

THE

December 2016



Sibford Rocket

The annual magazine of Sibford Old Scholars' Association

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SOSA

Welcome to **The Sibford Rocket**, the 2016 annual magazine of Sibford Old Scholars' Association (SOSA).

We hope that you will enjoy reading about what some of our former pupils are up to these days and share in their memories.

We are saddened to report the death of SOSA stalwart Mike Finch. As many of you will know Sibford played a very important part in Mike's life ... he was a pupil, a member of staff, served SOSA in numerous roles and was also the school's archivist. Former SOSA President Paul Frampton pays tributes to Mike on page 17. Meanwhile, his son, Andy, provides his own eulogy to his Dad on page 27.

Elsewhere in the magazine you'll find news of Old Scholar successes, a fascinating insight into life at Sibford during the 1930s and, of course, news from the AGM and annual Reunion.

Our final word, on page 31, comes from Michael Goodwin who retired as Head of Sibford in August 2016. Toby Spence took over as Sibford's 12th Head in September and SOSA looks forward to working with him over the coming years.

If you've got news that you'd like to share with other Old Scholars don't forget to get in touch ... you can email me at abromhall@sibfordschool.co.uk or write to The Sibford Rocket, Sibford School, Sibford Ferris, Banbury OX15 5QL.

In Friendship
Ali Bromhall
Editor

Cover photograph: Peace and tranquility at Sibford captured by Ian Weatherhead.

The Sibford Rocket welcomes articles from Old Scholars and other interested parties. Please note, the Editor reserves the right to edit articles for reason of length or legality.

Old Sibfordians

The Rocket is delighted to report on the achievements of three former Sibford pupils whose success in their individual careers has been officially recognised over the past 12 months.

Lola Vanderpuye was a pupil at Sibford from 1978 to 1983 and for the past seven years has worked for CBS Radio in Chicago.

In March 2016 she was announced as one of the recipients of the 41st Annual Gracie Awards, which honour exemplary programming for, by and about women in all facets of media and entertainment, as well as individuals who have made contributions to the industry.

Lola, was nominated for her work in the local imaging of Chicago Cubs for WBBM Newsradio and was one of eight CBS Radio women among the winners.

Andre Fernandez, president of CBS Radio said: "It's no surprise to

me that this year marked CBS Radio's most extensive list of honourees to date. These women represent some of the best and most accomplished professionals, not just in the radio industry but across the entire media landscape and I am especially proud of their efforts."

The awards ceremony was held in New York in June and Lola is pictured (right) receiving her award from Robin Meade, a New York Times best-selling author and lead news anchor for the HLN TV morning show, Morning Express with Robin Meade.

Looking back at her time at Sibford, Lola says: "Sibford made me what I am today. I made some wonderful friends who I am still in touch with, but it was those moments of silence, when you could just be and do nothing, that



pick up top awards

Edd is pictured with Penny Smith.

really resonated with me. Those moments of quiet are something I took away with me and in an industry that is full of hustle and bustle it's great to be able to step back and get that feeling of calm."

Former SOSA President, Edd Frost, was at Sibford from 1985 to 1990. Three years ago he established his own business, Edd Frost & Daughters Family Funeral Directors, and in September he attended the prestigious Good Funeral Awards ceremony held at the Porchester Hall in London where he was awarded second place in the national title 'Most Promising New Funeral Director'.

Edd said: "To have been nominated, let alone come away with second place, was an amazing achievement and it's something I am incredibly proud to have accepted on behalf of myself and everyone that makes up our small and dedicated team.

"When I started out three years ago, with the support of many friends, I knew it would be a difficult job to win the trust and support of the local community but with their help we've been able to come so far in such a short time. Our one aim has always been to give the very best family care and support following a bereavement and following on after a funeral and I'm just so humbled that people have taken the time to put our name into the hat for nomination."

Edd was presented with his award by GMTV's Penny Smith. "That was the icing on the cake," he says. "Penny was my ABSOLUTE

crush in the early 2000s when she hosted Central Weekend's 'Friday Night Live' debate show ... and I even told her so!"

Dean Wood was at Sibford from 1975 to 1978. He is now the owner of Mitsubishi dealership, Firs Garage in Oxfordshire, and in March he travelled to the Celtic Manor Resort in Wales to attend the car brand's annual conference where he picked up the award for Dealer of the Year ... for the third year in succession.

Dean said: "It's fantastic to win this award three years in a row and it really is testament to the incredible work of our team. I'm delighted for them to get this recognition and we're looking forward to another great year with Mitsubishi."

Lance Bradley, Managing Director of Mitsubishi Motors in the UK, said: "I'm delighted to present Firs Garage with this title – it's very much deserved and it should be extremely proud of its achievement. To be crowned



Dealer of the Year three years in a row is an amazing achievement. My congratulations to them all, and I look forward to Firs continuing to contribute to Mitsubishi Motors' success story."

Pictured below: Dean (right) receives his award from Lance Bradley.



Fred commits school memories to film

Since leaving Sibford School in 1981, Fred de Bradeny (or Avati as he was then) has forged an impressive career in the world of theatre and film.

Having spent two years studying Drama at the Birmingham Theatre School, a job back stage at the city's Hippodrome Theatre convinced him that he was better placed behind the scenes rather than in the spotlight.

He moved to London where he worked at the Prince of Wales Theatre on a production of 'Guys and Dolls' before moving to the Prince Edward Theatre to work on the musical 'Chess'. He then joined the West End Fit Up and Get Out Crew moving from theatre to theatre as shows opened and closed.

Three seasons and two national tours with Glyndebourne Opera followed before returning to the West End where he was Head Flyman & Deputy Master Carpenter of The Dominion

Theatre. Fred went on to work across the West End and did various prestigious productions with the Almeida Theatre.

Fred then took a change in direction joining Aardman Animation Studios as a Production Manager working on 'Rex the Runt' and 1st Assistant Director on 'Chicken Run'. He then moved to the States to join DreamWorks in Los Angeles to help make 'Shark Tale'.

A period of freelance work followed after Fred moved back to the UK to work on titles including 'Flushed Away', 'Coraline' (in the U.S), 'Fantastic Mr. Fox', 'Wallace and Gromit's World of Invention' and 'Shaun the Sheep'. Currently he is working for Hit Entertainment as the Producer on the Bob the Builder series and a special feature length movie "Bob & the Mega Machines' due out in 2017.

Fred visited Sibford School earlier this year to shoot some back ground footage for a film



about some of his early memories for his wife Shona and daughters Frankie, nine, and Lottie, six to enjoy.

"I was a member of Nansen Boys," he recalls. "and I remember House Master Brian Holiday, Tony Skeath and, of course, Geoffrey Higgins who, as head of English and Dramatic Arts directed some important school productions. I was involved in all the drama stuff and, looking back, that was probably the start of my career.

"I was also one of Geoffrey Higgin's bookshop boys. He used to run a school bookshop and chose a handful of pupils to help him operate it. There would be a few good pupils plus a few wayward ones ... I was one of the latter! I was always good at my work in class and participated in activities however, I would always be flouting the rules, especially when it came to smoking, and organizing petitions if I thought things were too harsh!

"Sibford was, however, responsible for some deep friendships ... Nigel Booth and Tom Scott, to name but two. The school also instilled in me a deep sense of mutual respect for which I will be eternally grateful and with this film I want my family to be able to understand and share in something of my formative years."

Fred is pictured above at his home in Bristol. Left during his recent visit to Sibford School.





Hook Norton Tunnel: Sibford's dark secret

In one of the episodes of Michael Portillo's *'Great British Railway Journeys'* he visited Hook Norton, writes Patrick Smart, a pupil at Sibford from 1969 ~ 1974.

Michael described the railway which used to run from Banbury to Chipping Norton and went to the brewery to sample the Old Hooky ale. But he didn't mention the tunnel or the viaduct.

In 2013 I went to a SOSA reunion for the first time. I stayed for a few hours, then cycled to Oxford. I rode my bike along the road to Hook Norton, down the hill towards the River Stour and up the other side, stopping halfway up to admire the view. I realised then how lucky I was to have been at Sibford for five years. It is because I have since lived and worked in some terribly ugly places that I now have a greater appreciation of Sibford's surroundings.

I wanted to explore Hook Norton a bit more thoroughly, but the light was fading and I had to

get to Oxford.

So in 2014, the 40th anniversary of my leaving school, I decided to explore the entire length of the Hook Norton railway.

I hiked South along the canal to Adderbury, where I turned West towards Hook Norton. It was sometimes difficult to find where the railway was because it has not been used since 1958. But I followed it wherever I could. It was very difficult at times because it is so overgrown with thorns, nettles and other unpleasant plants.

When I got near to Hook Norton I found myself in someone's garden where there was a sheep pen. The sheep saw me approaching, started bleating and blaring ... who would have thought that sheep could be so frightening? But they scared me. I backed off and retraced the line of the railway, cutting my way through the bushes until I got back to the road and it was then that I saw something which looked totally

out of place in this rural idyll ... a police car! I'd expect to see plenty in London, but here! What's worse was that they were looking for me! The owner of the noisy sheep had called them. I explained that I was looking for the Hook Norton Tunnel and we agreed that sheep were better at guarding property than dogs!

Having bid farewell to the boys in blue I finally found the viaduct and the North entrance to the tunnel ... which was locked. So I climbed over the top of the tunnel to reach the South entrance. The approach was very overgrown and difficult to reach, as if nobody had been there for years. I nearly gave up, but when I finally found the South entrance it was open. I kicked myself for not bringing a torch with me. I really wanted to explore it.

I returned a few weeks later with some lights and a violin and did some experimenting with the acoustics in there. ►

Jennifer's Ironman effort

Former Sibford pupil Jennifer Guy (1998 – 2008) has joined Team FARA, a group of people around the globe who participate in endurance events on behalf of the Friedrich's Ataxia Research Alliance.

In September she took part in her first event when she competed in the Ironman Weymouth 70.3 ... swimming 1.2 miles in the sea, cycling for 56 miles and then running a half marathon, all in one day!

Jennifer, who is currently a junior doctor at Arrow Park Hospital, Wirral, joined the team after her cousins' nine-year-old daughter Anna was diagnosed with Friedrich's Ataxia, a rare genetic, progressive neuromuscular disease.

"Anna is a brave and resilient little girl," said Jennifer "and the whole Morrow family (my mum's family in the USA) has pulled together in supporting and raising money to fund research and the charity 'Hope for toMorrow'. Anna herself is now a participant in a very promising clinical trial in the States at UCLA."

Jennifer completed the Ironman Weymouth on 11 September 2016 in just over 7 hours. To date she has raised more than £1,600.

Jennifer is pictured crossing the finishing line.



continued from page 5

I first found out about the tunnel when I was 11 years old. I went on a walk with some older pupils who showed it to me.

In all this time it has lost none of its fascination. There is water cascading through the brickwork in the middle where the tunnel bends. You can see stalactites forming where the calcite has been dissolved by the rain. It is a place of scientific interest and it is a fine example of Victorian engineering. As is the viaduct.

I have spent more time in the Hookey tunnel in the last four years than in the five years I was at Sibford. In 2015 I took my guitar there to do some recording and to investigate further.

However, when I stopped at Hooky tunnel this year on my way to the SOSA reunion, I found that the door had been securely locked ... so I will no longer be able to play my violin or guitar in the tunnel.



I wonder if there are any other Sibford Old Scholars who have the same fascination for the Hooky tunnel and viaduct as I do? If so, perhaps they'd be interested in campaigning to restore them? To leave them as they are would,

I think, be a crime against our ancestors. The work that went into building them must not be wasted.

If you would like to join me and campaign to restore the Hooky tunnel, please email me at: smart.patrick@gmail.com.

Welcome from Toby Spence

Joseph Spence Hodgson, first President of SOSA sounds like quite a character – not least when he opened a new swimming pool at Ackworth and plunged, fully clothed, into the water at the end of his speech!

I was surprised and rather delighted to find that Joseph and I are related. His great grandfather – John Spence of Birstwith (b.1746) is the brother of my great (x6) grandfather – Robert Spence of Hartwith (b.1742).

From what I can find out Joseph was energetic, driven and charismatic. No pressure on his distant relative then!

The Sibford community has been exceptionally welcoming to the Spence family and I have been delighted to meet many members of SOSA over the past few weeks. 2017 is a significant year for the school as we celebrate our 175th anniversary – we have a number of events planned and I look forward to working closely with SOSA as we look to strengthen ties throughout our community.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to any member of SOSA who would like to meet me at any stage. If you would like a tour of the school or simply to drop in for a coffee, you would be more than welcome.

Toby is pictured with his wife Jill and their three children Oscar, Isobel and Eliza who are all pupils at Sibford School.



2017 Summer Reunion

Dear Friends

The next Reunion will be held on Saturday, 17th June 2017.

2017 is a special year as it will be the 175th Anniversary of the founding of Sibford School and so we hope that as many Old Scholars as possible will attend.

Also, 2017 will be the 50th Anniversary of the Class of 1967 leaving the school, and to celebrate this occasion, Liz FitzGerald (née Rhodes) and Andy Tomlinson are arranging a reunion to coincide with the SOSA day.

In addition to joining the school celebrations, they plan to hold an evening party for those who left the 5th/6th Forms in 1967. If you would like to join them, please get in contact either by email at: sibford67@gmail.com or in writing to: Andy Tomlinson, Christmas House, Crackley Lane, Scot Hay, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 6AP.

If you are still in contact with anyone else from these years, please get in touch with them and encourage them to join in.

Details for the Summer Reunion will be published early next year. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Ashley Shirlin, SOSA President

From pupil to professor

Congratulations to former Sibford pupil Richard Hobbs, who has been made a Professor in the Earth Sciences Department at Durham University specialising in Geophysics.



Richard says: "I was a pupil at the school in the days of Jonas Fielding and June Ellis (from 1966 to 1973) and since then I have been making my way through the University system.

"The success of my career is built on the support and encouragement I received whilst at Sibford. The school hired in a post-doctoral researcher from Oxford to teach me A-level Maths and Physics because at that time there were no staff at the school that could cover that syllabus."

Rising star



Alex Jardine, who left Sibford in 2010 has been elected to the Mirror Board of digital marketing agency LIDA.

The initiative enables younger members of the agency to be mentored by board members and shadow the board to help shape the agency's future.

Mirror Boards are one of an emerging number of initiatives being used by companies in a bid to nurture and fast-track young talent and to reduce the age of company board members. Currently, the average board member is age 57 and one in six board seats are taken by someone over the age of 64.

From imagination to reality*

Many young boys dream of becoming an astronaut and former Sibford pupil Steve Salmon (1972 – 75) was no exception.

Although Steve never quite fulfilled his childhood dream, as a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society (Britain's leading think tank on space development), he has certainly come closer than most.

And, while he hasn't stepped foot in space himself, he has rubbed shoulders with both astronauts and cosmonauts who have ... the latest being Tim Peake.

"I used to say that I didn't study hard enough to become an astronaut," says Steve. "But in reality, with the benefit of hindsight, I don't think I had the 'the right stuff' to do so. You have to sacrifice an awful lot to do a job like that, and I wouldn't have been prepared to."

Steve credits his passion for space travel to the sci-fi films and TV of the 1960s and, in particular, those created by Gerry Anderson. "Many of today's scientists, engineers and pilots have a lot to thank

Gerry Andersen for," he says. "His creativity helped spark an interest in science and technology. I was also very inspired by Sir Patrick Moore, whose fantastic work, I believe, was perhaps never fully recognised."

Steve joined the BIS back in 1978 when, at the age of 19, he took out a subscription to the monthly magazine 'Spaceflight'. He was elected a Fellow in 1987, but he didn't actively get involved in helping to run the Society until 2011.

"I mistakenly thought that only professors and scientists could actively get involved with the Society, but I was wrong and the last five years have been fantastic," he says. "I've been able to take part in many activities and conferences

and have also helped in liaising with our first foreign branch, BIS-Italia, based in Rome."

Steve's contribution to the BIS was recognised in December when he was awarded the Patrick Moore Medal for individuals who have, or are, making an outstanding contribution to the Society.

Speaking after the event, Colin Philp, a member of the BIS Council said: "Steve has been an example to us all as the volunteers' volunteer, a friendly and welcoming presence at BIS events and a champion of the Society in so many ways. Nothing is too much trouble for him, and his huge enthusiasm for the Society and its subject matter, both science fact and science fiction, has been an inspiration. The only regret was that Sir Patrick



could not have been there to present the medal, but all those at the presentation agreed that this was an extremely well-deserved award."

When he's not staring into space, Steve's other passion is art and sculpture



Steve is pictured above with Sir Patrick Moore at his home in Selsey, East Sussex in 2011 and below with ESA astronaut Luca Parmitano.

... something that he first got involved with back at Sibford. "I will never forget the ceramics teacher, Jean Mortimer," he says. "I was always in the ceramics studio, poor woman! She used to have to chase me out to my German and French lessons. But I am eternally indebted to her for inspiring me to be creative in this way."

Like his involvement with BIS, however, it took a while for Steve to fully embrace his artistic side.

After leaving Sibford, he went into retail management and then spent 10 years working in computers before taking a part-time Diploma in Ceramics. He then studied fulltime at Camberwell College of Arts, where he gained a degree in Fine Art Ceramics and, in 2001, he set up his own studio. Steve now combines his time working as a professional artist and serving as 3D Artists' Representative on the Society of Fulham Artists & Potters' Committee, as well as volunteering with BIS.

* From imagination to reality is the strapline of the BIS. For further information on the Society visit: www.bis-space.com.

Andy hangs up his lab coat after 32 years

If you passed through Sibford Science department anytime from the early eighties through until 2015 you'll have bumped into Andy Newbold.

Andy joined the school staff in 1984 as a teacher of Chemistry O-Level and remained as a science teacher until his retirement last year.

In Autumn 1986, Andy led Chemistry pupils into a new era with the introduction of the new Salters GCSE Chemistry course. He was also responsible for Sibford piloting a brand new Biology course.

"A Level Biology at Sibford had virtually fizzled out," he explains. "However, there was a brand new Salters Nuffield A Level Course being introduced, which I thought we could get involved with.

"I went on various courses in order to be able to get the new course up and running and we became one of just 50 schools to pilot it. It proved a great success and I continued to teach it at Sibford until 2015."

Andy fondly looks back on some of the 'disasters' he experienced over the years in the Science department ... stressing that they would never happen today thanks to the introduction of new and improved health and safety laws.

"I will never forget spraying oil all over the ceiling, walls, books and pupils when the vacuum pump exploded," he laughs. "Then there was the time we set fire

"I will never forget spraying oil all over the ceiling, walls, books and pupils!"

to the electrolysis apparatus and also the time we made nylon ... unfortunately we didn't open enough windows and the class ended up breathing in the fumes! Thankfully those sort of things don't happen anymore."

As well as teaching science, latterly Andy was also responsible for the school timetable, exams and staff cover. Away from the curriculum he spent many years helping pupils

complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and regularly helped out with 'Kids' Camp', the annual visit of special needs pupils from Phoenix School in Tower Hamlets that continues to this day.

Andy retired in December 2015 and former scholars were quick to pay their tributes. Charlie Driscoll née Sidebottom (at Sibford 1987 – 1992) said: "Happy retirement Mr Newbold. Thank you for all your help over my school years." Stuart

Greenfield (1997 – 2003) said: "Congratulations sir. I remember your lectures fondly. Best of luck in your future endeavours." And John Dale (1981 – 1986) added: "I drove past Sibford yesterday, a real blast from the past. I can't believe any staff are still there from the 80s. Happy retirement Mr Newbold, hope we didn't drive you too mad!"

Andy might have left the school staff room ... but he's not forgotten. As a resident of Sibford Ferris, he and wife Gill, who has also retired, can regularly be seen walking through the school grounds and using the swimming pool. With extra time on his hands Andy is hoping to doing more cooking, travelling and photography. He is also planning to take up wood turning and is looking forward to spending more time with the family ... sons Tim and Peter and their respective wives plus the new addition to the Newbold clan, granddaughter Eleanor, who recently turned one.



Andy is pictured at his retirement with Michael Goodwin, Seren Wildwood, Clerk of School Committee and Cath Harding, Sibford's Head of Science.

Sibford School and the Friends' Ambulance Unit

Sibford School recently received a letter from Clare Collins whose late father-in-law, Geoff, was a pupil at the school from 1936 – 1941 and who subsequently went on to serve with the Friends' Ambulance Unit.

Geoff's parents were Members at Moseley Road Meeting in Birmingham and his Dad worked at Cadbury's in Bournville.

Geoff, together with his sister Joan, was able to go to Sibford thanks to funding through a scheme operated by Cadbury.

Geoff was awarded his School Certificate in 1941 and left Sibford to begin life as an indentured architect's apprentice to Cadbury Bros Ltd.

In January 1943, however, just two months before his 18th birthday, he received his call up papers and immediately applied to be registered as a Conscientious Objector.

According to a copy of his tribunal papers (as supplied by Clare), Geoff states: "As a member of the Religious Society of Friends I object to military conscription and all war as a violation of the commandment 'Thou shalt not

kill' as was taught by Jesus Christ. I was educated at the Friends' School, Sibford, where I found that the perfect life to be attained should be identical to that life of healing and love as was led by Jesus Christ."

The tribunal was heard on 13 April 1943, with the unanimous decision that Geoff be conditionally added to the Register of Conscientious Objectors 'until the end of the present emergency, the condition being that he undertake full time work with an Ambulance Unit under civil control.'

On 17 May Geoff was sent to Northfield Manor House in Birmingham. The house was at that time owned by Elizabeth Cadbury who invited the Friends' Ambulance Unit to use the grounds as a training centre.

In August 1944 he was posted to Yugoslavia with FAU where he served in Sarajevo and Derventa as part of a field bacteriological unit, testing and analysing the water supplies – mostly wells – to ensure that the water was safe. The work was essential as during the course of the war many water supplies had been deliberately contaminated.

He was finally repatriated in April 1946.

- *The Rocket would like to thank Clare for sharing Geoff's story.*



Geoff's United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration book (effectively his Passport during the war). Geoff (circled) pictured during his school days.

Former pupil pioneers internet safety app

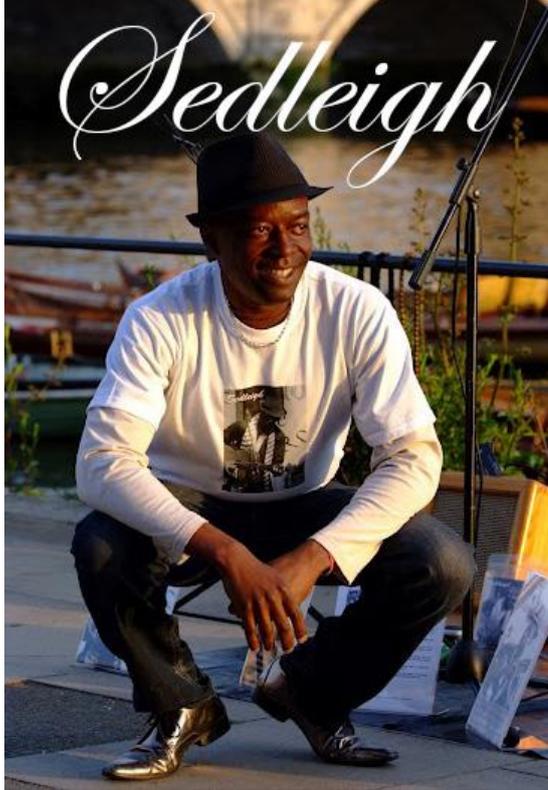
A former Sibford pupil is working on improving the safety of one of the world's most popular social media platforms with his own free app.



James in 2009.

James Bryan (at Sibford 2007 ~ 2012) has developed 'Snapsearch', which allows users to verify the identity of Snapchat users before adding them. It also enables users to search for friends without having to know their user name.

Currently studying Business Management at the University of Aberystwyth, James says his app significantly improves the safety of Snapchat users. Speaking to a local newspaper he said: "I'm blown over by the success of Snapsearch to date. The response we've had has been fantastic, which shows me there is a real market for it."



Sedleigh Adams was only at Sibford for a year and half ... but the school made a big impression on him, especially when it came to music. Having started playing folk and blues guitar at the age of 11 under American tutor, Tony Woods, his move to Sibford enabled him to study with folk legend, Frank Underwood (leader of the 1970s band Windsong, which featured Annie Lennox prior to her involvement with The Tourists and fame with the Eurythmics). That early inspiration made a big impact on the young Sedleigh and he has continued to perform on and off to this day. Now age 54, Sedleigh returned to Sibford in June to play at the annual SOSA reunion where his melodic voice and crafted songwriting attracted great admiration. Here he fills us in with life since leaving Sibford.



Sedleigh sings the blues

“ After leaving Sibford in the summer 1980, I went to London where I took more A-Levels at what was then the Tottenham College of Technology. During these three years, I continued playing music, busking at Covent Garden/London Underground and became a regular at a central London folk-cellar called ‘Bunjies’ near Leicester Square.

Winning an undergraduate place at the (then) Ealing College of Higher Education (School of Languages) in 1983, I went on to do a year in universities in Cologne and Paris. Music accompanied me on my travels, and I recorded a demo-album ‘People Like You’ in 1984 before I left London.

Graduating in 1987, I largely stopped playing music and focused on getting into the regular world of work. As a languages graduate, I gravitated towards travel, and was recruited by the founder of the Air Travel Advisory Bureau, Tony White, to join his team in Regent Street in 1988.

After a short spell at travel agency ‘Holiday Maker’ in mid-1988, I joined British Airways

Reservations Sales at Heathrow and for the next 20 years, I worked in market research, foreign language learning, reservations system upgrades/airport self-service check-in system-testing and training.

Five years after getting married in 2001, I returned to music in my leisure time, with summer stints at Covent Garden and pub gigs. In between travelling on business for BA to Europe and North America, I played for family occasions and pubs when possible.

In 2009 I took voluntary redundancy from BA and recorded an EP, ‘Bahnhof Zoo’, which, since then, has repeatedly appeared in the ReverbNation Singer-Songwriter charts’ Top 20. In 2010 I created the first free outdoor session, ‘Live@ Richmond’. This has now become an annual feature attended by thousands of people.

I now perform, mostly solo, or with session-band ‘Artist’ which goes out as a duo, trio or a four-piece at a variety of venues ranging from pubs to 5-star

wedding locations, hotels, private and charity functions in both the UK and overseas. My brand, ‘Sedleigh Live’ now appears widely online and on Webradio.

I have recently been selected for the UK-wide program, ‘Pizza Express – Live Playlist’ and on 20th December 2016 will be appearing at Pizza Express Jazz Club in Soho, a venue frequented by some of the world’s top jazz artists.”



Sibford School was delighted to receive a visit from Trevor Stokes whose mother, Doris Stokes (née Metcalf), was a pupil at the school in the 1930s.

After his father passed away last year, Trevor discovered a scrapbook which had been maintained by his mother and grandmother during Doris' stay at Sibford.

Says Trevor: "It would appear that my grandmother attended the Annual Meetings as there are notes of her observations of those meetings. Invariably, she commented on how happy the staff and pupils were. I have recently spoken to my sister and we both recall

that our mother always looked back at her days at Sibford with great affection."

Among the pages of the scrapbook is a letter from Head teacher Arthur Johnstone. Sent at Christmas some 85 years ago it reveals interesting insights into the school and, while lots has changed, it is surprising to see how much the school of 1931 has in common with the school of 2016.

The letter is reproduced opposite, and below are some of the photographs contained in the scapbook which Trevor has kindly donated to the Sibford School archives.



Back row: P Langford, M Stone, L East, M Hales
Front row: B Wooding, Doris Metcalf, H Lamb.



The class of 1934. Doris is pictured on the front row, far left.



Ready to return to school after a jolly picnic at Edge Hill.



Above, Sibford staff in 1934 and right, the staff enjoying their morning coffee.



M Watton, M Eaves, D Harris and P Warren.

Sibford School, December 1931

Dear Friend,

Occasionally a few parents tell me that their boys and girls write home very uninteresting letters as if nothing ever happens at school. It has occurred to me that perhaps I could fill in the blanks of the weekly letters telling you about a few things which may have been overlooked by your boys and girls. They are curiously unobservant.

When we came back after the holidays we were all delighted to see that the newly sown grass was already beginning to show all over the new playing field. It was not long before we had a beautiful thick carpet of splendid turf, and now Sibford can boast of thirteen and a half acres of playing field, which can hardly be equalled in any school of our size. The flower borders were still ablaze with colour and remained gay right until the end of October, when it was necessary to uproot the plants if we were going to be in time with our bulbs. Here the boys and girls came along with generous help. They gave twopences and threepences - and that result is that 1460 bulbs are now in the ground waiting for next spring. I hope all parents who can will come and see our show of flowers.

Through the generosity of old boys and girls we have now an avenue of beeches and birches leading to The Hill, and also we have been able to plant a new orchard of more than 50 trees.

Right along the south end of the school, in front of our fine open air classrooms, we have built a dry wall of old brown stones, with three broad steps at one end and in the middle. In this wall there are hiding many clumps of tiny rock plants, some of them having come all the way from the Pyrenees. Then at the end of the wall we have planted a small rose garden. We are now planning a few copses here and there in the rough corners of the field.

Early in the term we had a most enjoyable visit from Miss Owen's players, who gave us scenes from 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Twelfth Night'.

The girls' Hallowe'en party was a very gay affair. All the girls were asked to come representing books, and judging was a most difficult business, many of the costumes being both clever and pretty. On Nov. 5th we had our usual fireworks and sang songs in English, French and Esperanto round the bonfire. What a terrible noise we made. Another evening saw us completely mystified for an hour and half by a splendid conjuring entertainment given by a Birmingham Friend. And no one will forget the Folk Dance Party when boys and girls, school staff and domestic staff all joined happily together in the sociable old English Dances.

Of course it would not be correct to think that all the term had been play. We have done some good hard work. A new feature of the time table has been the setting aside of certain periods when boys and girls could choose what they wished to study. This gave opportunity to those for whom the pace of the class was too rapid to go over the difficult bits again and also it gave a chance to others to do a little bit of extra reading in the subjects that they found the most interesting.

During the term some most useful as well as most instructive woodwork was done. The boys have made a newspaper stand for the library and clothes horses for the laundry class; and the girls have made another garden seat. We must not forget, too, the splendid Christmas cakes made and iced most daintily by the elder girls. They prepared an excellent Christmas dinner, too, and were proud enough of it - and justifiably so - to invite the headmaster and his wife to join them when it was served.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you a really Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur Johnstone

Daya sets his sights on eventing challenge



Daya Hujan is a name to watch. At just 18, he is already in his third season of competitive eventing and is aiming to become a four-star rider. As he says: "If you don't dream or aim for a goal...you'll never hit a target!"

Daya joined Sibford in 2010 and left four years later after completing his GCSEs. He went to study an equine business diploma at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire where, in June this year, he graduated with a triple distinction grade.

"The move to Hartpury from Sibford couldn't have been more different," says Daya. "I left a small school in the countryside to live on site with several other hundred students at a large college."

In the months leading up to the end of Hartpury, Daya spent time thinking where he should go next. "My passion has always been the equestrian sport of eventing," he says. "Whilst at Sibford I had my own horse and had done some competing but only at lower levels. So I thought it could be a chance for me to properly start working at my career as an event rider."

An introduction to German event rider and Olympic gold medallist Peter Thomsen led to Daya being invited to join Peter's 30-horse yard in Germany.

"There is a team of five work riders like myself, all from different countries," said Daya. "Mainly I am managing a barn with nine horses ranging from young and exciting prospects to top international event horses aimed at Olympic level. On average I ride up to four horses a day while having the responsibility of running the barn and everything that comes with it. I managed to compete in two events here in Germany before the season ended. In my first German event, I gained an exceptional score and finished in 3rd place. I couldn't believe it when I checked the scoreboard."

"This winter will be filled with training for the new season in 2017, when I aim to climb up the levels to compete at bigger national and international competitions."

Fund Raising

Sibford Old Scholars' Charity

Since the publication of last year's Rocket, the Sibford Old Scholars' Charity completed its first year of activities. During this year approximately £17,500 was raised, £1,300 was spent on administration and £1,500 was spent supporting an existing pupil's school fees.

Since the SOSC year-end further donations have been received and £500 was raised at the auction held at the June Reunion. Two specific funds have now been created: one of £500 per annum to assist an existing pupil who is going on to further education, and a second of £3,500 per annum to go towards supporting pupils in need of financial support for special needs tuition.

No donations have been received to support the school itself and very little to support the needs of Old Scholars. We have had to turn down requests from a number of Old Scholars for support as under the constitution we can only provide support for educational purposes. We have additionally had to turn down donations from people who wished to support Old Scholars beyond the purposes of education. The Trustees would welcome the views of Old Scholars on whether we should change the Constitution to expand the Aim relating to Old Scholar support.

SOSC's three existing aims are:

- 1 For the advancement of education of children attending or wishing to attend Sibford School by the provision of Bursaries to scholars who have need of financial assistance.
- 2 For the advancement of education of former scholars of Sibford School by the provision of Grants to former scholars who have need of financial assistance.
- 3 For the advancement of education to scholars of Sibford School by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities at Sibford School which would not otherwise be provided by the school.

If you would like to make a donation this can be done through the website (www.sibfordosc.org) or you can send me a cheque made out to SOSC stating which aim you wish to support. If you can, please GiftAid your donation.

Sibford Old Scholars' Association

As many of you know Mike Finch sadly passed away in June. The SOSA Committee believe that it would be fitting for SOSA to purchase a Hook and Spike clock, preferably made locally with Quaker connections, to give to the school as part of the 175th celebrations and to be known as the Mike Finch Clock. If you would like to contribute towards this goal please send a cheque made out to SOSA to me.

Thank you,
Ashley Shirlin SOSC Chair and SOSA President
46 Upton Road, Poole, Dorset BH17 7AH



AGM 2016

The Head's Report

“ I have been musing about my last 12 years as Head of Sibford School, thinking about some of the changes that have occurred and looking forward to the appointment of my successor, and to my own retirement.

You will, already, know that Toby Spence has been appointed as Sibford's 12th Head. I would like to thank senior colleagues, School Committee and especially Seren Wildwood for the rigour and thoroughness of the selection process. We were pleased to have a strong field and delighted to have secured Toby Spence as our next Head.

Although I was (appropriately) only marginally involved in the selection process, I have had the pleasure of spending a little time with Toby since his appointment. We spent two days together at the annual conference of the Society of Heads; he and Jill, his wife, were our guests at Holly House for the weekend of the PSFA Charity Ball, and I am delighted that he is able to spend time with us this weekend. He will be fine!

The matter of 'handover' is always an interesting one. You will understand that in schools there is seldom the chance for a period of 'overlap' (I don't think my colleagues would necessarily agree with the adage that 'two heads are better than one!'). I have tried to leave systems in good order, particularly on matters of policy and compliance in a world in which the regulatory framework is increasingly important.

The best handover though rests on the trust I know I can place in my senior colleagues and my personal assistant, Lesley

Woodward; they know what to do and how the place works; Toby Spence should be able to use the first half term or so getting to understand the school with a fresh pair of eyes.

As well as 'running the school' a Head necessarily has to be responsive to external demands. The last six months has seen quite a lot of this, and our new Head takes over at a time of significant change to GCSE and A level examination syllabus and assessment criteria, changes to the inspection framework (which still remain unclear) and changes to safeguarding concerns, with the spectre of the Goddard inquiry and revised regulations in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Maybe this period of change is not so unprecedented; I remember leaving

a secure teaching post in London in 1982 to take up a temporary post in Valencia, Spain – in part in the hope that by the time we returned, proposed changes to 'O Levels' would be resolved. In the event, the new GCSE exams were not introduced until 1986 (and not examined until 1988) and my last 36 years in teaching have seen education continually bounced around by successive Secretaries of State for Education.

A quick test – how many can you remember? Mark Carlisle 1979 - 1981; Sir Keith Joseph 1981- 1986; Kenneth Baker 1986 - 1989; John MacGregor 1989 - 1990; Kenneth Clarke 1990 -1992; John Patten 1992 - 1994; Gillian Shephard 1994 - 1997; David Blunkett 1997 - 2001; Estelle Morris 2001 - 2002; Charles Clarke 2002 - 2004; Ruth



Michael Goodwin and Toby Spence pictured at the 2016 Open Day and SOSA Reunion.



AGM 2016

HEAD'S REPORT CONTINUED

Kelly 2004 - 2006; Alan Johnson 2006 - 2007; Ed Balls 2007 - 2009; Michael Gove 2010 – 2014 and Nicky Morgan 2014 - ??

Interesting isn't it? More Secretaries of State (15) in my teaching career of 36 years than Heads of Sibford School since 1842. One cannot help but feel that their combined impact hasn't always been to the benefit of schools, or education.

The landscape has changed so much in those 30 plus years and the comprehensive ideal that many of us believed in has been dismantled by specialist schools, academy trusts, the fracturing of Local Education Authorities, the closure of special needs schools and a relentless reference to 'rigour', whatever that means.

I don't mean to say that there haven't been improvements brought about by the political process. Child protection hadn't been invented in 1980 and I am sure that the standard of teaching has improved over this time, though the drivers for change have not always been appropriate and 'career teachers' like me may well soon be a thing of the past, as enthusiastic, socially conscious and talented graduate young teachers are worn down by targets and league tables.

At a recent conference of the Boarding Schools Association I heard Ben Fogle muse on his experiences as a former boarding school student. The TV presenter and adventurer said that if he were to write about how bad the education system is, he would call his dissertation 'How Lego ruined the world'.

He described how the Lego of our childhood used to be a collection of bricks out of which children could create fantastical worlds. Today's Lego comes

in kit forms, with exactly the right components and a set of instructions to build a never to be reconstructed model.

In his view, a once 'whimsical form of escapism' has transformed into a 'rigid box ticking discipline' because children are encouraged to build things by following strict guidelines. It feels to me that education has moved in this direction, and that schools, rather than broadening the minds of young people, have determined the narrow tracks along which they might travel.

I hope that, at Sibford, we haven't made quite such a mess of it. I am grateful to have found a school, and a School Committee, that lives out its values, that is prepared to support a Head who kicks against 'fundamental British values' and takes risks in giving some young people a second chance; a school that has been brave enough under my leadership to abandon SATs and the narrow constraints of the primary national curriculum, to embrace outdoor learning and to maintain a Quaker testimony to valuing that of God in everyone.

We live in interesting times, but I wish Toby Spence, members of School Committee, colleagues and students – this very special place that is Sibford School – every success, and thank you for your support over the last 12 years.

Michael Goodwin

Michael Goodwin is pictured over the years with (from top): Actress and author Sheila Hancock; Old Scholar and adventurer Charley Boorman; Racing driver Jackie Stewart; Cricketer Darren Gough; with pupils, parents and pups; Maypole dancing; at the 2011 Annual Reunion with Professor Forte and Arthur Vercoe Pedlar (father of Old Scholar Elinor Pedlar) and with British reality television personality and former pupil, Ollie Locke.





Members and non-members attending the Annual General Meeting were warmly welcomed by President, Ashley Shirlin. There were 45 members and attenders present.

1. Greetings and Apologies:

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Hilary Waterfield, Timothy Phillips, Guy Kingham, Jenny Wilson (née Lamb), Judy Beattie (née Davidson), Simon Barfoot, Mark Bennett, Nikki Knott, Wendy Finch.

2. Obituaries:

Margaret Elizabeth Rhodes (née Richards), Philip Gray, Debbie Schwartz, Marina Holder, Beryl Powell (née Whitaker) and Mike Finch.

Mike Finch Remembered

by Paul Frampton

"I am afraid it is not possible to say what I have to say about Mike in a few words. I am sure all Old Scholars have their own feelings for and memories of Mike and we will surely be sharing them over this weekend here at the place he loved, Sibford School. We will also be thinking of his beloved Wendy, their sons Andrew and Richard and of course the wider family.

"The timing of Mike's death, a week before Old Scholars Reunion and Open Day, has given us the perfect opportunity to recognise his unique and extraordinary contribution to Old Scholars and Sibford School.



'Rockets' held in memory of Mike Finch.

"I don't know who works these things out but the one thing I do know is that I am extremely grateful ~ Mike and Wendy so deserve to be held in the light this weekend by us all.

"But I am sure he would want the show to go on. We must have a pint at the Wykham, celebrate his life and perhaps Rockets could be a little different this year, a special Old Scholars' send off!

"It was Mike who introduced Rockets in the late 1950s with Nick Bennett and Leslie Baily. Bending down and touching his toes would have been a lot easier for him then.

"Mike was born in Birmingham on 30th May 1938, his Grandfather, Jack, and Father, Fred, were Quakers and he came to Sibford a year after his brother John in 1949 and left in 1954.

"After a successful career in the engineering industry, Mike was appointed Estate Manager at Sibford in 1982 and in 1992 became the first Development Officer widening the community offering Sibford had to make. It was when he joined the staff that he met Wendy who was the school Housekeeper and they were married in October 1985.



Mike and Wendy Finch pictured at the 2014 SOSA Reunion.

"I remember it well, such an enjoyable day and the beginning of a wonderfully happy marriage.

"Mike's involvement with Old Scholars began in the 1950s and he has been the rock on which SOSA has stood for over 60 years.

"How do you describe his contribution? SOSA simply would not exist today without his determination, commitment and passion for Sibford.

"Serving on the Old Scholars Committee in every possible role, almost continuously, Mike also represented Old Scholars on School Committee and was Chairman of the Finance and Premises Committee before his appointment in 1982. He was President in 1980 and with Wendy again in 1999.

"Mike's keen interest in history, and particularly that of Sibford, inspired him to secure and collate all the School Archive together with that of Old Scholars, much of which would have been lost I am sure. Wendy too has been central to this effort.

"But this was still not enough. Mike had an ambition to write a history of the school 1842 -



2010 and after years' of research and effort, 'A view from the Hill' was published in 2009. Sibford was the only Friends School not to have a published history and Mike remedied that in his own deeply emotional way.

"As Michael Goodwin wrote, Mike's love of the school could not be better illustrated.

"So much for the contribution, but what about the person?

"I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Mike through Old Scholars for nearly 40 years. In all that time I have witnessed his warmth, humour and generosity towards everyone connected with Sibford. He had a special, very personal and longstanding relationship with all of us – quite remarkable given the diverse nature of Old Scholars and the Sibford School community.

"Mike was a genuinely lovely man and a wonderful example of what Sibford has always been all about. Sibford and SOSA have lost a true Friend and great advocate. We shall miss him greatly and none more so than Wendy."

The meeting held a few moments of silence.

3. Minutes

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

The Minutes of the last SOSA Annual General Meeting held on 13th June 2015 were unanimously approved by the AGM and signed as a true record by the President.

4. President's and General Secretary's Report:

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

At last year's AGM I raised four main points for discussion:

1. Makeup of the Committee

The reintroduction of a Reunion Secretary has been a great success with Harriet Langridge undertaking

this role during the last year. She has taken over a lot of the tasks that I undertook in 2015 and I have enjoyed working with her on the Reunion.

Ali Bromhall has again edited the Rocket and I personally feel that the edition that went out in December was the best of Ali's so far.

Wendy Finch, now as our elected Membership Secretary, continues to do a splendid job maintaining the SOSA and School Alumni databases.

Where we have been less successful has been in the co-option of three younger Old Scholars to the Committee. However, we are still trying to address this situation as will be seen during the Nominations.

Another area which has caused problems relate to the position of Treasurer. Mark Bennett unfortunately suffered a stroke recently and so it has fallen to me to prepare the Accounts. Mark, in fact, resigned as Treasurer yesterday morning.

Richard Hughes and Margaret Shelley continue to serve on the School Committee and we are extremely grateful to them for undertaking these responsibilities along with those of the SOS Committee.

Amanda Brown and Nikki Higgs are two of our Ordinary Committee Members. They are also Trustees of SOSC and again I would like the Meeting to thank these individuals for their commitment to both SOSA and SOSC over the last year.

2: Membership and the website

With regards to Membership and the website we have now consolidated the SOSA database within the website database in order to make administration of

the Association's records easier. For example, where Harriet or I have received updates we change the records ourselves rather than having to burden Wendy. Also, where we have email addresses I continue to send periodic e-Newsletters to members.

Currently we have 1,255 members of which 14 are addresses unknown making a total of 1,241 contactable members. This is an increase of 126 on last year.

Last year we reported that we had 259 email addresses; this number now stands at 348, an increase of 89.

With regards to the website this continues to go from strength to strength. At last year's AGM I reported that the site had received about 4,700 unique visitors who had viewed about 25,000 pages since the website had been relaunched in April 2014. The numbers now stand at approximately 9,900 unique visitors viewing approximately 45,000 pages.

3: Voting

At last year's AGM we agreed that we would introduce postal, electronic and proxy voting subject to a rule change being presented to this year's AGM. The proposed changes have been available on the website for several months and were also circulated with the Reunion Invites. We will return to this subject under point 8 of the agenda.

4: 175th Anniversary

The fourth point I raised at last year's AGM concerned the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the school which will take place in 2017. Sadly there has not been an influx of donations for this project and so the SOSA Committee has been considering comparatively



inexpensive options.

Peter Robinson suggested that SOSA purchase a Hook and Spike clock and went on to explain the Quaker connections to such an item.

Additionally, Peter went on to outline possible plans for the replacement or refurbishment of the pavilion.

A general discussion took place on the merits of supporting these two items with reference to the 175th Anniversary of the Founding of the school and in relation to a memorial to Mike Finch.

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Simon Mathews) that £2,500 is allocated to the 175th Anniversary and/or a memorial to Mike Finch. This was unanimously agreed with the final decision regarding what should be bought to be left to the General Committee.

A new item that I would like to report on is the Sibford Old Scholars Charity that was discussed some length last year.

I'm pleased to report that in the first 12 months of SOSC's operation we managed to raise just over £17,500. This is clearly significantly less than the £50,000 we had targeted but nevertheless it is a reasonable start.

Also during our first year we managed to support an existing parent by contributing £1,500 towards their child's school fees. We work closely with the school in assessing individuals who might need assistance.

Since the SOSC year end we have raised a further £5,000.

Following discussions with the school we have also set aside money for two new projects:

- A SOSC Leavers Fund of £500 p.a. which will be given to a pupil going on to

Further Education who would need assistance with the purchase of items such as books.

- A SOSC Learning Difficulties Fund of £3,500 p.a. to help support parents of prospective or current pupils.

The SOSC Trustees appreciate that there may well be more deserving charities than SOSC which SOSA members may wish to donate to but in the words of one of our major sponsors:

"I always feel that without Sibford I would never have enjoyed the life I have and therefore feel very pleased to be in the position to help pupils and families of the school."

Although only five people out of our membership of 1,200 have donated to SOSC I would again ask you to donate. With Gift Aid your donation increases by 25%. You can donate via the website or by completing one of the leaflets or include SOSC in your wills.

5. Treasurer's Report:

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

At last year's AGM we agreed to change the Financial Year to run from 1st April to 31st March, which is why the Income and Expenditure Account shows a previous period of eight months compared with a current period of 12 months.

The Accounts are also distorted by the fact that an Old Scholar inadvertently paid her SOSC donation into the SOSA Bank Account and this was subsequently rectified in a different year.



SOSA President Ashley Shirlin addressing the 2016 AGM.

As Peter Robinson reported last year, the Association's Gross Income over Expenditure was £4,885 which dropped to £1,530 when the SOSC adjustment was applied.

This year's Gross Expenditure over Income is £2,973 but becomes an Income over Expenditure of £2,711 when the countering adjustment is made.

I'm therefore pleased to report that the Association's Accounts have now been back on an even keel for two periods following the significant losses of the previous periods which arose from the Association gifting £50,000 to the school.

The Current Account at the 31/3/16 stood at £8,108 and the Investment Account stood at £5,475.

I have been at odds with the Treasurer over this balance between the two bank accounts. Although the Investment Account attracts very little interest it is my belief that it would be useful to ring-fence any annual profits or losses within the Investment Account whilst being mindful of cash flow throughout the year.



Also, some significant donations have, in the past, been given to SOSA for specific projects. On occasion the original purpose of these donations has been forgotten as the money was swallowed up in the Current Account. Again, I believe that these funds should be ring fenced within the Investment Account.

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Simon Mathews) that we transfer £1,500 from the Current Account to the Investment account in respect of the period ending 31/3/15 and that we transfer £2,700 in the Autumn once we have paid the Reunion Costs. This was unanimously agreed.

As defined by the Constitution the Accounts are “an independently signed Examination of Accounts”. My thanks to Peter Robinson for undertaking this.

6. Head's Report:

Michael welcomed all Old Scholars to the school and outlined progress that had been made during his tenure.

Ashley Shirlin thanked Michael for all the support that he had given SOSA over the years and the entire meeting warmly wished him the very best for the future.

A copy of Michael's report is shown on pages 15 ~ 16.

7. School Committee

Representative's Report:

Richard Hughes outlined each of the following areas:

Spotlight Review – English

- How is the department addressing the demands of the new GCSE syllabus at KS4 and KS3?
- How is independent reading being developed in English lessons?
- To what extent does feedback from teachers help pupils to know how to make progress?

- How well do the lessons address the needs of all pupils?

Review of Educational Visits Summer Term 2016

Policy Reviews

- Computer acceptable use.
- Medical Capability.
- Family Friendly.

Finance and Premises 23rd May 2016

- Budget for 2015-16 based on 400 pupils, and the roll shows 414.
- Income for the Junior School is marginally down on the budget, with a predicted deficit of £8,562 at the year end.
- The overall forecast for year-end identifies a surplus of £22,778.
- Debtors report to March 31st March 2016. Current debts stands at £61,611 compared to £87,226.

Facilities and Premises Report

- Four bio-mass boilers are now installed and operational.
- New boys' toilets, green room and corridor are nearing completion.
- Staff kitchen in the Hill building has been refurbished and the bathroom in the Fielding houseparents' flat has been replaced.

Policy Review

- Data Protection

Richard informed the meeting that he would be standing down from the School Committee on 31/12/17.

8. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution:

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

At the last AGM it had been agreed that electronic, postal and proxy voting be allowed by the Constitution. The General Committee had agreed revisions in light of this, details of which

had been available on the website for several months and had been circulated with this year's Reunion invitations.

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Ian Weatherhead) that these changes be adopted. This was unanimously agreed.

9. Election of Officers:

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Reunion Secretary: Harriet Langridge (1/8/16 – 31/7/18).

Proposer: Ashley Shirlin, Seconder: Amanda Brown.

Committee Member: Navid Sadrzadeh (1/8/16 – 31/7/19).

Proposer: Ashley Shirlin, Seconder: Amanda Brown.

Treasurer: Cindy

Poulton (Immediate – 31/7/18).

Proposer: Harriet Langridge, Seconder: Ashley Shirlin.

The above committee members were unanimously elected.

10. Honorary Life Membership:

Presented by Ashley Shirlin

With regards to Honorary Life Membership, it came to my attention that a large number of previous Presidents and Heads have never been invited to become HLMs. The Committee therefore authorised me to invite all those involved to become HLMs.

Although a few people failed to reply I only received one rejection of the honour and so would like to announce that the following have agreed to join our select group of particularly honoured members:

Past Presidents:

1969: Loraine Brown

1970: Michael Van Blankenstein

1976: Grace Beckerlegge

1995-96: Margaret Fairnington

1997-98: Julie Greenhill

1998-99: Lucinda Poulton

2001-02: Simon Barfoot



2002-03: Guy Kingham
 2007: Chloe Bennett
 2008: Margaret Shelley
 2009: Bryony Veysey
 2009-10: Richard Hughes
 2012-13 and 2014-15: Edd Frost
 2013-14: Caroline Mills (née Bond)
 Past Heads:
 John Dunston
 Michael Goodwin
 In addition to the above, the

Committee believed that two other individuals should be invited because of their significant contributions towards SOSA:
 Joan Huddleston (née Collett)
 Nikki Knott (née Higgs)
 Those of you who attended last year's AGM may have noticed that we did not announce a new Vice President. I shall be continuing as President for another year but I

am delighted to announce that Harriet Langridge (née Jones) has agreed to accept the position of Vice President.
 The above nominations were met with unanimous approval.

11 Any Other Business
 Richard and Pat Wrigley were congratulated on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

Tea on the lawn at Holly House



To mark his retirement Michael Goodwin invited Old Scholars to join him for tea in Holly House garden. As can be seen, a grand time was had by all.





Lara French was a pupil at Sibford School from 1989 ~ 1994. Her attendance at the 2016 reunion marked her first return to the school in 22 years. Here she shares some thoughts of her experience.



I made my way to the main Hill building early on Open Day and Reunion with a mixture of emotions. I was bemused by the closing of the Manor, although a sense of familiarity remained ... the old houses on both the left and right of the drive and the trees casting shadows along the path. An old-fashioned ice cream seller, tucked away in the trees, showed that Open Day was soon to begin.

I walked to the main reception and inquired where the SOSA tent was. The corridor was full of pupils and visitors. All the students were dressed in uniform and I'm sure the badge seemed smaller than it used to (*if anyone can tell me when the school badge was miniaturised and changed please send your answers to The Rocket*).

A gathering of Old Scholars was already present in the SOSA marquee, but they all seemed to



be from an older generation. This was my first time at a Sibford reunion and I was unsure what had happened to all the Old Scholars from the last 30 years.

I left Sibford 22 years ago and it felt like a real honour to be back standing on the old playing fields some two decades later. There were pupils playing 50s/60s pop songs ... really refreshing to see so much talent being vocalised. Signs pointed to a bouncy castle and the classrooms for tea, coffee and cake. There was an expansive arts and crafts market selling a range of goods from Neal's Yard products to beautiful textiles and hand crafted pottery.

The school had undergone a real expansion since I was last here. It was a real encouragement to see that the creative arts, that had always made Sibford such an attraction, were still important.

An exhibition, combining effort from all years, showed so much creativity from textiles to pottery and arts. The large sculptures on display were really impressive.

We went on a tour of the 'new building', the extension of the sports hall and saw the 'new' swimming pool (I seem to remember that the previous pool had held the record for being one of the oldest indoor swimming pools in the country).

I walked to the science block where a subtle waft of formaldehyde reminded me of the years past, watching the old Victorian gardens on a rainy day. The labs were full of students constructing paper rockets which were then taken outside where a velocity of Oxygen was pumping air and shooting them high-up into the trees.

Making my way back to the





SOSA tent I was greeted by some old friends from the same year as me. It was fantastic to connect after 22 years and finally catch up and see how little, and how much, had changed. It was also great to see how responsible the new generation of Sibfordites all seemed.

I made my way to the cafeteria for lunch. I was a little anxious to be seated with so many seemingly retired Old Scholars but soon felt at home.

Lunch was a delicious and appetising selection including salmon and cold meats, new potatoes, salads and a really delectable dessert of Eton Mess and cheese cake. The charity auction began with school tributes. It was a great afternoon to appreciate the sincere support of previous generations and to listen to the music from Sedleigh Adams, another former Sibford pupil.

After lunch I walked back to the playing fields to see some more old chums. We sat and chatted about what has been happening with our lives and shared our memories of Sibford while the day was slowly dismantled around us. It was great to touch base, to be treated by the Sibford Old Scholars Association and to see that the school was continuing to provide so many with educational encouragement in the creative and academic arts and bringing out the best in each individual.





When I originally started to write my address Mike Finch was still amongst us. His advice to me was to keep my address short and to the point, unlike some previous Presidents. More importantly he said I was to avoid all reference to any escapades with girlfriends during my time at Sibford. How well he knew me!

Mike was a dear friend to me over the years. We had our squabbles like all friends but he and Wendy have supported me during the bad times and we have laughed during the good times. I will miss him enormously.

My subject tonight is friendship. If you looked through my Facebook friends or my address book you would find two main categories

of people: my family and friends in Malaysia and my friends from Sibford.

As some of you know, my father left the UK for North Borneo a couple of years before I started at Sibford. I saw little of him again, the last time when I was about 25. However, about 15 years ago one of my Malay siblings contacted me and I met my half-sister in London.

In Borneo I have two step brothers, four half-brothers, a half-sister and, up until recently, a step mother. I also have many, many nephews and nieces not least of whom are thanks to my half-brother, Jasni, who single handedly appears to be the cause of the population explosion in South East Asia!

I also have many friends in

Malaysia. At Christmas I was in Borneo for a month saying my farewells to my step-mum before she died. On Boxing Day my sister, Rosnah, a Malaysian Cabinet Minister, held a party in her constituency for a few thousand people.

Amusingly, I was ambushed by the Press and asked for an interview. What was more interesting was what they printed. They concentrated on the multi-religious aspects of my family and Malaysian society. My Malay family are Muslim, I'm C of E with Quaker leanings and my Malay friends are mainly Muslim with a few Catholics thrown in with the odd Hindu for good measure.

I mention all this because I am sure that Sibford made me far more tolerant towards other people whatever their background. Sadly, however, this tolerance rarely extends to Manchester United supporters. I make the odd exception for Aston Villa supporters in deference to Mike Finch and possibly Southampton supporters in deference to Edd Frost but that might be stretching things a bit too far.

The second main group of friends are those from Sibford. It never ceases to amaze me that it is possible to strike up a conversation with a complete stranger purely on the basis of having the shared experience of attending the same school.

Few of you here tonight were at Sibford at the same time as me although I am delighted to see Catherine Hunt, Nigel Payne and Hugh Goddard. People like Paul Frampton and Ian Weatherhead are clearly much older than me and people like Harriet Langridge and Edd Frost are just slightly younger.

Like most people I've had some



ups and downs in my life. With some exceptions from other parts of my life it has been my Sibford friends who have supported me. Mike and Wendy Finch have been bricks. Tim Gebbett, Mark Bennett and Danny Re'em provided me with huge support a few years ago. It is Sibford who gave me these friends.

I love the variety of people who attended Sibford and I love to hear people's life stories.

On television, I've seen people from my year who became strippers or who have had sex changes.

There have been Sibfordians who have become self-made millionaires.

Sadly, there have also been friends from Sibford who died very young. One even died weeks after leaving the school. Soon after last year's Reunion I attended the funeral of one of my year which was very upsetting. RIP Phil.

A few of you are aware of a chap from my year who has recently been released from prison. He now has Huntington's Disease and is struggling badly. I mention this because some Old Scholars have provided financial assistance for things like a bed which should be a basic human right whatever a person's sins.

Earlier this week my daughter and I had tea with June Ellis who was Deputy Head during my time at Sibford. This is a lady who terrified most of us at school but who helped me choose my 'A' levels and which university to attend even though I'd left Sibford a couple of years beforehand. She is 90 now, as bright as a button and is a dear friend. Mind you, she did say to my daughter "I won't tell you any stories about your Dad," and then promptly did so!

On the subject of Sibford staff there are some others that need a mention.

I've known a few Heads over the years from Jonas Fielding onwards. Since my return to the SOSA Committee I've had the pleasure of working with Michael Goodwin. He is leaving after 12 years at the helm and I'm sure that the school will be the poorer for that. Fortunately Peter Robinson will still be here and I half think that it is he that does most of the work anyway! I'm also really pleased to see John Dunston here tonight. John was Head during a very difficult time for the school and SOSA didn't always treat him fairly.

From a personal point of view I have mixed memories about my teachers at Sibford. Some were appalling teachers, some were terrifying and there were some gems but the vast majority were decent human beings. As with June Ellis I became friends with some of my teachers after school and enjoyed the occasional pint with the likes of Tony Rye and David Foulds.

I love Sibford and I love the people who came here, even the people who made me cut the playing field with my nail scissors or made me scrub Nansen Boys Common Room with my toothbrush. Even Penn & Lister boys and girls have turned out OK.

I have to mention my best friend. Amanda Brown was a couple of years younger than me at Sibford. Although Mike Finch advised me to avoid talking about any escapades with girls at Sibford I'm on safe ground here as it was her best friend at Sibford who caused my premature departure from the school rather than her.

Amanda and I have been together for some years now and



I valued her support during my bad times. I continue to value her support and advice now that we are living together although I'm not too sure that she wishes to spend every birthday at the Sibford Reunion Weekend.

To conclude, friendship is an important aspect in anyone's life but Sibford has made me and many others who attended the school far more tolerant of people. I think we have all benefitted from this in all our relationships.

It may be trite to say but our motto of 'Truth, Honour, Freedom and Courtesy' is as valid today as when it was first coined.

To our common friend of Mike Finch I'd like you to raise your glasses to toast him wherever he may be and to think of Wendy at this difficult time.

President's profile

Ashley Shirlin, SOSA president 2015 ~ 2017

As this is my second year as President I've found it very difficult to write a second Profile as most of what I wanted to say was included in last year's edition of the Rocket!

However, as we will soon be celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the school, I've decided to write about the small fraction of that time that I attended Sibford.

School Premises

In 1969, aged 11, I became a boarder in Nansen. The school was a very different place in those days. Nearly everyone was a boarder with just a smattering of day kids. The Manor was still owned by Sibford School and housed approximately 140 girls. The boys, again about 140 of them, were housed in Nansen, Penn and Lister. Each house contained pupils aged from 11 to 18. In the boys houses there was one dormitory of 12, five dormitories of six and one room of two for the Head of House and his Deputy.

For most new pupils this was something of a culture shock as very few people had been to Prep Schools prior to going to Sibford. An 18 year old is very scary to an 11 year old especially when 6th formers held huge power in terms of punishments that could be handed out.

Offices ~ as chores like cleaning the dormitories were known ~ were allocated to juniors. The worst jobs were: cleaning older boys' shoes or football boots and carrying the urn of milk and the bread and margarine from the Manor to Nansen each night for supper. If shoes weren't clean then you were refused entry to meals which could be a major problem as the trek from Nansen to the Manor in snowy weather reduced the cleanest shoes to a shabby



mess. An urn containing milk for 40+ boys is very heavy for an 11 year old ... even when the weather is fine.

During my time at Sibford the boarding population probably reached its peak as Fielding House was completed by the beginning of my 2nd year and all the 6th formers were moved there so making room for another 40ish boarders within the school.

The only other significant building work during my time was the New Hall, which started in my first term, and the re-building of the Rural Science Department.

From an aesthetic point of view, the New Hall was, in my opinion, a disaster as it was sited on what was previously a pleasant, open aired quadrangle. I had little contact with the Rural Science Department other than hiding home brew in the greenhouses to aid fermentation so can't really comment on its replacement following the fire caused by one of my housemates smoking by the bales of hay!

The old swimming pool, down by the Manor, was an interesting place. Built in the 1800s I believe that it was the first indoor pool in Oxfordshire, only three lanes wide

and 20ish yards long it was either freezing or like a Turkish Bath. The foot bath that was meant to be walked through to prevent the spread of Athletes' Foot was green and slimy, not pleasant and best avoided.

Everyone had to go swimming at least once a week. Costumes were optional during single sex sessions but mandatory during official mixed sessions. In Nansen Boys we had an illegal key to the pool which was passed from the 5th Formers to the 4th Formers at the end of their 5th year. Midnight unofficial mixed swims resorted to the 'costume optional' format.

Lessons

I was somewhat bemused to discover that in 1st year the boys studied Needlework and Cookery whilst the girls studied Metalwork and Woodwork but this reverted to stereotype from 2nd year onwards.

To this day I am not convinced that telling all the 11 year old boys to take their shirts off, cut off all the buttons and then sew them back on again actually gave me any life skills. I did however learn to poach an egg in boiling water

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As reported earlier in *The Rocket*, Mike Finch, former pupil, member of staff and SOSA stalwart died, on 10 June 2016, just days before the annual reunion. His son, Andy, has written the following words:



A Eulogy for my Dad - Mike Finch

Mike Finch

30 May 1938 ~ 10 June 2016

At Sibford 1949 ~ 1954

On behalf of Wendy and I and our families, thank you for the many kind messages and memories that you have shared with us about my Dad, Mike Finch.

I'd like to say a few words of my own about Dad – about the kind of man he was, his life, how he was influenced and his passions.

He was, of course, a wonderful Dad and Grandad, a loving husband and a good friend to many. He had a kindness of spirit, he was gentle and respectful, he believed in equality, fairness and opportunity for all. He was great fun, he liked a laugh. He was meticulous and organised. He always had a view on the way something should be done, he would argue a point but he never alienated others.

Dad had three great passions – his family, Sibford School and Aston Villa Football Club. But what shaped him? What influenced him and how did these passions come about? Furthermore, how did he live life as a result?

Well, it all started for Dad in 1938. As the cold, dark days of World War Two and post war austerity progressed, there was a small terraced shoe repair shop in Moseley in Birmingham where my Dad and his brother, John, were nurtured in a loving, warm environment. My grandparent's families hailed from Birmingham and had deep working class roots. His dad was a shoe repairer and his mum was a chiropodist, and both worked from their small



home. My Dad got teased at primary school about his parents' occupation, because they said: 'Your dad cripples 'em so your mum can cure 'em'. Dad laughed it off, of course.

His dad was a Quaker and although his mum was a Baptist, she happily attended meeting at the Friends Institute on the Moseley Road in Birmingham with all the family and the likes of Dorothy Cadbury. Dad's values came from his upbringing and his Quaker heritage. His humble roots gave him a lifelong humility and love of family. His interest in Aston Villa came through his dad and grandad and stretched back to his great grandad – as he always said – 'it's in the blood'.

Dad's parents wanted to do their best for him and his brother and so they looked at Quaker schools. They scrimped and saved and no doubt went without in order to get them both to Sibford School.

Dad first went to Sibford in 1948 to visit his brother at school and he joined a year later. Going to Sibford changed Dad's life for the better and led to a lifelong passion for the school and Sibfordians. What a change it must have been to move from the industrial city of Birmingham to the rolling countryside and open spaces surrounding Sibford.

Dad had a wonderful school life and made lifelong friendships. He finished his schooling in 1954, but as Wendy has said to me, he never really left Sibford and it never left his heart. I bet he never imagined that many years later, he would be known as 'Mr. Sibford' for all his contributions to Old Scholars and the school.

After leaving school, Dad returned to Birmingham and became an apprentice draughtsman at the General Electric Company, no doubt this contributed to his meticulous, neat, organised

ways. He continued to pursue his passion for Aston Villa of course.

When my Dad was 21, he met my Mum. At that time, he was leading a youth club at the Moseley Meeting House (Birmingham) in his spare time and Mum offered to help. Dad wanted to help young people, no doubt driven by his desire to improve life chances and opportunity for all. When my parents married in 1962, the plan was for Dad to go into full time youth work. There were no plans for children, but along I came 12 months later.

As they were living in a bedsit at the time, Dad was anxious to get a better home for his family, so he reached out to Dorothy Cadbury, and she made arrangements for my parents to rent a flat in one of her properties. So, once again, the wider Quaker family helped, and my parents were forever grateful.

Dad still hankered after a vocational career and took a job as a school attendance officer, before returning to better pay in engineering. Nonetheless, he continued to work as a part time youth leader in Sparkhill in Birmingham – a tough area with many impoverished families. These were hard kids, forever fighting, but Dad won them round and got their respect. Football helped, in part, as he helped the boys form a team.

I had a wonderful childhood; I was loved, cared for and supported. Dad did what all good parents do – he spent time with me, we played together, he nurtured me. Mum and Dad worked hard and afforded a move to Solihull where schooling was better, and so my life changed in a similar way to Dad's had when he went to Sibford – and I will always be grateful for this.

Dad developed an interest in Sibford Old Scholars in the mid 1960s. His first involvement was selling scarves and ties at reunions.

Over the years, all our August Bank holidays were spent at Old Scholar reunions and Dad always seemed to be at the centre of things, getting things organised and running smoothly. He fulfilled many roles – Reunion Secretary, General Secretary, School Committee Member. To me, he was always the main man, but it was lovely to see him so integral to reunions. I loved the weekends – treasure hunts, table tennis, hockey – anything that was competitive!

Talking of competitive sport, Dad and I shared a passion for Aston Villa and football. He first took me to Villa Park when I was 5 or 6 years old, and over the next 48 years we went to many hundreds of matches together. As I grew up, it became what Dad and I did, and what we talked about most. Football is a bit like life; there are ups and downs, glories and tragedies, hopes and fears, loves and hates. Dad and I experienced all of this with Villa, but really it wasn't just about the football – it was about me and him spending time together, it was about the connection we felt to Villa through our family back to my great great grandfather.

1982 was a momentous year. I was 19 and left home for college, I saw Villa win the European Cup and my Dad changed career. Dad took a job at Sibford School as Estates Manager – for Dad it was a dream come true to be back at Sibford and he could not have been happier. Again, Sibford provided a life changing experience for him.

My parents had amicably separated and so working and moving to Sibford provided a new chapter for Dad. He went on to meet Wendy and they married in 1985, and they were simply wonderful together and Dad was incredibly happy for the rest of his life.

When my children, Michael and

Alex and Wendy's granddaughter Jessica arrived, Dad became a very devoted and loving Grandad and he was hugely proud of his grandchildren. He loved spending time with his family and enjoyed being involved in his grandchildren's lives, and they adored him and always looked forward to seeing him and Wendy.

For many years, me, Dad, Michael and Alex would go to the Villa together – the family passion continued – well, Dad and I indoctrinated them really, but as Dad always said, "It's in the blood".

As the years passed, Dad's Sibford story took on new chapters. When he moved on from working at Sibford he remained actively involved in Old Scholars activities and developed his interest in the history of the school. I was very proud, when in 2009, he published his book about the history of the school – he put a huge amount of emotion and effort into writing and researching the book and talked to many people associated with the school so that he could present a balanced view. He also went on to be the school archivist – when I visited the archive room with Wendy, shortly after his passing, it was just how I had imagined - so typical of Dad – everything was labelled, indexed and meticulously filed.

Through his illness over the past six years, Dad remained optimistic, even after setbacks. He was determined to fight on and be active and he drew much strength from Wendy and he continued to live out his passions. He was still there for me too and he continued to show his love in many ways.

Finally, I say Rest In Peace Dad and God bless you. Thank you for all you have given to me, your family and your friends. It was an absolute privilege to be your son.

Andy

Angus Oakey

17 August 1997 ~ 23 March 2016

at Sibford 2008 ~ 2016

Strictly speaking, Angus never actually became a member of SOSA because when he passed away in March 2016 he was still a pupil at the school.

However, if Angus hadn't been suffering from leukaemia, and thereby missed months of school having chemotherapy at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, he wouldn't have stayed on for an extra year in a bid to complete his exams and would therefore have been presented with his SOSA pin in September 2015. It would, therefore, seem appropriate to mark his passing in this column.

Angus's funeral was held at Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground in Tysoe on 12 April and was a packed event attended with present and former scholars and Sibford staff joining family and friends. It was followed by afternoon tea held at the school. Donations made in memory of Angus exceeded £1,035 which has been split between CLIC Sargent and the Teenage Cancer Trust. This is in addition to a further £1,400 raised by Sibford pupils who took part in The Spring Shakespeare run shortly before his death.

In August this year Angus's posthumous A Level results were published and his family were delighted to discover that he had achieved B grades in History and Design & Technology. The family has since donated a special award to the school, The Angus Oakey Award, which will be awarded annually in recognition of the importance of friendship amongst students. First recipient of the award was Danielle Tharani (at Sibford 2009 ~ 2016). Angus' grandmother Val, who attended the awards evening in September



together with his mum, Jan, said: "It was a lovely evening full of mixed emotions but I'm so glad I was able to do it. Angus would have been so proud. Sibford will always have a special place in our hearts."

Claire Smith née Southwell

11 January 1930 ~ 31 August 2016

at Sibford 1940 ~ 1945.

Maureen Bottom née Tennant (known as 'MT') writes:

Claire had already been at Sibford for a year or two before I arrived in 1942 – extremely shy and nervous but a bit excited too. I found everyone was friendly but after a bit Claire and I seemed to hit it off and we found we shared a strong sense of humour about the lunacies of life (pre-dating the Goons by a number of years).

It helped us, I am sure, through the discomforts of freezing cold wartime winters, when we hugged the lukewarm radiators at the Hill, in the hopes of encouraging them to warm up, and invented complicated arrangements of string (a valuable commodity at that time) enabling us to draw the blackout curtains and put the lights on when the bell went at 7am on a frosty morning without having to

actually get out of bed for a few more minutes!

When the spring came with warmer weather I have vivid memories of splashing about in the Sib streamlet, visualising it as the mighty Rhine with its craggy castles as described to us by Frank Parkin in his Geography lessons; so I think we must also have shared vivid imaginations too!

We both ended up at Art Schools by various routes but stayed in touch, attending each others' weddings, but more often by post, living in different parts of the country and meeting only at SOSA gatherings, until latterly when my husband and I retired to Dorset. So when I visited the Meeting to celebrate her life I learnt a lot more about it from her sons and her many friends and colleagues; about her social work, her teaching and her lasting enthusiasm for the music at which she had always excelled. I felt it had been a real privilege as well as a pleasure, to have been (at whatever distance) a friend of hers.

Claire's son Paul adds: "Mum was very proud to have been a scholar at Sibford and was strongly committed to the annual reunions until infirmity reduced her ability to attend."

Claire's funeral was held at Basingstoke Crematorium on 21 September. 





Debbie Schwartz

1 February 1974 ~ 26

November 2015

At Sibford 1989 – 1992

We are sad to announce the death of Debbie Schwartz.

The mother of two was living in Carmichael, California. She was reported missing by her family members in the early hours of November 25 and was found dead the following day. Officials said there were no signs of foul play.

Posting on the Facebook site 'Sibford School in the 80s' her friend, Carole-Anne Wakefield wrote: "It is with great sadness that I have to inform you all that Debbie Schwartz (Sibford pupil 1989-1992) passed away yesterday. Those who knew her will remember her vitality and bright smile."

A Memorial Service for Debbie was held on Sunday 6 December 2015 at Sacramento Quaker Meeting House, California. Her family asked that any donations in her name were made to the RSPCA due to her love of animals.

News has also reached us about the death of Beryl Powell née Whitaker.

President's profile continued

which has served me well.

Although I studied Woodwork for only a couple of years I was impressed by the dedication of one master who demonstrated that not wearing a face mask when using a lathe to turn a bowl was unwise as it split and lacerated his nose. I am also indebted to this same individual for his demonstration that the utmost care should be taken in Metalwork by demonstrating how painful it is to sit on a red hot scroll just removed from the furnace.

Maths was one of my pleasures. Even after this time though, I'm still not happy that my master refused to give me 100% in an end of year exam even though I got everything correct as 'no one is perfect'. I'm also still not amused that a broken window was added to an end of term bill because I ducked when the same individual threw a blackboard rubber at me so breaking the aforementioned window!

Sport was fun. I was fortunate to have success and held school records for swimming, cross-country running and athletics. I also captained the football and rugby teams. One of my proudest mementoes is still my County Tie.

Most other lessons were much of a muchness although there were many memorable and loveable teachers ... the Rural Science master who was more embarrassed than us when giving sex education; the Geography master, who wore his gown every day and was lethally accurate when throwing chalk at a disruptive pupil; the History mistress who made the past come alive and the R.E. mistress who was still living in the 1960s and who brought her guitar to most lessons. The list goes on.

Social Life

This was varied and interesting although sometimes a little strange.

Without doubt the highlight of the week was the Saturday Night

Hop. This was an occasion to dance the night away to Bowie, T Rex and Slade and hopefully mooch to Roxy Music with your girlfriend. As long as your casual clothes had not been confiscated for some misdemeanour it was fun to dress up and wear makeup, after all, most of my time at Sibford was the glam rock era.

Sunday afternoons were variable. To give the staff some peace the entire school had to leave the campus for two hours. You couldn't go alone but groups of two or more males were acceptable. Couples could only go together with other couples in order to discourage any naughty goings on. People traipsed all over the countryside on foot or bike. The summer was good for playing Pooh Sticks at Traitors' Ford, trout tickling at Temple Mill and swimming in the Sib.

Why Sibford had an annual Eisteddfod is a mystery to me but this provided some entertainment. Many crafts and hobbies were encouraged and people even went on to make a living out of such activities. I met one old scholar in Australia who was working as a model maker. The highlight of the Eisteddfod was at the end when each house performed a Variety Show. Standards fluctuated wildly but some gems of talent showed through.

School plays were more serious affairs. Due to a serious lack of talent on my behalf my only involvement in these events was as understudy to Romeo and as the Sound and Lighting Man for Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat.

In addition to these events other ways of passing one's time included various after school clubs, the occasional charity 20-mile walk, the weekly viewing of Top of the Pops and the weekly guest speaker at Sunday Evening Meeting.

Ashley Shirlin, President

The times they are a-changin’

As a Bob Dylan fan since my youth, I was delighted to hear that he was to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature – poet rebel to acceptance by the establishment a certain proof that the times are a-changin’.

I suppose we all know that change is part of the human condition. Certainly, since we moved away from Sibford over the summer, there have been significant changes at a personal, national and international level.

Our oldest son Benedict and his wife Anna had their first baby in August; little Nora is a delight of course. We moved back to our old house in Norfolk and almost immediately began a small building project to extend the kitchen into a new garden room. We escaped the worst of the dust and noise by heading for Sicily in our little green van for a month – an exciting change to be able to travel for so long in term time. Retirement of course will bring further changes no doubt as we adapt to new regimes and responsibilities.

The ramifications of the Brexit referendum continue to reverberate and of course the US Presidential Election results have occupied the news since our return.



You can imagine that I am no fan of Donald Trump, but I have found some of the negativity difficult to understand. As a historian I suppose I am used to looking at possible



longer term implications. A supposedly catastrophic event can lead to unexpected reactions and responses. What matters is how we respond.

Dylan addresses each verse of his 1964 classic to different groups; come writers and critics, come senators, congressmen, come mothers and fathers... calling each to action as the ‘present now will later be past, the order is rapidly fading’.

Complaining or moaning won’t make a difference to these difficult times; rather people of good will need to stand together and act for good. Oliver Burkeman writing in the Guardian this month noted that ‘objecting to something you can’t control brings a moment of catharsis, but mainly makes things worse, by increasing the attention you bring to the problem, which makes it more intrusive.’

The first noble truth of Buddhism (Dukkha) suggests that life is suffering. We maybe shouldn’t expect everything to be wonderful – wonderful or otherwise it is transitory and learning to cope

with this flux might be the secret to more robust mental health. Protest by all means; show that we are not of the same mind. Dylan remains after all an icon in an age of protest and defiance - and the Quaker position is surely one which would not have us sit back and accept injustice or inequality.

The Quaker declaration to Charles II in 1660 stated: ‘Our principle is, and our practices have always been (see again that focus on doing, on action), to seek peace, and ensue it and to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of good, seeking the good and welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all’.

I look forward to seeing you at the next demonstration and to having more time in retirement to engage more actively in political causes, but you won’t hear me just moaning!



SIBFORD OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION Officers and Committee from 01/08/2016



Ashley Shirlin Edd Frost Nikki Knott Harriet Langridge Amanda Brown Navid Sadrzadeh Cindy Poulton

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Harriet Langridge

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REUNION SECRETARY Harriet Langridge

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Nikki Knott, Amanda Brown and Navid Sadrzadeh.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES



Richard Hughes (January 2014 until December 2017)

Margaret Shelley (January 2012 until December 2019)



Please note that if you wish to contact any of the above Committee Members please do so by addressing your enquiry through the General Secretary – Ashley Shirlin (details as above) who will forward on your emails/correspondence etc. Ashley is also the person to contact for general enquiries and to submit information for inclusion on the website.



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Ali is also the person to contact if you wish to submit information for inclusion in the SOSA magazine – *The Sibford Rocket*.

**For further information about Sibford Old Scholars' Association
visit our website: www.sibfordoldscholars.com**

For further information about Sibford School visit: www.sibfordschool.co.uk