



# FRIENDS' SCHOOL

SAFFRON WALDEN

OLD SCHOLARS' MAGAZINE 2013

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Friends' School, 1879



Reunion Dinner on 11th May 2013

# From the Editor

Elisabeth Ring

Dear all,

I hope you enjoyed a great summer and stocked up on plenty of sunshine to get through the colder and darker months of the year relaxed and refreshed

As Richard Gilpin retired after six years of dedicated work as the editor of the Old Scholars' Magazine, I stood in to create an interim magazine for this autumn and we are planning to create a combined School and Old Scholars' magazine in the future.

## A date for your diary

The next Annual Reunion will take place at Friends' School on Saturday 10th May 2014 and will coincide with the School's Friends and Families Day. The AGM will also take place on this day. As usual we will be encouraging those who are turning 60 and 50 in this coming year to meet up i.e. those in the 1972 and 1982 Years Groups, but all Old Scholars are warmly invited to attend events.



I would like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks for helping me with this task to Kirsten Batcheler, Martin Hugall and Tony Watson. Without their advice and support, this edition would not have been possible.

Also, I would like to thank all those Old Scholars who have responded so kindly to my request for contributions. I am sure you will find the variety of their stories and memories as interesting and enjoyable to read, as I have.

This magazine is slimmer than previous editions and some of the material such as AGM minutes and lists of staff, governors and past presidents can be found on the School or Old Scholars' websites [www.friends.org.uk](http://www.friends.org.uk) and [www.oldscholars.com](http://www.oldscholars.com).

**For the next edition, we would be delighted if you kept in touch and could send all your news to [oldscholars@friends.org.uk](mailto:oldscholars@friends.org.uk), or post them to The Old Scholars, Friends' School, Saffron Walden, CB11 3EB.**

Warm regards

Elisabeth Ring



# From the President

**Clare Thompson (née Parry) 1974-1981**

**Clare Thompson (Parry) YG 1981 takes over the Presidency from Richard Haw YG 1980 at the AGM on Saturday 11th May 2013.**

It seems a life time ago that my parents little mustard coloured Citroen chugged its way up the impressive drive at FSSW in September 1974 to start my next stage of schooling. I still hadn't learnt how to get out of the car carrying school bags while wearing the great big heavy green capes with red linings that were part of our uniform, so it was not the most elegant of arrivals. (gosh how I hated that cape!)

It all seemed so big and overpowering after my little village school of 50 pupils in total, but typically one soon adjusts and the girl with two blond pigtailed began to find her feet. Perhaps this is one of the special things about FSSW, you are made to feel part of something the instant you make contact with one of the 'residents'. The majority of the school were boarders so being a day scholar could have made one feel left out, but not here. As I progressed through the school I spent more and more out of hours time with friends boarding, until eventually even Sundays as one of our duties in 6/2 (upper 6) was to attend Evening Meeting and marshal Sunday

lunch queue.....I think that has all well and truly changed!

I was never a scholar and the academic world was never going to be me. On several occasions I was called a "crenelated cough drop" by the wonderful Cyril Mummery (funny how you remember such crazy things!) but the great thing about FSSW was that it always found something where you could fit in, even if not at the top level; you belonged. Perhaps out of all the things I learnt at the school was that being top isn't everything but you can still play your part. For me the games fields, art room and water tower where we did pottery, were more my cup of tea rather than a black board and class room, and goodness we were spoilt with these.

Wednesday and Saturday afternoons the front drive looked more like an Ealing Studio's black and white film like St Tinian's, as coaches piled up either to take the many teams to various schools or deliver those coming to take us on. These would be followed by match teas consisting of vast metal jugs of various strength tea and cakes from the local bakers of the time, Millers (also the saving grace to many hungry boarders who would dash down to the shop for a bag of 'stalies'(stale cakes) for 10p at

the end of the trading day!) and a lot of banter with the opposition.

School plays also became a major event in my calendar.....no I was never made to walk the boards but with encouragement from Phil Richardson I got involved back stage and was hugely honoured to be part of the amazing production of OH WHAT A LOVELY WAR, directed by Brian Gatward. Sweating away back stage with costumes etc Ann Foxley and I would sing along to all the numbers being performed in front of the curtain, and to this day the poppy means so much to me as I do our local door to door collection and hum along to the tunes ready for Remembrance Day.

Staff obviously played an important role and it was another special aspect of FSSW that this did not just mean teaching staff, I am sure many will remember Bill Jarvis, one of the grounds staff and incredibly important to the possibly homesick new boarder as he was always so chatty and caring towards them as were so many of the staff that cleaned and cooked for us all.

These are the sort of memories and experiences that FSSW gave me, not always easy ones and not always a huge success, but ones that gave me some of the most fabulous friends a person could ever wish for.

I was asked what I would like to achieve in this role with the Old Scholars; two come to mind.

- 1) to get back in touch with more of the many wonderful people I spent so much time with at school.
- 2) to encourage the present scholars at the school to retain links with Saffron Walden; the amount of friends I have who know nothing of school chums, and certainly don't seem to ever talk fondly of school days, I feel we were in some ways very privileged or possibly lucky too. At a reunion of our year those who were possibly a bit more mischievous than others, held equally fond memories, and boy did we have fun recalling some of the stories too!

Time moved on and after a variety of jobs and stages in one's life, (a very special one being

my marriage to Pete) yes you have it.....I am still in Saffron Walden, now coaching triathlon and working in a local gym, taking out running groups trying to make them believe they can achieve a goal they may have thought impossible etc and also doing a few crazy challenges myself to fund raise for a charity close to my heart. A combination of the above took me last year to a very special event as I had the honour to carry the Olympic Torch in Saffron Walden. Mr Smith (games master in my day), I have to thank you for making me train for the shot put all those years ago as my left arm had no trouble carrying the torch above head height the whole way so all could see it.

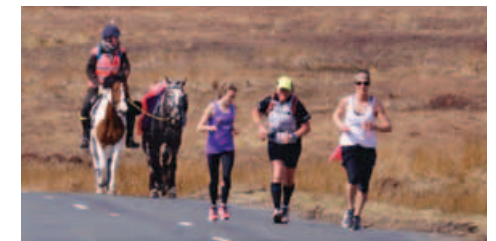
My year are all having their 50th birthdays over these next months and even though we are getting that little bit longer in the tooth I know when we meet up it seems that it was only yesterday after all, when we were chatting by the 'Res', or packing our kit for the holidays.

I hope some of these memories may jolt a few for others too.

At this point I would like to take the opportunity to wish all my year and all other OS present and ones to come, all the very best for the coming year. If any one feels inspired to get in touch I do hope they will (I don't think I am very frightening!)

A big hug

**Clare**



**The fifth and last day of coast to coast 192 miles with the team encouraging Clare on including present day scholar from FSSW.**

# Carrying a torch for Friends'

By Katherine Wiseman



Clare carrying the Olympic Torch through Saffron Walden

**Clare Thompson (née Parry) talks about her recent experience as an Olympic torch bearer, and about the debt she owes to Friends'.**

Clare Thompson, athlete, personal trainer, President of the Old Scholars' Association and Olympic Torch bearer is a bit like a torch herself. She glows with energy and goodwill. When I met her it was only two weeks since she had fulfilled her duties as an Olympic torch bearer for Saffron Walden, and she was still buzzing with excitement.

'I was very lucky,' she says, with the modesty that seems typical of her, 'to be nominated by several different groups'. Among these, and in no particular order, were a lady's running group, a triathlon club, a blind gentleman whom she had coached in running, a family of past and current Friends' scholars and her nephew.

Clare was unaware of these multiple nominations until she received an email

asking if she would be willing to accept her nomination. She replied in the affirmative, firmly expecting to hear nothing more about it. Indeed, she very nearly did hear nothing more about it. 'I don't like computers,' she explains, 'and I'm pretty tardy at checking my emails. I heard nothing for weeks and then was surprised by a text from Coca-Cola, one of the sponsors of the torch-bearers, asking if I was still interested. Apparently they'd emailed me a few weeks ago to find out more about me and I hadn't replied. I had to confess that I hadn't even picked up their message!'

Then, on the 8th December, the day before Clare's birthday, she received another text from Coca-Cola, congratulating her on being provisionally accepted as a torch bearer. 'When I got home,' she remembers, 'there was a small box waiting for me, which

had come in the post. When I opened it, it contained a hologram of a running torch bearer, complete with his torch which bobbed as he ran. It was an amazing feeling, seeing that'.

The hardest thing was to maintain strict secrecy while stringent security checks were carried out. Clare sailed through these and it was only three days before the public announcement of the identities of the runners that she found that she would definitely be one of those elite few. 'I was still sworn to secrecy,' she recalls 'and that was really hard because I wanted to tell everyone! The announcements were made on a Monday morning, and when I got to work that day at 7am, and found two local reporters waiting for me, I realised that the news was out and I could finally talk about it'.

Before the Big Day she attended training sessions at the district council offices. There was a lot to learn. How to get out of the official bus, the correct way to hold the torch and what to do if the torch went out, were some of the topics covered that demonstrate the meticulousness of the planning that went into the event. The most important piece of advice imparted was, says Clare, 'not to rush my run. For three hundred metres I was THE Olympic torch bearer. I was told to go slowly, to make the most of the occasion and to make sure that I could be seen'.

In the lead up to the day, Clare admits to a not unsurprising feeling of butterflies in her stomach. 'I was terribly nervous,' she remembers. 'I knew all eyes would be on me, and I didn't want to let anyone down'.

Fast forward to the Big Day. The rain came down in torrents, but this didn't deter the people of Saffron Walden, who came out in droves to see the passing of the Olympic torch. One of Clare's abiding memories of the day is of the 'sea of faces' watching her. 'They looked so kind and so warm, even in the terrible weather'. The 'amazing' volume of the noises of encouragement made by the spectators is another thing that she will

never forget. 'I felt like I was floating,' she reminisces, 'people came up to me afterwards and told me that I looked so happy!' Taking the advice imparted during her training sessions seriously, Clare made a point of progressing slowly, making frequent stops to allow children to hold the torch. Eventually, the security guards, whom she describes as 'great - very professional' had to ask her to speed up!



A question that Clare is frequently asked is whether she will sell her torch. Her answer is adamant: 'Never. It would be an insult to the people who nominated me'. Another topic of curiosity is where she keeps it. 'In my office, where I work on exercise programmes. It sits with my school hockey colours'. The torch has made frequent trips to primary schools – about ten in the couple of weeks that had passed between her big day and our meeting – where she is happy for children (and adults) to hold it and be photographed with it. 'It was, quite simply, one of the most memorable days of my life – a day I'll never forget. And I know that Friends' School played an enormous part making it happen'.

Clare has nothing but praise for the school and her association with it goes back a long way. Her mother, the much-loved Mrs Parry,

was a House Matron (and surrogate mother) for Gibson House for over thirty years. Clare joined the school in 1974 and spent a very happy seven years as a 'boarder without sleeping there'. In the days when the vast majority of the students were boarders, she was one of a small number of day students.

'I owe the school a huge amount,' she says. 'I wasn't in the least academic. I'm sure my parents used to dread parents' evenings. But Friends' is a school that sticks with you. I'd never have managed to get A-levels at another school, and they were quick to bring out my enjoyment of sport. I ended up as captain of various teams, girls' games captain and Head Girl'. Clare also spent six very happy years as a Classroom Assistant in the Junior School, taking special pleasure in building the sets for numerous school plays. 'They were great,' she says. 'I used to love watching some of the shyest children in the school come out of themselves on stage. It seemed to typify what makes Friends' such a unique school: that ability to recognise the best in everyone. It means that people who come out of Friends' are always interesting and usually very nice'.

While studying at Friends', the students were asked to raise money to put towards the purchase of the school's first mini-bus. Typically, Clare's method for doing so involved sport. A lot of sport. Fundraisers undertook a long bike ride, a twenty mile walk, a marathon and a swim the equivalent of crossing the Channel. Clare obviously found some enjoyment in these gruelling

events, because she went on to participate in numerous other, equally arduous events. In fact she is still doing so. One of many recent events in which she participated was the 2009 Norseman Challenge, a punishing test of strength and endurance which involved jumping off a ferry into a Norwegian fjord at five in the morning, swimming several kilometres to shore, then cycling 180 kilometres across several mountains and running a full marathon carrying a heavy back pack (part of the route was up Norway's highest mountain). For added fun, there were time limits for reaching various points along the route. Fail to reach them on time and you are sent off with a pat on the back and a white t-shirt as a consolation prize. A white t-shirt means that you tried and failed.

Astonishingly, there are people who manage to complete all the stages within the allotted time, and to complete the event still breathing. For this they are awarded a coveted black t-shirt. Needless to say, Clare came home with a black t-shirt.

When not performing seemingly impossible feats of sporting endurance (Clare describes her attitude to sport as 'more of a cart horse than a stallion. I'm not a sprinter!'), she finds time to work in a local gym, and to coach local children and a triathlon club. She also agreed to take on the role of President of the Old Scholars. No doubt she will bring to the role her own unique brand of enthusiasm and goodwill. Watch this space...



# The May Reunion



▲ The girls and boys of the 1982 Year Group in 1978 (forms 5x and 5y)

◀ The 6ii girls of the 1971 Year Group in 1970

As in previous years this year's reunion was held on the School's Friends and Families Day, Saturday 11th May 2013. This year the 1971 and 1981 Year Groups celebrating their 60th and 50th birthdays were encouraged to attend this year's reunion. It was an excellent opportunity to see the School in action, to meet and exchange news and fond memories of Friends'. This year also presented the chance to visit the splendid new Junior School buildings. The main meeting point was the Library, but the front lawn, around the cricket pitch, as well as a local pub, were also very popular. After a vintage tea party on the front lawn there was the chance to attend the AGM in the Library, followed by the Reunion Dinner in the Dining Hall. Many Old Scholars especially from this year's reunion Year Groups of '71 and '81 had a very enjoyable afternoon and evening, watching the cricket,

meeting not only with their former fellow pupils but also with present pupils, parents and staff.

The next Annual Reunion will take place at Friends' School on Saturday 10th May 2014 and will coincide with the Schools' Friends and Families Day. The AGM will also take place on this day. As usual we will be encouraging those who are turning 60 and 50 in this coming year to meet up i.e. those in the 1972 and 1982 Years Groups. We do need volunteers from these Year Groups to help to get in contact with their former class mates - please email [oldscholars@friends.org.uk](mailto:oldscholars@friends.org.uk) if you might be able to help or to find out more.

**Also if you would like to see more photos, please see the Old Scholars' website [www.oldscholars.com](http://www.oldscholars.com).**

# Old Scholars' Cricket Match on Friends and Families Day 2013

By Nick Batcheler

The annual Old Scholars cricket match took place once again on a very overcast and cold mid May day. No surprise there then.

The Old Scholars could only muster a few players such as Tom Dickinson, Chester Hawkins, Bobby McCarthy, Stephen Douglas and Joe Bloomfield so resident hockey coach and pace bowler extraordinaire filled the void with the help of young pupils Felix Hannam and Joshua Batcheler.

The all important toss was won by home team captain Ray Mordini and without hesitation he decided to bat first. Some tight bowling from openers Chester Hawkins and Stephen Douglas followed but Mordini and Sam Winfield negotiated the eight overs without any real problems. The Old Scholars' captain introduced spin with Bobby McCarthy and the run rate picked up with Mordini playing some enterprising shots around the ground. He was finally retired just two runs short of his half century by umpire Nick Batcheler who wasn't prepared to give him the glory of reaching his fifty. Leg spin was introduced, and year eight student Josh Batcheler quickly had opener Sam Winfield out, caught for 15, and then in his next over bowled Art Brears who could have easily taken the game away from the Old Scholars with his power stroke play. The runs then dried up somewhat with tight bowling from Felix Hannam, Grant Ward, Chester Hawkins and Joe Bloomfield: Both Bloomfield and Hawkins taking wickets at important stages in the game. Ben Winfield scored a quick fire

14 not out, batting at six, to take the final total to 109 of the allocated 20 overs.

A fine afternoon tea was had as the clouds begin to look darker and more menacing after every delicious bite. As the second end resumed, gap student Josh Beaumont and Chester Hawkins strode out to the crease to knock off the 110 runs required to win the game. However, after just five balls from Freddie Evans and just three runs on the board the inevitable happened and torrential rain quickly conclude the day's play and hands were shaken on an enjoyable yet short lived draw. Let's hope for better weather next year as this annual event is one that is looked forward to by teachers, students and Old Scholars alike!

Thanks must go to the catering and ground staff who supplied lovely teas and a fine wicket to play on. I would personally like to thank all the Old Scholars who gave up their Saturday afternoon to play in the match. Much appreciated. I would also like to encourage more old scholars who are cricketers to play next year. It is a very enjoyable event and one that is in danger of dying out if more interest is not shown. If you would like to play next year on Friends and Families day please email me on [nickbatcheler@hotmail.com](mailto:nickbatcheler@hotmail.com) or get in contact with Clare Thompson (Parry).

# Old Scholars' AGM

It was agreed at our AGM in November 2012 that we should hold future AGMs on the same day as our May Reunion to allow more Old Scholars to attend. To see the minutes of the AGM held on 11th May 2013, please visit the AGM page of our website at [www.oldscholars.com](http://www.oldscholars.com)



# Phillip Richardson retires

I've been asked to write a piece about my time at Friends' School, Saffron Walden. The school is all about the people and a large part of that for me is the Old Scholars. Many I still know or at least remember clearly. Others I need reminding of and usually, without too much prompting, I can recall an anecdote or two about them.

The years have gone quickly and very enjoyably. The first students I taught are now in their 50's and many have sent their children to Friends School and I've taught them – that's scary – I don't think I've taught any grandchildren.

But what do people really want to know about my time at Friends? I thought the best way to find out was to get a few Old Scholars to ask me questions.

## What aspects of Art have you most tried to encourage?

For me, the central skill of art is the ability to draw. Imagination and ideas can be encouraged and brought to life but are probably not directly teachable. Good drawing has its roots in looking and thinking. The looking may be introspective or objective but relies on a relevant diversity of marks selected and created by the artist. It is a learnt skill with its basis in observation. I remember setting up large still lifes in the middle of



6i: Emma (L. back row) taught in the Junior School, Sophie (3rd from R. back row) is a Head of Art in London (and mum), Jo (front row in white) has daughters in the Junior School. 1992

both art rooms when I first arrived at Friends' School. Amanda, Sarah, Shona and Jo worked so hard to raise their standards. There were tears and curses – but the A level results were great. During the next years I added life drawing – firstly at the Bell College, then evening classes at the County High School with the fierce Mrs Reed ("draw the hands accurately!") and eventually permission was granted to have onsite sessions in the drama studio (which was then the gym, wall bars and all). Brian Hollet and I ran them together and we had some wonderful models. Brian and I would draw with the scholars hopefully setting a standard to which the scholars would aspire – and aspire they did with boldness and freedom often putting us teachers to shame.

## How do you judge your teaching?

There have been so many very talented young people passing through the art rooms. I hear of or from some. Sophie Baker and Sarah Edwards are both Heads of Art. Mark Wilsher, who was so determined to get a good A level grade and did, now runs an excellent theatre set building company – if you ever get the chance to visit, do, you will be warmly welcomed and perhaps sat down around the circular refectory table, everyone here is valued equally – no wonder Mark is so successful.

Rosie Miller wanted to be a doctor but realized how important art was to her; after studying at Oxford and the Courtauld she is now a Fellow of Cambridge University working at the Hamilton Kerr Institute

conserving masterpieces – recently John Sell Cotman, lucky girl!

Polly, Leanne and Georgia gave me chickens when they left Friends. Polly Johnson is now at Chelsea studying painting; Leanne Kennerson is taking a break before continuing her art career; Georgia Rolls is at Reading University studying estate management, I think – well, you can't win them all.

## Has Friends' School changed much? What was it like when you first started?

Starting teaching at Friends' School was a good move. A beautiful school set in a wonderful position overlooking a lively, pretty, tastefully well healed rural market town. The school was populated by some excellent people; pipe smoking Cyril – the sage of the community; imposing Brian; welcoming Maggie B; Denby, who among his many attributes was going to rekindle my love of bees; fierce Chris with a heart of gold whose golf swing certainly improved over the years. And then the younger group of staff, probably a typical mix of characters for a co-ed boarding school but they ranged from Peter, a small tangential maths teacher teetering on the edge of all sorts of things; Martin, racing around the school grounds in MOT failures; well prepared Graham, quiet, low key, but full of surprises; lovely J.D., an inspiring force who somehow always got more out of the scholars than they knew they had.

The scholars were a mixed bunch too. Bright girls, 11 plus passers as there was no girls' grammar in the area; authority placed children who needed the protection of a boarding school for many different reasons; the offspring of Walden's wealthy; and the enriching cosmopolitan overseas students. All these in search of what was special about a Quaker school and most of them not fully understanding it until long after they have left. Yes, things have changed a lot but I think the essence of FSSW is still intact – but it does need to be nurtured and cherished.



FSSW staff cricket team. (Phil is holding Sam (on right) and J.D. is holding Tom), 1991



The boys of 3x – Phil's first class as form teacher, 1978



The girls of 3x – the boys and girls were photographed separately, 1978

## When did you design for Moorcroft?

It started in 1987. Hugh Edwards, then the new owner of Moorcroft, asked me to work with Sally Dennis to produce some fresh designs for the company which was verging on collapse. It worked. My designs were well liked. I have stayed in touch with Hugh and last year, 25 years later, I was asked to create some anniversary designs, which I did. I really enjoyed the challenge of working in three dimensions so I might, now, do more.

## How do you feel about the recent developments to the School site?

Nothing stays the same forever, nor should it. Many of you will know it as The Res. However, the Art Department was given permission in the early 90's to turn The Res into the Octopus Studios and Gallery. I was particularly disappointed to see this fall foul of the development and no provision made for replacement. Myself and students had worked hard to renovate the tired building. Jim Smith, James Hawkes, Ben Peacock and many others painted and plastered and created an aesthetically pleasing space, often remarked upon. Tim Bates developed the gallery news sheet, while Jim Anderson and Paul Lillie ran workshops and social occasions, put up exhibitions and generally created a lively, vibrant area of the school that was fun to be in. Some of the exhibitions were stunning; Ella Berthoud turned the gallery into Narnia, Tim into a ceramic parterre. The Arts Week, brainchild of Sarah Evans, saw musicians, such as Stephen Varcoe and Tom Robinson, supported and conducted by Andrew Fowler, Edward Dodge, Martin Wilson and many others, perform and excite. Drama productions happened throughout the days. And some wonderful artists hung their pictures alongside



Phil holding one of the pots he designed for Moorcroft in a publicity photograph, 1987

our students. The recently appointed RA, Anne Desmet, had one of her first exhibitions in the Octopus at this time.

Hopefully, one day soon, a new permanent gallery will be established in the school and serve again to focus the community on higher things.

## Are there any particular moments that stand out for you?

Many of the trips, to galleries both in this country and abroad. The students - always delightful, and lovely company. Venice, Paris, Amsterdam - once three students in one of the groups spoke pretty good Dutch - the wonderful looks on the locals' faces as Hanneke, Taco and Evan chatted away to them, with Anne, Kate and me looking on speechless.

A moment of personal pride came when a small piece was written about me in the Times Educational Supplement entitled "My Best Teacher". In it Helen Smith described how she hadn't really been aware of being taught art, what she learnt from me had happened "sort of osmotically". I liked that.

## And so...

I've never been much of a one for dwelling on the past. I think in this I'm lucky - it's now that matters to me and I love it. However, coming to the end of part of one's life is sad but also exciting. Leaving behind all these memories and all those "what ifs", "if onlys" or "maybe next time", I can now look forward to a lot of unknowns without the predictability of the academic year.

I had helped a friend with their bees as a boy. So when I arrived at Friends' to discover Denby Allen running a thriving Young Farmers' club with sheep, cattle and, above all, hives, my life was complete - well nearly. I married Kate a few years later and now have three grown children, a dog, chickens and, of course, bees. Life is pretty good; I can sit at home and paint and print forever more....

# Friends for life

## Tony Watson - Scholar 1944 - 1952, Governor 2000 - 2010.

If you are familiar with the School prospectus you will recall the last page depicts two sixth formers leaving through the front door under the title "Friends for Life". When I first saw this in a draft of the prospectus some years ago I thought this recognises what so many Old Scholars feel about their connections with the School.

When I was asked to write about my connections with the School I did not quite know where to start. So, as we are so often told, start at the beginning. I joined the Junior House in January 1944 at the age of 7. You can read about the Junior School in the History published by the School to coincide with the opening of the new buildings last September. On the theme of Friends for Life it was at the Junior School I first met among my fellow pupils a girl, Margaret Pilgrim, later nicknamed "Pilly", with whom I was destined to spend the rest of my life. One of my few achievements was the ability to run quickly and one of the few records of my school career is a report of my times in athletic matches against other schools. The then new "GCE" was introduced the year before we were due to take exams so we

Tony Watson opening the Watson Hall of the new Junior School



were only the second year to sit them. My results were not that good, so I did not join the sixth form. Following a period of National service in the RAF I returned home to study law. Following marriage to Margaret in 1960 I duly qualified as a solicitor in 1965.

It was not long before I was asked to join the Old Scholars' Committee, serving as Treasurer to the OSA Bursary fund, and as President in 1987-88. My firm had acted for the school for a number of years and I duly took over acting for the school. What became a marathon began in the 1970's when I was asked to advise the Governors regarding the trusts of the School. My report recommended that the Governors consider becoming a Charity Company. Some ten years later this eventually happened, and during my time as a Governor, the School also had the ownership of the school site transferred to it.

Margaret and I also had a connection with the school as parents when our daughter became a pupil, and later as grandparents. So as a family we now number five Old Scholars!

As I neared my retirement I was asked to Chair an Appeal Committee for the Tercentenary celebrations in 2002 and in late 1999, the then Bursar was on the phone: "The Head wants you to become a Governor". I joined the Board in January 2000. A start to the new millennium for me was a change of challenge. The role of governor is now very complex and a new governor has to learn a lot of new acronyms. I was soon involved as were all governors in the appointment of two new heads, as well as the planning for the Tercentenary celebrations.

The Tercentenary weekend was very hectic, our house was full with Margaret's brother and sister-in-law from Canada, and visitors from London, France and south east Essex. Among the pleasures was country dancing with our two granddaughters, then still in the Junior School, the procession to the Museum, and the opening of the re-roofed swimming pool.

Following the Tercentenary, prompted by the new Head, Andy Waters, the Board began a long review of the School in the new 21st Century, where it wanted to determine the objects of educating children and to improve the facilities that would be required. A feasibility study produced a development plan, detailed plans for a new Junior School and Boarding House. I described all the detail of this in Chapter 4 of the "History of the Junior School". If you have not read this you can find a copy on the Old Scholars' website and copies are still available from the school.

My term as a governor came to an end in December 2010, but the Board asked me to stay on in my role as Clerk of the Project Steering Group until the new Junior School buildings were complete. We had a splendid opening last September which will be documented elsewhere in this Magazine.

I began this article with my reference to "Friends for Life". I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to be educated in a Quaker school, to have found a lifetime partner in a fellow pupil, and gone on to a lifelong connection with the school as Old Scholar, Parent, Grandparent, and Governor. I am not sure if having the new School Hall being given your name is an honour I really deserve but it does give great pleasure to see it being used for all the purposes for which it was designed.

**I look forward to continuing my connection with the school as a "Friend for Life"**

# Playing a part

By Lucy Singh (Garnett) at FSSW 1981-1986

"What I don't understand, Lucy, is why it sounds as if I'm reading about two different people" - Brian Gatward, discussing my last six achievements, effort, behaviour and attitude. It was an improvement on Peter Arter's declaration to my mother three years previously that I was "suffering from an identity crisis" because it was at least kept between the two of us. But in truth, what I don't understand is why they thought it worth pointing out. Isn't that what all teenagers are like: annoying, selfish, unsure of who they are, or how to behave when upset or angry or just plain moody? And FSSW was the best place for me and many others to make that difficult transition from childhood to adulthood. I occasionally tell people that I ran away to boarding school at 13 (with generous help from QSRE). I 'ran' to escape the large rural West Yorkshire comprehensive school I was in danger of truanting from, where even the teachers made racist remarks about me in front of the class, and to hide from disintegrating family life.

My first impression on arrival in Saffron Walden was surprise that I didn't need to hide at break time ('recess' in this foreign land) from the fighting I had been used to. I was also relieved of the pressure of being the only nonwhite in my school. In fact, it was delightful to mix with peers from all over the world and from various backgrounds. I could be myself or a different person from the one I left behind in Yorkshire.

Playing different people happened several times whilst at Friends' School as I discovered new interests and abilities. My happiest times were spent painting in the art rooms, encouraged by Phil Richardson, and a sketchbook and pencil were my constant props as drawing my fellow students and the world around me was an excellent way of hiding in and out of class. I discovered fun, running round a hockey pitch for the school and county, and was renowned for being covered in mud when I wasn't splattered with paint. School plays were also a fabulous way of legitimately being someone else, as well as providing me with a wider social circle.



Lucy in Oxford September 2012



Sketch of Gregory Baldeosingh 1986 by Lucy



Sketch of Amanda Manouvrier 1986 'Mandy sewing in the common room' by Lucy

Coming back to school for the 6th form was the best time for redevelopment, and I feel so sorry for 16/17 year olds who have the constant pressure of course work and AS levels that interfere with this important stage in adolescence. I think I spent most of that time playing - with ideas, the oboe, hockey teams, a paintbrush or pencil, parts in plays, reading novels and having fun with friends. I also developed the confidence to argue and be passionate about all sorts of things, but without the experience to know when to hold back, hence the dual personality apparent to my tutor. I also believe that Friends' School instilled in me the notion that the more I put in to community life, the more I and others would benefit.

My community shrank for a few years after I left school, whilst I reinvented myself as wife and mother. I married Geoff Garnett (Bootham Old Scholar, whom I met during JYM at Leighton Park just before my A levels) whilst he was doing a Masters degree at York in 1986 and we produced Naomi the following summer, before moving to Sheffield for three years PhD research. I embarked on a six year Open University degree in History and Music and Imogen was born in 1989.

Geoff's recruitment to Imperial College in 1990 working on HIV saw us relocate to Horsham, West Sussex, where I became



Cast of Jenny See's production of Much Ado About Nothing Autumn 1983

the warden of the Friends' Meeting House in return for accommodation. Being responsible for two girls, a garden and the Meeting House whilst studying was difficult at times but the Quaker community in which I ministered brought out the school prefect in me and I thrived on the challenge for three years. Being a parent helper at Naomi's school also showed me that primary schools had changed since I was her age and had become places in which my skills were useful.

1993 was a momentous year: I learnt to drive which was liberating; Geoff's work moved to Oxford University; I visited India for the first time to meet my grandmother who died during my stay; I finished my OU degree and my father died. I also gained a place to do a PGCE at Oxford Brookes University. I had a chance to reinvent myself again.

I was a primary school teacher for 17 years in Oxfordshire, with responsibility for music, art, humanities and educational visits and though I feel proud of my pupils' excellent progress in Science, Maths and English, I was happiest devoting myself to the Arts, and enabling pupils to put on plays, concerts and exhibitions of their artwork. I loved running day trips and residential visits, drawing on boarding school coping techniques to combat children's homesickness (active involvement and no phoning home!). Sadly this brought me into conflict with management, but (mostly) I used more diplomacy than I had at FSSW.

Out of school my priority remained family life in Eynsham but I also served on various PTAs, school governors and community groups, using skills developed when on School Council and Food Committee at FSSW. I gradually filled spare moments with art and crafts of all kinds, oboe playing with other musicians, adventurous outdoor sports and hockey. I came home from matches covered in blood instead of mud and earned a Harry Potter style scar from defending a short corner that will be in Witney Hockey

Club's collective memory for many years (I didn't duck).

I taught part time from 2000, when Geoff started commuting to London again with frequent global travel. Two years later I found myself enrolling on a part time Art Foundation course in Banbury, then a Fine Art degree which I finished last summer, with a bonus award for my final piece which was exhibited at Modern Art Oxford last autumn. In recent years I have mostly worked with printmaking, textiles and stop motion films projecting into installations, exploring global issues such as HIV infection, deprivation of childhood and working practices in the clothing industry. Sitting in Seattle, contemplating the 27 years since I left, I can see how FSSW played a part in my life.

Although I intend to continue my passion for art and music, I know I need active involvement in my new community. Geoff was recruited to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to help with their Global Health work on HIV. Once again I find myself socialising with people from all over the world and from different backgrounds. I have learnt so much more about the world and its problems and how individuals can make a positive contribution to improve people's lives. I just need to figure out a new part for me to play.



Fairies from JD's production of A Midsummer's Night's Dream Autumn 1982



'6'one' X summer 1985



English field trip Autumn 1985 waiting for the steam train to Haworth and Bronte pilgrimage, having done DH Lawrence country round Nottingham.

# Life in Saffron Walden in the 1950s

by Peter Southgate – at FSSW 1953-1960

Peter Southgate kindly agreed to share with you some extracts from his recent book on Saffron Walden. The following are some edited sections:

## A brief biography

I first came to Saffron Walden in 1948 when I was six, and attended the Friends' School from 1953-1960. Following study and research at universities in Manchester, London and Canada, I worked for many years at the Home Office on criminal justice policy research and, more recently, spent four years as a Consultant and Fellow in the University of Tasmania. Apart from academic papers I have published articles on ex-pat life and on East Anglia, in newspapers and magazines including Essex Life and Suffolk Norfolk Life. My wife and I now live in Kent, but are still regular and appreciative visitors to Walden.

## How the book came about

Sorting through some papers in the loft a year or so ago I came across a box containing my father's diaries, recording daily life in Saffron Walden during the post-WW2 decades. These made fascinating reading, and I eventually decided to use them as part of a book about life in Walden at that time, supplemented by my own recollections and published sources. The memorable year of 1963 seemed a good starting point, and I found myself working back through the decade to the early 50s, to the time when I was growing up in the town and first went to Friends'. I then examined later decades to see what had changed over the years. In the 1950s Walden was still a sleepy market

town, but now it's vital and bustling with double the population. Much has changed, but the town has retained much that is good. So the book is aimed at everyone who knows Saffron Walden, but especially those who remember it in the 1950s. I considered various possible titles, and eventually settled on: 'Saffron Walden in the 1950s: small town life in another time.'

## From the Preface

In the early 1950s our home overlooked fields on the southern edge of the town, less than a mile from the new Technical and Modern School where my father was a teacher, and closer still to Friends' School where I was a pupil. The road was 'unadopted', full of ruts and puddles with no tarmac surface. There was no garage or parking, but in those days this was hardly an issue, as few people had cars and there was plenty of kerb space for anyone who did. The house had a very long garden, an important part of life when most people grew their own vegetables. My father did this at first, though as the years passed he grew fewer vegetables, and more of the garden was turned into lawn.

It wasn't long, though, before the fields we'd looked out onto began to disappear under housing estates, the road was paved and more cars were parking in the streets around us. Changes were taking place, as the motor

car took over and dominated life, destroying so much of what was pleasant.

The Coronation year of 1953 is often seen as marking the real start of post-war Britain, and the decade from then until 1963 is the period that most historians take as embodying the true spirit of 'the fifties'. During those ten years a new world didn't suddenly emerge, but the groundwork for it was laid, and after this the effects of change really began to show. 1963 saw events - nationally, internationally and in Saffron Walden - which marked it as the real beginning of the 1960s, and like 1953 it became a defining moment. In all kinds of ways things were happening then which marked the town's progress into the future we now inhabit.

Some might wish to reverse this process of change, but there's probably more to be grateful for than to regret, for somehow Walden has survived the changes which half a century has brought. In many ways it's now a different place, but it's still a delightful one. If you look it up on the internet you can find yourself directed to somewhere called Uttlesford. Until 1974 there was a Saffron Walden Borough Council and a Saffron Walden Rural District Council, but these were merged and combined with the Dunmow Rural District Council to form Uttlesford. It's

a less attractive name than Saffron Walden, but it has genuine historical origins, derived from a medieval Hundred of that name. It covers a much larger area and includes Stansted Airport within its boundaries, a place that fifty years ago we were barely conscious of. Sometimes it droned away in the distance, but it didn't really impinge on us. The rest of that story is already history.

## From Chapter 2 'School Days'.

Friends' has always had its own ethos and way of doing things, though this has led, at times, to some misunderstandings amongst Walden residents. It was said, for example, that it encouraged nude bathing, and I was a nervous when I went to the pool in my first term. But the rumour turned out to be quite untrue: boys and girls swam separately, and there was no nudity. The only slight frisson came when the boys had to wrap towels around themselves and walk (heavily escorted) through the girls' changing room to reach the pool. This happened either before or after the girls were in any state of déshabille, and things have long since been rearranged to avoid such movements.

The staff were very much individuals, with their own oddities and preoccupations. There was the chemistry master with eyebrows so bushy he had to lean back to see as he



poured liquids into test tubes, the history master who taught us how the price of mars bars marked the rate of inflation, the scripture teacher who explained biblical miracles in scientific terms and the geography master whose dog would wander into lessons and sleep under his desk. The school buildings themselves had their oddities: one classroom block had electric heating - in the ceiling. As heat rises it was freezing in the winter and lessons began with physical jerks to warm us up. This was useful as I didn't do many of these in games lessons. By our senior years the games master had given up hope for some of us, and we were set to gardening and maintenance work around the grounds to get us out of his hair while he coached the seriously sporty types. This gave us the chance for a good chat, but it all came to an end when we crashed the groundsman's trolley into the back of his Austin Seven, the trolley being more substantial than the car.

Certainly schools and teachers had character in the 1950s, and schooling was a much more varied experience than it is these days. But it's the eccentric teachers of the past that we remember best, and there were plenty of those around fifty years ago. Now it's very different and like so much else



Peter on left with Michael Ellis c 1957

schools have changed. At Friends' different foreign languages came onto the curriculum: Russian instead of German, for example, and scripture incorporated 'Human Studies'. A more democratic atmosphere was developed: no more prefects, and a cafeteria instead of the dining hall. The school still emphasises its Quaker principles, aiming to 'realise the potential and talent of each individual within a friendly and challenging environment'. With around only 300 students it's able to offer something a bit different and more personal. A number of its alumni have risen to fame in the arts and professions, and the school remains an important part of Walden's Quaker heritage.

### Footnote

As part of a special exhibition on life in the 1950s at Saffron Walden Museum I shall be talking there about the book on the afternoon of Saturday 21st September 2013.

If you'd like to read the rest of the book it's available at £7.50 through Amazon, at the Tourist Information Centre and the Museum in Saffron Walden or (post free) from me at: Oast Barn, 37a The Green, Woodchurch, Kent TN26 3PF.

# Walden born & bred

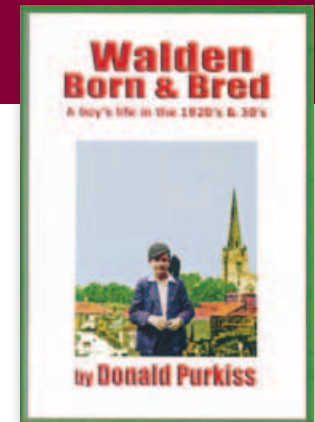
## A boy's life in the 1920's & 30's An extract by Donald Purkiss

### Friends' School – a personal account of life in the 1930s at Friends'

Starting at Friends' School was undoubtedly a very thrilling experience. There were not a great many surprises because Joyce had been there for two years and so I knew roughly what to expect. The fact that it was a boarding school made it especially exciting. Some of my Sunday school prize books had been school stories, with tales of tuck boxes and midnight feasts in the 'dorm'.

I had to have new clothes and they had to be bought at a particular shop. Gray Palmer was not good enough and my blazer had to come from Joshua Taylor of Cambridge, much to my mother's annoyance. Football shirts were specially made in the school colours of red and green. All clothes including underwear had to be labelled. A red and green segmented cap was also required. (My first school cap blew off on a ferry in Plymouth). New boarders would have been sent a very comprehensive clothing list. It was quite an expensive business.

We had no lessons on the first day, but we were shown our classroom, allocated a desk, shown the boot room and toilets, the library, the gym and changing rooms, and best of all the swimming bath. There was a matron, mostly for the benefit of the boarders, who was a sharp little Irish woman with a squeaky voice. We were given a number for use in the boot room and changing room. My number was 92. We were also allocated to 'houses'. These had nothing to do with location, but were divisions for competitive purposes, mainly for games and sports. The



three 'houses' were named after prominent Quakers and were 'Moorland', 'Crossfield' and 'Godley'. I was in 'Godley' (of course!).

My first impression was that all the boys at playtime were on roller-skates and having a lot of fun. Not only were they skating on the asphalt playgrounds, but also in the playroom where the boarders' trunks were kept. My parents had no peace until they had bought me a pair of skates. The first pair was cheap and pretty useless, but at Christmas I had a 'Rolls Royce' pair on which I became quite proficient.

Co-education was new to almost all of us and seemed very strange. Some of the staff insisted that we sat next to a girl and at ten years of age we were not keen on this. However, all the girls were healthy looking, well-spoken and smelled only of soap, unlike some local girls I encountered. For some classes I sat next to Jill Southall, a day girl who is now the widow of Jack Griffiths, the former golf professional. She lives in Gibson Close (her lovely garden can be admired from the Battles Ditches footpath). In another class I was put next to Hazel Tinney who was a

boarder, although her farming family came from Clavering.

We were all lucky to be at the school at this time because the staff were of the highest calibre, and among them were a number of exceptional people who could be described as 'characters'. The headmaster was CB Rowntree, a member of the Quaker chocolate family. He was a rather stern, upright character in every sense of the word and was an excellent traditional headmaster.

Rowntree retired soon after I went to the school and soon became much involved in affairs of the town. He became Borough Councillor, Alderman and Mayor, but is best remembered for his book on local history called 'Saffron Walden Then and Now'. He was a Rotarian and may have been a founder member. He had his roots in the town and as a young man had played football for the town.

The senior master at the school was Arnold Brereton who was another high-minded Quaker and a splendid maths teacher. He also had the responsibility of the boys' moral welfare, or so it seemed. When war broke out AB became an Air Raid Warden. One night when he was patrolling on the road to Debden with a man named Perry, there

was a massive air raid on Debden Airfield in which two hundred bombs were dropped in twenty minutes. When it started Perry dived into the nearest ditch and yelled to AB to do the same, but AB continued walking and would not take cover. Perry was amazed and spread this story in the town. Like CB Rowntree, Arnold Brereton became a Borough Councillor after his retirement. He was also a Rotarian.

Mention must be made of two other extraordinary characters and really good teachers. Our history master was a man named Stanley King-Beer. He was a wonderful actor and acted out history in an unforgettable way. No wonder history was my best subject. The youngest boys called him 'Uncle Booze' to his face as a term of affection, but this privilege was only for the new boys for underneath he was a man of steel. His appearance was rather striking. He had long greyish hair, not quite shoulder length, but on top his head was bald and shiny. He always wore a corduroy jacket with leather patches at the elbows. He was a Devon man, born in Plymouth, and he knew Dartmoor very well indeed. Every year in the summer holidays he organised and led a party of older pupils on a hiking



The teachers at Friends' 1930



The Friends' School swimming pool at its opening or soon after in 1902

holiday in Dartmoor. This was known as 'The Tramp' and became a school tradition. He was a man of strong convictions and high moral principles. As a young man he had left home with only a shilling in his pocket and became a tramp for a year to really experience poverty and hunger. When the First World War came he was a conscientious objector, and was imprisoned and given hard labour. Not being physically robust this was particularly hard for him. He survived partly by having toilet breaks every fifteen minutes. He told us that after the war it took him two years to get back to a normal toilet regime. He had a son named Michael who was born deaf and dumb. He was sent to a special school when he was very young and when I knew him as a teenager he had overcome these handicaps amazingly well. He was a nice chap.

The other extraordinary character on the staff was David Pearson, known as DP. He taught German and French and was very good at it, but he was special because of his wit and dry humour. His anecdotes broke the tension of an intense language lesson. One gathered that he had been some sort of religious student in Germany before the First World War. When the class was distracted by an aeroplane going by he would say, "Don't worry, it's one of ours". At the time we all thought it was funny, but not so a few years later. In his spare time, DP could always be found walking in the 'Avenue' with a

ponderous gait as if the 'Avenue' was a cloister.

DP was also a group master and on rare occasions administered the slipper to persistent offenders. He did this in his study and afterwards sent the sometimes tearful offender away with an orange.

The thing I enjoyed most about the school was the swimming baths. There was a 'general bathe' every day, and often a gym class would end with a short swim. I was intrigued by the diving boards and spent most of my time diving. To my surprise I was picked out to dive for the school to compete against local swimming clubs and schools. At the time I was small and slim, and entered the water with hardly a splash. Later on when I entered for a life-saving medal I found that I lacked stamina for swimming. We had to swim four lengths breaststroke and then, without a break, two lengths on our backs with our arms folded. I struggled to finish my four lengths and was so relieved to turn on my back'.

At the school we were made aware of what was going on in the world politically and internationally. For older scholars there was in fact a lesson called 'Civics'. During my first year there was a mock election. This caused no end of fun. Candidates were selected from the senior pupils to represent the parties and they swooped down to our classroom chanting their slogans and giving

out leaflets. In the end it was the Liberal Party that won. There was great poverty in the country at that time, particularly among the Welsh miners. The school tried to help and held a fête to raise money for them. I was surprised to see Stanley King-Beer in charge of a gambling stall, but found he was shouting, "It's a mug's game - come and prove it!"

Punishments at the school were rather odd in that instead of being given 'lines' one was given 'words'. Every half-day holiday on Wednesdays and Saturdays a classroom was allocated as the 'punishment room' and the master or mistress on duty for the day would be there. If one was given, say, twenty words, perhaps for not doing your homework (or 'prep' as we called it) one would have to attend the punishment room on the next half-day holiday and carefully copy out twenty words from a special book. A doddle, you might say, but the number of words you were given was cumulative so that if you had more than so many words in a week you would be 'gated'.

Other punishments included 'standing practice'. One might be given half-an-



This group photo was probably taken in 1934. On the front row, from the left are Tommy March, Betty Allen, Donald Purkiss, Jill Southall (now Mrs. Griffiths), Percy Kent, unknown, Michael King Beer, Michael Pawsey, unknown, Mark Headley.

hour or an hour and have to stand in the punishment room for that period. I found that the worst punishment and the one I was given most frequently was 'changing practice'. This was given if one was late for games. Twice a week we had games in the afternoon starting at two o'clock. In the morning, lessons ended at one o'clock and the boarders finished lunch at half past one, so they had plenty of time to get changed and on the field by two o'clock. As a day boy I had to go home for lunch which was our main meal of the day and get back to school and changed within an hour. This was not always possible, even when I was cycling. Having lunch at school was the answer, but that was expensive. Our 'changing practice' consisted of getting into, say, football gear, boots and all, and reporting to the master on duty and then changing back and reporting again. Usually one was given six to do so it took up most of the afternoon. Some of the time was taken just finding the master on duty if there was no-one in the punishment room. That's a long-standing grievance off my chest!

I was once given 'lines'. This was for walking off with a pencil from the art room. Several boys had taken the art pencils with them to the next class, so the art mistress noticed their absence and came storming down to the science lab where we were in class with Mr Pumphrey. It was he who gave us the punishment and I had to write two hundred lines saying, "Taking pencils from the art room is as bad as taking bricks from a building site". The other boys had similarly appropriate words to write.

While I was at Friends' School I came to really appreciate the Quaker Meeting. Every morning assembly was a short meeting and every Thursday morning there would be a full religious meeting. These meetings were characterised by long periods of silence. Not just periods when nobody said anything, but non-shuffling, non-coughing silences. When a school of about 200 pupils aged

from ten to seventeen stay that quiet and still for so long, to be part of it is quite an experience. Imagine the two minutes' silence on Armistice Day going on and on. Just occasionally somebody, anybody, might be moved to share their thoughts or read a passage from a book. Usually it would not be the bible, for the Quakers believe that people have been inspired in their writing long after the books of the bible were written, right up to the present day, and today's books were often more relevant to us. When the time came to end the silence, the headmaster would shuffle and everyone would relax. That was how it was, but I wonder if there is still the same self-discipline.

Every day except Saturday and Sunday there was an assembly, but first there would be 'collect' in the boys' and girls' playrooms. We lined up in height order irrespective of age, and there was a roll-call. We then filed into the tiered lecture room for assembly. Later, when the school hall was built, we had to trail across to the hall in the open in all weathers. Getting to school in the mornings was always a rush for me, and I really appreciated the ten minutes or so of complete silence to gather my thoughts and prepare for the day.

During my first year, academically I 'held my own' having had a good grounding in the 'three Rs' at the Boys British School. There was only one really new subject and that was French. Our teacher was Miss Waites and she taught us to pronounce French phonetically which made it easier, but I'm not sure that it was a good idea in the long run. In the second year, one almost had to start again. Miss Waites had bad teeth and watching her teaching us pronunciation was most unpleasant. I suspect that she smoked a lot. Our class discovered that she loved Paris and if we could get her onto that subject there would be little serious work done for the rest of the lesson. I remember waiting for the world to end in one of her classes

After the first year we were given the choice of taking Latin or German, and also between taking chemistry or biology. I was pleased that my parents wanted me to learn German rather than Latin, and biology. The only Latin I learned was by accident. Some of the classrooms were divided by light removable partitions so one could hear something of the next-door class. We used to hear the Latin class chanting the conjugation of verbs such as 'amo, amas, amat' etc. Latin was taught by a mistress named Miss Yap - a name we thought very appropriate. Some years after I had left school my parents met a couple from Bristol who lived next door to Miss Yap. They said that she was in fact married, but had to conceal this to keep her job. I think the law changed during the war.

On Saturday mornings we had no serious lessons, but we met in groups under our group master. In these sessions we were counselled about social and personal matters as previously mentioned, and we also dealt with our accounts. Each term we deposited a sum of money for petty cash. As a day boy my requirements were modest and I usually put in 10/- a term. One could buy fruit at certain times. A prefect would stand in the playroom with a basket of fruit for sale. One could buy quite a variety of fruits including pomegranates which I had never seen before. They were surprisingly popular, but they had to be eaten outside so that one could spit out the pips.

There was one other time when extra food was available and was intended only for boarders. After prep in the evenings, the kitchen staff would put out a basket of bread which was often quite stale, but the boarders would scramble for it. The bread was known as 'bricks'. Many boys (and perhaps girls) had a pot of Marmite in their trunks and would eat the dry bread spread with Marmite. Having had tea once or twice at school I could understand their hunger.

A few years later the school had a tuck shop run by stage 5 economics class. The class

also sold ice lollies made in the science lab. Every member of stage 5 was a director of a company, and the tuck shop was run like a business with dividends to be had at the end of the year.

The boys' side and the girls' side of the school were fairly strictly segregated except during class times, but outside there was only voluntary separation. If a boy wanted to get to know a girl and ask her out, or sometimes vice versa, he would ask her to 'walk round' with him. To walk round meant walking round the perimeter of the playing fields. This practice was tolerated by the staff. The headmistress, Miss Priestman, a typically severe looking Quaker lady, once referred to "Jolly little friendships developing". She didn't know of the disused and overgrown lane which ran along the eastern side of the playing fields and provided wonderful places for the younger boys to make secret 'dens', and for the older couples to disappear for a while.

'Walking round' was something I only did once and that was in my first year. I did it to please my sister who had a friend who wanted to walk round with me. Appropriately her name was Una Forward! I didn't repeat the experience.

Of course there were some who went beyond the boundary of the rules and incidents did occur. Two boys were suspended for a term after they had been discovered in one of the girls' dormitories. Appropriately their names were Young and Long!

Sport at the school was traditional. Football (soccer) and cricket for the boys, and netball and hockey for the girls. There were tennis courts, but tennis was not taught. Tennis tournaments were arranged, however, between the houses and at one time I played for Godley. Once a year there was a hockey match between the girls and the boys, but this was just a bit of fun. The ref's whistle was constantly blowing.

In my last year at school I was sometimes selected to play football for the first eleven, but more often captained the second eleven. They were useless. I remember losing to a Newport Grammar School team 16-0. This must be a record!

I loved cricket, but I was not good at it. The problem was with my eyes. The realisation that I needed glasses only came in my last year and I avoided wearing them whenever I could.

If you were particularly good at a sport you could win your 'colours'. I'm not sure how it all worked, but I think a badge was sewn on your blazer. There was also a tradition that the collar of one's blazer could only be folded down if you had your 'colours'. Or was it the other way round?

The only thing I was interested in at this age was nature. I spent my spare time birds nesting and pond dipping. I frequently went to the 'gault hole' where there were a series of ponds. This was down Cement Works Lane, off Thaxted Road, and was where gault clay had been extracted for us at the cement works. The ponds were full of interesting creatures including crested newts. There were voles, water-rats and tadpoles galore.

I had been taking photographs since I was seven years old, following in my father's footsteps, and the photographs of birds' nests in the weekly nature magazine inspired me to have a go. I had never collected birds' eggs, although it was not illegal in those days, but I liked to see them and identify them. I had a box camera and a tripod, and it was great fun. Most of the results were not very good, but one or two were rewarding. Moorhens' nests were the easiest because they were often quite exposed. One of my most treasured things is an enlarged photograph of a garden warbler on its nest with its chicks. It was taken by Eric J. Hoskings FRPS, and is bound into Volume-I of my 'Outline of Nature'. Hoskings was a celebrated wildlife photographer

of that time. I had never met him, but he was a friend of a man who stayed with us one weekend. He was a visiting missionary who had come to preach at the Baptist Church and we were giving him hospitality as part of my mother's duty as a church deacon. He heard of my enthusiasm for bird photography and got his friend Hosking to arrange with the bookbinders for the insertion of his photograph in my copy of volume I. It was a wonderful surprise for me and a great gesture on his part.

Mr Hindle, our biology master, took advantage of my enthusiasm for birds and got me involved in a national survey of rookeries in which he was taking part. On my half-day holidays he would send me off on my bicycle with the appropriate ordnance sheets to plot the rookeries and count the nests. After cycling home from one of these expeditions against a cold strong head wind I became ill and was away from school for many weeks. My schooling in some subjects never really recovered. However, on the plus side I did get to read 'David Copperfield' and other books that I wouldn't otherwise have found time to read.

Music played a large part in the life of the school and there were some excellent music teachers. Mrs Radley who played and taught the cello had won a national award and was known as 'Ma' Radley because her son was a school prefect. She was quite a character and I am reminded of Margaret Rutherford. Miss Noreen Wright, who was much younger, taught the violin and led the school orchestra. Concerts by the school orchestra were frequent and of a high standard. That could not be said for the school choir of which I was a member. The choir once performed 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' and I was in the chorus among the altos. The principal part of the Piper was taken by our new headmaster, Mr Littleboy. My parents came to the performance and my father latched onto a particular phrase that the Piper sang ... "No trifling! I can't wait". From then

on when he needed to go to the toilet that was what he sang.

Every class was weighed and measured at the beginning and end of term. This was done in the gym by the games master. He once remarked to me that I was the only boy who lost weight during the holidays. After having school food I'm sure the boarders would have made up for it in the holidays. On the other hand I was having the same food, but doing hard physical labour from 8 o'clock until 5 o'clock on the houses my father was building. I remember using the pick and shovel on the service trenches at 30 Borough Lane and slating the roof on a bitterly cold day during the Christmas holidays. I did all sorts of jobs on the houses, the favourite being making slatted shelves for the airing cupboards. One of the 'perks' I was allowed was to collect all the lead off-cuts from the lead aprons and flashings around the chimneys. A bag of these would fetch anything from half-a-crown to 10/- at the scrap yard. One summer holiday when I was about 14 I told my father that I was fed up with doing odd jobs and would like to build something from start to finish. He said I could build a detached garage for a house in Peaslands Road. I managed everything quite well except the rendering (plastering) which I could not get to stay on the walls.

It was becoming clear to me that my future after leaving school would be a life of doing this sort of work for my father, and I found this prospect most depressing and had little



The author with a jackdaw during his time at Friends'

incentive to work hard at school. But then my father heard about the London School of Building. He heard about it through a building hardware salesman named Tom Ward who was going to night-school there and studying to be a heating engineer. My father decided that I should go there after I left school. This was great news for it opened up the possibility of my becoming a surveyor or even an architect, and so escaping the perceived tyranny of working for my father. Not that my father was really a tyrant. This meant that I had to pass my exams so I started working hard. (Incidentally, Tom Ward succeeded in becoming a heating engineer and his firm of T B Ward Ltd based in Letchworth was very prosperous).

Now I knew where I was heading, my school curriculum had to be changed. I had to drop some subjects, like biology, and take physics which was actually called mechanics. I also had to go down a class to catch up on algebra and geometry. My favourite subjects, however, were still history and English literature. During the first years at school we had a young English master named Walter Baldwin on whom many of the girls, including my sister, had a crush. He was fond of Wordsworth and romantic poetry generally. Now our English teacher was the headmistress, Miss Priestman, who liked to deal with sterner stuff so we studied John Milton and Spenser. I really enjoyed 'Paradise Lost' and I can still quote some passages of it. Not the same could be said for Spenser's 'Faerie Queene' which I thought unsuitable for study with a mixed class.

There were two after school societies which one was encouraged to join. The Literary Society, known as 'Lit', and the Natural History Society, known as 'Natch'. I joined Natch, for this was where my real interests lay, but also because a girl I liked the look of was a member. She was known as Angus because she was Scottish and she sometimes wore a kilt. In the summer there were quite frequent outings on bicycles to places of

some special interest such as woods and ponds. Members would be asked to do a report on the results of a pond dipping exercise or something similar.

The last Natch outing I went on was undoubtedly the best. We cycled on a round-about route to Little Easton Manor, stopping at various sites on the way. This was 1937 so of course the manor house was still standing and occupied by the Countess of Warwick. She was not there when we arrived, but we were shown her 'doggerly' if that's the right name. There were at least twenty dogs and they had been trained to do all manner of tricks including sitting at school desks! There was an aviary on her estate a short way away which was very special and open for us to see. Unfortunately, I didn't get to see it because a chap named Johnson, an American from Oregon got a puncture in his borrowed bicycle and hadn't a clue how to mend it, so I stayed behind to do it for him. We were mending the puncture in the courtyard when a chauffeur-driven Daimler drove up. The chauffeur opened the gates and drove in. In the back of the car was a haughty-looking lady gazing down at us through her pince-nez. We took no notice and carried on with the job. Shortly afterwards the chauffeur walked over to us and said, "Her ladyship wishes to know who you are, what you are doing here, and why you didn't acknowledge her". We told him and apologised, of course.

Cycling home from this expedition I rode ahead of the pack, and to my delight Angus caught me up and we cycled home together. That made my year! The next day I was baptised and the day after that was my sixteenth birthday. It was a weekend I have never forgotten.

At the end of that term I left the school. Paradise lost.

**For a fuller account, please see the School History page on [www.oldscholars.com](http://www.oldscholars.com)**

# Impressions & memories from past Quartet members

## GEMMA WATHELET - QUARTET 2002-2003

It is most strange that this email has landed in my inbox as it was only the other day that I was speaking of my time in the Quartet.

The 2002-2003 Quartet: Wendy Palmer, Daniel Gonzalez-Carter, Gemma Wathelet and Ben Ball

Firstly, I would like to say that my time at Friends' School was fantastic and being chosen as deputy head girl was one of my best personal achievements. I remember telling my family and their reaction of pride was quite overwhelming - (even at 16/17 and thinking parents were simply there to embarrass or harass you.)

Having come from a comprehensive school at the age of 15, Friends' was a little bit of a culture shock, but, it was one of the most positive things that could have happened to me.

My time in the Quartet went all too quickly and it defined my sixth form years. It was such

an important part for me to give something back (however small) to the school that had taken me in and helped me realise my potential, both academically and emotionally.

Some of the duties included organising charity fund raising events such as austerity lunches, discos and representing the students at different occasions.

After completing my A-levels I was accepted at my university of choice, unfortunately though due to family circumstances I came home after a short time. I took up a "career" in care, where I worked as a home care assistant around Uttlesford and then went on to work in a number of different care roles. My most recent employment has been as a charity coordinator for the charity Accuro, which incidentally Friends' School has helped through further fund raising events. Part of my remit was to recruit, train and develop young volunteers to work with under-19 year olds with learning difficulties at our youth club. This involved me coming to local



The 2012-2013 Quartet: Anson (King Luen) Wong, Harry Guest, Becky Westerhuis and Josephine Lohoar-Self



The 2002-2003 Quartet: Wendy Palmer, Daniel Gonzalez-Carter, Gemma Wathelet and Ben Ball

schools to speak with sixth form students and encouraging their involvement in local volunteering.

Friends' School was a regular haunt for me and it was so lovely to be able to come back to the school and continue a relationship with it. I even came to speak to year 10 students for a "careers information session" to give advice about careers in the third sector.

Now my life has changed once again, and last May I gave birth to my son, Brock. I have since retrained as a childminder so that I can work from home. I still help at Accuro at their clubs for people with disabilities. I am so very grateful that I was able to attend Friends' School. I really do feel that's its Quaker ethos and indeed the general values of the school have shaped me into the person I am now and helped me achieve so much.

Thank you to all at Friends' School Saffron Walden. I am a great advocate.



Gemma with her son Brock

## WENDY PALMER - QUARTET 2002 - 2003

Current Job: Administrator for a Diamond Merchant and aspiring illustrator/artist

Wendy and Gemma in the Library 2003

### How would you describe your experience at Friends' School and how it influenced your life?

I think to answer that properly, I need to start before I entered year seven. At a young age my parents had noticed that there were some underlying issues with my learning. Luckily after changing primary schools, my teachers noticed this too and believed I could be dyslexic. They suggested considering Friends' School as a secondary school option due to the benefits ranging from small class sizes, an LSU unit and emphasis on letting individuals flourish. It was absolutely the right decision, as I was supported throughout my school experience. Had I attended a larger school, I may have been left behind and struggled academically. At Friends' I was able to take full advantage of the art, music and drama departments, often being involved with afterschool clubs and drama productions. I believe that Friends' School nurtured my creativity whilst giving me the support I needed to gain confidence academically and achieve sound grades (in school and beyond). I feel enormously grateful to my parents for sending me to the school.

### What do think has changed here since you left?

Shamefully I have not been back since 2007. I think I need to plan a visit!

### What is your favourite memory of your time at Friends'?

Probably being involved in the school production of Little Shop of Horrors – I think it was 1999!?!



Wendy and Gemma in the Library 2003

### Where did you go after you left Friends' School?

I went to The University of Birmingham to read Performing and Visual Arts

### What are the main milestones in your life and about what are you particularly proud of?

Graduating with a first! Receiving a copy of Lionheart Magazine issue 2 and seeing my illustration in print for the first time. Also a proud moment was getting an email back from the Artistic Director of the V&A after sending him a bundle of my illustrations – he basically said thank you and good luck with my artistic practice– it was such a shock to get a response!

### What are you most passionate about and why?

Art... It's multifaceted as I love art history, seeing exhibitions, learning about styles and studying techniques. I really love creating and trying to make something beautiful. I also enjoy the challenges presented by life drawing.

### How would your best friend describe you?

Ooh. Quiet until you get to know... and possibly a bit of a dreamer.

### What keeps you still connected to Friends' School?

The friendships that I have made.

### How do you think the Friends' Old Scholars Association can benefit past and present pupils?

I think you can learn such a lot from other people – their experiences, failings, what motivates them.

### If you could offer one piece of advice to current pupils, what would it be?

I think my advice would have to be directed at those in sixth form or year 11 considering what to do next. Some people are gifted academically and will glide through with ease. Others are focused and know exactly what they want to do and might even know how to get there too. For those who are undecided, maybe even passionate about lots of things, try to consider all the options before making big decisions. Do your research! It might also be worth taking a bit of time out after completing A-Levels to discover yourself and your true vocation. If you make a mistake – like enrolling on the wrong course, don't just ride it out, it will cause you more heartache in the end than making that decision to leave. We learn as much from our failings as we do our successes. It is OK to reevaluate. Even in later life you might take another direction. What is important though is whatever you choose or wherever you go or end up, be dedicated and you will go far.

## ZHENBO HOU - QUARTET 2005-2006

Current Job: Research Officer, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK

### How would you describe your experience at Friends' School and how it influenced your life?

Friends' School was my first destination in the UK and it literally taught me what the UK was about.



Zhenbo in Year 10 in the summer of 2003



Zhenbo on the History Battlefields trip in September 2003 when he was in Year 11

**What do think has changed here since you left?**

Quite a few teachers that taught me have left or have retired. I miss them a lot as they are a huge part of the school and one or two of them were inspirational.

**What is your favourite memory of your time at Friends?**

Playing football on the field despite the wind, rain or hail!

**Where did you go after you left Friends' School?**

I went on to study economics and politics at Warwick University before getting an MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

**What are the main milestones in your life and about what are you particularly proud of?**

Arriving at the Friends' School at the age of 14 on my own from China is probably still the proudest achievement for me so far. It taught me resilience, independence, self-discipline and motivation.

**What keeps you still connected to Friends' School?**

I had a cousin who graduated from Friend's School three years ago and at the moment I am introducing my friends' children to the school.

**If you could offer one piece of advice to current pupils, what would it be?**

Be ambitious and hardworking. Hard work will eventually pay off, in one way or another.

**REGINALD (PO TIK) CHONG - QUARTET 2008-2009**

Current Job: I finished my degree at King's College London last year and I am currently working in our family business back into Hong Kong as a senior manager.

**How would you describe your experience at Friends' School and how it influenced your life?**

I would say my experience at Friends' was life-changing. I was new to the country, new to the culture and also new to the language at that time, Friends' School provided a comfortable, as well as a safe atmosphere, which helped me to settle quickly. I would have never dreamt of speaking English fluently until I received huge amount of support and help from both friends and teachers.

Despite the education I received, what I also appreciated the most was the close relationships I formed with teachers. This allowed me to share my feelings to them, no matter whether I was up or down. This was particularly important since I was an overseas student, and very often would have home-sick or other moments where I felt lost. Family



The 2009 Year Group

wasn't around, so teachers were the people to go to when these moments came. This has influenced me to understand the importance of being independent, and getting used to life without family around, which I found very useful when I was at university.

**What do think has changed here since you left?**

Some of the changes are obvious and for good, for example, the buildings and school site due to the Development Plan, as well as the students and some of the teachers. However, one thing that has not changed at all, which I appreciate the most, is the comfortable atmosphere in which the school is surrounded.

**What is your favourite memory of your time at Friends?**

There are quite a few, but the following three are the memories that I shall never forget.

One is definitely the time of being one of the Quartet at Friends'. It was not just a glory for me, but also recognition of my ability and effort. Having the chance to chair the School Council and organise different types of fund raising events were unique experiences that

not every pupil would have chance to obtain.

The second memory would surely be the yearly overseas students' talent show – International Evening. Being the major organiser of the event did not just help me to obtain such organisational skills, it also helped me to build a network within the school, connecting different people from different areas to achieve success in running a smooth International Evening.

The third memory I enjoyed the most was being the assistant in after-school cookery club. I personally enjoy cooking a lot, and it was always fun teaching kids to cook food for their parents.

**Where did you go after you left Friends' School?**

I went to King's College London to complete a bachelor degree on Business Management.

**What are the main milestones in your life and about what are you particularly proud of?**

The main milestones so far in my life would definitely be receiving a British education



From the left: Reggie, Yu Kimura, Alex Wan, Jay Chen, Dorothy Yeung, Eliza Lau

and successfully graduating from one of the top ranked universities in the UK. If I did not get sent to Friends' where I received a great amount of support and help, I would not have had the chance to go into university. I am particularly proud to be a student of Friends', where I turned myself from a person with little English to now a graduate at King's College London, and this is one of the main reasons why I am still connected with the school.

**What are you most passionate about and why?**

It has been a pleasure, and something that I have appreciated, the most, are the cooking skills I have gained at school. My food technology teacher has inspired me to cook for others and getting to know the enjoyment a chef would have when cooking. Now I enjoy cooking for others because it makes me so proud and happy when I see people enjoy my food and smile.

**How would your best friend describe you?**

'A Weird Chinese' is the title my best friend once gave me. I love eating bread, I enjoyed the school food, and I did not have a habit of buying Chinese take aways. This is the reason why my best friend called me 'A Weird



From the left: Harry Huang, Reggie, Askhat Bissembayev, Giuliano Wurster, Charlie Park

Chinese' because he thinks these habits should not happen to a Chinese person.

He says I am a nice person, very hard working. Popular and loved by everyone at school as well as his parents and family.

**What keeps you still connected to Friends' School?**

The people I have met here. This does not just include teachers and friends, but also the cleaning and kitchen staff whom I am also friends with.

Apart from that, the great memories I had at Friends' also keep me in touch with Friends'. These great memories make me want to share with people both inside and outside the school. I always seek for opportunity to share my experience at Friends' to those who are new to the school.

I have already once represented the school at an education exhibition in Hong Kong, and there is another one, organised by the British Council of Hong Kong, in August where I will represent the school again.

**How do you think the Friends' Old Scholars Association can benefit past and present pupils?**



Joey Harlow, Sam Richardson, Jess Dickinson, Daisy Johnson, Bethan Waters, Sebastian Major

Friends' Old Scholars Association provides a platform for past students to connect with the friends they have made at Friends', which includes friends who are still current students at school.

In addition, the Association also provides ways for us to get to know the history of the school, which often could be found through past Scholars sharing their past experience at the school, and also the magazine produced by the Association.

**If you could offer one piece of advice to current pupils, what would it be?**

I think the advice I would give to a current student, no matter whether he/she is a local or an overseas student, is to have belief in yourself. It was the attitude I had when I was completing my GCSEs and A-levels. The key element for this piece of advice is that to believe you can achieve your best and try your best, just the same as others. You are not trying to be the best of all, it would be a bonus if you could do so, however you believe yourself to achieve your personal goals, and therefore your personal best. This is what matters the most.

**DAISY JOHNSON - QUARTET 2008-2009**

I was in the Quartet in 2008/9. After Friends' I studied a degree in English Literature and Creative Writing at Lancaster and I am currently studying the Creative Writing MA at Oxford.

Friend's School means a huge deal to me. Its emphasis on individuality, creativity and freedom of thought and speech has very much made me the person I am and I hope it will continue to be a school based around these ideas.



Daisy Johnson

# Two impressions of Berlin – 60 years apart by two Friends' School Old Scholars

**IMPRESSIONS OF BERLIN  
1953 - An extract from the  
Old Scholars Magazine of 1953  
by Robert Dunstan, Form V  
(Year Group 1955)**

The first thing that strikes one about Berlin is the comparative emptiness and quiet, but I speak as one used to noise and traffic, living in London. Everywhere there is reconstruction taking place; new houses, flats and shops rising out of the ruins and rubble of war damage. But one is not to be disillusioned by the apparent newness of it all: everywhere one passes ugly skeletons and heaps of broken bricks of what used to be fashionable houses and stores. At night they appear ghostly with their gaunt, grey pitted walls, standing out conspicuously in the night sky. But Berlin has its centre of attractions: in the west the Kurfürstendamm, in the east Stalinallee, the war memorial, the museums, and the state university.

The Kurfürstendamm, the pride of the West Berliners, the theme of so many songs, the subject of lovers' dreams, has at last regained the splendour of its pre-war days. From the upper storey of some delightful restaurant, it is now possible to observe the welter of traffic along this famous road. Day and night an unending stream of traffic flows between the Gedächtniskirche and the Halensee up and down the Kurfürstendamm; past elegant shops with the most enticing of windows, past the beer gardens, the fashionable restaurants and tête-à-tête cafés with their wonderful front gardens, past the travel bureaux, the ever-popular sausage stalls, and the bookshops which all have the same

international character as the crowd of passers-by: Kurfürstendamm is alive with that special zest common to all large cities, which impresses everyone, from which no one can keep aloof. The Berliners whole-heartedly enjoy the variety Kurfürstendamm has to offer, and are proud to make it the centre of attractions in West Berlin.

Berlin is famous for its hotels which do indeed deserve a preferential position in the overall picture of the city. Everywhere can be seen notices: "on parle français", "si parla italiano", "English spoken". But these grand hotels, unlike those of the East sector can only be frequented by the rich.

I quickly got the impression that Berliners are fond of sport. The Olympia Stadium is still one of the largest sports arenas in the world. But the enthusiasm Berliners feel for sport is even too large for this arena. Whenever an international football or athletics match is held the stadium can hardly hold the eager crowds. I was lucky enough to obtain a ticket to an England-Deutschland athletics match. The Germans won after one of the most sporting of matches. Of course I cheered our Gordon Pirie and before long the German crowd were doing likewise. There is no kind of sport that Berlin does not dispose of in an ideal arena, and all sportsmen feel encouraged and inspired by the large crowd of enthusiastic followers in Berlin.

For holiday-makers the Berlin lakes are extremely popular. These lakes are like limpid jewels in a necklace surrounding it. I only know the Tegelersee, but there are other more popular ones such as Heiligensee and Wannsee. Secluded bays where reeds and

rushes rustle and fir trees sway in the breeze attract holidaymakers in canoes and yachts, who pitch their tents and moor their boats and enjoy the peace. The landscape under the Berlin sky is neither romantic nor rugged but its charm and placid beauty offer an irresistible appeal to those who care to explore it.

There are three chief means of travel in Berlin: tram, bus, or underground. The easiest way to get into the east sector is to go by underground. You can tell when the train arrives in an East Berlin station by merely observing the advertisements: if there are no "Coca-Cola" or "Vivil" posters you can take it for granted that you are in the east sector! Contrary to the ideas of some imaginative minds there are no fierce-looking frontier guards that board trains and ask for a special pass at gun point.

A typical frontier between East and West consists of two huts, and between the huts will be a rough part of the road where it has been dug up. This ensures that vehicles travelling in either direction will be obliged to drive slowly. On one side there are blue policemen and on the other side khaki: the khaki uniform are East German and the blue uniforms West German. Alighting from a train at Friedrichstrasse station one is immediately met with a colourful array of flags and slogans. These are the typical signs of the east sector. There are fewer posters and fewer advertisements; otherwise the stations of the east and west are identical, although there are some very newly decorated stations in the east.

Stalinallee, the pride of the East Berliners, and their centre of attractions, has been entirely newly constructed since the war. Production is still progressing at a tremendous rate, and it is said that the finished job will be some six miles long. The road itself is designed after the style of the English dual carriageway with a neat grass strip running down the middle. On each side of the road there are wide white pavements, and the buildings themselves are magnificent. Obviously they have been

built by top-line architects. Tremendous blocks of flats tower upwards to an almost skyscraper height, modern stores and shops fill the ground floors and every precaution is taken towards cleanliness - all perishable goods under cover and windows stacked mainly with tinned and bottled food. Many of these shops come under the state-owned grocery HO; there are many of these in East Berlin; even HO sausage stalls which park themselves outside the factories and offices receive many customers at "knock-off" hours. As one walks on down Stalinallee one passes more and more flats of different shapes and size designed by different architects, and built by the workers for the workers. At night Stalinallee is illuminated by fifteen-foot arc lamps and the shop windows are ablaze with light. On one side of the road is the sports hall where various kinds of indoor sport is played: basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and various others. This place is also known as the distributing centre for the famous food parcels. It was here that some of the food parcels sent from the West Germans to the "allegedly starving" East Germans were collected and sent back to the West Berlin unemployed.

Walking on down Stalinallee I suddenly came upon the memorial to Stalin: a little gap between two terrific blocks of flats, and there, set in a simple well-tended little flower garden stood a small statue of Stalin, no name, no inscription, just this small life-like statue. Behind there was a step and the ground paved; on the step was one small brown wooden seat. On and on I walked down Stalinallee looking to right and left, completely enthralled.

One of the most remarkable memorials in the whole of Berlin is the Russian war memorial, bearing the names of those who fell in honour during the fall of Berlin. The remarkable thing is that it is situated in the west sector guarded by two members of the East German People's Police. It is very impressive, guarded also as it were by two big tanks, each mounted on a large granite block.

It is every boy's ambition in East Berlin to graduate in the famous University. It has been rebuilt and repaired since the war, and has now regained its pre-war grandeur, with wide marble staircases and a glistening front hall-in fact it is an ideal bait to make scholars work, as the state scholarship attends to all fees, books and lodgings.

Having seen a lot of Germany during my five week holiday I have come to hold a very great respect for the country, and from my observations I can only feel really happy to see the all-out reconstruction that is taking place in East and West, even where the destruction has been worst, and the project seems hopeless. It makes one feel just how futile war is and now with the present situation, our fight should be for everlasting peace among all nations against the horrors of another war.



The wide roads of East Berlin

## IMPRESSIONS OF BERLIN REVISITED by Roland Fisher Vousden. Quartet 2009-2010 (Reading German and Philosophy at Kings College London, and Humboldt Universität Berlin)

When writing in direct response to another piece on the same theme, you immediately enter into a form of dialogue with the piece that is, if not your inspiration, at least your interlocutor. When entering into this form of dialogue with someone's impressions of a city from 60 years ago, the temptation to compare and contrast is too much. And as you begin to compare and contrast today with yesterday you naturally come to think about change and continuity. The things which change and the things which stay the same in a city. Then,

as thoughts tend to move in chains, you end up moving along to the idea of a society that moves and changes – one that progresses. This last thought took me full circle, back to something that has been on my mind a lot recently: Berlin as a progressive society, city and culture.

The changes that Berlin has lived through over the last half a century are both massive and well documented. Therefore, it is not my aim to write down the history, but rather give my personal experience of living here in the last year. However, as a point of reference, when Robert Dunstan wrote his piece for the *Old Scholars' magazine* the Berlin Wall had not even been erected. Yet, what obviously runs deeply through his piece is the East-West divide. Obviously this is much less a factor now, but it is not only the architectural differences that still mark the divide. Although things change very quickly here, there is still a sense that the areas in the East are possibly slightly cheaper to live in and have a more alternative culture than many areas in the former West. This kind of divide does not really stand up to scrutiny though because the Kiez in which I live, Wedding, is in the north-west of Berlin and is definitely one of the poorest areas of Berlin. In fact I would say that the East-West divide is now more of an aesthetic divide than anything else. I mean aesthetic in the sense that the architecture of the East is very different from that of the West: for example, as Robert Dunstan points out, the roads in East Berlin are huge and daunting to cross, like dual carriageways. One of my friends who grew up in East Berlin says that he remembers tanks rolling down the huge streets. I also mean aesthetic in the sense that the divide is possibly still existent as a construct in the minds of those who lived in Berlin when it was divided, something illusory but maintained in the attitudes of people.

But again, I would take all this with a large pinch of salt: most people I meet here do not hold onto things of the past and Berlin is, like it seems to have been in '53, very international and multi-cultural with people coming from all



Flags at the Motzstraßenfest (an LGBT Parade)

over the world and settling in different areas. Rehberge, where I live, is part of the traditional African Quarter, but is home to a huge variety of people. In fact, a lot of the roads have oddly familiar names (Liverpooler Straße etc.) because the area was at one point home to a large section of English immigrants. The movement of people to Berlin and their subsequent integration has a long history, from the Huguenots up to the many Turkish and, more recently, Spanish people who have moved here. But this is not particular to Berlin as a lot of large cities are very multicultural. What marks Berlin apart is the conscious appreciation of the fact that variety makes for more interesting culture. In nearly every street parade or protest be it the LGBT (Lesbian-Gay-Bi-Transsexual) parade or the First of May demonstrations, there is a heavy emphasis on the pros of a Multi-kulti society, with many people waving banners with anti-Nazi messages as well as positive messages of unity and celebrations of diversity. The many parades and protests show the progressive and liberal nature of Berlin society which, coupled with the radical anti-establishment attitudes which many people have, make Berlin not only a socially conscious example for other cities, but an enjoyable, liberal place to live.

The streets of Berlin, perhaps now louder than in 1953, remain peaceful compared to the crawling, swarms of people in central London. But the relative peacefulness of the streets is by no means a signal of a dead city: Berlin is the polar opposite of a quiet city. The vibrant arts scenes make Berlin one of the most enjoyable cities to live in. The great attraction of being able to go out for literally days on end may not be attractive to everyone, but the ability to do so speaks volumes about the mindset of people in Berlin. The clubs and the quality of the music is something which, I believe, is difficult to come by anywhere else in Europe. Without wanting to go into the politics of door policy (which is something that slightly speaks against my moral ideals of acceptance), the clubs in Berlin are phenomenal and Berghain is most definitely the crowning jewel. Berghain is enormous and dominating. Situated in an old power-station with huge cavernous rooms, steel adorning the walls and its aesthetic born out of its own minimalism, you are confronted with a natural, unaffected, unusual beauty. And then there's the sound, which fills you with its relentless rhythm and cathartic drive. I must admit that techno isn't everybody's cup of tea, but if you are planning to go out clubbing in Berlin then it soon will be!



Inside the Eisfabrik

Of course, there are downsides to every society and Berlin has its own fair share of social problems, be it to do with violence on the streets, high unemployment, drug problems, racism and so on. But as this piece is to do with my impressions of Berlin, I will only report on the problems which I have experienced. This itself is intertwined with the theme of continuity and change which makes up the core of this piece. In fact one of the central problems is one of change versus continuity and is a problem not particular to Berlin, but accentuated by Berlin's very unique past. Berlin's reconstruction, something touched on in Robert Dunstan's piece, is an ongoing process and, where in the piece from 1953 it was reconstruction from the war, now, since the huge exodus from East Berlin after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent occupation of buildings, it now seems to focus on the removal of people and institutions by private companies. The fight to keep alternative spaces open and in use, and old buildings from demolition, is a fight against a form of change which is viewed by many people to be greedy capitalists attempting to destroy people's way of life. How far this is true is difficult to measure, but when one sees the former squat Kunsthaus Tacheles with closed, darkened windows, still covered with the traces of its former activity in murals and graffiti, one is hard pressed to find a positive reason for the change. A building once full of artists, a club and a cinema is now an empty skeleton. In fact many take the end of Tacheles as a sign for the loss of the centre of the city to reactionary, conservative elements of Berlin society.

This form of change: the buying up, forcing out and knocking down of buildings and people, in each separate case becomes a symptom of the overriding rift. And the rift is everywhere to be seen: Mediaspree are vehemently disliked because of their attempts to regenerate parts of Berlin along the river Spree where many people may not only become priced out of where they live, but also entire institutions and buildings will be



Roland and his fiancée Amy lazing on a sunny afternoon in Mauerpark, Prenzlauer Berg

either knocked down or forced out. In fact the ongoing plans of Mediaspree build to a sense that Berlin is fragile. This change threatening the art spaces, the remaining squats, the old buildings is in itself part of a continuous line of attempting to rebuild. What it threatens is not just the aesthetic structure of Berlin with its wide roads, crumbling buildings, graffiti covered walls and undeveloped wastelands, but it threatens the delicately intertwined strands of the cultural spider-web which defines Berlin. For example, the development plans could herald the end of places like the beach bar Yaam as well as threatening buildings like the derelict Eisfabrik which at the moment does in fact house groups of people (who are squatting there). The recent arguments about the removal of parts of the Berlin Wall from the East Side Gallery publicly brings to a head the ongoing tensions (these tensions are not very well hidden at the best of times – graffiti on buildings all around Berlin voicing anger against companies like Mediaspree makes sure of this).

So as the attitudes of people in Berlin reflect a movement and progression towards acceptance and celebration of diversity, the idealistic attempts of private companies to regenerate the city will break the delicate social strands. People often get displaced and moved out as areas are regenerated and each time it is questionable for which virtuous reasons this is done. Usually it is the dubious goal of more capital and subsequently gentrification (which I must admit that I am in some sense contributing to as someone who can afford to pay higher rents etc.). The question is, regeneration for whom? Probably not for the people living there at the moment and very probably at the cost of the many cultural institutions which exist there. A lot of my friends speak with a degree of fatality and sadness about the future of this city: for the diagnosis seems to be that once the web has been ripped apart, no human hands could possibly rebuild it.

# The Railway Club c1950 – 1962

Roger West recalls the activities of the Railway Club at FSSW

**More than fifty years ago there existed at the School a club for railway enthusiasts, whose activities are recorded not only in the doubtful memories of its former member but also in surviving issues of its magazine and in articles written about it for *The Avenue*.**

I do not know when the Club was founded, but it was already established, with its own 'O' gauge railway, by 1950, the only other legacies from that time being some articles of railway interest in *The Avenue*, and the Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative Branch Lines in the United Kingdom.

This originated in 1953 in the Club and its purpose was to seek ways by which small railways could be made economically viable. SRUBLUK's inaugural meeting was held at Ashdon railway halt! It was seen by railway enthusiasts as a cause whose time had come and it quickly outgrew its FSSW and Quaker roots.

The Club was reinvigorated in the mid-1950s, attested by an article by Adrian Smith snr (1952-59) in *The Avenue* thanking Mr. Osborne and Mr. Cane for their help. The Club established a committee.

From the outset the re-founded Club welcomed members from all forms, and was I think the only School society to have members from Form I to Form VI2.

It was however for boys only: I have no doubt that if girls had applied for membership they would have been admitted: but no girl ever did. Enthusiasm for railways is chiefly a boy thing, and besides the Club's premises were a

long way from the girls' end. My recollection is that for most of its existence, membership of the Club hovered around 20-24, and this is confirmed by a Club Report in the 1959 *Avenue* which states that the membership then stood at 22.

The Club had three main activities.

One was the model railway. The Club had use of the attic above Mr. Sturge's study. (Ed: This later became the Hobbies loft) The 'O' gauge circuit was soon replaced by an 'OO' gauge electric railway, grandly named the Flaxstead and Bure Valley railway. Not only did we play trains' but we constructed an elaborate undulating landscape from corrugated cardboard, paint and foliose lichen (for the hedges). There were several railway buildings accurately modelled, chiefly by Peter Jamieson who went on to become an architect, on real buildings of Essex and Suffolk branch lines. Peter helped many younger members complete their buildings. This was an example of friendship by the older members to the younger members which was characteristic of the Club.

Another activity was excursions on local branch lines. A large number of these were held. The first few of these were accompanied by staff members (Mr. Benson and Mr. Cane

are mentioned in records), but latterly they were organised with almost no staff input. These included four excursions to Mildenhall, including the last train on the branch, and to Marks Tey, via Sudbury (the Stour Valley line) on the way out and Halstead (Colne Valley line) on the way back. We got as far as Buntingford and Peterborough. The senior members counted the younger members out, and counted them back; none was ever mislaid. There were also club meetings, usually in the form of an erudite lecture on some railway topic, or a railway quiz ("Which was the only railway company to have an exclamation mark in its title?" Unless you are Adrian Smith you probably don't know the answer to that one!). Most of these were provided by senior members for the benefit of junior members, but we also had some outside speakers. Mr. Parker, a senior manager on British Railways Eastern Region who went on to become the General Manager of British Railways, spoke to us in July 1960 on "Modernization on the Great Eastern", and declared himself very impressed by the intelligence of the questions at the end – so much so that he returned in 1961 to talk on "Safety on the Line", about signalling. It was through Mr. Parker's good offices that we were able to visit the signal boxes at Cambridge and Audley End and Whitemoor Marshalling Yard at March, where we saw hump shunting in progress – a real privilege for a group of schoolboys. In 1961 also we heard a Mr. Yardley on "Work Study on the Railways" and Mr. H.T.L. Champness, and Old Scholar (1914-21) on "A Station Master's Day" – he was then Station Master at Bethnal Green. He later invited a group of senior members for a behind-the-scenes visit to his station and signal box during a summer holiday. When Adrian Smith snr became an Old Scholar he was able to arrange for us to join members of Cambridge University Railway Club driving a steam train at Haverhill. (they drove, we rode behind!)

Our third activity was our magazine, known to its publishers as *All Aboard* and to



"All Aboard" mastheads, FSSW Railway Club. Upper (railbus) by Chris Rule, lower (steam outline) by Adrian Smith 1959

unsympathetic non-members as *All Are Bored*. Its genesis was during the re-founded Club's first excursion to Chesterford and Linton, on Saturday 18th October 1958. Adrian Smith snr recorded in his diary for that day "The younger members would like to start a magazine. Well, let them try." Try they did, and the first issue appeared in late Autumn of that year. It ran to eleven issues, one per term at the start then two per year, the last issue in July 1962.

Word processing and computer printers were unknown then, Roneoing (what that? Ed.) was troublesome and even the school resorted to it only for exams. The first four issues were printed by Adrian Smith jnr using movable type by a process that Caxton would have considered primitive. A linocut of the title was cut by Adrian Smith snr but most of the typesetting and printing was done by Adrian Smith jnr (no relation). The fifth issue was produced by typing carbon copies (also a Palaeolithic technology), and subsequent issues duplicated on A4 paper (I believe that

# News of Old Scholars

**We would love to hear from you and what you are up to now. Please email any news or photos to [oldscholars@friends.org.uk](mailto:oldscholars@friends.org.uk) or post to Old Scholars, Friends' School, Mount Pleasant Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3EB. Please also remember to let us know of any changes in your contact details.**

Terry Pollard's mother did most of the hard work). Adrian Smith snr has copies of six of these issues, which have been an invaluable resource for this article. Articles included Club News and Notes, a regular feature by Terry Pollard; accounts of Club excursions; railway facts and figures, a regular feature by Chris Rule; and other articles of railway interest too numerous to list.

It is easy to caricature railway enthusiasts as nerds who collect engine numbers and pine for the days of steam, but this was by no means the whole truth about the Railway Club. Yes, we did have a romantic affection for these things, but we were well aware that that is no way to run a railway and that modernization and efficiency were the only way forward. We rejoiced in electrification.

The period of the Club's existence coincided with a great increase in car ownership, a consequent rash of closures of branch lines and a feeling among the public that railways were yesterday's technology and that motorways, and poop-poop the wave of the future. During our first excursion to Mildenhall we were told by the Station Master at Barnwell that trains were full. A few years later we travelled on the last train from Mildenhall to Cambridge. Members of Cambridge University Railway Club had attached a headboard to the train emblazoned with the legend A Merciful Release After a Long Illness, with which we resignedly concurred. On his first visit Mr Parker assured us, I am sure in good faith, that the future of the Saffron Walden branch was secure. Three years later it was closed. Issues of All Aboard record opposition to some closures by the Club. These articles may now seem nerdy, but we had reason. The Minister of Transport was Ernest Marples, whose family business was heavily involved with constructing motorways, so we thought that giving him ultimate responsibility for British Railways was like putting King Herod in charge of kindergartens. At the public enquiries that preceded each closure it was not permitted to challenge the balance

sheet of the line, nor to suggest ways in which it might be run less expensively. Local companies or local authorities were not permitted to take over the lines as going concerns even if they were willing to do so. We felt that this was a stitch-up. We recognized that many small branch lines were hopeless cases, but believed that the country would come to regret the closure of minor intercity routes such as Cambridge-Oxford and Cambridge-Colchester. Today, with the price of petrol soaring towards the stratosphere, we may repent at leisure some closures that were then decided in haste.

School clubs can have short lives unless teachers are available for resuscitation when required. Mr Cane did the necessary once, but the Club of its own volition untied its apron strings, so that on the next occasion that resuscitation was required it was not available. Besides, railways were becoming unfashionable, and the Club passed into history. An obituary notice appeared in the 1963 Avenue. SRUBLUK still exists as the Railway Invigoration Society, a lasting monument to a schoolboy club of more than half a century ago.

## Roger West (1954-62)



Photo taken by Richard Gilpin at the end of the summer term 1960 of the crowd of pupils on the platform of Saffron Walden station, waiting for the "Squash" to arrive and take them home, via Audley End.

## A HELLO FROM NANCY WICKS FSSW 1979-1986

I am doing fine. I'm living in Los Angeles with my husband and have been working as an Occupational Therapist since 1998. I have been in California since 2001 - visiting and then finally settling here. Before that I was living in London for about 10 years - first as student (SOAS and the LSE) getting a BA in History and Religious studies of the Middle East and a MSC in Marine Policy and then working! After realizing none of this was for me I ended up retraining as an Occupational Therapist at Queen Mary and Westfield and then worked in Camden for a while. I'm now working at UCLA on an adult inpatient psychiatric unit and have been there since 2004.

I still see quite a bit of James Tuckwell, who lives quite close by in San Diego. He recently got married again and so I got to catch up with Phil Gibbs and Jem Allen who were at the wedding too. I know there's a lot of Facebook and Twitter FSSW communication but I haven't really got into all of that!

From reading all the OSA info it sounds like FSSW is doing well, I hope that's true?

I loved being there and always spent as much time as possible at school!

All the best,  
Nancy Wicks

## NEWS FROM GILLIAN HOPWOOD FSSW 1938 -1945

Gillian Hopwood and her husband, John Godwin, have worked as architects in Nigeria, setting up a practice, Godwin and Hopwood, in 1955. In recent years, whilst still practising architecture they have been compiling their knowledge and research of the city, which they call home. The culmination of this work is a subjective account of Lagos since it was named in 1861, when it was occupied by a foreign force.

The illustrated book, was presented to the public, in Nigeria, at the beginning of December 2012. In the course of the research John and Gillian worked in partnership with a historian, Prince 'Kunle Akinsemoyin, and a former Town Engineer of the Lagos Municipality, Engineer Timothy Aluko, to capture the breadth of Lagos's story, including its history, landscape, physical layout and unique peoples, with an emphasis on Planning and Buildings.

The foreword has been written by Professor A. L. Mabogunji, pre-eminent Geographer now retired from the University of Ibadan, with a preface by Mr Disun Holloway, presently the Honourable Commissioner for Tourism and Inter-Governmental Relations in Lagos State.

The book covers the development of Lagos as a settlement into the most populous city in Nigeria, the second fastest growing city in Africa, and the seventh fastest growing city in the world – considered globally as a Megacity.



Gillian Godwin, Chris Lee (at school during the 60's), and Gillian's daughter, Carey Godwin (at FSSW 1970-1977) visiting her in Lagos

It is a fascinating account of how Lagos was experienced "from the time of the Bini overlords" to Nigeria's independence, through the turbulent sixties to the anxieties and infrastructural deficits of the nineties and finally to the resilience, hope and inspirational change of the present.

The narrative has been developed from some familiar sources but relies on the author's interpretation of the historical facts, particularly those relating to the siting of Lagos and the embedded policies, both political and administrative which, they suggest, have become an impediment to clear thinking, while welcoming the Mabogunje plan as the first essential step in the new approach to the co-ordination of the factors which bedevil the need to make Lagos work as a modern city.

There is already a growing interest in the book's content and it is being commended to anyone interested in the architecture and history of this Megalopolis.

More information about the book will be found on [www.sandbankcitylagosat150.wordpress.com](http://www.sandbankcitylagosat150.wordpress.com)

**Books are available in the UK. If you wish to order please do so by contacting [sandbankcity@gmail.com](mailto:sandbankcity@gmail.com) Price £80.00 + p&p.**

# Obituaries

It is with regret that we have been informed of the following deaths:

- 25.3.12 Tony NEWTON (1948-55)
- 28.3.12 Daphne FRANCIS (Palmer 1926-32)
- 24.4.12 Anthony BROOKS (1936-46)
- 18.5.12 Michael HOW (1942-50)
- 29.6.12 Melanie BARBER (1954-59)
- 8.7.12 Alan WRIGHT (1963-70)
- 5.8.12 Martin HOLMES (1945-54)
- 8.8.12 Rachel WHITE (Pumphrey) (1936-43)
- 27.8.12 Geoff SOAR (1938-44)
- 6.11.12 Molly HATCH (Chapman) (1936-40)
- 5.3.13 Joan MUMMERY (Staff 1946-48)
- 11.5.13 Gerard WAKEMAN (1939-45)
- 15.5.13 Alan RISDON (1948-54)
- 11.5.13 Gerard WAKEMAN (1939-45)
- 25. 5.13 John WIGHAM (1958-65)
- 4.6.13 Janet ASHTON (Smith) (1947-54)
- 12.8.13 Charlotte STORY (Morgan) (1940-50)



**Melanie Barber  
(1943-2012),  
FSSW 1954-1959**

Melanie Barber was born on 16th February 1943 together with her stronger twin brother, Ondré. At a very young age she suffered coeliac disease which involved her in an uncomfortable stay at Great Ormond Street

Hospital, having frequent intra-muscular injections at a time when parents were neither able nor expected to visit children very frequently. She was greatly relieved when my parents arranged an irregular discharge to bring her home and the experience gave her an enduring dislike of hospitals. She was prescribed a rather curious diet which included grass, dried bananas which she hated [but were treasured in wartime by the rest of the family], and folic acid tablets which were mixed up with black current juice to make them more palatable. Eventually, she began to thrive and she took ballet lessons to help strengthen her legs.

In 1954, she and Ondré followed me and Benita to Friends' School Saffron Walden, where we had been sent during the invasion scare in 1941 – a fact that worried mother to the end of her long life. They both left FSSW after O-levels and continued their studies in Brighton and, in due course, Ondré went to Christ's College Cambridge and Melanie went to Bedford College London, where she read History and obtained a BA(IIa) in 1965. She was so interested in one series of lectures based on Dr Irene Churchill's two volume work on Canterbury Administration, that she promptly went round to Lambeth Palace to see if she could obtain a job there. At that time the Librarian, Dr Bill, said that there were no vacancies but that if she obtained an Archive qualification, they might think about it. Melanie duly enrolled on an Archive

Diploma course at Liverpool University and a year later she was awarded a Diploma in the Study of Records and Administration of Archives (DRAA). Accordingly, she went back to Lambeth Palace and this time she was successful. It would be trite to say that, amazingly, she retired thirty six years later, and it is true but there is much more to say than that.

In 1966 Melanie was initially employed to catalogue the papers of Archbishop William Temple – as she records, a much undervalued Archbishop. In her own words she "had no intention or expectation of staying very long but Lambeth grows on one. Also, its collections are quite unique – it is the British Library in microcosm and it has the advantage of being somewhat manageable. The more one stays the more one appreciates the range and richness of the collections. The real beauty of Lambeth is that all the collections interrelate – the manuscripts, archives and printed, they enrich each other – they embody the heritage of the Church and the Archbishops". So Melanie stayed with her beloved collections for thirty six years. She helped innumerable readers and academics to find their way through the collections and assisted many archivists in their careers and provided four Archbishops with appropriate material for their various needs.

In 1987 Archbishop Runcie awarded Melanie a Lambeth MA for her work and researches in the Library with the following words

"The association of religious experience with sound learning is ever before us at Lambeth through having here one of the best of libraries. Melanie Barber has worked in it for over twenty years and for most of that time has been Deputy Librarian and Archivist. I can speak with real feeling of her capacity to produce for me at a moment's notice the apt quotation or the appropriate historical allusion when I am called upon to speak of the foundation of the Church in Australia or examples of sanctity or eccentricity among my predecessors. Her expert knowledge as

Librarian and Archivist is second to none - or second only to Dr Bill. It is ironic but wholly appropriate that a desperate Archbishop in search of an historical allusion or reference should so often have been rescued from banality, platitude or inaccuracy by a calm and knowledgeable Quaker"!

Melanie had become that paradoxical figure of a Quaker at the heart of the Church of England. Someone who was around, and had been around for a very long time, to help anyone needing access to or information from the amazing collections contained in the Library at Lambeth Palace.

Melanie was involved right at the beginning of the Church of England Records Society and she served as its Executive Secretary for the first ten years until she was hospitalised, finally becoming a Vice President. Apart from the administrative effort that this involved the society produced some eighteen academic volumes for posterity and she was proud to be invited to edit and plan the Society's 18th volume "From the Reformation to the Permissive Society – a Miscellany to Celebration of the 400th Anniversary of The Lambeth Palace Library". She developed the plan and persuaded the authors, but in the end was finally too ill to do the actual editing – but the other editors, Stephen Taylor and Gabriel Sewell, continued with her plan and kindly attributed the first editorship to her!

One of her last two major professional activities was to write a Presidential address for the Friends' Historical Society entitled "Tales of the Unexpected: Glimpses of Friends in the Archives of Lambeth Palace Library". In the early days of Quakerism, Archbishops required their bishops to advise them of the number of Quakers and other dissenters living in their various dioceses! The Quaker testimony against the payment of tithes to the local incumbent was a particular issue.

In addition to her work for the Church of England, she naturally became involved with the Library Committee at Friends House, serving on it for twenty years and acting

as clerk for the last nine years of that time. She also served on the Quaker Committee on Christian Relationships for seven years, which was concerned with ecumenical rather than personal activities. In addition, she edited successfully the Friends Quarterly for some five years. She became a trustee of the George Gorman Memorial Fund, which had been established by her sister Benita and me. With other trustees she found ways of supporting Young Friends in various new and exciting activities.

In her personal life, she continued her contacts with her "Young Friends" group long after any of them qualified for the title. She enjoyed many walking holidays in the Lake District and abroad. She loved to go to the ballet and classical concerts – a habit she developed during her student days in London. She liked nothing better than to go to Sadlers Wells or Covent Garden to enjoy the ballet – initially standing in the gods, before she could afford the luxury of a comfortable seat!!

Melanie suffered the death of her twin brother, Ondré, in 1998; she retired shortly afterwards in 2002, and this was followed by her mother's death in 2004. She continued to work on the development of a Clergy Database for the next few years in the Library but she returned from a Turkish holiday with shingles. Thereafter she had some years of indifferent health which worsened following a nasty dose of pneumonia in 2009 which then led to the periods of hospitalisation and care at home which dogged her last three and a half years. Somewhat unexpectedly, Melanie died on 29th June following a major stroke, and her funeral took place at the Downs Crematorium in Brighton. However, her real Memorial Service took place in the Chapel at Lambeth Palace on 20th November when some one hundred and twenty friends and colleagues gathered together to witness to the Grace of God in her life in the place that she loved so much and had served so well for over thirty six years.

**Barry Barber (1941-1951)**



**Janet Ashton  
(Smith/Marriage)  
(1936-2013) FSSW  
1947-1953**

Janet (known at school as "Miff") died aged 77 on the 4th June 2013. Janet had a long battle with cancer supported by both family and friends

including three of her fellow pupils at Friends'. Anne Wickenden, Jane Gorman (Goodrich) and Patricia Chuter (Webb) helped her write the story of her life for the school archives. It is printed as the most suitable memory of her life.

Following my sister's footsteps, I came to Friends' School Saffron Walden in September 1947, taking the 11 plus later in the year, I became an Essex Scholar. At that time we had to wait five years before attempting O-Levels, which meant some had to bide their time.

About this time, having been a couple with Tod Marriage, I remember spending a Natch outing to Grimes Graves, being consoled by Len Beeson when Tod had decided to make O-Levels his priority!

Realising there were a few girls at a loose end, the headmistress Jennie Ellinor set up a course to fill the gap – "Jennie's S". We could choose our own way through it. I revised some O-Level work; went to Pure and Applied Maths A-Level classes; took part in whatever special topics I could; and in addition, did O-Level Technical Drawing classes, along with Heather Wright, who later studied Architecture. Other topics were Cookery and Needlework with Pauline Goddard, which included making and decorating the 250th Anniversary Celebration cakes, producing and hosting Saturday lunch each week (I only got to make coffee). For Needlework, Alison Edmunds made a garment and a book of samples. I did

Ancient History with Jennie Ellinor, German with Meurig Pearce, Anatomy with the Games mistress, Dr. Youngman and Art with Irene Chedd, making a mural in Croydon House and the Art Room and designing and printing bedspreads.

At the end of that year, I left school to start work as a trainee draughtswoman with an engineering firm in Harwich, my home. The firm sent me with the apprentices to Colchester Technical College, one day a week, to study for the Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) in Mechanical Engineering (this was a three year course roughly equivalent to the first year 6th form level.)

Returning to Saffron Walden one dismal November evening via Bartlow Station to retake my failed O-Level English Language, I found all the train carriages locked along the branch line, and was greeted by the Engine Driver with the words "I wasn't expecting any passengers!"

The Government of the day had introduced Technical State Scholarships to encourage those in industry. Having been awarded one on gaining ONC and enquiring what you did with it, I was told "go to University". I received offers from Bristol, Imperial College London and University College London, but all three said I must have Pure and Applied Maths and Physics A-Level and Chemistry O-Level to gain entrance. So I gave up the job, bought a Vespa Scooter, went full time and three evenings to Colchester Training College, to do it all in a year. There were very accommodating and I was able to make my own timetable, filling in as best I could and had the practical equipment put at my disposal.

The journey was 17 miles each way and Frank and Lucy Cadman were my saviours, having me en familie (John, Pat and David) for half the week. A weekly treat was going to the Colchester Rep with them.

O-Level Chemistry was my bête noire, but I got it, so off to University College London in September 1957, where Jana Rice was in her

third year reading Bio-Chemistry. That same year, Tod returned to Suffolk from National Service in Germany and Cyprus. When I arrived, I was one of 200 first year entrants, a mixture of mechanical, civil, electrical and chemical engineers. Fortunately there was another mechanical student like myself, David Hutchinson, who had also been in the industry for three years. We were twenty-one years old. I was told I could use the staff toilets, there being no facilities for women.

I was fortunate to be offered accommodation at Canterbury Hall, a London University Hostel for women in Cartwright Gardens, only a ten minute walk from College. The porters here were very tolerant and I was allowed to have as many visitors as I liked.

It seemed I could trade my abilities as a draughtswoman in exchange for expertise I needed in practical work, which was very useful to me! I took a small part in the Engineering Society, but I let them get on with capturing the rival trophies, etc. For sport, we could only take part in mixed hockey if I played (very reluctantly, I might say, as I always ended up with bruises).

After the first year we split down to Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. The wiring of electrical motors I needed to do was referred to as my 'knitting' and once ended with an explosion of a rather large motor. After the second year, we studied solely Mechanical Engineering under Professor "Red" Bishop. At the end of it all, David and I received a degree in Mechanical Engineering with Honours, Class 2.1.

Only then did the staff tell me, there should have been two women students from the start as the College was not prepared to take one on her own, but the other one didn't materialise!

In 1960, with a BSc Eng, Mech under my belt, I went to a job with one of the Cambridge Pye companies, based in Newmarket, not too far from Tod, moving to Risby, Bury St Edmunds, when we married in 1962.

Later, Jenny Ellinor offered to give me some teaching experience two days a week at FSSW – Boys' Physics!! I stayed overnight with Val and John Cadman at Hillcroft each week. It was there I learned to make home-made soup!

In 1966, our first child Roger was born and I then started to work part-time teaching Maths as a lay teacher at a small Convent School in the next village, where the nuns were delighted to look after the baby. I had to post a notice on him asking them to leave him to sleep sometimes! After two more boys, Andrew and Paul, I gave up teaching, only to have the devastation of losing Tod in the Paris air disaster in 1974. Six months' turmoil ensued, selling much of the farm we had only just started to buy, in order to pay the debts and duties.

A year earlier, I had been taken on by the Open University as a part-time technology tutor. They kept the job open for me as long as needed – what a blessing that turned out to be! It was something to get back to, which I did after a few months, loved the job and stayed with them 27 years. Meanwhile I was swept off my feet by my second husband, Os Ashton, and moved here to Wivenhoe in 1977, marrying in 1979.

Then a happy 12 years with Os; he needed a heart operation to which he succumbed in 1989. Again, in the previous year, I had joined a local engineering firm in the village dealing with water pumping systems, working for a fellow student from way back on the ONC course! So I was occupied part-time using a Computer Aided Design (CAD) package to make the transition from paper draughting to computer draughting, (later becoming a director, then a retired shareholder).

Our lives have been enriched by that Quaker education with five of us from that Sixth Form Special course remaining in contact across the years and last year four of us met at Walden to celebrate our 75 years.



**Antony Harold Newton, Lord Newton of Braintree, politician, born 29 August 1937; died 25 March 2012**

Tony Newton was an Old Scholar and was a pupil at Friends' School from 1948 to 1955.

In his forward to the book "The School on the Hill" which marked the 300th anniversary of the school, he fondly described Friends' School as a home "the place where we grew up, rebelled, had our first loves and our first broken hearts, the place where we matured from adolescents into young adults."

He was President of the Old Scholars' Association from 2001 to 2002 and presided over our Tercentenary celebrations in the summer of 2002.

Lord Newton was born in the Essex port town of Harwich and was the son of a builders' merchant. After he left Friends' School in 1955, he went to Trinity College, Oxford, from which he graduated with a degree in philosophy, politics and economics in 1958. He was president of the university Conservative Association in 1958 and of the Union the following year. He joined the Conservative Research Department straight from Oxford, and was secretary of the Bow Group. From 1965 he headed the department's economic section, and after contesting Sheffield Brightside in 1970 became its assistant director. He was awarded an OBE at the age of 35.

In 1970, he was selected for Braintree and was MP for Braintree from 1974 until stepping down in 1997. Once in parliament, he had to adjust to a kind of rightwing politics that was not part of his background. He never pretended to be a Thatcherite, voted against capital punishment and opposed beating in schools. His own two daughters, Polly and Jessica, both went to

state schools and he did not belong to any private health scheme.

As a backbencher, he urged humanitarian and rather interventionist causes: the holding down of VAT on electrical repairs, a higher tax allowance for pensioners, plus tax relief for blind people and on travel to work costs. A Private Member's Bill proposed the continuation of a disabled person's mobility allowance after retirement. In the House of Lords, he worked on a number of undertakings, ranging from the study of the effect of tax on the social services to drug abuse and hospices.

Newton did prevent scandal submerging Major himself, however, by closely guarding the secret of Major's four-year affair with Edwina Currie. At the time of the affair, which lasted from 1984 to 1988, Major was a Conservative whip, and needed a single colleague he could confide in. Had his faith in Newton's discretion been misplaced, it is highly unlikely that Major would have become prime minister.

In 1993 Lord Newton was made an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy by Anglia Ruskin University in recognition of Lord Newton's support and encouragement which he has given for over 15 years to the goal of establishing Anglia with its regional purpose.

He was involved with many voluntary organisations, and served as chairman of East Anglia Children's Hospices and Help the Hospices.

Until weeks before his death, Newton was active in proposing amendments and voting against aspects of the Welfare Reform Bill, on issues such as the cutting of legal aid to people pursuing welfare benefit appeals.

He had married his first wife Janet Huxley in 1962, and they divorced in 1986. His second marriage was to Patricia Gilthorpe, who survives him, as do his daughters and stepchildren, Robin, Emma and Sukie. In a statement Lord Newton's family said

following his death after a long illness. "In spite of his worsening health, he was determined to carry on contributing to public life right up until the last few days. He was a remarkable man."

**By Elisabeth Ring**

**Biography**

**UK Parliament**

Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons (Privy Council Office); 1992-97

Secretary of State for Social Security; 1989-92

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister (Trade); 1988-89

Minister of State (Department of Health and Social Security) (Health); 1986-88

Minister of State (Department of Health and Social Security) (Social Security and Disabled); 1984-86

Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department of Health and Social Security); 1982-84

Lord Commissioner (HM Treasury) (Whip); 1981-82

Assistant Whip (HM Treasury); 1979-81

**Committee House Date**

Tax Law Rewrite Bills (Joint Committee) Lords; 2009-10

Standards and Privileges (Chair) Commons; 1996-97

Standards and Privileges Commons; 1996-97

Standards in Public Life (Chair) Commons; 1994-95

Standards in Public Life Commons; 1994-95

Privileges Commons; 1993-96

Finance and Services Committee Commons; 1992-97

**Constituency Date**

Braintree; 1974-97

**Political life – other**

Special Advisor to Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; 1984-86

Officer (Treasurer then Chairman) Daventry Constituency Conservative Association; 1976-83

Desk Officer and Vice Head of Economic Section Conservative Research Dept.; 1966-73

**Professional life**

Ran family farm business; 1974-87

**Public life**

President National Energy Action; 2012

Chairman Friends of Torres Vedras; 2011-12

Governor Northampton University; 2010-12

Chairman Northants County VCH Trust; 2010-12

Governor Cardiff Metropolitan University; 2007-12

Council Member Agriculture & Food Research Council; 1988-90

Chairman Perry Foundation (Research Charity); 1984-90

**Sources:**

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# Friends' School Saffron Walden Old Scholars' Association

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### President 2013/14

CLARE THOMPSON (Parry) - YG 1981 -  
clareparry62@hotmail.co.uk

*(A list of past Presidents of the OSA can be downloaded from the Committee page of the Old Scholars' website at [www.oldscholars.com](http://www.oldscholars.com))*

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*A copy of the Constitution of the OSA can be  
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# A Taste of Friends'



History and RS trip to Rome



An Evening of Music



Sports Day



Young Chef Competition



Christmas Words and Music



Year 8 & 9 trip to Sorrento



Annual Production - Daisy Pulls it Off



Sixth Form Quaker Pilgrimage



