

THE SIBFORD ROCKET

The annual magazine of Sibford Old Scholars' Association

 SOSA

WELCOME TO THE 2019 ISSUE OF THE ROCKET

This year we have made a few changes: the editorship has come back to SOSA, with the help of the school; the format has changed - with the most obvious being the size; but we are also trying to have more of a visual feast for you.

The Rocket will be sent out during the early part of the year in future, not before Christmas, with an electronic version also being available.

As your current editor, I can only emphasise the need for a wide range of articles, without which the magazine cannot flourish, so I make a plea for articles, photographs and reminiscences, all of which it is a pleasure to receive.

I hope you enjoy the new format magazine.

My huge thanks go to Ian and Russell for their photographs.



Please do contact me with any news for future issues.

Harriet

Email:

SOSA.Rocket.Editor1903@gmail.com

Or by mail via:

Sibford School, Sibford Ferris, Banbury,
Oxon. OX15 5QL

Due to extenuating circumstances with the challenges of the Coronavirus, we feel we have no alternative but to cancel the June re-union. New dates to be advised.

Would you like to help to run a local group in your area?

SOSA is here for all its members, but the committee is aware that, although we have the reunion at School, there are those who either cannot, or do not want to travel for the day. So, by bringing back the idea of the regional reunions we believe that more people can get together in friendship, over a cuppa and cake, or a pie and a Pint. Whichever, please let us know and we can advertise here in the Rocket.

Are your details up to date on the website?

Please check and let the membership secretary know by emailing SOSA.Membership.Secretary1903@gmail.com.

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE



I would like to extend you a warm welcome to this year's Rocket. I have the honour of being asked to be President this year, and it's proven to be an extremely challenging one.

When Harriet kept asking me to finish my "Presidential Thingy" or my Profile, I was stumped. Surely the good Sibfordian's had better things to do than read about me drone on about, well, me.

But she insisted. So here it is:

I attended Sibford between 1986 until 1989, and, yes, I still get that warm fuzzy feeling I got in the pit of my stomach, when walking up the Hill towards the main school entrance.

After Sibford, I came back to Surrey, to study at Brooklands College in leafy Weybridge. For some of you history buffs, Brooklands was the site of the first ever British Grand Prix. Then the racetrack was used as an impromptu take off site for the Spitfires during WW2. The Bouncing Bomb

was also designed and constructed there.

Upon finishing my studies at Brooklands, I was accepted into Birmingham University, where I attended 4 very happy yet hazy years. From there I lived many years in the Cayman Islands and Dubai for work, but I moved back to sunny old Blighty, just before I got married in 2007.

But throughout all of these educational powerhouses I attended, and beautiful countries I lived, I never felt the same calm, or the sense of belonging I did when I was at Sibford. That's because of its soul.

I've heard a lot of people complaining, that Sibford isn't the same place that they attended, and a part of it has died, because it's no longer a boarding

school. I strongly refute and disagree with this theory. Sibford's soul will always be the same. It will never change. The most diehard and consistent Old Scholars in my generation are mostly day students, who never boarded.

I hope, like me, you all get sense of wonder, laced with nostalgia and the feeling, I can STILL accomplish anything I want, as soon as I step out of my car and see what used to be the Lister Boys building, or looking along the playing fields towards the pavilion, or the smell of "eggy bread" when walking into the canteen. That's what SOSA represents, and that's what we want to promote and preserve, and long may we do so.

Navid Sadrzadeh
President

PHOTOS FROM THE ARCHIVES

IT'S A KNOCKOUT. 1976.



BUILDING THE NEW DINING HALL. 1974.



DOMESTIC SCIENCE ROOM. 1960.



LISTER COMMON ROOM. 1960.



SCIENCE BLOCK POND. 1966.



NEWLY OPENED DYSLEXIA CENTRE. 1977.



SCIENCE BLOCK LANGUAGE LAB. 1965.



THE ART ROOM. 1960.

MEMORIES FROM SIBFORD IN THE 1980'S, 2000'S AND FROM 2020.

16 GOING ON 60

I am Year 11 at Sibford (that's fifth year in old money). Almost forty years ago, in 1981, so was my mum. So much has changed since she was at Sibford, or has it?

Mum's early morning ritual started at 7:30am, but for me, by this time, I am already on the bus to school. Having woken up as late as I could, I rolled my tartan skirt to make it shorter, rushed out of the house, Dad speeds through traffic (makeup applied on route - mine not his) and arrived at the bus stop with no time to spare. My mum was a boarder much like the rest of the pupils in her day, so as you can imagine the girls' boarding house was a madhouse, rushed and frantic. They were forbidden to wash their hair in the morning and so naturally sneaking a cheeky hair wash became their morning challenge. After dressing into their A-line skirts, they ran to breakfast. While my mum enjoyed cooked bacon and eggy-bread, I have to sit on the bus for 45 minutes.

Once registered we both attend meeting for worship, a long silence where early morning throat tickles are caged in, in order to prevent an awkward embarrassment. The biggest fear for us millennials is being the foolish one to leave their phone on and having the cheery ringtone of Snapchat ping in your pocket, leading to the entire hall locking eyes on you.

After filing out of meeting, the next few lessons, for the both of us, dragged out until lunch. In 2020, laptops are commonplace. This always bothers our teachers, as they cannot see our screens. I have gathered many mugshots of me and my friends on my laptop looking like stunned deer as we stare intensely at our teacher making sure they do not look in our direction. However, in my mum's school years, there was only one computer in the whole school and everyone used chalkboards in the classrooms, now teachers use whiteboards, powerpoint presentations and digital aids.



Finally, lunchtime would arrive and we rush off to the lunch hall. After choosing our meal, we scavenge for an empty table. My mum, on the other hand, did not have to do this; she did not get a food option nor did she have to think about where to sit. All 350 students could be seated at the same time. Mum was a vegetarian (very bohemian for 1981) so got "better" food than the standard offering. We, on the other hand, have lots of choice and many vegetarian, vegan, and gluten free options. Not so bohemian to be a vegetarian in 2020!

After lunch, Year 10 upwards have the choice to take a trip down to the local shop, Greens. If you don't have a lunchtime club, pupils hang out in the classrooms. Rowdy and boisterous, half our year at a time will squeeze into one classroom. In the summer we sit on the fields and play sports; if we dared play on our phones we risk getting caught, the most "tragic" punishment as we would have to lose it for the rest of the week. For us this was like getting oxygen taken away from us. For my mum, down to the pavilion for a smoke was the plan every lunch. No Greens and no clubs so there was plenty of time to misbehave. Phones and Fags - that's the big change in illicit activity.

At 4:15 our day comes to an end and I make my weary way to the bus. Getting down there first is vital to "bagsie" a good seat at the back. When I finally make it home at 5:30, food is the only thing on my mind. After that, homework and then Netflix to end my evening. My mum had to go back to the boarding house for records (what are they?), Top of the Pops and cigarettes. Then tea and finish the evening with prep. Prep for my mum was monitored by Sixth Formers on the prowl. Now, 40 years later, my mum is always on the prowl to monitor my prep!

Amelia Ross and Tanya Ross
(nee Carapetian)



JUST A NORMAL DAY IN THE EARLY NOUGHTIES FOR A DAY KID AT SIBFORD

Up at 6.30am, shower, leave the hair (it's a lost cause anyway), grab a pop tart or 2, quick cup of tea, stuff the school bag with some half finished English homework and some maths problems I still can't solve and then out the house, with my little sister Laura in tow, for a leisurely walk to the end of the road to wait for the school minibus.

Much hilarity on the bus as we wend our way around Banbury picking up other kids and we arrive at Margaret Fell (later the kiss and drop) to be dropped off for the walk across the playing fields with some mates, up to school. A cursory, mumbled 'see you later' to Laura as we scatter around the school to go to our respective tutor rooms for registration.

Let's take a mid-point; in 2003 I was in Year 10, studying for GCSE's and in Jean Rudge's tutor group. Mrs Rudge was our French and German teacher; nice lady, firm but fair!

Registration done and straight to morning meeting; we all file in, chairs arranged in a massive circle, hoping that whoever is in front of the line for 10JR heads to somewhere at the back. No luck there, as we end up 2 rows from the front.

After meeting, double English (my favourite subject and lesson) with one of

the holy trinity of English teachers that Sibford has to offer: Tracy Knowles, Penny Spring and Maggie Guy. Today, I've got Penny Spring, an absolute saint and all round good egg; calm, encouraging and patient.

Next, just a single lesson of French; thankful for small mercies here as it wasn't, isn't and never will be my strong point!

Bell goes for a 20-minute morning break at 11am. We're a pretty tight group in my year; some of us go to the refectory for a cup of tea and to stash some biscuits for the others, whilst others take a quick run down to Greens with a list to grab some packets of Rolos and Mars Bars (they'll come in handy during double science). We're all still reeling after the closure of the tuck shop opposite Top 86 two years before, no more everlasting aniseed balls for us!

Ok, off to double science in the science block. Who have I got today? Will it be some experiments with Mr Skeath, cutting up beetroot with Mr Newbold perhaps, some horticulture with Mrs Bovill, maybe some graphs with Mrs Usher? It's Skeathy, with his jars of weird suspended animals in unidentified gloop and taxidermy. Today, he lights a strip of magnesium and shows us some owl poo – I am invigorated.



Mad dash to the refectory, chuck our bags anywhere against any wall that happens to have an empty spot available, inside or outside of the building, whatever the weather (we'll get told to stop doing that and move them next meeting, again).

Nominated Sixth Formers guard the side-door (not allowed in through the front door, don't know why) and let us go through in batches to form a queue around the edge of the refectory. Another guards the tray stackers – that'll be me one day, I think, oh the power, the responsibility!

What's for lunch today? Fish in a white sauce, with some peas and mash and a jam flavoured pudding and a cup of water; didn't we have that yesterday? One of the group has got the latest minidisc portable player and is telling us that it took them 3 hours to get 10 songs on one of the discs. We share a headphone; it's Britney Spears, Toxic.

Now for what seems the longest lunch break ever. We spend our time in the underused classroom above the sports hall, flitting from playing Snake on one of the groups Nokia 3310's, climbing up and down the walls in the squash courts and mucking about in the changing rooms; oh to be 16 again.

Straight in to double maths after lunch; that incomplete homework is going to bite me in the behind; I can feel it. However, the maths teacher, Miss Zanibellato has taken a shine to me, not because I'm good at maths but because I, too, have an Italian surname; you have to take the wins when they come along.

Ten-minute break and then double history with AJ Righton (now Mathers). I like history; AJ is sound as a pound, but I think she worries about my attention span. Modern history and me are not easy bedfellows; I much prefer the blood, gore and plague of the medieval times!

There's the bell for the end of the day. Everybody crowds the corridors and we walk down to the kiss and drop to get onto the minibus. My sister gets on and plonks down beside me: 'Good day?' 'Yeah, it was alright' 'Cool'. Now off home for a bit of toast and we'll do it all again tomorrow.

Holly Poncini



OLD SCHOLARS VS SIXTH FORM



On Sunday 31 March 2019, the 'Sixth Form Leadership Team' and SOSA hosted a charity football match in memory of Angus Oakey.

The Sixth Form team battled valiantly against SOSA and also raised funds for CLIC Sargent. A windy but beautiful afternoon saw a wide range of recent scholars return to Sibford to commemorate and remember Angus, a Sibford Sixth Former who died in March 2016 from acute myeloid leukaemia

while still a pupil at the school. Angus's mother and grandmother, alongside CLIC Sargent representatives were in attendance and everyone appreciated the opportunity to meet with Angus's friends and teachers. It was a lovely, and poignant occasion and the sense of community and friendship was evident in

every conversation, every cheer and every donation.

The aim is to make this an annual event, jointly organised by SOSA and the Sixth Form.

Due to the Coronavirus, the match in March this year had to be cancelled unfortunately.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? A FOCUS ON DAVID HOBBS

In 1975 I was sent to Sibford School because it could help me with my dyslexia. I was there until 1978, made a lot of friends, but always hated being away from home.

My dad ran a large farm (1100 acres), although I wanted to go into the RAF as a driver after school, dad said I should work on the farm, so I started full time as soon as I left school, and until 1992, that was my summer.

One day I was in AOL chat and said hello to a girl (Penny) in America. We talked for over a year on AOL or on the phone (yep no Facebook back then). In December 1997 I applied for a visa to go to the US to see her. I needed a birth certificate, so we had to go to Scunthorpe rather than Grantham to get a copy. I asked why, and got the answer that Grantham was full. Mum said she would come for the drive. About halfway there she suddenly said, "By the way, you were adopted". My birth mum died in 1980. I just kept driving, trying to work things out in my head, and how I had never seen it coming.

I went to the US for a two week holiday. We got married in 1998, and I moved to America. Our son, Alex was born in 1999, Cody in 2001 and our daughter Emma in 2003.

Over the years I wondered if I had brothers or sisters. My birth mother's name was on my birth certificate, so I used Facebook, and school friends' groups to search. I found someone on Facebook, and it was like looking in a mirror, he looked just like me. There was a phone number, and where he worked. I thought what's the harm in calling and asking if he had any brothers or sisters, and any brothers that were adopted. I called

before I went to work, the time difference being 6 hours, asked if he was sitting down, and told him the story and that my birth mother had died in 1980. He nearly hung up because my mum, and as it worked out, his mum was very much alive. I had a medical problem at birth, so I sent a copy of my medical records to him to show my mum. It turned out I now have two brothers. We are all friends and keep in touch.

I worked for the State of Wisconsin for the Department Of Natural Resources, but am currently with the Vernon County Highway Department as a patrolman. I plough the snow off my section, which is 52 miles, meaning some long days, sometimes from 4am until 10pm. In 2008 I became a volunteer fireman, a medical first responder in 2009, and a US citizen in 2012. I am now Wheatland Fire Chief and have held that position for three years.

I have always wanted to find old school friends, like Justin and Ruth to name a couple, so I started the 'Sibford School, people who left anytime' Facebook group. Within a week a few people added to it, now there are over 600 members, giving others the chance to keep in touch too.





CHARLOTTE WOWS AT NATIONAL GIRLS' ENGINEERING COMPETITION

Sibford student, Charlotte, came a magnificent second place at the 2019 National Engineering Competition for Girls.

She presented her design at the Big Bang Fair at the National Exhibition Centre where she received her certificate and a £300 prize from BBC science reporter, Marty Jopson.

The competition sponsors, Rolls Royce Aero Engines and Pepsico, also invited Charlotte and the other winners to attend exclusive behind-the-scenes tours.

Tasked with a brief to solve key challenges of the 21st century, Charlotte's prize-winning robot uses tablet computers to provide access to teachers and teaching materials for young people while they undergo hospital treatment. Charlotte developed several prototypes and

wrote extensive computer code in order to produce her demonstrator robot.

Toby Spence said 'We were thrilled by Charlotte's success in this competition. Charlotte is a highly motivated student who brings a 'can do' attitude to all that she does. We know Charlotte to be both creative and tenacious and her award is a tremendous credit for her endeavours. The practical potential of Charlotte's design are significant and we look forward to seeing where her engineering skills take her next.'

Charlotte was also delighted to be approached at the fair by the head of paediatric medicine at a major UK hospital, who would like to explore taking her proof-of-concept into design development.



SIBFORD STUDENTS WALK 102 MILES FOR CYSTIC FIBROSIS TRUST

Sixth Formers Dominic Mills and Henry Burton set off from Bath Abbey in the early hours of the morning on Saturday 6 April 2019 and walked the Cotswold Way, virtually non-stop, through the night all the way to Chipping Campden.

Dominic said 'The walk was great, but very tough. We did end up having to sleep for two hours from 5am until 7am. We finished the walk at 10pm on the Sunday night meaning in total we walked for 37 hours. We did struggle in parts, but we managed to keep going.'

Toby Spence said 'This is a brilliant achievement. I never doubted them, what a remarkable feat of endurance!'

The pair managed to raise over £7,000 for Cystic Fibrosis Trust.



A NOTE FROM THE SCHOOL ARCHIVIST

In 2013, I retired from full-time teaching, having spent the previous 32 years on the staff at Sibford.

In Summer 2019, I was appointed by Toby Spence to take on the role of official School



Archivist. Since that time I have been busy continuing the work which Wendy Finch and Di Howes had started, creating a comprehensive computerised catalogue of the school archive, building on the extraordinary amount of work put in by Mike Finch over many years.

My task is to gather contemporary items which will extend the archive into the 2020s, saving and recording anything which might be of value or interest to future generations of Sibfordians. At the same time, I intend to make the archive more accessible to staff, students, Old Scholars or anyone who has an interest in the history of the school.

Whilst I am making this the principal thrust of my work, a member of the Old Scholars Association will be responsible for gathering material from the annual SOSA gatherings, including the re-union and the committee meetings. This will continue to form an important resource which will be stored in the SOSA section of the archive.

My long-term plan is to make the archive a digital collection, but that will require substantial time and money. In the meantime, I am creating hard copies of any photograph or document as they are requested, in order to make items available without risking damage to, or loss of, valuable and irreplaceable items.

Please let me know if there is anything you would like to know, or if you would like to donate something to the archive.

I can be contacted on
Archivist@sibfordschool.co.uk

CALLING OLD SCHOLARS FROM 1985 - 2000

Zoë Simms, Head of RS at Sibford School is looking for Old Scholars from 1985 - 2000 to take part in her PhD research titled 'An examination of whether exposure to Quaker values at school affects adult character.'

In 2017 I graduated with an MSc in Learning and Teaching from Oxford University. My primary research was 'Religious Education in a Faith School Quaker Setting' and 'Still Education: an examination of Quaker stillness as an active teaching method.'

I have decided to further my Quaker studies by conducting private PhD research at Birmingham University. My question regarding whether exposure to Quaker values at school affects adult character is going to need the help of old scholars from the years 1985-2000, so please ensure that your details with SOSA are up to date, persuade any old scholars to sign up if they have not already done so, and contact me using the details below for more information or to take part.

I am currently in the necessary process of gaining ethical approval from the University and will not be able to reply fully until approval has been received.

In Friendship

Zoë K Simms

PhD Student Birmingham University,
Dept. of Theology and Religion

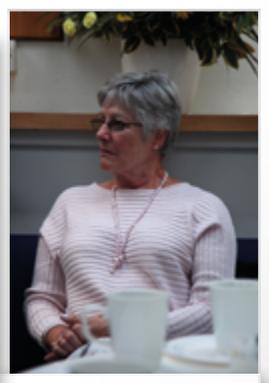
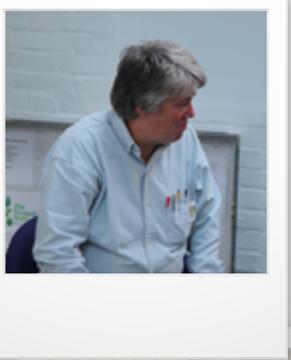
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Zoë Simms, Head of RS

2019 REUNION IN PICTURES





2019 PRESIDENTS REPORT

This year, as with last year, I have tried to establish better links between SOSA and the younger Old Scholars and those soon to become Old Scholars. We have again asked leavers from the last 5 years to Presidential Dinner. They are the future of SOSA after all.

I had lunch with the Sixth Form Leadership Team again, asking them for their input; this resulted in SOSA paying for tea after an afternoon of football matches between the school and recent Old Scholars, celebrating the life of their friend Angus Oakey and raising some money for CLIC Sargent.

This year Ali Bromhall left the school, so we welcome Harriet Canavan who, although won't have all the same responsibilities, is involved with the link between us and the school. Ali edited the Rocket again for us last year, another great magazine, and did a lot of invisible incidentals that we are very grateful for, too. The committee decided to award her Honorary Life Membership, which she accepted.

The committee loses Margaret Shelley; thank you Margaret for all your help and support. We have gained Peter Robinson, co-opted to cover the Treasurers post.

I would like to thank the committee members for their continued support of SOSA over this last year.

We have been discussing the possibility of sharing a small part of the school website. It is felt that as we in SOSA are a product of the school, there could be more interaction in this way. We are now on a more sound financial footing with a fairly consistent income every year, so it's worth looking at ways of getting the SOSA word out there.

I have enjoyed my second year as your President, still getting to know the school again, and trying to encourage the younger Old Scholars, thank you all.

Harriet Langridge

TOBY SPENCE SOSA SPEECH

15 JUNE 2019

On Thursday 13th June 2019, an email arrived in my inbox, which included a gem of a story. It started thus;

Fifty years ago I got lost in the Sahara Desert. A Tuareg nomad rode out of the mirage and rescued me. He took me to his people, goes into a tiny hut and reappears with two sticks and a cassette player. He rubs the sticks together - makes a fire. We have a nice cup of tea. Then he turns the cassette player on and Bob Dylan sings "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall"

The author of said remarkable words is an Old Scholar and former Head Boy of Sibford School who left around 1964. He was writing to the school inviting us to consider taking part in an art exhibition which draws attention to environmental issues from the perspectives of school children. It is a hard hitting exhibition which has been seen by over 15 million people. We were contacted by this individual to see if we would be interested in playing a part. Given the support we have given to the recent School Strike for Climate Change and similar themes the response has

been a most positive one from us!

If anything was going to illustrate how I see the school / Old Scholar relationship it would be stories like this.

We have been challenged of late to consider the relationship between Old Scholars and the school. To my mind there should be no need for a 'relationship' between the school and Old Scholars as we are essentially different faces of the same body. We have beautiful grounds and good facilities – but it is the community and shared experience of Sibford School which binds us together. This community will be diverse, there will be those who loved their time at school, and those who did not; those who excelled academically and those who had different gifts and talents. Indeed, there will be those who do not wish to be part of the Old Scholars' Association for reasons which might be entirely personal to them. We must respect that decision also.

Because SOSA has its own, identifiable aims we should look to those who hold

positions of responsibility within the organisation to uphold and drive the positive and unifying agenda of responsible leadership. Although there have been changes in the constitution over time (I note that in 2009 the Constitution was changed to ensure that SOSA was more closely connected to the school). Mike Finch recorded in 'A View from the Hill' that the support [of SOSA] for the school has been enormous. I hope that we will continue to work closely together to achieve our common aims.

SOSA's main aims were established in 1903, they have not changed since:

- (a) to foster interaction between former scholars and staff and present day pupils and staff; [such as sharing stories about getting lost in the desert]
- (b) to further school day friendships;
- (c) to enjoy the mutual benefits that can arise through a sustained relationship with the school and former scholars;

- d) to encourage a spirit of loyalty amongst present scholars;
- (e) to assist the further development of the school.

If we are to have a re-appraisal and refresh (which I welcome) I would suggest that the natural action would be to ask whether we feel the aims are still appropriate and then, once agreed, to build a plan to ensure the most successful approach to the fulfilment of these aims.

It has been a pleasure to work alongside members of SOSA who share a common vision of growth and positivity for SOSA. Reaching out to a wider, sometimes younger, generation of Old Scholars will be critical. There is no need for division or an 'us and them' approach for, as I learned at Bootham, *Membra sumus corporis magni* - we are all part of a greater body. If individuals choose to step out from SOSA that is absolutely their reasonable decision to make. What I would add is that we are always open to listening to and addressing concerns and indeed complaints if they arise.

In school news we are in good shape despite all sorts of challenges for a school like ours to tackle. We are a body of over 400 pupils and 100+ staff. Boarding

numbers have levelled out at around 50 full boarders with many more who 'flexi' board. We have moved from 3 to 4 form entry in Year 7 (the start of Senior School) – this bodes well for the future and is a nod to more parents moving towards the values and approach to education that we espouse. Our A level results were some of the best on record last year but we are most proud of our pupils who have achieved success in their own particular manner. We continue to develop our holistic approach to education with a great deal of success in music, drama and sport. Our new climbing wall is proving very popular (do come and see it) – it adds another dimension to our broad offer. Amongst our pupils we have national champions in swimming, triathlon and equestrian sport. Our school production in 2020 will be *Les Misérables*.

In terms of staff there have been four significant changes in relation to Old Scholars. Ally Lynch has arrived as our new Business Manager. She has been a breath of fresh air with the professionalism, honesty and integrity she brings to the team. Harriet Canavan has joined our ranks in the (newly created) role of Marketing Manager – she is a great addition to the staff and she is looking forward to working closely with SOSA

on a number of levels. One of her key areas of focus will be how we achieve point (c) of the SOSA aims. Finally Nikki Homewood has stepped into the breach of Community Development Officer as Ali Bromhall moved on to pastures new. A warm and deeply caring professional, she is already proving to be a 'can do' colleague. Finally I am pleased to announce that Mike Spring a former staff member (and Old Scholars' Committee member) has become our school archivist. He has many ideas for taking the archives forward. I hope you will get to meet them and say hello soon.

It was a pleasure to welcome back so many Old Scholars to our charity football match (in aid of Clic Sargent and in memory of Angus Oakey) in March. The warmth and affection from former pupils, staff and parents was a great pleasure to be part of. I don't remember who won the tournament – it was about much more than the sport.

Thank you for coming back to school this damp summer! You are all most welcome and I look forward to hearing more stories and sharing more experiences in the days and years ahead

Toby Spence
Head

PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

15 JUNE 2019

Thank you all for being here. Again we have Old Scholars from both ends of the scale, it is wonderful to see you all, especially the younger Old Scholars. You are the future of SOSA, and I hope that we can make more effort to involve you.

As this is my second time of doing this, I thought I'd go off on a bit of a tangent! So, this is my take on the love hate relationship we (I) have with technology. As I sit writing this on my computer, I have *Vanity Fair* playing on iPlayer radio, whilst charging several other batteries for various 'can't live without' gadgets. I worked out the other day that if we're at home, there are 7 ways of people being able to speak to us (including landlines), another 5 or so ways of sending a written message (including the post), and the last resort - knocking on the front door!

I actually rang an Old Scholar to speak to her about the reunion the other day on the landline due to the fact that she doesn't do all the technology! So, with all this technology we have several problems, I think. In communications there is firstly either narrowing down the methods (gadgets or programs) that we use. Sometimes keeping an eye on where messages are can take over - as can checking for the unexpected ones! Alternatively, you can choose to ignore all until a later time. The biggest trouble with all this is if one person wants an answer straight away, and the recipient leaves things until later, or even asks on one platform, and gets an answer on another. So, is this

technology all it's cracked up to be? Well, the answer to that has to be yes... but perhaps our methods of employing it needs thinking about. I'm all for communication, after all, "It's good to talk", but not running round trying to find out how someone's tried to get hold of you!

So, communications are one thing, but then we have other technology uses...

We go out shopping, and use a handheld scanner... it could be argued (and perhaps justifiably so) that is putting checkout bods out of a job - but in all the years we have been using it we have noticed that the amount of open checkouts is roughly the same... plus how on earth would the supermarkets get the right money off vouchers to you if you didn't use them? We love it because we get on very well with the staff that look after the scanner till. And we've named the tills themselves Tom, Dick, and Harry, making a mundane task a little humorous.

I like to shock the youngsters in the pub we use by using contactless payments with my card... I still get raised eyebrows a couple of years on from first getting them, but love the mickey taking that goes with it. Of course if we go completely cashless, all that will change. It was a first for me to be able to pay by card in the middle of a field recently, but still didn't feel right really. Then there's us folk who don't feel it's right to pay for a low-cost item of say a couple of pounds with a card anyway.

Now we come back to mobile phones - we have friends (yes we're back to the 24 yr olds again!) who have never known life without a mobile phone... they use them for everything - ordering and paying for stuff, general internet access, with apps for just about everything.

We see others arrive as a group in the pub, sit at a table and get their phones out, order a drink, and then sit there, not conversing but twiddling their phones. And this seems to be the norm!

Now I have to confess, I do like my mobile phone because I can make calls on it. I have, amongst other apps, a crumbly finder for days out, a weather app (which sometimes disappoints) a radio player, a talking books app (lovely when I'm mowing a lawn) even a magazine app, but my favourite of all my apps is one I don't use very often. It's a timer for when I do long exposure photography, and if I'm honest, I'm probably at my happiest when it's in use. But I can always refer to my paper copy as a backup!

So, how many of you name your satnav? It's one piece of technology that I find really infuriating. Ours is called Agatha. We shout at it on a regular basis when we use it, but because we don't use it for every trip we do, thankfully that's not very often. The real question about these is why do folk who have been using maps and common sense for years suddenly rely on these gadgets so heavily? Useful when you're going to a place for the first time, but not for every repeat journey surely?

So, technology... I love the fact that you have enabled us to keep in touch, get to strange places easily and give me the confidence to take some really interesting photos, but I don't like you because I feel like I should be constantly checking you to see who might be needing my attention...

Thank you all for making my two years as President interesting, challenging, and above all enjoyable.

Harriet
President



ABRIDGED GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2019

Committee

At last year's AGM we elected Paul Roberts as Treasurer. Unfortunately, Paul was unable to undertake this role and so the Committee co-opted Peter Robinson as his replacement.

As Harriet has already mentioned the Committee has been considering ways in which the Association can work closer with the School. We are therefore proposing that a new position be created of School Liaison Secretary. Harriet, in her role of President, has already begun to progress closer ties with the School and I hope that you will also choose to elect her into this new role later in this meeting.

Ali Bromhall had been elected as SOSA's Honorary Magazine Editor. The Committee are therefore proposing that the new School Liaison Secretary would also be responsible for co-editing the Rocket along with the School.

SOSC

Although donations are far down on what the Trustees would have hoped for there is currently about £17,000 available to help prospective and current pupils.

Membership

Last autumn Holly sent out a letter asking members to confirm their addresses. This exercise proved what I have long thought, that the active membership of SOSA is far less than the 1,300ish that has been reported on in the past. A more likely figure is 500-600. In particular, those pupils who have left in the last 15 years, generally failed to reply. It was also noticeable that few replies were received from this same age group to the survey that I recently sent out.

Survey

As concerns the survey about 50 people replied. I have attempted to summarise the replies and this summary is available on the SOSA website.

TREASURERS REPORT 2019

Background

Firstly I would like to thank Ashley for providing me with a working spreadsheet which has made the production of the accounts somewhat easier than it might have been having picked things up at year end. The accounts have been prepared in the well-recognised format with the activity for the year showing on the income and expenditure sheet and the balance sheet showing the current financial position at year end which, for the purpose of these accounts, is 31st March 2019.

Results – Income and Expenditure

The accounts show a healthy surplus of £9,550 for the year. However, this figure is somewhat misleading as £6,340 of the annual subscriptions relate to the 2017/18 year which was received after the production of last year's accounts. A fairer reflection of the figures is that there was an excess income over expenditure for the year ended 31/3/18 of £1,157 rather than a loss of £5,183 and that the excess for the year ended 31/3/19 is £3,205. Additionally, there is £1,519.66 due to the school for the 2018 reunion and the 2018 Rocket postage so reducing this surplus to £1,685.

A donation of £1,000 was made in support of the climbing wall.

This leaves a total £10,496 in the current account and £9,702 in the deposit account and it is proposed that a sum of £5,100 is transferred to the deposit account made up of amounts made in surpluses in the previous three years.

LIVES REMEMBERED

DOROTHY JUNE ELLIS

1926 – 2019

I first met June in 1974 when I started my teaching career at Sibford. June was Deputy Head at the time and had previously been a teacher of Biology. As a Biologist myself, we seemed to 'click' from the very start and we formed a friendship which lasted for the rest of her lifetime.

I have read various quotes about June and, perhaps the most common thread is to describe her as having been a kind, caring and generous-hearted person who had a positive influence on so many people, both pupils and colleagues.

Among the many comments from Sibford old Scholars is that June "ran a tight ship" – this idea reminds me of my own experiences with regard to June and her dogs. Whilst out dog-walking, June had the uncanny knack of finding people in the wrong place at the wrong time (myself included) but a simple comment together with June's famous "disapproving look" would quickly defuse the situation and one always thought – O.K. Fair Cop!

I worked closely with June both as a teacher and as an assistant Housemaster and I benefited enormously from her support. I kept in touch with June whilst she was Head

of the Mount School in York and saw her from time to time when she came down to stay at her house in Swerford during school holidays. June was a very good friend of Tony Rye, a colleague at Sibford, and I was with Tony when he died in April 1990. I had the unfortunate task of letting June know what had happened and they were sad times.

I saw quite a bit of June following her retirement and spent many happy hours cutting her grass and trimming hedges at her cottage. I have been to numerous social events with June – both at the Swerford Village Hall and further afield – one thing I shall always remember is the way in which June would never allow anyone to sit quietly in a corner, even if they wanted to!

Sadly, as June's illness progressed, I saw less and less of her because I was caring for my mother up in Morecambe. I did see her occasionally and we were able to talk quite frankly about her changing physical condition. June showed remarkable stoicism. I have valued our friendship over the 45 years I have known her and she will be sadly missed.

Tony Skeath



ARTHUR WILLIAM HARRISON

1923 - 2020

Born in Bradford in September 1923, Arthur attended Sibford School for 4 years from 1934 to 1938. He later returned to Sibford, to work at the school and became a very active member of SOSA.

Arthur's connection with Sibford spanned his entire life. As a schoolboy, Arthur resided in Littleboy dormitory. Roland Herbert was the woodwork master, Arnold Darlington the science teacher and Gladys Burgess the Headmaster.

In 1938, Arthur's younger brother Leslie was sent to Sibford. The family couldn't afford to fund both boys, Arthur left and went to technical school.

When he was about 16, Arthur cycled from his home in Northampton to Stratford on Avon. He and a friend, Will Yeomans, went to see a play at the Shakespeare theatre. Arthur decided he would like to work at the theatre and wrote to them asking for a job. He was successful and quickly became a stage electrician and assistant to the engineer. It was 1939, the second world war had begun. In his late teens, as a conscientious objector, Arthur, was required to appear before a tribunal committee. He was excused from military service on the grounds that his work at the theatre was a reserved occupation, entertaining the people.

In the late 1940's Arthur returned to Sibford school, employed for general maintenance. His skills lay in his hands, Arthur could fix, make, adjust, assemble absolutely anything. In his early retirement, Arthur built two narrow gauge steam engines. Meticulously, fabricating each and every piece by hand. To this day, his great grandchildren enjoy riding

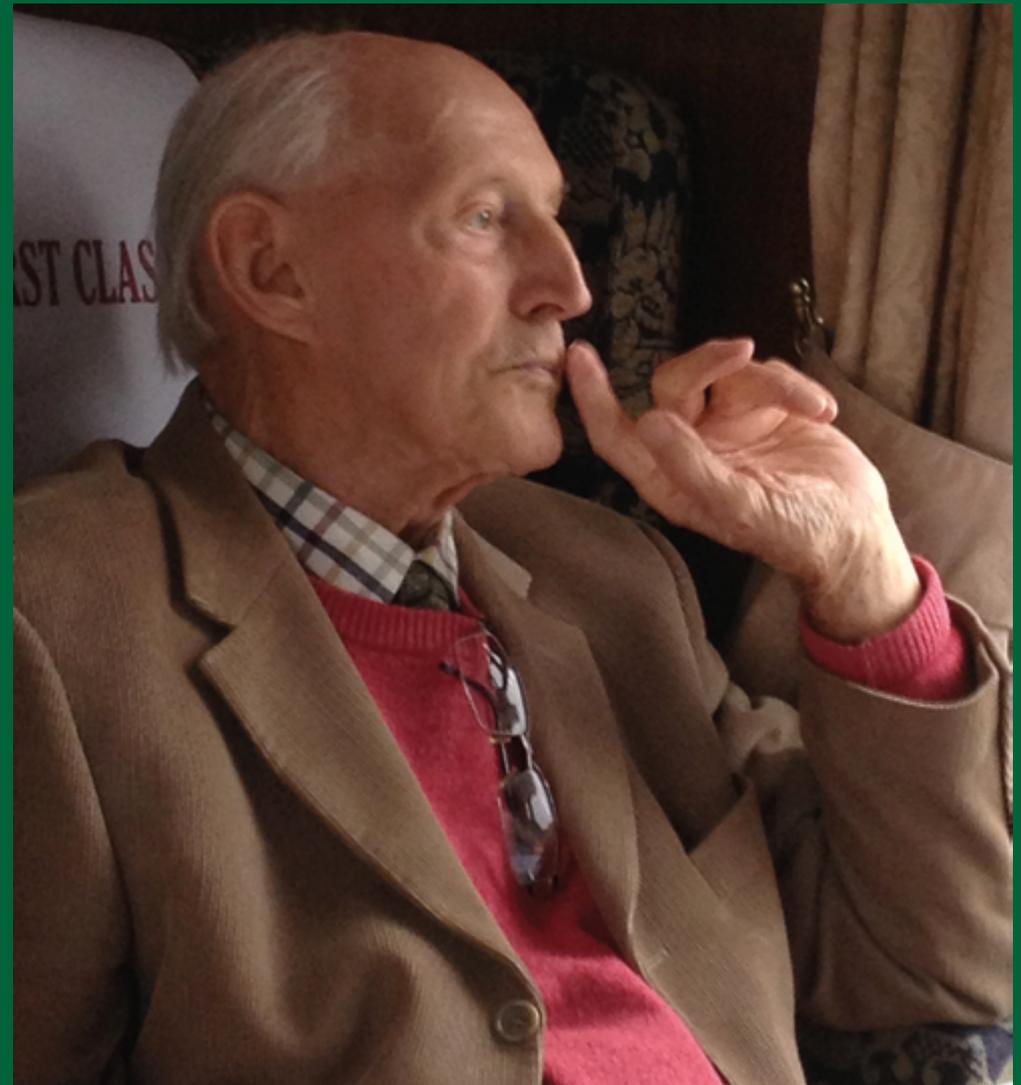
on the back of one of his steam engines.

Arthur met Pamela Jewitt while they were both working at Sibford School. Pamela was in the San. She and Arthur were married in 1951 and made their home at Barn Close in Burdrop. While at Barn Close, Arthur and Pamela had four children. Philippa, Rosamund, Nicholas and David all attended the village Primary School. Philippa, also attended Sibford School. In 1962 the family moved from Barn Close to a school house at Hillfield.

The Harrison family was an integral part of the life and times of Sibford for almost 20 years. And Sibford was for them a magical place as they attended Meeting and Sunday School, shopped at Green's and Gina's Wool shop, took the bus to Shipston and Banbury, went sledging in Canning's field, swam in the school pool, bonfire nights, walking to the Elm for Rockets and attending Old Scholars reunions. Unbeknownst to many, Arthur built a house in Sibford Gower, the bungalow beside the village hall.

In 1967, Arthur left his position at Sibford for a post at Leighton Park School in Reading. The connection with SOSA continued as Arthur and Pamela always attended the annual reunion at Sibford and events held elsewhere. Arthur sat on the school committee.

A lifelong Friend, Arthur was a quiet and humble man who without fanfare conducted his life with integrity. His talents were exceptional. If you needed anything to be done, just ask Arthur. Both Arthur and Pamela were involved for a number of years with the Quaker tapestry. Following Pamela's death Arthur moved to Yorkshire



where he regularly attended Beverley Meeting. Well into his 90's, Arthur lived independently and kept up to date with events at Sibford via The Rocket and The Friend.

In 2017, Arthur and 14 members of his family met for a few days in Sibford. They stayed at Holmby House, revisited familiar places and created new memories.

Arthur passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 4, 2020 as a result of contracting Covid 19. A celebration of his life will be held later in the year when all the family, some of whom live in North America, are able to attend. Arthur's wife Pamela and her parents are buried at Sibford Meeting and his ashes will join them.

SYLVIA A. WARREN

1924 - 2019

Sylvia was born in Bradford in 1924, daughter of a Methodist minister. She attended Goldsmith's College during the 2nd World War and graduated in Fine Art. After several teaching posts in East Anglia and Lincolnshire, she took up a post as art teacher at Sibford School, and spent the rest of her life in the Banbury area.

After Sibford, Sylvia's last teaching post was at Southam School, where she taught for several years until her worsening aural impairment caused her to seek early retirement.

She continued to lead a full life during her retirement. She had a very strong faith and studied for the Local Preacher's exams. After qualifying, she regularly took services in Methodist churches and in a variety of ecumenical settings.

She was a regular member of Wigginton Methodist Church and, when she moved to Milcombe in 1983, of the Parish Church of St Lawrence.

She continued with her artwork, spending a very productive time painting, mainly in watercolors, undertaking commissions, attending life classes and exhibiting

regularly during Oxford Art Weeks. She held regular art classes for adults and lead an art holiday in the Brecon Beacons for several years. Never idle, when not preparing sermons, or working on art-related projects, she was busy in the garden, sewing, reading, walking her dogs or participating in one or another aspect of village life.

Very much an animal lover, she always owned one or two dogs, and had several cats over the years. Into her late eighties, she could be seen slowly wending her way around the village with her last border terrier, Annie.

When her failing mobility and eyesight became bothersome, in addition to her hearing, and she could no longer paint or read, she continued to get out and about with the help of good friends and volunteers. She spent her final fifteen months in Godswell House in Bloxham, making the best she could of activities on offer, and despite her failing faculties, remained positive to the last.



OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 2019/20

PRESIDENT



David Sadrzhan [31/7/20]
SOSA.President1903

GENERAL SECRETARY



Julie Greenhill (co-opted)
[31/7/22]
SOSA.General.Secretary1903

VICE PRESIDENT & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY



Holly Poncini [31/7/20]
SOSA.Vice.President1903
SOSA.Membership.Secretary1903

RETIRING PRESIDENT, SCHOOL LIAISON SECRETARY & ROCKET EDITOR



Harriet Langridge [31/7/22]
SOSA.Retiring.President1903
SOSA.Rocket.Editor1903
SOSA.School.Liaison.Secretary1903

TREASURER
Peter Robinson
SOSA.Treasurer1903

[31/7/21]

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE
SOSA.School.Committee.Rep1903

[31/12/22]

SOSA COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Edd Frost
[31/7/22]



Tom Williams
[31/7/21]



Annie Broe
[31/7/20]



Margaret Shelley (co-opted)
[31/7/22]

SCHOOL MEMBERS



Toby Spence
Head

2020 COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Interested in supporting old and present students of Sibford School? Want to share your experiences with others of the 'good ol' days'? Are you looking to connect with old friends and have the opportunity to make new ones?

We have some vacancies on the Sibford Old Scholars Association committee in 2020 including General Secretary, Membership Secretary, Reunion Secretary and 2 Committee Member positions.

If you're interested in any of these opportunities and would like to chat to one of us about what is involved please send us an email. We look forward to hearing from you!

*Please note that all email address end in @gmail.com

NEW OLD SCHOLARS

We would like to give a huge welcome to SOSA to last years leaver's, and hope to see them at future events:

Year 11 Leavers:

Hannah
Victoria
Timmy
Archie
Finn
Althea
Sam
Peter
Meghan
Ned
Rebecca
George
Jack
Leon
Jason

Year 13 Leavers:

Benedict
Fergus
Alastair
James
Henry
MingJing
George
Rowena
David
Edward
Tom
Sophie
Samuel
Yutaka
Max
Charlotte

Emily
Liliana
Dominic
Iain
Deng (Pan)
Tavi
George
Harry
Sam
Reuben
Amelia
George
Eve
Clayton
Kejin