



# THE OLD PALUDIANS NEWSLETTER

December 2020



## WELCOME TO THE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

**A**s we fast approach the New Year, there is an uncertainty as to what 2021 will hold for us all. We can, however, look back on our years at school and our youth safe in the knowledge that the memories, good or bad, will always be there.

Reading through the letters and emails that have been sent in, the Grammar School and High School days are reported as being a time not only of a very high standard of education but of so much more that has had an enduring impact over the years. Many friendships forged at school have been maintained to this day.

As well as achieving academic success, pupils acquired an ability to enjoy life and fulfil their potential.

It is wonderful to read of the affection and respect given to so many members of Staff.

Careers, hobbies, sports and pastimes are mentioned throughout the Newsletter, having been first introduced and then encouraged at school. As one ex-High School girl says, "one of the things we learned, was to cope with anything." Let us hope that school has left that feeling as a legacy for us all in these difficult times.

The feedback from the "Lockdown Special Newsletter" was plentiful and positive. One criticism only

was that there were few contributions from the High School. This issue has almost tripled the number. So, watch out SGS we will overtake you yet!

We have lots of photos, a couple of poems and even a maths puzzle interspersed with the memories.

There hopefully is something of interest for everyone.

With the good news of a vaccine, we could be looking forward to a Reunion in September 2021. Meanwhile the Newsletters are a valuable way of maintaining communication with members.

We are already oversubscribed with submissions for this one and are holding some over for the next. Please keep your memories and stories coming in as they are of real interest to everyone.

My very best wishes for a joyful Christmas and New Year.

**Glenys Laws** (*nee DICKINSON 1959-65*)

*Editor*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Throughout World War II Slough Grammar School in Lascelles Road remained open. If my memory serves me correctly, I never missed a day's school, even when an unexploded bomb dropped on our back lawn. Yet COVID-19 closed the School and forced the cancellation of our much looked forward to 2020 Annual Reunion. We have done our best to make up for the loss of personal contact through the Newsletters, thanks to the tremendous efforts of the Editor, Glenys Laws.

Following re-opening of the School we have resumed contact and I am pleased to say that two of the projects we agreed to fund, the School Ethos Murals in the Legacy building and new benches outside it, have been completed. Other projects the Committee approved will be delayed. Similarly, no School prizes were awarded this year.

The membership approved the new Constitution in April and at the first Committee meeting since lockdown in November we agreed to adopt it and also in future to waive the Life Membership fee of £10, as an encouragement to School leavers to join immediately.

The Association is in a strong financial position with a bank balance of £5,900, thanks again to the generous donations of members. We also hold £645 in respect of Reunion refreshments' payments, which is of course ring-fenced.

At this time of year, we usually confirm our March Reunion date. I do not believe we will be ready to meet as soon as that. Even though recent news has been very encouraging there are still too many uncertainties to fix a date, but I would hope that, subject to School availability, we will be able to get together in September 2021.

On behalf of the Committee, may I wish you good health and an enjoyable festive season and do take care.

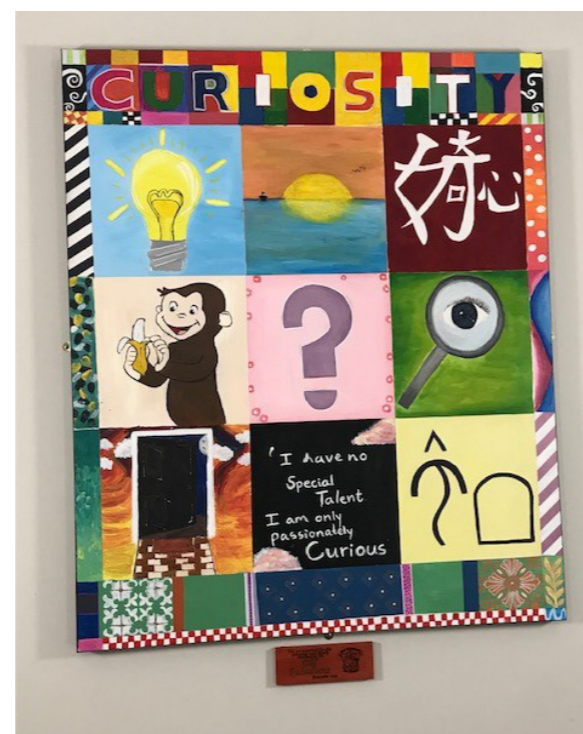
We'll meet again, we know where, but we don't know when ...

**Ron Fidler** (SGS 1943-49)

Chairman

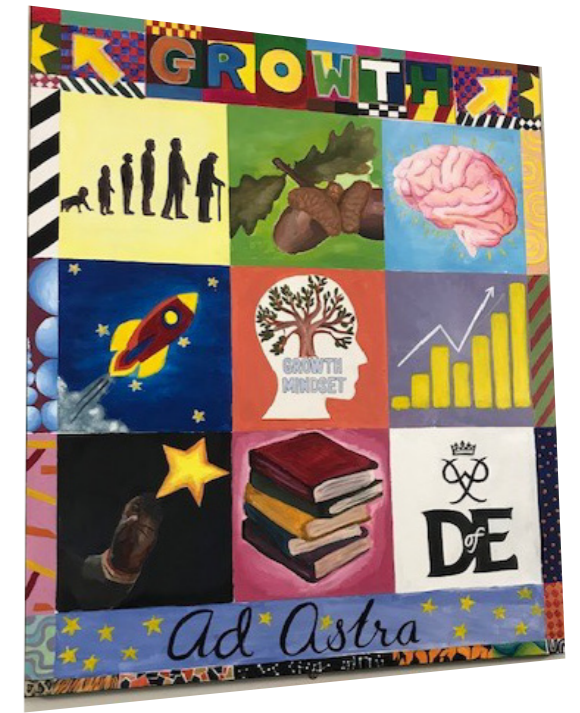
### Canopy Seating

The canopy seating replaces old benches outside the Legacy block. This provides a covered area for students to study, relax and socialise in the fresh air. It has been particularly welcome in the recent circumstances. This has been partly funded by The Old Paludians Association, by means of a contribution to the School Overall Maintenance Fund.



### Ethos Murals

The wall murals reflect the diversity and ethos presently within the School, manifested by the values of Unity, Curiosity, Growth and Service (UCGS!) and by the ethos of Aim High, Be Proud, Be Kind. The plaque acknowledges that the cost of the murals has been funded by The Old Paludians Association.



## RESPONSES TO THE LOCKDOWN NEWSLETTER

**Jean Sylvester nee Pickering** (SHS 1955-60)

I found the various memories in Jenny Brooks' piece, in the Lockdown Newsletter, very interesting especially as it was the SHS era that I attended - 1955-60. The detail of the 21st anniversary trip to Stratford enlightened me about what we did and enjoyed on that train trip! My main memory is of the train journey, when my group of friends persuaded me to make up stories to tell. I remember that they were all in hysterics due to the fact that the tales I told them were full of sex and other such mysteries even though at that time I was 15 years old with absolutely no actual knowledge about that topic. I hope no-one was 'traumatised for life' after that! I went on to work at the Pest Infestation Laboratory marrying an Entomologist in Africa and now am settled in Hertfordshire having been married 52 years! Happy memories. The trip also left me with a lifelong love of Shakespeare.

**Valerie Gomersall nee Watts** (SHS 1953-58)

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the Old Paludians' Newsletter and all the anecdotes, especially the one by Don Fraser about the April Fools' Day prank. I first met Donald when we were aged five at Upton Lea School. I hadn't seen him since we left in 1953 until we met a few years ago at the AGM which was held during the summer.

**Avril Sutton nee Esson** (SHS 1953-58)

Thank you so much for the Old Pals' Lockdown Newsletter. It was a brilliant idea and I read it all avidly, pretty much soon after it arrived in my inbox. There was only one name I recognised, ie David Harding, who wrote fondly of GAD, since Mathematics was also his subject. His sister was in my class at SHS (1953-1958) and he invited me to see the D'Oyle Carte opera touring company performing The Mikado at The Adelphi. Happy memories! I have never forgotten it.

**Bill Morgan** (SGS 1947-53)

Following the April Fools' item in the recent Newsletter, I was the second person involved in the prank. Below is an account of it as written in my life story.

In the meantime life went on at Slough Grammar. It was in March 1954 that three of us decided that the school had little or no tradition; so we planned to have an April fools' joke on the school. The three were me, Stan Cutts, who was a brilliant mathematician and John Barnes. We gained access to the school premises in the evening prior to the day and nailed a bra onto the school emblem over the school stage. We plastered sticky soap powder adverts on the hall ceiling and suspended sanitary towels, suitably dyed, between the lights. We did other things like painting all the school blackboards white and treacling the seat of Dr Long's private toilet, having replaced the working bulb with a blown one, so he could not see in the dark place where it was situated. We also ensured that there were only a few slices of toilet paper left on the roll.

It was Headmaster's routine to pop in to the toilet for a constitutional on his way in from his train to work. He certainly stayed longer in the toilet that morning! We then sawed the school ladder in half, so that our efforts could not be easily undone. Morning assembly was conducted under the decorations, with Dr Long announcing that the school half term holiday would be cancelled unless those who carried out the dastardly deed owned up. So we had no choice but to confess. We got John Barnes off by saying he was just passing and we forced him into helping, but Stan and I were immediately expelled. I did not tell my father, but the local paper found out via Bill Bradshaw and on the following Friday we hit the daily papers: The Daily Mail, The Daily Sketch and the Daily Herald, as well as the local Slough Observer. My father initially went absolutely spare, but later relented and told me of all the scrapes he had got into in Norwood.

Whilst I was expelled, I went for my Army and RAF officer cadet test at Cranwell. When we were doing the RAF test Princess Margaret was visiting. She had a certain reputation for playing around, so we prepared a treat for her. In the entrance hall stood a bronze statue of Mercury on top of the world. We got hold of a tin of Brasso and polished up his private parts, so they stood out. The RAF staff ran around like headless chickens not knowing what to do. In the end they had to cover the polished parts with Army blanco to make them match the rest of the figure. We were put on the first train back

and that was the end of the RAF test!

Some weeks later I went down to Westbury in Wiltshire for the Army Regular Commissions Board. The tests took about five days and some of the candidates were interviewed by the President. I was selected and I was asked if my school had been in the news and if so, did I know anything about it. I replied that clearly this was a loaded question as the Board must have obviously been aware already to call me to interview! The President asked me for the detail and laughed heartily when I told him. He said that was just the kind of spirit and initiative the Army needed. A week later I got the result. I had been accepted for The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. We were delighted but the school had a dilemma; I was only the second pupil to ever gain entrance to Sandhurst, which then was very public school orientated. I was reinstated and finally presented with a prize on school speech day for my achievements!

Stan Cutts was never reinstated in spite of his ability in Maths. It is not a fair world!

**Joan Whipp nee Stark** (SHS 1948-53)

Thanks very much for sending the Lockdown Newsletter. I think it is a great idea to share memories like this. I now live in Nelson, New Zealand. We are in level three of lockdown for the corona virus, but will be moving to level two tomorrow. ( Joan wrote this in May -Ed ). This means that I can visit my daughter and son-in-law. I have been in isolation because of my age and my son has been doing my shopping for me. Have been out only to get money for the cash machine and to the doctor. It feels very strange being out with the streets so empty. However, I think NZ has done very well to get things under control so quickly.

**MISCELLANY**

**Keith French MBE** (SGS 1963-70)

These are a couple of extracts from a longer article, that Keith has written. One about SGS the second about SHS. The full text will be available soon on the Old Pals' website.

I was at Slough Grammar School from 1963 to 1970. Why I stayed so long I don't know, for I didn't really enjoy my time there. I think part of the reason for me staying was that my mother and father were a generation that was so very proud that their children had been given the opportunity to enjoy what they saw as a public school education free from the burden of fees. I felt I owed it to them. My mother, who had a reputation of being a little rebellious in her younger days, was actually one of the first attendees of the new High School when it moved to Twinches Lane. She appears in the 1938 whole school photo on the website. Her life, like mine, did not turn out as her parents had wanted for her. She made the decision to leave school with the prospect of a secure job with Barclays Bank but instead joined the Land Army to help with the war effort.

My feelings about my time at SGS are a little sad but honest. So often you hear people say "school days were the best days of one's life". Well for me every other aspect of my youth was so much better than going to school! I think I must however express some humility, such that comes with age, along with the tempering of a tendency to display a degree of outspoken arrogance. Instead I must be grateful for the education I received. I am sure that it must have been my time at SGS that was at least partially responsible for setting me up for the achievements of my life.

In reflecting on the past 50 years, I remembered something that might be of interest to Old Pals from the High School. This relates to the demise of the Twinches Lane buildings. Not everything was lost to the contractor's wrecking ball, when the school was demolished. In fact we went in and stripped out the science labs and salvaged all of the wonderful teak worktops and cupboards before they were consigned to the contractor's bonfire. We recycled almost all the material, using it to fit out a new large passenger boat called 'The New Queen of the Thames' and to refurbish 'The Lady Margaret Anne', an earlier

boat which was named after my mother, who sadly had died in 1982. All the timber that was left over afterwards I used on our kitchen when we built our farmhouse. Some mornings I just sit there looking at the worktops and cupboards and wondering if all those years ago my mum had once sat at them in her lessons.

I should like to extend my best wishes to you all to stay safe and have a happy Christmas.

**Bob Moss** (SGS 1956-64)

It must be about 7 months since I wrote my last piece about how we were coping with lockdown and not much has changed in the meantime. At least we're all in the same boat – well, those of us observing the regulations are – so it's not much good complaining about what we've missed; in my case, seeing family, going on holiday, singing in choirs, going to the theatre and above all, Golden Wedding celebrations. However, one person in the family has managed to fill the time creatively – my eldest grand-daughter (17), a very talented artist who is currently studying Art, Design and creative use of materials. Lockdown has provided many extra hours for painting and her room is now full of the results. There has also been a financial benefit: a number of people have expressed interest in having an "original" Klimt, Munch or Van Gogh on the wall at home and my grand-daughter is able to oblige by producing very convincing copies. The money earned from these goes towards buying more art materials and saving up for university. There's an ironic twist in all this, as my wife's uncle was the artist Tom Keating, who achieved fame (and a very modest slice of fortune) by his 'fakes', or 'Sexton Blakes', as he used to call them. The difference is that my grand-daughter signs her own name on the picture! Her gift was certainly not inherited from me – "rather weak" was Vincent Evans's not unreasonable assessment in my end-of-second-year school report. Art and Music seem to be subjects in which some degree of natural talent is a basic requirement; in most other subjects you can graft your way to a modest level of success, whereas being tone deaf or the artistic equivalent are absolute showstoppers – or so it seems to me.

**Don Fraser (SGS 1953-58)**

This little story is an account of an incident that occurred when I was in the fifth year, in autumn 1957. After lunch, three or four of us would occasionally pop into Lascelles Park and make our way over to a lovely walnut tree on the far side of the park to enjoy a few walnuts. The route from the school was behind the senior cycle shed, then passed behind the safety wall of the army cadet firing range, and out through the hole in the fence.

Unfortunately, on this particular day, as we came back through the hole, we could see that the cadets were engaged in target practice on the firing range. The safety wall was of adequate length and height and clearly fit for purpose, so we continued to pass along behind it. We didn't feel threatened at all, as even if a cadet missed the bullseye, he couldn't possibly miss the wall! It was at this point our luck ran out. We walked straight into Major Wharmby who was heading for the firing range. It was a rather angry Major who confronted us. He had seen us come through the hole and walk past the safety wall. I don't remember his exact words, but the gist of it was "What on earth do you boys think you are doing coming through the fence and walking behind the firing range?" Not an unreasonable question you may think! One of our number [not me!] immediately replied "Sorry sir, we didn't see the red flag" - stunned silence - all eyes turned to look at the flag pole - NO RED FLAG - In a nanosecond the whole focus of the Major's anger changed. "Off you go, I never want to see you boys here again" and he strode off to rectify the situation.

I have often thought that if it hadn't been for my pal's keen observational skills and quick fire answer [see what I did there!] we would have been marched off to Dr.Long's study. A trip to see the Head would almost certainly have ended badly for us. After a serious dressing down, there would have been the rattle of canes as the Head chose his weapon of choice followed by maybe three strokes. I can testify that three strokes were a very painful experience as this was my fate after a rather short visit to the air raid shelter on another occasion. Truly we were very lucky that day - but a certain cadet may well have received a roasting from the Major for omitting to fly the red flag when live firing was in progress.

**Linda Osborne nee Handcock (SHS 1957-62)**

I went to a talk about the hearing dogs for deaf people by someone who owned one.



She got her life back from the trained dog, who went everywhere with her. It was a Cockerpoo breed. We owned one ourselves and they are exceptionally good at sensory observance. This impressed me and she asked if I would abseil down the Spinnaker Tower (560ft) to help raise funds for the charity. I said "yes", thinking it would only be about a third of the height so didn't mind as I have abseiled before. It was a total shock on the day to find it was the whole thing but by then there was no

backing down. I did this three years ago but it still sends shivers down my spine when I go on the ferry past the Tower.

**Keeping positive in lockdown**

**Reg Fahey (SGS 1954 - 60)**

Firstly, I cannot claim to have learned any new skills. I have only been doing more of what I usually do in retirement, without the parts that involve physical contact with other people. I am never bored. There is just so much these days to occupy our minds and it does not have to cost anything, or not very much, at all.

Basically I concentrate on fitness, creativity, networking and relaxation. I am not some kind of fitness freak. I am just talking about mobility and wellness. After all, I am seventy-eight years of age. I just want to remain independent, mobile and avoid falls.

I believe that the finest and the cheapest way to keep fit is walking and to do it on a regular basis. Doris goes for a walk every day for at least an hour. Two or three times a week I join her. We try to walk at a reasonable pace. We do not stroll, that is a complete waste of time.

In normal times I play golf twice a week. Although the golf courses have been closed under lockdown, I can still practice my swing in the garden. Recently I bought myself a practice mat and some plastic balls so I can practice by hitting off the patio against the garden trellis.

For many years I suffered with lower back pains but in recent years that has much improved thanks to doing regular yoga exercises at home. I use the 'Yoga Studio' App from Apple. It costs only £4.99 per

quarter and includes exercises specifically for lower back pain.

Gardening is another activity I enjoy which involves both exercise and creativity. We only have a modest suburban garden, but it still needs attention. I find I get great satisfaction from the most ordinary tasks like cutting the lawn, clearing the leaves and pruning the roses when I look at the end results. I would suggest we all need feelings of satisfaction to keep our spirits up.

On the creative side, I am quite keen on oil painting and belong to Cheltenham Art Club.

Which brings me to my third point, networking. I do enjoy keeping in touch with my many friends and acquaintances. I find you need to work at friendships to keep them alive. Humour is very important to many people and every day I receive and exchange jokes and funny video clips from my email network of friends.

Finally, on relaxation; I think it is important to get a good night's sleep if you can. Long ago my wife and I agreed we would not have a TV in our bedroom nor mobile phones or tablets. However, we do both enjoy reading in bed. I find it clears the mind of all the fragments of memories of everything that has happened during the day.

I should like to wish all members a safe and peaceful Christmas.

**Revd John Overton (SGS 1959-67)**

It was the last school assembly of the Autumn Term 1966. Dr W R V Long had been due to retire as Headmaster at the end of the Summer Term, but his successor could not take up the role until January 1967, so he had generously agreed to stay an extra term.

As Head Boy, it fell to me to give a farewell speech of appreciation on behalf of the School.

After the customary address to those present, I began, "As you all know, Dr.Long should have left at the end of last term..."

The immediate eruption of loud laughter drowned out the possibility of another word and I stood there, blushing, as the laughter continued for what seemed to be an eternity. Even Dr.Long began to laugh.

Eventually, the laughter subsided and it was possible to continue to speak. I doubt whether anyone remembered a word of it however.

Every good wish for Advent, Christmas and New Year 2021.

**Jim Lindop (SGS 1952-60)**

During the late 1950s I had poetry of a sort published in "The Swan" and in more recent years have had a collection published, as well as being featured in a number of magazines. Attached are a couple of my 'Lockdown' efforts, one a rewrite of Elvis Presley's 'Hound Dog'...in the form of a Shakespearian sonnet, the other a kind of Blues.

**HOUND DOG**

*Thou art naught but a cur that doth bewail  
Incessantly, thy hang-dog cheeks a-cours'd  
With tears like rivulets, thy mangy tail  
Now curv'd between thy thighs, thy spirit lost!  
I'd heard on the Rialto that thou wast  
Of gentlemanly status, noble stock.  
Ere long such prating, to my much rued cost,  
Did seem as worthless as a crowless cock.*

*Mark how the clever coney straights her nose!  
Or how the hurried hare makes soft his stride!  
Both know they need fear naught, nor harbour  
woes,  
For thou art fangless! Would that thou had died!  
Thy snivelling doth everyone offend.  
Thou nevermore can be my lusty friend.  
(With apologies to Lieber & Stoller.)*

**SINGING THE BLUES**

*I've got the Blues,  
Got the Blues,  
I've got the lockdown Lockdown Blues.  
I've measured my tyres' tread  
Fifty times, swept out the shed,  
Polished my camellias,  
Tried cooking recipes of Delia's,  
Meant to write more verses  
But only managed curses;  
Tell me when I may resurface  
Again.*

*I've got the Blues,  
Got the Blues,  
I've got the lockdown Lockdown Blues.  
I've sorted out the spices,  
Put daft apps on my devices,  
Memorised the Rubaiyat,  
Fed my guitars, tuned the cat,  
I've pleaded with my Muse,  
Then sat and watched the News;  
Tell me when I may be useful  
Again.*

## MEMORIES OF THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### Ray Ford (SGS 1956-61)

I had been thinking about what I could write for the next edition when I visited the website and read the article about SGS in the 1960's by David Browne. I left SGS in 1961 but some of the names brought back memories (mostly happy ones) of the five years I spent at the school.

I started in October 1956. I had spent my first month at secondary school at a London Grammar School and on arriving at SGS I was taken aback by how much more advanced the lessons were, especially in Maths and French and I spent the first couple of years trying to catch up. Still I survived.

As with most schools, in the 50's and 60's, corporal punishment was normal and Wilf Long always seemed to resort to the cane too easily as I found out from personal experience on a few occasions. However most of the Masters had their own way of maintaining discipline without sending you to the Head. 'Max' Wall used to walk around the class with three or four rulers in a bunch and would use them to prod any poor boy who was having difficulty remembering the correct tense of the French verb being taught. Mr Purvis who took Geography walked around the class with a table leg which he would bring down with a crash on the desk of any boy sleeping or daydreaming. There were many other examples, involving chalk and wooden-backed blackboard dusters, but I have no recollection of ever feeling scared or threatened, although other pupils may well have done.

I have to confess that I was in the class when Mr Boggis made his teaching debut and can clearly remember the laughter that followed his introduction, although I cannot lay claim to the comment reported in Mr Browne's article. It has remained one of my most vivid memories after more than 60 years.

### Dr Gina Barney (SGS 1946-52)

The RAB Butler 1944 Education Act, with its 'free secondary education for all' and my dad, made it possible for me to enter Form 2B on 3 September 1946, coincidentally my birthday. Gosh 74 years ago! My father had noted Burnham C of E 'Big' School hardly got anyone through the 11+. Having gone to school with the headmaster of Cippenham Council School

he got me into Miss Widdington's crammer. Passing in the summer of 1946, I went to SGS and my friend June Emmet (who lived at the bottom of our garden {not literally}) went to Twiches Lane.

On the first day we were instructed, by letter, to enter by the front door. I never did that again until five years ago. Eventually we went to the Assembly Hall with that chained up Swan over the stage and the first bit of Latin I learnt 'Ad Astra'. Never quite got 'to the stars' but still hoping. The reason for the front door entry was made plain by 'Nobby' (ER) Clarke. Apparently, the new second year arrivals were, by tradition, thrown into the hawthorn hedge by the playing field as an induction by the third and fourth years. "This had to stop" said 'Nobby' and it did, if you could run fast enough.

We second year entrants (we never found out where the first years were – anyone know?) were then told we would not be in main school, but down Lascelles Road in some old army Nissen huts. Nearer St Bernards Convent and the buses was some advantage.

There were three huts and being 2B we were in the middle one. There were 37 of us. Very basic. Mr Binstead was our Form Master. He also took us for Biology. The problem with the huts was, in the winter, they were heated with coke stoves. Between classes we took turns to stoke them. Never got warm.

The year 1946-47 was the first full year after the war and clearly school had expanded from two form to three form entry, hence the huts and using the Art Room and the raked Lecture Room as form rooms. There were 24 staff. A good number were fresh out of accelerated teacher training. What a wonderful mix of old and new. I would have loved to be a fly on the wall in the cramped staff room.

I left Cippenham School with the remark "Must work hard to succeed in the future" on my report (I still have it). I did, but I found it very tough. From being 14th out of a class of 45, I could only manage 20th out of 37. Lots of reasons. Firstly, I had a six-mile journey, at 11 years, with a one-mile walk and two buses to get to school. Secondly, during the war, teaching was a bit mixed up with retired teachers coming back from the war. Thirdly, my first year at school – being the age I am – was during the Battle of Britain, when the Germans dropped bombs on me.

**Gina currently lays full fibre (1000 Mbps) networks in rural fields. Photo is part of a DCMS case study. Beside, her community projects, for the last 52 years her day job has been as a Chartered Engineer in the lift industry. Ad Astra.**



They missed, but I missed some education! Then the Thames flooded at Maidenhead and the Thames Valley buses couldn't get through. That meant walking to Burnham railway station, another mile, to get a train to Slough. I just was not up to it and admit to the odd tear. 3B was much better!

PS: If you look at the year photograph on the website, I'm the question mark at No 1 (?) on the 7th row next to Grimley. I am very tiny (bigger now). (Clive) Bartlett, my best friend from Cippenham, is No 5 in the front row. We went to Kings, graduating in 1959, then lost touch.

### Reg Fahey (SGS 1954-60)

I must confess that I have only ever been to one Reunion and I think that was in about 2013 when I travelled with David James (1953-60).

Don Fraser was also there, he was a fellow pupil from 1953 to 1958.

I attended SGS between 1954 and 1960 and I look back on my days there with mostly fond memories. Indeed I have good memories of living in the Slough area at that time. After graduating from Battersea College, with a degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1965, I joined the CEGB and then National Power for a career in power station design, construction and operation.

Also in 1965 I married Paula Cail who had been a pupil at SHS from 1954 to 1959 before transferring to Langley Grammar for the sixth form. In due course we had two children. Unfortunately we divorced in 1993 and later I remarried. Paula never remarried and sadly died in 2012.

I made some great friends at SGS and thankfully we have stayed in regular contact ever since. They are David Buckley, who like me, joined SGS in the second year and now lives near Newport; David James, who was at SGS from 1953 to 1960 and now

lives in Gloucester; and Mike Green (1953 to 1961), who now lives in California. I live in a village just outside Cheltenham.

## MUSICAL MEMORIES

### Alan Singleton (SGS 1957-65)

Alan has some memories about music during his time at school

#### RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

The composer Ralph Vaughan Williams died in August 1958. I have a vague, and possibly incorrect, memory of him visiting Slough Grammar School in what must have been the last year of his life. We did get some eminent musicians, and my memory may be false, but that would have been a stellar addition. He was very tall, six foot five or six, and somewhat dishevelled. That fits the picture but I may be constructing my memory from what I've seen in subsequent years. Does anyone else remember that occasion in 1957/8? If so it would be good to learn more about it.

#### LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Mr Moutrie arranged an exciting trip to London to attend a session taken by Leonard Bernstein, who was of course a very famous music educator as well as composer and conductor. I don't remember anything of what he taught (!) but he had a full orchestra there and finished with a rendition of his West Side Story Suite, which was amazing! I remember Moutrie's comment on his conducting style - "he won't be able to do that when he gets old!"

#### FREDERICO FERRARI

The choir gave a big concert in the Methodist Hall in Slough. I saw, when I visited this year, that the

building is no longer there, although I remember it as quite a fine building. We had a guest artist called Frederico Ferrari, who in earlier times had been a very popular singer nationally. I remember the choir stuff had been very serious, including choruses from Messiah, and Ferrari was obviously quite surprised and appeared a bit embarrassed because he said "If I had known, I'd have brought something more high-faluting". The first time I had heard that expression.

#### AMADEUS QUARTET

We occasionally had quite eminent visiting musicians coming to give performances - I remember the Amadeus quartet (one of the world's best, for decades) coming. These concerts took place after the morning break and before lunch. I remember us giving rapturous applause, thus demanding one or more encores. I think the players much appreciated this. They never suspected that the reason for this was that we wanted to extend the concert up to lunch time so that there was no prospect of further lessons before lunch!

#### MUSICAL ALUMNI

My successor as Head Boy, Clive Timms, does have a claim to fame as he became a repetiteur at Covent Garden Opera House, as I found out in reading some of the programmes! Although he would sometimes play the piano for hymns at school assemblies, I don't think Music was his major subject then. His brother Colin was more into that, as I recall. Philip Hinchcliffe, a previous Head Boy, became a senior producer I think at the BBC, but that was not music-related. He was notable, in his Head Boy role, for wearing exotic-looking waistcoats

#### Barry Gates (SGS 1954-60)

Moving from a quiet village Junior School to Slough Grammar School was an experience. The final year in one place to the first year in another, the top of the one small hierarchy to the bottom of the next larger version. From a short walk along a country lane and round the local cricket pitch, to a long walk to a bus stop and double bus journeys lasting an hour each way. New environment, new rules, new subjects to grasp and Masters wearing gowns.

Most experiences from that initial week have faded from memory except a recollection of the first Chemistry lesson which remains vivid. Seated on stools, at laboratory benches, set it apart from the desk and chair of a conventional classroom. 'Chemi' Morgan, my Chemistry Master of the day, introduced himself

and the subject matter to come with the words "Let me show you some Chemistry in action".

For the next 30 minutes he was the wizard of unusual properties and the various characteristics of different solutions and materials. Liquids that changed colour or generated gases when mixed. Metals, soft enough to cut with a scalpel, that reacted violently when dropped into water. The two that remain sharpest in my memory were a small conical mixture of powders, set on a gauze and tripod over a Bunsen Burner. It erupted slowly over a few minutes as a mini volcano. The *pièce de résistance*, at the end, was setting light to a thin strip of Magnesium and it burning with dazzling brightness. He drew the show to a conclusion by saying "and that's the last you will see of that for the next five years".

He was correct with that statement, but it sparked an interest for me. After leaving school I worked in various industrial laboratories for many years, until I joined a multinational company. Then the scenery changed and life took a different direction.

#### Alan Forbes (SGS 1949-53)

With others, I was a 'late entry' to Slough Grammar School for which there was an entrance exam. My family lived a few doors along from the Dickinson family. GAD was a Maths teacher at SGS. My parents arranged for him to coach me, and as a result I gained a place.

I found Maths a difficult subject always and in my last year's report GAD emphasised my lack of mathematical ability! However, I am grateful for his support otherwise I would not have received the benefit of a grammar school education. During my time, the Headteachers were imperious individuals and my only personal contact was to receive the cane for escaping over the boundary fence on a sports' afternoon.

Our first year was in the old Army - type Nissen huts on the corner of Lascelles Road and Sussex Place. The heating was from coal stoves which we used to fill with grass clods which smoked out the buildings, a good start!

We had travel week, which included visits to Stonehenge, Kew Gardens and Slough sewage works (known as 'Chalvey Treacle Mine'.)

Most of the pupils lived in Slough and their parents would have worked at some of the iconic companies in the town, Mars, ICI, Aspro, Horlicks etc..

Things have changed dramatically over the years but the school continues to flourish and be as vibrant as ever.

## FROM GORY TO GLORY

#### Dick (Richard) Croker (SGS 1956-63)

I was always an adventurous outdoor person. At Primary school we had a playground and a large field which was manned by a friend's mother among others. When she was on duty we went there because she gave us cigarettes. We thought nothing of it - everyone smoked then.

When I went to SGS it was different. Only a small playground. One day the football went under a parked lorry and being small I was asked to retrieve it. I did and when I came out from under there were screams. Odd. I then noticed that my face was wet. I wiped it and came back covered in blood. I went to the secretary's office and she put a bandage over my scalp and phoned for an ambulance. Unfortunately, there was none available, so a member of staff was asked to walk across the fields with me to Upton Hospital. After shaving my head, it was decided that I did not have a broken skull and they said they would not stitch the cut but try a new method of gluing the skin together. The glue was held in place by a plaster. I was told it would drop off by itself in a few weeks and all would be well. That is exactly what happened. The glue became brittle and crumbled away.

#### CUNNING PLANS

I decided that being out and about was not for me. So I volunteered to be on a rota for taking the tea trolley to the Staff room. I also stayed in the canteen after lunch for thirds. Being small had its advantages because in winter I could climb up to the small top window of the cloakroom and nudge it open. I then crawled through and unbolted the outside doors and pushed them open to let others in. Then the doors were pulled to and re-bolted. The playground duty staff member could not work out how a locked door could be opened. After quite a while, unbeknown to us, they decided to have another teacher watch from a distance and after I had done the usual crawling, I went to unbolt the door and was greeted by the duty teacher. Another plan was needed so I joined the choir. I cannot sing in tune and sat at the back of a nice warm hall occasionally mouthing what was being practised. All went well until Mr McCabe said he wanted to have a concert and was going to listen to each of us to see where we should be placed. My turn came and I did my best. He was not pleased and as a punishment said that I should come to all rehearsals. I enjoyed my punishment but pretended that I would rather be outside, just to please him.

#### SOCIETIES

Another way of avoiding playgrounds was to join a society so I joined several. Because they met at different times on different days, I could spend most of my time in a classroom listening to interesting talks, playing chess, making things or being in the greenhouse tending cacti and succulents. Thus, for a small outlay I reaped great rewards.

#### SPORT

I did not enjoy kicking a wet muddy leather ball about and being kicked with nail studded boots. So I changed to rugby. A great move because we played on the fields to the outside of the school property. I was put on the wing opposite Sefton Hayes, another small person. We spent most of our time sitting and chatting. Rarely did the ball come our way thanks to Ron Brown and Roy Coleman. I was then asked to go back to football because my lack of exercise was noted. I asked to go on cross country runs instead because a friend said that a few of them started the run, turned off behind some bushes, had a quiet smoke and after a bit of light muddying, joined the runners coming back. This worked well for quite a long time. One day, just as I was turning off I felt a whack across my backside. I turned and there was Mr Madge on his bicycle with a cane. I had to run but luckily, he stopped after a while. So I waited until he had gone and stopped until the others returned. It seems this was noticed. I had to run with the rest after that, but the advantage was that runners had first use of the showers and sometimes the water was really warm. To ensure I had the possibility of a shower after a longer run I ran faster, and this was noted. I was asked to run as an extra with the cross-country team at home and away runs. I enjoyed this even though on one occasion away, there was only a bath of water. We ran through rubbish tips and scrambled over ploughed fields, but it felt good. I even came in front of some team members and was therefore given a team vest and ran as part of the team in some events. I did quite well but the stars were Peter and John Virgo and Phil Hinchcliffe (I hope I remember that correctly).

Not surprisingly I was sent to the Headmaster's study quite regularly over the years. He asked what I would do if he were to cane me and I said "I would just laugh it off." He agreed that it would not discourage me, and I was never caned.

Quite an achievement.

## MEMORIES OF STAFF

### Philip McGoun (SGS 1960-66)

Unfortunately I was not a high flyer nor did I become a Doctor or Lawyer or go to Oxbridge but I still feel grateful to the school for teaching me French which I used to great effect in the career that I ended up pursuing.

I have special fond memories of 'Max' Wall who encouraged me and helped me along the rocky path of education. I would dearly love to know if anyone has any stories of him or knows anything about his life. I never found out while I was at the school. I know that he has died of course. Do you know when and where?

There were several teachers at the school who were inspiring and there were some that would be locked up today if they displayed the same behaviour (and should have been locked up then too.)

My travel folder is in the loft. Does anyone else have theirs? It used to come out from somewhere for school travel days when we would visit the gas works or the fire station or perhaps further afield to see the Goring Gap, London Museums or Whipsnade Zoo.

For years, my father was the Windsorian coach driver for the Easter field trips to the Lake District. He must have done those annual trips for 20 years and more, never failing to bring us back Kendal Mint Cake on his return. That meant of course that we didn't see him during the Easter holidays as he

would be away with the school. The picture attached is of the 1947 party.

That's enough for now. More next time of the trip to the Dolomites, Ivinghoe Beacon, Mr Gibson, the fire in the desk, and the game of "Drains", etc.

Keep safe everyone

### Michael Richards (SGS 1975-81)

I was delighted to read Mr Browne's article. It sparked so many memories. I was a school boy at SGS from 1975-1981, seven years after my father Ray Richards sadly passed away at an early age as Mr Browne mentioned.

It felt strange knowing my father had taught at SGS but I was determined to go. In the lead up to going Dr Long, the SGS Headmaster with whom we kept in contact after our father had passed away, sent me a most earnest letter of support and advice which as a 12 year old made a big impression upon me! It was really delightful to read the comments about our father in the Lockdown Newsletter. I do not have enough memories of him sadly so it was wonderful to bring him back to life for a few moments in my mind.

The comment about him cycling at a slow pace amused me particularly as I used to cycle from Langley to school on Wednesdays with my school bag strapped on the back of my bike, my hockey stick



bag on my back, my sports bag in my left hand and my viola in my right hand as well as holding the bike handles (road safety was not the same in the 70s!) and I'd hope my father would have been proud of my commitment! I also remember his dislike of bridge. I think Gad, with whom he worked, was a fan and indeed I played a lot of bridge in the sixth form.

I was taught Maths by Spud... sorry Mr Blagrove, who of course worked with our father. He was an excellent Maths teacher just like our father and GAD. Lots of other names spring to mind - for example Mr Binfield (Biology), Mr Rogers (Latin and Greek), Mrs Holgate (English) and many more. Mr McGinn was my sixth Form Master and hockey inspiration. He played for England. He encouraged a number of us in his form to play and eventually I was the school hockey captain. I hope I lived up to that.

### Michael's sister, Ann, adds:

Do you remember Mr. Richards and his black bicycle? A mathematician with a quick wit and dry sense of humour, a love of cricket and hockey (coached the school teams), an accomplished pianist and fan of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas.

Ray's children, Ann and Michael, were delighted to read mention of their father by Mr. Browne in the Newsletter earlier this year. They say that it gave them "an unexpected positive in this difficult year." Ray died in 1968 when his children were only 10 and 5 years old. They would be happy for anyone who has any personal memories of their father to pass them on to the editor.

Ann and Michael come from a small family and are only in touch with one relative who remembers their father so your memories (positive ones!) would be much appreciated by them.

### Charles Tyrie (SGS 1953-60)

I was in the SGS intake for 1953-1960. Firstly, thank you for the newsletter. I live in Nottingham and come to the Reunions whenever possible. Between times therefore I do appreciate being kept in touch with old colleagues and the school.

Sadly, the need to have an arterial by-pass operation behind my knee and then a period of convalescence precluded me from contributing to the previous Newsletter. I have read the articles about GAD, and it is thanks to his teaching of Applied Mathematics and Mr Richards' Pure Mathematics, when I was in the sixth form, that led to me obtaining a degree in Civil Engineering at the University of Birmingham and my subsequent success in life.

Some years ago I wrote a Trilogy called 'The Langley Boy', with the first book describing the social period between 1941 and 1960, especially my formative years at SGS. There should be a copy of the three books in the school library, which I presented to the then Head Teacher. GAD occupies the pride of place in many sections, because of his impact on my school career. There are a number of anecdotes which were not mentioned by the contributors to the recent Newsletter.

His most memorable piece of advice, given to our sixth form Maths group, during his final lesson with us, was very profound. He said that if we were going to involve ourselves in a life of crime, later in our lives, do not go down for a piffling sum, make it a really really big one. It was an interesting way of saying, do not take up criminal activities in view of the likelihood of being caught. However if we did, to make our goal £millions for nothing less would justify being in prison.

What I liked about him was the immense respect his presence generated with all the boys he taught and it was such that no one was ever inattentive in his lesson. If it could have been bottled, it would have been sought after by generations of teachers. He was also not only a brilliant Maths teacher, he had the unique ability to explain concepts and theories in so many different and understandable ways that even those struggling with the subject could grasp them.

I shall try to attend a meeting of the Old Pals when the lockdown has passed.

### Philip J Watson (SGS 1958-62 aka Derks)

Philip sent in some memories and also a Maths puzzle that GAD had sent him when he left to go to university.

When we had completed our 'O' level examinations in June 1960, we had to return to school for four or five weeks. Consequently, our Mathematics Master (G A Dickinson) gave us a choice of what we would like to do. He suggested the following options: more pure mathematics, reading books, or learning to play cards - we didn't want the first two options and we told him that we could play cards, namely pontoon, whist, rummy, brag, poker etc. He stated that he would teach us to play (duplicate) bridge. Thus we had six periods (including two doubles) with the Master, teaching us bridge for the next few weeks.

On entering the sixth form we joined the bridge club and played every Wednesday evening after

school for a couple of hours. We also played at a local bridge club on a Friday evening. Thus my interest in bridge was generated. In winter 1960, Mr Dickinson took us to Reading Bridge Club, where cut-in rubber bridge was played. We normally played for 1d (an old penny) per 100 points, when we played bridge in the sixth form common room. My partner, Sid, and I joined a table and agreed the stakes of 1d. As we bid and made two slams and won two of the three rubbers in the game, we were 2,400 points up. However, our opponents suggested that they paid us our winnings by cheque. As we were expecting two shillings each, we couldn't understand this – in fact, we were playing for a penny a point and we had won £10 each! We persuaded them to just pay us two shillings each – I have never played rubber bridge for money since. In early 1962 I played for the Bucks and Berks junior county team.

When I went for my interviews for a university place, the oddest one was at the Economics Department of Nottingham University. The interviewers were Andre Gabor (Reader in Economics) and Clive Granger (Senior Lecturer in Statistics – he went on to be eventually the Professor of Econometrics at the University of California and in 2004 won the Nobel Prize for Economics.) Initially I sat an hour's exam consisting of 10 questions on Pure and Applied Mathematics. I got the pure questions all right and the applied all wrong (I had never done any applied mathematics.)

After the formal greetings, Gabor and Granger referred to my application form and my interest in playing duplicate bridge. Consequently, nearly the whole interview of some 45 minutes consisted of discussing bidding systems, card play technique including discarding and signalling methods etc. at duplicate bridge. A card game I had learnt at school and which has given me a life time of enjoyment, both playing and teaching the game. Also, when I received the offer of a place from Nottingham University I just had to get two passes at A level, one of which was to be Pure Mathematics.

**Problem:** A cube of 1 unit side is drilled from all three sides with a drill size of 1 unit in diameter. What is the volume of one of the eight corner pieces that remain?

It took me nearly 15 years to solve. It came to me how to do it when I went on a De Bono lateral thinking course in the early 1970s.

(The solution can be found on page 20- Ed)

### Gerry Lake (SGS 947-52)

My first Maths Master was Mr Mears who I found to be difficult. Later I came under the influence of GAD, a lovely man, but by then I was too far behind. I still have my last report from him saying I had achieved 3% in my mock O-levels with the remark, 'Tries hard but has little aptitude,' which was kind and very accurate. Following the main O-level exams there was a six week hiatus during which GAD and Joe Purvis the Geography Master, both County Players, taught the whole fifth form the mysteries of bridge. What a transformation; from being a dunce I became a star. Thank you GAD.

### MEMORIES OF VINCENT EVANS.

As I often did (attention seeking no doubt) I was fooling around behind his back. The first time he caught me I was made to stand with my face to the blackboard.

Undeterred, I carried on with my antics. He caught me again but this time he slammed my nose against the blackboard which certainly stopped me being such an idiot ever again. Summary justice and well deserved. I even managed to pass my O-level Art!

### Dick (Richard) Croker (SGS 1956-63)

I have very fond memories of GAD.

He was always even handed with discipline which made him popular.

I was never taught by him (I was never in the top Maths group. My contact with him was philately.) I was one of a small team that helped make the timetable for the following year.

The first thing to put in was his afternoon off. Then his sixth form teaching. Then repeat this for Senior English Mr Madge (I hope my memory serves me correctly). We had time off classes and in a small room with several blackboards we would then put in the core subjects for each year. Then the sixth form most often-used combinations so there was no clash. Some of us managed to programme in that we could do both sciences and languages for three years. No mean feat and it depended on a new talented teacher lasting the course.

Also we made sure each year that, after the vitals had gone in, we came next!

This happened, so I was very lucky.

I still enjoy logic and spatial problems - keeps my elderly brain working.

The one outstanding thing was that we were all given the opportunity for a really great rounded education and most of us took full advantage.

### Gillian Dibden (Staff at SGS 1986-89)

My only claim to official association with the school is that I did three years part time Music teaching there toward the end of Gerald Painter's time. I was thrilled when they asked me to join the Old Pals - I was born in Slough and have had continuous links with the school.

My mum was at Slough Secondary School from about 1917. Born 1907 - really loved it. Talked with such affection about teachers like Benjy Llewellyn - and others. I was educated at St Bernard's all the way through. In 1954 my parents bought the empty plot opposite the front door of SGS and had a house built there by Ireland, the Slough building firm (father of Jean Tyler nee Ireland.) Mum lived there until 1989 or 90, when she just moved round the other side of the school to Juniper Court (off Sussex Place and on the edge of Lascelles Park.) She loved being opposite the school, but I don't think it was her washing that was stolen for the April Fools day joke! If it was she would have thought it a hoot.

I could go on for hours talking about SGS and the various links with different generations. My ex, Michael Griffiths, was taught by GAD. He is 82, was a Thomas Gray Primary and one of those brainy peo-

ple who passed the 11 + at 10. He also talked about Vincent Evans, whose daughter Audrey I knew.

### Barry Gates (SGS 1954-60)

Perhaps the most sincere compliment you can pay to a former teacher is to note 'they made a difference'. Harry Doncaster, the Woodwork master at SGS, made a difference for me that endured. He encouraged a respect for tools: not to misuse them, rest a Smoothing Plane on the side not the base and it's a habit for me now. By chance, he also started my lifelong interest in canoeing as a sport.

Returning from a seaside summer holiday I must have mentioned I'd tried a canoe. Harry had plans to hand for making a canoe and suggested, if I was interested, I could make it in the school workshop as a project for the following year. So it came to pass. Harry sourced all the material and under his guidance I started. By the next summer, with the help of another boy from the same year, it was finished. I think the boy's name was Mike Gilson but my memory is a little shaky on that detail. I had my own canoe to paddle on holiday that year. It was used for several seasons after school days had finished and sold eventually to be replaced by others made from Fibreglass. The canoeing continued until recent times when age and injuries forced an ending to an enduring pleasure.

The other aspect of Harry, that stays in my memory, is Morris dancing. From memory, outside school



Barry Gates (far right) with the Morris dancers



activities, he was a member of The Whitchurch Morris Men. Looking back to the 1950s, Morris Dance might seem an unlikely subject to introduce to a boys' school. He caught the interest of seven or eight boys from various senior years, found another boy who played the accordion and provided sheet music to learn tunes for some dances. With Harry as 'foreman' he must have started to teach us a few step routines. Costumes were simple. White shirt, white handkerchiefs and cricket whites - it was a boys' school. A Baldric over the shoulders with rosettes front and back in school colours, red and gold, also Bell pads to tie over the lower leg. It is possible these last two items of mine exist today, hidden somewhere at the back of a cupboard. I can recall dancing at a SGS Fete in the late 1950s and have a grainy photograph from that day. Also half a memory of the side being driven round, crammed into the back of an Armstrong Siddeley Sapphire, to dance on village greens in South Bucks on a Saturday afternoon.

I didn't continue with the Morris after I left school, but I have maintained an interest in English traditional culture and folk law, Harry opened that door for me.

## MEMORIES OF SLOUGH HIGH SCHOOL

### Linda Osborne nee Handcock (SHS 1957-62)

No wonder winning a scholarship to Slough High School in the fifties was so sought after. When you read the correspondence and memories of past pupils it's wonderful to learn how so many aspired to achieve great careers and were successful in a variety of professions and businesses contributing to the wealth and progress of our country.

I will always feel a sense of pride when I cast my mind back to the seven years I spent at Twinges Lane. I wasn't a remarkable pupil academically. So many of my classmates were extremely creative, clever with diverse abilities. However, early on in the sixth form I was chosen to be a school prefect and Head of House. I think the leadership stood me in good stead as eventually I became a Head Teacher myself. I have always been passionate about education for my pupils. I love reading everyone's stories as seen here in the Old Pals' Newsletter. I live near Winchester now and Slough has changed so much but I won't have a bad thing said about it unlike Sir John Betjeman (See page 20 -Ed). My

### Dr Gina Barney (SGS 1946-52)

Because I was too young to take "O" level, I repeated the Upper 5th moving from 5B in 1950 to 5A in 1951. GAD took us for Maths. He saw that I would stagnate, so he fixed for me to do extra work in addition to the ordinary work. He wrote in my report of Autumn 1951:

'He has been doing special work during the term (whilst maintaining the ordinary work at a very high standard.) I think he has profited much thereby. I am pleased with the results.' I came second.

In the summer (1952) he wrote 'He has continued to work at the more advanced studies, meanwhile maintaining a very high standard in the ordinary work. Very promising pupil.' I came first for Maths and first in the class!

My love of Maths is due to the foundations and encouragement of GAD. I think I have fulfilled his expectations

mother died last year aged 91. She was my last family link with Slough. I miss her so much. Her wisdom and friendship were so important to me. She saw me through my education and encouraged my school life at Slough High School. She loved the High School but didn't have the same opportunities as me, leaving school at 14 years with no qualifications. She worked for years for the NHS and I often wonder what her take on the current lockdown etc. would have been.

We had another grandson last year. Becoming grandparents again has been incredible and such fun though we haven't seen him for two months due to isolation. Peter and I have been married for 54 years have three children living near and are so lucky to see them regularly.

We had planned to go on the Queen Mary World Cruise next year. Who knows what life will be like then? As Scarlet O'Hara said "Tomorrow is another Day". So let's rejoice and keep going.

Those of us who went to SHS will have had a very special experience. One of the things we learned is to cope with anything.



The road safety competition winners

### Carolyn Boulter nee Blatch (SHS 1959-64)

I was at the High School for Girls 1959-1964 as Carolyn Blatch and became Head Girl.

In lockdown I am going through collections of photos and this was in my parents' collection. We won the Road Safety Competition probably in 1963. In the photo from left to right are Jane Griffiths, Audrey Froggatt, myself and Janet Rolfe. We won a monetary prize and Miss Owen the Head asked what we would like it spent on. In those days, before mobile phones, we asked for a telephone kiosk in the school. The suggestion was greeted with horror!

### Vivienne Jones nee Hardy (SHS 1958-60)

I was a pupil on the Pre - Nursing Course 1958-1960 when it was in Twinges Lane.

I feel very fortunate to have attended the High School. I left at 15 to attend a two year full time commercial course, at East Berks College, to train as a secretary.

Although I did not go on to be a nurse, I worked for almost 20 years in the Health Service across the borough in various roles including a time as a Medical Secretary and also a Public Relations Officer. About two years ago I met someone I recognised from the High School, Jennifer James who lived in North Ascot. She told me about the Old Pals and said she was on the committee and urged me to attend.

Sadly the last time I saw her, at the Old Pals Reunion a few years ago, she completely didn't remember who I was when I spoke to her and I understood later on that she had dementia. I first knew her when I was a teenager and lived in Eton and went to the Eton Wick Youth Club. She grew up in Eton Wick where her family had a greengrocers in the shopping parade. I am very glad she told me about the Old Pals. Unfortunately she died a few years ago, which I read about in the Newsletter. I have attended several Reunions and even managed to get a copy of a school photo which had been lost in a house move.

### Christine Seaville nee Herman (SHS 1957-62)

Most interesting to read memories from years ago in this latest newsletter. I will briefly add a few memories that instantly come to mind.

I was amused to read Mary John's experience with pastry. My experience was similar: the teacher was delighted my crust fitted the pie plate exactly - but that was because I'd eaten the extra! In the sewing term we had to make a red (gingham-like) skirt but I had no clue, so was told to try an apron instead which probably also was beyond my ability. My domestic skills haven't improved much since!

I'm regularly in touch with my German pen friend from the fifth Form, and it is their golden wedding anniversary next month.

I still see the Pywell twins a couple of times a year. They live in Vancouver and I live in Victoria, BC.

I remember driving my Austin Seven into Windsor Castle to visit Miss Gerber one afternoon after I'd left SHS. I bought the car for 10 GBP plus a sack of potatoes: the floor had rusted out in places - I could see the pavement! I wasn't embarrassed though.

And I bumped into a nephew of Mrs. Boul's by chance one Christmas in Arizona almost 60 years ago. He had the same unusual surname - a small world.

I remember getting authorisation to get on the 441 bus to High Wycombe at the Three Tons before the students who lived closer. Some of us had a much longer ride than others so this made good sense.

I remember wearing different shorts when I made the school hockey team and being so proud! What a long time ago...

### Julie Peake nee Albrow (SHS 1950-57)

I left Slough High School in 1957 and went on to Goldsmiths College for two years.

I then taught in Millwall. The series 'Call The Midwife' captures that area beautifully.

I married an Australian, John Peake, and came to Australia in 1961. We had three children who have given us eight wonderful grandchildren who range in age from 19-27.

We have lived in Melbourne, Brisbane and Mackay before retiring to the Sunshine Coast about one hour north of Brisbane. This region is a real paradise, close to the beach and the mountains. The climate is excellent and we have been COVID free.

Australia tackled the virus quickly, closed our International and State borders and almost everyone obeyed the rules and socially distanced. John and I have been very lucky having travelled to Europe, Africa, South America, Canada, USA, Vietnam, Thailand and of course England many times. We had planned holidays in Bali and India this year but obviously they were cancelled. I doubt that we will venture overseas again but there are still areas of Australia to explore.

I am still in touch with Sue Cheale (Nee Clark 1952-56), Alyson Coney (Nee Skinner 1950-55) and Angela Rix (1954-57) and also, before they passed away, with Jill Mansfield, Jillian Rider and Jacky Hoskins. Modern communications make keeping in touch so much easier than when I first came here when all we had were air-letters.

My sister, Elaine, also went to Slough High School. She now lives in New Mexico.

Slough High was an excellent school and I still have happy memories of those years.

### Betty Wess nee Cohen (SHS 1941-46)

I remember the jazz group with our one and only record - Joe Loss playing 'In the mood' and our concert group with Ruth Walkman trying to teach us tap dancing to 'Run little raindrop run'.

There was the Victory Parade outside the hall with Miss Brock, Art teacher, taking the lead. We made a white V for victory, surrounded by navy blue.

I also remember being served 'Rock of Ages' pudding. One day plain, then with jam and custard the next. We also had it with sultanas and then of course rice pudding and jam... so many happy memories during war time.

### Lyn Jones nee Williams (SHS 1954-60)

My memories of Slough High are of comfort and friendship. Everything, so new at first, soon became a world of widening experiences. The music played before assembly introduced me to the classical music I still enjoy. Discipline was firm. Staff were mostly unmarried women then and lessons completed the structure of the days. I particularly remember the dry humour of Miss White, French, and Miss Heywood's enthusiastic History lessons. Headmistress, Miss Crawford, encouraged us all. On the lighter side, each term we had to make sure that the length of our uniform was not above our knees and our beret was always to be worn to and from school or else we would be in trouble, which probably meant a detention !! Lazy chats with friends or club meetings at lunchtimes balanced out the day. I look back on my SHS times with happiness.

### Sally Lovelock nee Fryett (SHS 1965-72)

I can think of no stories of note to share except to say that the school was a real privilege to attend and the standards were excellent due to the dedicated staff who saw teaching as a true vocation.

## WANTING TO GET IN TOUCH

**Betty Wess nee Cohen (SHS 1941-46)** is trying to trace Eileen John who lived in Salt Hill Way. If anyone can provide contact details for Eileen we would be pleased to pass them on. -Ed

## IN MEMORIAM

### Mrs Elizabeth Hurst (SGS Staff)

**David Rogers (Staff SGS 1963-2000)** Has informed us of the below:

Old Paludians who attended the school after 1986 will be saddened to hear of the death this Autumn of Mrs Elizabeth Hurst. She came to the school from the Piggott School (Wargrave) to be Head of English and to take charge of the Library. With her lively sense of humour and Canadian accent she cut a memorable figure. Lessons revealed a deep enthusiasm for her subject and the ability to present and vigorously defend a position in argument. Out of lesson time she organised (and encouraged others to organise) a range of theatre and cinema trips and she sang with the school choir. Students (and staff) of the time will remember her well - and we will all mourn her passing.

### Patrick Slater (SGS 1956-64)

**Ian Cruickshank (SGS 1959-67)** Writes to expand on David Garrod's piece in the March 2020 Newsletter.

Patrick died on 17 December 2019 in Weston Super Mare General Hospital, to which he had been admitted about 10 days earlier. He had moved from London to WSM around 2005. The death certificate gave cause of death as basal cell carcinoma and chronic kidney disease. That does not tell the whole story however.

Patrick had been suffering from cancer for over 15 years. I believe it was initially located in the sinuses on the left side of his face. He underwent many cancer operations at The Royal Marsden in Fulham, often followed by further surgery to minimise his disfigurement and to offset the side effects of the initial surgery, including operations to his eyelid and to his mouth to help him swallow solid food. In total he must have undergone about a dozen operations, but the cancer always returned a year or two later.

Between 2005 and 2017 I would meet Patrick every 12-18 months on one of his trips to the Royal Marsden. We often had a late pub lunch (the Anglesea in South Kensington was a favourite), with Patrick having his usual white fish and white Burgundy. If he was running late at the hospital, we would knock back a couple of bottles of wine in the buffet at Paddington Station, before he caught his

train back to WSM. He was never despondent nor self-pitying, even when the hospital had given him news he did not want to hear and he faced a three hour journey to reflect on it.

David Garrod is correct about Patrick going to Afghanistan, at least twice. On the first occasion in 1970, I was one of the two drivers (of an ancient Landrover). We were initially a party of four (including one other OP, Mick Donoghue), but Patrick bummed a lift from us as he "was going in that direction". He left us somewhere between Herat and Kandahar when the Landrover shed a wheel and he bummed another lift from a passing Dutch couple. The experience clearly did not deter him as he went back a year or two later and, in later years, he visited other Asian countries including up - country Thailand and Burma. For someone who was not in the slightest bit practical he managed to travel to, what in those days were, far-flung places with little or no creature comforts and few tourist facilities. More latterly, he confined himself to frequent trips to Amsterdam and Lisbon where he had friends who would put him up.

To the extent Patrick had a career, it was in teaching, mainly in primary schools, sometimes as a supply teacher. He always viewed work as a means to raise funds to travel and explore the world. After LSE and SOAS and a year in Edinburgh, his first job was at a primary school in the London Borough of Camden. Six of us moved into a very grand house in Regents Park Road, for which we paid a peppercorn rent. One of the governors at Patrick's school owned the house and, being of a socialist bent, wanted to let it to young professional people working in the public sector in the borough. Though new to the school and area, Patrick somehow persuaded him/her that he and his public sector friends were the obvious candidates, again showing his powers of 'extracting freebies'.

At some point in the late 1970s Patrick moved to Amsterdam and found a job teaching EFL at a junior school in Haarlem, to which he commuted daily. He would tell friends his flat was in the centre of Amsterdam, which was true. Visitors would only discover on arrival that the adjacent house was the beginning of the Red Light District. I visited him there once or twice, but then lost contact for a number of years. I believe he stayed and worked there for upward of ten years.

He returned to London in the 1990s and took

various jobs teaching English to immigrant children, finally ending up at a school in Bayswater. Along the way he bought a flat in West Kensington. In 2004 he took early retirement as his disease had begun to reveal itself and shortly after moved to a flat in WSM where he had friends.

The last time I spoke to Patrick was a month or two before his death. He was a life-long Spurs

supporter and we discussed the wisdom of the appointment of Senor Mourinho and the stupidity of Donald Trump. As always Patrick held very strong views on both! He also kept up his love of the horses and was still studying form and placing bets, using a neighbour as his runner, right up until his admission to hospital. I am told he more often than not won, albeit his bets and winnings were relatively modest.

## SLOUGH

by John Betjeman (1906 - 1984)

John Betjeman published his poem about Slough in 1937 in the collected works 'Continual Dew'. Slough was becoming increasingly industrial and some housing conditions were very cramped. In willing the destruction of Slough, Betjeman urges the bombs to pick out the vulgar profiteers but to spare the bald young clerks. He really was very fond of his fellow human beings. Slough is much improved nowadays and he might be pleasantly surprised by a stroll there.

### SLOUGH

*Come friendly bombs and fall on Slough!  
It isn't fit for humans now,  
There isn't grass to graze a cow.  
Swarm over, Death!  
Come, bombs and blow to smithereens  
Those air -conditioned, bright canteens,  
Tinned fruit, tinned meat, tinned milk, tinned beans,  
Tinned minds, tinned breath.*

*Mess up the mess they call a town-  
A house for ninety-seven down  
And once a week a half a crown  
For twenty years.*

*And get that man with double chin  
Who'll always cheat and always win,  
Who washes his repulsive skin  
In women's tears:*

*And smash his desk of polished oak  
And smash his hands so used to stroke  
And stop his boring dirty joke  
And make him yell.*

## SOLUTION

From Philip Watson's problem on page 13

Area of circular drill cut out is  $\Pi r^2 = \Pi/4$

Thus length of side of 'square' drill is  $\sqrt{\Pi/2}$

FIRST CUT:  $1 \times \sqrt{\Pi/2} \times \sqrt{\Pi/2}$

2<sup>nd</sup> CUT:  $\sqrt{\Pi/2} \times \sqrt{\Pi/2} \times (1 - \sqrt{\Pi/2})$

3<sup>rd</sup> CUT:  $\sqrt{\Pi/2} \times \sqrt{\Pi/2} \times (1 - \sqrt{\Pi/2})$

Thus total volume of removed is:

$2 \times \{\sqrt{\Pi/2} \times \sqrt{\Pi/2} \times (1 - \sqrt{\Pi/2})\} + 1 \times \sqrt{\Pi/2} \times \sqrt{\Pi/2}$

Simplified:  $\Pi/4 \times (3 - \sqrt{\Pi})$

Approx. = 0.964 cu. units

Thus, the volume of a residual corner of the 8 corners is approx. 0.0045 cu. units

*But spare the bald young clerks who add  
The profits of the stinking cad;  
It's not their fault that they are mad,  
They've tasted Hell.*

*It's not their fault they do not know  
The birdsong from the radio,  
It's not their fault they often go  
To Maidenhead*

*And talk of sport and makes of cars  
In various bogus-Tudor bars  
And daren't look up and see the stars  
But belch instead.*

*In labour-saving homes, with care  
Their wives frizz out peroxide hair  
And dry it in synthetic air  
And paint their nails.*

*Come, friendly bombs and fall on Slough  
To get it ready for the plough.  
The cabbages are coming now;  
The earth exhales.*