invitation which read: 'DRESS TO KILL! Location - The Jazz Club Restaurant (next door to the RITZ) London. Event-40th Birthday Party. Date-January 12th 2002. Time-8.30 until late'. Whose birthday? Anne Farr celebrated in 'STYLE' and I remember her arrival to Sibford being similar. She had this glamorous entrance, which still stands today. We first



met in Nansen Girls, both of us had the shared experience of parents living in Zambia. This was the start of a very long friendship dating back twenty years, and across the globe to Africa and back. Our adventures have been many, some stories have been sad and others have been joyful. But although we've gone through very different journeys in life we have always kept in touch. HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY, ANNE FARR. Your strength, personality and courage has made you the star you are."

**Paul Matthews** (1975-77) communicated with Mike Finch, converting his annual membership to 'Life' - "so you can cross me off when future subs are due! Glad to hear Dad (Lister Matthews, 1949-54) has rejoined and maybe my work will let me attend a reunion some time. I am still 'cheffing', travelling with music groups on their tours and feeding the whole entourage. Some fun, others not!"

**Hugh** (Head of Sibford 1956-62) & **Daphne Maw** have moved (address available) and write: "Thankyou very much for the SOSA Address List. It will be very useful for us. What a splendid job, but never-ending, like the Forth Bridge. Thanks too for the Fund-Raising results; well done. We thought the new buildings were great and especially the horticultural unit - what I longed for way back in '56! We now look forward to the new swimming pool and are glad that Daphne's brother, Donald Southam, has agreed to go on the School Committee. He has great experience. Our new address is warden-assisted and close to all the services. Look forward to seeing you at the next OS gathering D.V. - the 'Hub' and Café facilities are a great help."

**Anne Muir** (staff, 1980-87) sent us a fascinating Christmas newsletter last year, from which these extracts are taken: "With all that has happened in the world in recent months, it does not seem quite right to be reporting that I had had another wonderful year, but it is so, and I am grateful. I'll start with the holidays: Tuscany in March; Across the Atlantic in May; Scotland in July; holiday at home in August; Kent in November; Christmas in Australia - the

whole family were reunited for the first time for some years. Though it might seem otherwise, all this did actually leave many months for life at home in Bloxham and my activities have continued much as usual for most of the year. I am now co-ordinator for a small Neighbourhood Watch group. This is not onerous and the intermittent police messages are fascinating eg the registration numbers of dodgy white vans to look out for, and warnings about undesirable door-to-door salesmen who may be operating in the area. What a fallacy is the idea that retirement means 'having time to do all the things you've always wanted to do!'"  
*annesmuir@cs.com*

**John Peile** (1938-44) has been reminiscing: "There are many things I remember looking back to the war years. The school playing field at The Hill was ploughed up to plant wheat and the senior boys (inc me) helped to thrash the grain when the farmers arrived. There were Nissen-type huts all along the road from Sibford to Hook Norton which were used as storage for the army. Some said they contained ammunition. Then one afternoon the Canadian army arrived to camp around the school for several days. The girls went mad - poor A.J had his hands full! We were always cold in the winter due to lack of coal and showering after games was hell as the water was inevitably tepid/cold. The crafts master, Roland Herbert, had great difficulty getting wood for our carpentry lessons but somehow he managed. Happy Days!"

**Chris Phillips** (1946-49) e-mailed us from Australia in June: "While you move into Summer we go the opposite way and I have to say that I don't like the cold weather. It dropped to 10°C last night and only reached 20° during the day. I have a solar heated pool that has also gone down to 24°, so I shall have to curtail my swimming soon..... shock horror! The fact that we used to swim in that disgustingly filthy pool at school seems more than a life time ago. I love this retirement thing. We are now enjoying our winter months on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland. Living just below the Tropic of Capricorn, we can grow many tropical fruits and I have many of them in my garden; my favourite being mangoes. I have also planted coconut palms but they have yet to bear fruit. Just ten minutes from where I live I can buy 'finger lickin' crabs, oysters, reef fish and lobsters virtually off the trawlers as they return daily. *cmbp@powerup.com.au*

**Barbara Pitt** (1955-60) writes: "Since leaving school, I have spent 16½ years in the Army Medical Services. After this I have worked in an inter-denominational Mission - 'Youth With A Mission', I spent 1½ years on one of the Mercy ships going around Africa (south and west) as

well as visiting Europe to collect supplies and finances. I had a very interesting 6 months in Benin, West Africa, working both on the ship and in the village medical clinics in the Bush, where we trained people from the bush churches in basic medical care so they could run clinics in their villages and keep the wells clean and covered, as well as maintaining the water pumps. Yours in Jesus Christ."

**Sue Schriber** (1972-77) would like to say 'hello' to anyone who remembers her. She has also written to tell us about her friend Antoinette Hallam (née Bebbington, 1971-76). She and her husband Ian have a guest house in Scotland which she would like mentioned to any interested Old Scholars, their address is: Ardconnel House, Woodlands Terrace, Grantown-on-Spey, Moray PH26 3JU, Tel: 01479 870201 or 01479 87210, or: *www.ardconnel.co.uk*.

**Eleanor Smith** (née Blunsom, 1949-55) e-mailed: "The mag is certainly much 'zippier' than in the past and the Head sounds very vibrant and enthusiastic. I had already heard excellent reports from friends (ex OS) who visited last year. I was in London last week at Friends' Meeting House (an interesting place and full of good information on all topics 'Quaker') doing some Blunsom/Lamb family research." *andalucia@freeuk.com*

**Norman Smith** (1935-38) writes from Australia: "The illustrated activities in the 'Rocket' make one wish one lived in England and could participate, but I could never cope with the cold winters. I suppose one is really saying - if only youth could be recaptured. I can't imagine how Sibford looks today, one would need an aerial photograph. I've heard that the Manor House was sold. We used to pour water down the yard which froze and we slid down the ice into the wall. I had decided to discontinue my membership of SOSA for financial reasons, but having received a copy of the 2001 magazine and read some of the contents (especially the bit about me), it seems rather churlish and would cut off what has been a major connection with my early development. I write regularly to Elizabeth Jolley (née Knight, 1934-40) the well-known (in Australia) authoress. . . This is a mad time of year. Today (18.12.01), I rose at 4.45am, had part of my breakfast then at 6.00am set off to deliver another batch of Church Christmas brochures. I'm a bit of a coward in as much as I prefer to put them under shop doors than go in and see staff; probably neither achieve much but the former is quicker. My ankles are still sore from the effort."

**Vaughan Southam** (0000-00) wrote (last December): "This has been a sad, sad year with many nasty shocks but I have all the way through followed Jeanne's wish that should I ever become a widower I would be a cheerful and positive one. I was very fortunate that when Jeanne broke her leg and had to go into hospital, I was able to go into the Quaker old people's home in Cotham, Bristol as a respite patient offering me full care and very generous companionship. In the following weeks I worked at settling into Avenue House to become a permanent, well-established resident acquiring a splendid room, a new bed and an indoor electric chair which with some practice I will be able to manipulate with accuracy. The way ahead: I see myself as a permanent resident of Avenue House where I will be very happy dealing with reading, writing, socialising, TV and visitors. My long term project is to finish my autobiography in 2002."

**Mavis Stiles** (née Mutch, 1946-49) writes: "I finally completed the sale on Orchard House on 14th June - how I shall never know - mainly thanks to Anne (Rose, née Stiles) as I had been in so much pain for so long. On 28th June after waiting 22 months I received a hip-replacement at the Sandringham Hospital, Kings Lynn. Five weeks on the pains from the op are much easier and I am no longer sleeping the days away - my fingers are longing to start on my new garden. My first overnight visitor in Lincolnshire was David Smith (1951-57) who came over after attending the memorial service to Harold Pugmire at Spalding on 14th July. David kindly did some gardening for me."

**Irene Tester** (née Yarwood, 1920-22) kindly sent us a cheque towards the 'Silver Mile', and



also a photograph of herself at Lapford School Jubilee Pageant. Now aged 93 and an ex-School Governor, she had just made the vote of thanks - accompanied by the 'wives' of Henry VIII!

*Messages from Members. . .*

*continued on page 30*

## Head's Report to SOSA: August 2002.

It has been a remarkable year. The school is the biggest it has ever been, (although there are some Old Scholars who would take issue with that); we opened two major buildings in the space of six weeks and that means we finally moved out of the Manor after 160 years since the school's foundation. A plan first conceived in 1930 has finally come to pass and, at last, we have our one-site campus. Now, after only a few months, it feels as though it has always been thus.



The PSFA has been very active this year under its chairman, Karen Sephton, who sadly will be standing down in September. They have raised more money this year than ever before, donating over £5,000 to the appeal in addition to supporting numerous projects in the school. They have organised a Ladies Night, an Auction of Promises, the French Café on Open Day and they have provided refreshments for all of the numerous events that



have taken place here during the year. I hope that they will soon form a link with SOSA for the future and that we will be able to hang onto committed parents once their children have left the school.

SOSA has become more and more part of school life, and through the auspices mostly of Ann and Raymond Bond, have been increasingly involved in, and supportive of, the school. There was again a welcome presence on Open Day which was well attended and brought



many positive comments from current pupils and parents.

One might think that this is a year when I might justifiably dwell on the material - the new buildings, the new resources, the healthy surplus we are about to turn in. But no - this is a year when I want to focus more than ever on the Sibford product. The young people who study and learn here; not just how to acquire knowledge and skills; but how to 'be'.



We have continued our work with the Oxfordshire Independent State School Partnership, this year as part of a Citizenship Project,

under the watchful eye and energetic leadership of John Charlesworth (Head of Science) with the aid of Zoë Warriner (Head of RE). Our pupils made quite an impact in Oxfordshire



with their presentation on recycling, when instead of the usual dry accounts one might expect (and probably with the back-up of a 'Powerpoint' presentation), they presented a 'dramatised' realisation of their ideas, with typically Sibfordian flair and originality. Their 'performance' was commented on by both the acting Chief Education Officer and the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, months after the event.

We must have had thousands of visitors to the school this year with the official openings of the two new buildings, the concerts and the dramatic productions, to say nothing of visiting speakers and prospective parents. Our pupils have done a marvellous job, acting as guides and hosts, and I so often receive comments about how confident, communicative and mature they are compared to other people of their age.





not only on the school, but also on the quality of the Sibford pupil.

So the school, of which we have all been proud for so long, is beginning to be recognised for what it actually does best. Yes, it does deserve its recognition for helping children with special needs; it does deserve its growing reputation in the creative and performing arts; but people are beginning to see why it does so well in helping children realise their potential. Sibford gives young people a sense of self, with it instilling a self-confidence and poise that is something that strikes the visitor forcibly. The abiding memory visitors take away from here is of the people. In spite of the developments you see around you, it is the pupils and the meeting of their needs that still drives us.

There have been several major events in aid of the Appeal this year. Matthew Smallwood organised a concert of his Vocal Octet at Bloxham Church in September; we were joined by Jan Ravens of Dead Ringers fame, together with



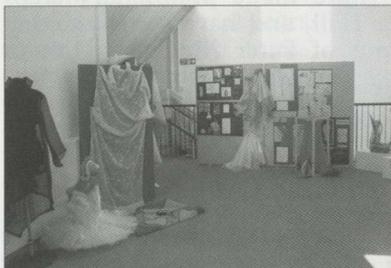
As some of you know, I am the chairman of a national heads' association this year, SHMIS (the Society of Headmasters and Headmistresses of Independent Schools), and apart from the many events I have attended outside school, we hosted the Society's Summer Meeting at Sibford, with over sixty heads from all over the country coming here, one glorious day in June. Again, our pupils did us proud, and in the numerous letters I received from fellow heads following the event, the vast majority commented

Leigh's 'Abigail's Party', also boosted the appeal fund. We have received donations from several trusts, thanks again to the hard work of Karen Sephton, and only last week I heard that Vodafone are to give us £10,000 towards the development.

However, the Appeal Fund is growing very slowly. You will have seen that the new pool is well under way, and you are already aware of the generosity of the Southall Trust, but the pool is to be completed through the careful management of school funds over the next few years, and more good housekeeping. We have made preliminary steps towards the new Meeting Hall, and have some exciting plans made with the input of Peter McCurdy; but in financial terms it remains a long way off.

Occasionally I am challenged about the emphasis on the arts that recent developments have demonstrated. Our reasons for that are well rehearsed, and I would say that the current buoyancy of pupil numbers vindicates our approach. However, I hope that those who feared that we were neglecting our historical commitment to the soil, will visit our new horticulture department with its associated conservation area; both due to the inspiration and hard work of Angie Bovill and the grounds team. Equally, those who feared we had lost sight of science, should peep through the windows of the science department to see the two new labs that are nearing completion. In more general terms, take a walk along the south corridor, either inside or out, and see the new roof, new windows and internal refurbishment that will be ready for use by September. You will have already seen that - my patience having run out - the hall (otherwise known as the 'black hole') has been painted, and close inspection, all around the school, will reveal that all manner of other jobs, long outstanding, have been completed or are underway.





The arts development has stimulated an interest in Sibford, especially locally, that has boosted pupil numbers to the point where we can afford a proper maintenance and refurbishment programme, that is gradually bringing the old place up to scratch. Victims of our own success, we are now short of boarding space, and we really do need a new boarding house too. But all in good time!

As usual the end of the summer term, brought the departure of a number of staff. Perran Gill had been here for just two years as Head of PE. During that time he managed to raise the profile and the standard of sport - especially rugby, in the school - and to nurture a culture of playing hard and enjoying it. He has gone off to do some serious travelling - in his own words: 'while he is still young enough'.

Other leavers will have been less familiar to Old Scholars, with the exception of one, Elisabeth Escher came to the school when her daughter Manda joined us as a pupil. She worked as part of the House team, in Nansen Girls' down in the Manor; taught in the Enhanced Learning Department; and taught English, eventually becoming Head of Department in 1998. In many ways Elisabeth embodies all that is special about Sibford. She is known, and has been loved, by generations of Sibford scholars, and her daily presence will be sorely missed. Although she will be replaced as Head of English by Penny Spring, I am delighted that she is to continue part time for a little longer.

Like so many of the staff at Sibford, Elisabeth was driven by the desire to see our young people 'fly'. That dedication, common to so many of our staff, has resulted in record-breaking results again this year. At GCSE, GNVQ and Advanced Level, our pupils achieved their best results ever. Statistics are not important to us and we believe that good exam results are a by-product of a good education, not its ultimate aim. All that our pupils achieve outside the classroom bears testimony to the validity of that approach,

but it is so good to see them achieve by their own lights, and such a joy to see the look on their faces as they open their envelopes on results day.

Of course it has not all been good. As a community we coped with the aftermath of September 11th, and grew together as proof that a multicultural 'family', containing representatives of over twenty nations, can live together in productive peace and a climate of harmonious inter-support. As we approach the new year, we do so with the sadness that one member of Orchard Close will not be moving up into the Senior School because he died in a car accident last year. We have shared in the sadnesses, the traumas and the personal losses of several members of the school.

But Sibford is a strong and loving community, and we bear loss and pain together. That is one of the joys of Sibford and the key to its success. Whatever we may achieve outwardly, our greatest strength is the genuine love we hold for each other and the support that it affords when it is needed. The strength of the Sibford community extends from the youngest pupil to the oldest old scholar. Sibford has had a high profile this year. Not only were we featured on Six TV, but we also had an impressively good write-up from John Clare in the 'Saturday Telegraph',



knocking Wells Cathedral School onto the third page of a special feature on Independent Schools. John Clare, who strikes terror into the hearts of many heads, really caught the flavour of Sibford in his article, and perceived what is really precious about the school - the fact that above statistics, above results, above buildings and resources, what matters to us here is the quality of relationships; and the success and well-being of the individual. We are proud of our pupils and we are proud of our school. We will never be complacent, and seek all the time to keep on improving, (with a full inspection coming in February, that is just as well). But from time to time it is important to celebrate all that we do achieve, and this has been a successful year.

*Sue Freestone*

# School Heads and SOSA Presidents 1842-2002

160 Years of Service

Richard and Rebecca Routh 1842-1880



Robert and Elizabeth Oddie 1880-1906

## SIBFORD OLD SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION

Founded 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1903

1903-04, Joseph Spence Hodgson  
1904-05, Dr Richard Laycock Routh  
1905-06, Michael T Graveson

James T Harrod 1906-1930

1906-07, Robert B Oddie  
1907-08, Joseph S Parsey  
1908-09, Elizabeth Oddie  
1909-10, Edward P Kaye  
1910-11, Chas E brady  
1911-12, Ethel Harrisson  
1912-13, Arthur B Oddie  
1913-14, Lucy Lamb  
1914-16, James Harrod  
1916-19, Elizabeth Brown

1919-20, Thomas Jackson  
1920-22, Mabel T Harrod  
1922-23, Frank W Snow  
1923-24, Ethel M Sharp  
1924-25, Frank Lascelles  
1925-26, Margaret Brady  
1926-27, Chris Martin  
1927-28, Miriam J Carter  
1928-29, Arnold J Kaye  
1929-30, Henry J Randall



Arthur Johnstone 1930-1956

1930-31, James T Harrod  
1931-32, Theodora Hodgkiss  
1932-33, Lionel Geering  
1933-34, Jane Sabin  
1934-35, Percy O Whitlock  
1935-36, Margaret C Gillett  
1936-37, Henry Lawrence  
1937-38, Frederick E Goudge

1938-39, Wilfrid Pollard  
1939-43, Howard Quinton  
1943-44, Kathleen Rice  
1944-45, Roland Herbert  
1945-46, John Dearden  
1946-47, Leslie Baily  
1947-48, Geoffrey D.Long  
1948-49, F Joy Reynolds  
1949-50, Ronald LL Lloyd  
1950-51, James C Baily  
1951-52, Ronald Quinton  
1952-53, Alice Long  
& Edward P Kaye  
1953-54, Louis E Wright  
1954-55, Marjorie Simmons  
1955-56, Reginald W Barber

Hugh Maw 1956 1962

1956-57, Arthur Johnstone  
1957-58, Celia Law  
1958-59, Lewis Poulton  
1959-60, Vera Rollett  
1961, John N Coxon  
1962, Gladys Burgess



Jonas Fielding 1962-1972



1963, George Law  
1964, Brian A Wright  
1965, Betty A Thelton  
1966, Gulie Grimes  
1967, Gordon A Wells  
1968, Jonas Fielding  
1969, Loraine Brown  
1970, Michael Van  
Blankenkstein  
1971, Lilian D Ward  
1972, John A Taylor

Kenneth Greaves 1972-1980

1973, D June Ellis  
1974, Geoffrey L Moore  
1975, Arthur Harrison JP  
1976, Grace Beckerlegge  
1977, Frank Rollett  
1978, Janet Eavis  
1979, Nicholas Bennett  
1980, Michael R Finch



Jim Graham 1980-1989



1981, Hugh W Maw  
1982, Marjorie Fielding  
1983, Irene Coxon-  
Smith  
1984, Kenneth  
& Robin Greaves  
1985, Philip Manasseh  
1985-86, E Jeanne  
Southam  
1986-87, Leslie Harrison  
1987-88, Russell Steed  
1988-89, Mavis Stiles

John Dunston 1990-1996



1989-90, Ken Francis  
1990-91, Paul Frampton  
1991-92, Anne S Muir  
1992-93, Daphne P Maw  
1993-94, Ian Weatherhead  
1994-95, Christopher &  
Patricia Grimes  
1995-96, Margaret  
Fairnington  
1996-97, Philip Morris

Susan Freestone 1997 -

1997-98, Julie Greenhill  
1998-99, Lucinda Poulton  
1999-00, Wendy & Michael Finch  
2000-01, Michael D T Farr  
2001-02, Simon Barfoot  
2002-03, Guy Kingham



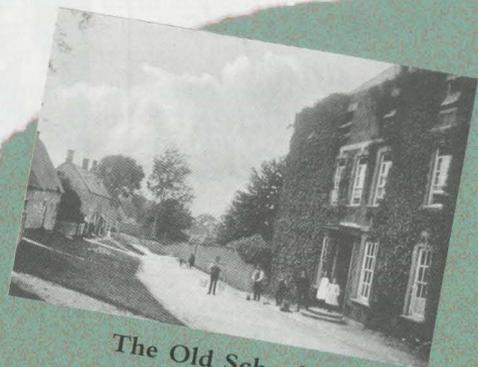
# Fragments of History:

## Memories of O.S.

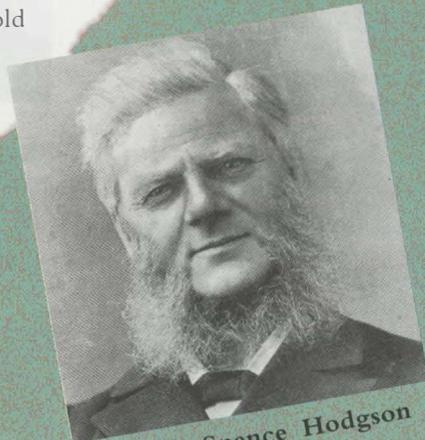
The first five years (as chronicled in SOSA magazines)

1903 At the General Meeting held at the Friends' School, Sibford, a number of Old Scholars "decided that the good school at Sibford 'should suffer wrong no more,' and an Old Scholars' Association should be formed to enable the scholars of days gone by to meet once every year for the purpose of visiting the dear old school, of renewing old acquaintances and of cementing old School friendships." Thus, on **19th June, 1903**, the Sibford Old Scholars' Association was founded. *Queen Victoria had been dead for only two years, the late Queen Mother was just one year old. It was the year of the first flight by a powered aircraft.*

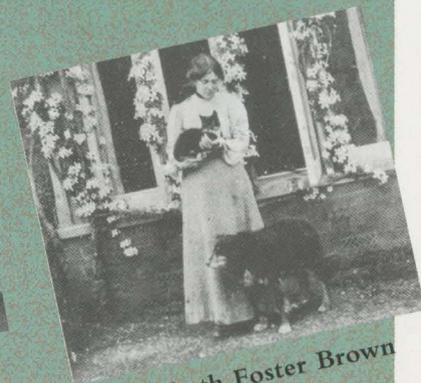
Joseph Spence Hodgson was elected President. E.Percy Kaye, B.Sc, formerly a master at the School, was appointed Secretary and Treasurer, and Elizabeth Foster Brown, Local Secretary. A Committee was appointed consisting of Gulielma M.Oddie, Richard Routh, Arthur B.Oddie and Charles E.Brady.



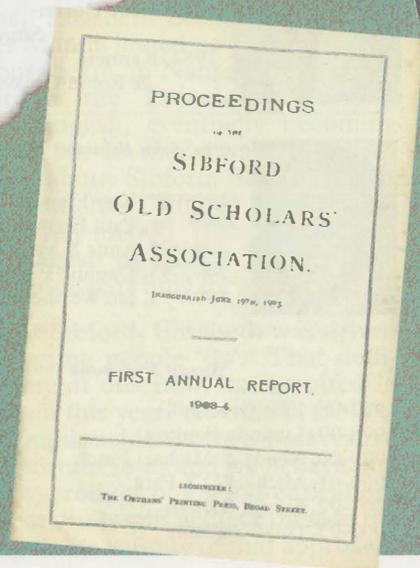
The Old School  
in 1904



Joseph Spence Hodgson



Elizabeth Foster Brown



OS first gathering Whitsuntide 1904

1904 (Membership numbers 186)

Publication of the first 'SOSA' Annual Report in which appears 'that Membership be open to all Old Scholars, Past and Present Officers of the School, and Past and Present Members of the School Committee.' Great efforts were made in the first year to give full effect to the objects of the Association and by Whitsuntide, 186 members had been enrolled. The first Annual Gathering was held at the School from Saturday May 21st to Tuesday 24th, and passed off with great éclat; with ideal weather and environment supported by a loyal and enthusiastic membership. About 70 members attended with many additional holiday-making visitors on Whit-Monday.

#### Editorial in the first Annual Report:

"It was with some trepidation that a year ago our Association was formed, for it was felt that Sibford had natural disadvantages of position which made it a place of difficult access, and it was feared that many would find the travelling too bothersome. Now that our first gathering is a piece of ancient history we can look back on our former fears with amusement, feeling that we have received due recompense for energies spent when we think once more of the happy time we spent at the Old Scholars' Gathering. Nevertheless, we have not yet reached our ideal, for there are a great number of Old Scholars who do not belong to our Association, and some who have not heard of us. ... It has been decided to start a photographic album, in which we hope to have reproductions of all the photographs that have ever been taken of the School or those connected with it; thus forming an illustrated History of the School from earliest times."

*Extracts from a letter received from Margaret Clarke (1851-18??) were read at the first Annual Gathering: "It was in the month of February, 1851, that my father and I left*

London for Sibford; we reached the School after dark, and, as Governess came to the hall-door to greet us, I saw maidens flitting about, wire safety-lamps in hand. I felt a little awe-struck and strange at first but in after years I knew how to value those dear friends, Richard and Rebecca Routh, and the general all-round instruction the school afforded. ... We had our first lesson at 6.20am, except in very hard weather and Governess often went into the kitchen before that hour - Rebecca Routh was a really hard worker, and I am thankful to this day for the practical knowledge I got through our many household duties and the advice I received from her. The mending for the boys was no small items and in those primitive times we made their collars, stitching them by hand in various grades of excellence. ... We enjoyed a good game with a skipping-rope or with clubs, occasionally we had an evening without lessons, and once a year came the grand holiday - a whole one - on Master's birthday, when, to our great delight, he came to play with us in the evening, and Governess knitted. ... Sometimes, "Girls, we may go for a walk!" rang out, and we put on our homely bonnets and tippets and trotted off, two by two, but were allowed to break ranks when out of the village. I wonder whether the wild hyacinths grow as plentifully now, and whether the graceful little oxalis is still found up the Hook Norton road. ... Our food, though plain, was of excellent quality. What a capital woman (Hannah Golder) we had to make the butter after the boys had churned it! ... I think I would not be disloyal to my old School when I say that the holidays were the sublimest event - these weeks were very precious, for we only went home once a year. But my schooldays were very happy and I know that our greatest good was sought by the Committee, Superintendent, Governess and Teachers. ... I hope the new Association will prove a bond of sympathetic union between old

friends. A kindly message, please, to the whole Gathering."

1905 (Membership numbers 244)

*from "The Second Annual Gathering":*  
"Our memory is busy with thoughts of long ago, so busy that we should not have been startled by the loving Quaker-like greeting of our master, Richard Routh ...



'Well, Joseph, how do thee do? I am pleased to see thee.' We are old boys now, and we never realised it more than we do this hot June afternoon, as we tramp the eight miles to the old School. ... You look around you in vain for your contemporaries of the 'sixties. Alas! not one. What has become of the home-sick small boy with whom we retired to the hayrick and cried our eyes out at the dismal prospect of a whole year away from home? There is an old grey-haired man of the forties boasting of his perennial youth (he is now seventy-three), and a grey-haired boy of the fifties, and with this youth you are near enough on common ground to talk over old times and the old régime." (J.S.K. Parsey).

"It was Friday night, June 9th, 1905. Drip, drip came down the rain in London and the horses splashed along dismally. Nevertheless, the Old Scholar felt cheerful. As he wiped a splash of mud from his neck ... he hurried to the railway station, and the train rushed him away from town. ... and then Sibford and the good old flag floating over it. We tumble

out of the brake. Hurrah! the good time has commenced. ... We adjourn to tea; knives and forks and tongues are soon in evidence. Then to the Lower Schoolroom, tastefully arranged as a sitting room. Some good songs and a game or two of musical chairs and soon after ten (as we are in the country where people go to bed early) we depart to our lodgings. ... One or two of the Old Scholars are lodged in quaint little rooms. The following morning one Old Scholar feels called upon to explain that such is the size of his apartment that when he shaved he had to open the door and window to make room for the lather upon his chin." (*Chas E. Brady, 1882-87*).

**From 'The Annual Business Meeting':**

"... It is very gratifying to report that our membership has increased from 186 to 244 ... an increase of 31 per cent, much in excess of expectations. The Treasurer's report, unfortunately, does not show a corresponding increase in subscriptions .. due in great measure to the fact that last year's members have not sent in their subscriptions for this year." (*Edward Percy Kaye, staff 1895-97*).

"An interesting address was given by R.B.Oddie, grown quite eloquent in reminiscence of his twenty-five years' mastership of the School, reviewing the changes that had taken place during his régime. How long he would have gone on reviewing these changes, if his coat tails had not been pulled by the Secretary behind him, we do not know, but we are free to imagine."

**from 'The Year's Chronicle':**

"September 26th - recent walks have had the added interest of blackberry gathering - two expeditions to Swalcliffe Common, Traitors' Ford and Oatley Hill having furnished 150 lbs of ripe, luscious fruit. ... November 27th - actually wet, so we stayed in all day. The next day- "there came both mist and snow and it grew

wondrous cold." During the next week all available time was given over to tobogganing, which was the best we have ever had. Fortunately, we escaped with only two slight accidents." (*Robert Brearley Oddie, Superintendent*).

**from 'The President's Address':**

"I think that perhaps but few in the present company know very much about the exact circumstances under which this School was founded, and I must take you back to about the year 1840. It was about the year 1840 that J.J.Gurney paid a religious visit to this Quarterly Meeting. He was a brother of Elizabeth Fry, and it is interesting to know that the last connecting link with that generation of Friends is yet living among us, that is J.B.Braithwaite, who accompanied him as companion on that journey. ... Well, on this visit to the various meetings of Berks and Oxon Quarterly Meeting, J.J.G



found a very large number of people who had married out of the Society, and had been in consequence disowned. Their affections were still with the Society, but they and their children were non-members, and appeared likely to drift away rather than be drawn closer to their old faith. The question took deep hold of his mind - probably was brought before Yearly meeting; at all events, in the following year it was pretty much decided to establish an agricultural school for non-members as well as members.

Funds were raised, and a great many

places were inspected with a view to purchase. ... the decision lay between the Old



Manor House at Sibford and an ancient hostelry named Chapel House near Chipping Norton. Ultimately, the Manor House was bought from the late Joseph Harris, and some twenty-five acres of land with it. The Friends who in these earliest days had most to do with the School were Samuel Beesley, Henry Beesley, Joseph A. Gillett, William Collins, William Albright, James Cadbury, and others. All these have long since passed away. The next thing was to get a suitable master and mistress. The mistress had first to be secured, as there was much to be done in the way of preparing linen., &c., so the School was first of all opened to girls only... After three or four months, things were ready for the admission of boys. ...

The range of buildings now used as boys' schoolrooms was then an open thatched barn, with the wash-room and store room at one end, and the apple room above. That wash-room is a vivid spot in my memory to this day. It had a stone floor,



and a small window looking into the orchard. It was very narrow, and all along the orchard side ran a long leaden trough with a pump at one end. Into this, the boys were turned every morning, in batches of six or eight. The trough was pumped full, and the lads did their ablutions in the open trough. ... In winter, this was a very cold, unpleasant business. ...

Mornings were always spent in School, afternoons were a good deal taken up with farm work. The sewage farm below the orchard, still called the dug field, used to be all hand dug by the boys every year, and what crops it bore! There was the biggest crop of oats on it one year that I ever saw anywhere. 'Squitching' was a field job we used to hate. The boys were arranged in a long row, with a basket between every two lads, and then slowly marched across the field - and every particle of squitch had to be picked up. ... Potato planting and potato digging was much more popular, but nothing ever came up to the joys of the harvest field. The older boys had their sickles and went to reap. ...

What days those were, when the school broke up for its one holiday of just four weeks at midsummer. Father (Richard Routh) would go with a string of boys and girls to the station and there would ensue a regular set-to at bargaining between him and the fat, genial station-master as to how much should be paid for the fares. "Now," father would say, "here are seven boys and five girls - all going to Euston - some of them thou sees are quite small; now what canst thou take this lot for?" Then a price would be quoted for the lot. ...

At Sibford we have lived through an age of desecration. Sentiment has always been throttled down and utility has taken its place. This is greatly to be regretted, for dear old landmarks have been effaced which would be worth anything had they

been spared. In an unfortunate moment it came to the minds of Friends that the sweet old Meeting-house, in which George Fox had preached, was no longer big enough for the meeting. It was a quaint old place with its panelled sides of worm-eaten oak, and its lobby and gallery - a lobby in which you could hardly stand upright - and its benches so narrow that a big man could hardly sit on them; they were uncomfortable, I could forgive anyone who could go to sleep when sitting on them. Well, it had to come down when the present Meeting-house was built - ah! it was a pity. ...

In the early days, General Meeting day was the red letter day of the School year. And what assemblages they were! Schools were the pet hobby of Friends in those days, almost the only outlet for their interests and generosity. Sunday Schools, Foreign Missions and Home Missions were only just beginning to attract their thoughts, and so they crowded to the School General Meetings literally in hundreds. From London, Reading and Birmingham, and even more distant places they came, and as many as thirty carriages would be seen standing all up the road. Then the children were 'examined'. Not that it amounted to much; the boys and girls read a few sentences, spelt a few words, did some mental arithmetic which was always pronounced to be marvellous, answered a few catch questions, and the examination was over. ... Legacies and donations used to be a matter of yearly occurrence; now they seem utterly diverted from schools to the mission field. ...

I only remember two very serious epidemics in the School. One was when diphtheria broke out in 1859 ... and an awful outbreak of scarlet fever in 1878. ... The whole place seemed turned into a hospital. ... There may be a feeling of thankfulness for you of the younger generation, that you have had far greater

advantages than those who were before you: that times have changed, that education is carried on on broader lines, that it is no longer thought sinful to sing or play music, but that they are regarded as elevating and refining." (*Dr Richard Laycock Routh*)

1906 (Membership numbers 253)

*from 'The Secretary's Notes':* "Our Third Annual Gathering is now a matter of History. It was as great a success as its two predecessors both as to the enthusiasm of those who participated in its functions and the standard of excellence of the individual items provided. It is the last gathering we are to have with Mr. and Mrs. Oddie as host and hostess, but we are fortunate in being able to look forward to a pleasant reunion next year with the former taking the presidential chair." (*E. Percy Kaye*)

*from 'A Short Account of the Annual Whitsuntide Gathering':* "For our gatherings so far we have had royal weather, and the last was no exception; the days were gloriously fine from beginning to end, and the evenings could not have been better for quiet strolls through the lovely shady lanes, where many old-time friendships were renewed and re-strengthened. What enjoyment there was in those quiet times - the trees and banks looking their best, the moon near full, and the balmy air, all conspired to make our happiness complete. ... Great was the consternation of one old scholar, who found himself en bicyclette ten miles from anywhere, on the Friday of the Gathering, ploughing his way through sloughs of mud and torrents of rain. ... But the sun soon came out, in preparation for welcoming the first brake from Banbury, which arrived at the School about 7.50. The welcoming process was aided by Mr. and Mrs. Oddie, Gulie Oddie, Frank Whitlock, the Staff, the Children and the Secretary. What cheers, what bustle and

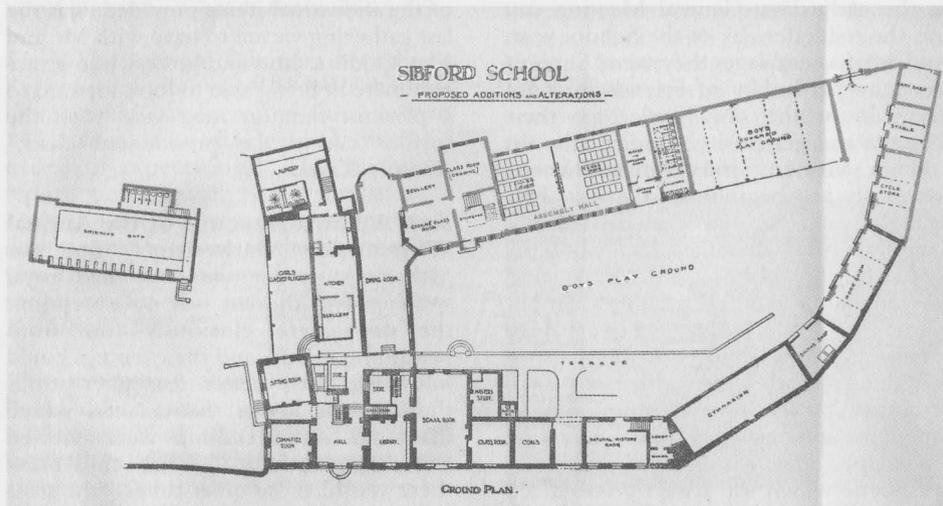
confusion, what handshakes and greetings as the brakes were quickly disbanded of their burthen, both human and material.

...

We had the most glorious and successful excursion to Edgehill that the heart can wish for. There was not too much wind, nor yet too little, there was not too little sun nor yet too much, as for the pork-pies, sandwiches, pasties, cake, fruit &c., &c. - not forgetting the ginger beer ... besides those who went by brake - and we were very glad to have the company of all the girls and boys - some cycled, and our oldest old scholar shewed his strength of

truest fellowship with our comrades. How like a School Sunday it was. The Head's reading after breakfast, the walk 'down the Garden', the Sabbath day's journey to the peaceful little Meeting House at Sibford Gower, and the slow procession back again, down into the valley and then steep up the other side, dinner, the stroll up and down the playground, and then the 'public walk' to Traitorsford in the afternoon for the energetic, or the 'straw' in the paddock, or the 'private walk' for those so inclined. ... Looking back, one sees that the gathering was a brilliant, unqualified success, and yet there was just one note of sadness which it was difficult

taken: "... I would like to have told you more of those barbarous days under the conditions of which school life was made supremely happy. It would not have been a story of football, cricket, tennis and the dress and habit of the present day. It would have been a description of genteel boys and girls who, compared to the period I am referring to, look like the sons and daughters of esquires. In those heroic and barbarous times we found much of our recreation in manual work.

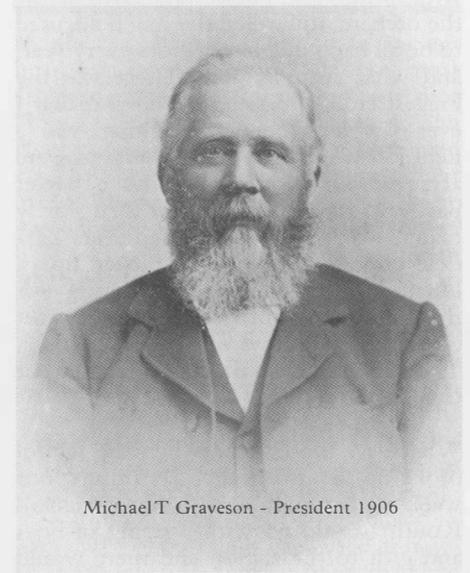


wind and limb by walking, with another, the whole nine miles. ... Again our day was terminated with a 'free and easy', though the attendance at first was small. Later we had our full compliment and a truly pleasant time, though it was all too quickly over. Although we are only three years old, we are already becoming bound by tradition, and there are some songs and their singers who would be a distinct loss to the functions.

Sunday was, with us, a true day of rest, and perhaps it was then that we found the

to put aside - *the feeling of impending change*. Still, we are, some of us, already counting the weeks that must pass before the next gathering, and are preparing to suitably welcome the combination of old and new next year, Mr. Oddie as our President, and Mr. Harrod as Headmaster of the School."

**from 'The Annual Business Meeting':**  
The Secretary (E.Percy Kaye, staff 1895-1897) read a letter from the absent President (Michael T Graveson, 1849-1854), from which these extracts are



Michael T Graveson - President 1906

We had to keep the playground and schoolroom spick and span, to clean boots and shoes. We had to pump water, assist in the laundry to mangle clothes, wash potatoes and peel apples. In chill November weather we donned smock frocks, and did a fair share of scraping and chopping in the turnip field. At other times we went, armed with reaping hooks, to cut the corn, and generally to play our little parts in the grand old play of Harvest Home. We gathered apples, picked fruit, and considerably paid ourselves by appropriating a fair percentage of the crop. All these exercises were the

gymnastics of that time, and it was in the pursuit of these useful games that we gathered muscle and made ourselves strong.

Perhaps the choicest of these recreations was experienced when the unwieldy threshing machine arrived. We were then in a tumult of excitement, for we knew that the few good boys of that day would be rewarded for their exemplary conduct by being allowed to feed the men who fed the machine, and, in return for this favour they stocked the schoolrooms, the bedrooms, their desks and even their boxes with mice. . . Whatever our general attire may have lacked in comparison with present day dress, it was certainly as picturesque and much more serviceable, and probably gave us more warmth in winter. Corduroy and fustian, Blucher boots with solid leather soles bright with shining nails, which, when the occasion required, did duty as a looking glass - such was the appearance of our dress in the days of 'auld lang syne'."

**Also at the Business Meeting**, the question of membership arose: "we are forced to the conclusion that since only one-fifth of the Old Scholars are members of the Association, there are four-fifths who have not as yet heard of that glorious quartet of letters - S.O.S.A. And here is evidently a field for missionary enterprise for some enthusiastic member or members."

*from 'The School Diary':* "... Black-berrying excursions have been less frequent than usual this autumn ... the results are poorer than in previous years, due in part to the efforts of the village people, who now find a ready market for the fruit at the local jam factory."

**'The Presidential Address'** was given in the absence of the President, and at short notice, by Charles E Brady, who discoursed upon 'Experiences of

Schoolmasters, and some stray reminiscences of School Life'.

**1907** (Membership numbers 277)

*from 'The Business Meeting':* ... many minor matters discussed in Committee, that have as yet scarcely come forward sufficiently to warrant public discussion ... a casual reference now may prepare the minds of our members for future action. The first is the adoption of The Old Elm as the Old Scholars' emblem.



Arthur Oddie has taken considerable pains to obtain a good picture, and we think the result is plain evidence of the same, and we shall probably find some reference to the Elm in all future reports. We have hardly reached the stage of issuing 'elm' brooches, 'elm' tie-pins, 'elm' hat-pins etc., etc., in gold, silver and brass, but lassen Sie das bleiben." (*E. Percy Kaye, Hon Secretary*)

*from 'The Treasurer's Report':* "A balance of nearly £19 may be considered highly satisfactory, but it is only as it should be, for the 1907 Report ought to be paid, naturally, out of money received in 1906-7, and not from the current year's income, as was done last year. The £26 odd which was received between Whitson 1906 and Whitson 1907 can hardly be considered as a normal income, for many who had not paid for two and more years, sent subscriptions (in some cases liberal

ones) this year. Thus it is hoped that Old Scholars will not be lulled into a dream of false security and omit to send their subscriptions, thinking that they are not wanted. Even now, there are some seventy members who have not paid for last year, and in some cases for two years. Will these please remit payments at once, and so avoid more useless expenditure of Association funds in the future? Since the last report several names have been deleted from the membership list, as no response had been forthcoming from old members after several intimations." (*Percy O. Whitlock*)



*from 'The President's Address':* "From their playing-field, Sibford children have often cast wondering and speculative eyes over the extensive landscape lying towards the setting sun, with Temple Mill, Ditch Edge, and Whichford Wood at their feet, and bounded by the wind-swept ridges of Broadway and Stow. And when you return as Old Scholars, city-pent and weary, your interest is aflame again. You gaze upon the familiar scene with enhanced admiration, and espy a thousand beauty-spots hitherto unobserved. There is in those wooded slops and gentle uplands in the very heart of oldest England, a suggestion, an assurance, of the quiet and rest of which you are perchance in search. William Morris once wrote a now little-known sketch entitled Under an Elm Tree. In this, with glowing pen, he

records his appreciation of the charm of



nature on the Cotswold downs. ..." Robert B. Oddie.

from an article **'By the Elm Tree of the Crossways'**: "It is shortly before midnight: the moonlight shines white over all the landscape: I am alone by the weather-beaten Cross-elm where the ways meet. And here I stand and look over the sleeping land, with its silent fields and voiceless hedges, for no sound is heard from near or far. To the right, down in the hollow, where the stream flows gently over the stones, lies the little village I know so well, calm and peaceful, no light from a single window relieving the grey distance. The roads on either hand glimmer white until they are blotted out between the hedges, and, near by, the shadow of the tree is lined sharply across the pathway.

This same tree against which I am leaning has borne the summer heat and winter storm of full half a century, but now it has lost its towering height, for last autumn the fierce November wind and snow proved too much ... his mighty limbs crashed over the snow-laden hedges. How different was the scene that day on this very spot - the wind whistling, the snow drifting and blowing so quickly from the north, that its blinding shower almost

blotted out the sturdy men, pulling and hacking to remove the mighty mass which had blocked the highway and lay along it - a very picture of fallen greatness." *Albert G. Limney.*

from **'The Fourth Whitsuntide Gathering'**: "Many Old Scholars arrived per brake on the Friday evening. The old School and the peaceful village were the same as ever and it was found that, outwardly at any rate, the change was not as conspicuous as was feared. ... It would not be fair to judge the warmth of Mr. Harrod's welcome by the temperature of the 'old barn' that evening, and we are hopeful of more luxurious quarters next year. . . . The evening concluded with an expedition round the village in the dark, dropping Old Scholars, bag and baggage, at various cottages by the way.

Saturday was just the day for a walk, and in the Company of the whole school, to say nothing of the School donkey, we made our way to Whichford Wood. What a donkey our four-legged companion proved, to be sure! The School seemed accustomed to his tantrums, and relived him of the provision-loaded cart quite

cheerfully when his jibbing became hopeless. At Temple Mill the donkey went on by road in charge of a few trusty boys, and to our great surprise they all arrived at the woods - but we forgot to ask who drew the cart. From Temple Mill to Whichford we wandered along the stream by a pretty route discovered recently in School walks. After the informal lunch in the woods we rambled about for an hour or so, then leisurely made our way home by the old, familiar, memoried road.

Sunday in Sibford is always peaceful and restful. The walk through the fields to Meeting brings back many memories of childhood, and quietsens our spirits for the settling into silence together. ... Monday: And then came the Old Scholars' entertainment at seven o'clock. Your Secretary has received some letters of thanks from some of the School children, and they seem to fondly imagine that we have spent the eleven months previous to the Whit-Monday evening in assiduously rehearsing our efforts for the entertainment. My dear young friends - nothing of the sort! That's the whole beauty of the thing. We know of one piece which delighted you to the extent



of an encore, which was first thought of on the previous Saturday, and first rehearsed ten minutes after midnight on Monday morning. Oh what a lot of energy is put into those three days!

Breakfast next day was as happy as could



LEAVING SIBFORD SCHOOL AFTER OLD SCHOLARS' GATHERING.

be expected under the circumstances: tag-ends of business were finished off; Joe Parsey, our new President, read to us from the Bible; votes of thanks were passed, and in a quarter of an hour Warren's brake whirled us off to Banbury, to the accompaniment of cheer and counter-cheer from leaving and left."

1908 (Membership numbers 286)

from **'The Whitsuntide Gathering'**:  
 "Contrary to late practice, we had our first public function on Saturday Evening at 5 o'clock, viz: High Tea. One or two members had managed to get away from the outside world soon enough to put in an appearance at the School earlier in the day; while our President from Yorkshire had come down on the Friday evening, and was on the School steps, with the

School Staff, C.E.Brady, Jasper Hunt, and E.P.Kaye, to help give the usual welcome to Warren's Wagonette, the Victory, with its three horses, which bore gatherers from London-way and Birmingham up to the School; old and young, new and old Old Scholars were equally heartily wel-

comed. ... The interest of tea was considerably increased by a book-guessing competition. Nearly everyone was wearing a picture or a letter, or a piece of furniture (nothing larger than a chair or sofa), or crockery which, with ample aid from one's imagination, could be made to represent the title of some book. Many were guessed after a period of brain-racking, the ladies generally proving their superiority, but some of the emblems were puns of such an involved nature that the full force of the joke only struck one after prolonged thought.

The present Scholar's Entertainment began at 7 o'clock, and it was only the evident excellence of the programme which tempted us to leave the balmy evening breezes for the festive air of the dining room. ... The manner in which this

was carried out made it evident that not only had the teachers spent a great deal of time, care and thought on the items, but that the boys and girls had ably seconded the efforts made on their, and ultimately on our, behalf, and had thrown themselves heart and soul into their efforts.

On our programme, Sunday breakfast was quoted at 9-30, and that was its actual time, but the Old Scholars' day began a good deal before then. Early walks were taken and the swimming bath was extensively patronised. One of our number got as far as Epwell before 8 o'clock - but that was by motor car. Breakfast being ended our President, Joseph S.K.Parsey, read from the Bible, and after we had had a few turns round the garden we made out way over the fields in blazing sunshine to the well-known Meeting House across the valley. What a hearty welcome the Sibford Friends gave us - the little room was well filled. ... The keynote of the meeting was the very appropriate one of friendship; and Henry Harris gave us some very interesting details of the life of George Fox, exhorting us to live in the present, and comparing profession and practice. We then returned to the School for dinner at 1-15, and the afternoon rapidly passed in either walks with the boys and girls or with one another, correspondence, reading in the paddock, or in singing in the sitting room.

At 7 o'clock we packed ourselves once again into the dining room, and after we had sung three hymns and had had a chapter read to us by the top girl and another by the top boy, we had a most practical and inspiring address by Henry Harris, of London, the main points of which are as follows: -

"The primary concerns of serious men of all ages are spiritual concerns, and the religious instinct is implanted in the heart of everyone. ... The early Friends laid great stress on the unity of

*Continued on page 22*



# SOSA



# Links



# with



# the School

## Judith Weeks:



I am pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself as the Chair (or Clerk) of The School Committee. I took over from Hedley Quinton in November 2001 and feel privileged to have done so.

Sibford School is a wonderful place to be, and this is a thoroughly good time to be here.

I have been on the Committee for many years. I am a member of Sibford Meeting, and live close to the School, with which I have had a long association, ever since my daughter became a pupil in 1986.

Hedley is a hard act to follow. His devotion to Sibford is well known and he was a very committed Committee member and Chairman for many years. We miss him greatly and the wisdom which he brought to the task. I am, however, fortunate to have such a strong and supportive Committee, and our job is made easier by the outstanding work of the Head and Staff which goes on day by day in School. We value the input of Old Scholars too, and it is always good to welcome them to the School for the Annual Reunion.



Our new buildings are great, and it is wonderful to see the swimming pool underway at last. There is still a long way to go, however, if we are to achieve our dream of a Meeting Hall worthy of Sibford, and a Theatre where our children can develop their talents fully. If anyone can donate more money, or organise a fund raising event (even a coffee morning in their own neighbourhood - 300 coffee mornings would raise a lot of money!) we should be pleased to hear from you.

*Judith Weeks*

## Football Match:

Old Scholars 2 - School 2. Sunday 17th March saw one of the best OS soccer matches in years. A well organised School



XI with accomplished players like Jeremy Wright and Christopher Carty worked very hard to hold an Old Scholars team that once again played some attractive football. The evergreen Mickey Jenkins, brother Peter, and Simon Barfoot had some help from a younger pairing of GAP students - Nick and Dan. Paul Colegrave would probably have been the 'man of the match' if there had been one. At the after match tea, the trophy was awarded to the school as they won it the previous year. A draw - a fair result.

*Brian Holliday*

## SOSA 'Open Day' Reunion:

Open Day on June 15th was again a lively affair. To everyone who helped to make our Day Reunion such a success: thankyou - whether setting up, baking, making, donating items, stall-minding, collecting 5p pieces, arriving on time for the photograph/s, fetching/carrying, clearing up, or just being there, it was



much appreciated. The OS Hub in Room 1 hummed with visitors, many of whom



helped to fill the donation bowl for the Silver Mile and were then tempted by the array of home-made bread, cakes and preserves for sale, swelling the coffers even



further. Ann and Ray Bond, Mike Finch and others were on hand to enthuse about SOSA, answer questions, reunite lapsed members with the Association and catch prospective new ones. Two group photos were necessary this year as many Old Scholars were watching the World Cup at the designated time!

Amongst the day's other activities Chloe and Nick Bennett chose to set up a book stall on a particularly gusty corner of Orchard Close playground - first catch your book as it flies past; let's hope not too many were blown away to Banbury before purchase! The School was as vibrant as ever and in good heart. Particularly enjoyable were the clay models in Orchard Close and the intricate glazed models of fantastic creatures in the new Mackenzie

# SOSA



# Links



# with



# the School



▲ Mike Finch in conversation



▲ The first Group Photo

### The youngest talk to the oldest!

When Naomi Hall and Hannah Mills (now members of OS) needed to research the history of the Manor for their sixth form A-Level Media Studies in the Summer, they turned to a number of Old Scholars for help and information; particularly supportive were Mike Finch, Norman Coxon and Raymond Bond. Their film was shown at Open Day and much enjoyed by those OS who were fortunate enough to see it.



▲ Philip Morris and Michael Bond

Thorpe building. They were a testament to the patience, skill and creative imagination of pupils and teachers alike. The pièce de resistance this year, though, was the new Horticultural Area - in February a barren plot, in June a flourishing garden of vegetables, plants, flowers and fountain. Different from the much loved old Walled Garden but equally amazing and exciting - do visit it.

*Pat Grimes (1946-49)*

▼ The second Group Photo



▲ Hannah Mills & Naomi Hall talk to Norman Coxon

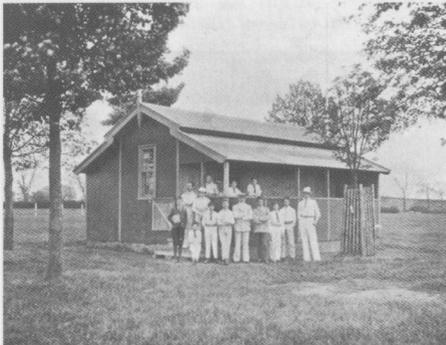


... continued from page 19

life. We cannot rightly live our lives in watertight compartments. ... Someone said that Quakerism is an attempt to turn Christianity into the religion of Christ. The message of George Fox cut to the root of all shams, and deepened the sense of social responsibility."

Monday dawned fine and remained so for about two hours. Tennis began at 6 o'clock, and at 7 o'clock players were waiting for sets to finish in order to get a place on the courts. But we seem doomed to some rain on Whit Monday, though on this occasion the Clerk of the Weather gave us all a small dose as he could conveniently arrange for, and everything was bright as ever in time for our Cricket Match.

The Business Meeting was held directly after breakfast this year; a change from former years made so as to allow more time for a definite finish to the Cricket Match, and so, for once, we made an absolutely prompt start. After the Business meeting therefore, we raced up to the cricket field, and the Old Scholars having



won the toss, elected to bat on a pitch as good as the School has ever provided for us. ... Play was suspended at 12.30, to allow of photographs being taken of the 'Gatherers'. This year the sunlight seemed to be too strong for us to take up our usual position on the lawn in front of the house, and our expert photographer had



to suggest that we should be under the shade on the girls' playground, though it was a case of making the best of a bad case. So mounted on tables and forms instead of the usual grassy bank (to the very obvious detriment of at least one of the tables, which gave an ominous crack, threatening to put an end to the proceedings and to the table), we faced the camera under cover. ...

The Doctor's customary and kindly invitation to a reception and tea on his well-known lawn had been changed into a still more pleasurable and exciting event, to wit, a picnic to the pine plantation near Epwell. All the available landaus, hansom cabs, char-a-bancs, omnibuses and four wheelers which Sibford can produce (viz., three wagonettes of no recent date) were hired for the excursion, while those who possessed cycles used them, and a few preferred to walk. Gipsy fires were soon started and it was only our appetite (and thirst) that gave us the impression that the water was



longer than usual in boiling. It seemed quite natural to see our old friend, Beckett, the 'Sibford Carrier' helping generally. The absolute sociability, freedom, and jollity of our two hours in the woods made this event the most memorable of an enjoyable Whitsuntide. A splash of rain would have made the event uncomfortable, last year's cold would have made it impossible, but this year's warmth and freshness made it perfect. Of course there were incidents; no one who has attended our gatherings can fail to guess who it was that tripped up the bearer of a full urn, and yet by studied speech and guileless cast of countenance made the world and his wife put all reproach on the innocent and blameless. ... Lest the school children should not be able to endure with adequate patience our promised entertainment, we got up a riotous game at terza in the cricket field for half-an-hour in anticipation - with the desired result.

Then followed the **Old Scholar's Entertainment**. ... It was interesting to have our platform adorned by two choral banners which had been won in local contests by the local choir, of which the School forms no inconsiderable part. Votes of thanks to those to whose efforts the success of the evening was due were then passed with the highest enthusiasm.

At this juncture an elderly female rushed into the hall swinging violently a loud and discordant bell, and urging upon the assembly 'Votes for Women' in no uncertain voice. She was eventually unmasked and discovered to be no other than our respected friend Charles —, well it is better not to reveal the surname for he is on our Committee - but his energies were eventually sobered. ..."

from **'The Business Meeting'**: "In a short speech, Chas.Brady wished us to consider a quotation referring to Sibford, which is said to have been extracted from the Domesday Book, and which he hoped we might adopt as an Old Scholars' Motto. He thought it shewed a right spirit of independence which might well be imitated by us of a later date and generation. ... We hope to come across no legal difficulty in using it - AND THE MENNE OF SHEEP-FORD WENT WHITHERSOEVER THEY WILLEN"

from **'The Secretary's Report'**: "We are now, as a Society, five years old! This is our fifth birthday! Though we are not exactly bent double by the hand of time, nor crowned with the grey hairs of old age, yet we decidedly have a past as well as a future. Our past - is it not written, with all its acts, in the four Reports already published? ... Our future - who can foretell? We have already fulfilled a wish uttered by one correspondent in our first number, for we have surely 'proved a bond of sympathetic union between old friends' and long may we continue to do so. ... Joe Tyler would like to hear of Branch Meetings before long. 'The Birmingham Branch of the Elm' sounds quite natural and rustic. ... Many members had left their address without giving due notice, and we are quite unable to write to them. ..."

from **'The President's Address'**: "... As I wander over the village, I cannot help wondering how very same it must have

looked many years ago when, as a small boy, I first gazed in childlike wonder at its rural beauty. There is intoxication in the very air. The children playing in the roadway, the mothers knitting at the open



doors, the fathers standing about in long white smocks, chatting and smoking. ... The cuckoo is continually heard, and the song of the lark is like a lyric of Shakespeare set to music. On the road you may walk and encounter nothing more remarkable than the carrier's cart and troops of noisy children from the woods

laden with primroses. Everything around is unhurried, quiet, moss-grown and orderly. ... Well the boy has in course of time become President of the S.O.S.A., and in that capacity, dropping the third person, I will venture to say a few words to the young and those a little older. ... It seems to me that there is a great need for an Association of this kind, for the sake of the Old scholars themselves. ...

I said a year ago that the office of President of the S.O.S.A. is an indication that one is getting old. We may be old in years but young in spirit ... You are an old man if you believe the best is in the past. So long as you believe the best is yet to come, you are young indeed. An annual visit to our old School, renewing associations of our youth, mingling freely with the young life of the School, will surely keep our ideals fresh and hearts pure. The future of the S.O.S.A rests in great measure with you young people. As you leave your Alma Mater rally loyally under its banner. We will help you to lead good and useful lives, and as we who are older pass away, you in turn shall take the helm and assist in guiding this Association into fresh and unlooked for channels of usefulness." (Joseph S.K. Parsey, President 1907-1908)

#### CASH ACCOUNT, 1907-8.

INCOME.		£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.		£	s.	d.
Balance from last year	.. .. .	18	13	10	600 Cases for Reports	.. .. .	11	11	0
Profits on 1907 Gathering	.. .. .	4	0	0	Photo Blocks	.. .. .	2	12	0
Subscriptions	.. .. .	21	7	0	Photo for Report	.. .. .			5
76 Cases sold	.. .. .	1	18	0	Stationery	.. .. .			4
Reports sold	.. .. .			2	6	Photographic Record, Postage and Sticking in	.. .. .		10
					Printers' a/c.		£	s.	d.
					330 Reports	.. .. .	13	4	6
					Corrections	.. .. .	1	3	6
					Block for Cover	.. .. .		10	6
					Addressing	.. .. .		12	6
					300 Slips	.. .. .			3
					Postages	.. .. .		2	0
					Discount	.. .. .	8	10	—
					Secretary's Postage and Sundries	.. .. .			1
					Printing of Whitsuntide Programmes	.. .. .			14
					Balance	.. .. .			11
									15
									3

£46 1 4

Audited and found correct,

C. E. BRADY.

£46 1 4

# Important Announcement

SOSA was inaugurated on 19th June, 1903. We are celebrating our Centenary Year by offering you TWO exciting Weekends, one in June (coinciding with the School's Open Day), and the other our traditional residential three-days 'letting our hair down'.

BOOK THESE DATES in your diary NOW.

You will be sent full programmes in due course  
(please note, these activities are provisional and may well change)



## Invitation



### June Reunion

Saturday 14th June, 2003 from 9.30 am at Sibford School coinciding with the School's Open Day SOSA 'Hub' & Bazaar; Bring a picnic lunch; Group Photo; Ceremonial Planting of Oak Tree; Tea with School; Evening Reunion with Meal at a local pub.

Sunday 15th June, 2003: Gower Meeting for Worship (10.30am) followed by coffee and some form of SOSA Dedication; informal Lunch; Afternoon Reunion: laze and chat; Tea and farewells.

*Please note: there will be no overnight accommodation at the School. A list of B&Bs is given on page 3.*



## Invitation



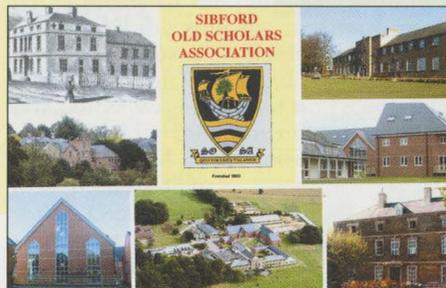
### AUGUST REUNION

Saturday 23rd August - Monday 25th August, 2003

Many activities are currently being planned for our residential weekend, amongst which are:

*Centenary Ball:* Live Band, Live String Quartet, Bubbly Reception, Black tie.

*Sibford from the Air:* fly in a light aeroplane and enjoy the magic of the local skies; *SOSA HUB with Bazaar, Café and Wine Bar* will be open all weekend: a place to meet, chat and socialise; *Sports Facilities* throughout the weekend will include the new Swimming Pool. All the usual regular events, and activities for the 'non-sporty'.



SOSA Postcards: to celebrate our Centenary, the Committee has commissioned our very own SOSA postcard, linking the past with the present Measuring 6" x 4", you can buy them at SOSA functions, or by post. Available in sets of ten cards: price £3.50, plus 50p post and packing (£1.00 Europe, £1.50 all other world destinations); cheques with order please, payable to SOSA in £sterling. Order from the Magazine Editor, Ann Bond, address page 48.

# SIBFORD DEVELOPMENT APPEAL 2001-2002

*An appraisal written for Old Scholars by Diana Paine, Sibford School Marketing Director.*

The Sibford Development Appeal has had a wonderful year. All the hard work raising funds since the launch of the Appeal in October 2000 has already made an enormous impact on the school.

On 7th December, 2001 the new arts facility was officially opened by the artist, MacKenzie Thorpe. The school mustered in the sculpture park awaiting the moment and as he and Sue Freestone walked out onto the little balcony above their heads a spontaneous cheer rose up from the crowd.



After short speeches the pupils, parents and friends toured the new building and marvelled at the light, airy interior, spacious Mackenzie Thorpe gallery, roomy textile studio, fully equipped pottery, sculpture room and art studio.

The steep roofed gallery has already hosted many events including the national summer meeting of SHMIS (Society of Heads of Independent Schools) of which Sue Freestone is chairman this year. There has been a Gala Dinner for the Banbury Fine Arts Society, a performance by our junior school, Orchard Close, of a Victorian play in full costume and countless displays of all the art, ceramics, textiles and sculptures produced by the pupils.



The music facility was officially opened on 18th January, 2002 by Richard Stilgoe. It was a bitter, windy day but the Sibfordian spirit resisted bravely. The pupils were rehearsed by Richard Stilgoe for a performance of his original piece of choral

music composed for the event. Again there followed a tour of the new building with its individual practice rooms, class rooms, recording studio and ensemble room.

There is never a moment without activity in the music facility - choir practice, instrumental classes, music theory sessions and performances. The ensemble room is also used for examinations, meetings and school Open Mornings. Its cheery yellow interior and steep roof give it a warm, welcoming atmosphere for any event.

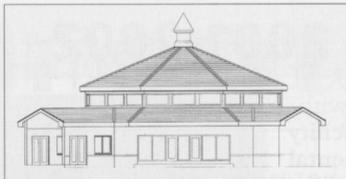


If you look out of the windows of the music block you will catch sight of the latest addition to Sibford, thanks to the Development Appeal: the 25 metre long swimming pool. The hole in the ground was soon transformed with tall, arched beams and these have already been covered with roofing material and insulated walls. The project is on target for the official opening in February 2003.



The Appeal does not stop here. We already have a number of fundraising events planned for 2002-2003 - a Christmas Craft Fair, another Golf Day, a horse riding event and much more besides. The aim now is to raise the funds (£2 million) to furnish Sibford School, the local community and the Quaker fraternity with a brand new meeting hall (designed with the help of Old Sibford Scholar, Peter McCurdy - of Globe Theatre fame) with a green oak, timber frame. The plans are also well advanced for the transformation of the present school hall into a theatre befitting the high quality of performance by the school's drama students, large scale musical performances and open lectures and productions.

***Old Scholars: Enclosed with this issue is a brochure updating you on the progress of the Appeal. If you would like to discuss how you can make a contribution - whether in kind or in cash - please call Diana Paine on 01295 788092 or Email: [appeal@sibfordschool.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:appeal@sibfordschool.fsworld.co.uk).***



# You Can Make a

**Help  
still  
needed!**

**Help  
still  
needed!**

New  
Swimming Pool.  
Opening  
February 2003  
only part funded



New Music  
School and  
New Art Block  
completed  
Autumn 2001  
•  
Fully funded



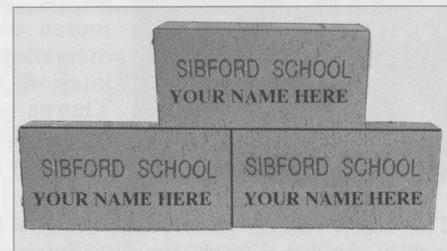
Fund-raising is a long, slow process! A project as imaginative and worthwhile as that envisaged by the School Committee cannot happen without the support and commitment of everyone devoted to Sibford. Many people have worked tirelessly helping to provide the new Music/Arts Facilities and the soon-to-be-commissioned Swimming Pool; but the heart of a Quaker School must be its Meeting Place. Sibford does not have such a facility, or at least it does not have a *welcoming* auditorium where the whole school can meet together for worship or other collective functions. Which is why the idea of a versatile, octagonal Meeting Hall was conceived. It is designed to be functional; it will be beautiful and it will provide sufficient working space for large-scale concerts, dramatic and other creative performances. **But it may never be built!** We need to raise over six hundred thousand pounds.

The School, and also the P.S.F.A, are organising corporate 'events' and activities; and a few SOSA members are slaving individually towards this next target. Many OS have 'given' already, and are continuing to do so by supporting Appeal activities. You, personally, may not be able to hand over a small fortune, but YOU CAN STILL HELP in any or all of the following ways.

**Come to Appeal events**, or actively participate in some way - the following projects are currently being discussed: Sibford Sponsored Slim - Jan; Opening of the New Pool - Feb (N.B. 'Slim to Swim!'); Antique Valuation Day - March; Horse Riding

Event - May; Venture Portrait Studio - modern family portraits; Pet Show - June; School Open Day and Sports Day - June; Golf Day - Sept; Country Dancing - Oct. Keep in touch with progress on these and other events through the SOSA newsletter - you can register by e-mailing either: [sosaneews@aol.com](mailto:sosaneews@aol.com), or [appeal@sibfordschool.fsworld.co.uk](mailto:appeal@sibfordschool.fsworld.co.uk)

**Buy a P.S.F.A 'Appeal Brick'** to raise the final funds for the new swimming pool, and cement your name into the fabric of the school.



Brick 'pavers' cost £35.00 each and can have a maximum of 14 characters plus a date chiselled into the surface. More details and an application form from:

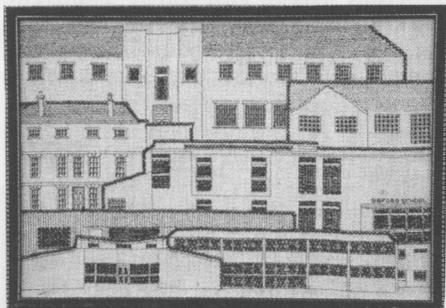
[Peter.Neighbour@fountainsplc.com](mailto:Peter.Neighbour@fountainsplc.com)

**Support the SOSA 'Silver Mile'**. We have already raised £2,320.70 and are thus over half-way to our target of £4,500.00 in just 18 months (it would be so good to be able to hand over the balance during our Centenary Year). So we still need 43,586 five-pence pieces! *Everyone* can save. Challenge yourself. Pledge a certain 'small change' target each month. If you use credit or debit cards to pay bills, round up the amount you are paying

# Difference: Support the Appeal!

and put these small amounts into a 'pledge fund'. If you can't attend Reunions, convert your 'collection' into a cheque made out to SOSA, and send it to Ann Bond (address page 48) by 1st June, 2003. And then go on collecting. Thankyou to all those who are already helping with this initiative. It's so painless and so easy.

## The 'Southam Embroidery'.



Buy this beautiful work of art - a black-work collage of Sibford 'buildings', created and stitched on linen by **Jeanne Southam**, and now generously donated to raise Appeal Funds by her husband, Vaughan. We do not know what 'reserve' Vaughan has set on this lovely piece of work, but we are auctioning it through these pages. It measures 17in. x 12in. and is mounted and framed, ready to hang on your wall. Send us your **auction bids** (name, address, phone and/or e-mail, plus the amount you are bidding) in a SEALED envelope labelled 'Embroidery' to Cindy Poulton, General Secretary (address page 48), by 1st March, 2003.

**A Gift after Death:** if you haven't

already done so, please include the School's Appeal Fund in your Will, so that your name will be remembered within the spiritual heart of Sibford, to whom we all owe so much.

A last word on the Meeting Hall. It will be *the* focal point for the school and has been designed in conjunction with old scholar, Peter McCurdy (1962-67) to utilise 'Green Oak Technology'. (G.O.T is 21st century jargon for what the first Elizabethans did five hundred years ago!) The system was used in the construction of the new Globe Theatre, for which Peter's company was responsible.

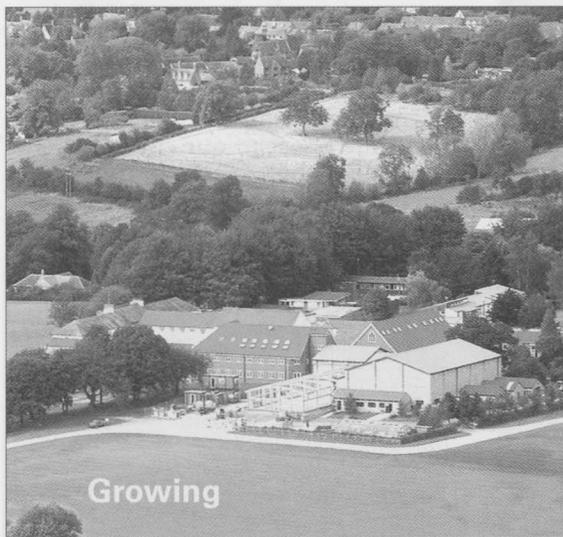
Oak is the embodiment of strength and substance, endurance and worth; good images to associate with a Quaker school founded 160 years ago, with a strong horticultural connection

and set in the heart of the English countryside.



Growing

As we in SOSA celebrate our Centenary, let us all, - each one of us, help to ensure that the new Meeting Hall becomes a reality.



Growing



Waiting

# WALKING FOR SIBFORD

## Leslie Baily Address

*(given at the August Reunion, 2002)*

The development appeal has encouraged people to look for suitable ways of raising money. The impetus for our project came when we noticed signs that had appeared outside the school dining room marking the D'Arcy Dalton Way. From the appropriate guide book, we discovered that this long distance path was 66 miles long and encompassed the length of Oxfordshire. Arthur suggested it as a sponsored walk and I was pleased to join him.



Originally we intended to undertake the walk at Easter, but the foot and mouth epidemic caused us to delay it. At the August Old Scholars 2001 Reunion we set a new date of October 5th. We started at the northern end at Wormleighton



Reservoir in Warwickshire, about 9 miles north of Banbury. The first day was a day of contrasts, quiet villages, a noisy (very noisy) motorway, wide expansive views across the Sor Brook valley, the extensive well maintained Farnborough estate, the abandoned decayed cricket pavilion on the same estate. Our first night was spent at Yarn Hill farm near the village of Epwell.

Next day we passed through the village of Shenington where we observed the only cottage on the route which was being thatched. We crossed Yarn Hill Farm close by the farm house and then passed through the village of Epwell.

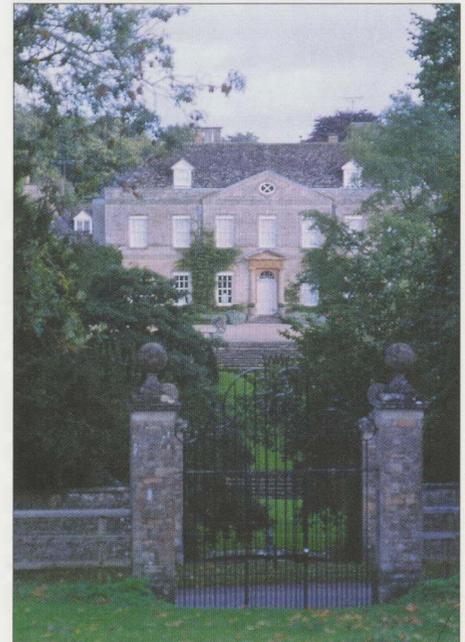


Lunch time found us at a pre-arranged rendezvous at the Bishops Blaize in Burdrop. Several Old Scholars met us there at "lunch time", travelling from as far afield as Birmingham and St Albans. It was a welcome boost to our efforts. One of the Old Scholars, Pat Grimes, is a member of School Committee which was also meeting at the same time. An



excellent excuse for us all to walk across the valley to Sibford and the school to deliver her to and greet the Committee. Arthur and I then continued on our way.

Our next three nights were spent with our friends, and Old Scholars, Mike and Wendy Finch in Churchill near Chipping Norton in a cottage typical of the area. Our walk continued through the villages of Hook Norton, Great and Little Rollright, with a distant view of the stones. We were grateful of the church at Salford for its shelter whilst we partook of our lunch during the rain. We were now entering an area of one time, and occasionally still, estate villages.

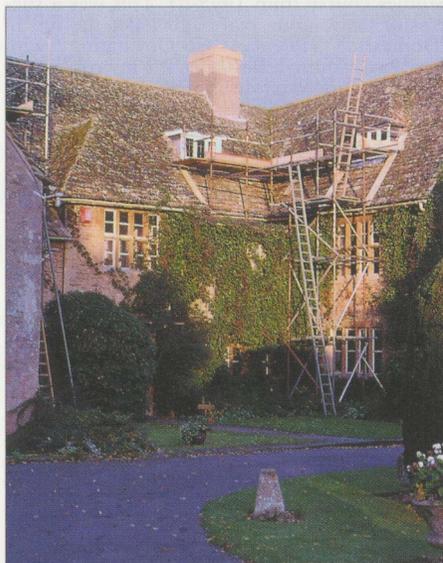


Cornwell is one, and looked as if life had changed little. It is picturesque

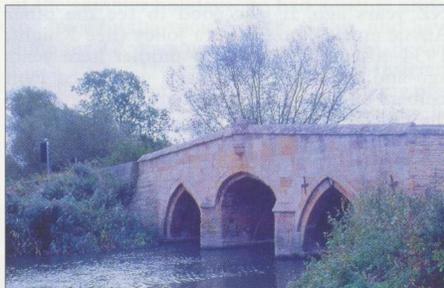
and inviting till you read the "No Access" notices.

This was an area in which there had been wealth. A look at the churches showed how much. Some were quite simple, others had more elaborate spires and more decoration cut into the stonework. All that we saw were uncluttered, plain and well maintained. Quite acceptable to a Quaker eye.

We crossed an area of open countryside with the potential of being bleak in poor weather before descending to cross the River Windrush between Great and Little Barrington. These villages together with Westwell and Holwell gave us a very pleasant afternoon.



We now had two nights at Charney Manor. Arthur is a trustee there and made the arrangements for us. Much to her surprise we met Pat here again. At Radcot we used the crossing point of the River Thames that has been used for thousands of years, one of the present bridges dating from the 13th century. After the undulations of the



Cotswolds we found the Upper Thames valley a little flat and not as interesting, but still a good pleasant walk.

We continued through the fringes of Buscot Park (now in National Trust ownership) and glimpsed a little of its grounds. The long straight tree lined drive rather surprised us, as it led not to the house but one of the estate farms. At this farm we met the only genuine foot and mouth restrictions.

The last day had interest of its own. When we arrived at the village of Longcote we heard the church bell and expected to see a wedding, but had to draw the conclusion that mid morning was their time for bell-ringing practice. For most of the day we could see our destination on the skyline, the Berkshire Downs with the Ridgeway. In due course we could see the White Horse near Uffington close



by the end of our walk. We crossed the well-groomed estate of Compton Beauchamp, which was made all the more pleasant by the absence of the forbidding notices. By mid afternoon we started the final ascent up the Berkshire Downs and once we reached the Ridgeway it was only a short distance to the end of the walk at Waylands Smithy.

Here Arthur and I had one of the



most pleasant surprises of the walk. Some of our friends who had met us at the Blaize in Burdrop were there to welcome us. Not only that, but in a nearby car park champagne was waiting for us to complete the celebration. Being Sibford Old Scholars, the celebration and the walk were completed with a Rocket!

*Russell Steed (1955-61)  
& Arthur Harrison (1934-38)*

*To date, Arthur and Russell have raised £3,200.00 towards the Appeal - a magnificent effort.*

*More contributions will help to swell their total.*

*Russell's address is on page 48.*

**Maggie Vella** (née Smith, 1946-53) e-mailed: I live in the 'City of North Vancouver' (not to be confused with 'North Vancouver District Municipality'), on the north side of the Burrard Inlet, the natural deep water harbour which provided a grain, timber and minerals shipping terminal for the trans-Canada railway. I moved here with my husband in late 1978, from Toronto, and we had a very pleasant little house, which I sold after his death in 1998, to buy a 'condominium apartment' about 1km downhill. Now, I am really at the heart of this community, about 100m from the main intersection, surrounded by banks, two supermarkets, small ethnic (mostly Persian) fruit and vegetable shops, a couple of post offices, coffee bars, restaurants (Thai, Indian, Cantonese / Szechuanese, Japanese - even a McDonald's!). The hospital, police station and fire department are all within 500m! I can get to my choice of two swimming beaches in ten minutes by car or twenty minutes by bus. In winter, the local indoor pool is only five minutes walk away. My two-bedroom unit, (one, I use as an 'office') is in a 'secure' concrete building."  
*turtles@telus.net*

**Moritz Von Hulsen** (19??-2000) e-mailed: "After finishing at Sibford I took a course in Hospitality Business Management at the Birmingham College of Food, where I finished the first year without a problem which gave me the necessary basis to start my second year of studies in Berlin (Germany). I am undertaking my practical year here in the famous Hotel Adlon next to the Brandenburger Gate. The past six months have been full of ups and downs and sprinkled with a handshake of some famous people from industry, politics, sports and show biz. After this practical year I will upgrade my current course to a Bachelor of Arts which means I might be in England for another two or three years."  
*moritzvhulsen@hotmail.com*

**Nan Williamson** (née Edwards, 1949-52) wrote: "Although I have never been to any OS reunions - and initially that was due to a career in nursing with little time off, then marriage and young children - I always look forward to the magazine and reading of the various activities. My magazine is then passed on to my brother, Martyn Edwards who was also at Sibford."

**Jennifer Wilson** (née Lamb, 1940-45) e-mailed "Thankyou for a very interesting magazine - I need to go through it again a.s.a.p now Christmas is over and enjoy it all over again. I was interested in a mention of Eleanor Blunsom. I am in touch with Jean who is the widow of my late cousin Bernard Blunsom. Jean and Bernard used to call by en-route to

NZ years ago. It was good to see the other Aussie entries too. Monica Jolley (née Knight, 1934-40) used to visit my mother here years ago and we are in touch; and we visited Pam Gilbert once in SA. So you are helping renew the ties! We had a good Christmas, the weather was lovely. I wonder if you had snow? Our gum trees had white bunches of blossom - our White Christmas." *jenrose@iinet.net.au*

**Janet Winn** (née Savage, 1949-53) wrote from Western Australia: "Many thanks for the magazine. I really do enjoy catching up with everyone, but sorry to find that a few of my era are turning up in the 'Remembrance' column. Here's wishing you all a very happy Christmas. Whilst you are around your fires we are trying to keep cool. I still keep in touch with a couple of OS (Maggie Boaden, née Samuel, and Brenda Hale, née Darling). My best wishes to everyone who might remember me."

**Otto Wolf** (1939-45) e-mailed, also from Australia: "The 2001 Magazine was one of the best I have read and the colour pictures were very excellent. Certainly the information on members overseas is a good idea and I was rather flattered in having my own written up. This year I have been working three days a week and as I will be 74 years in September I will definitely be retiring. The weather here has been very dry with very little rain this winter and everyone in the country is very concerned. In fact last Friday and Saturday the temperature reached 18°C and the Wattle trees are already flowering, I am keeping well and hopefully one day I will make a reunion. Best wishes and regards to all who know me and send a card each year." *ottow@alphalink.com.au*

**Suzannah Wright** (left 2002) e-mailed: "I would like to receive the newsletter. I hope to go to Sussex University to study Social Anthropology and Development Studies in September 2003. In my year off I am planning to go to Bordeaux for 3 months, to improve my French. From January onwards I am going to Sierra Leone where my dad lives and works. There I have an internship with UNHCR (UN refugee council)."

## News of 'non-members'

**Nicholas Cross** (1968-73): "I have found quite a few of my class mates and others through e-mail, namely Robert King, Simon Fiddler and Graham Downer. We have been chatting over the internet and hope to meet up soon with regards to joining up to SOSA. If I get to come to the OS day I may consider that." Nick is also trying to contact other class-mates of 1972: Colin Naylor, Trevor Roberts and William Waterfall. *westienick@hotmail.com*

**Peter Fielden** (1940-44): "I left Sibford aged 14 to move to Bromsgrove School. Since then I have remained in teaching and eventually arrived back at Bromsgrove to teach! I suppose I ought to join SOSA. Are there names from the War Period? My classmates were Stephen Wall, Brian Cashin, Mike Parker, John Line (an actor) and not forgetting Paul Eddington of course, Ian Beer, one of the Lamb family (was it Vivian?). I remember Ann Sweatman and her sister Jane, Jean Davidson, Eileen Bowmer, and others." *pfielden@bromsgrove-school.co.uk*

**Anna Green** (née Foster, 1965-70) e-mailed: "I have two children, now aged 25 and 28. I live in Saltaire West Yorkshire, about five miles from the centre of Bradford near the River Aire, canal & moorland. I went back to college as a 'mature student' (I was all of 27!) after I moved here and did a degree in Organisation Studies at Bradford College. I went on to be a CAB volunteer then got a job in Welfare Rights advice work which I did for 10 years. In an attempt to change track, I took a Diploma in Management Studies course from 1995-97. This was a successful tactic: four years ago I got the job of 'Domestic Violence Co-Ordinator' with Bradford Council. Basically, it's my role to co-ordinate work to tackle domestic violence in the District. I work with agencies - statutory (Council, Police, Probation, Health) and voluntary - who deliver services to women (and children). I convene meetings and task groups, establish support projects, devise policies and strategies. I don't have a budget and there's just me - though I have close links with the Community Safety Team."  
*annaluceya@blueyonder.co.uk*

**Sheila Harding** (née Charles, 1973-76) has just e-mailed us: "I was a pupil at Sibford leaving in July 1976 having been the first day pupil to be elected to Head of Penn House. My niece Amy Charles is currently a pupil in the sixth form. I have recently completed a BSc(Hons) degree in Health and Community Practice - School Nursing Pathway. Classification: 2:1; University of study: University of the West of England, Bristol. Study undertaken as a full time seconded student from North Somerset Primary Health Care Trust from September 2001 to September 2002. I have now returned to my post as a Senior School Health Nurse in Weston-super-Mare."  
*sheila15@supanet.com*

**Clare Hunton** (née Holland, 1960-65) e-mailed "I am writing in response to an email I received today from Philip Manasseh. My mother mentioned to him that I had reunited with two old boyfriends (also old scholars), in Australia, this summer; you might be interested." *huntonclare@hotmail.com*

**Adriana Hyland** (née Sanchez Reyes, 1983-1988) e-mailed: "Gerardo (Sanchez Reyes) is my brother; I am visiting him this weekend and will be popping in to Sibford on Saturday, so I may see you all then."  
*adrianahyland@aol.com*

**Denise Johnston** (née Davis, 1972-76) e-mailed "yes, I would like to join SOSA and it is just a case of not getting round to it. Can you do this with a visa number on-line?"  
*johnston.athome.virgin.net*

**Sarah Kramer** (née Baxter, 1971-75) e-mailed that she would love to catch up with some of her friends from the past - her nickname was 'Potty'. She is now settling into a new life in Utah (USA) after over six years in Florida and says, "I am enjoying the running here away from the humid climes of the deep south and feeling a lot better in competition. I have been blessed to win all three races I entered although they have been quite low key but very hilly!"  
*sk26two@eirthlink.net*

**Amanda Lawson** (1971-1973) emailed that she had been looking at the school web site and "thought I would drop you a line. I live in Perth, Western Australia and have done so on and off since leaving England in 1973. I would like to know if there was any way I could contact anyone who was at the school in the years I attended. I can't remember people's names, but my house was Lister."  
*pinkcat@bigpond.com*

**Tony Loomis-Price** (0000-00) and his wife sent a moving newsletter from New Jersey, USA at the end of 2001 saying: "we are long overdue in thanking our far-flung family and friends for the dozens of calls, notes, emails, and prayers that meant so much to us during the week of September 11th. Tony witnessed the entire World Trade Centre disaster from the windows of his office building, and was numb for days. I saw plumes of smoke rise in the sky, and sat with anguished neighbours while they waited for calls from husbands and sisters. Ali (our daughter) was perplexed by the glorious weather that day - how could such horror happen, while the flowers just stood there, looking so pretty?"  
*loomis-price@erols.com*

**Julie Moxey** (née Chalmers, 1971-76) e-mailed asking for details about SOSA and any reunions that may be happening.  
*crofthead\_pa@hotmail.com*

**Dafyd Litster Powell-Palaisis** (????-??) e-mailed "I've been back several times, especially in the years just after leaving, and then again with my daughter 'Jacaranda' (now 12 years old). Arriving up the gated road in the middle

of the summer holidays, we had a picnic under the trees by the sports shack. I live, and have done for 12 years now, in Germany, in Berlin. I'm a Father-Houseman and also a Musician. My 'Whistle' and my 'Vocal cords' are my preferred instruments, but I can sometimes be tempted to play the 'Window', 'Drainage Pipes', Corrugated Cardboard and several percussion instruments. I show how improvised music, theatrics and Clowneree could change lives."  
*Dafyd@gmx.net*

**Fiona Smart** (née Richardson, 1974-81) e-mailed the School in June (forwarded to SOSA): "I and some similarly vintage old scholars would like to reunite on your open day and have a picnic on the field with our children (or in the hall if it is raining). I would like to check if this is OK? We would love to take a fond trip down memory lane and look around the school, if the headmistress is comfortable with this."  
*Fi.Smart@btopenworld*

**Jackie Tan** (née Howell, 1961-68) e-mailed: "Sorry didn't make it down for 'open day'; had to cover work for a colleague. I like the newsletter to keep abreast of news; good idea. Will keep in touch now able to do so. Can we do SOSA subscription on line? I think, for a lot of us, it has made it easier to make contact through "friends re-united" then ask ourselves why we didn't stay in contact with our school in the first place. It is always difficult to go back if one didn't do immediately and a lot of us in those years didn't. Maybe we can now get the courage to visit, after all this time, wondering why we didn't do it before."  
*JckTan@aol.com*

**Ruth Threapleton** (née Haines, 1946-51) e-mailed: my brother, David, has continually attended Old Scholars since he left, but I haven't as I have lived abroad in New Zealand and Australia. After leaving Sibford, I attended The Roan School for Girls in Greenwich, London and then embarked on a long nursing career. After training in Halifax, I went to NZ for four years and have been in Australia since 1967. I have held several administrative positions in large teaching hospitals. Finally I worked as Occupational Health Consultant for General Motors in South Australia. Ten years ago I went into the Ordained Ministry of the Uniting Church in Australia (mysteriously I am still a Friend as Adelaide Meeting was loath to let me go!). I am currently working on my doctorate and work in a large country parish - I am the only minister in a very large area of approx 300x350 km, with six churches.  
*ruthsyvia@yahoo.com.au*

**Thomas Venour** (1974-79) e-mailed: "I wonder if you might be able to help. I am trying

to find a way of contacting two old friends called Robert and Andrew Egbuna, who were with me at school; they may have gone to America".  
*Thomas.tvenour@virgin.net*

**Chris Walker** (1982-86) emailed asking for details of the Open Day reunion. He has been back to the School a few times since leaving and was instrumental this year in 'collecting' together many of his contemporaries for the August 2002 Reunion - it was good to see so many of these.

**Paul Waterhouse** (1969-74) e-mailed the School asking for a direct e-mail address for SOSA.  
*conchtec@hotmail.com*

**Neil Williams** (0000-00) e-mailed: "Kay and I will miss not being at Sibford for this year's reunion. For me it's only been five or six years, but for Kay (Böhm) it's quite odd not to be planning and co-ordinating with her Mum and Dad (Lorraine née Quinton, 1940-44, & Philip Brown). I can't try to imagine how they feel. It's the end of an era. The newsletter is a great idea; for many people like me, e-mail has become the primary medium. Good luck with the 'Hub'."  
*Neil.Williams@xanza.com*

**Jonathan Woodcock** (1979-1985) e-mailed: "At the moment I'm doing therapeutic work with an organisation called Workspace which is part of a mental health charity called Making Space. It involves using a sewing machine which can be programmed to embroider patterns which go onto horse blankets. I'm also hoping to move into a council or housing association flat at some point in the near future. As regards a career I'm not sure what I'll end up doing, but I would like to get in touch with Hugh Stirling."  
*jwoodcock10@yahoo.co.uk*

*We don't always hear direct from former pupils, but it's good to learn that some stay in touch with the School. The following message was passed on to us by Sue Freestone: "Mrs Freestone, just to say a huge thank you for letting us reminisce in the school today. Please say thank you to Liz for being such a patient and informative guide. Many thanks once again." Maureen Armstrong, Janet Neal & Jude Canning (all 1963-68).*

**Keep the News Flowing:**  
Copy date for the 2003 magazine is July 31st 2003. News items should be sent to the Editor, Ann Bond (address and e-mail, page 48).

# The Writing on the Wall . . . .



Photograph of 'The Old School' taken about 1900

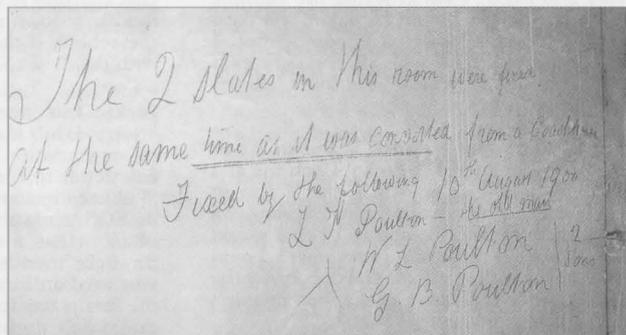
When I was a scholar at Sibford I hardly noticed the bricked up archway on the front of the Old School. I attached little significance to it and just accepted it as an unusual feature. In more recent times, I did wonder why it was there and the reason for some unusual air vents on either side of the window.

This last year, I have been taking photographs before the building left our ownership. I became more curious about this feature. I photocopied the plans from a brochure produced for the sale. As there was an archway on the front of the building, I assumed that this had formed an access way through as does the archway that we are all familiar with. Which archway came first? The whole of this part of the building was obviously built at the same time, so both archways were probably of the same date. On the yard side of the building there was no evidence that an archway ever existed, except for the one we know. Besides, the small room across from where it would have been, which I knew as the surgery, appeared to have been built at the same time, part of the 1848 extension. I put it down to a Sibford eccentricity and carried on with my photography.

Then last January, I heard that a blackboard had been removed and writing had been discovered on the wall behind. Would I be interested in taking photographs? Yes. I did not know exactly where it was until I got there, except it was in the music school. On arrival I found it was in the room behind this curious bricked up arch. The inscription, in pencil, read: "The 2 slates in this room were fixed at the same time as it was converted from a coach house. Fixed by the following 10th August 1900, L T Poulton the old man, W L Poulton G B Poulton, 2 sons." Who were

the Poultons in the inscription? An email to Cindy soon gave the answer. L T was Lewis Thomas, Cindy's great grandfather. W L was William Lewis, Cindy's grandfather, and G B was George, William's brother.

So this room had originally been a coach house. That explains the dressed stone arch; carriages would have been expensive and needed looking after properly. The room is 17'7" x 15'1", so the coach could not have been very big; about the size of a modern medium-sized car. I looked through past SOSA magazines for clues. The 1984 magazine cover has a picture taken in 1884 of the front of the building. Disappointment, the coach house doors are obscured by the ivy. But, a surprise, the window next to the archway is not there. The present



window blends so well with the rest of the building that it does not raise any curiosity. Could this have been inserted in 1900, when the coach house was converted? Both the window and door on the yard side have modern concrete lintels and I can see no trace of previous windows. I cannot visualise this room without windows, so I speculate that it was probably for a gatekeeper. He could check and help all trades who called, he could watch all that went on in the yard, which, at that time, would have been very agricultural. The whole of this wing (either side of our known archway) appears to have been built at the same time. The section which was last used as an art studio and in earlier times was the school hall started as an open fronted barn.

The 1986-87 magazine gave more answers. It has a picture from the 1880's showing the coach house with its doors. The doors appear to be in sections with one that can be opened to give pedestrian access. Maybe it was just used as storage for tools and materials, or even a donkey cart. Talking to other Old Scholars revealed the purpose of the room between the coach house and the archway. It never had any windows on either side, it was a coal store with access from the archway. So the 1848 extension included a coach house and a coal store. In 1900, the coach house was converted into a class room; over forty years later the coal store was converted into a staff room. In due course both were absorbed into the music school. And now?

Russell Steed (1955-61)

# SIBFORD OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION

## Minutes of Annual General Meeting

**Date & Time: 10.00am on Monday 26th August, 2002 Venue: Sibford Friends' School Attendees: 44**

Simon Barfoot welcomed Old Scholars and Guests to the Meeting.

**1. Greetings Received:** Simon Barfoot reported that Best Wishes for the Reunion had been received from many individuals including: Andrew & Clare Finch, Mary Mascaro, Hugh Gibson, Jimmy Setna, Mavis Stiles & family, Des & Margaret Rose, Anne Muir, Hugh & Daphne Maw, Jane Gunsten, David Haines, Mike Ladell, Janet & Joe Sewell, Ruth Jones, Derek Gaffee, Anthony Hill, Irene Yarwood-Tester, Stephen Burt, Kageha Marshall, Pauline Hooper, Fred & Erica Sessa, Philip & Janet Manasseh, Philip & Loraine Brown, Kay Bohm & Neil Williams, Roger & Ann Baily, Otto Wolf, Elizabeth Bent, Jennifer Wilson, Rainer Josenhanss, William Norgrove, Jim Hilling, June Ellis, Stephen Bunney & family and June Baily.

**2. Obituaries:** The meeting observed a short silence to remember the lives of: Bernard Aylward, Louie Bagley, Elin Baily, Mary Blashko, Eric Brown, June Dawson (née Ladell), Geoffrey Gaze\*, John Gilchrist, Albert Griffiths, Geoff Higgins, Eva Horwood (née Roy), Winfred Hyde (née Nicholl)\*, Margaret Keeble (née Ewan), Hilda Lissaman, Olive Moriarty (née Edwards), Neville Nicholls\*, Harold Pugmire, Gwen Rowntree, Pauline Sagar (née Covington), Rachel Smith (née Eavis) Miriam Tebbs, Leslie Tucker\*, Oliver Walker (née Bennett) and Ethel Wright\*. (*\*A tribute to these friends appeared in last year's Magazine*).

**3. Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting:** The minutes were approved unchanged and signed by the President as a correct record of the meeting.

#### 4. REPORTS:

##### a) General Secretary's Report:

*Presented by Lucinda Poulton*

Following a very successful Reunion last August the General Committee has met for four very full meetings. Each time we arrived at the School the rapid changes with the building

developments were always an astonishment to us.

Membership and Finance issues have dominated the meetings and there has been great concern over both matters. The financial side of things I will leave for the Treasurer's Report to be presented later in the meeting.

Membership of the Association stands at 750. In the last year there have been 12 new members, unfortunately only four of these were recent leavers. However 33 members have been removed following no response to three notifications that their membership had lapsed, 29 of these were young members. A major concern is that over the next three years we have the potential of losing one third of our total membership as there are 227 ten-year memberships that will reach maturity and if the current trend continues these individuals will not re-subscribe to the Association membership. We have 56 fully subscribed members whose addresses are unknown: a list has been posted on the SOSA Noticeboard in the foyer. We would be grateful if you could cast an eye over the list and if you know any contact addresses please let Raymond Bond know.

Ann Bond has continued to work tirelessly as the Magazine Editor and co-ordinator of the SMAG sub-group. This group has been concentrating on three aspects of the 'blue-print task sheet'. Those areas have been leavers, lapsed members and promotion of the Association to former pupils other than recent leavers and ex-staff. SOSA has continued to promote itself through the School Magazine and a SOSA Magazine was sent to all parents and staff. We had an increased presence this year at the School Open Day in June, which was extremely successful and very well attended, despite it's clash with one of England's matches in the World Cup, viewing was provided! The SMAG sub-group needs to be revisited in both its membership and ongoing objectives and discussion is to take place at the next General Committee Meeting. If anybody is interested in campaigning for members and would like to work with this group without having to commit to regular meetings, (a lot of the communi-

cation takes place by e-mail or phone) then please speak to Ann.

**Other matters:** This was our second year of 'The Sibford Rocket' Magazine and I am sure you will agree with me that it was once again a full and varied production. Your Committee has this year given support to a sixth form student, through the Special Reserve Fund, to assist the individual in joining a trip to Barcelona as part of their curriculum studies. Unfortunately the wall at the Elm garden was collapsing but this has been repaired. Last year an oversight occurred and the Geoffrey Long Book Prize was not awarded. In order to rectify this two awards were made this year: the first to Iona White from Orchard Close for 'B is for Boarding' and the second to Mark Walls for 'Fire' - these can both be seen in the most recent edition of 'Sibfordian', the School Magazine. On the last Sunday before Easter the School versus Old Scholars annual football match took place under the keen eye of referee Brian Holliday, who informs me that it was one of the best matches he can recall, ending in a score which reflected the match - a 2-2 draw. Work has already begun on the planning of next year's Reunion as it will be the Association's Centenary Year - don't forget to encourage others to come along.

I would like to encourage members of the Association to talk to Committee Members about the work of the Committee. We are always looking for nominations as positions become vacant and I would like you to give some thought to one major vacancy that will be occurring next year. In August 2003, Mike Finch's term of Office as Treasurer is complete and Mike has already notified his official intention that he will not stand for this Office again. So if any of you have an interest or background in finance and would like to consider the post, I suggest that you have a chat with Mike this week-end to find out more.

Finally I would like to close by thanking all members of the Committee for their ongoing support, hard work and dedication to the Association.

## **b) Branch Reports:**

### **Midlands -** *Presented by Hilary Haddleton*

The Annual New Year gathering took place on Saturday January 26th 2002, at Selly Oak Meeting House. After a cold buffet lunch a preview of 'A Walk through Oxfordshire' was given by Russell Steed and the afternoon ended with Rockets. The Branch's next New Year Party will be on Saturday January 25th 2003 at Selly Oak Meeting House. All are welcome. Please contact Hilary Haddleton, 0121-705-0462.

### **London -**

*Presented by Pat Grimes*

Early in December London Branch met for the day at the Grimes' home in St. Albans for the annual Advent Gathering. Nineteen Old Scholars squeezed into the house and somehow, after lunch, they managed to find enough space for Stafford Steed's projector. They even all managed to see the collection of views taken by Russell on the sponsored walk that Arthur and he had done for the Sibford Appeal earlier in the Autumn. Arthur and Russell were on hand to give a running commentary of the event which so impressed everyone that further donations were collected that afternoon! The day finished with a cup of tea and a cryptic quiz supplied by John and Doreen Taylor. The Branch's Advent Gathering this year will be on Saturday 7th December in St. Albans. If you would like to join them for all or part of the day and are not on the mailing list please give Pat & Chris Grimes a call on 01727 850521.

On Friday 18th October London Branch will be hosting a Fund Raising event in St. Albans Friends' Meeting House for the Sibford Appeal. Stafford Steed has a wonderful collection of his audio twin dissolve sequences to show and will be presenting them under the title 'My World'. You may remember seeing some of Stafford's work several years ago at Russell's Presidential Choice. They were amazing then - Russell says they are even more amazing now. It is hoped to have a sell out. If it goes well Stafford is prepared to present a show elsewhere.

### **c) School Committee Representative Report:**

*Presented by Russell Steed*

All year we have been coping with the consequences of a very full school. I have never known the numbers to be so high. The boarding accommodation has been full, and re-arrange-

ments are made to make the very fullest use of our limited space. Nearly every form has been full. This has arisen in part due to the closure of Arden Lawn School at Henley in Arden, a school similar in many respects to Sibford. We continue into next year with waiting lists for many parts of the school and with a very healthy demand. This of course has had an effect on the cash flows. With a full school there is a lot of money coming in, but there are also greater demands for expenditure. The Education subcommittee has considered the size of the school because of this rapid increase. They were concerned that numbers should be so great that they could not meet together and that the Head would not be able to know each pupil. They recommended that the size, including Orchard Close, should not exceed 460. Our present size is about 370.

One feature of school life which I find amazing, is the travelling. Over recent years a network of bus travel has developed for our children. When I was here I lived just south of Birmingham, a distance of 35 miles, and was a boarder. Now children travel this distance daily from the same area, catching the coach at Henley in Arden. The coach is nearly full by the time it arrives at Sibford, its last pick up being Shipston on Stour.

The early fruits of the appeal are now apparent. The Music and Art Schools came into use in the autumn term. The Art School was officially opened by artist MacKenzie Thorpe last December and the Music School by musician Richard Stilgoe last January. Both occasions were well attended and enjoyed by all. Sue received a spontaneous cheer from the pupils before the opening of the Art School just by appearing on the balcony. The swimming pool is now being dug and is due to be opened at half term in the Spring. The hall is starting on the next stage. The original architects are no longer with us, so the initial ideas are being reviewed. Peter McCurdy, the Old Scholar who helped build the Globe theatre, is still involved and the intention is still to build in green oak.

The Appeal next. It is going slowly at present. We have enough to start the pool, but completion will be with the assistance of a loan. The old school now no longer belongs to us and does not appear to have been missed. Everyone is now working in the Hill complex and has no reason to go near the old building. Swann Hill

started their development there in January and part of the building has been demolished. Open Day felt coherent with everyone in one place and not spread between the Hill and the Old School. All the facilities from the Old School have now been relocated. The swimming pool I have mentioned. The horticulture has been placed behind the peace garden and has started again with a fresh piece of ground. The laundry is now located behind the sports hall in a smart looking "garden shed".

There is still a lot of work being done on the existing buildings. The new buildings made the existing Hill building look very poor. A coat of paint on some of the walls facing the new buildings has made a marked improvement as well as toning down the difference. The main hall has had a coat of paint and it now looks more inviting but still the roof lets the water in. A major refurbishment programme of the school's buildings has started and will take 10 years to complete. Some things will be obvious, double glazing and a new roof on the Hill. Others will not be seen but will be just as important, such as the removal of the old tanks in the Hill roof space. Now that the Hill building is only used during the day in the week instead of its former continual 24 hours daily use, the heating system is not suitable, it is also very old. This is to be replaced with a more efficient system.

These changes and improvements in appearance are improving the school's image in the locality. The perception of the school is changing, helped in no small measure by Sue's activities in the community. I hear encouraging reports from sources outside the School. There was a very complimentary, almost full spread, article in the Daily Telegraph.

Other changes within the school include the ending of boarding in Orchard Close. The dormitory accommodation here is being changed into teaching facilities. The few children that board for Orchard Close are being accommodated elsewhere, such as the Ark and Margaret Fell. The boarding accommodation now is so tight that there will probably be other changes such as Fielding being changed into a junior house.

There have been changes with the committee. Hedley Quinton resigned as chairman for personal reasons at the end of last year. Judith

Weeks has taken his place as Clerk. The timings of the sub committees were changed in May so that we met in the evening and saw the school in session while we were here. Later this year the full committee will be meeting over a weekend.

#### **d) Treasurer's Report:**

*Presented by Michael Finch*

The Accounts were presented to the Meeting. Two typographical errors were corrected. Page three item 4 Administration Costs, the total General expenses for 2000 had been omitted and should have read £379. There was £15 difference on the Silver Mile; this was due to money received after the accounts were drawn up but within the financial year.

Questions & Comments from the floor: David Carlton Smith enquired about investments. Mike Finch explained that at the present time the Association has none as they matured two years ago and due to the extremely low interest rates it is of no value to invest at the current time. John Haddleton congratulated the Treasurer on avoiding pressure to invest at this time. Philip Morris enquired if there was wastage in the over production of the magazine. All extra magazines are allocated for use in the membership drive and are not wasted.

Adoption of Accounts: Proposed by Arthur Harrison, Seconded by Norman Coxon, Carried Unanimously. (If any member would like a copy of the accounts then please write to the Treasurer, address page 48).

#### **Proposed Increase in Subscriptions:**

Discussion followed on the proposed increase to subscriptions, mailed to all members prior to the AGM. Michael Van Blankenstein expressed concern on the increase of 25%. The subscriptions have not been increased for 5 years and the increase equates to no more than £1 per year for Ordinary Membership. Ann Bond felt it would be disastrous to put the subscription up and proposed an amendment of Ordinary Membership £10, Joint Membership £15 and Life Membership £100. Ellen Salway stated that there are ways in which the Association can offer assistance and that the price is therefore not an issue. Raymond Bond stated that there was a lack of logic in the proposed Life Membership for School Leavers and those over 60; the rates are not rational. The rate for young

Old Scholars had been discussed with Sue Freestone and was thought to be realistic. Counter Proposal proposed by Ann Bond: Ordinary Membership £10 per Annum, Joint Membership £15 per annum, Life Membership £100. Proposal had no seconder. Vote taken on Committee Proposal: For the Proposal - 26, Against the Proposal - 5, Abstentions - 10. Proposal was carried with a 2/3 majority.

#### **5. REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:**

Presented by Sue Freestone, Head, Sibford School. This report is published in full on pages 8-10.

#### **6. ELECTIONS**

**General Secretary** 01/09/02-31/08/05, 3 years: **Lucinda Poulton**; proposed by Ann Bond, seconder Ellen Salway.

**Reunion Secretary** 01/09/02-31/08/05, 3 years: **Ellen Salway**; proposed by Michael Finch, seconder Guy Kingham.

**Assistant Reunion Secretary** 01/09/02-31/08/05, 3 years: **Nicola Grimes**; proposed by Lucinda Poulton, seconder Julie Greenhill.

**School Committee Representative** 01/01/04-31/12/07, 4 years: **Lucinda Poulton**; proposed by Ann Bond, seconder Pat Grimes.

**General Committee Member** 01/09/02-31/08/05, 3 years: **Diana Lloyd**; proposed by Nicola Grimes, seconder Michael Finch.

**General Committee Member** 01/09/02-31/08/03, 1 year: **Tom Lane**; proposed by Ellen Salway, seconder Julie Greenhill

All the above nominations were accepted unanimously by the Annual General Meeting. There was one 3 year General Committee Member appointment not made.

#### **Simon Barfoot then addressed the AGM:**

One of the most prestigious awards that this Association makes is to bestow **Honorary Life Membership** on people who have given outstanding service to the Association or the School. We are recommending four awards this year and the reason for this is that as this is the final year of our first century, we felt it should

be commemorated by the creation of these four awards to people who have made an enormous impact on the Association and the School. I am sure you will consider that they are worthy recipients - they are, in alphabetical order: Alfred Holland, Margaret Le Mare, John Taylor and Lilian Ward. The assembled members endorsed these appointments.

**Endorsement of the President 2002 - 2003** - Guy Kingham.

**Endorsement of Vice President 2002 - 2003** - Stephen Bunney.

#### **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Michael Finch and Ann Bond presented, to Sue Freestone, a cheque for £136 and a Bucket of Money as an ongoing contribution to the Silver Mile.

A most generous donation of £500 was received from Sue Thomas (née Smith) in Canada, towards the new Swimming Pool Development. All these donations were gratefully received by Sue.

The Midland Branch has presented a cheque for £420 to SOSA. These funds have been used to purchase 'Bricks', - which will pave the way to the new Swimming Pool, and also towards the SOSA Archives.

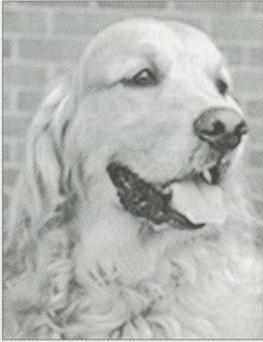
History of the School - Michael Finch appealed to Old Scholars for anecdotes of life at Sibford, he has to date received very little. Interviews have been taking place with past staff and pupils which are very enriching.

On behalf of Members, Raymond Bond expressed the Association's friendship, support and prayers to Simon Barfoot, who has had a difficult year with the illness of his son, William.

Simon Barfoot closed the Meeting with Thanks to Cindy Poulton, Lis Burch - School Committee Guest, Raymond and Ann Bond, Christopher and Pat Grimes, Ellen Salway and team and Guy Kingham for all their support and work over the last year and in particular in making the Reunion a success.

Norman Coxon asked for a vote of thanks to Simon Barfoot, Michael Finch and Cindy Poulton for the management of the Annual General Meeting.

The Meeting Closed at 11.50 a.m.



# REUNION WEEKEND 2002

Green were the fields. Lush was the countryside - fresh were the faces of the Sibford Old Scholars who gathered for

their 'end of the summer' reunion. I 'cased the joint' prior to the general arrival of the weekend guests. The first thing I did was check out the door to the kitchen and was promptly told very firmly 'no' by my master (whom I adore and I know that she is right but it was worth a try). The same thing happened when I went to the dining room door! Other than that I found everyone very warm, friendly and very welcoming.



It was rather difficult to get round to everything - one has to rely on others to help out on such occasions and on this particular occasion I needed the help of my master - whatever we have left unsaid we can only hope will be said in other places of the Sibford Rocket.

It seemed there were people arriving all weekend - some had discovered Old Scholars through the web site 'Friends Reunited'. Others had got in touch with old friends and decided to see what this Sibford

weekend was all about. It was mentioned that a local bed and breakfast had been booked to avoid the school bell that may awaken those who wanted to sleep on a bit! How reassured the visitors were to learn that there was no mandatory reveille at Old Scholars Weekend!



There were so many building changes, additions, reconstructions; I hardly recognized my old walking and sniffing places. It is great to have a change and I discovered areas I never knew existed! The beautiful horticultural centre, (I wonder if there are bunnies under the building, I certainly smelled something interesting under there!) The swimming pool construction is well underway and the art department, lots of talent there! The flowers around the school, the hanging baskets and newly painted visitors 'loos' sweet smelling with dried flowers.... all of these small touches gave the school a fresh and happy feel.

It was such fun to see how you all dressed up for the country and western evening - I was salivating, the barbeque smelled delicious; I felt very comfortable, greeting everyone and receiving all those 'pat pats' (and was hoping someone would happen to drop a little morsel!)

Throughout the weekend there was a hub of activity in the 'SOSA Hub' (excuse the pun); what was really nice too was the availability of tea or coffee or even a sip from the Maestro drinking fountain. What I really liked were all the cakes and biscuits that everyone brought to sell on to others in an ongoing attempt to expand the 'coffers' of the Development Appeal. Again I had to be very careful not to get too close to the homemade cakes but oh how wonderful it all looked and smelled. So many people chatted about when they were at Sibford and what they remembered from days gone by and who was doing what when and what now and most of them lent down to give me a gentle stroke which was very kind. It seemed too that even the people who aren't Old Scholars had a great time exchanging chatter in one way or another.



Sunday: Choral was at the Gower Meeting House. All who attended were in full voice for the old favourite hymns and even for the new up beat jazzy hymn. This was followed by the quiet reflective stillness of the Quaker meeting which I have grown to appreciate so much.

The Leslie Bailly Lecture - I can't believe that Russell Steed and Arthur Harrison went on the d'Arcy footpath through Oxfordshire on a Sponsored Walk for the Development Appeal; all



# August Reunion Weekend



*Cincy Poulton - General Secretary*



*Simon Barfoot - President*



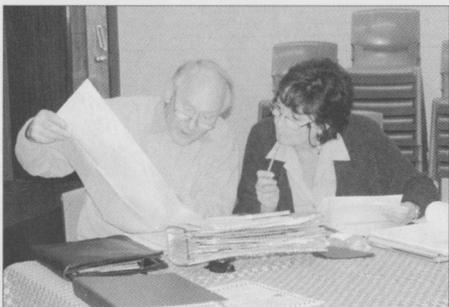
*Ellen Salway - Reunion Secretary*





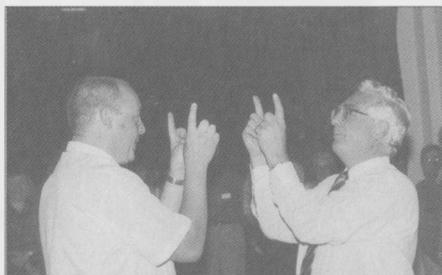
those beautiful places in the countryside. I was so envious, the slides were so inviting. Lunches in the porches of the village churches along the way - I was envious indeed. Next time perhaps I'll get an invitation to join in.

Presidential Drinks and Speeches - be sure to read the words of wisdom from our President, Simon Barfoot. Lis Burch, the School Committee Guest who accepted and subsequently was asked to be Guest Speaker (I think that was the order in which she was invited to spend the weekend!) was inspiring. Prior to delivering her most interesting talk, she had carefully researched so many things that Old Scholars have thoughtfully and generously contributed to the school. Amongst her favourites were the trees planted by Old Scholars. It was remarked somewhere along the weekend (probably by our able Headmistress, Sue Freestone) that Sibford is quality education, not a fast track route. The trees will bear the



significance of that statement most definitely. I heard rumour that the delicious Presidential dinner was actually chosen by the President. Look out Simon you may be approached for advice in planning future menus. (I noticed there wasn't much in the line of leftovers!)

Following the Presidential dinner.... Who said, 'You can't teach old dogs new tricks?' - I saw Mike Finch doing the polka with my master! The callers were such fun, so



much square dancing or barn dancing - lots of happy, smiling people dancing and swinging each other around. Even I tried but I must admit I prefer four legs to two legs.

Monday: I wonder if I am the first dog to attend a Sibford Annual General Meeting? This was a well attended, well-run annual meeting, the report of which appears on pages 33-35.

Now let's see, I did see some funny sights on Monday afternoon in front of the school - was it Guy with a blonde wig followed by others ..... (he has been known for his hair styles in the past!). He was playing hockey or was he/she! I was in the distance, I got a little side tracked with the 'walkies' Treasure Hunt probably. I would have chosen to chase the ball but the hockey players who turned up looked as though they didn't need my help!) so - up and down the stairs, trying to find the conductor in the hub, fire hydrants, grass, Hawthorn

hedge, no smoking anagrams etc to discover the school was built in the same year as Nelson's column! What a clever and well thought out afternoon puzzle. Thank you clever Grimes'.



I so enjoyed meeting with people that I had met in previous years and I so enjoyed meeting the new people who came to a Sibford Old Scholars Reunion for the first time. Thank you to everyone who made it such a fun, interesting and inspiring 'end of the summer' for us all. You worked so hard and it is greatly appreciated. See you next year, I hope.

*Belden 'Dog' and Christine Weatherhead*

*And a postscript from Cindy Poulton: 'we had a scream on Monday night. There must have been around 30 of us; Nicola and Ellen alternated as quiz masters and we had teams of four. Four rounds with breaks for drinks and nibbles - we laughed so much but My Team won: Diana Lloyd, Lester Matthews, Margaret Shelley for part of it, myself and Julian who said absolutely nothing!!!!'*



## Greetings, Mr President:

*Messages received from those who could not come to the Reunion in August, 2002.*

"Dear Simon Barfoot, Sorry I can't make Old Scholars. I am 93 and getting less mobile. I must be one of the oldest Old Scholars, and enclose a photo that was in my local paper. Such happy memories of Sibford, I wish you all the best. Greetings" **Irene Tester** (née Yarwood 1920-22).

"I am sorry that we are not able to come to the reunion this year due to other commitments. We will miss you all and send our best wishes for a happy weekend" **Janet** (née Eavis 1943-48) and **Joe Sewell**.

"Thank you very much indeed for sending details of the gathering. Unfortunately I cannot join you but I will be thinking of the various activities you have arranged, all rather first class, Regards" **Stephen Burt** (1929-31).

"Dear Simon, Thank you for all the information about the SOSA weekend this month. Unfortunately I won't be able to attend as I will be on holiday with my family in Wales. It was lovely to come back to Sibford last summer and it was a great honour to do the 'Leslie Baily Address'. ..... Have a brilliant time at Sibford and I hope you have enjoyed your role as President this year. Say hello to your sister Sarah ..... and give my best wishes to Cindy Poulton, Guy Kingham, Ann Bond, Patricia Grimes, Mike Finch and Mike Farr. Take care and I hope it won't be long before I visit Sibford again. It holds so many memories for me which has carried me through life. Best wishes," **Kageha (Gay) Marshall** (née Watts 1974-78).

"Just to wish you a very happy and successful reunion. I am disappointed to have to miss the Old Scholars of Sibford 2002 Reunion, but am still recovering from a hip replacement and need to take life quietly.....I will be thinking of you all during the August weekend, Sibfordially" **Mavis Stiles** (née Mutch 1946-49).

"Thank you for the very interesting programme for the Reunion - how I wish I could be with you but unhappily I couldn't stand the pace!! Seriously, I am recovering from a short spell in hospital, necessitating antibiotics being pumped into me for three days and not being used to illness, my body objected and I'm not quite back to normal! I'm so interested in the developments at Sibford and so sorry not to see them. I enclose cheque towards the Silver Mile. Please give my greetings to all those I know and of course to everyone. I shall be thinking of you, Kindest regards," **Lilian Ward** (née East 1928-34).

"Thank you for the information about this year's SOSA reunion. I am afraid that once again I am not going to be available for any of the events - last year I was fully occupied entertaining a Romanian student, and this year I shall be away in Romania making a return visit (a prospect I view with excitement and not

a little apprehension!) I'd be very grateful if you would record my apologies to the AGM and indeed my good wishes to SOSA for a very enjoyable weekend (is it ever not?!)" **Anne Muir** (staff 1980-87).

"I hope you'll have a wonderful weekend - I came across an old photograph which reminded me of what a happy weekend I had as President many years ago! (a very tiring one too...) When I saw your letter and the programme I was enthused to come this year, but a nasty dose of shingles is taking a lot of energy so I'm not sure, but I might appear - shingles is long-lasting in the over 70's, I'm told - something I don't want to hear! Very good wishes to you all - have a lovely Reunion" **June Ellis** (staff 1964-77)

"I regret I cannot attend the Reunion this year - again - another family wedding celebration! I hope the weather holds and that you all have a happy time. Please remember me to all those who remember Brian and me - We (I) expect our fourth grandchild just before Christmas! I enclose a donation to the Silver Mile, yours cordially" **Pauline Hooper**.

"Very best wishes to you all for a very successful SOSA reunion. We are very sorry not to be with you, even for a day, but we are still trying to settle in at our new address in Hagley. So please accept our apologies for non-attendance at the business meeting of SOSA. Yours sincerely" **Hugh & Daphne Maw** (staff 1956-62).

"This is just to let you know I will not be with you this weekend but will be thinking of you all and hope you all have a great reunion and some sunshine at the very least. Please say hello to those Old Scholars who know me.....I had to have a hernia op in January and seem to have had a continuous stream of medical checks since then, but thankfully all of them have proved to be negative, so things are now back to normal..... Have a great reunion, hope to make it next year" **Mike Ladell** (1939-44) *Hey! That's a long time ago, yet seems like only yesterday.*

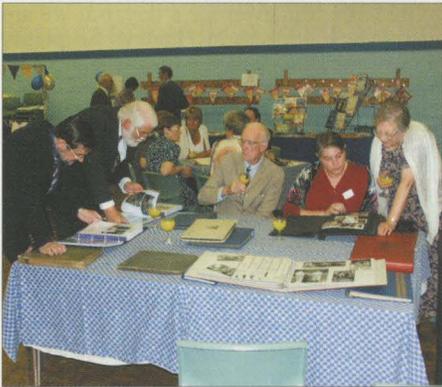
### The following attended for all or part of the Reunion:

Barbara Abercrombie; Simon Barfoot; Steven Bartholomew; Nick & Chloe Bennett; Alix Blakelock; Ann & Raymond Bond; Michael & Scilla Bond; Robert Buffon; Lis Burch; Paddy Coppinger; Liz Cordiner; Margaret Cox; Norman Coxon; Lesley DeCosta; Bryony Denton Williams; Martin Dodson; Martin & Dorothy Dodsworth; Helen Doyle; Jan, Romy & Joost Elias; Margaret Fairington; Michael Farr; Wallie Farr; Mike & Wendy Finch; Hugo Finley; Jane Fletcher; Paul Frampton; Sue & Rupert Freestone; Elizabeth Freestone; Tim, Issie & Thomas Gebbett; Christian Gilmour; Anna Green; Julie Greenhill; Chris, Pat & Nicola Grimes; Maggie & Chris Guy; Hilary & John Haddleton; Arthur & Pam Harrison; Ben Hedges; Alfred & Susan Holland; Katie Holton; John Hughes; Adriana Hyland; Esther Jackson; Robert & Suzy King; Guy & Jane Kingham; Alex Komlosy; Piers Komlosy; David Laity; Tom Lane; Will Lehmann; Bronwen Lilley; Jeanne Little; Diana Lloyd; Winifred Lycett; Jennifer Macintosh; Lister Matthews; Mark Mercer; Caroline, Paul, Kate & Dominic Mills; Jean Mills; Philip Morris; Jean & John Osborne; Pam Osborne; Madge Palmer; Sally Perkins; Lucinda Poulton; Philip Price; Barbara Quinton; Rosemary Roe; Ellen Salway; Gerardo Sanchez-Reyes; Stuart Sanders; Julian Sandiford; Margaret Shelley; Joan & Jim Shields; Adrian Shirlin; Ashley, Carol, James & Maria Shirlin; Connie Shirlin; Peter & Jenny Sladen; Claire Smith; David C Smith; Russell & Janet Steed; Stafford Steed; Peter Stocker; Erica Strofton; Vicky Swinnerton; Sarah Tatchell; John & Doreen Taylor; Imogen Tittley; Sheila Trout; Michael & Wendy van Blankenstein; Chris Walker; Tim Wardle; John Watson; Ian & Christine Weatherhead; Chris Webb; Judith & Louise Weeks; Josephine White; Tom Williams; Elise Woelfel; Graham Wooding.

*Apologies for any errors or omissions.*



## 2002 - Reunion Charivari





## *Assorted Groups • Assorted Venues*



## President's Address



Old Scholars, it's 25 years ago since I left Sibford in 1977. It is only with age that you come to realise that school days were some of the best days of your life, and again it is with age that you come to realise how much school days actually dictated the rest of your life, whether it was from the friends that you met, the teachers who taught you or the exams you

left with. But success is always measured in how many exam results you gained when you left school, be it GCSEs (or in my day O-levels or A-levels); but I believe that Sibford gave students a bit more than just exam results. What Sibford gave us was more than just exam success; and what I am referring to was not taught to you by a specific teacher or with books or classes. But what was taught us would also help us through life.

What I am referring to are four words which are equally as important as any exam success. The words I refer to are all around the school. They are always seen, they are always looked at, but are they really ever read? These four words are the words on the school badge which we wore on our blazers. They are the school motto of 'Truth, Honour, Freedom and Courtesy'. It is when you sit down and really look at these words that you come to realise how important they are in your life.

So I went away and I looked these words up in the dictionary. I first looked at the word 'Truth' and the first thing it said was 'Law Abiding' which are two words that in my profession I love to hear. But then again if everybody was law abiding, I would be without a job! Secondly, it listed 'Honest' and I must say that truth and honesty sort of go hand in hand, a bit like bread and butter; but what really jumped out at me was the sentence, 'to be honest with yourself'. I believe there is no greater truth than to be honest with yourself; to be able to put your hands up and say 'I was wrong', or when at school to put your hand up and say 'I don't understand'; and to be able to admit to your errors or to be able to say to a friend a few days after an argument ..... 'you were right and I was wrong, out of order'. That is to be honest with yourself and if you are honest with yourself then you will gain the respect of your friends, family, colleagues and your peers.

Next I looked at 'Honour'. And in the dictionary there was one

sentence, 'High respect of others' and that hit home, not just respect of others but the 'high respect of others'. We know we all should treat people as we would want to be treated ourselves, irrespective of race, creed, colour or position, whether you're one of the many people we see nowadays on every high street with their mongrel dog and penny whistle begging, through to the movers, shakers and decision makers of our society. We should treat them all the same and show them the respect that we would wish to be shown.

Thirdly I looked at 'Courtesy'. And again the definition provided was just one sentence which said 'politeness of manners'. As we know 'Manners Maketh Man' and some of you may think there are not enough manners in the world today. I must admit that as a child I was forever being told by my parents when I went to a friend's house or a birthday party to remember my Ps and Qs, and whenever they came to collect me it was always, 'have you said please and thank you?' To this day no-one has ever explained what Ps and Qs are. If any of you have the answer please let me know. One can write a long list of manners with the 'pleases' and the 'thankyous', the 'hellos' and 'goodbyes', the holding doors open or giving up of seats.

Finally I looked at 'Freedom' and there was only one word listed. Liberty. I am sure all of you would agree this is a beautiful word. And together with Truth, Honour, Courtesy - and I am going to throw in the word Tolerance because, hey! I am the President tonight and I can do that! Because, whilst I thought about this list of four, another word came to mind: a very Sibford word, a very Quaker word - the word Tolerance, which I am sure you would agree is a great virtue. This will ultimately give you freedom and with these words any student, with or without their exams, should have an easier path through life. Sibford, never lose sight of these words!

As students sail a course of education through Sibford there will always be an invisible undercurrent of these words to help to produce a better person, even though parents will always measure Sibford by its exam successes and the Government will measure Sibford by exam league tables. But nothing can ever measure what will be in the sub-consciousness of students who leave Sibford and become old scholars of the school. Whether Leavers have a dozen exam successes or none at all, the motto of the Old Scholars' Association - 'Quo Volumus Vagamur' - which translates as 'go where the will takes you', has never been so apt. Thank you, Old Scholars.

*Simon Barfoot, 1973-1977*

## Guest Speaker: Lis Burch

*Our School Committee Guest this year spoke most eloquently on education and old scholars and their interaction within the School:*

I'd like to begin by wishing SOSA a very happy 99th birthday! I know the main celebrations will be next year, but I think 99 is a major achievement in its own right.

Thank you very much for inviting me to join you at the Old Scholars' reunion this year. When Pat Grimes first asked me if I would like to come, she waited until I had said yes before she told me that I would have to make a speech, so I have always had the highest respect for the intelligence and cunning of Old Scholars! It's particularly interesting for me to be here because I didn't attend Sibford myself or go to a Quaker school, although I was brought up as a Quaker. I first started to learn about Sibford when Judith Weeks' daughter Katie came here, and since then I have become more interested in the school, but being asked to join the School Committee has been a further revelation to me. I would like to echo some of the points that Simon made in his address, about the importance of an all-round education, and the opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life. I am lucky to live near enough to the school to be able to attend some of the musical and dramatic performances, and in many ways it is these events which have made the greatest impression on me.

I work in the area of educational publishing and so I am aware that one of the main concerns in education at the moment is the narrowness and prescriptiveness of the curriculum. I once worked on a series of history books for primary schools, and I could just about see that the history curriculum could be covered in the course of the school year, but I couldn't believe that schools would have time to fit anything else in at all. Teachers are faced with the seemingly impossible task of delivering the curriculum and concentrating on raising standards, and one of the main casualties of this enforced approach is the opportunity for children to get involved in music, drama and the arts generally.

I think this is a real loss to children nowadays, and am delighted that Sibford has always been different in this regard, and that pupils here have many opportunities to enjoy the creative and performance arts. It's also clear how much this has been encouraged, and given practical support, by Old Scholars. When I was talking to Russell Steed about this weekend, he said that it would be an opportunity for me to see what Sibford pupils turn out like! In the conversations I have had and the displays on the walls, it's easy to see that Old

Scholars strongly reflect this emphasis on a rounded education. There is a very impressive array of activities and interests which show that Sibford has a long tradition of encouraging its pupils to develop all aspects of their potential. Education of the whole person has clearly always been a concern to SOSA as well as to the School.

I was particularly struck by some of the gifts and donations presented by SOSA to the School, ranging from a case of stuffed birds in 1923 (which is apparently still on display in the science labs); radio equipment; a contribution to the appeal fund (in 1928, so appeals have obviously been around for a while too!); contributions to the sports fund; in 1936 a gift of fruit trees - what better gesture, what more fitting gift could have been given at such a time in world history, than this one, nurturing the natural world and looking ahead to future generations? What a wonderful gift and message to the School. The list goes on - timber for the workshops; floodlights, stage curtains, and theatrical make-up; sculpture equipment; a careers rack for the library and, appropriately following in the footsteps of Quaker involvement in industry and business, a donation to the Business Studies Centre. Particularly pleasing to me as a publisher was the gift of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and the establishment of the Geoff Long Book Prize. In 1988 Old Scholars gave the school a new piano and robotic arm, and paid for cello repairs. I am learning the cello myself and often when I'm practising I have wished I had a robotic arm! (Although I'm not really sure what one is, it sounds very useful.)

All of these gifts and donations over the years show that there has always been a commitment to carrying forward the Sibford ethos.

I won't take up any more of your time as it is almost time for dinner - I was impressed during Russell and Arthur's talk earlier today, by the number of times they managed to stop for lunch during their walk through Oxfordshire; I'm sure we heard about more lunches than there were days! But this shows that, like me, Old Scholars like to know where their next meal is coming from, so I won't come between you and yours any longer. Thank you again for asking me, and I look forward to the continuing warm relationship between SOSA and the School Committee.



# The world gone mad

## O Still Small Voice of Calm.

*Twenty-five Monthly Meetings were represented at, and many Old Scholars also attended, the School's General Meeting on November 15th, 2001. Most of those who were present still felt a raw disbelief concerning the outrage that took place in New York on September 11th and many were unable to comprehend how it could possibly have happened. We asked Sue Freestone for a transcript of the most moving, and most relevant, address which she contributed to General Meeting on the spiritual life of the School, (which was delivered too late for inclusion in last year's magazine, as it had already gone to press). This extract, provided for us by Sue, is that which was sent to 'The Friend'.*

"Whenever I meet prospective parents, the first thing I tell them is that Sibford is not merely a Quaker foundation; it is an actively Quaker School. Quaker values inform all of our activities, structures and relationships and provide an underpinning current from which we derive an energy that drives us forward. I tell them that, as in business practice, many of the Quaker principles in education have been adopted by most good schools, but what sets us apart is the coherence of the Quaker rationale. We don't do things just because they represent good practice; we do them because we believe in their 'rightness'.



On September 12th (2001), we held an extra-ordinary Meeting for Worship, Wednesday being the only day when there is not one scheduled. The shock of crises in world events always seems to be absorbed by the School in the act of worship. Our meeting was moving and inspirational. An American girl ministered. She told the school that that evening they should tell their parents, their siblings, anyone who mattered to them, that they loved them - 'just tell them that you love them'. A young member of staff min-

istered to the effect that she had gone home on the evening of September 11th and said they should have no children - 'no-one should bring children into a world where such events can happen'. But she had come into Meeting that morning and looked at our pupils, and seen hope. 'You are our future' she said.

I tell you this not out of sentimentality but to inform you of the openness and trust that exists in Meeting for Worship here. Members of the school community have the confidence in their safety to render themselves totally vulnerable. They are nurtured by the experience of Meeting for Worship, and that is the other thing that sets us apart from most schools.

That morning I had counted up the number of nationalities present in the School at the time. Including staff there were twenty-six. We sat together as a united community; as friends who value and respect each other; who celebrate our differences; whose lives are informed and enriched by knowing each other. As we shook hands at the end of Meeting, it was a real act of unity and a reinforcement of the possibility and reality of peace.

Alas, that has not been the way in the world in the ensuing months; and since that dark day in September I have found it difficult at times to know what to say to the School. But I have been strengthened and supported by the wisdom of others and by an unshakable belief in the need to establish a world in which there is no exploitation, no inequality, no starvation, no slavery, no torture, no deprivation: no justification for terrorism; no mass destruction. More than that, by the need to equip our students with weapons that can make such a noise in the world as to drown out the clamour and scream of the gun and blast of the bomb.

It is the duty of those of us responsible for the education of the young to reinforce the need to fight for a world that takes away the 'occasion for all wars'. I am so fortunate to work in a school in which my own beliefs are supported and nurtured by the very essence of the faith on which the school was founded, and by those who stand in governance over the school.

I often face challenges from friends to the existence of Quaker Schools. The old cry of the immorality of fee-paying schools that can call themselves Quaker, and the claim that there are many forms of outreach that are far more effective than any that goes on in Quaker Schools. I, in my turn, challenge that judgement. Over half term, I went to Kenya on business and whilst there, I came across four Sibford old scholars in the space of five days. Only one of them had come from a Quaker family, but all of them now attend Quaker Meeting. Equally, at an enquirers' meeting held by overseers of Sibford Preparative Meeting in October, of

the twenty-five who attended the majority were parents of Sibford pupils.

We are often criticised because of the small percentage of Quaker pupils and staff in Friends' schools. I see that as one of our strengths. There is no need to reach out to those who are 'in'. We are a community of nearly five hundred people, excluding parents, who, on a day-to-day basis are exposed to Quaker values and Quaker practice. If we are right, what stronger message can there be that there is a way to live that eschews materialism and the 'dog eat dog' mentality prevalent in today's society? We show young people that respect for self, others and the world around us, can and does work as a basis for day-to-day living.

In a world that responds to violence with violence; to deprivation with more deprivation; to ignorance with propaganda; to force with greater force; what more important function can a school have than to demonstrate, in its daily life, that there is another and a better way?

Surely at this particular crisis in the history of the world; and for the future, our most important function must be to teach our young people to respond with compassion and courage to the sanity of the 'still small voice of calm'.

*Sue Freestone*

Member, Sibford Preparative Meeting & Head of Sibford School

*The following is a pupil's view, which appeared in this year's 'School Magazine'. With the permission of both the Head and the author, we reprint it here. Although written whilst at Sibford in the sixth form, the writer is now an Old Scholar.*

## September 11th - a day we won't forget

September 11th, or 9/11 as they call it across the pond, is undoubtedly the most high profile tragedy of most Sibfordians' lives. Although just as many people seem to be dying every week in today's world, be it from war and famine or disease, most residents of politically and economically elite countries have a hard time sympathising.

This is especially true for the younger generation. We have never watched our men go to war by the score, or grown victory gardens, we have never even been led to believe that there may one day be occasion to. I never thought I would witness a war or its aftermath. Until 9/11, terrorism was something that happened

only in the Middle East, as far as I could see. This act of terrorism was culturally in our backyards, and suddenly it was something that we were forced to face. I really don't know how to express what I felt that day, because there are no words for it. It didn't hurt any less when I found out that my father was alive, or any more when I learned that a friend had lost his life. It was terrible. In a way this has taught me to value life.

When we are told that 'x' number of teenagers die everyday in futile struggles on the other side of the world, I don't really know what to think; I never have thought. 9/11 is the closest thing I have ever experienced in terms of war and destruction. I have never been to a funeral; the closest thing to death I have ever seen was fishing out my sister's dead goldfish for her.

I wanted to go to New York then and there. The weeks waiting for the half term were agonising. In the time that I waited to return home to my friends and family, it became very evident just what Sibford is. A phrase that is always used lightly to describe the Sibford aura is 'community'.



When I couldn't be with those that I had a life bond with, I came to appreciate the support that I really did have around me.

A Year 9 class was asked to write letters to America discussing how they felt about the attacks. One student gave a copy of his letter to me. The letter I saw reflected the horror and pain that I felt. That a person could take another's life is nauseating enough, but the orchestration of mass murder shook our generation to its foundations. If the West isn't safe, then where is?

I think what allowed us to come through this, as a community, was the realisation that there is that security in one another, so that we can face the world and not be afraid. I have also learned here that no one is powerless, and there is little point in doing nothing. Although I might not be able to wave a banner and herald a new age of world peace, everything that a person does has ripples. Be thoughtful and forgiving at the very least and you can affect the course of history. Even Osama Bin Laden is only one man.

*Juliana Staius-Muller*

# IN REMEMBRANCE



*It is with great sadness that we again this year have to record the passing of many Old Scholars, friends, former pupils and staff who have died since the last magazine was published.*

**BERNARD AYLWARD** (Sibford 1919-23). We received news via 'The Friend' that Bernard had died earlier this year. At Sibford during the 1920s, he later spent many years in the Leicestershire area as a teacher and craftsman in the true Sibford mould.

**ELIN BAILY.** Elin, who was an Honorary Life Member of the Association, died at her home in North Wales. She was prominent with SOSA during and after the Second World War when she was joint Secretary with her late husband Jim Baily (brother of Leslie Baily). Although well into her nineties, Elin kept an active interest in SOSA and Sibford. She was also the mother of Roger Baily and the late Peter and James Baily.

**LOUIE BAGGLEY.** Louie was a qualified RGN who returned to England having lived in Australia with her husband Wad. She was Assistant Matron at Sibford to Shirley Ross in the 1970s and later worked at the village surgery. Her son John, attended Sibford in the early 1970s.

**MARY BLASHKO** (1/11/08-25/10/00) *whose death was announced in the magazine last year, too late for the following tribute, which has been written by ex-Chairman of the School Committee, Philip Manasseh:* "Mary served on the School Committee in Jim Graham's time in the 1980s, as well as attending General Meetings. She often came with me, which in itself was an experience, for Mary - a conversationalist par

excellence, was interested in all aspects of the School's life, its progress and development; the journey passed in a flash. She had a comprehensive insight into education, having been a primary and secondary school teacher in Oxford. Her own schooldays at Sidcot formed a solid Quaker foundation, fostering an independence of spirit, a non-conformist approach to issues and concern for others. Mary travelled widely with her husband, High, carrying with her a film made by Kenneth Southall, 'Life in an English Quaker Boarding School'; it became her 'passport'. Looking back on her life, Mary wrote, "it was wonderful how one thing led to another worthwhile activity. One has always felt at home with Friends of all ages, and the spiritual flame has been kept alive and refreshed".

It was always a privilege to be in Mary's company, her boundless energy, no nonsense approach and generosity of spirit making everyone feel that they were special to her. Sibford is the richer for having had the benefit of her experience, wisdom and support in its history."

**ERICH BRAUN** (Sibford 1973-78, known as Eric Brown). It was with deep regret that we learnt through the School offices that Erich had died in a road accident in Austria where he lived with his wife and baby daughter. His father was Gerald (Gerhart) Braun, who was at Sibford between 1941-46, along with his sister Kitty (Baker Short) and they were part of the Sibford band of wartime refugees who joined the School from war-torn Europe.

**HAROLD JOHN BROWN** (Sibford 1926-31) died peacefully and gently in Ottawa, Canada on December 23, 2001, aged 87, surrounded by his family. Born in London in August 1914, he attended Sibford for 5 years in the late 1920s. Sibford left an indelible mark on him, and very much helped to shape the man he became. Sibford left him with not only a wealth of stories which he told his family in later years, but also strong principles and a dedication to helping others. A conscientious objector during WWII, he did relief and land work, drove an ambulance in London and worked for a period at Summerhill School where he became acquainted with the educational theories of A. S. Neill. This experience influenced him to train as a teacher after the war. In 1945 he volunteered for relief work in Greece with Save the Children's Fund, where he met and married Hratchouhi. He emigrated to Canada in 1955 and taught in Saskatchewan and

Ontario, retiring in 1979 after fifteen years teaching of inmates at Collins Bay Penitentiary in Kingston. He moved to Ottawa in 1995 to be closer to his son's family. The love of his family goes with this gentle, peaceful man, who had a passion for social justice, a love of teaching and a talent for telling stories. He leaves a loving wife, Hratchouhi (Michaelian), brothers (and Sibford Old Scholars) Eric, Reg and Ron, son Philip, daughter-in-law Joanne Jackson and grandchildren, Michelle, Mark and Sarah Jackson-Brown.

**JUNE DAWSON** (*née* Ladell, Sibford 1934-40) died suddenly on 31/10/01. She was a well loved Old Scholar who regularly attended Reunions. After wartime service as a Land Girl, June maintained a life-long attachment to agriculture and animals, in particular to horses. One of the high points of her career was the management of Lord Cobham's string of 45 polo ponies in Suffolk. She is survived by her husband Peter, whom she married in 1955, a son, two daughters and four grandchildren.

**JOHN GILCHRIST** (Sibford staff 1954-76) *whose death was announced in the magazine last year, too late for the following tribute, which has been written by former headmistress, June Ellis:* "John Gilchrist was one of Sibford's legends! Behind a front which would tolerate no sentimentality, was a sensitive, very kind man, to whom pupils, staff and members of the village turned with assurance in times of need. He worked tirelessly but unobtrusively to care for other people, and with his wife Vi and his two daughters Sandra and Jill, made their home a place where members of School and Village were welcomed and ministered to if need be.

John could be irascible and his language was often colourful, but those who really knew him soon realised that this hid the true person who 'barked' but rarely 'bit'. It could of course cause problems, as when a boy was brought to my study to be reprimanded for the use of unacceptable language. The boy accepted whatever I said, but as he turned to go I heard him mutter, "Mr Gilchrist says things like that". Completely at a loss as to whether to ignore or act, I heard myself say, "Mr Gilchrist is a very special person. If you grow up to be so special maybe you could copy him, but not now!" John was a very special person and that boy turned out very like the real John Gilchrist.

When I went to see John in hospital, during his last, mercifully short illness, he tried to raise himself in bed to be his usual courteous self. His funeral at St. Peter's church in Hook Norton, the village to which he and Vi retired, was well attended by former staff and pupils - We miss him."

ALBERT GRIFFITHS (Caretaker 1979-1995). *The current School Caretaker, Jayne Turner, has written the following tribute:* "No bad language; no drinking alcohol whilst at work; and definitely no smutty jokes - this was our introduction to Albert, on his first day as School Caretaker. Our hearts sank, would we be able to survive the working day, but we need not have worried, he soon had us eager to please as his quiet charm won us all over. The word 'Caretaker' perfectly describes Albert. Though a quiet and private man, he was also a carer, and a true gentleman in every respect. Caring and gentle are the two words that belong to him, he cared for all his workmates, support staff and teachers alike. He became an 'agony aunt' for many of us. He rarely gave his opinion, often gave his advice, and he always listened. He had the ability to reach the more reserved, shy, or problem student that never made the 'in crowd'. He became firm friends with these youngsters and gave them invaluable words of comfort and praise. His family were his life - devoted husband, father, grandfather. I feel privileged to have entered his life, and worked side by side with him, and to be able to call him a good friend."

GEOFFREY HIGGINS (Sibford staff 1973-83) died earlier this year aged 80. *Tony Skeath has written the following tribute:* "I was privileged to have Geoff as a colleague for nine of his years at Sibford. Geoff was a completely dedicated member of staff, working as Head of English, Assistant Housemaster in Penn and finally Housemaster in Fielding. Geoff always tried to get the very best from his students and I shall always remember the difficulty of having Science prep on the same night as English prep - his deadlines always seem to have been seen as more important than mine! He committed himself totally to life in a boarding school and was well known for his many drama productions whether they be School Plays or Gilbert & Sullivan Operas in collaboration with Tony Rye.

The public face of Geoff was well known (how do you spell cantankerous?). What may have been less widely known was the way in which he was able to recognise when students were feeling unhappy about 'their lot'. There are a number of former pupils who will always be grateful to him for his wise counsel and for the many hours of his time which he gave willingly to help them through difficult periods of their lives. Geoff was a very private person but those who knew him well will remember his sense of humour and his forceful opinions on a wide range of topics of public or political interest. During the later part of his retirement, he moved back to this area - one of the main factors being his love of Oxford where he had many old friends. It is a pity that towards the

end of his life, most of his visits to Oxford were to hospital appointments rather than social events. Geoff was a true 'Sibfordian' and I shall always have fond memories of him."

EVA HORWOOD (*née* Roy, Sibford 1936-41). A Life Member of SOSA, Eva died on 12th November 2001.

MARGARET KEEBLE (*née* Ewan). Margaret died in October 2001, aged 92, leaving six surviving children. She followed her brother Stan Ewan to Sibford in 1920 and found it a 'wonderful experience'. She and her late husband, Stanley, farmed in Cornwall from 1946. Both were well known prisoners of conscience over nuclear disarmament. With her husband they spent several years in Africa, where her husband was a livestock adviser. Margaret's wide-ranging interests were gardening, children, Oxfam, and a member of Come-to-Good meeting.

HILDA LISSAMAN (Sibford 1922-25) died on the 20th March 2002, aged 91. She lived for many years with her older sister Florence in the cottage behind the Cannings at Sibford Ferris. In her earlier years she had been a dressmaker in the Coventry area.

J. OLIVE MORIARTY (*née* Edwards, Sibford 1917-21) died in September 2000 and was a Life Member of SOSA. Her daughter is Brigit Compton who attended the School in the 1950s and is also a member of SOSA.

HAROLD EDWIN PUGMIRE. Harold was a much loved Old Scholar who regularly attended Reunions and enlivened us all with his rich wit and illuminating conversation. *Nancy Pugmire has written the following tribute:* "It is with great sadness that I write about the death of my father, who died on the 30th April 2002, after a long struggle against Emphysema and Cancer which he refused to let get the better of him. My memories of him are of joy, determination and adventure in his colourful life. I will miss being able to 'tap' his vast knowledge and could always rely on his sound advice. The short time that he spent at Sibford between 1937-39 were recalled with happiness and great fondness of his contemporaries with whom he shared that experience - two of whom were to be come well known - Paul Eddington, the actor, and James K. Baxter, the novelist. They shared with Harold that giving openness of heart, humanity and principles by trying throughout their lives to make changes in ridiculous bureaucratic systems. I feel that these were seeds sown during their time at Sibford. Each of us who had the pleasure of knowing Harold, have been touched in some way by his kindness or inspired by his ideals. May peace be with him

and his spirit live on. OM, Shanti".

GWEN ROWNTREE. Gwen was a much loved member of the Midland Branch, born into a Quaker family 22/11/1906 and died on 07/03/2002 aged 95. She trained as an SRN and Midwife and in 1938 married her first cousin, Reg Rowntree. Reg taught crafts at Sibford between 1949 - 1960, and these were among the happiest days of their lives. Her training as a nurse were put to good use on many occasions when she helped out at Sibford and in the village. Gwen's son, Terry, is also a former pupil, having studied under Hugh Maw.

PAULINE SAGAR. We learnt with sadness that Pauline had died, after a long battle against cancer, on 7th August 2002. She was the wife of Graeme Sagar, and they both taught for many years at Sibford. Pauline was House Mistress in Gillett for a while and they lived for many years at Balscote.

RACHEL SMITH (*née* Eavis). Rachel died on the 28th November 2001 aged 61, in the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, having endured many years of ill health. Rachel was a member of one of Sibford's great dynasty families being the sister of Janet, Helen, Bridget and Brian (Eavis). She was also mother of Claire, Russell and Hazel (an OS) and granny to Joshua. She was a member of Westminster meeting.

MIRIAM TEBBS (Sibford 1932-37) died on 16th October 2001, aged 81. She lived for many years at Burdrop and was a devoted member of Sibford Gower Meeting. Miriam was a Social Worker and during the Second World War worked with evacuee children at Stoneleigh Abbey and at Foleshill, Coventry. After the war she worked among refugees in eastern Europe. She was much appreciated for her accessibility, her great kindness and forbearance.

OLIVE WALKER (formerly Bennett). Olive died on the 17th April 2002. She was the mother of Nick Bennett and enjoyed many Reunions at Sibford in the past, having been an active and loyal member of the Association.



# SIBFORD OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION

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# DOORS CLOSING

As we all know, doors open in life, doors close. These doors have never been more completely shut. Rich in symbolism, the archway doors were always open - they had to be - it was one of the main arteries of the school, certainly until the demise of the kitchens. Always a scene of comings and goings, tentative or exuberant arrivals, sad departures, a trysting place for couples, especially in the black-out days, a site for piles of packed trunks prior to collection - a busy place on the whole because everyone had to pass through it several times a day. And suddenly it is so quiet. Doors I had almost forgotten it had, are shut.

*Martin Dodsworth, (1941-46)*



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