

The Sibford Rocket

100th Anniversary Issue



1903 - 2003

THE SIBFORD ROCKET

The Annual Magazine of the
Sibford Old Scholars' Association

Editorial:

One of the most delightful aspects of editorship is that of seeking material to fit a theme (which may have been planned for many months) but never knowing what will *actually* arrive, - solicited or unsolicited.

An editor then has the pleasure of fitting all the material together to make a coherent whole. Sometimes a planned theme involves tortuous contrivance, at others a topic emerges naturally, and a section that was never originally conceived, assumes an irrepressible identity of its own - even before a first layout or visualisation has been attempted. Such is the case with 'Memories' - an inspiring series of articles that all came together at the right time. (Its inclusion has resulted in the postponement of Part II of the 'SOSA Fragments of History' series until next year.)

This 2003 issue - celebrating our centenary year - is bursting with anecdotes and memories, as well as notes on activities and gatherings ... we are an organisation with a diverse and scattered membership, and with so many interests and talents. We enjoy ourselves immensely and we have the good fortune to be able to hold our main reunions in the most beautiful surroundings. I am sure that we all wish to do what we can to maintain our links with the School and to firmly establish the Sibford Foundation Fund. Our recent reunion gatherings, our contributions to School life, our current news and memories of past years all appear within these pages. Thankyou to my generous contributors for all that you have written and photographed, and for conscientiously meeting my copy deadlines.

And now a very special thankyou to two stalwarts whose extra hard work means that you should be receiving this magazine earlier than some previous editions: Philippa Harrison has converted more scripts than ever into electronic format - even taking material on holiday with her and e-mailing it to me from Canada, typed and complete! Raymond Bond has again excelled with his professional layouts and typesetting which saves the Association so much money. As editor, and on your behalf, I am indebted to them both.

The 'Sibford Rocket' is *your* magazine. Please keep sending me your news.

Ann Bond, Editor
November, 2003

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Dates for your Diary:

- Friday 28th November, 2003 (afternoon): School/PSFA Christmas Fair incorporating the SOSA Bazaar
- Saturday 6th December, 2003: London Branch 'Christmas Gathering'
- Sunday 25th January, 2004: SOSA Committee Meeting
- Saturday 31st January, 2004: Midlands Branch 'New Year Party'
- Sunday 28th March, 2004: SOSA Committee Meeting
- Saturday 19th June, 2004: School Open Day & SOSA Day Reunion
- Saturday 31st July, 2004: 'copy date' 2004 magazine
- Saturday 28th - Monday 30th August, 2004: SOSA Annual Reunion Weekend & AGM

Details of any of the above events can be obtained from anyone on the SOSA Committee (please see page 48)

Another SOSA Centenary occurs next year (2004) - it will be one hundred years since the first SOSA Reunion was held (you can read about that first year on pages 12 and 13 of the 2002 magazine). The Editor would like to incorporate a section in the 2004 magazine on 'Personal Reunion Memories' (rather than reminiscing about times at school, as in this issue). Do think back to the first Reunion you attended and share your memories and anecdotes. Text can be e-mailed, or hand-written or typed and posted as 'hard-copy' or on disc; and if you have photos you can loan, so much the better. Please supply by July 31st, 2004 at the latest, although earlier submissions would be appreciated (address p.48)

Stephen Bunney

SOSA President for 2003-2004

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE

On Saturday June 14th I visited Sibford on their Open Day / Sports Day. Along with a group of scholars past and present, it was my privilege to plant a tree to commemorate the centenary of the founding of SOSA. Before the actual planting I was asked to speak to the assembled students, parents, staff and Old Scholars, outlining my reflections of the role of SOSA and its relationship to the school.

Obviously, one of the main functions of an old scholars' association is for its members to get together to remember their school days. At all gatherings of old scholars, whether young or old, small groups can be observed huddled together talking about what they did at school, and what happened to them. The old scholars will also discuss news of their lives since they last met. By these conversations the old scholars both renew and strengthen the friendships that they made at school. These friendships bring strength and support to these old scholars when life is a bit tough, just as they did at school.

As Old Scholars when we visit the school, we are able to demonstrate how important these friendships are to us. I am certain that they mean something to present day members of the Sibford Family. The young people of today may not always rush up to us and be openly friendly, but they do see groups that came together at Sibford and continue to flourish when the members' school days are over. This gives them a positive example to live towards in their daily lives at the school. When they leave they may not always rush back to reunions, probably because they are glad to be free from the regulations of the school and want to live their own independent lives. However, I believe they remember the groups of Old Scholars that used to visit the school and will when they return to visit Sibford. It is at this stage that the School and SOSA members can encourage these people to become active members of the Association.

The groups of Old Scholars also compare life at Sibford in their day with life in the school today. Invariably, they feel that

things today are for the better, in that conditions were a lot harsher in the past. This in most cases is of course true because living conditions and expectations have improved over the years. These improvements cost money, which has to come from somewhere. In the case of Sibford this is from fees and/or gifts. This is where SOSA can and does help. By raising funds, giving financial gifts and by encouraging others to give to the school. Many Old Scholars cannot give the school very much but this does not matter. The small amounts add up to make



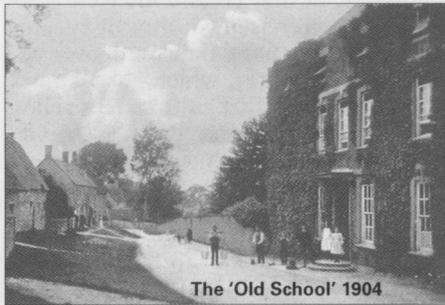
larger amounts, which are obviously of use. But this is not the only way, nor indeed the main way, that these small amounts count. Their main contribution is that they show that the Old Scholars care and that they want to continue to be part of the school that they once attended. In this way they provide a firm foundation that means something positive to present day scholars, staff, parents and committee members (Governors) and helps them in their continuing resolve to improve and strengthen the school.

To conclude my speech on Open/Sports Day I drew the comparison between the functions of SOSA to the roots of the tree that we were about

to officially plant. The roots will become strong and support the tree in its daily life. They will provide goodness for growth and strength to keep it upright in winds etc. SOSA provides Sibford with friendships and support to both its members and to the school. I asked all present to remember these things when they see the tree and act on them accordingly. Certainly, I intend to use my time as President of SOSA to do both things.

In the last 18 months I have also become Chairman of the Friends' Schools Joint Council. This is an umbrella body that links the Friends' Schools to the Quakers in the UK. Part of my role, as I see it, is to inform the Society of Friends of the strengths of the Quaker Schools. I am certain that my time as SOSA President will strengthen my already strong understanding of the benefits of an all round education at Sibford and so provide me with material to pass on to The Society of Friends.

Congratulations - SOSA is now 100 years old!



The 'Old School' 1904

"At the Sibford General meeting held on 19th June, 1903, a group of old scholars met to inaugurate the foundation of the 'Sibford Old Scholars Association'. Its main objects were to continue supporting Sibford School, and its aims: to provide assistance whenever it could and to help each other in a spirit of fellowship and support.

Many OS are here today to join with local Friends at a place which we hold very dear in our hearts, to commemorate that significant event of one hundred years ago. The Association has grown from strength to strength and today we give thanks to all those who have served the Association with such distinction.

An Old Scholars' Association can sometimes be dismissed as an organisation to just have fun, but we at Sibford pride ourselves in being part of a vibrant and special community. This happy band of brothers and sisters look forward to a new century with renewed energy and purpose; with deep thankfulness for the past and high hopes for the future."

Michael Finch (1949-54)

on Sunday June 15th, 2003 at Sibford Gower Meeting House

"I have been reading again 'The Sibford Rocket 2002' which I have found so fascinating and memorable. My attendance at SOSA gatherings has been pitiful to say the least, but I do so enjoy the occasions when Sibford Old Scholars join us at the Friends Meeting House in Sibford Gower. My hope is that there will always be a link between SOSA and the local Meeting for Worship."

Margaret Le Mare (staff 1959-67)

hon life membership conferred August 2002

"Please convey our best wishes to OS for the June celebrations. Well done OS!! A great achievement. We would have liked to have been with you on this special occasion, but it's not possible. The Baily family have had a long association with OS. Many of us attended Sibford. My parents Jim and Elin Baily were joint secretaries during the second World War. Despite the war, gatherings were still well attended.

We are sure you will all have fun in celebrating 100 years."

from New Zealand,

Roger and Ann (Tulk) Baily, 1949-55 & 1953-59

It's forty years since I was appointed to Sibford staff and I well remember the first weekend reunion I attended (held at Whit in those days with the School in session!) and the friendliness and welcome I received, especially from the President, Lilian Ward.

Although I have not been a regular attender at Reunions since I left Sibford in 1977, I have kept in touch with the School and admire the way it is now running. This years' SOSA Reunion

programme looks excellent and exciting - it gives the impression of a lively, forward-looking Association - superb - keep it up.

June Ellis (Deputy Head 1964-77)



The new "Hill Building"
Opened June 20th, 1930

How glad I am to be here to add my congratulations on this 100th anniversary of the Association. I have been reflecting on my arrival at Sibford in 1928 when there were less than 100 pupils there! The annual visit of SOSA was looked forward to so much as most of us went home only three times a year. Later, John and I both enjoyed our annual times at Whitsun. What fun we had with Godfrey Basely & Co! How through the years we had to fight to retain the weekend when some thought it should be only a day's Reunion.

I do hope that the Association will thrive and continue to support the School in every way we can so that others may enjoy the long friendships forged at Sibford by so many of us.

Lilian Ward (1928-34)

hon life membership conferred August 2002

What a task after 100 years to say anything but congratulations. Any volun-

tary organisation which has survived so long has to mean something special to its members. The hey-day of the Association was probably the immediate post-war years when well over 200 attended reunions, comfortable accommodation was non-existent, we all slept on straw filled palliasses, but still we came in hordes.

Alfred Holland (1939-43)

hon life membership conferred August 2002

The 2003 P.S.F.A of Sibford School congratulate SOSA on attaining their Centenary. We wish you continued success as you go into your next Century.

Shona Ellison, Chair P.S.F.A

(Parents, Staff & Friends Association)

As the SOSA passes its centenary one wonders if our founding members in 1903 realised what they had started. Successive generations of scholars at our beloved school have carried on the tradition of those pioneers who started an Association, the like of which had probably never been seen before.

I wonder what it is that keeps old scholars so attached to Sibford, and I can only assume that it is because we live together, we become a 'family'. Looking to the future, with the larger number of 'day pupils', I wonder will they feel as strong an attachment to the old school as those who 'live in'? Let us hope that everything that is 'Sibford' will keep them as interested as past generations, and willing to serve the Association, as so many have done in the past.

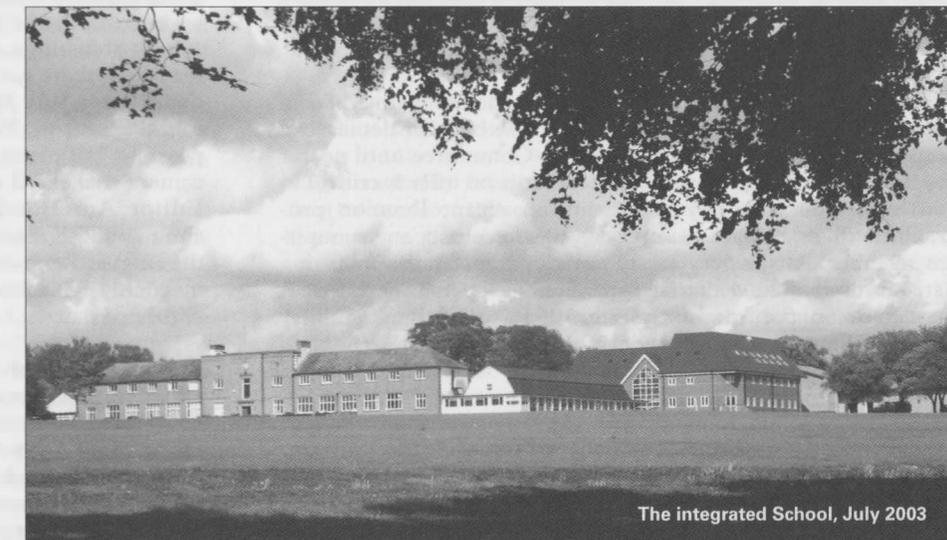
The association has survived through

two wars and grows ever stronger, long may it continue. I attended my first Old Scholars Reunion in 1946, and from 1950 I spent about 25 years serving on the committee in various capacities. My proudest time was 1972 when I was honoured with the Presidency of the Association.

John A Taylor (1940-40)

hon life membership conferred August 2002

It is difficult to come up with a summary in two or three sentences on the achievements of what is a quite unique organisation. SOSA has had its ups and downs over the years, and with a declining boarding population in the school, cohesion with the leavers has made for a real dilemma at times. We are a small organisation in a large and increasingly competitive educational world.



The integrated School, July 2003

SOSA is an organic movement that continues despite the changing pace of the school under pressure to adapt to an ever-demanding curriculum. Hard to recognise by some as 'their Old School', who are naturally sentimental, yet it is always supportive in matters of importance to the school's well being, and continually enterprising in its fund raising activities.

As to the future, having now reached the goal set out in the 1930s, Sibford can be proud of itself and walk tall in the educational opportunities it provides. I very much hope and believe that Old Scholars who have benefited from these advances will want to play their part in maintaining the links forged over the past 100 years by its Association.

Philip Manasseh (1938-46)

Past Chairman of School Committee

Keeping the Wheels Turning - Committee Jottings and Notices:



Your energetic SOSA Committee has had another really busy year, as outlined in the AGM Report given on pages 17-19. A full list of Officers and Committee, with contact details, appears on page 48. Do make use of this list and keep it handy pending any queries you may have on SOSA matters. We like to be contacted!

The Committee meets regularly 'in-person' at the School - a considerable commitment for those who have a long way to travel. Much additional work is undertaken by e-mail - a great time- and cost-saver now that all but two of us have this facility. Indeed, some sub-committees operate almost entirely by electronic means, allowing everyone to fully digest the comments made, and to put forward constructive ideas with greater ease than can sometimes happen when crowded round a table.

Reunions involve considerable extra work and are planned far in advance; ideas and logistics ebb and flow, but full details can rarely be finalized by the Reunion Sub-Committee until nearer the time. If knowing the specifics of what is on offer is critical to you, or if you have any comments on recent Reunion programmes (likes, dislikes or requests), please contact any committee member. At the very least, you can transfer the following dates into your 2004 diaries now: School Open Day & SOSA Day Reunion: Saturday 19th June, 2004; August Bank Holiday Reunion: Saturday 28th-Monday 30th August, 2004. We hope to greet you at either, or both.

We are grateful, too, to many others in the Association who give of their time and expertise to further SOSA aims; they are frequently to be found working behind the scenes or helping at SOSA events, or just 'being there' in support of both SOSA and School functions.

Farewell and Hello:

We said goodbye to two of our youngest Committee members at the AGM: **Ellen Salway** (Sibford, 1989-95) and **Tom Lane** (Sibford, 1992-95). Ellen has been on the Committee since 1996 and has been Reunion Secretary from 2000-2003, taking over at short notice from her predecessor. Tom came onto the Committee in 2000 and has rarely missed a meeting, keeping in touch with the rest of us by e-mail when he was traveling abroad. We wish them both well for the future. We welcome **Julie Greenhill** who rejoins the Committee after a short absence. We look forward to her again taking part in lively debates on a number of issues that the Committee will be looking at over the next twelve months.

We currently have a vacancy on the Committee for Reunion Secretary. If you are interested in serving the Association, in this or any other capacity, or know of anyone who might be, please contact the General Secretary, Lucinda Poulton (address p.48).

NOTICES:

Magazine: We seek your articles, views, news, whatever - we love to hear from you, of your doings, travels, successes and meetings with other OS here or around the world. Plans for the 2004 edition are already underway, so pen to paper please (or fingers on keyboards). Please let the Editor know a.s.a.p if you would like to submit something, and apologies to those who sent in material for which there just isn't space this year. **The LATEST 'copy' deadline is July 31st, 2004** (11th September for items relating to the Reunion). Pictures are much appreciated, digital if at all possible, but prints are also acceptable if 'in focus' and without camera shake! **All material should be sent to the Magazine Editor, Ann Bond**, (address p.48), either by post or e-mail. We aim to publish the magazine as soon as is physically possible after the August Reunion and AGM, but the date of publication will inevitably be delayed if ALL material is not received by the requested dates.

Keeping in Touch - E-mail Newsletters: started last year, our e-mailed newsletters keep you in touch with SOSA activities between each (annual) magazine. It also includes information on events at the School where SOSA support is welcome, though we often don't hear about these until the last minute. We have now 'e-published' five e-mailed newsletters; others will follow whenever there is news to impart. The e-mail newsletter is free to any

one with an e-mail address (member or non-member, staff, ex-staff, and any parent): just e-mail your name and connection with Sibford to sosanews@aol.com. Newsletters are e-mailed 'blind' so that the e-mail addresses of recipients are not revealed. N.B. Don't forget to let us know if you change your e-mail address!!

Postal 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 have a new Membership Co-ordinator: Mike Finch** (address p.48).

SUBSCRIPTIONS for ordinary annual members were due on 1st September. If you haven't paid yours yet, please do so now and **send your cheque to the new Treasurer: Russell Steed** (address p.48). A reminder of membership charges: ordinary annual membership: £20.00, married couples, £25.00; life membership £300.00 (£150.00 for over 60s); recent leaver life membership (within 2 years of leaving school) £150.00.

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. Additionally, we are now a definite part of Open Day with our 'SOSA Hub', information display and Bazaar. We 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 has continued to support the School Development Appeal during 2002-3 (it has now changed its name to the Sibford Foundation Fund). Don't forget the 'Silver Mile' - we can all save our 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 2003. Please keep going!

SOSA Memorabilia: TIES: We now have two styles of tie available in SOSA colours - royal blue, gold and silver stripes. A conventional full-length tie, fully lined and very smart, has been popular for a number of years; this year we introduced a snazzy bow tie, much in evidence at the Reunion Ball. Both styles are priced at £7.50 each plus £2.00 p&p. Orders with cheque made out to SOSA should be sent to **Philippa Harrison** (address p.48).

POSTCARDS: last year, in celebration of our Centenary, we launched the SOSA Postcard which has been selling well throughout this year. Measuring 6" x 4", depicting both old and new buildings in full colour, you can buy these at SOSA functions, or by post: Price £3.50 for a set of ten cards, plus 50p p&p

(£1.00 Europe, £1.50 all other world destinations). Orders with cheque made out to SOSA should be sent to **Philippa Harrison** (address p.48).

Special Reserve Fund: The Treasurer would like to remind readers that we still have a small amount of funding (currently £1,500.00) available. If you would like to apply for financial assistance to carry out some worthwhile project which may require additional funding, or know of anyone who would like financial help, please get in touch. Any applications should be made directly to the Treasurer, **Russell Steed**, (address p.48)

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

Our list of B&Bs local to Sibford is proving increasingly useful, and not only for Reunions and Open Days; the availability of somewhere to stay overnight has often meant that OS from further afield can attend school functions. SOSA has no links with any of the places listed; neither can we vouch for their style, price or standard. On the recommendation of some OS, we have been able to add to the list this year. Please tell us if you know of any others. Contact Ann Bond (address p.48)

Judith Hitchens, Gower Close, Sibford Gower;	01295 730348
The Bell, Shennington;	01295 6702 74
Pam Tustian, Yarnhill Farm, Epwell;	01295 780250
The Lampett Arms Hotel, Tadmarton;	01295 780070
La Madonette, North Newington;	01295 730212
Blinking Owl Inn, North Newington;	01295 730650
Broughton Grounds Farm, North Newington;	01295 730315
Roberta & John Ainley, South Newington Hse, S. Newington;	01295 721207
T. Beadle, Pretty Bush Barn, Wigginton;	01608 638262
Barbara Taylor, Grange Farm, Swalcliffe;	01295 780206
Erica & Malcolm Brown, Partway House, Swalcliffe;	01295 780246
Gowers Close, Sibford Gower;	01295 780348
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, Yerdley Farm, Long Compton;	01608 684655
The Red Lion Hotel, Main Street, Long Compton;	01608 684221
Eileen Whittaker, Butlers Rd Farm, Butlers Rd, Long Compton;	01608 684262
Southcombe Lodge, 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
Judy Hughes, Manor Farm, Station Rd, Hook Norton;	01608 737204
Cotefield B&B, 1 Cotefield Cottages, Bodicote;	01295 264997
Liz & David Robson, Virginia House, 1 High Street, Bloxham;	01295 720596
Rowan Court B & B, Rowan Court, Milton Rd Bloxham;	01295 722566

Sibford Open Day and Old Scholars 100 Years Celebration Weekend



A fine hot day on June 14th and Sibford and the school seemed to welcome us as warmly as ever. The buzz of parents and pupils brought back many memories of school days, athletics and games. The building and classrooms were all open for parents, friends and old scholars to view, and we were amazed at the high standard of artwork and ceramics etc. It was wonderful to see the new Art Block so well used.

Philip Morris was able to use the new pool to swim 33 lengths, for which he had been sponsored, wearing his Victorian swimsuit. He was accompanied, for a while, by Chris Phillips, who was over from his home in Australia. Chris hardly recognized Sibford and The Hill, having not been back for 50 years. We, who have visited more often, have taken in the many changes along the way.

Ann Bond and her many helpers manned the Hub where over 80 old scholars visited, brought home made cakes and jams (and home produced eggs!), along with bric-a-brac and plants. Chloe Bennett had her large selection of educational books for sale. Picnic lunches were taken by some and others found sustenance in the French Café manned by parents from the PSFA, where sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee etc were available. Of course there was the inevitable photo call (see back cover). During the afternoon many wandered down to the Old School to see how the alterations to the Manor House and grounds were going. It was the first day of open viewing and it was interesting to see what is planned for the site and to wander through the first converted property. In the evening some 30 of us enjoyed a meal at the Bishop Blaize.

Sunday was a much quieter day with most pupils at home for the day. Meeting for Worship at the Gower followed by coffee was a happy occasion, followed by a buffet lunch at the school, which was much appreciated. A committee meeting followed which was quickly dealt with. After tea and cakes and tidying up it was time to say goodbye after a happy and enjoyable week-end in the Sibford countryside.



Hilary Haddleton (1947-50)

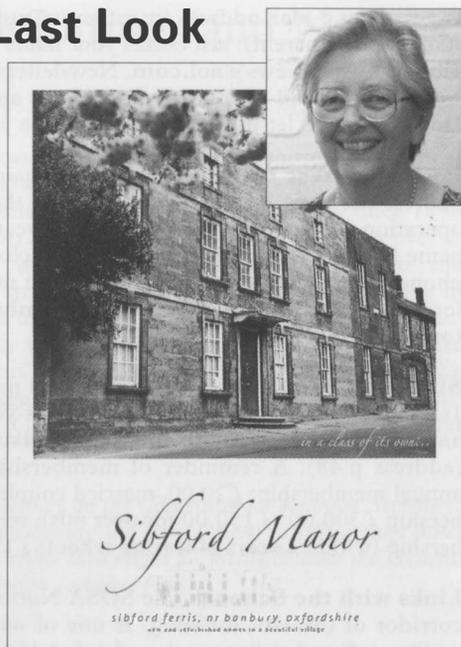
Another Last Look

Like many Old Scholars, Chris and I have very happy memories of the Manor. Apart from anything else it was the scene of our first meeting - 1970 OS Reunion - and many years before that it had been the Harrod family home where Chris's mother and her two sisters were born and brought up. Not surprisingly we were curious and a little apprehensive to see what the developers are doing to it. We got the chance to find out at the Old Scholars Centenary weekend which happily coincided with the weekend chosen by the developers to open up a Show House. We nipped in to look around and were very pleasantly surprised at the care that is being taken to preserve the ambience of the old building. It looked and felt alive, loved, tastefully refurbished and cared for. We came away satisfied that the old place is being revitalised and has a secure future. Unfortunately the prices are somewhat beyond our means! We are a little envious; nevertheless, we wish the new residents well and hope they will feel the ambience and enjoy making the Manor a home once more.

Pat Grimes (1946-49)

The day was busy as it was (nearly) the 100th Anniversary of SOSA. Setting up the SOSA 'Hub' had already begun the night before with all the hard work done by Ann and Raymond with some help from Nick and myself. Bunting, specially prepared by Ann on the computer, was strung across the room announcing the 100th Anniversary. Balloons (100 today) in the SOSA colours were hung on the banners over the stalls.

By Saturday morning the stalls were ready and loaded with pro



duce, plants, second-hand books and other delights donated by SOSA members and their friends. The photograph albums, brought by Nick, were set out on tables in the middle of the room with chairs around them so that SOSA members and anybody interested could browse through the years of photographs. Raymond had his computer set up in one corner with his database of former pupils, the bowl for the Silver Mile coins was set up in another corner. Mike had mounted a small exhibition on one wall showing photographs from earlier years. My 'Usborne' books were situated in the corridor outside the room so that visitors coming in and out could see and buy them.



A ceremonial tree planting to celebrate the 100th anniversary took place on the field outside the new Horticultural Unit. A small oak was 'planted' within a huge tree guard to protect it from the wind. Stephen Bunney gave a speech and introduced the participants: Barbara Quinton, the oldest SOSA member, helped by Nick Bennett (a younger SOSA member), the Head Girl and Head Boy of the senior school and the youngest girl and boy from Orchard Close. Many photographs were taken of the proceedings which included a good crowd of children, parents, staff and SOSA members.

The 'Hub' was a hive of activity all day. A visitor's book was laid out so the visitors could be recorded. Apart from locals and visitors from all around the UK, I met a couple from Tasmania who were visiting Friends' Schools in the UK and a SOSA member (Chris Phillips) who now lives in Australia. Of course we also had members of staff from the School coming in to say 'hello'. At lunchtime group photographs were taken of any SOSA members who could be persuaded to sit or stand on the verandah.

SOSA members took it in turn to man the stalls; this meant they could watch the activities of the School Open Day. The Sports Day races took place on the playing fields right outside the room. Others took time to go and see what was happening at the Manor.

In the evening thirty SOSA members met at their favourite hostelry, the Bishop's Blaize, for a good meal of roast beef and all the trimmings followed by very exotic puddings. Much merriment was had by all. Next day members attended Meeting at the Gower followed by lunch at the school. All in all the weekend was very successful. Grateful thanks to Ann and Raymond for all their hard work in organizing the weekend, the room and for everything else they seem to do.

Chloe Bennett





Those OS who were concerned that the House Martins who were deprived of their old nesting sites down at the Manor, will be pleased to note that the birds have very happily taken up residence on the new Music Block!



Meet Chris Phillips, the OS from AUS, who thought he was chatting-up the head girl!





OS assemble for the 'Tree Planting' ceremony



Mike Finch hands over another 'Silver Mile' cheque to Sue Freestone

**June Reunion
and School
Open/Sports
Day**



Sunday Meeting at the Gower



Philip Morris completes a sponsored '1/2 mile swim for 'The Foundation Fund'



◀ *Hedley Quinton,
Sue Freestone
and Barbara
Quinton at the
'Tree Planting'
ceremony*



▶ *Christine
Weatherhead and
Diane Burgess
enjoying the June
Reunion meal at
the 'Bishop
Blaise'*

A Tree for Posterity - Celebrating 100 years of SOSA



The oak's enduring quality is well known, indeed the SOSA badge incorporates an oak tree. The SOSA Committee decided to plant an oak sapling as part of the celebration of our Centenary. It is hoped that the maturing tree, even then still only in its youth, will be appreciated when the Association celebrates its second century!

After much discussion with the School over a suitable site, the south-facing field alongside the new horticultural area was selected. Edmund Hudson and his team prepared the planting area and constructed a sturdy enclosure to protect the tree in its infancy. The School kindly granted us a prime slot in their Open Day programme when parents, staff and pupils could all join us for the actual planting. A plaque will shortly be affixed to record the occasion.

Taking part in the planting ceremony was the oldest member of SOSA, Barbara Quinton (aged 95); Nick Bennett (1954 to 1959) who was instrumental in the establishment of the Old Scholars' Peace Garden; SOSA Vice-President, Stephen Bunney (former deputy-head of Sibford); Chair of School Committee, Judith Weeks; Sibford Head, Sue Freestone; the Head Boy and Girl, Sebastian Stride and Claire Gregson; and the two youngest pupils in the School, 4-year old Jake Dew and 5-year old Claire Neil.

Forging links between past and present pupils has always been important to SOSA, and what better way than jointly planting a tree for posterity that all can enjoy in the years to come.

ASB. Editor



SOSA Members and Visitors attending all, or part of, the June 2003 Centenary Reunion:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| BAKER, Roger | MATHEWS, Lister |
| BELCHER, Liz (néeTew) | MATHEWS, Paul |
| BENNETT, Nick & Chloe | McINTOSH, Jennifer (née Quinton) |
| BERRINGTON, Rosemary (née Coxon) | MEMARZIA, Mary |
| BOND, Ann & Raymond | MORRIS, Philip |
| BOND, Michael & Scilla (née Flinn) | MUIR, Anne |
| BUNNEY, Margaret | PALMER, Madge |
| BUNNEY, Stephen | PARSONS, Janet |
| BURGESS, Peter& Diane (née Clark) | PAYNE, Phyllis (née Longford) |
| COOKSON, Frank | PEILE, John |
| COPELY, Felicity (née Walker) | PHILLIPS, Chris |
| CORDINER, Liz (néé Hockley) | POULTON, Cindy |
| COXON, Norman | QUINTON, Barbara |
| CUNNINGHAM, David | QUINTON, David & Yvette |
| FINCH, Mike & Wendy | QUINTON, Hedley |
| FRANCIS, Kenneth & Elisabeth | ROWLEY, Frederick |
| FREESTONE, Sue | ROWLEY, Wilfred |
| GOODWIN, Clyde | SAGAR, Graeme |
| GRAYMORE, Jennifer (née Horne) | SALMON, Wendy (née Holden) |
| GRIMES, Chris & Pat (née Baker) | SAMWAYS, Sarah |
| GRIMES, Nicola | SANCHEZ-REYES, Gerardo |
| GUY, Maggie | SESSA, Fred |
| HADDLETON, Hilary (néeThornton) | SEWELL, Joe & Janet (née Eavis) |
| HARRISON, Leslie | SHIELDS, Jim & Joan |
| HARRISON, Philippa | SHIRLIN, Adrian |
| HOLLIDAY, Brian | SHIRLIN, Connie |
| HOWES, Di | SMITH, Claire (née Southwell) |
| HUGHES, Don | SMITH, David Carlton |
| HUGHES, Graham | SPENCER, Loraine (née Rollett) |
| HUGHES, Richard | SPRING, Mike |
| KINGHAM, Guy & Jane | STEED, Russell & Janet |
| KOMLOSY, Piers | STROFTON, Erica (née Eden) |
| LAITY, David & Eileen | SYRETT, Pat (née Eversley) |
| LAMB, Arnold & Ina (née Herbert) | TAYLOR, Richard & Ann (née Scaife) |
| LANE, Tom | TROUT, Sheila (néeWatkins) |
| LAWRENCE, Edna, | VARLEY, Ro (née Allison) |
| LEE, Bryan | WEATHERHEAD, Ian & Christine |
| LE MARE, Margaret | WEEKS, Judith & Louise |
| LEO, Jonathan & Christopher | WILLIAMS, Sheila |
| LITTLE, Jeanne (née Darling) | WRIGHT Jackie |
| LLOYD, Diana (néeWright) | |
| LUDLOW, Paul | |
| LYCETT, Wynn | |
| MANASSEH, Philip | |

Our apologies to those omitted from this listing.



Links with the School

.... from our School Committee Guest:

First of all, thank you for inviting me as your Committee Guest for your centenary year. I feel honoured to be invited. I have been associated with Sibford a much shorter time than many of you - since 1986 when my daughter became a pupil here. It was a big upheaval for us as we moved here from Cornwall, but we have never regretted it, and certainly the education which Katie received here made it all worthwhile. I have been on School Committee since 1990, and would have been off by now, but was Deputy Chairman when Hedley Quinton asked me to take over when he had to retire, and I was appointed Chair (or Clerk) subsequently. I have a horror of staying too long, until people say, "When IS that woman going to stand down?" - so please let me know when you feel that I am approaching that point!

I have always been fascinated by SOSA, because you have something very special here, and I know that not many schools have Old Scholars meeting annually for a reunion. I have heard many stories from Old Scholars, but the one that I want to repeat is about Norman Coxon, a very dear friend and friend of mine. Norman has told me about the time he lived in the accommodation called Paradise. They used candles to light them to bed (can you imagine the modern child being entrusted with a candle!) and Norman and his friends used to use them to burn the legs off spiders. This has shown me that Sibford can turn nasty little boys into really lovely men - and presumably nasty little girls into lovely women!

But to come to the present day. Things are very good at Sibford. We have a record number of pupils. You have seen and used the lovely new buildings. I know that for many of you the Pool is a dream come true. But more importantly, the ethos and

values to which Sibford has aspired all these years is stronger than ever. It is a very good place to be, and an honour to be associated with it. I don't need to sing Sue Freestone's praises - everyone knows that I think she is wonderful. We are very grateful to her and to the wonderful staff team which she has. I include teachers and support staff, of course. Have you ever seen the Grounds looking better?



I know that many of you have been on School Committee over the years, so know the joys and burdens thereof. It is hard work, and carries huge responsibilities. You will know too that you appoint two representatives from SOSA, and I want to tell you how much they are valued for the special insights which they bring. We have Pat Grimes and Russell Stead at present. Thankfully Pat is staying on, but Russell leaves us this year. He has been Clerk to the Finance and Premises Committee, and he will be sadly missed. He is to be replaced by Cindy Poulton, and we look forward to welcoming her in the New Year.

It is wonderful to see so many ex-members of staff here and more have joined us at other times over the weekend. It's par-

ticularly good for me to see Ann Muir, for it was she who interviewed and accepted my Katie back in 1986, and thus changed the course of our lives! It is so important to remember the contributions that these staff have made to Sibford. I have said how marvellously Sue and the present staff are taking the school forward, but they would not be able to do it without the firm foundation laid by so many over the years. So it's lovely to see you all - and thank you.

Finally, I want to look to the future. You know that the Appeal did not raise as much as we had hoped. It did produce the new buildings and we are grateful to the many people who worked hard to achieve it. School Committee has decided to lay down the Appeal as it stands, although we do not want to lose sight of the parts of the development not achieved so far. In place of the Appeal we are establishing a Foundation which is to be a channel to enable friends of the school to give on an ongoing basis. In due course, hopefully, we shall be able to fund developments as the need arises, or at least go partway to doing so. As you probably know, Sibford has never had the sort of endowments enjoyed by most other independent schools. You should have had a letter about this, because, in consultation with your Committee, we felt we should involve Old Scholars in the launching of the Foundation, and are asking for "A hundred pounds for a hundred years". I know some of you are planning the raising of your hundred pounds already. Good luck with it. We want to extend this to all those who have been educated here, so if you know anyone who is not a member of SOSA, please let us have their name and address.

All that remains is for me to say, once again, thank you for having me.....and Good Luck for the next 100 years.

Judith Weeks,
*Chair School Committee & SOSA School
Committee Guest, 2003*



SOSA



Links



with



the School



*Top L: OS/School Soccer Teams.
 Top C: Stuart & Yvonne Hadley.
 Top R: OS meeting new parents.
 Cen L: Penny Spring, Jim & Joan Shields at art exhibition.
 Cen R: Linbury Studio recital.
 Bot L: Scene from School production of 'Oliver'.
 Bot Cen: Jean Little and Philip Morris at Art Exhibition.
 Bot R: SOSA stand at School/PSFA Christmas Fair.*





Continuing



Support



The Silver Mile creeps ever upwards and now stands at around £3,000.00. Thankyou to everyone who is still supporting this initiative and saving 5p pieces or other small change, or sending donations. All money raised supports the new 'Sibford Foundation Fund' (formerly the Appeal). Please continue saving - for all OS surely hope that the new School Meeting Hall/Concert Hall and refurbished Theatre will eventually be built.

Before the Appeal was laid down, OS were urged by the School in January to 'Slim to Swim', seeking sponsorship whilst so doing. Philip Morris did just that, raising over £300.00 and eventually swimming a half-mile in the new pool. Ann Bond raised an equal amount, not slimming, but following a 'healthy living' routine for 28 days; she took to the water in the new pool in August, joining the new Sibford Swimming Club. *The requirements for membership of Sibford's Swimming Club are currently being re-devised; anyone interested in using the new pool facilities should contact The Swimming Pool Manager, Andy Bullough on 01295 781200.*

The Sibford School Foundation: In June, all SOSA members were circulated with details of the new Sibford School Foundation, and we were each asked to "raise £100 for 100 years of SOSA." Some have done this already, either individually or as a group initiative. Others are busily planning their contributions and may wish to seek OS support - let us know about your fund-raising activity so that other OS can be circulated, be it coffee morning, talk, sponsored event, or whatever.

Meanwhile, as not everyone is able to raise money themselves, you are invited to sponsor one of the younger SOSA member's endeavours: that of **Caroline Mills** (née Bond,) 1982-1987. Caroline writes: "Between May and July this year we (my husband and I, with our two small children) achieved one of our lifetime ambi-

tions - to drive around Europe. Planned for some years, it seemed inappropriate to treat it merely as an educational 'jaunt' and so decided before we left to set ourselves a challenge - to visit as many countries as possible in order to raise money that could be split equally between two causes: the 'Sibford Foundation' (supporting the School) and 'William's Fund' (set up by Old Scholar Simon Barfoot for Leukaemia Research, in memory of his young son - see Obituaries page 44). We visited fifteen countries and principalities (with proof should it be required), two continents, and covered more than 7,000 miles: France (4 times overall), Spain, Gibraltar, Morocco (Africa), Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Austria (twice), Czech Republic, Germany, Lichtenstein, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Belgium (twice) and The Netherlands. *Please can you sponsor us (post-event)? Either per country, per mile or an overall combination. Cheques should be made payable to SOSA and sent to: Caroline Mills, Woodlands Farm, Wigginton, Banbury, Oxon, OX15 4LH. For more information you can contact me on 01295 722172 (evenings only)."*

Stuart Hedley's Retirement: Mike Spring writes - "Stuart joined the staff at Sibford in the early seventies. He had previously taught at the Quaker school Ackworth, where he had met Yvonne. Together at Sibford they looked after the pastoral needs of the boys in Lister House for the next 32 years. Stuart's expertise and infectious enthusiasm for fine craftsmanship was quickly recognised and he continued Sibford's already widely known reputation for excellence in craft teaching. Stuart's Yorkshire wit and directness never left anyone in doubt as to his opinions, whilst he also had a sensitive and spiritual side based deeply upon his sympathy for the Quaker ethos - a belief in the talents and potentials that exist in all of us. Stuart raised his family within the community of Sibford, and for generations of Sibford scholars he provided a model of

commitment and stability - he and Yvonne will be greatly missed."

from Stuart and Yvonne Hedley: "We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who contributed so kindly and generously to our 'send off' from Lister and Sibford. We were overwhelmed on the occasion of the End of Term Barbecue and the gifts we received were very much appreciated and they will be enjoyed for years to come. I am beginning to learn how to play the Banjo all over again and gardening furiously to enable me to fill my lovely new wheelbarrow. No piece of wood will be safe from me and my sander and we are looking forward to sitting on a balmy evening after dark drinking a glass of wine with the garden illuminated by strategically placed garden lights. We look forward to hearing news of Sibford in the future and hope that many of you will keep in touch with us. Love and best wishes to you all."

Building Bridges: To her immense surprise - and delight, Ann Bond was invited to become the Honorary President of the PSFA (Parents, Staff & Friends Association) at their AGM on September 9th, 2003. Though this is an honorary position with no special duties, Ann hopes to build bridges between all who hold dear the well-being of Sibford: parents and pupils, current and former staff, and of course OS (with the added bonus to SOSA that parents might become better acquainted with our activities). For 'starters', Ann helped serve tea to 'new' parents in Orchard Close at the start of term.

Other Links: many OS have individually supported School functions throughout the year. SOSA participated in the School's Christmas Fair; attended the opening of the swimming pool and an art exhibition ('Earth's Bones'); played in the traditional School/SOSA football match; enjoyed concerts and plays performed by pupils and went to Covent Garden for an Appeal Concert organised by Sue Freestone & Tara Overend. Many of these functions are promoted to OS through the e-mailed SOSA Newsletter; if you are not already on the free distribution list, e-mail sosanews@aol.com.



Links with the School

Review of the School Year 2002-2003: Head's Report to the SOSA AGM

A very belated welcome to Sibford for your Centenary Celebrations. It has been a pleasure and an honour to be part of your festivities acknowledging 100 years of SOSA.

Here at Sibford, we have had another successful year. We have continued to grow and we begin the coming term with around 400 pupils.

Within a short time of my arrival here I was 'vetted' by all of my predecessors who were, at that time, still alive: they included Ken Greaves, who died a few months ago. Those of us who knew him, and especially those members of the school who had worked with him, were deeply saddened to hear of his death, and mourn his loss. Anyway, when Ken came to see me at Sibford, he told me to beware appeals. After working tirelessly to raise the money to build the 'new' dining room, and on the day that he signed the documents for the build to go ahead, he had a heart attack and never worked again. (Gladly though, he did survive for many happy years after that.)

I am pleased to say that I did survive our latest appeal, and that to the two major buildings opened last year we have added, in February, the new swimming pool. It was wonderful to see so many old scholars at the official opening and to be able to acknowledge the support of the Southall Trust and of individual old scholars in a public forum. I repeat those thanks here. Many of you have done a great deal to raise funds for the development programme and supported in other ways. In connection with the pool, my particular thanks to Ann Bond and Philip Morris and to the London Branch of Old Scholars. So, at last you might say, after decades of gingerly avoiding the edge and creeping through the damp, dingy changing rooms in the old pool we now have a splendid new resource and our pupils love it!

The past year has also brought us a full school inspection by the

Independent Schools Inspectorate. Whilst there were a few recommendations for improvement, the need for most of which we were only too aware, the report was resoundingly positive and a reinforcement of how we teach and how we treat all of the members of our community.

The beginning of the summer term brought the SARS crisis! Most of our students from the Far East had managed to make arrangements to stay in the country over Easter, or return early to guardians. However, there were four who had to spend ten days in quarantine, so they were locked away in the health centre, with Rupert (Freestone) in charge, until they were in the clear.

We have received, in the past two weeks, the results of the public examinations taken by our students this year. They achieved a 100% pass rate at A level - the first time since the expansion of the sixth form programme, with 82% achieving the top three grades. At GCSE our pass rate at five A*s - C was slightly down on last year, but still above the national average, and 100% passes above grade G. Our key stage two pupils at the top of Orchard Close bucked the national trend and 97% achieved level 4 or above. (The 3% who did not were actually absent on the day of the exam.)

Statistics, statistics, statistics. I think this is what Tony Blair actually meant when he said 'Education, education, education' - or did he mean 'testing, testing, testing'? Young people today are assessed to the point of lunacy and what do we, as a nation, gain from that? More to the point, what do the young people themselves gain? You are all aware that here at Sibford we believe in holistic education; in developing the whole person, not merely in the academic sense but also in terms of social responsibility, involvement in sporting activities, productions, concerts, art exhibitions and so on. We have a broad 'curricular enrichment programme' that involves many trips and activities that would have seemed utter fantasy when I was at school.

Over the past year, these events have included: Two major productions, the 'Golden Pathway Annual' and a production of 'Oliver' involving over 100 pupils. There have been several concerts and recitals, in and out of school. We are key players in the Oxfordshire Independent State School Partnership and as part of that our Citizenship team has been out and about in the county, making presentations as well as doing serious research into disabled access to public places. We have had hundreds of visitors to

the school on open mornings; to three area conferences of the Independent Schools Teacher Induction Programme; speakers at Friday afternoon Meeting for Worship; visiting theatre troupes and on Sports Day/Open Day, when, again, there was a strong and much appreciated SOSA presence. There have been trips to the theatre, to art galleries, garden centres, nature reserves, to the Phoenix School in London, from which a group of pupils still come every summer to spend a week with our own volunteer pupil helpers - and of course, there have been one or two social events. On a grander scale, there was a team-building weekend for sixth formers, a week-long activities trip to the Lake District; Year 9 went on a watersports trip to the South of France; there were two ski trips and a group of sixth formers went for a working trip to France. I could go on and on. This is just the tip of the iceberg. The range of opportunities available to our pupils is enormous, and very few are excluded from taking part for financial reasons. Much of what I have mentioned is included in the fees, and in some circumstances, grants are awarded to pupils whose families are in need of a little extra support.

If I return to results for a moment, you can tell from what I have just said that the improvement is not a result of academic 'hot-housing'. Neither is it down to a change in the profile of the Sibford pupil. We still take any child who we believe will thrive here and gain from the educational philosophy and nurturing culture of the school; we still enter any child for an examination who works and who wants to sit the exam. We do not sift through and exclude from entry those who might hurt our league table performance, as happens in many schools. We believe in the right of the child to have their worth acknowledged and the dignity of having their achievements celebrated. The reasons they succeed are manifold. They are very well taught, by teachers who believe in them and recognise the need for individualised teaching; but most of all they achieve because of the very valuing and respect that is so fundamental to the Sibford approach. In spite of the fact that occasionally, in some individuals, we find 'that of God' quite well hidden, we continue to strive to reveal and nourish it in all of our students.

Testimony to the success of our approach is the achievement of Joshua Jackson. Josh has been with us for longer than I have and he had a statement from Oxfordshire for quite severe specific learning difficulties. Education has been a struggle for him, but with the support of his parents and the school, he



battled on through the years; not only against educational difficulties, but also through difficult personal circumstances. He has just achieved two Bs and a C at A level and he reached the finals of a national competition run by the examination board Edexcel, to find the most remarkable candidate, in terms of achievement over adversity, in the country. He did not win in the end, but his achievements are none the less remarkable. He was a real Sibford success, but not unique by any means. Every year, we witness the joy of pupils who came here feeling that they were good for nothing, reading results that are beyond their wildest expectations!

Several staff left at the end of the summer term and of them few would be known well to old scholars. One however, has been part of the fabric of Sibford for so many years that it is hard to imagine the place without him. Stuart Hedley looked after the boys of Lister House for 32 years and there can be few to exceed that record in the history of the school. Many old scholars, ex staff and parents contributed to a 'This is Your Life' style book presented to Stuart in final Meeting and their reflections demonstrated the high regard in which he was held by many of the people with whom he came into contact over the years. He has returned to Yorkshire with Yvonne for what, we hope, will be a long and happy retirement.



I also have a heartfelt, if a little premature, 'thank you' to make to Elizabeth Young. Before Old Scholars meet again, Elizabeth will have retired at the end of the coming Autumn Term. When I arrived in 1997, there were only 27 pupils in Orchard Close. Now there are over seventy and under Liz's safe and steady guidance our little sibling school has gone from strength to strength. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Liz for all the work she has done to make Orchard Close what it is.

Finally, my thanks again to you, members of the Sibford Old Scholars Association. When I first addressed an AGM of SOSA I referred to the 'Sibford Orchestra' and the parts old scholars play in our ensemble. I still feel that way. Although, with the passing of time, some slip to the back of the second fiddles, others still play the odd solo, and SOSA is a vital element in the music of Sibford. It is quite something to be able to say that you have been supporting Sibford for a hundred years and that the bond of friendship, born at school, has supported the existence of your society for a century. Long may it continue!

Sue Freestone,
Head, August 25th, 2003

Centenary Reunion - August 2003

Thoughts of A Visitor from Abroad

Not having been to Sibford for many years I decided this being the Centenary year of S.O.S.A. to make the trip from Canada in order to attend the Reunion.

On arriving at school the Archway was my first point of recognition. I was aware the manor and old school had been sold for development but, on walking through the Archway I was suddenly in a different



From L to R - Susan Thomas, Eddie Goudge & Bryony Denton-Williams

world! I had forgotten how beautiful Cotswold stone is and delighted in seeing so much being used in the new homes.

I proceeded to the Hill after asking directions and again found myself in a different world from my memories. Coffee in the large dining room proved interesting as the first person I chatted with was Ian Parsons, a gentleman I discovered lived in the same town in Canada as my family for quite a few years and we both knew the location of each others homes. What a small world we live in! I was so

pleased to meet three more OS from my year: Chris Grimes, Bryony Denton Williams (née Veysey) and Eddie Goudge who was visiting with his wife Margaret from South Africa. Not having seen these folks for forty-seven years, we had much to talk about. There were several other OS I knew and was just as pleased to become reacquainted with them.

The new buildings are a wonderful addition to the school. The swimming pool is delightful, a joy to behold in fact for all of us who remembered the pool of our school years. I was very impressed with the art centre exhibition and spent an interesting time viewing the archive exhibits and reading back issues of 'The Archway', all so well laid out by Mike Finch. The Leslie Baily lecture and AGM were most interesting as were the President's and School Committee Representative's addresses.

Saturday evening dressed in our finery, the champagne reception, through supper and dancing was a fun time and the hall decorated in its draperies was a most suitable venue for the SOSA Ball. The pig roast was delicious, as was lunch on Holly House lawn. The 'Hub' was a great place to mingle and partake of refreshments. It



When we were very young:
bathing beauties of long ago

was very evident that all members of S.O.S.A. involved in organizing the reunion had worked very hard and long in order that we all had an enjoyable time.

I am writing this on the aircraft winging my way back to Canada and my family. The effort to attend the reunion was well worthwhile and I have much to think about and remember from a most enjoyable time spent at the school that was instrumental in forming my present values and helped make me who I am.

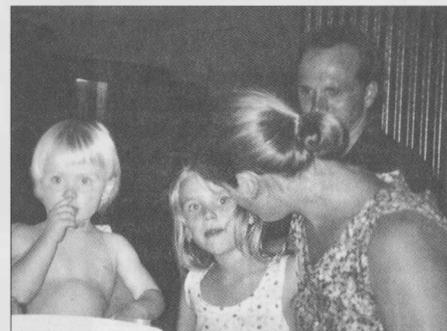
Susan Thomas (née Smith),
1951-56, former head girl

.... from nearer home - Chucked Out but Rescued!

To the dismay of those of us who for various reasons couldn't attend the Ball, the 'Hub' was banished at grievously short notice; we had nowhere to go. But wonderful Caroline Mills (née Bond) and husband Paul generously and quickly came to the rescue, offering their farmstead-home for a barbecue.

"And if they are having champagne," said Caroline, "so shall we!" The unquakerly bottle was uncorked and the whole party of rejects had a lovely time. Many thanks to our Sibfordially welcoming hosts.

David Haines, 1942-47



**SIBFORD
OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION
Annual General Meeting Minutes**

Date & Time: 10.00am on Mon 25th August 2003;
Venue: Sibford Friends' School; Attendees: 48

Guy Kingham welcomed Old Scholars and Guests to the Meeting.

1. Greetings Received: Guy Kingham reported that Best Wishes for the Reunion had been received from many individuals including: Naomi Alexander, Michael Van Blankenstein, Cecily Blunt, Eric Brown, Moreen Budgen, Douglas Carn, Michael Farr, Andrew, Clare, Michael & Alex Finch, Derek Gaffee, Lisa Hart, Esther Jackson, Ruth Jones, Ronald Kennedy, Kerry Reaper (née Hughes), Des & Margaret Rose, Debbie Rosen (née Stephenson), Doris Russell, Gerardo Sanchez-Reyes, Jimmy Setna, Mavis Stiles, Victoria Swinnerton, Irene Tester, Sue Toet, Tim Vallance, Peter Yeoman, Maggie Vella and Elizabeth Young.

2. Obituaries: The meeting observed a short silence to remember the lives of: Sidney Geering (October 2002), Pam Harrison (November 2002), William Barfoot (December 2002), Kenneth Greaves (January 2003), Clem Cox (February 2003), Joan Bamford (née Hilling) (March 2003), Dr Sidney Agnew (June 2003), Helen Doyle (August 2003), Judith Smith (née Long) (August 2003). Tributes appear on pages 44-46.

3. Minutes of the Last Annual General Meeting: The minutes were approved, incorporating the correct version of the Treasurer's Report, previously circulated to members, and signed by the President as a correct record of the meeting.

4. REPORTS

General Secretary's Report:

Presented by Lucinda Poulton.

Your Committee has met on four occasions and has worked hard in promoting the Association's Centenary Year. SOSA Post Cards have been produced and are available for sale. Ann Bond has produced an E-newsletter this year to be received by members through e-mail; this has kept members informed of some of the events that have taken place and other SOSA news. Christine Weatherhead has been in communication on behalf of the Committee looking at the possibility of the Association sponsoring a page in the School Year Book. This will commence in the forthcoming year.

As stated in a recent correspondence that you will have all received, the School Appeal has

run for the last three years and as we have witnessed over the last two years, the Development of the School at the Hill has evolved. The Art School was officially opened in 2001 by McKenzie Thorpe and the Music School by Richard Stigoe in 2002. The beginning of 2003 saw the opening of the Swimming Pool. Judith Weeks joined your Committee at one of the meetings this year to discuss the School Committee's decision to lay down the Appeal and form the Sibford Foundation Fund and to inform us that the School Committee were keen to link with Old Scholars during their Centenary Year to launch the change. The Foundation will be a vehicle for investment of donations, legacies, gifts and fund-raising and will assist in funding future major developments. We hope that Old Scholars will link together in families, Branches or groups, each trying to raise £100 for 100 years.

The Silver Mile continues to creep nearer to its target, and has reached £3000, so don't forget to save up your five pence pieces and please liaise with Ann Bond if you have your money bags of coins with you - these will then be handed over to the School for the Foundation.

In June, the School's Open Day, which was a great success, well attended and excellent weather, coincided with the nearest week-end to the founding of the Association and as in previous years, under the organisation of Ann Bond, SOSA joined in the Open Day celebrations. In order to recognise the significance of the week-end to SOSA there was a Tree Planting Ceremony on the Saturday Morning. The SOSA HUB was open and in the evening there was a gathering of SOSA members to be found having dinner at the Bishop Blaize. On Sunday morning, members joined Sibford Meeting in the Gower. The week-end also coincided with the first viewings of the development of the Manor and many Old Scholars and Parents took the opportunity to go and view the Show House and full plans for the site.

The Membership/Financial side of things I will leave for the Treasurer's Report to be presented later in the meeting. Ann Bond has continued to work tirelessly as the Magazine Editor for yet another year and produced a successful and well received 'Sibford Rocket'. The annual School versus Old Scholars football match took place under the keen eye of referee Brian Holliday, with the School winning the cup.

With the change in presentation of the School Magazine, which no longer has a specific literary section, the question of the Geoffrey Long Book Prize was raised. It was agreed at Committee that the prize should be awarded to an individual piece of work which could be literary or art and that the name of the award

should therefore be changed, without losing its reference to Geoffrey. The award is now named the 'SOSA Geoffrey Long Prize and its value has been increased to £50.

It is with sadness that I announce Ellen Salway's retirement from the Committee. Ellen has been on the Committee since leaving school and has worked in the capacity of Assistant Reunion Secretary and Reunion Secretary. We are all extremely grateful to the work that Ellen has put in and look forward to seeing her at future SOSA events, looking less tired but probably still eating 'fish fingers'.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee for their continued dedication and hard work on behalf of the Association. Finally I would like to close by asking you to join with me in showing your appreciation to Mike Finch. Mike finishes his long stint as Treasurer of the Association and I am sure you will agree that he has managed our finances well - in fact I think it is often harder to justify why we want to spend money to Mike than it is to any Bank Manager! Thank you Mike.

Branch Reports:

London - Presented by Chris Grimes - London Branch continues to remain a small select group of Old Scholars, but as they say, many things come in small packages! We have had a rather quiet year. There were, however, two highlights.

In October we helped to organise, and supported, a fund raising event for the School Appeal. This was when Stafford Steed came to St. Albans Meeting House and shared his passion for photography with a wonderful presentation of his synchronised slides and music show. It was a great success and raised over £200 for the Appeal.

We held our Advent Gathering as usual. Fourteen young and old Old Scholars and family met at our house for lunch and gossip. In the morning we managed to include a visit to the Abbey for those who had never seen it. After lunch several found the energy for a stroll in the local park whilst Ann and Ray Bond kept the less active amused with a co-operative effort of crossword solving. During the course of the day the group agreed to Buy-a-Brick for the Swimming Pool. That was a quick and easy decision to make. What was neither quick nor easy was deciding upon the wording to go on the brick - should there or should there not be an apostrophe in Old Scholars? What did we decide? Go and see - if you can find it!

Before she moved right away to Lincolnshire last year Mavis Stiles was one of our most loyal members who could always be relied upon to

turn up to and help with whatever we did. It is sad to learn that Mavis is now very poorly, and we would like to take this opportunity to send Mavis and her family loving greetings on behalf of us all. Pam and Arthur Harrison have always been staunch supporters of London Branch activities. Having been sad to learn that Pam had died just before our Advent Gathering, we were glad that Arthur was able to be with us on that occasion. Another regular at our gatherings has been Helen Doyle who also, sadly, died recently. Helen has often contributed to the entertainment at our events with games and stories and has been the source of much fun and laughter. Mavis, Pam and Helen will be much missed from our Advent Gathering this year. Take out your diaries! The venue for this annual event is St. Albans. The date is Saturday December 6th 2003 and everyone is welcome. Please do come along and help swell the numbers. Just ring us in advance - 01727 850521. We look forward to seeing you.

Midlands - Presented by Hilary Haddleton - The Midland Branch Annual New Year Gathering was held on Saturday January 25th. Some forty Old Scholars met at Selly Oak Meeting House for a cold buffet lunch. With plenty of food and talk we ended our proceedings with Rockets - what else! Our next lunch will be on Saturday January 31st 2004 at 12.30 p.m. All are welcome, just let me know - 0121 705 0462.

School Committee Representative Report: *Presented by Patricia Grimes*

Once again the School Committee year has been full, varied and interesting. Since our last report to you several members have attended a Friends Governors Training Day at Sidcot School organised by FSJC - Friends Schools Joint Council. Following that, Sibford School Committee held its own training event last November experimenting with a residential weekend at Barton Manor near Bicester. This was both enjoyable and useful. We got to know each other better and had time to discuss issues and concerns that warranted deeper consideration than is possible at routine committee meetings. One outcome of our deliberations is that Education Sub Committee has changed its name to School Life Sub Committee - a more accurate description of its work.

Two major events in the life of the school this year have been the Inspection in February by the Independent Schools Inspectorate and the opening of the long awaited new swimming pool. The first was of considerable interest to School Committee and the second of considerable interest to Old Scholars.

The Inspection, which lasted a week, I am sure Sue will be telling you about. Our role as members of School Committee was largely to

uphold and support the whole school community throughout what was undoubtedly a difficult and stressful time. At the end of it all Sibford emerged with flying colours. In their overall summary the Inspectors said "Sibford School is a good school; it is successful in fulfilling its aims. It gives pupils confidence and self esteem and enables them to achieve standards that are good and often very good for their abilities." I am sure OS share pleasure in hearing this and would wish to congratulate Sue, all Staff and Pupils on a very positive inspection report.

The grand opening of the new swimming pool took place at the end of February which is music to the ears of every Old Scholar. This splendid facility is being used and enjoyed by the present pupils while the rest of us wallow in nostalgia and turn green with envy. However all is not rosy for, as I am sure you are aware, the Development Appeal which was intended to cover the cost of the new pool fell very far short of all hopes and expectations and this part of the Development has had to be supported by a bank loan. A decision was taken to lay down the Appeal and to launch in its place The Sibford School Foundation. This will give the School a permanent vehicle for fund raising and hopefully will encourage more legacies, something Sibford has always been short of. School Committee looked to Old Scholars for help in publicising and launching this new initiative and your committee took up the challenge. You should all have received information about it and I hope you are all busy thinking up novel ways of raising a bit of cash to celebrate 100 years of fun and games with SOSA by getting the Sibford School Foundation off to a flying start.

One function of School Committee is to receive reports from the Heads, The Facilities Manager, The Financial Administrator and its own two subcommittees. In this way the Committee can keep a watching brief on the health and welfare of the whole Campus and its community. From the Facilities Manager we learn that routine maintenance is not forgotten. This year, amongst other things, new windows have been put into the south side of both Lister and Penn boarding houses; one half of the surplus boarding accommodation in Orchard Close has been converted into a year 5 classroom and the other half into an IT room; the kitchen has been partly redecorated and the Ark has been refurbished to accommodate up to 8 flexi boarders. Remember when it was the San?

Looking back is not altogether a good idea - times and needs change and a vibrant community has to move forward to meet the challenges of its day, however I had to smile when the Committee agreed that senior weekly boarders

would in future be allowed to have their cars at school and then the Head put forward the idea that more Girls may be attracted to Sibford if they could bring their horses with them, to be stabled locally, she hastened to add, not on the campus. Remember what a tremendous concession it was to be allowed a bicycle at Sibford - or even be lucky enough to actually own one? Ah well as I said times change. The intake numbers for Autumn 2003 look good with or without cars and horses.

School Life sub committee has had the usual round of policy documents to approve. One which is of interest here is the Lettings Policy as this states that Old Scholars are an exception to the rule of not accepting repeat booking for small groups likely to result in a net profit of less than £7,500.

An innovation which will interest many is the proposal to introduce an Art Scholarship. This is in line with the Academic and Music Scholarships that are already offered and will help to encourage youngsters showing potential talent to opt for a place at Sibford.

An item of interest to those of you that bought any Buy-A-Brick blocks for the Swimming Pool is that these have now been laid and can be viewed. There is space for more if anyone feels they have missed out!

More changes are in the air. In May School Committee appointed Lesley Nell as new Head of Orchard Close for January in place of Elizabeth Young who retires at the end of the year. As a member of School Committee I have taken a particular interest in Orchard Close and have tried to find time to visit on at least a termly basis. Whenever I have turned up I have been met with friendship and a warm welcome from Liz and her staff. I have greatly appreciated and valued this contact and will miss Liz when she goes.

Also going at the end of the year is my co-representative, support, helpmate and guide Russell Steed. Russell has been a tower of strength to me as an OS rep and I shall miss him being on hand as a sounding block. Cindy will be replacing Russell on the Committee. I look forward to welcoming her aboard in January and hope she will continue Russell's role of keeping me on track!

Treasurer's Report: *Presented by Michael Finch.*

Financially, 2002-2003 has been a very satisfactory year, finishing with a surplus of £6196.00. The increase in subscription charges raised an additional £660.00 during the year. The new method of collecting subscriptions from current pupils brought in about £12,000.00 which is a

magnificent start.

Just to go through the accounts I would like to highlight certain aspects: Investments - you will see that our investment income has fallen again due to the low interest rates. Ian Weatherhead, who is looking at our investment portfolio, along with the new Treasurer, will be looking at new and suitable opportunities. The Annual Reunion of 2002 produced a surplus of £491.00 despite a low turn-out. The Magazine costs showed a slight increase on the previous year, this is mainly due to production cost increases. The Magazine is a vital part of our organisation and I for one, believe that it is money well spent. Administration costs increased this year as we purchased new stationery, including the postcards. Pavilion Refurbishment - there was an administrative error shown in the accounts for 2001-02, which showed a donation of £500.00 in the income account. This has been rectified by showing it as expenditure in the accounts ending 31/03/03.

The final part of the report concerns the Recent Leavers subscriptions which we are laying down as it is no longer applicable. Most pupils now join as life members. As I've reported previously the administration of this fund has caused some anxiety since I became Treasurer and I would like my successor to be free of a burden which I inherited. John Miller set the administration up whilst he was Treasurer and it was a sensible arrangement, i.e 10% would be deducted from the fund for payment into the Income Account. Unfortunately we as an Association didn't make the Rules clear as with life membership. If we wanted it to work in the way that it was envisaged, then we should have restricted it in a similar way to life membership. Basically, the fund was spent but administratively the expenditure has not been shown against the Fund. It was, in effect, a Book Keeping error which I inherited but I was advised that it was best to leave it in the accounts as it was good housekeeping. However, several of us have felt uneasy about it and have decided that it should change. The Fund will not appear again and to overcome this we have moved it from the balance sheet to the accumulated Fund. It makes sense to do this and we hope you will agree.

The Treasurer then invited comments from the meeting.

John Taylor stated that he had analysed the last year's accounts and noted that Membership subscriptions are drawn 1st September but the Accounts run until 31st March, however, these are not shown in the Accounts as Advance payment. It was requested that the new Treasurer look into this. David Haines asked if the

Archive Fund is adequate; he enquired whether the Archive could be linked with the School as a subject and proposed that more money be placed in the fund. It was agreed that the Association Committee would discuss this suggestion.

Adoption of Accounts: Proposed by John Taylor, Seconded by Jane Gunston; Carried Unanimously. (If any member would like a copy of the accounts then please write to the Treasurer).

Michael Finch finished his report by saying that he would like to thank the membership for their support over the 10 years that he has been Treasurer. He became Treasurer at a difficult time in his life, but the work as Treasurer helped to sustain him and for that he would always be grateful. John Haddleton addressed the meeting and commented that Mike Finch had inherited a complicated set of Accounts when he took over as Treasurer and that he had worked extremely hard towards making them explicit and clear to understand and that Mike should be thanked for all that he has done as Treasurer.

5. Review of the School Year and Development Programme:

Presented by Sue Freestone.

This report appears on pages 14 & 15.

6. ELECTIONS

Treasurer 01/09/03-31/08/06 (3 years): Russell Steed; proposed by Mike Finch, seconder Diana Lloyd.

Membership Co-ordinator 01/09/03-31/08/06 (3 years): Michael Finch; proposed by Christine Weatherhead, seconder Simon Barfoot.

Editor 01/01/04-31/12/06 (3 years): Ann Bond; proposed by Christine Weatherhead, seconder Patricia Grimes.

General Committee Member 01/09/03-31/08/05 (2 years): Simon Barfoot; proposed by Julie Greenhill, seconder Nicola Grimes.

General Committee Member 01/09/03-31/08/06 (3 years): T Ian Weatherhead; proposed by Christopher Grimes, seconder Lucinda Poulton.

General Committee Member 01/09/03-31/08/06 (3 years): Julie Greenhill; proposed by Lucinda Poulton, seconder Michael Grimes.

All the above nominations were accepted unanimously by the Annual General Meeting.

Guy Kingham then addressed the Annual General Meeting: Endorsement of the President 2003 - 2004: Stephen Bunney; Endorsement of Vice President 2003 - 2004:

Diana Lloyd

7. Any Other Business: Ian Hedger commented that the School is now a bit of a 'maze' and asked that sign posting be considered in future years. Ann Bond requested that any pictures for the magazine should reach her within one week. Margaret Farrington spoke on behalf of Jean Moore who had expressed concern that the programme did not include enough things for children and that the Ball and food were not really 'child friendly'. Lucinda Poulton responded that in this, the Association's Centenary year, the Ball was organised as a 'Charity' event to support the School Development Programme and that it was a unique event and had always been expressed as so. Lucinda continued by saying that the Committee would discuss the comments made.

John Taylor noted that there had not been an elected replacement for Ellen Salway as Reunion Secretary. Lucinda explained that Ellen had only tendered her resignation the week before the Reunion and therefore there had been no time for the vacancy to be circulated to the full membership and therefore it would go to election next year.

John Haddleton thanked Guy for doing a superb job as President and for putting together a splendid event, especially the Ball, in celebration of the 100th Anniversary. He commented that Guy had worked tremendously hard, at a geographical distance, to organise the events.

Guy Kingham closed the Meeting with Thanks to Sue Freestone and the School for their support of the week-end, Wendy Finch for the beautiful flower arrangements at the Ball and for her tireless work throughout the year fielding enquiries. Diana and John Lloyd were thanked for the delicious desserts and salads to accompany the Pig Roast. Ellen Salway and Nicola Grimes for all their running around and behind the scene organisation throughout the week-end. Ann Bond was thanked for her tireless work in organising and running the Hub, also the production of tickets, posters and flyers for the Ball and organisation of the Pig Roast. A special thank you to Henry Taylor and all the waiters at the Ball, Henry was Head Boy at the School last year and both Henry and his band helped to make the Ball a success. Thanks were passed on to Richard Weatherhead for his role as Life Guard. Russell Steed was thanked for leading the walk on Saturday. Guy also thanked Mike Finch for the superb Archive exhibition and also Mike and Lucinda for all their support and hard work throughout the year. All these individuals had assisted in making the week-end a great success.

The Meeting Closed at 11.15 a.m.



Intrepid OS aviators gather at 'Oxfordshire Sportflying Club', Enstone Airfield



Margaret Fairmington and Bryony Denton-Williams embark in the 'Robin DR400'



Guy Kingham chats with his Flying Instructor, 'Jim'



Post-flight discussion, with tea: Julie, Chris, Hilary and Ann



Pre-flight briefing for Philip Manasseh



Peter Sladen awaits his 'slot'. Jenny Sladen and Bryony D-W offer advice!



Slicing the roasted pig



Hilary Haddleton and Chris Grimes help themselves to Di Lloyd's delicious salads



Country Dancers, full size ...



Country Dancers, half size ...



Honour your partners ...



Circle to the right ...

Addresses at the August 2003 Reunion

The President, Guy Kingham, spoke to the assembled company on Sunday 24th August:

I appear to have been a late developer in most aspects of my life. I didn't get married until I was thirty-three, I am about to have my first child at the ripe old age of thirty-five and I eventually matured as an academic, gaining my first degree at the age of twenty-seven. However, I knew from an early age that teaching was something that I very much wanted to do. I am now working at a large Secondary Modern fully Comprehensive school in Eastbourne. It has a broad, mixed and multi-cultural community. There are at present eleven hundred pupils in the school, and in the next five years this is to expand to nearer fourteen hundred. The school is situated in the heart of Eastbourne, a town that factually states it is the sunniest place in Britain, hence my all year round suntan!

I am very lucky in my school. I teach PE and the facilities that I have at my disposal are very good. The school's facilities for this subject are similar to, but not the same as Sibford's, for I am able to teach on a large open plan playing field or in one of two gymnasiums, and on occasions on a tarmac area that accommodates ten tennis courts. When I compare this to those of my professional counterparts in Sussex I realize how fortunate I am. The school's age range is 11-16, and I teach both single sex PE and mixed sex groups. In my school we teach GCSE PE to every child up to what is known as the 'short course level'. This level enables them all to gain a qualification equivalent to one half of a GCSE. As you could imagine PE is a popular subject, and out of 240 children on average per year group, we often have 80 students who choose to study for a full GCSE qualification. So in summary the pupils are very stimulated towards my subject and the PE department is thriving. It is a very rewarding and enjoyable place

to work. I am about to start my 8th year in the school and I am very much looking forward to the next academic year.

Even though I so enjoy my job, I felt it important to fulfil one of my personal dreams, that of travelling around the world for a year. I felt most grateful when both my Headteacher and my Head of Department gave me permission to leave the school for a full academic year, with my job secure for me on my return. I think I was one of the first people to be offered this opportunity of a sabbatical, and I know that many of my professional colleagues were surprised that I was allowed to do this (maybe they hoped that I would not come back!) So both Jane and I planned our year and looked into our journey and decided that we wanted to visit and explore all four corners of the world. This couldn't happen, a) because we could not afford it and b), as we did not have enough time. We decided upon travelling through India, visiting Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, The Philippines, Bali, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, some areas of the USA and a few countries in Europe that we had not previously visited.

It was a fascinating experience as you can imagine, and when you take two teachers, as in our case, and put them into these types of situations it was probably obvious that our natural curiosity would take us into a variety of different schooling situations and educational environments. There were certain situations that really stood out to us on our 'educational tour' of the world. One of these was in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia where we met some teachers from an International School. We were invited to the school and given a tour of the facilities and found it to be incredibly British, extremely new, with all of the

up to date modern equipment that you would expect to see, such as interactive white boards and brand new sports facilities, but overwhelmingly a caring environment where you felt very much that the teachers and the pupils were working together in a very tight knit community.

Another educational environment we saw was in a Buddhist teaching community in a town in northern Thailand called Chang Mai. We were not formerly invited to this school, but just stopped and observed as we were passing by one day. Here, there were none of the trappings of wealth that we had encountered in Kuala Lumpur, but there was a clear demonstration of the importance to the community of learning. There appeared to be almost a reverence towards the teacher as the pupils listened intently to the instruction that they were being given, within a very calming and respectful atmosphere.

The final situation I would like to mention happened in Fiji. Whilst we were there we were determined to go to some form of Christian worship on the Sunday morning. So, off we went from our hostel to the local village. At quite an early hour we stumbled into the area where the service was to be held. There appeared to be some kind of Sunday school going on. All of the children had been dressed up in their Sunday best. They were sitting in the shade under the shelter of a corrugated roof listening intently to their teacher. Again through our lack of knowledge of their language, I can't tell you what was being taught or what was being said, but we both considered afterwards how the children placed such importance on the words of the teacher. It was seeing such situations that I have mentioned that invigorated not only me, but Jane as well, into the value and importance of our jobs. It made us both realise how important and influential teachers can be in their jobs, and perhaps reaffirmed our belief and commitment to the profession.

It also increased our awareness of the importance of the teacher's role in helping children to learn and develop, and established the fact that through schooling and the opportunity that this provides, children are constantly being promoted to develop their own life skills. It became apparent to me that the process of learning and developing does not stop when you finally walk out of the school gate at 16 or 18. We need to be constantly developing and learning throughout our lives. From a personal perspective, it has been suggested to me by some that being in the same school for eight years could stagnate my personal development, but I feel justified in saying that whilst at this school I have continually developed both professionally and personally. Examples of this can be seen by the fact that I have been promoted regularly in the School with my third promotion starting in September, by the opportunities offered to me during our year travelling and in my ability to study for a Masters Degree whilst teaching over the last two and a half years.

When one reflects on one's own personal development, when one looks back on your own personal journey, it is interesting to try and see where your journey started. Clearly my family and home life was very important to me, but in terms of identifying my introduction to the prospect of teaching, then my journey started at Sibford. Whilst at Sibford I was influenced by many teachers and feel very strongly that I could mention many who positively influenced me at that time. As a boarder your house staff are like surrogate parents, and are constantly watching, guiding and influencing you. Within Sibford, the strong caring ethos that is developed and nurtured and carries on to this day was found in abundance in the 1980s whilst I resided here. On television at the moment there are a series of adverts designed by the Government to entice people into the teaching profession. These adverts have centred their attention on the

positive influences the teaching profession has upon pupils. I feel very strongly that I could have been on one of those adverts, because I have such a strong belief that I would have not taken up teaching if it was not for the positive influence of so many staff here at Sibford.

Guy Kingham, 1982-84

'There is no point in Religious Education. Is there?':

a précis of the **Leslie Baily Lecture** given on Saturday 23rd August, 2003 by **Mike Wycherley B.Ed**

(the full script is available as an e-mail document from sosanews@aol.com)

I am often asked why I teach RE, is it important for children? Do children like it and is there any indoctrination involved? The role of education has changed dramatically in the last century and none more so than in religious studies. It has been affected by various education reform acts, from the 1944 act up the 1988 act to the present day green paper on the 14-19 curriculum. The curriculum of the country has certainly changed and I feel is working slowly towards the needs of society and of the changing face of the society, what can now be termed as a multi cultural or pluralist society.

When we ask what religious education is, the most obvious answer is that religious education is the study of religion. Beneath that apparently simple answer lie a number of perplexities. What is religion and how is it to be studied? By whom is it to be studied and who is to control the study of it?

The role of religion in the curriculum clearly offers a social, moral, cultural and spiritual aspect. Learning from religion, I feel is the most important and valuable contribution that an RE syllabus makes to a school's curriculum. Students might know what the interior of a Gurdwara is like or why Prince Siddhath left home and

founded Buddhism, but what I feel is more paramount to their studies, and gives them skills such as empathy and reflectiveness, is the fact that they can think deeper and wonder why someone might leave their family and friends to seek a higher truth. It is with a doubt that skills such as empathy and emotional intelligence are as important as cognitive intelligence.

I recently stumbled across a book that took my fancy: 'Emotional Intelligence' by D.Goleman. I was immediately struck by the title because I had been discussing with my department how we could enhance the emotional intelligence of students as well as the cognitive. Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness and impulse-control, persistence, motivation, empathy and social deftness.

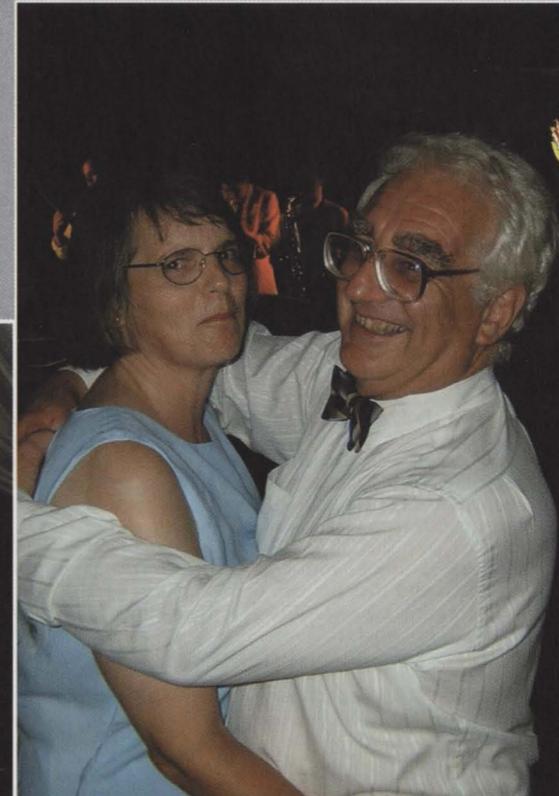
Since September 11th students have been asking me about religion and terrorism. It is certainly an issue that needs to be discussed due to its emotional nature. The first thing to notice is that every major world religion and many minor ones are associated with terror. Perhaps R.E. is indoctrination and should be avoided on a school syllabus after all.

British religious education is both critical and spiritual. It is critical in the sense that religious education seeks to dispel ignorance and superstition, exposing religious beliefs to the light of rational discussion. It is spiritual in the sense that it is not content with merely factual description but seeks to make a lively and intelligible contribution to the moral and spiritual development of every child. I feel that religious education performs tasks which go far beyond its role as comprising the study of religion. The task of religious education is to expose religion to itself, to reveal the ambiguity of religion in ways which liberate adults and children from the oppressive aspects of religion, and at the same time to open up the treasures of religion.

Mike Wycherley



SOSA CENTENARY BALL



Greetings, Mr President:

Messages received regarding the Reunion in August, 2003.

"As an old SOSA member what is the best way to send you a donation for the Sibford School Foundation from this side of the Atlantic? All good wishes for the August Reunion - wish I could be there! Was at school a long time ago!"

Doris Russell, 1934-38

"Dear Guy, Please forgive me for not replying to your invitation to the Old Scholars Dinner sooner. I had been waiting to hear from some friends from NZ to know when or where we could meet up. Now I've heard and it will be the Bank Holiday weekend. I'm sorry I can't join you. Have an enjoyable time. Best wishes,"

Elizabeth Young, Head Orchard Close.

"Dear Guy, I am sorry I am unable to attend the SOSA weekend this year but the journey by public transport over a Bank Holiday is just too much for an old girl like me. I hope you all have a great time and you enjoy being 'head' of the unruly bunch of 'oldies'. Best wishes to all,"

Moreen Budgen (née Gibbons), 1943-48

"Dear Guy, May I send all best wishes to you and all old scholars present this coming weekend. Have a happy and successful anniversary celebration - and long may it continue. Have managed to collect coins over the years to the value of £25, and enclose cheque as a contribution towards the 'Silver Mile' project. Yours Sibfordially,"

Derek Gaffee, 1938-43

"GREETINGS to Old Scholars this weekend for the Reunion 2003. I would like to be with you, but Ken and I are away. I shall think of you, and hope all goes well. I wonder now many of my time will read this - a special greeting to you."

Naomi Alexander (née Butler), 1933-37

"SOSA Reunion, Best wishes to you all for a happy weekend. I will be with you in spirit although cannot manage the journey to Sibford. Kindest regards,"

Cecily Blunt (née Edridge), 1941-46

"Dear Guy, I shall be thinking of you all at Sibford this weekend. I know that you'll have a happy time - as always! Hope that the weather is good. I enclose cheque for £100 for the 'Silver Mile'. Best wishes to all. Yours,"

Lilian Ward (née East), 1928-34

"Dear Guy, Wendy and I should like to wish you every pleasure in your Presidency and our greetings and best wishes to all Old Scholars attending this very important gathering. Wendy had a quadruple coronary bypass operation in March and although she has made a marvellous recovery she needs a substantial holiday. Unfortunately, our arrangements have clashed with the August Reunion; the travel agency is to blame. We shall be thinking of you over the weekend and hope that you all have a great time, with a continuation of this wonderful weather. Yours,"

Michael (1940-44) & Wendy van Blankenstein

"Dear Guy, What a lovely program. I was at Sibford from 1920-22 and it was certainly one of the best 2 year periods in my life. This is to present my apologies. I'm 94 now and shan't be able to manage it. I'm having my first novel published in July. Wouldn't Mrs Harrod have been pleased? Many good wishes to you all,"

Irene Tester (née Yarwood), 1920-22

"Dear Guy Kingham, Thank you for the information regarding the Old Scholars Reunions, I regret I shall be unable to attend and ask you to give my best wishes to Old Scholars for a happy weekend. We have lived in Spain for seven years within sight and sound of the sea and overlooking almond groves. Maurice Gardner has visited on occasions bringing news of Alfred and Susan Holland in South Africa. Some will remember these Old Scholars. I was sad to see pictures of the demolition of the 'Manor' and look forward sometime of a written history of that Grand old Lady of the Ferris. Yours sincerely,"

Peter Yeoman, 1935-41

"Dear Guy Kingham, Thank you for your letter inviting me, along with other Old Scholars, to the two OSA events this year. Unfortunately I shall not be able to attend either of them so please accept my apologies. I am registered deaf/blind and find it difficult to mix in crowds. When I was at school in the nineteen-twenties I had no idea as to how young the Association was. We always looked forward to the Whitsun gatherings and I still recall, with pleasure, the many songs we were entertained with at the Saturday evening concerts. One song in particular extolled the wonders of the association and encouraged us to join. 'Sibford scholars, all old scholars, join the OSA', which advice many of us took. I hope you enjoy your term as President and that the two occasions this year will be a great success. With warm greetings to you all, Yours sincerely,"

Eric Brown, 1922-27

"Hi Guy, Received all your flyers for the old scholars ball Wish you best of luck. Hope all

goes well, I am sure you will have a good turn out, just wish I could be there to see you all again Anyway will be thinking of you all on Saturday... Kind regards from Zambia."

Debbie Rosen (née Stephenson), 1980-85

"Dear Guy, Thank you for your kind invitation to the SOSA Ball on 23rd August. I regret that I shall be unable to attend as I shall be away that weekend. I hope that the whole weekend is a resounding success and will no doubt hear all about it from Sue Freestone when I am back from my holidays. With best wishes,"

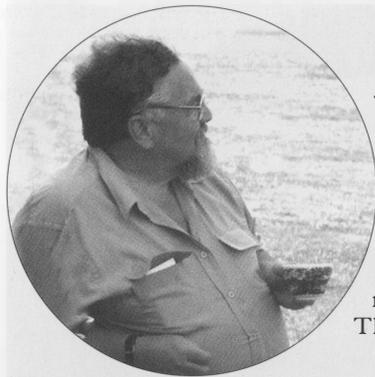
Sue Toet, PA to the Head

The following attended all or part of the August

Reunion: Amy Anderson; David & Teda Ashdown; Matthew Ashton; Simon Barfoot; Nick & Chloe Bennett; Lorna Bergstrom; Maureen Berry; Eric Bibby; Ann & Raymond Bond; Michael & Scilla Bond; Nancy Bottoms; Ann Brown (née McCallum); Stephen Bunney; Lisa Burnett; Sarah Clacy; Liz Cordiner; Naomi Cordiner; Norman Coxon; Bryony Denton-Williams; Heather, Jessie, Joe & John Downard; June Ellis; Simon Everest & family; Alison Farr; Margaret Fairnington; Mike & Wendy Finch; Ruth Fletcher; Clare Francis; Elisabeth & Ken Francis; Sue & Rupert Freestone; Dominic Fryer; Eddie & Margaret Goudge; Julie Greenhill; Chris & Pat Grimes; Michael Grimes & Nessa Williams; Nicola Grimes; Jane Gunston; Hilary & John Haddleton; David Haines; Georgina & Lucy Harmer; Steven Harrigan; Arthur, Philippa & Leslie Harrison; Barbara Hart; Ian Hedger; Ben Hedges; Stuart & Yvonne Hedley; Katie Holton; Jason & Richard Hughes; Guy & Jane Kingham; Vivienne Kingham; Alex Komlosy; David Laity; Tom Lane; Andrew Lawrence; Mathew Leach; Bronwen Lilley; Jeanne Little; Diana & John Lloyd; Andrew & Sarah Lloyd; Winifred Lycett; James McCallum; Susan & Stewart McDermott; Jen McIntosh; Leo Maggi; Philip & Janet Manasseh; Hugh & Daphne Maw; Mark Mercer; Caroline, Paul, Kate & Dominic Mills; Jean Moore; Philip Morris; Anne Muir; Daniel Oates; Jean & John Osborne; Kingsley Paine; Madge Palmer; Ian Parsons; Alex, Clare & Elizabeth Pearce; Cindy Poulton; Barbara Quinton; Pam Ramsay; Guy & Sarah Redmill; Nicola Risk; Paul Roberts; Daniel Rose; Navid Sadrzadeh; Ellen Salway; Julian Sandiford; Fred, Ben, Sarah & Huxley Sessa; Janet & Joseph Sewell; Margaret Shelley; Jim & Joan Shields; Ashley Shirlin; Tony Skeath; Peter & Jenny Sladen; Audrey Smith; Claire Smith; David C. Smith; Linda Smith; Russell & Janet Steed; Elsa Stewart; Catherine, Mark & Matthew Stokes; Barry Swann; John M. Sykes; John & Doreen Taylor; Jim & Sue Thelton; Susan Thomas; Jayne & Percy Turner; Patrick Tustian; Jonathan Tutte; Nick Upton; Rachel Veazey; Gill Wakefield; Sylvia Warren; Rebecca, Tom & Victoria Wathen; Fiona Warden; John Watson; Ian, Christine & Richard Weatherhead; Tabitha West; Mary (née Kopp) & Will Wheeler; Mike Williams; Mike Wycherley.

Apologies for any errors or omissions.

High Light!



Just after 13:30 on Sunday 24th August a motley collection of vehicles in loose formation could be observed travelling in a southerly direction. The contents of these cars was a select group of would-be pilots and their next-of-kin. Object - to reach Oxford Sportflying at Enstone (about 4nm SE of Chipping Norton). Actually at 51:55:45'N 01:25:50'W; don't know why they didn't tell me that at first, would then have driven straight there. One Sunday, many years ago, walked there - and back!

Then, nothing going on; now, everything.



At the same time other SOSs were having a one-to-one 'lesson' in another aircraft, a 'Dimona'. My turn was last and I was very pleased that the previous pupils had returned the aircraft in good condition.** The wind was from the east at about 10 knots. Take off was, of course, into this breeze, after taxiing to the west along a magnificent tarmac runway, a turn was made onto a tiny little patch marked up for our use. The ground was left at only about 40 knots followed by a climb to 1500 ft turning west to see 'Chippy' then a wide turn for 'Hooky', cricket match taking place, 'whites' showing up well. Maintenance of the sky was not too good, some potholes, perhaps should complain to the local authority! Next North (ish) for the Sibfords. Dropped a bit to get good view of 'the Hill'. Looks just the place for a windsock and runway! Next to look at the 'Manor' - lots of concrete where the dinning rooms were - what a mess. Other side of aircraft: Burdrop and the Gower. Shown the instructor's house - he lives in the Ferris. Then, sadly, back to Enstone. Joined the 'circuit' with two other aircraft ahead. Find the little patch for landing and the instructor puts us down. Taxi back to parking area, apply bigger grin and climb out. What a way to lose 15Kg (actually =30 pounds-£). Didn't mention got opportunity to 'take control' and fondle the joystick. Oh to live closer and spend some more time 'up there'. What's the 5280 ft high club about?

Then tea and cake. Great time, but then back to the Reunion and reality.

Peter Sladen, 1949-53

*** Old pilot's adage: A good landing is one from which you can walk away. An even better landing is one from which you can walk away and they can use the aeroplane again afterwards!*



With the most difficult part of the day's navigation over, a group photo was taken, just in case. During the afternoon and in rough (very) accord to a timetable small bunches of people could be seen being shoehorned in to a 'Robin' aircraft, some as ballast, but one person on each flight would get the chance to subject the rest to the ordeal of having an amateur pilot. In spite of this most on arrival back on terra firma were grinning, no one was actually seen to kiss the ground. These trips continued all afternoon.





OS visitor, Pamela Ramsey (née Gilbert) arrives from Australia



Stephen Bunney, Philip and Janet Manasseh



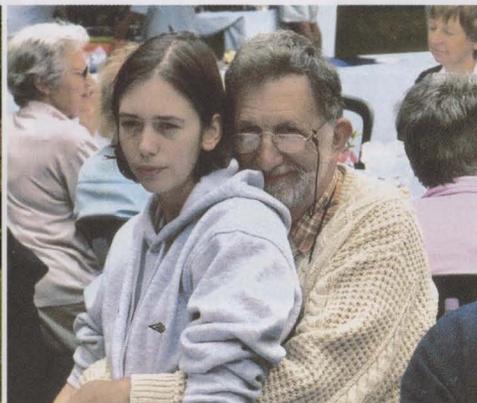
Assembling for Russell's guided village walk



Leslie and Arthur Harrison chat with Ann Bond



Monday Lunch on Holly House Lawn



Nicola and Chris Grimes: a moment of relaxation



Water Polo in the New Pool for the energetic!



OS enjoying the Archive and Art Exhibition in the Mackenzie Thorpe Gallery

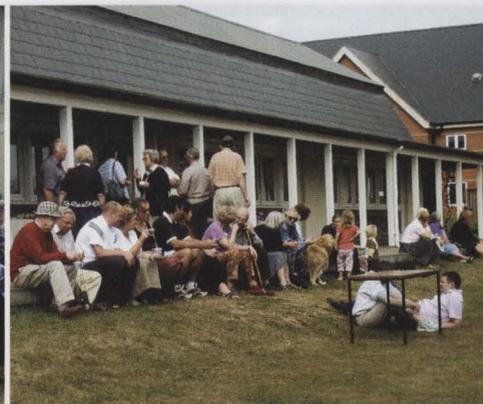




The AGM 1, as viewed from the 'chair'



AGM 2: OS discuss weighty matters



Monday tea on the South Decking, in perfect weather



Caroline Mills made a surprise Centenary Birthday Cake



The President makes a wish and cuts a slice



Ian Weatherhead tries to instill some order - pre 'Group Photo'



Rockets down ...



Rockets up ...



Auld Lang Syne - Monday afternoon

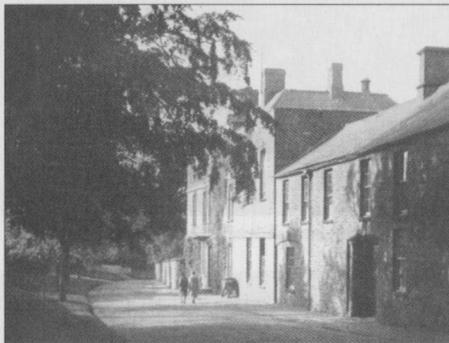


MEMORIES



THAT WAS THE SCHOOL THAT WAS

At long last we have formal notification of the burial of the Old lady, issued it seems by the undertaker himself. I refer, of course to the over size postcard arriving with this year's Reunion Programme. My mind immediately bumbled back some 75 years to when I carved my name followed by the date 1928 on the roof beams above the Boy's Playground Loo. It wasn't of course called a 'loo' in those far off days; the terminology was 'Fezzies', which I imagine had some reference to the head-gear worn by the away team at the battle of Omdurman. The undoubted work of art, produced by myself, showed both initiative and achievement, although the reward was such that I was unable to sit comfortably for several days.



'Re-live the best days of your life' - stated on the postcard may suggest the notice is specifically for Old Scholars but it is not exactly an epithet I would apply to those Neanderthal days of James Tyler Harrod, complete with trimmed beard and side-whiskers. The School was then still living in the stagnant ethos of the end of World War (No. 1 for those historically minded) some ten years previously. There were daily reminders of the importance of the League of Nations and also a polygot language called Esperanto. With a vocabulary of some 2,000 words culled from a

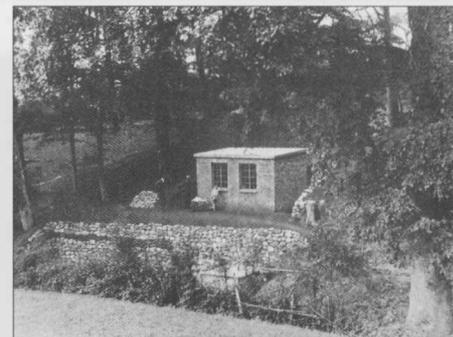
mélange of the entire dictionaries of Europe, it was to bring to all mankind peace and tranquility. Educational sanity began to return to the School only with the advent of the Cro-Magnon period of Arthur Johnston; but even he found it hard going at times. He was a good teacher of mathematics and I remember in my School Certificate year he taught us a few tricks from elementary calculus in order to solve seemingly impossible equations. Although many found fault with his Headship, it must, in fairness, be said that he was the person who pulled the whole School out of it's educational mire of the late 20s and also sowed the seeds of development leading to the present day. Having said this, it is possible that my preconception, as the smallest boy in the bottom form, may be faulty. There were during the JTH period a number of exceptional students, some of who became, in their time, household names.

My most pungent memory of that grey winter term, my first, was being given the leading role in a 'New Boys Concert'. The candidate stood on a discarded and very unsafe trestle table, arms stretched out, and a lighted candle in each hand. He was then required to sing the national anthem or some such ditty. Any perceived failure in pitch or diction was immediately rewarded with a mouthful of toothpaste and shoe blacking mixture and a return to the beginning of the ordeal.

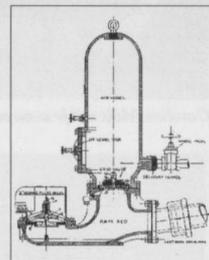
At that time the School was lit by home made petrol gas and, as far as we were concerned, only George Webb, the general factotum, was allowed to handle the thing or its fittings, hence it was always dark at night after 'lights out'. The journey from the Dormitory to the distant Bathroom was considered unsuitable for young lads; actually the story went that we might end up in the Girls Dormitory by mistake, and in those days that would never do. As a result of these restrictions we all had gallipots (without handle) under our beds. On moonlit nights these were used for team races along the 6 x 80 foot

corridor between the beds. Although great skill was exercised there were, from time to time, casualties and the item was no longer suitable for its original purpose.

We had at that time, a weekly Science lesson given by a gentleman known as Crappy Thorpe. He was Welsh so that probably accounts for his unusual fore-name. Water supplies for the School came from a spring at Hill Bottom about a mile away and were pumped by an ingenious device known as a Hydraulic Ram; driven by what is nowadays incorrectly termed 'renewable energy'. One day Crappy told us about the workings of this wonderful beast and then offered an apple to the first



boy who could explain it. I was hungry at the time (a fairly permanent state) and pumped my hand up and down with great gusto. However, I was a new boy and not a member of the Football Team so was ignored until the remainder of the class, some 20 or more, had demonstrated their ignorance. In those days I had never heard of such words as 'gravitational forces' and 'momentum' but at least I gave a credible and, I think, creditable answer and like Paris won the apple. That was not the end; it gave me the reputation of being too cocky.



We were in general shut away for 13 weeks at a time and looked forward to a Saturday evening entertainment of some kind. No TV (not invented) and, until I

made my own, only one radio in the Head's House. We were sometimes allowed to listen to 'improving' programmes, but in fact just to hear noise and music come out of a box was an excitement in itself. By way of alternative fun, there was the Gent who gave a Lantern lecture (Black and White Slides and a light source that required a bicycle pump to keep it going) on Macedonia and the Monasteries of Athos. After an hour, even the Master running the machine and changing the slides was getting a little weary and when the announcement came 'This is a picture of my wife' an upside



down sheep appeared on the screen to the delight of all. This may seem tame to current sophisticates, but to us, at that time, it was a thing of joy for many days.

There were two main events to liven the year, both in the Summer Term: General Meeting and Old Scholars Reunion. The first was the only time we saw our Parents at School. Although an exciting event when one could go out freely (with Parents) and receive (like some Prisoner of War) a Food Parcel, there was always the concern that one's Mother would turn up in the wrong sort of Hat or one's Father might actually speak to another boy who had not been formally introduced.

The event that was really important was Old Scholars, held at Whitsun and with the intention of entertaining the whole School. Each area, London, Birmingham etc, put on a play or similar delight, and to cap it all the Quinton Jazz Band filled in any gaps in the programme. For us internees it was a real bonanza extending from Saturday midday to Tuesday morning. It gave the Old Scholars' gatherings a real purpose probably never to be achieved again. A sense of rapport existed between current and old, and no leaver would dream of missing his first or subsequent Reunion. Those were the days my friend; we thought they'd never end. They have. Are we all too blasé, or is it because there is no longer any natural connection between Old Scholars and the current

School? Leavers may attend our gatherings but that is cold comfort compared with the old time entertainment, when giving was far more than taking out a chequebook.

No, they were not the best days of my life, but were, I consider, the most important. I am what I am today only because of learning to overcome the trials and tribulations of those early years. I owe a great debt of gratitude to that dear old lady, Sibford Manor, my Alma Mater for many years. Although she is now truly dead and buried the memories still linger on in those of us who knew her. When we are gone so will the memories go.

Ian R Hedger (1928-35)

LOOKING BACK - SIBFORD SCHOOL 1921 - 1925

Sunday morning: boys line-up in the playground with shoes polished, caps were worn with 'F.S.S.' (Friends School Sibford) badges on the front, walk to Meeting at the Gower via the road. At the Sibford Gower Meeting House we were lined-up in size order, the smallest first; we sat facing the doors, boys one side, girls on the other. There were some occasions when William Reason, a weighty Friend living at Holmby House, got up to speak. He always wore a bowler hat, so took it off and put it on his chair behind him. Imagine the mirth when he sat down and flattened it! The last Sunday in each term was known as 'Kick Form Sunday' and it was quite an achievement to kick one of the benches without being caught as we left the meeting House.

Dinner in the dining room (then at the Manor) ended with each boy carrying two chairs to the Gym ready for Evening Meeting. When the gas lights went low, it meant running to find George Webb to come and put petrol in the gas machine. In the dining room we sat - two boys then two girls, and moved in opposite directions each weekend. One of the times I remember was sitting on the stairs in the front hall of the Manor listening to Gilbert & Sullivan music on an HMV Gramophone with a big horn and a wind-up handle. Frosty weather in winter and the boys tipped a dustbin of water down our playground to freeze and make a good slide. Senior boys and girls all had small gardens

where Beech Cottage now stands, and before putting tools away they had to be cleaned with a paraffin rag, the smell of which stuck to your hands all through dinner! Boys were taught cookery and the girls woodwork. Radio transmissions were just starting and I remember spending some free evenings playing with a 'catswhisker' on a coil of copper wire and head-phones (where has it got us to now?)



The masters in my day were James Thorpe, Frank Parkin and Roland Herbert, with the Art teacher changing frequently; at one time it was Howard Quinton. Roland Herbert was the crafts master, and he usually had a few peppermints in his pocket and he would surreptitiously put one out of sight for a bright boy or girl. He also led some of the Sunday walks (pig drives) with boys and girls dressed in their Sunday best, through some of the muddiest paths to be found!



A few of the senior boys slept in the attic at Frank Parkin's house 'Paradise,' almost opposite Holmby House, and close to Sally Walker's shop (The Old Forge), where we could spend an odd copper if we found one. Paradise was lit by candlelight and any odd spiders were cremated! The swimming pool was filled each summer with the overflow water from the springs in the road outside - no heating or disinfectant! If we learnt to swim the length whilst at School, James Harrod would give us a



Roland Herbert

shilling. A Meeting for Worship was held at Sibford Gower when the School Committee met on General Meeting day, and we were given a small pork-pie and an apple for lunch before walking back to the School.

Boys and girls each had duties to perform to keep the School in good order, and one duty that senior boys were given was to take the bags of shoes to be repaired to the Cobbler in the village who was almost toothless! He held nails in his mouth for repairing shoes and managed to talk to us at the same time. If there was a good crop of apples we were allowed to go 'scrumping' in his orchard.

Norman Coxon (1921-25)

SIBFORD BY GAS AND CANDLE LIGHT - MEMORIES OF 1922

In the year of 2003 it is difficult to imagine what lighting was like in the year 1922. We now take for granted the high intensity of lighting and the concern for safety, especially where children are concerned, is constantly being drummed into us. Were our elders so concerned in 1922? We hope so and must assume that they did their best for us.

In 1922, when I first went to Sibford, the main school buildings were lit by gas; the school had its own gas plant. In 'foot candles' the lighting was probably very poor but we managed as long as the two boys, whose duty it was to maintain the gas supply, did their work properly. We all had duties, which had to be done every day, some very minor ones, but maintaining the gas supply was very important and, therefore, only entrusted to reliable senior boys.

The gas plant was powered by heavy weights, which had to be wound up, above the building housing the plant every day without fail! This was the boys' duty. Sometimes they forgot, causing pandemonium, usually during evening prep. The lights would begin to flicker and then go out completely. It was bad enough being

left in the dark but the great concern was that every gas jet, which had been alight, must be turned off before the plant could be started up again. It was quite a worrying time for all concerned but especially for James Harrod, the Head. Only when every gas tap was turned off was it safe for the weights to be wound up again. As far as I know the boys were never punished for their lapse!

But why candles? Until the new buildings were erected on the Hill, some 22 boys slept in 'Paradise', the house opposite the blacksmiths. It was a two-storey building, with an attic and a single storey at the side, which had been used as a butcher's shop. I believe it is now roofed with corrugated iron but in those days it was roofed with thatch. The ground floor was occupied by Frank Parkin and his family



Frank Parkin (R) with Jimmy Harrod

whilst the rest of the building was used for sleeping the boys. There were no toilet facilities, other than chamber pots and water in enamel basins in the stone floored wash-room in the old butcher's shop; the water was drawn from a well by the back door.

Paradise was lit by candles. Each evening at about 8.15 we would assemble at the foot of the boys' stairs in the Manor and then be escorted by the road by a senior boy, carrying a candle lit lantern. We would arrive at Paradise to find every room and the landing corridor lit by candles. We slept in small rooms, the largest having five beds, apart from the attic where there were eight. We loved Paradise, despite its hardships, and were never aware of the fire hazard. Twenty-two boys sleeping in a thatched house lit by candles! That was sufficient of a fire hazard but it was compounded by the fact that the attic had no

ceiling other than the bare thatch; sitting up in bed one could touch the straw. Paradise was for sleeping only and I do not expect parents were ever shown where their off-spring spent their nights.

I enjoyed sleeping in Paradise. Frank Parkin was very kind and understanding. As soon as we were all in bed he would read to us from such authors as Conan Doyle, H G Wells, Zane Gray, Victor Hugo and other writers of interest to boys. He would then go round room by room extinguishing the candles and opening wide the bedroom windows. Whatever the weather the windows were opened wide and, of course there was no central heating! Often in very cold weather we would find, in the morning on waking, that our breath had condensed on the bedclothes.

Lights out and the night sounds would commence. An owl would hoot, another would screech. Was that the sound of a nightjar? Another sound, was that a fox? Then the sounds of humans would take over including the faint sound of a motor-bike starting up in the village and increasing in sound as it came up the hill and went past the house. The sound would die down as the bike approached the Elm and turned towards Brailles. The sound would disappear as the bike went into a valley only to re-appear as it breasted a hill and then disappear altogether. A young man on his way home, having spent the evening courting one of the maids at the school?

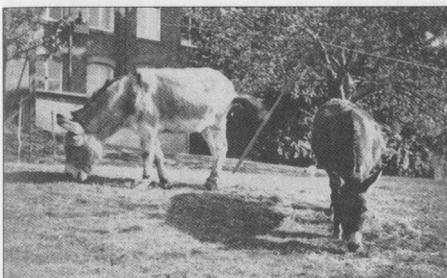
Soon the clip clop of a horse and the rumble of cart wheels would break the silence and we would know that the carrier from Banbury was approaching. The light from his flickering candle-lit lamps would light up the ceiling of our room. The cart would stop and we would hear the carrier and Mr Canning, the blacksmith, talking as packages were unloaded for the blacksmith or for Sally Walker, who kept the sweet shop and general store facing the blacksmiths. A 'Goodnight' to Mr Canning, a word to the horse and the cart would rumble on again to deliver more packages lower down in the village.

Bedtimes in 'Paradise' will never be forgotten!

Eric Brown (1922-27)

THE BLACKBERRY PICKERS

Ralph and Peter (fictional youngsters) attended a boarding school in the heart of the country where blackberry briars abounded. Once a year the headmaster declared a 'holiday' from ordinary school work so the pupils and staff could roam far and wide to collect as many of the delicious tasting berries as was possible, to contribute to the school's fairly bland diet and the cost thereof. The two friends looked forward to this day each year as they could gorge themselves silly at the same time as doing their duty to the school, although the latter wasn't that high in their thoughts.



They did however like the school's two donkeys, Japhet and Selina, and were always ready and willing to help harness them into their carts and even hang around them in the hope of taking a turn at the reins, normally the duty of Tom and Jim, the school's gardeners and handymen. As they set off down the country lanes, cans in hand, they picked and ate to their hearts content, disturbing the odd rabbit as they went and remembering a nest of hedgehogs they had come across the year before. Ralph was the taller of the two so he reached as high as he could whilst Peter concentrated on the lower berries, filling their cans and emptying them into the larger containers on the nearest cart, at the same time endeavouring to avoid the sharp bramble thorns in the process.

To encourage greater activity, the headmaster (Mr Johnstone), awarded points to each of the schools houses, Nansen, Lister and Penn according to their results, which added to their year's sporting and general activity totals. The school was coeducational with approximately as many girls as



actually it's Arthur Harrison and Brian Southall!

boys so there was the added incentive to beat the girls and vice versa.

As they progressed, Peter called to Ralph, 'Hey Ralph, look at this, a blue tit's nest', as he observed the hanging bag of moss, rather like a trouser pocket but soft and velvety and sadly empty as the science master was keen to ring fledglings' legs for migratory studies. The boys were wary about getting over the stone walls and into farmers' fields; not so much about getting seen but in case a bull might be there or maybe an overprotective dog. Luckily neither eventuated. Cowpats were another common hazard. There was a bit of a break about midday for bread and cheese and a glass of milk, healthy and filling even if unimaginative, but easy to disburse. The girls had spent an hour buttering the bread before leaving. Afternoon was more of the same and by four o'clock it was time to get back to school. The boys chatted up old Tom and were allowed to sit with him behind the donkey who wasn't too keen to hurry with the heavy load. Japhet knew the way home so didn't need any encouragement. Turns were taken with the reins but it was a mere formality.

Penn won the competition that year, which was Ralph and Peter's House, so there was joy in their dormitory, at least in their corner - except for the thought of possibly having to write an exercise on the day's events! The following day blackberry pie was served and being the first of many was enjoyed by all, but over the next month

everyone felt they had blackberries coming out of their ears as the cooks busied themselves with pies, jam, tarts and even just blackberries and custard. Then it was back to the usual tinned fruit or even prunes. All the pickers had stained fingers as well as tell-tale blue lips for the next few days but nothing was said for kids will be kids and at least there was a topic to write home about at the weekend.

Norman Smith (1935-38)

THE GOOD OLD BAD OLD TIMES

My mother, many years ago had for a short time looked after two Ladell children, Michael and June, and through their father found out about Sibford. She knew no other boarding school that was co-educational and that is how we came to Sibford. It was 1943 when Michael and I arrived at The Old School. I was full of excitement and determined to do well. After all I had always been top of the class at the village school.

We lived in a remote part of Somerset in a lovely old rambling stone house with half an acre of garden, the Mendips across the lake and fields all around us. There was no shop, Public House or buses, just a church and a tiny village hall. Our house was called "Cuckoo's Nest" and the hamlet was Nempnett Thrubwell. It was very special (as many friends who came to stay from Sibford over the years would testify). We walked many miles to school and back from our earliest days. There were only about 20 pupils from 5 to 14. and I was always at the top. We had a house full of books and I was an inquisitive child. We ran wild all day with very few rules and no bedtime. We just slept when we were tired and ate when we were hungry. Discipline would be difficult.

I don't know what I had expected when I started at Sibford but the sheer number of people terrified me. I was extremely homesick and hated being parted from my brother. I think he was quite pleased to be parted from his bossy sister. There was quite a lot of bullying in those days especially if, like me, one told tall stories to impress. I was very insecure. I had thought I was clever and was rudely awakened. I was my own worst enemy. I thought

friendship could be bought. I gave away my chocolate ration every week and would do anything for a dare just to win admiration and perhaps, friends. I was a nightmare to all. After all my freedom at home, bedtime at 7.30pm was awful and the punishment of sweeping the boys' playground or cleaning the teachers' shoes was infinitely better. Other girls knew how to play tennis. I had never seen a tennis court. I had been in water in lakes, sea and rivers but never in a swimming pool. Mind you, I learned to love that swimming pool with its little red worms and hardly ever missed an early morning dip followed by scrummy hot sugary bread and milk.

I remember I ran away from school taking with me some unfortunate girl who I had probably bribed. I had no intention of getting home. I just wanted to be so naughty I would be expelled. I didn't then comprehend the "there is good in everyone" belief of the Quakers. I was brought back and ignored by all. I certainly wasn't any kind of hero and it was a salutary lesson. Arthur Johnstone was very kind to me at that time asking me which music I would like him to play during morning meeting. He knew I was passionate about classical music. I remember I chose Elgar's 'Serenade for Strings' and Walford Davis's 'Solemn Melody'. We both agreed then that sad music makes you happy. I respected him for the kindness he showed me. He also found some exercise books that I had



stolen which were filled with poetry either that I had written or enjoyed. Instead of punishing me, he congratulated me on my work and of course that made me feel very

small and sorry.

I looked forward to Sundays, the peaceful walk across the fields and over the stream, the quiet of the Meeting House and the interesting discussions. It was there that I imagined being in the middle of a corn-field on a sunny day with just a rug and a book.

The walks in the afternoon with Terry Cemm (if I was in favour) or with Jean Carr, Alison Hargreaves or perhaps Onfer (Jennifer) Jo, Tess or Boozy (Pam) were great. Sometimes we walked to Banbury and back, sometimes to Traitors' Ford and at others we just soaked up that lovely countryside full of wild flowers. The best day of the year was the Whichford Picnic. Selina the donkey was all harnessed up and her wooden cart filled with food and drink and off we would go to have a free and wonderful day out. It was heavenly. My children envy my time at Sibford.



I loved netball and became the captain which was quite something. I was also games curator for a VERY short time. I again let them all down when they found cider in the hockey stick holes which I had bought from 'The Gate Hangs High' - I just wanted to give a party and be popular. They must have been at the end of their tether. I watched the games teacher pouring the golden liquid down the sink in horror. Art Classes, I remember with excitement, as they were the highlight of the week. On one afternoon we had treble Art - what a treat. The still life and the sketching in the fields were something I had never done before. I never misbehaved in Art or Music because I loved them and I still paint while listening to my music.

I look back now at Sibford with a great deal of regret, first that I caused so much trouble and secondly because I missed a great opportunity which my parents were

finding it hard to afford. I feel I let them all down, though. Amazingly, I did pass my School Certificate. However, I realize that the forbearance and understanding showed to me by Arthur Johnstone and others was quite remarkable. I learned to accept myself as I was and not to try and buy my friends, to tell the truth and to nurture the things I was good at.

Shirley Rowley (née Baker, 1943-48, & ex-Cemm)

THE OLD GYM - an ageing Thespian remembers!

It is exactly 50 years since the Old Gym at the Manor was closed and moved up to the Hill.

It had always been the intention to have a purpose built Hall at the Hill and advanced plans were laid for building such a place, where Penn Boys House now stands. It was around 1938 that the plans were detailed, but like so many dreams it never happened because of the Second World War. The Hall was eventually built on the end of the centre wing at the Hill that is now known as The Oliver Studio. The Main Hall was opened in 1975 and along with The Oliver Studio is still in use today. The dream of a multi-purpose Theatre Hall/Workshop and a Meeting Hall is still very much alive.



The Hall that opened in September 1953 (now the Oliver Studio) replaced the Old Gym - much loved by generations of Old Scholars who were at the School between 1892 and 1953. You entered it through the Archway and turned right along the 'Prom.' It had been opened in 1892 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the

School's foundation and was largely funded by donations from Old Scholars. The equipment inside the Gym was State of the Art and included climbing frames, ropes and vaulting boxes. It was heated by an iron coke stove in the centre of one wall which I recall vividly, as one day we were playing a favourite P.E. game called 'shipwreck,' where we had to stay on form-benches, playing a kind of 'tag' game, and I managed to slip and head-butt the stove finishing up in the San, and I still have the scar to prove it! The Gym had been created out of an open-sided barn, the open side facing onto the 'Prom' which skirted the boys' playground, which had formerly been the farmyard of the Manor House. The brick facing, which many will remember was ivy-clad, was added to enclose the barn, which was probably thatched originally. As you climbed the three or four steps into the Gym (1892 is still inscribed over the door), a staircase went off to the right to the hallowed and secret territory of the girls dormitories and the sitting room of the legendary Gladys Burgess - little boys ventured up those stairs at their peril although sometimes legitimately to see Miss Burgess. Swinging left from the imposing front entrance, you entered the Gym, underneath a gallery which had a basic wooden stair/ladder set on the right-hand side to get to it (the Health & Safety constraints of today's society would have a fit!) The gallery itself was just plain boarding, which tiered about five steps up to the back ceiling. Unlike other Quaker establishments, the gallery was used only by the boys - trust Sibford to be different! It had always been the ladies who were obliged to sit in the galleries of Friends' Meeting Houses. At exciting moments in concerts and the like, the boys would stamp their feet in unison to make a thunderous and alarming noise. How the gallery survived so long I shall never know. In the early nineteen fifties, an iron fire escape was built on the outside of the Gym to facilitate an easier escape route. The Gym itself was only 45ft long (to the back of the stage) and 18ft wide - long and narrow! The stage was quite high, about 4 feet off the ground and one could say, very intimate! The stage was quite well equipped with proscenium curtains and grey tabs. At the back of the stage, on the

left-hand side facing the stage, a set of wooden steps dropped down into an ante-room which was the girls boot-room and had originally been part of the Workshops, where Sibford's great craft tradition began. This also doubled-up as the Green Room for concerts, revues and School productions.

I am quite sure that my own love affair with amateur dramatics began at Sibford, and certainly the traditional 'smell of greaspaint' has never left me. My first major venture in the acting world was to take part in Ted Langford's first-year production of 'Treasure Island' at the end of the summer term of 1950. Aged 12, I played Long John Silver and must have been one of the shortest John Silvers on record! Also taking part were Peter Sladen as Squire Trelawny and Willie Handley as Captain Smollett.

The skill of Gladys Burgess in drama productions made her a major influence not just on me but on I am sure many others. Despite her somewhat dour countenance she came alive with the theatre and it was quite clearly her forté. She produced many memorable productions such as the 1941 'Toad of Toad Hall', the 1950 production of 'Victoria Regina' and the 1951 production of 'Abraham Lincoln'. The productions at the Old Gym were magical. Theatrical mystic was in abundance. The adrenaline flowed in bucketfuls. The expectation of the audience was exciting in that cramped old hall, and what a theatre of dreams it was.

Make-up was always done in Gladys Burgess's room, so one had to make a quick and secret exit along the prom and into the boot-room.



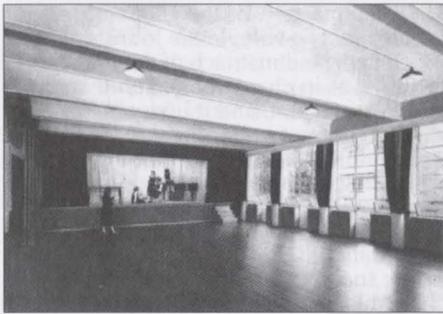
The Headmaster was the enigmatic Arthur Johnstone. His wife, Jessie Johnstone, that much maligned matriach of the thirties and forties, was in charge of make-up and was quite superb at it, and it undoubtedly fired my own interest in theatrical make-up. She was quite brilliant at transforming you into an ageing man or woman or fashioning you into a Toad or a Mole! It was a nice little irony that when I came back to work at Sibford in 1982 I was able to do the make-up for such epics as 'Pirates of Penzance', 'The Mikado' and 'Brilliant the Dinosaur' with Richard Stilgoe.

My one claim to fame is that I was the last male privileged to appear in the very last play to be performed in the Old Gym in February 1953. The play was 'Mr Sampson', a great favourite of Gladys Burgess. I appeared as the love-torn Mr



Sampson along with Jenny Le Mare and Wendy Boardman. I also hold the distinction of being one of the first males to appear in the first production in the New Hall (now the Oliver Studio) at General Meeting in June 1954 in 'Dinah's Master' by Beatrice Saxon-Snell, who was a much loved Quaker historian whose speciality was lecturing with dolls dressed in historical costume. 'Dinah's Master' was the story of a famous Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, who converts a Highwayman from his wicked ways - guess who played the Highwayman! I can in fact claim to have 'trod the boards' at all of Sibford's Halls as I also acted on the splendid stage (now sadly removed) in the Main Hall at the Hill, during the highly successful SOSA 75th Celebration Review in 1978, written by Shelia Stewart.

The Old Gym however, was not just an important place to the School, it was also very important to the village as it was the first sizeable place in the community where the residents could meet. The vil



The New Hall in 1954; now The Oliver Studio

lages of the Ferris and the Gower didn't have their own Hall until the present Village Hall was built in the mid-fifties at Sibford Gower, opening on 9th November, 1957. The Old Gym also housed political meetings and was used for voting at election times. It was also the first place that a radio transmission was heard in the village. It is also interesting to note that after the Old Gym's conversion into staff flats in 1958, with an additional girls common-room, it later gained a new lease-of-life and part of Sibford folklore, by becoming the first permanent base for the School's famed Remedial Unit (now Special Needs) in the 1970s. Its intimacy, to me, was the Old Gym's greatest asset, very similar to the intimacy and expectancy that one gets at the famed Chipping Norton Little Theatre (a converted Salvation Army citadel!)

It was, of course a natural progression for the Hall (which then became a new Gym and later the Oliver Studio) to be built at the Hill, with its magnificent stage extension, built by Esher Craftsman (founded by that legendary Old Scholar, Louis Wright, who also built the Library furniture, some of which is still in use today!) Its spaciousness and sprung floor were light years away in facilities compared to the Old Gym - but I am not sure it ever captured the magic of the Old Gym.

The new housing development promises to be of a high quality. The Old Gym is being converted into three terraced 'cottages.' - I wonder if its new residents will be able to hear the ghosts of stamping boys' feet or the clapping of hands of memories from the past? I am sure they will be warm and cosy.

Mike Finch, (1949-54)

MEMORIES FROM A RECENTLY JOINED OS

I am so pleased to be 'in the fold' and read my first SOSA Rocket in detail; twenty four names triggered memories.

It is difficult to believe that the Old School has gone - the games area where the likes of self, James McBrown, Eddie Goudge, Chris Saville et al played football before meals and showed off if there were girls on the prom. Other names? Well, John Imrie, Alan Keeble, Alan Roberts, John Rickard, Sabins, Peter Smart, Ann Candy, Richard Pallet - enough! I remember 'Collect', hands and fingernail inspections, moving fortnightly in pairs around the tables, grabbing the butter before the girls and adopting that Reg Rowntree cry "always cut on the waste side of the line" when dividing it up. Remember that wonderful gym master 'Hodgo' and odd ball Barry Jacobs (Maths), the lovely Miss Harrison (Domestic Science), Michael Harrison (French) and the real character 'dozy' Gilchrist now sadly departed.

I am afraid there were times when we led him a merry dance. One of us would seek his attention in class, "Sir, can you please show me on this atlas the rim of the fault line you mentioned" whilst bending slightly, imparting his wisdom, a friend at the desk opposite would be cutting pieces out of the lower edges of his black gown using scissors. At the end of Autumn Term 1955 a group of us assembled at 05.00 beneath his bedroom window at Beech Cottage and rendered the first verse of 'Christians Awake'. Well not quite the complete verse before the sound of opening window and colourful words being showered over us. Luckily AJ was sleeping peacefully some distance away!

Then there was the month of April, probably 1953 or '54, and school was active, busy, firing on all cylinders but we were all there even on April Fool's Day! Imagine almost every desk removed from the 'verandah' classrooms transported out on to the sportsfield and assembled into a pyramid that challenged anything to be seen at Giza. All done before breakfast, lessons slightly delayed but I do not



remember being at Sibford on any further 1st of April.

I remember discussing the Walks Books with AJ and managing to convince him that we V-formers were responsible enough for a Mixed Walks Book. In 1955 this was quite revolutionary but AJ agreed and of course morale soared.

I could tell you of how we managed to 'silver' penny coins in the lab and how we tried to convince that dear lady at the Post office that it was a half crown - better not, it was a class secret!

My memories of Sibford are so many, varied, wonderful and full of happiness and all I suppose added to my make-up in one way or another. Life would have been far less valuable without the experience of Sibford. In lower III I did not look forward at all to the trip to the Gower Meeting on Sunday mornings. However, by the time I reached V-form that hour on a Sunday was a time valued for its comfort, its thoughts and reflections, a perfect start to another busy school week. Sibford did work you see!

**David Furness Gibbon (Chimp)
(1952-56)**

**De Menne of Sheep-ford
wendath withersoever
they wilen**

Quo volumus vagamur ... The Road Ahead



During the Summer the School Committee and Management decided to 'lay down' the School Development Appeal. Although the achievements of the last few years are really very remarkable, - to which the new Art and Music blocks as well as the new Swimming Pool bear witness, it was obvious that the Development Appeal, as such, was beginning to lose impetus.

Having made this decision, it was still felt highly important to provide a facility through which legators, benefactors, and all those many others who have the best interests of Sibford at heart, could focus their generosity; and could focus that generosity in a way which would most flexibly assist the future development of the School and its pupils.

Sibford has never been a 'rich' foundation. Every new development and every major maintenance project has involved a superhuman effort on the part of a great many people. Old Scholars have always been among the principal contributors, and can take real pride in their achievements. But, like the unending painting of the Forth Bridge, the requirement to modernise and maintain both the physical and spiritual fabric of the School must be constantly remembered if Sibford is to continue to provide the sort of education, - which those of us who were fortunate enough to enjoy it, so greatly value.

After much thought and discussion the School Committee decided to launch the 'Sibford Foundation Fund'. The Foundation will be a vehicle for investment and will provide flexibility in the funding of future major developments.

You will recall that an idea was promoted suggesting that every Old Scholar should try to raise or contribute £1 for every year of our Association's history. £100 per member would realise over Seventy Thousand Pounds and would indeed provide a cornerstone for the 'foundation' upon which so much else could be built.

Contributions have already been received: some considerably larger than the suggested amount, and others which represent the best that an individual Old Scholar can manage; all are acknowledged with equal gratitude.

If you, personally, have not yet felt able to help, cast your mind back to your own schooldays and ask yourself if one or more of these: Jimmy and Mabel Harrod, Arthur and Jessie Johnstone, Roland Herbert, Frank Parkin, Gladys Burgess, Dorothy Brigham, Dorothy Prior, Arnold Darlington, Hugh and Daphne Maw, Jonas Fielding, John Gilchrist, Ken and Robin Greaves, Jim Graham, Mike and Jenny Wollerton, Stuart and Yvonne Hedley, (and many others 'still in harness',) failed to influence or enrich your life to the value of £100!

If you can write out that cheque, do it now! If you can't, then

consider the many ways in which you can put some 'fun' into funding and painlessly raise both small and (sometimes surprisingly,) large amounts. Events such as family reunions; local OS meetings; shared-meal parties; group outings; sponsored walks or other personally sponsored activities; theatre and concert parties; discussion groups; play readings; sing-songs, wine-tastings, support the Christmas Fair, etc., etc., etc., - the possibilities are as extensive as your imagination.

For example:

An impromptu barbecue over the August Reunion weekend was most generously rewarded with unsolicited contributions from the participants. A recent informal lunch and cider pressing session resulted in fourteen OS having a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and raising a useful sum to be passed on to the 'Foundation', - every little helps!

The 'Silver Mile' is still growing yard by yard, (and who misses a 5p piece these days?)

Ray Bond, 1941-45



◀ impromptu barbecue, (early)

impromptu barbecue, (late) ▶



◀ informal lunch

'scratching apples' for cider ▶



We can all help. E-mail announcements can be made through the SOSA e-mail newsletter; you can be provided with an address list if you want to contact other members or former pupils individually - and the Editor would be pleased to receive brief details and photographs of 'happenings' for the next magazine.



The following extracts from e-mails and letters have been received over the last twelve months from members and non-members alike. No e-mail addresses are given this year, as some readers are concerned at having theirs published. So if you would like to get in touch with anyone, please contact the editor (address page 48) and we will forward your request. As far as the e-published SOSA Newsletter is concerned, this is always sent 'blind' so that e-mail addresses are not divulged. E-mail sosanews@aol.com with your name and years at Sibford if you would like to be added to the newsletter list.

Iain Ball (1946-53) wrote in June: "I am writing to enquire about rejoining SOSA. There have been a number of happenings which have prompted this. Not least that last month, five of us (from an original six) who cycled from Marlborough to Swanage 50 years ago in order to visit Dorothy Brigham's brother, had a reunion of our own in Romsey: Jimmy Grubb (former head boy and over from New Zealand), Barbara Drinkwater (née Lyall, former head girl), Ree Barrell, Andrew Wall and myself all got there. Only Michael Dickens was not contactable. We had such a good day with so many memories and laughs about Sibford. Barbara has lent me several past copies of the magazine and I thought it would be good to have them myself. During the past ten years I have been passing through Sibford almost every three weeks in order to take an old friend shopping in Banbury or Stratford. She has to take to a wheel chair for these activities now. But it has been extraordinary seeing the developments unfold. Fascinating, too, how many memories crowd in as one passes through Rollright, Whichford and so on. I am now retired after teaching, then a period in Higher Education in teacher-training, eighteen years in the school inspectorate and finally a spell with Ofsted. I've just completed 10 years as the Chairman of the Diocesan Board of Education for the Bath and Wells Diocese in Wells, Somerset, and Really intend to do nothing from Christmas this year!"

Judy Beattie (née Davidson, 1950-57): I am a very new addition to Friends Reunited and have spent many happy hours reading about people that I knew during my time at Sibford. I was there from 1950 to 1957 and my brother

Martin was there from 1947 till 1956. He was known as 'Wavy Davy' during those years! I would really like to have the O.S. newsletters sent to me and if by any chance you know of any Old Scholars from the years mentioned above I would love to get in touch.

Elizabeth Bent (née Gray, 1949-53) e-mailed from New Zealand: "You might be interested to know that through 'Friends Reunited' I have developed a considerable correspondence with old scholars who are not members of the association - four of my contemporaries and eleven pupils I taught who are in turn in touch with others so we are developing quite a 'Sibford' network. I am surprised at how many there are 'down under' - mostly in Australia. I am due a visit to U.K but hip replacements and knee surgery on both legs to keep me mobile has put long distance travel on 'hold' for the time being. So best wishes for the August reunion - I hope the weather holds - and greetings to all."

David Bevcree e-mailed: "Life has been very different this summer due to the horrendous bush fires. For over a month there have been a series of fires in the Australian Alps stretching from Dargo (near us) to Thredbo in NSW. Gradually all these fires joined together creating an enormous fire front of over 1,200 kms. Often we wake up to a smoky dawn, unable to see the sky and at times, even our fence line. The water develops an interesting ash flavour, and I am not referring to the tree. Since then, we have had some superb sunsets when visibility is good. All the farmers around us have attached 'clip on' tanks to their utes, complete with pumps and all sporting UHF aerials. Thus they are prepared whenever action is called for by the Country Fire Authority (CFA)."

Nancy Bottoms (née Baker, 1931-35) wrote from Canada on her return from the August Reunion: "I have lived in Canada since 1957, and during those years my husband, Ivan Bottoms, and I have made it our aim to coincide our trips to the UK with SOSA weekends. I regret to inform you that Ivan died, very suddenly, last July (2002). Many OS will remember him as he was always there with me. The visit this year (2003), was my last 'Hurrah'. Seeing all the present buildings, I realise that Sibford is

a very different place today than it was in my time. In the 30s, we were far ahead of the general school leaving age (14); computers were unknown; TV and advanced technology had not advanced to the 2003 state. My parents, Matthew & Elizabeth Baker, made many sacrifices so that I could attend Sibford. Bathing suits and gym shoes may seem small items today but given their annual income I know that they must have endured many 'soup/rice' dinners to keep me there. I was a very privileged girl."

Loraine Brown (née Quinton, 1940-44) e-mailed: "I just wanted to congratulate you on the best Old Scholars' Magazine yet! I thought it was excellent - as did Kay (Böhm) and Neil who visited us last week. We will make every effort to be at Old Scholars this year, although the lack of transport makes it slightly more complicated."

Eric Brown (1922-27): You asked for news for the magazine. I am happily married. I have six-grand children and seven great-grand-children whose hospitality we very much enjoy from time to time. I am able to enjoy quite an active life in this very friendly town (Saffron Walden). Having been Bursar at the Friends School here for thirty years, I am well known and have many friends. To keep me occupied, I am treasurer of the Essex branch of the National Garden Scheme and twice a week I attend a handicraft centre for the disabled where I make baskets in variety and repair cane seated chairs!

Cecily Coetsee (née Hynard, 1934-37) emailed from USA: I am thinking how best I can contact any of my still-existing school friends of so many decades ago, some of whom might recall this harum-scarum eleven-year tomboy who loved to climb trees, and who was teased mercilessly by the boys. Here is a partial list of those whom I remember very well: Peter Hargreaves, small in stature but quite a bully - I was in awe of him, as I was of another 'tyrant', someone (possibly Peter also) Wilson. Then there was someone Brewer, a very nice boy with a lovely rosy complexion and warm smile. Alec Fieber pretended to be driving a noisy car and changed gear, right in front of me. Mr Frank Parkin (who taught us Esperanto and gardening) asked a chubby lad, La Croix, if he could spell the name of a flower called an 'escholtzia'. Hazel Parkin, his daughter, was a good friend to me during my 3 years at Sibford. Another

teacher's daughter, Margaret Herbert, was also a good friend. A boy whose surname was Morton, sat next to me during meals and he loved to suddenly raise his hand as if to hit me on my head and naturally I would shrink in my seat and try to back away, at which point he merely scratched his head and looked at me with an expression that said, "What's the matter with you?" John Osborne, a very nice boy, grew up to marry a good friend of mine, Jean Sinclair, both in my class I think, and Brian Southall who loved to grate everyone's nerves by scraping a ruler across the blackboard! He was quiet and had the rosiest face I had ever seen! Chris Little, another friendly boy, was the younger of two, if not three brothers. Odette Lamb, a local girl with a winsome smile and freckles was a special friend to me. Margaret Eaves and Margaret Wooten, Peggy Yeoman and her brother Peter, are all well remembered as was Anthony Moore, Arthur Harrison, and 10 year old Hauptmann, a young German immigrant who was in my school bus as we left Banbury station. Pegeen Morris was a jolly girl and one last name, is that of Rosemary Dearden whom I think became a doctor and doubtless is retired long since. My one question I would ask of all of them is "What happened to you since you left Sibford? How has life treated you? It would be a real treat to reminisce."

Geoff Cox: (1941-46) "You asked for something about me to put in your magazine. I am not good at talking about myself, but after leaving Sibford at the end of the war I found myself with no ambition to do anything including work but my father put an end to dreamtime, and I found myself apprenticed as a carpenter and joiner! From about 1950 I used to hitch hike around Europe for about a month every year and eventually married a Danish girl. I was by this time pretty fed up with England and what I could see that England offered me so as I had written for some years to a distant cousin in NZ, we shipped out here. Life was not easy at first as there was resentment towards English people for starting wars that caused people in NZ to lose many fine men! I did many jobs from driving buses to building houses, including my own, and raised four children, and am now a grandfather of nine and so it goes! Since 1982 I have sold real estate in Auckland, which I really enjoy as this is a growing and vibrant city built around two massive harbours, and peppered with at least 52 volcanoes."

Margaret Cox (née Green, 1931-35) wrote: "Dear Rocket Editor, having made unsuccessful attempts to phone you, I must put pen to paper without further delay to say 'Congratulations and a sincere Thank You' - for a really super OS mag. I was particularly delighted to read both articles by the President and the Head - the Sibford ethos personified!"

Mike Farr (1938-43) e-mailed on 20.12.02: "Just to say thank you for a lovely magazine. Only came yesterday and still devouring it, but it really is a superb effort."

David Furness Gibbon (1952-56) wrote that he had spent 35 years in the army, Private to Lt Colonel. He spent several tours clearing real live rockets, was wounded twice, contracted malaria in Sierra Leone, served in Aden, Germany, Belize, England, Scotland and Ulster. Was decorated twice, ran a 48 bed nursing home for British limbless ex-service men and women, has three sons, parachuted for charity - now 63 but fit and healthy.

Jim Grubb (1946-52) e-mailed "A Happy New Year to you, even if war could break out any day! Our plans for our trip to Britain are now just about complete, but regrettably we just couldn't work in the June Open Day. We look forward to our visit with pleasure, but have re-routed both flights via SE Asia and overflying Russia, skipping the US. I greatly enjoyed the last SOSA Mag, but couldn't really glean just how much of the Old School was being demolished.

Antoinette Hallam (née Bebbington, 1971-76) sent us details of the Guest House which she and her husband run in the Highlands, together with the 'Strathspey Experience', mostly whisky distilleries. They offer vegetarian and coeliac diet (which is a gluten/wheat free diet).

Guy (1982-84) & **Jane Kingham** now have a little daughter, Saffron, born on Thursday 25th September. Congratulations to all three.

Hugh (and **Daphne**) **Maw** (1956-62) wrote in early January on receiving the Sibford Rocket: "a really bumper edition of the SOSA mag once again - full of good things. Having missed the last gathering we were so pleased to catch up with the news and with progress of the Appeal. We are very much looking forward to coming

over for the opening of the Swimming Bath. Daphne has almost completely recovered from her back operation and is without pain. She is taking short walks again and is allowed to drive, which is a great blessing."

Nike Otegbola (1984-87) e-mailed: "I am hoping to get in touch with some of my former class mates: Fay Gibson, Nike Atayi and Charlotte Barnard. I would really appreciate hearing about them."

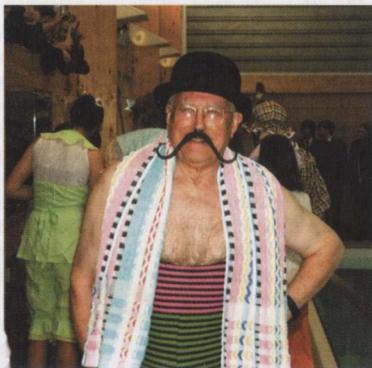
Elinor Pedlar (1983-88) e-mailed: "Hi I don't know if you remember me but I think you will (in the year below Chris Walker and Chris Webb). I now have two children; not married yet but living with Chris Ball, brother of Ian Ball, member of Gomez the rock band still in Southport near my parents house. My dad is still clowning all over the world. Next year in March he is becoming president of clown hall of fame in the States. I was interested in finding out which reunion looked more my age group. I have visited Sibford twice since leaving nearly ten years ago when all 85,86,87,88 years all returned; it was fantastic but it was arranged by Caroline (Mills, née Bond) and a lot of ringing round.

Pat Phillips (née Williams, 1946-53): "My husband and I are two Old Scholars who have not notified you of our change of address although its been a long time since we moved! So of course we have not had a magazine. My husband's name is Christopher Phillips, he was at Sibford from 1957-62 and is a Life Member. We visited Sibford a few days ago (August) with my husband's cousin, John Miles-Taylor, who was in the same form as Chris, and had a pleasant hour or so wandering round the school and admiring the new buildings and swimming pool. Needless to say the first place Chris and his cousin wanted to visit was the Temple Mill Quarry. We were made very welcome by the headmistress and Wendy Finch and went away happy to be re-acquainted with our old school which has spurred me on to divulge our new address after so many years. Recently we went to a Southampton quayside to wave goodbye to Mark Faux, also in Chris's form, who was sailing round the world with his wife and another couple for three years. There were quite a few familiar faces there as well as some of the younger Faux relations who had been at Sibford. I'm sure there will be more news about this from members of the Faux family.

The Quaker Tapestry: SOSA's Tewkesbury Reunion.

It was the end of the first week of the touring 'Quaker Tapestry Exhibition', at Tewkesbury Abbey, on Friday 7th February, 2003 that Ann Taylor (née Scaife), Jeanne Little (née Darling), William Rowley and Philip Morris, all at Sibford School together in the 1940s, found themselves stewarding together. Our picture (loaned by Bridget Guest of the QT Newsletter) shows them all in front of the Friends' Schools panel.

Philip Morris added the following explanation for the Quaker Tapestry Newsletter: Appropriately Sibford Old Scholars' Association celebrates its centenary this year. It still holds annual reunions at the school as well as at various branches elsewhere. It maintains links between past scholars, has representatives on the school committee and raises funds for the school.



To help towards the present building fund Philip Morris undertook a sponsored swim of half a mile, in Victorian costume, when the new school pool officially opened on Friday 28th February.

Beyond Sibford:

Branch Meetings offer an opportunity to enjoy informal gatherings between Reunions at the School - and how equally enjoyable they are. In this last year some of us have participated in activities organised by both the London and Midland Branches: from sampling the Grimes' hospitality pre-Christmas, (left below) combined with a brisk walk in the park and visit to St Alban's Abbey; to fun and games at Selly Oak meeting house in January 2003 with 95 year-old Barbara Quinton winning the word quiz.



SOSA SNIPPETS



Behind the Scenes:

Many SOSA members may be unaware of the frenetic behind-scenes activities that make up the SOSA year, everything from putting together and e-mailing newsletters, updating the Sibford Friends Reunited website, the School noticeboard, organising events (such as the SOSA Bazaar at the School's Christmas Fair) and our own Reunions - and mailing out programmes, literature and magazines. Much help comes from non-Committee members, too. Don't stand back and wait for it all to happen - if you can offer any help, do make contact. (We often meet informally, afterwards, for a convivial meal at the Bishop Blaize!)



Wanted - 'Sibford on the Silver Screen':

David Haines asks if anyone knows of the whereabouts of the cine-films shot by Roland Herbert, Arnold Darlington and many others over previous years. He says they must be somewhere and could make a fascinating show at the next Reunion. Contact the Editor (address p.48) if you have any information.

Hobbies & Happenings: the preparation for next year's magazine is already underway. Are you involved with other OS in any activities or gatherings that you would be happy to share with other readers? Do you have a hobby that was inspired by the teaching you gained whilst at Sibford? The Editor would like to hear from you! (Address p.48).



Chris Phillips (1946-49) e-mailed: "I am back in Australia now after the June Reunion and pleased to be here after 6 weeks away, but it was an interesting time for me in the UK, meeting people I hadn't seen for over 50 years! We all tend to change a little over time ... a few more wrinkles, a little less hair, but still the same underneath. The school has changed enormously since I was there of course. However, it was good to see that while the buildings have changed the overall principles governing the conduct of the place remain much the same. I was very pleased to meet the Head and please convey my best wishes to her and apologies for initially not knowing who she was. I am sure she will remember the mirth following my gaff!

Hilary Powell (née Feather, 1965-67) wrote: "I was at Sibford only for two years, but what an impact those two years had on my life; even now they still influence my life in many ways. I have two boys aged 17 and 15. I live in Solihull, West Midlands. After leaving Sibford I went to college to do an art course and eventually became a cartographer working for Birmingham City Council until leaving to have my children. While my children were growing up, I ran my own business staging and promoting craft fairs, until I became too ill to continue. I've always suffered with Rheumatoid Arthritis, only when I was a child it was known as growing pains!! It may have had something to do with not being able to run round the track or do the cross country - I used to hide in a barn and join the run on the way back! I remember Faith Badger, née Steel, Jackie Howell - (to whom I owe a great debt), Veronica Stemp, Liz Tinson and Vaughan Bradbury - I do hope some of those people are members of the Old Scholars Association, I'd love to meet them again."

Patricia Psoma (née Bruton, 1975-78) wrote: "Some of my happiest memories remain at Sibford. I believe anyone who has been fortunate enough to pass through the corridors of Sibford will agree that it gave us all a good, wholesome preparation for life ahead. I was in Nansen Girls and names that I fondly remember are Gay Watts (have never forgotten the half term I spent at her farm in South Wales), Imogen Margrie, Sally Warwick, Elizabeth Bains, Cherry Pedlar, Helen Painter - and the list goes on. These were the girls that I lived night and day with; we shared our secrets, complaints, and many a joke, apart from our

numerous midnight feasts. Would love to hear from any of them. I was the 'goalie' for the Sibford hockey team, unfortunately the knee pads were taller than me and I became adept at letting the goals in. It didn't matter though, just a day out with the team was worthwhile!!! However, I will boast better success in the music arena. As far as I know, I was the first female trumpeter to hit Sibford. And I wasn't bad at it either. If my memory serves me correctly I was the Music Captain in my final term and Nansen won the music 'eisteddfod'. Mr Greaves always gave me so much praise and encouragement in this area. I shall cherish my fond memories of him. Also have great memories taking part in musicals such as 'Oklahoma' and 'Zigger Zagger'. Well, a lot of water has passed under the bridge for all of us. My husband (who is Greek) and I met while he was studying in London; we married in January of '85, we then settled in Athens. We now have two children, a boy and a girl aged 17 and 13 years old. I teach English as a foreign language, and I still believe Geoff Higgins was a very big factor in my career. He was a wonderful teacher!!!! So, any of you Old Scholars who may be visiting Athens for the '2004 Olympics', please look me up. It would be a delight to see any of you!!"

Shirley Rowley (ex-Cemm, née Baker, 1943-48) wrote: "I will give you a brief summary of my life since Sibford. First of all I went to the West of England College of Art in Bristol which I thoroughly enjoyed. I soon realized after a short time that I really wanted to look after children and found a great job on a farm in Wiltshire with a young couple who had 3 children from 18 months to 4 years. I worked hard from 7am to 7pm and never regretted a minute of it. I am still friends with them now. I got married to Terry Cemm in 1954 and we had two children, first Michael and then Judith. We separated in 1976 when Terry retired from the Police - he went to the Isle of Wight and I to a thatched cottage in Cambridgeshire. I married Pat Rowley in 1980. My hobbies are water colour painting, decorative artwork and gardening. We love our holidays and especially enjoy Turkey and Greek Islands but are going to Andalucia on June 1st. When I come back, I will have to have my 3rd thyroid cancer operation and then radiotherapy. I had hoped I would be clear but no such luck.

Graeme Sagar (staff 1970-90) e-mailed after receiving the e-published newsletter and com-

ing to the June Reunion: "It is so good that someone takes the trouble to make these contacts possible. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of my old colleagues and students. Hope to see you all again in the not too distant future."

Eleanor Smith (née Blunsom, 1949-55) e-mailed us too late for last year's magazine: "I met up with six others at Hook Norton in early May (2002) and we had a lovely time. We went to the woods in Whichford and they were flooded with bluebells - such a treat. I don't think we used to go there during bluebell time, it was always in the summer for a walk and a picnic. We tried to find the place where we had the picnic but we were unsuccessful, although later we met Tom Williams (OS) who told us where it was. We also visited the Hill and saw the new buildings although we didn't go in as they were closed. I thought the new art rooms looked really interesting. We visited Tom's shop in Hooky (Tom is the brother of Judy Williams); the Hook Norton Brewery and went to the theatre in Stratford. A great weekend."

Vaughan Southam sent us details of 'The Southam Year 2002' (The Year of the Great Sort Out) - too late for last year's magazine: "After the death of Jeanne and the triumph of her very positive funeral in 2001, 2002 has been a year of sorting out and tidying up. I spent my year in the warm comfort of Avenue House, the Quaker Elderly Peoples Home in Cotham, Bristol. My main preoccupation has been in completing my autobiography, which I hope will be issued in early 2003. The big item of this year has been the sale of Dilkush, our dream home for 40 years. It feels very strange to have sold this property and to have it pass out of our hands. But I am fortunate in being very well looked after in Avenue House and I managed to extract from Dilkush my main personal treasures, which I have now around me in Avenue House. Those of you who are able to visit me will be able to appreciate them when you do."

Mavis Stiles (née Mutch, 1946-49), written 17.05.2003: "Fingers crossed I hope to join you all on 14th and 15th June. I booked in at Grange Farm, Swalcliffe soon after I received 'The Rocket'. I hope to bring some plants along and although I am very under-the-weather am sure I can make myself useful." Written 10.06.2003: "I am a very disappointed Sibford Old Scholar - sorry but will not be joining you this coming weekend. I had an emer

gency examination with a gynaecologist - the result major surgery in the next few days. Have had to cancel my garden visits the week following the Open Day/OS and two weeks in Switzerland end of July is out of the question, just hope I can make the August Reunion. Will be thinking of you this weekend; let's hope the weather is kind."

Catherine Stokes (née Hunt, 1969-74) wrote in March: "Thank you for sending me a copy of the current SOSA magazine. It was very interesting to read. Last time I was at the school was just before the Manor was sold for development, so there has been a few changes since then. I have very fond memories of Sibford. I met some really nice people who I am still in contact with today. I've attended a few reunions organized by Ashley Shirlin (shame they have stopped). I have also managed to contact a few friends via Friends Reunited. I've enclosed a cheque for my subscription, don't know why I have never done it before. Hopefully we are staying in Chipping Norton on August Bank Holiday weekend, so we shall visit the Reunion."

Erica Strofton (née Eden) 1958-63 wrote after the 2002 reunion (received too late for the last edition): "We both thoroughly enjoyed our weekend with SOSA and were made extremely welcome by everyone. I must admit, we hadn't been back for 40 years and really didn't know what to expect! It was also so well organised and so friendly that we soon felt part of it all. I was very interested to see the new buildings - how lucky the pupils are today with such magnificent music and art facilities. It made me realise how basic our equipment was and what little space we had for lessons - but we all managed at the time! It sounds as if next year (2003) is going to be a big celebration and hopefully Rosemary and I can rustle up more people from our year - it was quite noticeable that the 1950s and 60s weren't well represented which was a shame. However, if we can get them to come, I am sure they would enjoy it as much as we did this year."

Irene Tester (née Yarwood, 1920-23) has had her first book published in July at the age of 94: 'A West Country Trilogy'. She moved to Lapford twenty years ago, and has become a well known resident of the village. The book is set in three parts, the first part being based upon a time spent in the village of Drews-

teignton. The second and third parts are the story of a street party and the house in which she once lived in Bridgewater.

Susan Thomas (née Smith, 1951-56) e-mailed from Canada: "I am making a special journey just to attend the reunion. I am really looking forward to it and although I probably won't know many people, it will still be a great visit. Wherever the 'Hub' will be, I will pop in to say hello! It will be strange to see the manor gone, oh what memories!! I can't wait to put my toes in the new swimming pool. I have such fond memories of the old pool at the manor. It's a wonder we didn't catch typhoid or some other dreaded disease in there, but we didn't did we? I left school the same year as AJ & Mrs Johnson 1956. Will we ever forget AJ's trousers always being too short?" (Susan's account of the reunion weekend can be found on page 16.)

Karen Turburfield (ex-staff) e-mailed: "We are now proud grandparents of a little boy named Harry James and we are thoroughly enjoying every minute. Last year we moved home to Deddington and are still in the throes of trying to complete the barn conversion. I'm sure we will get there eventually."

Jennifer Wilson (1940-45) e-mailed from Australia in November 2002: "Thankyou for your email newsletter; I'm sorry not to have contributed. I have had health problems which are limiting my energy and activities a bit, but any hip replacement will be reconsidered next year. I hope your Christmas Fair goes well...wish I could send some warm weather to go with it but over here when it reaches high 30s we long for some snow!!!" - and again in December: "Thank you very much indeed for such a full and interesting Rocket!!! I still have a lot of reading and re-reading to do. It is a superb publication! I also enjoyed the visit to Perth of Sally Law!!! She was here over a weekend and I saw her between the cricket items. We were able to visit King's Park together and go the Zoo, where we wandered through the Australian Section and saw the kangaroos and koalas. We also came upstream from Fremantle back to Perth on the river."

Otto Wolf (1939-45): e-mailed at the end of 2002 and again in June 2003: "Thanks for the e-mail nesletter; I always enjoy receiving news of SOSA activities. There is certainly a great deal happening with Sibford's continuous

development, and the SOSA contribution. I also received The Sibford Rocket and was very impressed with the publication and compared it with the Sibford Magazine of 1945 which is the oldest in my possession. There were only two photos in it. The historical information on the SOSA was very fascinating. I remember Whichford Woods (your mailings certainly bring back memories, such as going to the Gower to the Inn or Pub and buying Smiths' Crisps with stamps sent from home). There are so many familiar names in the 2002 edition from my era and I was impressed with Phillip Morris chatting with Michael Bond. Then of course the Honorary Life Membership bestowed on Alfred Holland and John Taylor: my congratulations. Other familiar names and information on Basil Franey, Mike Ladell, Phillip Manasseh, John Peile and the article and photo from Martin Dodsworth on the door closing which brought back memories. Had an exchange of correspondence with Mike Farr, Phillip Morris and John Saunderson. The June Centenary will be an event and of course the August reunion. The August Centenary Reunion programme is absolutely marvellous. It will certainly do it justice for the 100 years. My only obstacle for me to attend are the costs involved. Please remember me to all Old scholars that knew me. I am at last retiring at the end of December (2002) and very much looking forward to this event. I will have plenty to do what with my involvement in a Sporting Club, Neighborhood Watch and my interest in Photography and Stamps. As I am sending this email, here in Australia it is Very hot with the temperature of 40 degrees centigrade and bush fires everywhere; in fact in Canberra over 500 homes have been burned and have had no rain for a long time. That is Australia."

Ian (1957-62) & **Jenny Wright** e-mailed: "Thanks for the newsletter. Jenny & I were hoping to come to Sibford on the Sunday, but this is difficult now as we will be experiencing The Globe Theatre (obvious Sibford connections) - and Taming of the Shrew - so we will be with you in spirit ! Please give our greetings to all. With best wishes to all attending the Reunion."

Keep the News Flowing: the editor is always delighted to receive news for inclusion in the magazine - at any time throughout the year. Just write or e-mail - as often as you like.
(address on page 48).

In Remembrance



Dr Sydney Agnew passed away on the 10 June 2003 at the age of 79 years. Many Old Scholars will have known Dr Agnew as the School GP based in Burdrop. He was a gentleman of many abilities; medically he was an extremely competent, kind and caring man who made patients feel at ease. He was also an enthusiastic horseman, which stemmed from his Irish ancestry, and had a passion for flying. Dr Agnew moved from Sibford to Devon but was regularly seen back in the village. He will be sadly missed by many especially his children, Alexei, Robert, Diana, Deirdre and Katrina.

Joan Bamford (*née Hilling*, 1931-39): Joan was born in 1921 and was educated at Sibford from 1931, shortly after the death of her father, until the outbreak of war in 1939, when she joined the Friends Ambulance Unit and met John Bamford. They married in Cairo in 1944, then settled in Kent where, as soon as her three children were at school, Joan returned to work and pursued a career firstly as a medical secretary, and subsequently, following a second spell as a student in her 50s, moving on to Social Work and Probation. She had a fine, trained contralto voice and performed regularly as a soloist in everything from Gilbert and Sullivan to oratorio. What little leisure time remained was spent sailing. Following John's death in 1981, Joan lived in Derbyshire and then Sheffield, where she continued to sing and enjoy walks in the Peak District. She died on 25th March 2003 and is survived by her three children and four grandchildren and her brother Jim Hilling.

William Barfoot 2000-2002: The son of former OS President, Simon Barfoot, William died on Christmas Day 2002. He was an extremely happy little boy; but in April 2002 he was diagnosed with leukaemia and spent most of his last summer in Leicester Hospital receiving Chemotherapy. Throughout this time, despite feeling unwell and losing his hair, William remained remarkably cheerful. He was discharged from hospital in September 2002 and continued to regain his strength, but sadly subsequently lost his fight against the disease and also his all too short life. A memorial fund has been established in William's name to raise money for Leukaemia Research and awareness; if anybody wishes to know more about this they can contact either Simon Barfoot or Cindy Poulton (addresses on page 48).

Reginald David Brown (1926-1931): Reg died on the 10th September 2003, aged 89, after a long illness. He was the beloved husband of Vera (*née Norgrove*), and father to Deborah. He was a Life Member of SOSA, and was part of one of

Sibford's well known families. He was one of five brothers who attended Sibford - Harold, who was his twin brother, Ronald, Tom and Eric, who was one time Bursar at Saffron Walden. Reg was also Head Boy in 1930. Reg and Vera were loyal and devoted SOSA Members and were regular attenders at Reunions until Reg became ill in the 1990s. His friendly and caring approach to others, and his gentle wit, will be sadly missed.

Clement Cox: Clem was a quiet, gentle man with a generous heart and a great love of the countryside and country life. Born and bred in Tysoe, he had lived in the Sibford area all his life. Whilst not himself a former Sibford scholar, Clem was both spouse and parent of Old Scholars and fully supported his wife, Margaret, in her interest in the School and the Old Scholars Association. He was often quietly in the background at reunion weekends and for several years he and Margaret organised the Motor Treasure Hunts for us, planning them with care and always ensuring a coffee stop.

Helen Doyle: Helen and her husband, Johnny, were not actually Old Scholars, but came to a re-union weekend when their sons were in their early teens, and they had been asked to entertain a bored Austrian teenager as well. They brought their tents, and the whole weekend was such a success they joined SOSA and became lively and popular members. Johnny's death, ten years ago, deeply distressed Helen and probably led to the collapse of her own health. She was encouraged by the London Group and delighted at the warmth and friendliness that greeted her when she returned two years ago. Helen died suddenly at home just before the 2003 reunion.

Sidney Geering 21/07/1925 - 17/10/2002 (1934-1941)
Sidney was at Sibford during the early part of the Second World War and was head boy in his last year. His parents were in West Africa and he made a home with a friend, Dick Neal, an Old Scholar whose family farmed at nearby Brailes. Farming filled the rest of his working life after a spell at Plumpton Agricultural College as a working student. He moved from Devon, having married there, to Dorset and on to Hampshire from where he joined the M.A.F.F. until retirement. He had three daughters, one of whom predeceased him. His love of, and interest in all wildlife and the countryside in general, instilled at Sibford by Arnold Darlington, lasted for the whole of his life.

Kenneth Charles Greaves 16/02/1920 - 08/01/2003
(Headmaster of Sibford School 1972-1980): a full tribute, compiled by Robin Greaves, appears overleaf.

Pam Harrison died in November 2002: Pam's long connection with Sibford came, not because she was an old scholar, but when

she joined the staff as Assistant Matron in 1951. It was here that she met Arthur who, at that time, was a self employed builder living in Burdrop.. Their first home after they married was Barn Close in Burdrop (next door to the Bishop Blaize). When Arthur became in charge of maintenance at the school they moved to one of the staff houses in Hillfield. Their four children, two daughters and two sons, were born when they lived at Burdrop and they went to the village school. Later Philippa, the eldest, started at Sibford until their move to Reading in 1967. Pamela seemed a quiet person but had a strong character and ably supported Arthur in all his interests while, herself, like Arthur, being active in Quaker affairs. It is difficult to think of them separately.

When the Quaker Tapestry was started and the panels needed to be transported in boxes Arthur made these and converted a trailer to carry them, and this began their long association with the Quaker Tapestry scheme. Pam managed the shop for the Tapestry, handling all the mail orders and also running the shop at the many exhibitions before the Quaker Tapestry moved to its permanent home in Kendal. We shall miss Pam's presence at Old Scholars and it is good that their daughter Philippa also has a keen interest in SOSA and is, at the present time, one of our committee members.

Judith Smith (*née Long*, 1937-40): We are sad to report that Judith, who lived at West Hampstead, died on 10/08/03. She was a member of one of Sibford's renowned dynasty families, being the daughter of Geoffrey and Alice Long. Her surviving brother, Tom, is also a former Sibford pupil.

Thomas Kingstone Wheeler, (1919-23) died on July 30th, 2002: Thomas came from a Quaker family living in the hurly burly of busy Broadmead in Bristol and was fascinated by the Bristol scene and intrigued by the sights and smells of the ships unloading goods at the nearby Broad Quay. At the tender age of eleven he was sent to Sibford School in the quiet Oxfordshire countryside. Here he rapidly had to learn self reliance and the ability to get by when his great talent was artistic, but writing and arithmetic did not come so naturally. Back home in the holidays and later leaving Sibford, he eagerly helped his father at the family shop, learning painting, picture framing and restoration. After wartime service as a fire-fighter he was able to re-use his great skill in picture restoration specialising in watercolours and engravings. He was happier caring for others before himself, and nothing for others was too much trouble for him. His gentle sense of humour could never be bettered.

Kenneth Charles Greaves

16.02.1920 - 08.01.2003

Headmaster of Sibford School 1972-1980

Kenneth was born in Sutton Coldfield, the youngest of five children. He won a Scholarship to the Bishop Vesey Grammar School and left after gaining his Matriculation, due to financial difficulties at home. He got a job in an office, joined the Territorial Army, and was 'called up' at the start of hostilities in 1939. He became an officer and served in Egypt, and was involved in the Battle of El Alamein. He ended the War in Italy and returned home to spend a year studying at Birmingham University before moving on to Cambridge.

He married Robin Foulds in 1951, and started married life in Keighley, teaching at a boys' grammar school. In 1952 he moved to Sidcot and spent eight happy years there, not only as Head of English, but producing plays and operas, the School Magazine and running the Library. It was during his time at Sidcot that he joined the Society of Friends. Ken and Robin's four children were all born at Sidcot.

In 1960 he moved to Ackworth and then in 1961 he became Head of Wigton School in Cumbria. He spent eleven years at Wigton where he first encountered the problem of Dyslexia. In 1972 he became Sibford's seventh Head. His concern for the children in the School who needed extra help and for the dyslexic child, led to the setting up of 'The Remedial Unit' in the Old Gym at the Manor, under the leadership of David Foulds, which became nationally known. An unexpected generous gift enabled the School to have a purpose built Remedial Unit at the Hill.

Worry about the state of some of the School buildings started almost as soon as Ken arrived at Sibford. During his headship some of the buildings in the Manor complex were demolished on safety grounds, the end gable of Gillett had to be strengthened and the Dining Room had to have support scaffolding installed until the New Dining Hall was completed at the Hill. The School Appeal of that time became part of daily life, on top of the problems of running a boarding school - small wonder that Ken suffered a heart attack! He recovered well, but decided wisely to retire at sixty, and he enjoyed over twenty years of retirement at Yealand Conyers.

He joined fully into village life, joining the Parish Council and helping to set-up the village as an 'area of outstanding natural beauty.' He enjoyed singing in two local choirs and became Secretary and then Chairman of one of them. He was also active with the local meeting and for many years organised and participated in Pilgrimages to the '1652 Country' for Quaker Schools and other Quaker groups. Many Sibford Old Scholars will remember the Pilgrimages with affection.

Ken also made a workshop out of an old storeroom and said it was due to the encouragement and expert advice of Stuart Hedley that he took up woodworking seriously. He made a small chair for eleven of his grandchildren, as well as lorries, dolls cra-



A recent photograph of the Greaves family:
Back (left to right) - Caroline, Deborah & Helen; Front - Ken, Robin & Richard

dles, a doll's house and many numerous pieces of furniture. He was sketching a design for something for his twelfth grandchild (born April 2003) two days before he died.

In 1965 John Brigham (who also taught at Sibford), then Secretary of the Friends Education Council, wrote a paragraph which might have said of Sibford: "Our Wigton School is a remarkable one in academic achievement, in its family atmosphere, in its friendliness and sense of purpose. Mr Greaves has given himself heart and soul to the achievement of these virtues. He has managed to encompass the considerable complications of running a boarding school of this type, but has also retained the intense interest in the personalities of the individual boys and girls in his care, in fact to him the boys and girls as persons come first and this has meant that he has been able to help many a youngster to achieve a much greater integration of character than he might have had."

An Old Scholar writes: "distinguished, dignified - sometimes a bit formidable, but always a kindly light in his eyes, no matter how severe and deserved the 'telling-off' might have been. I loved Ken's reading voice, his mastery and control of diction, rhythm, tone and pitch gave me my first real insight of how words might be spoken."

David Foulds, former Head of Special Needs at Sibford writes: "Not many Heads would arrive in school and begin with considering the plight of children who were disadvantaged, whom he had accepted and therefore had a responsibility to help. It wasn't just Special Needs I shall be grateful for but his whole philosophy of education - the wider picture, his desire to lead a school that reflected the thinking of Friends. Quakerism in Action! Not an easy task, but it led to development of the workshops, boarding Houses becoming more like homes, and teachers teaching children and considering them as individuals."

Robin Greaves

George Fox Reincarnated

- A Spiritual Journey



Meet George Fox

By Colin George

The first ever performance of 'Meet George Fox' was given on Saturday 1st February in the Oliver Studio at Sibford School to an audience of old scholars, parents, staff and members of Banbury/Evesham and Warwickshire Monthly Meetings. Presented by actor and theatre director, Colin George, (as part of his Joseph Rowntree Quaker Fellowship programme), 'Meet George Fox' followed Colin's Concern to reconnect Friends with their past, and in particular with George Fox.

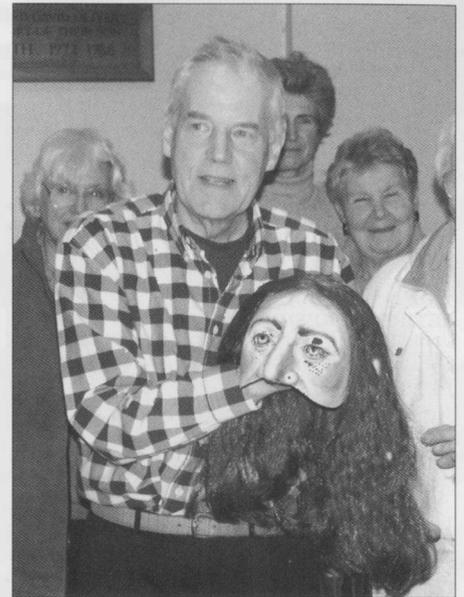
Colin held his Sibford audience spellbound with his imaginative and dramatic monologues exploring the writings of George Fox, his life, his witness, the times in which he lived and his spiritual journey. Using the simplest of props, costume and masks, we were transported from a warm studio theatre back to the 1600s, to conditions in 17thC prisons, then high up Pendle Hill and on across treacherous

sands to Swarthmore Hall, all the while following George Fox's search for the Truth, seeking the Light.

A fascinating explanation in pictures and words followed, outlining the historical and social background to the early Quakers, after which the audience was given time to reflect (through a thought-provoking question and answer session) on how George Fox's ministry might manifest itself today in the challenges faced by the contemporary Religious Society of Friends.

Colin George has spent forty years as an actor and theatre director, in plays ranging from Chekhov to Musical Comedy. He helped design the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield and was its first Artistic Director; he spent the 1990s performing with the Royal Shakespeare Company. In the 70s he became a member of the Society of Friends and is now an Elder of the Milton Keynes Meeting.

What prompted his Concern to establish this programme? Britain Yearly meeting 2001: 'We carry less of a corporate memory with us than preceding generations' - and - Simon Schama (contemporary historian): 'History ought never to be confused with nostalgia. It is written not to



reverse the past but to inspire the living. It is the secret of who we are'.

'Meet George Fox' was an astonishing revelation and also at times so poignant. Since his first performance, Colin has taken George Fox to 48 Meetings and has had 111 invitations. If you have already had the opportunity to participate in this unique and enlightening theatrical experience, you were indeed fortunate. Without further funding, the 'living' George Fox will, himself, be consigned to the pages of history. A matter of great regret, as Colin had hoped to extend his presentations to include the Leaveners and visit all Quaker Schools (appropriate, as it was George Fox who instigated their foundation; he also wrote a school spelling book), plus as much outreach as possible. Let us hope that the programme can be resurrected. Colin George can be contacted by e-mail: colin@colin-george.com - or we will forward any correspondence.

Ann Bond

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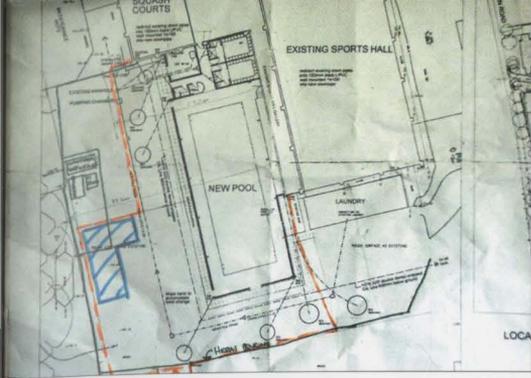
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Sibford's magnificent new swimming pool: pictures illustrate planning, construction, opening and use.





SOSA Founding Reunion June 2003



SOSA Centenary Reunion August 2003