

AOSA President 2008-09, Harry Snalam

Presidential Address

Madam Chairman, Old Scholars and Friends,

I was working on a rather boring job one day at the beginning of last year, when my thoughts wandered back to Ayton. I was thinking about everything that Gill Jackson (née Hinds,) Arthur Grainge and Dick Dennis have done for the Old Scholars' Association over the years and how much they deserved to be chosen as Presidents. I never thought I would qualify for such an honour. A few weeks later, I received an e-mail asking if I would consider being President in 2008–2009. I was absolutely astounded that my peers put my name forward for this important position. After giving the matter a little thought, I decided humbly to accept the invitation. My one worry was what the contents of my inauguration speech would be. I asked Dick, and he suggested I include some of the "adventures" from my years at Ayton.

I was at Ayton from 1947 to 1952. I have many memories from there, but my favourite times by far were the Saturday and Sunday and Wednesday afternoon walks. Needless to say, I did not excel academically, but I did form many lasting friendships and, as you are about to hear, I also developed the ability to make something out of absolutely nothing at all! I'm told I have not changed much in appearance since the day I left. Apparently others perceive me as a studious individual; a quiet and scientifically inclined respectable member of society. But my School friends remember me as having an insatiable appetite for adventure and danger, as well as being somewhat of a rebel.



Harry Snalam - President 2008-09 delivering his Presidential address at the AGM.

able member of society. But my School friends remember me as having an insatiable appetite for adventure and danger, as well as being somewhat of a rebel. In my first year at Ayton I was friendly with Clive Olbery, (as he came from Blackpool and I lived in Lytham we travelled together part of the way from the Fylde to Ayton, accompanied by our mothers.) The two of us made a den out of one of the circular holes that we found up on Cook's. In retrospect, these were probably ancient graves that had been robbed over time. We covered the den with branches and bracken for a roof to make it reasonably waterproof. Clive and I decided to start making toffee and made a stove out of a shoe polish tin filled with cotton wool and paraffin, in our den. We would nip back into the dining room after everyone left, and empty some of the sugar bowls into a jam jar to take out to the stove. Sugar was the only ingredient for making our toffee and this was a well kept secret between the two of us. One time our paraffin stove flared up out of control, and set fire to the roof of the den. We only just escaped without getting burnt – you have no idea how fast dry bracken burns, and we spent at least half an hour extinguishing the fire on the side of Cook's. After this near miss, we found an old platelayer's hut along the railway lines towards Kildale, with a pot-bellied stove in it, so we resumed our toffee mak-

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ing exploits in a safer environment.

Dick (Dennis) and I decided to try and make some iron (just for something to do.) We put filters in the ditches to catch the red rust that floated down. We needed to make charcoal to run a blast furnace to convert the iron ore into iron. At first we were going to misappropriate the charcoal from the art room, but their supply was



Above: Harry finally inaugurated as President and sealed with a hug and a kiss

very meagre, it wouldn't have gone very far. We had a den along the Beck near Easby where we used to make a fire and put a treacle tin full of wood chips in it. When it stopped smoking the wood chips had turned to charcoal. Oak chips, we found, produced the best results. After several weeks of charcoal making, we made a furnace out of clay with a tin in the middle of it and inlets for the air jets. When we figured we had enough iron ore, we filled the little furnace up with charcoal, some of it glowing of course, and poured the iron ore over the top of it. We had a hopper on top which held the rest of the charcoal. We had made a rudimentary blower to blow the furnace

which was powered by the Beck. We left it going on Saturday and returned on Sunday. When all the charcoal had burnt out the end result was two little peas of iron that stuck on the end of a magnet, so we knew that we had been successful.

During my first year I had a supply of matches, but they were usually confiscated during the term. So in my second year, I had a cigar box which I carried with me every time I went out, tucked under my sweater. The box looked as though it contained a first aid kit, because it had Band-Aids and Iodine in it. It also had two chemicals, that when put together, burst into flames which meant that I didn't have to have matches any more.

I went to the mines for the first time in year 3. I was terrified; I didn't think that I would ever go into them. Bill Coates started going in with me and the



Pictured above: Past President 2007-08- Tessa Snowdon, President 2008-09 - Harry Snalam, and President's lady Susan Snalam wearing her spouse's brooch.

first trip was to the bottom of the ventilation shaft, which we called the chimney. Later we started to explore the mines and see how far we could go. There was always a draught coming up which made us think the other end was open somewhere. We had torches which used to give out, and candles for emergencies. One time my torch gave out and Bill dropped his shortly after, I had to try to make my chemical

match work in pitch black to light two candles. We got so used to going down the mines, we used to stand outside and offer guided tours to anyone who came by. We didn't charge for our services and we had several brave kids who came down with us. Bill and I wanted to see how far we could go, the trouble was we could only go for an hour and a half, and then we had to come back. So we used to run in a crouched position because the roof of the mine was only around 5 feet tall. I never managed to find the end, but Bill went up for a full day one time and found where the mine became flooded. It took him 3 hours to go one way.

Somebody suggested that we should try blasting in the mines. I knew how to make a really good blasting powder, but after several attempts we realized that all it was doing was making a really good bang, and not moving anything. We then put a pretty large charge in a crack in the rocks, with a slow burning fuse, and ran all the way back to the opening. When we didn't hear anything, we thought the fuse must have gone out. So we slowly went back down towards the fuse, just as it exploded, nearly blowing us over.

I think it was Louis Trotter who said, "What about dynamite?" We knew that it started off as nitroglycerine. So, I approached Geoff Baxter, who was a Lab Boy, and he thought it would be good fun to try and make some. He supplied me with all the chemicals and became part of the team. Our first mixing was in the

Woodwork Shop on a Saturday afternoon. When it started to smoke and bubble, we got out of there. We thought that it was going to blow up! We ventured back after 10 minutes to find the Woodwork Shop still standing. I then went to the library and checked the Encyclopaedia Britannica, to see where I was going wrong.

I had another mixing one night in the Changing Room in

one of the sinks. I successfully made about an ink bottle of nitroglycerine. We couldn't find the special sand to make dynamite; I even asked Spig (Bernard Coates) if he had any in the lab and he told us the only place to get it was ICI. Obviously, that suggestion was not followed up. We didn't know what to do with it because we realized that it was too dangerous. We used to put a drop on the floor and scuff it with our feet. It would go off with a little bang, as would a droplet dropped from 3 feet in the air. I wanted to take it up Cook's and throw it down the deep mine shaft,

but none of us was willing to carry it. Finally one night I poured the dynamite onto a sheet of newspaper on the Teachers' Terrace and lit the corner. It flared about 6/8 feet with a big orange flame that lit up the whole sky. Luckily, nobody was awake to see it!

Another favourite place to hang out was the Nissen Hut, this was a lab and a workshop beyond the mill building, that wasn't being used as a classroom. We were allowed to go there to make radios and we formed the "Nissen Radio Club." My ambition was to make a transmitter



Bernard (Spig) Coates in his familiar brown lab coat, conducting a science experiment

(which even in those days was completely illegal!) I made one and Bill went home to tune in his radio to receive it. I called him using a fake call sign. Ten minutes later he came belting back to say that he had received it fine, but there was a 'ham radio' guy from Thirsk trying to get in touch with me. Needless to say, we took the transmitter to bits right away.

One day Spig asked Bill and me to go under the Nissen hut to retrieve eggs that his hens had laid there. We found three or four dozen, some old and some fresh. The only way we could think of sorting the fresh ones from the bad ones was by floating them in the tadpole tank, but we also lost all the ones that were good! Hopefully, none of the non-swimmers ever stood on one....

Another amusing incident in the Nissen Hut happened when Bill and I made a little cannon out of a small tube – we put some gun powder and a little ball of solder in the tube. We heated it with a Bunsen burner until it exploded. Just before the second shot went off, the door burst open and Spig walked in. He said, "What's this then?" Bill said "It's Harry's little cannon." Then Spig looked at the blackboard where we had drawn a big bull's eye and threw us out of the Nissen hut and banned us from going back there.

Bill then had to reconcile himself with his father so that we *could* go back in the Nissen hut. The little workshop in the Nissen hut gave me the opportunity to make pass keys which I supplied to several of my friends. This was quite easy to do

with all the metal scraps lying around. When a member of staff lent me a key to open the changing room, I pressed it into a bar of soap. With this imprint, I filed down the piece of metal, until it was the correct shape. These keys were useful, as they gave us access to the lab, the dark room, the bike shed and the domestic science room. I used to go into the Nissen hut to do experiments that I wasn't allowed to watch in class. Blakey Dunn disliked my handwriting, so he used to make me practice instead of watching the science experiments with the rest of the class; my handwriting never improved but science was my top academic subject in school.

I also made a circuit for charging batteries which we used in our torches when we went down the mine. One time Spig came in when I was there and said "What's this Snalam?" I said "It's a circuit for charging batteries?" "Nonsense, you can't charge dry batteries" was his reply. I told him "Overnight it makes them like new again." "Then you are rejuvenating not charging them," he told me.

I went home to Lytham one holiday, leaving Bill with some of my blasting powder. He found if he put a nut part way on a bolt, and then put some blasting powder in the nut, and another bolt on the other side, when he threw the bolt it exploded with a very loud bang. When I returned to school, he wanted to show me, so I went round to his house and he proceeded to do the experiment. There was good bang, Bill was crouching down, covering his ears from the explosion, when I real-



Harry and Susan Snalam, outside Headmaster's front door (that was) after the AGM

ized there was a pool of blood forming on the ground around his feet. When it had exploded, one of the bolts had flown into his face and cut his nose and eyebrow. I gave him a handkerchief to staunch the blood and took him across the green to the Doctor's where he had four stitches put in his face. Spig stormed in having followed the trail of blood and said he knew that something like this would happen, it had got to end, but of course it never did!

At the beginning of one spring term, Dick announced that he had something to show me. He proudly produced 100 feet of clothesline and said, "We are going to climb the Crag up Cook's." After a few days of thinking out the best climbing strategy, one Sunday we decided it was time to give it a try. I went up to the top and threw the end of the rope down to Dick, who tied himself on to it. He then started to climb up from the rocks below. I could find nothing to tie the rope to except a rather flat rock, which I managed to kick a groove around and then I tied the rope around it. As Dick climbed, I kept winding the rope around the rock. I couldn't see how he was doing because I was about 8 or 10 feet from the edge but by the amount of rope I was winding in, I knew that he was doing pretty well. Then as he neared the top, he lost his foothold and was dangling on the rope, screaming for me to pull him up. I tried but couldn't pull the rope, and I was afraid that if I pulled too much, I

would lose the grip around the rock. Fortunately, Dick managed to get a new hold and made it the rest of the way without falling. I always felt that I had failed him, because I couldn't help him in any way. The next week, it was supposed to be my turn, but Stanley (Boozy) Carr read an article from the Middlesbrough Gazette to the effect that a Middlesbrough youth had fallen to his death attempting to scale the Crag. That put an end of our mountaineering.

One time when Bill and I were on a walk we saw two aircraft jettison tanks in a yard at Barking Dog Farm. We asked the farmer if we could buy the tank, he said we could have them as *he* would never do anything with them. We managed to float one back to the Nissan Hut, via the beck and its tributaries, we cut a hole in it with a hammer and chisel, then we bolted a piece of pipe on the bottom for a keel and put a block of wood inside for a seat, and made a paddle with plywood and a broom handle. We went back and got the second tank and did the same thing to it. They were extremely tippy and unstable, to say the least, and people who tried to get into them, fell out the other side when they rolled over. We tried fastening a bigger piece of pipe on the bottom, which didn't help very much. We kept asking for permission to put the canoes on the lake, even promised to get rid of all the weeds, but the answer was always, 'no'. Finally, we

were allowed have them on the Beck, provided anyone could use them. Later, one of the old scholars produced an old wooden boat which Boozy wanted us to caulk and seal. This boat was allowed on the lake and was shared with the girls as well. It was supposed to be pulled out of the lake every night, but it leaked so badly that it sank. A few days later we managed to retrieve it - the wood had swollen so much that it no longer



Photo shows the rowing boat mentioned on this page, clearly leaking - water cascading out between the planks as fast as it can be poured in.

leaked.

I left Ayton in 1952. I spent one year farming at Ballam in Lancashire. I then went to Winmarleigh Agricultural College for a year and obtained my Diploma in Agriculture. I spent the next twelve years farming throughout Lancashire and Yorkshire; my aim had been eventually to own and operate my own farm, but this became impossible owing to the fast rising land costs.

In 1966 I married my wife Susan who came from Lytham St. Anne's as I did. Four weeks after the wedding we emigrated to British Columbia, Canada. We joined contemporary David Tiffany and family in Prince George in the centre of the Province where we lived for the next two and a half years.

A year after arriving in Prince George we bought a "Luscombe" two-seater float plane, which we still own today. We flew all over the north of the province, visiting lakes for fishing and moose hunting. On one trip, we landed on a lake with a small cabin. The sandy beach was a little ways from the cabin, and we tied the plane up and walked to the cabin to eat our lunch. When we returned to the plane, we saw that a bull moose and a grizzly bear had covered our tracks and we had left the rifle in the plane. We flew fearlessly over the bush for hundreds of miles, and we didn't even have a radio in the plane. In retrospect, England is covered by two aeronautical maps. British Columbia needs 22 maps on the same scale.

After obtaining my commercial Pilot's

Licence, I tried to get into flying full time but this proved to be very costly and time consuming so I started to work for a sheet metal company. For the past twenty-six years I have had my own small steel fabrication business in Surrey, a suburb of Vancouver. We have three sons; one of

whom is married, and one granddaughter. Twenty-five years ago, we pulled down our existing house and lived in a large trailer caravan while constructing the geodesic dome in which we still live.

I very much enjoyed my time at Ayton, particularly my extracurricular activities. I made some lifelong friends and learnt to be resourceful and rise to every occasion. I still enjoy the outdoors, shooting black powder guns, flying my small aeroplane to remote lakes and fishing

when I have the time to do so. Five years ago, I converted a 1984 Mazda RX7 to electricity, which I drive around whenever I can. All the above activities, combined with genealogical research, keep me busy. I enjoy my life in Canada immensely, but I still like to return to Ayton as often as possible to meet my friends and acquaintances from many years ago, and make new friends with the old scholars who return to the reunions each year.

Once again I would like to thank the committee for having bestowed on me this great honour. Despite the distances involved, I will endeavour to fulfil all my Presidential duties this upcoming year. Thank you all for listening so intently to some of my memories of Ayton.

Harry Snalam (1947-52)



Harry with his Luscombe light aircraft floatplane

120th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 120th Annual General Meeting held on Sunday June 29th 2008

The chairman, Diz Dexter, welcomed everyone to the AGM. She asked all present to share a short silence to remember those Old Scholars who had died during the preceding year and also to send loving thoughts to those members who are experiencing difficult times.

1. The 2008 President, Harry Snalam gave his address which proved humorous and very interesting. We were all enthralled by his audacious excursions and experiments. He certainly kept us all on the edge of our seats! Diz thanked him for his confessions and for his dedication in coming from Vancouver so often to reunions and also for attending Committee meetings during his time in office.
2. Greetings and apologies for absence were received from: Geoffrey & Joyce Galling (Whittingham); Kathlyn Tonkin (Bearby); Barbara Weschenfelder (Bearby); Mary Kidd (McClure); Maeve Hird; Beryl Queen and her brother Alan Goodfellow; the meeting sent its sympathy to Alan who was in hospital suffering from MRSA and its very best wishes to him for a speedy recovery. Tony Jeffries; Edwin (Tucker) Thompson; Jane Scrimshaw (Wood); Ann Gardner (Bell); Alan Smith; Roy George; Sheila Howd (Dent); Joe & Beth Tillott; Norman & Christine Graham; Michael Warren; David Artiss; Joan Howarth (Robinson); Eleanor Hone (Jackson); Kathleen Wheldon (Hall); Brian & Jan Sinclair (Hall); The family of the late Charles Danson 1936-37 who was known at school as Karl ErichDanielsohn.

Congratulations to Reg Fall, who as the Steward and Maintenance Engineer at School, he reached the grand age of 100 years on 24th June this year and to Margery Rider who was a pupil at school and will be 100 on 2nd

July. Cards of congratulation have been sent to both on behalf of the Old Scholars.

3. The Minutes of the 119th A.G.M. were taken as read from the Magazine and approval was proposed and seconded by Gill Jackson (Hinds) and Tessa Snowdon (Greenwell).
4. There were no matters arising.
5. Jill Wheeler (Rhodes) Hon. Secretary reported that the Committee had fulfilled its role in keeping the Association running in accordance with the Association Constitution, and that Jenny Summerfield, our Reunion Secretary, along with the Committee, had brilliantly rearranged the 2008 Reunion when Whinstone View was no longer available.
6. Hon. Records Secretary's Report. Diz welcomed Dick back to the fold after a two year absence owing to ill health. Dick reported that the total membership of the A.O.S.A. at present stands at 603. As well as Records Secretary Dick is the Website Supremo and garners many interesting facts & figures. The A.O.S.A. website is a great place to reminisce and keep up to date with events past & present. Dick reported that he now has an e-mailing list of 360. Email is a good way to keep in contact with many people. The A.O.S.A Website gets up to 800 visits daily and a high percentage of those are from North America. One poor chap has had his sleep pattern altered as he was so captivated by the site he sat up late while his family slept!
7. Hon. Treasurer's Report was presented by William Pine. William had produced copies of the figures which he distributed to the members at the meeting, which was very helpful. The Association has £5,370.78 in current accounts and £14,152.57 in the Life Fund. The 2008 Reunion should not

incur such a loss as in the past. William thanked Dick Bye for independently examining the accounts and also the Committee and in particular Jenny Summerfield for all the hard work in arranging the Reunion.

8. Editor's Report. James Slater's report began by thanking Gill Jackson for her invaluable help in compiling news, Suzie Scaife, Dick Dennis, Clifford Weschenfelder, Wendy and Nat Smith for their help in preparing and despatching the Magazine with such enthusiasm and dedication. Grateful thanks were also given to Jane Campbell (Bye) for all her care and dedication in keeping the Old Scholars' Memorabilia in such good, accessible order. James went on to report that because not so many Magazines are needed the Magazine printing can incorporate colour photos – so if anyone has any interesting/unusual photos please can you let James have it/them with captions of explanation.
9. Acceptance of the above reports was proposed by Gill Jackson (Hinds) and seconded by Jenny Summerfield (Smith). This was agreed by all.
10. There were no questions regarding the 4 reports, which are recorded in full in the 2009 Magazine
11. Retirement of Officers as of 2008. Dick Dennis, Records Secretary (yearly basis); Sonia Wade, Nominations Committee (yearly basis); Louis Trotter, Executive Committee (yearly basis). All these above are all willing to stay in office on a yearly basis.

Suzanne Potter, Nominations & Executive Committee, is willing to be re elected for a further 4 years (2009-13).

All those below are all within their years of office or willing to stay in office:

Chairman: Diz Dexter (2006 – 2010);
Secretary: Jill Wheeler 2006 – 2010)
Treasurer: William Pine (2005 – 2009); Editor: James Slater (2005 –

2009) Committee Member and Reunion Coordinator - Jenny Summerfield (2004 – 2009)

School Committee Representatives are: William Pine (2007– 2011); Jill Wheeler (2007–2011); Sonia Wade (2007–2011);

Lou Trotter proposed the acceptance of these posts, including the reappointment of Suzanne, and this was seconded by Wendy Smith (Arnold). All were in favour.

Retirement of these key Officers in 2009; William Pine, Hon. Treasurer; and Jenny Summerfield; Reunion Coordinator.

Lou Trotter spoke about the above retirements due in 2009. He said how concerned the Committee were that Old Scholars were not coming forward to help and this was putting the Association in jeopardy. The Committee needed to have a full compliment to ensure the Association's future. Margaret Carnegie (Wilkinson) asked for some clarification on the job and commitment required. Lou said being a Committee Member was not an onerous task. There are two meetings and the Reunion each year. Email is useful but not vital. Some positions are more specific than others but there is always help available from the previous incumbent. Other Committee Members added that it is really quite rewarding and a good opportunity to get to know other Old Scholars from different eras. The Meetings are pleasurable and it's good to be able to help the Association. James Slater said that most Members did not have very much to do and it is a team where everyone helps where they can. Dick said that those who come on to the Committee have fun and learn by helping other members. Lou said he was pleased to report that he had already been approached by a member after his appeal at the Saturday

evening meal. If anyone feels that they or someone they know could help, Lou Trotter or Sonia Wade (Dunn) will be pleased to speak to them.

12. Area Representatives. The General Committee is looking into redefining the Areas owing to changes in the way subscriptions are paid and news is gathered. Diz said she would keep the AGM informed of any changes.
13. Nomination of President Elect. Gill Jackson (Hinds) proposed Sue Fox (Turner) as the President Elect. Sue worked tirelessly for the Old Scholars' Association, and in the pre-computer era, which meant that when she was the Records Secretary the records were all kept on cards at her home, each one hand-written! This was but a small part of her contribution to Old Scholars. Presidents are chosen for diverse reasons but it is right that those who have given so much to our Association should be honoured in

this way. Sue's nomination was seconded by Diz Dexter.

14. Diz asked those present at the AGM whether they had enjoyed the new format reunion, and the consensus of opinion was that the weekend had been a great success and enjoyed by all. Diz said she was very pleased and thanked Jenny Summerfield, William Pine and Tessa Snowdon especially for their contribution to the weekend turning out so well. She assured the AGM that the Association would be making a donation to the Ayton Meeting, because being able to use the Meeting House had certainly been a great asset.
15. Future Reunions. The 2009 reunion will be 27th & 28th June and the format will be much the same as 2008.
16. There being no other business the meeting closed 4.10pm.

Hon. Secretary

Jill Wheeler (Rhodes 1949-56)

Changes to AOSA Areas and Area Secretaries

When you look at the outer back page of this Mag's cover, you will see that we now have nine AOSA Areas instead of thirteen. Area Secretaries always contacted OS when subscriptions become due and at the same time collected news for the Mag News section. However, as most of the membership are Life Members and as the number of members who elect to pay their annual £5 by standing order increases, there is less and less work for a number of Area Secretaries.

The Committee has therefore agreed on some Area amalgamations: Scotland and Northumberland (Area 1) is still looked after by Mary Kidd (McLure); Sonia Wade (Dunn) has the North East & Stockton (new Area 2), Tony Jeffries, as before, has the North West as his patch (Area 3); Barbara Weschenfelder (Bearby) now looks after Middlesbrough, Stokesley and Great Ayton, (new Area 4) taking over Great Ayton from her daughter Sally Tierney (many thanks Sally for your years of work as Great Ayton District Sec); East Cleveland (now Area 5) - no change, Andrew Vaux being your contact; Yorkshire Area Sec is Suzanne Potter (now Area 6); Midland & East Anglia (now Area 7), as before with Stewart Brammer; Kathryn Tonkin (Bearby) now looks after the South of England, Channel Islands, and Wales (new Area 8); and oversees (now Area 9), as before - Chris Vodden.

Mary Banks and Clifford Weschenfelder

an appreciation of their quiet contributions over the years

For many AOSA members, the Association goes on from year to year with little visible sign of any particular activity, with the exception of Reunion weekends' organisation and AGMs. The Annual Report appears in the post each May and so life goes on. Committee membership tends to change every four or eight years, members come and members go, all make their own individual

contribution, but some, in their time on Committee, leave an indelible but often invisible legacy, and too often we fail to acknowledge publicly their contributions.

Two such former Committee members are Mary Banks and Clifford Weschenfelder. Mary and Clifford were on the Committee at much of the same time and their activities overlapped.

Mary Banks

Mary Banks was a pupil from 1932-38, along with her brothers Peter and Harry. She enjoyed Ayton, recalling that she was no scholar, although she enjoyed games, needlework, art and cookery. On leaving she was steered into the usual training for young ladies – learning shorthand, how to type and office routine; a round peg in a square hole as Mary freely admitted. WWII came and Mary joined the Women's Land Army until she was invalided out in 1944. When she recovered, she joined the Wrens for two years, followed by another two years in Cyprus looking after friends' children, which is where the square peg started to fit the round hole.

On coming home, and with no job, Evelyn Nicholson suggested Mary consider becoming a school matron. Her first post was in Swanage, followed by Ackworth and then on to St. Peter's in York. It was there, in 1961, Mary learnt that Dora Patton, Ayton Boys' Matron, was retiring. She applied for the job, got it and the rest, as they say, is almost history. Mary was back where she started – at Ayton – and now with ninety

boys in her care. During her nine years as Matron, the number increased to one hundred and ten, which must have had its problems, as demand for accommodation far exceeded supply, and boarders were housed in a variety of homes around the village. She was a good and caring Matron and much loved, always there for homesick new boys, and for all when they were ill. Mary started a variety of clubs, modelling of all sorts, and stamp collecting. Many of the finished articles were exhibited on General Meeting Day.

When Mary retired as Matron in 1970

she worked with mentally handicapped adults in a Middlesbrough Further Education College until her official retirement, when, responding to an appeal from the Yatton House Committee in Ayton, she once again helped with mentally handicapped children, where her gentle and patient nature was much appreciated.

Mary never lost touch with the School, becoming involved with Old Scholars, helping at reunions – twice a year in those days, both Summer



Mary Banks photographed in 1986 - her Presidential year

and Autumn – joining the Committee in 1985, when she became President Elect. Mary followed Clifford Weschenfelder as AOSA President, 1986-87. At the end of her three-year Presidential committee cycle, Mary became a regular committee member and took over as Convenor of the Nominations Committee from Dorothy Dawson (Easton) in 1996. Finding the right person either for the committees or as an Association officer is not easy and will have taken up much of her time. However, it will be Mary's reunion organising work for which she will be mostly remembered. In those days, stretching back to the 1980s and beyond, reunions were all held in School and meals in the dining room. It was Mary who, in my recollection, made the detailed ar-

rangements with school, received the bookings and money, and sent out appropriate tickets, and then made sure all her arrangements went according to plan (unruly OS could often be the cause of things going awry, and were appropriately chastised.)

Then came the School closure. Mary continued her committee work through this very difficult time, finally stepping down in the Millennium year. Her cheerfulness was always a feature at committee meetings and she was much missed. In the years since, she has been a regular at reunions, but latterly, restricted by mobility problems, her attendance has been limited to Reunion Sundays and the AGM. We are grateful for all she has done over the years for the Association.

Clifford Weschenfelder

Clifford Weschenfelder's years at school were 1943-51. In his 1985 Presidential Address, Clifford told us about his family, starting with his grandfather, who came to England in the early 1900s from Germany, attracted by industry on Teesside, where he met and married a German girl working in Middlesbrough. Clifford related how his grandfather was interned in the Isle of Man during WWI – the Island of Barbed Wire, as it became known. Clifford's Presidential Address is surely one of the best and describes the almost accidental manner in which he eventually arrived at Aytton, with his grandfather and grandmother's application for British citizenship being endorsed by a Quaker minister, and his grandfather advising Clifford's father to send his

children to the Friends' School Great Aytton.

Clifford did not like School very much; it would be called a culture shock nowadays (a lot of us would identify with that). He would have joined the "Junior-Junior" School in 1943 (*Junior-Junior School was a temporary classification for boys and girls*



Clifford Weschenfelder - a photo taken for his Presidential year

under the age of nine accepted as pupils - mainly boarders - during the War years), thus having Edith Carr's motherly eye looking over him. He did not like games of any sort and deliberately avoided all the compulsory sport he could. But he did like music; learning to play the piano, and, thanks to Bernard Porter, learning about all the composers. He was a winner of the Ruth Arundel Music Scholarship. It was at Aytton Clifford met his future wife, Barbara Bearby, herself

the daughter of Old Scholar Jack Bearby.

It seems almost accidental that he was later involved with the school, for Clifford left in the middle of sixth-form studies; "Eight years at School was too much," he said. Within a year, he was called up for National Service in the Royal Air Force, and served, for much of the time, in Pakistan, thoroughly enjoying himself over there. Back home, he re-met and married Barbara. The family followed, and when it was time to think about where the children were to be educated, there was really no contest. This brought about for Clifford a reconnection with school, this time as a parent and exposed to school life, and the Staff, in the way parents are, in discussions about their children's progress.

Evelyn Nicholson, who always had an eye open for OS talent, wrote to Clifford

and asked him to join the School Committee. Surprised as he was by the invitation he agreed, and remained a member for eleven years, the last four as Treasurer; slowly he became more and more involved with School and Old Scholars' affairs.

Clifford joined the Association Committee as part of his three-year Presidential term, and soon became Chairman, handing over to Wendy Smith. He took over the Hon. Treasurer's office and quietly, but efficiently, kept track of subscriptions (there were many more members in those days), producing annual accounts, managing the Association's financial assets and handing over to William Pine in 2001. Still in the background though, Clifford continued his connection with the Committee, auditing the annual accounts until 2006.

Mary Banks and Clifford Weschenfelder both gave much to Ayton and the Old Scholars' Association, for which we express our appreciation and thanks. The helping habit persists though; early each May they join Wendy Smith in her Stokesley home inserting Annual Reports into envelopes prior to posting to Association members at home and all over the globe. Long may they do so and long may we enjoy seeing them both at Reunion gatherings.

Dick Dennis (1944-52)



This photo was taken on the occasion of Barbara Bearby and Clifford Weschenfelder's wedding, 5th May 1958. There were twentyone members of staff and old scholars present. It was reproduced in the 1998 AOSA Annual Report when Clifford and Barbara celebrated their Ruby Anniversary. Last year, 2008, was of course their Golden Wedding Anniversary; our belated congratulations to Barbara and Clifford.

SECRETARY'S REPORT 2008

This year has been rather more challenging than usual. I am sure you will all remember last year's exceedingly wet Reunion weekend. The Reunion Co-ordinator and Committee felt that things turned out pretty well under the very trying circumstances and the management and staff at Whinstone View were extremely helpful. Thus, the communication from Whinstones View, to tell us that they felt they could no longer host any further Reunions, because of the risk of the same thing recurring, came as a great surprise. We wrote to Jackie at Whinstone expressing our appreciation for all their help over the past years. After the School closure the Reunions have certainly benefited from being settled at the same local venue but we understand Whinstone's concerns regarding the weather - the last weekend in June can be very inclement.

Jenny, the Reunion Co-ordinator, heard very good reports about Stokesley Town Hall and made arrangements for the Committee to view the venue. We were all

pleased with her find and after approaching Carol Avison, the Bookings' Secretary of Ayton Meeting, and being offered the use of The Meeting House over the weekend particularly for Sunday Lunch and the AGM, we were able to plan the "New Look Reunion". This 2008 Reunion is a prototype and any constructive comments will be welcomed by the Committee.

Other than this the Committee has done all it should with panache and humour, cups of tea and biscuits and of course dedication. Lapsed Old Scholars have been found, new members have been encouraged, the Handbook and Magazine collated, printed and posted, the Website updated, the Constitution upheld, records kept and a new President Elect persuaded and welcomed. It's plain to see we all went to Ayton School!

Jill Wheeler (Rhodes 1949-56)
Hon. Secretary.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2008

Many thanks to Dick Bye for examining the Accounts. I would also like to thank the Committee Members and District Secretaries for all their hard work over the past year, with special thanks to Jenny for organising this Reunion.

The current bank balances are:

Current Account	£2,646.62
General Fund	£2,646.62
Life Fund	£14,152.57
Total	£19,445.81

William Pine
Honorary Treasurer (1981-86)

Changed your e-mail address? Would you like to be kept in touch via the Ayton Old Scholars' e-mailing list? E-mail dick.dennis@manannan.org.im

AYTON OLD SCHOLARS' ASSOCIATION

Year Ended 31st March 2008 Receipts and Payments Account

Current Account

2007	2008	2007	2008
Annual Subscriptions			
656	1 Bankers Orders 639.25	484	Postage 447.10
359	2 From Dist. Secs. 279.41	128	Stationery 194.93
0	Transfer from Life Fund 0.00	947	Annual Report 964.00
		51	Reunion Notices & Printing 50.19
144	Advertising and Sponsorships 210.00	1,116	Loss on Reunion Activities 1,014.63
4,778	2006 Appeal 0.00	0	Other 0.00
58	Interest less Tax 96.12	150	Provision for Handbook 150.00
0	Profit on Reunion Activities 0.00	3,126	<i>Excess of Receipts over Expenditure</i>
5	Other 0.00		<i>Less Excess of Expenditure over Receipts</i>
0	<i>Excess of Expenditure over Receipts</i> 0.00		-1,596.07
6,002	1,224.78	6,002	1,224.78
General Account			
3,001	Balance at 1.4.07 6,127.23		
3,126	Less Excess Expenditure over Receipts/Add Excess Receipts over Expenditure -1,596.07		
6,127	4,531.16		
690	Provision for Handbook Less cost of Handbook 839.62	3,233	Nationwide Building Society 2,760.70
0	Evelyn Nicholson Fund 0.00	3,834	H.S.B.C Current Account 2,646.62
		200	Less Cheques not presented -11.54
		0	Plus Cheques to be Credited 25.00
		50	Less 2007/08 Receipts 0.00
		0	Less 2008/09 Receipts -50.00
6,817	5,370.78	6,817	5,370.78
Life Fund			
13,140	Balance at 1.4.07 13,620.13	13,620	Nationwide Building Society 14,152.57
245	New Members 196.20		Plus cheques not cleared
236	Interest Less Tax 336.24		
0	Less Transfer to General Account 0.00		
13,620	14,152.57	13,620	14,152.57

*Hon. Treasurer: William Pine
Independently examined by Richard Bye*

Sue Fox (Turner) 1964-71 ***A profile of our President Elect*** ***by her daughter*** ***Louise Seniscal (Fox) 1991 - 1995***

Sue became a day scholar at The Friends' School in the summer of 1964, as her father had been moved to Billingham ICI from the Huddersfield Works.

The family rented a house on Newton Road in Ayton for a couple of years before moving to Cambridge Road in Middlesbrough. Since going to Ayton Sue has been involved as a pupil, an old scholar and as a parent.

We as a family have always had strong links with Ayton School. It was the place where Mum and Dad (Sue and Neil -1964-70) met each other and where some of our Aunts and Uncles were pupils - Jane Fox (Atkinson), Gary Fox, and Stephen Atkinson (Jane's husband). Also many of our family's closest friends originate from Ayton days, Sue Cooper (Horne - daughter of Douglas), Liz Bownes (Banks), Nigel Carr, David and Patricia French, and Hussein Badr.

Sue was a day scholar until her last year in 6th form; this was the year that Leven Hall opened. She was one of the first pupils to enjoy the luxuries that Leven Hall offered - duvets, and wash basins in each room! Sue was one of those day scholars who only went home to sleep! She caught the 7.45 am bus from Marton, arriving at Ayton at 8.15 am and left after

prep at 8.15pm

Sport was one of Sue's strengths at school, as well as being one of her main interests. She left Ayton to train as a secondary school teacher at Didsbury College in Manchester, her main subjects being PE and Geography. After leaving college, she returned to Cleveland and married Neil Fox who by then was a police officer in the Durham Force.

Sue was asked to organise an OS Hockey Team the year that she left school; she continued to do this and to organise the Percy Green Tennis Tournament for many years. Later she joined the AOSA Committee, becoming the Membership Secretary, which involved then, as it still does today, keeping a record of all members' addresses and dates at Ayton. This was pre computers, and records were kept on index cards in a metal

box file! Another job was to hand-write all addresses on the envelopes for the Handbook and the Reunion Notices and to pack the contents! Our front room was stacked high with magazines and envelopes. Mary Banks, Cliff and Barbara Weschenfelder often came round to help. My sisters and I quickly learnt to count in twenties (this was a post office requirement when posting in bulk). We were experts at securing



Sue Fox (Turner) 1964-71
President Elect 2009-10

the bundles with elastic bands, but the best job was always stamping each envelope with the Return to Sue Fox @..... rubber stamp! During this time the AOSA moved into the age of technology, Cliff Wesch. brought round an early Acorn computer which made the job slightly easier – it printed out sticky address labels!

Sue moved to the role of Reunion Secretary and along with Mary Banks and Roy George was heavily involved in the organisation of the School's 150th celebrations. During this time Mary, Roy and Caroline became good friends with Sue and Neil, a close friendship that still exists today.

The 1990s saw another link with the school. Sue and Neil decided that Ayton was the place to send me. Sue made sure that I was in Firbank, of course! She was involved with parents' committees during this time while Neil served a couple of terms on the School Committee.

In 1998, a year after the closure of the

school, Sue was asked to take over the role of Chairman of the AOSA Executive Committee from Wendy Smith. It was a difficult and sad time for Ayton and its supporters. In October 1997 Sue had taken three days leave from her teaching post to help at the Auction Sale of the School's Chattels. She was interviewed by the local television network and it took three or four 'takes' to get any footage as Sue kept bursting into tears when asked, "What did this school mean to you.....!"

Sue often reflects on the fantastic education for life that she had at Ayton, a place where children were valued and encouraged to discover their loves and strengths. She is full of praise for so many of her teachers who gave so readily of their time. Sue has great affection for Ayton School and has always been a great supporter of the AOSA. I wish her well as President.

Louise Seniscal (Fox 1991-1995)



Three members of the Fox family - Neil, Louise, and Sue

SUMMER REUNION 2008

It was his first long journey post the health traumas of the past two years and as he headed down the M6 from Blackpool, where he had been visiting his RV site and meeting up with Harry and Susan Snalam, the heavens opened and Dick Dennis our Records Secretary and Webmaster feared we were in for a repeat of the weather conditions of last year. He need not have worried, though it was dull and drizzling when he and I set out on the Friday morning from Wirral, and we did have the odd shower over the next three days, generally, the weather behaved pretty well.

The clans began to gather on Friday night and a group of us – Harry and Susan Snalam, Mike and Barbara Adam, John and Margaret Fothergill, Lou and Doris Trotter, Phil Ramsay and Dick and I enjoyed a very pleasant evening at Whinstone's Bistro.

Saturday morning saw some of us back at Whinstones for a guided tour of the very attractive new chalets the family had built since last year. There are five in all, two singles, and three doubles, they are sited along the edge of what used to be the entrance road, sumptuously appointed inside, each with its own hottub on the veranda, and with most attractive landscaped surrounds. The doubles are self-catering, while the singles are rented on a b&b basis with breakfast served in the restaurant. The wetroom-bathroom is an interior designer's dream.

This year, Wendy Smith (Arnold) agreed to lead another of her very popular walks - by car to Gribdale Gate and then on foot to Little Fern Deep. A lar-

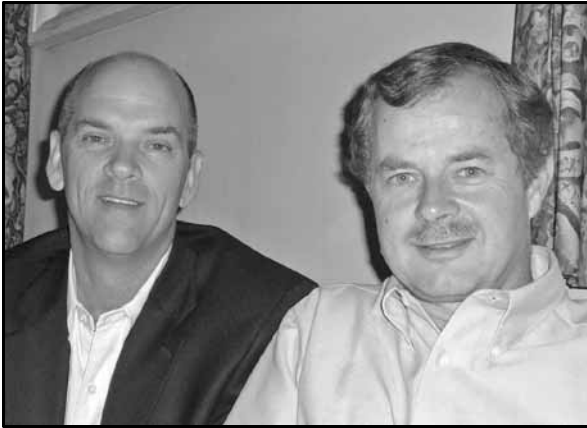
gish group assembled in the Meeting House including our Editor James Slater, his wife Pam, their three children and the dog. George Hetherington was asked by Dick to be the walk's official photographer, but he had forgotten his camera. I loaned him mine and the resulting photographs are an absolute delight. Mike and Barbara Adam and I left Dick in the Meeting House preparing his computer for OS hits later in the day and arrived at Gribdale just in time to greet the walkers on their return. We sat for a while with Charlie Corner and Jim Shaw, recovering from their exertions, and discussed the actual whereabouts of Little Fern Deep. Charlie, a local



Above: inspecting the new chalets at Whinstone View



Saturday afternoon's walk; Wendy points out the route the the walkers will follow



Chris McClellan and Phil Ramsey pause for the camera during the 2008 Reunion Supper in Stokesley Town Hall

lad, reckons that the name is peculiar to Friends' School pupils. (A walkers' group photo appears at the end of this report).

Dick Dennis tells me Mike Adam has been asking for the precise location of Little Fern Deep (LFD) for years. Harry Snalam borrowed Dick's SatNav and standing beside LFD, he recorded the position as follows: Latitude 54.461° N; Longitude 1.091° W. According to Mike, whom Dick contacted with the information, these coordinates seemed to indicate a location somewhere in the North Sea just off Hartlepool, and he wondered just what Harry had been up to that afternoon! Confused by this, Dick, with the aid of an Ordnance Survey Map, and corroboration by Google Earth, came up with the following and much more accurate data - 54° 29.4' N, 1° 4.5' W. It appears that the Sat Nav coordinates are in degrees and decimals of degrees, and converting decimals to minutes and seconds of degrees is a task too far for the average arithmetical ability these days (well our ability in this area was over 50-years ago)! This, of course, will be of great assistance to others who follow, providing they carry a SatNav or sextant - or possibly even a map.

The Evening Do this year was held in Stokesley Town Hall - a

goodish crowd, despite Jenny Summerfield (Smith) our Reunion coordinator's earlier fears. My contemporary and old friend Angela Gough (Bradbeer) was back for the first time in many years, (in her camper van accompanied by her dog and cat, from their home in France) it was good to see her.

Chris McLellan a 1970s' OS was over from Texas with his wife, the first time, he said, he had been to a reunion for thirty years. They were sitting at the same table as Gill Cloughton (Parkinson) who was, I believe, attending her first ever reunion. She and her husband Bill met

George and Jan Hetherington on a train journey through Europe, the four got talking and the Ayton connection discovered. Gill was a near contemporary of Chairman Diz Dexter and her friend and fellow committee member, Suzanne Potter (Morgan) and the three spent some considerable time looking through photos of their days at school.

Once all were assembled, Tessa Snowden (Greenwell), somewhat reluctantly, handed over the medallion of office to Harry Snalam, our new President, and fastened the spouse's pin dexterously on Susan's lapel, many photos were taken,



Audrey Davies (Seddon) and Angela Gough (Bradbeer) chatting during the 2008 Reunion evening meal.

and the evening was declared up and running.

Waitresses served the meal, a choice of three main and three dessert courses, which was prepared by a local firm known to Wendy Smith, and was universally said to be delicious and a huge success. After we had been fed and watered Jill Wheeler (Rhodes), our Secretary, once again entertained us with a Quiz. Divided into five sections, it was as fiendishly deceptive and difficult as ever. The winning table comprised Tony and Beryl Browne, John and Margaret Fothergill and me. It had been another really enjoyable evening.

I missed morning Meeting on Sunday, but I gather that Ministry had been OS led with Harry, Lou Trotter, and Dick all contributing. Lunch, provided by the same people as last night's dinner, was again delicious, and rather akin to the loaves and fishes, there was more than enough left over.

Freezing when the early birds went in, the Meeting House soon warmed up and was full to bursting by the time the AGM started. On advice from Dick, Harry, in his Presidential Address, set out to dispel the myth that he was a quiet and serious sort of guy, by describing some of the incredible exploits he and others, including Bill Coates, Clive Olbery and Dick, had been

involved with in their early years at school. It is a miracle they survived as many of the things they got up to were of an explosive nature. From where I was sitting, I had eyeball contact with newly retired President, Tessa, her expression became more incredulous as the speech progressed. Harry almost literally had us rolling in the aisles.

Diz took us adroitly though the AGM with contributions from Dick, Secretary Jill Wheeler, Mag Editor James Slater and William Pine our Treasurer, who has only one more year to go before stepping down from a job he has held for eight years. Lou Trotter thanked various OS and committee members for their help over the past and somewhat difficult year for the Association, losing as it had, its base at Whinstones. And, almost before I knew it, we arrived at the point where we announce the President Elect, a task I had the pleasure of performing this year. Former AOSA Chairman and sometime Records Secretary Sue Fox (Turner) will be our President from 2009-10. The announcement was received with much enthusiasm. After Any Other Business, the AGM was declared over, and with it came the end of another reunion and a really enjoyable weekend.

Gill Jackson (Hinds 1950-55)



The group of OS walkers, friends and family, led by Wendy Smith to Little Fern Deep and a nostalgia trip over Cook's



Left to right: Charlie Corner, Jim Shaw, and Dorothy Sills at Gribdale carpark at the beginning of the 2008 walk.



Wendy's walkers wending their way through the woods on the way to Cook's Monument



Nearly there now; Cook's Monument on the horizon. Then comes the trek back to Gribdale carpark



*President's Table. L to R:
Harry Snalam -
President 2008-09;
Barbara and Michael
Adam; Fiona Campbell;
Jen Summerfield
(Smith); Tessa Snowdon
(Greenwell); Dick
Dennis; and Susan
Snalam.*



*Raffle draw time:
President, Harry
Snalam is invited to
draw the first winning
ticket offered by Jen
Summerfield (Smith).
AOSA Chairman, Diz
Dexter looks on.*



*Winners of the 2008
Reunion Quiz; L to R:
John and Margaret
Fothergill, Beryl and
Tony Browne, and Gill
Jackson*

Experiences at Bletchley Park 1941-44

One year after leaving Ayton I was in a train on a hot July day, heading for Bletchley, now part of Milton Keynes. I had joined the Women's Royal Naval Service

(Wrens) as a writer, which is what the Navy calls secretaries and clerks. I had completed my month-long initial training in London and was travelling with three other newly-fledged Wrens, all equally bewildered as to why we should have been sent about as far from the sea as it's possible to get in this country.

When we arrived at Bletchley station we were met by a Leading Wren and marched up to a perimeter fence with sentries standing guard. We were then taken to an office in a grand Victorian mansion. This was Bletchley Park, head-

quarters of Government Intelligence. We were told that the work we were going to be doing was of the utmost secrecy and vital to the war effort, and we were required to sign the Official Secrets' Act. One was left with the distinct impression that contravening it would mean a spell in the Tower at the very least.

Next we were escorted across the large grounds to a concrete hut, and had to press a bell and wait to be admitted. When we went inside I was immediately aware of large black machines making a terrible din and smelling of hot oil. These were the bombs, in effect a primitive type of computer, which were essential to the breaking of the German Enigma codes. The Enigma machine, which looked like a large typewriter, had three wheels on the

side, each with a notch for every letter of the alphabet, a keyboard, a panel on the front with plugs and the letters of the alphabet, and a panel of 26 lights. The Ger-

man operator set up the three wheels in the order, and at the letters, he had been given, connected the letters on the panel with plugs, again according to the code for the day, and proceeded to encode the message by pressing the keyboard letters. For each one a letter on the panel of lights would be illuminated and transmitted as part of the message.

In order for the message to be read the recipient had to know: the order in which the three wheels (from a possible five) were set up, the start position of each wheel and the details of the connections on the plug panel. Additionally, the first

wheel rotated one notch each time a letter on the keyboard was pressed and when it had rotated 26 times, the second wheel moved on one notch and so on. This meant that, although A might come up as D at the start of the message, the next time it was pressed it could come up as K. The chances of decoding a message was 15 million, million, million to one!

But that first day I knew none of this and after a brief introduction to the work we would be doing we were appointed to a watch (Navy-speak for a shift) and sent off to our billets. In those early days there were no Wren quarters and we were billeted with local people - not all that local in my case as I was billeted with Mr. and Mrs. Bunce who lived about 8 miles away. Mr. Bunce was a retired railway worker



Anne Pease (1938-40) photographed during her days at Bletchley Park

and his wife was a very kind, homely little lady. It must have been an upheaval for them to have me and another Wren, also called Anne, invading their home and having to produce meals for us at strange times. I particularly remember breakfast when Mrs. Bunce would give us huge doorsteps of fried bread like nothing I'd ever had before. They were delicious.

At Christmas, the first one I'd ever spent away from my family, the other Anne must have had leave, and I must have been on evening or night watch, because I remember that while Mrs Bunce cooked the Christmas lunch, Mr Bunce took me to the pub - another first, for me. When he asked me what I would drink I hadn't a clue what to ask for, so ordered something I knew my mother sometimes drank, gin and orange. After several of these I don't think I remembered much about Christmas lunch.

Work in the bombe hut went on 24 hours a day and we worked 8 hour watches. The first week was from 8 am to 4 pm, the second 4 pm to midnight and the third midnight to 8 am, with one day off each week. On the fourth week we worked the other watches' days off and then had four days leave. It was a long way to travel back to Yorkshire for four days and expensive too, when my pay was 14 shillings (70p) a week. So I mostly came home only when I had a week's leave, tacked on to the four days, when I used one of my annual rail passes and travelled free. Rail travel in wartime was no picnic. Trains were always crowded with service personnel and one often had to sit in the corridor on one's luggage. After dark the internal lights were dimmed and there were black-out blinds on the windows. If the train was close to a large town when there was an air raid warning, it would stop outside the town and you might be there for hours, hearing the crunch of bombs and the booming of anti-aircraft guns. Not that you usually knew where you were as the names of all the stations had been taken down in 1940 when a German invasion was expected. My mother must have spent many long hours on Middlesbrough station waiting for my train to arrive.

Often I spent my four days leave going home with other Wrens or with relatives or family friends whose homes were not too far away. Once I stayed with a cousin in Sussex who said on my arrival that I looked tired and perhaps I'd like to have a rest before supper. I went to bed and the next thing I knew it was 11 pm and there was a plate of sandwiches and a thermos of Ovaltine by my bed. Having polished those off I went to sleep again till 7.30 next morning.

Often when I went on leave with my friends we would hitch-hike to save money. There wasn't a huge amount of traffic during the war because of petrol rationing, and we usually ended up in the cab of a lorry. It probably sounds to modern ears a reckless thing to do, but we thought nothing of it and never had any unpleasantness but only kindness from the lorry drivers. Sometimes we spent our four days, or part of it, in London which was only about 50 miles away. There were various hostels for service women where we used to stay. There was also a kiosk in Trafalgar Square where there were free theatre tickets available for members of the armed forces, for that evening's performance, and we often took advantage of those.

The number of machines we operated expanded quickly and those of us who were at Bletchley in the early days won quick promotion, so that I was a Leading Wren within 6 months and a Petty Officer (at the age of 19) not long after that. There wasn't room at Bletchley Park to allow for more huts to be built, as there were many other, different, kinds of intelligence work going on. So outstations were formed, usually in large country houses in the area, with special huts built for the bombes, and there were also two big purpose-built outstations at Eastcote and Stanmore, near London. The first outstation I went to wasn't far from Bletchley, at a village called Wavendon. It was now time to leave my billet with the Bunces as all of us Wrens were installed in proper quarters and the first one I was in was at Walton Hall, now the headquarters of the Open University. After a few months we were

transferred to Wavendon House so we were able live and work in the same place.

The work was fairly monotonous and although we knew when a possible solution to a code had been found by the bombe, we seldom knew the contents of the message. There might be several machines working on the same coded message for many hours, particularly in the case of the naval codes, which used three of a possible eight wheels instead of five and were therefore much more difficult to break. The codebreakers were able to use some shortcuts for the German Army and Air Force codes, for instance, there was a daily weather report and it was possible to take an educated guess at what that might contain. Or a reconnaissance plane would be sent to fly along the coast of occupied France, or the Low Countries, knowing that there would be a report of it and



*Anne Chetwynd Stapylton (Pease)
photographed during 2007*

roughly what it would contain. In this way the Enigma setting for the day for that particular code could be found with relative ease.

The mechanics who kept the bombes in working order were ex-Post Office engineers and after some time it was decided that Wrens could do some of the more routine maintenance work if we were trained. I volunteered for this work and was transferred back to Bletchley Park and put on permanent day watch, which was a welcome change.

Later I volunteered to go to Colombo in what was then called Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and in April 1944 I left Bletchley Park and went on embarkation leave, celebrating my 21st birthday at home before the long wartime sea voyage to my new duties.

Anne Chetwynd Stapylton
(Pease 1938-40)

Payment of your AOSA annual subscription

If you pay your subscription annually you can now pay online direct via our website - <http://www.manannan.org.im/aosa/> - which if you live outside UK could make payment a lot simpler.

There is a link on the home page which will direct you to a paying via PayPal. Those used to using Ebay will be familiar with both systems but for those who are not PayPal is more user friendly and permits a direct credit card transaction.

If you are paying your subscription annually by cheque or cash please consider paying by Banker's Order - obtainable from Hon. Treasurer, or Dick Dennis, or from the website.

Are any of your Ayton pals not members? They can join AOSA online now - website address as above

William Pine, Hon Treasurer 2001-2009

William Pine is stepping down as Hon Treasurer at the AGM. William followed Clifford Weschenfelder in the post and has been quietly and efficiently keeping track of our financial affairs for the past eight years. After settling in and absorbing the various systems operated by Clifford, William applied his office experience gained in day-to-day accounts with Middlesbrough Corporation, to computerise the various sections of AOSA finances.

Recording expenditure was a lot simpler, but keeping track of subscriptions was very much as time consuming as before. The task of sending out subscription reminders starts in February, with the cooperation of Area Secretaries. Happily, most annual subscriptions are now paid by Bankers' Standing Order but they have to be identified with the Treasurer's membership records.

William was able to introduce much needed spreadsheet analysis of finances for Committee information and guidance, balancing forward forecasting of expenditure with the needs of the Association. Then there are visits to our Bank, and movement of funds to interest bearing accounts.

All this culminates in compiling the Annual Report Accounts. The Association financial year runs from 1st April to 31st March therefore the Accounts we all read are one year in arrears as each year's Mag is due to go to press around the same time, which does not give the

Treasurer sufficient time to complete and ask our Auditor to verify the latest set of figures.

The Committee is very grateful to William for his hard and conscientious work over the past eight years, and, on behalf of the whole membership, thank you William very much indeed.



William Pine photographed at a recent Reunion

Jen Summerfield (Smith) - Reunion Coordinator steps down from the Committee

Jen Summerfield, daughter of Wendy Smith, past AOSA Chairman, has been our Reunion Coordinator since 2004, taking over from Tessa Snowdon (Greenwell,) and now is at the end of a five-year term of office. As this was preceded by three earlier years on the Committee, Jen has decided it is time to hand over to someone else after the 2009 Reunion.

The Reunion Coordinator has the most frantic job of any AOSA officer, considering that almost all reunion

tasks are concentrated into a short space of time - March to end of June.

Reunions are all about organisation, and one of the most important part of organisation is to make sure there is a venue. The following year's venue is established very soon after the end of the each reunion. From 2004 to 2007 Jen simply had to ask Whinstone's View Bistro if we could come back again the following year, and then to book the marquee. After the washout that was 2007, Whinstone's View's



Jen Summerfield

management, understandably, declined, as the deluge caused problems they did not wish to see repeated; 2007 also coincided with their plans to redevelop the site. So, a new venue had to be found and Jen was pointed towards Stokesley Town Hall. Whilst perhaps not the obvious choice for our Saturday night function, it turned out to be a very good move indeed, see the Reunion Report on pages 18-20.

After that there are menus to be discussed and agreed upon. These have to be added to the reunion leaflets accompanying the Annual Reports. The website reunion pages have to be compiled and put online by early May.

After the Mag has been sent out, tickets need to be issued to those booking via the

leaflet or online. There is also the chasing up of those the Reunion Coordinator knows always attend, but leave booking to the last minute, and some who forget to book altogether, but still need tickets on the day. A time when, I suspect, Jen is almost hairless.

At the reunion weekend all the plans come together, but need the coordination and cooperation from members of the Committee to help it all work. Thus is the role of the Reunion Coordinator. Jen has done an absolutely wonderful job over the last five years dealing, in particular, with the 2007 near disaster and certainly a flooded marquee, with considerable calm and aplomb, and we are going to miss her; thanks, Jen, for everything.



Reunion walk 2008 - Rohan Hill (Campbell) and son Matthew, enjoying the ride, lead the way up a rather steep hill



Photo right: This is all that's left to see of Little Fern Deep, at least from the bank; overgrown and fenced in with barbed wire. 'Elf and Safety keep you away from as much as possible

NEWS OF OLD SCHOLARS

Thanks to William Pine, Jim Slater, Dorothy Newby, Mike Adam, Harry Snalam, Margaret Cumbor, David Artiss, Margot 'Scottie' Waters, Wendy Smith, Chris and Suzi Scaife; Dick Dennis for all the forwarded e-mail news, the District Secretaries (with particular thanks to Chris Vodden our DS in District 13, who is responsible for the news from rest of the world.) And all OS who sent in news via *any* method for the Annual Report 2009. I am very grateful to them all. Deadline for the 2010 Annual Report – Christmas 2009, *please* - Gill Jackson. **News Editor and also Editor for the 2009 edition - Gill Jackson, Phone: 0151 334 7563. email: gill-jackson@o2.co.uk . Home address: 46 Barrymore Way, Wirral, CH63 0HN**

A long time before the 1920s

In mid December 08, **DICK DENNIS (1944-52)** received the following email from a Jeremy Sibson in Tasmania...."Dear Dick, I noticed on your website for the Ayton Old Scholars' Association that in the "Past Presidents" section there was no photo of (Dr.) **ARTHUR**

SIBSON (scholar 1882-86, President 1897-98) my great grandfather. To this end I am attaching a photo with this email of him. If you would like any more information about him I would be happy to send it. I also see from your website that quite a few of my relatives attended and helped out at Ayton. The Sibsons are also related by marriage to the McDermids. - *Jeremy.*" Dick was delighted and replied immediately "Dear Jeremy, Your great-grandfather's portrait is now online. In comparison with others though, the image file is rather small; if you could scan the original once more and send it to me as a much larger file, I'll reduce to it the size I want and give Arthur Sibson

equal prominence with the other Presidents. There are very few Presidents now not pictured. When setting up the website ten years ago, I scoured all archive sources for photos and found all but a few. Hopefully, descendants, such as you, will be in contact and the Gallery will be complete.

Dick"....., Jeremy has yet to send the improved photo, but he did send *me* (GJ) some further interesting family details... "(Dr) **Arthur Bertram Sibson** was born in Rochdale, Lancashire on 30th January 1871 to Daniel and Elizabeth. He had two brothers, Ernest O D (1867-1933) and **PERCIVAL R** (1870-1939) - (**Ayton scholar 1884-84**) and one sister, Lillian M C (1884-?). Arthur was educated at Ayton School between **1882** and **1886** before furthering his studies in London to become a doctor specialising in Dentistry like his father, brother Percival, and nephews Maurice and Reginald. He officially became a doctor on 13th November 1896 when he was also admitted to MRCS England, and



ARTHUR SIBSON (scholar 1882-86, and President 1897-98)

LRCP London. About this time he married *Henrietta Louise Pollard* and had four children, Francis Henry (1899-1972 my grandpa), Alan Tweedale (1902-1964), Arthur Robert (1906-1984), and Kathleen Pollard (1908-1996). They emigrated to South Africa in 1920 to live in Cape Province and then The Transvaal. He continued as a dentist until his death in 1960. An interesting sideline is the Pollard family, they were a large and well respected Quaker family from the London area. *Henrietta's* great great uncle, Theophilus Pollard sailed to Van Dieman's Land (now Tasmania, where I live) in 1825 with his daughter Ann. She eventually married into the Mather family who were instrumental in founding The Friends' School in Hobart which I believe is the largest Quaker School in the world. I have taught there as a specialist music teacher. I discovered last year that both Theophilus and Ann are buried in the Friends' Cemetery 100 metres from where I lived as a child and 300 metres from where I now reside. We always thought that we were the first to be born in Tasmania."

The Sibson-McDermid connection.

Ernest Oswald D Sibson's daughter,



John H. McDermid (1863-1948)
(Ayton scholar 1875-76,
AOSA President 1913-14)

Eva Mary (1895-?) married Harry Raymond McDermid, son of **JOHN H. McDERMID (1863-1948) (Ayton scholar 1875-76, AOSA President 1913-14)** and

Frances Annie McDermid (1865-?). They had one son, Alastair (1924-?)"..... In Chris Scaife's Ayton Register, we also have listed as pupils around the same time as John, two other McDermids, **EDWIN J. (1876-78)** and **JOSEPH J (1972-73)** no doubt his brothers. The only other **McDERMID** listed is **MARGARET**, later **LECKIE (1937-42)**, it would be interesting to know if she was related to the Sibson/Pollard/ McDermid Dynasty. As Jeremy taught music at the Friends' School in Hobart, it is just possible he might have met our **1950s'** Geography Master, **RODER-**

ICK GROSVENOR, who was the school's Head from 1974-81.

Immediate Pre-20s

MARJORIE RIDER (1919-22) who died in November 2008, was one of our oldest old scholars, she lived long enough to receive her telegram from the Queen on her hundredth birthday which she celebrated on 2nd July. She also received a card and good wishes from the Association.

1920s

Dick Dennis was contacted in early September 08 by Judith Sedgewick, the daughter of one of our 1920s' scholars..... "My sister and I are researching our family history - and we have some major gaps in our parent' lives. We understand that our father, **EDGAR NELSON**, who was born in Shildon in 1913, was a day pupil at the Friends' School from **1923 - 1928**. He then became a boarder at the King Edward 7th Grammar School in Kings'

Lynn where he stayed for 1 year before going to the Middlesex Hospital as a dental student. We have the records from the King Edward 7th Grammar School but have no information about his time at the Friends' School or indeed why he left, to spend only one year elsewhere.... Dick sent Judith a prompt reply... "Thanks for this. I cannot give you much information as, when the school closed in 1997, all the Records went to the Northallerton, County

Records Office and we have no access to them. I can confirm that your father was at the Friends' School, Great Ayton, from 1923-1928 and he was pupil number 1691. A copy of this goes to Gill Jackson who compiles the News section of our old scholars' Annual Magazine to see if she has any contacts from the late 1920s who might remember you father"... At this point I began *my* researches, but with little success, and finally emailed Judith on Sept 20th..... "My contemporary and our webmaster, Dick Dennis, copied me in to your email to him re your father Edgar Nelson, on 3rd September. I felt that as your dad left Ayton in 1928 there was little chance of any of our surviving 1920ish OS being able to help you, but it was worth a shot. I emailed a friend, **DOROTHY NEWBY (DANBY)** who was at school in the 1930s whose friend **ELEANOR HONE**, née **JACKSON** was a near contemporary of your father, but drew a blank there. I have just phoned **DOUGLAS HORNE** who went to Ayton in **1930**, hoping your father's name might have meant something, but, sadly, I also drew a blank. Dick has told you that our Records went to Northallerton Records' Office when the school closed in 1997 and there seems to be a rule about not being able to access these owing to pupils from the school still being alive. It might be worth *your* while ringing them, it is after all 70 years since your father moved to King's Lynn. Has that school no records as to why he moved there from Ayton for such a short time? Did his parents move home? Have just been on our website, on it I came across an eleven or so page item which you may find of interest, a prospectus written by a former head **HERBERT DENNIS (1913-39)** Dick's Great Uncle, who would have been the Headmaster

when your father was a pupil, it gives a lot of detail of Ayton life in those days. The website address is www.manannan.org.im/aosa. I do hope it helps." - I have had no reply!

ELEANOR HONE (JACKSON 1927-35), wrote to me in early May 08, it was a delightful surprise. She had just received her OS Mag and had enjoyed reading the 30s' News..... "The first name to catch my eye was **DOUGLAS HORNE 1930-34**), I remember his flaming red hair and couldn't picture him as over ninety (*looks just as spry nowadays - G.J.*), it's incredible how the years accelerate as one grows older. I, too, will be ninety next month. As Douglas recalls, the regime at Ayton was very Spartan when we were there, but the boys had one very unfair advantage over us, they were allowed to consume tins and tins of baked beans in their little hut. **(Miss) M. SOPHIA WELLS (1902-1937)** did not allow us the same privilege! **DOROTHY NEWBY's (DANBY 1934-39)** was the next name I noticed and I wondered if you would like to know how we met again fifty years after I left Ayton, to which I had never returned? It was one of those fortuitous coincidences. When I retired from teaching, I began an OU Course in 1984 and my tutor turned out to be Dorothy's son in law. He immediately recognized the school from my description in an essay I had written, entitled, 'Memories of Childhood'. His wife, Dorothy's daughter Annette, who travelled from Sunderland to Wolverhampton daily, soon brought her

mum along to see me. After that, we often met and I stayed with her in her beautiful bungalow in order to attend the school reunions... My distant memories of her are as a small girl dashing about Top Field with her hockey stick." It is easy to see from Eleanor's description of Ayton in



Capt. James Cook's cottage, as rebuilt, stone for stone in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia (see overleaf)

'Memories' why it struck an immediate cord "When I was eight my mother decided I was to go away to boarding school, she did not like the local Grammar School as the curriculum was too narrow in her opinion and too geared up to examination results. The school she chose for me was certainly years ahead of its time, and in retrospect I think she was right to send me there although I hated parting from her (Eleanor never knew her father

who died when she was baby) and was sometimes homesick. All forms of art and craft and all aspects of creative activity were encouraged. My love of drama thrived, I was always producing plays or taking part in them and writing poetry. I collected tadpoles, walked on the Yorkshire Moors, climbed up to Captain Cook's Monument. (I even remember going to see the cottage where he was born, before it was shipped off to Australia.)"

1930s

From **MARGARET CUMBOR (1935-37)** came the sad news of the death in March 2008 of Dorothy, 'Dolly' the wife of **JOHN WILSON (1930-35)**. Along with John, Dolly was a regular at Summer Reunions for many years.

(Captain)**WILLIAM JAMES (BILLY) LONG (1933-39)**, born and raised in North Yorkshire, where he eventually retired, died on 11th March 2008. After Ayton, Billy Long read Veterinary Medicine at Edinburgh University and from there went on to Sandhurst, joining the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. While on service with them, in Northern Ireland in 1942, he met his first wife - Doreen Mercer, a local doctor, they had one son: after they married, Billy Long settled in Ulster. In 1948 he became the Secretary of the Northern Ireland Marriage Guidance Council. After Doreen Mercer's death, and in 2007, he married Valerie Bryans, his former private secretary at Stormont. He was elected to the Northern Ireland Parliament in 1962 as the Unionist MP for Ards. Billy Long held a series of Cabinet Posts and was unfortunate enough to be the Minister for Home Affairs at the start of the troubles in 1969 when a Civil Rights March from Belfast to Londonderry triggered the violence which degenerated into three decades of murderous conflict. When he left politics in 1972 after the Stormont Parliament was suspended, Billy Long returned to his great love of fishing, and became owner-skipper of his own boat. He fished for scallops and velvet crabs, and even learned to weld so that he could repair his dredgers for himself. For eleven years he was the Chief Ex-

ecutive of the Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Association and in 1982, he chaired the UK Association of Fish Producing Organisations. Billy Long was awarded the OBE in 1985.

As ever and despite a year of mixed health, **DOROTHY NEWBY (DANBY 1934-39)** has been a most regular correspondent via email. During the year Dorothy had an email from Dick Dennis in which he said that he thought that she would be one of the few at Hartrigg Oaks who *could* email. He was astonished when Dorothy told him that many people there have their own computers and that there are 40 members in the computer club, including two 90 year olds! .. There were the weddings of two of Dorothy's grandchildren in the course of the year..... "My granddaughter's wedding in August was wonderful. The bride looked radiant and so very, very happy. It was a cloudy, chilly day but it did not rain until evening, when we all got soaked going home at midnight.".. The wedding took place around the time of Dorothy's birthday when her daughter planned to visit... "The arrangement was that my daughter who lives in Spain would fly to Luton, hire a car and, after spending a night here, we would travel to Devon on my birthday. My youngest daughter had booked a birthday meal for twelve of us for that evening. However, the plane was cancelled and my daughter had to spend a night in an hotel so was a day late in arriving and the birthday meal had to be cancelled."..... In October, Dorothy wrote to tell me about wedding number two, of one of her grandsons, as it took place in York it

fortunately meant very little travelling for her... "My grandson was married two weeks ago in the tiny Church of England church at Skelton, on the outskirts of York. As the bride is Swiss, the reception was a little different from our traditional receptions, no speeches. Throughout the evening there were various entertainments, the highlight, for me, being when 50 balloons were released, and floated away across the night sky." Weddings apart, Dorothy also received two Ayton related visits which she much enjoyed... " I had family here last week (June): my daughter from Devon for four days, my granddaughter from Leeds Uni for two days and a niece from Sunderland, the daughter of **BOB TROTTER (1941-43)** came over for the day."... " On the third of August, **SONIA WADE (DUNN 1952-58)**, **JILL WHEELER (RHODES 1949-56)** and her sister **JUNE DUNN (1941-47)** came to have lunch with me. As we left the dining room, we bumped into **VIVIAN FLYNN (1954-61)** and **PAULINE BUCHAN (SWANSON 1954-59)** so it was quite a mini reunion." Dorothy, who wrote the tribute, below, to her friend **JOE TILLOTT (1936-39)** was delighted to receive a visit in mid January from Joe's half sister, Valerie, who brought with her many photos of Joe, some of which were from his days at Ayton.

On the 10th November 2008, as part of the programmes commemorating the 90th anniversary of the ending of the First World War, Channel 4's *'Not Forgotten: the Men Who Wouldn't Fight'*, told the story of some of the Conscientious Objectors. According to the Radio Times,...."Ian Hislop relates the emotive experiences of some of the conscientious objectors who chose not to bear arms in the first World War. Travelling to the Western Front he discovered 'conchies' fitted into one of two categories – either they were 'alternativists' who worked in non-combat roles, or 'absolutists' who would do nothing to aid the war effort. Ian asks whether those who did not fight should be honoured as well as those who did?"..... One of the absolutists, Bert Brockelhurst, was imprisoned along with fifteen others in Richmond Castle, Yorks. Ian His-

lop showed us the cell in which he was held and some of the interesting graffiti on the walls, with which he had whiled away his time. Another way in which the sixteen in Richmond kept up their spirits was by singing hymns, and a favourite was 'Nearer my God to Thee.' The absolutist in the neighbouring cell to Bert, was Norman **GAUDIE**, father to our 30s' OS, **MARTYN (1935-38)**, who apparently kept time for the other fourteen by beating out the rhythm on his cell wall. In his conclusions Ian Hislop, through the programme, said that it took very brave men to make the stands that the conscientious objectors did in the First World War, which is a good enough reason for us to remember them all today.

On the 19th January 09, I received a welcome letter from **ERIC RODHAM (1939-39)** and rang him for a chat. Last summer while he and Kathleen were on holiday in Tenby with members of their family, they went to visit **MARJORIE REES (WILLIAMSON 1935-40)** whom Eric had not met since they left school. Married to a Welshman, she and her husband had spent many years in Canada. During their schools days, Marjorie's father owned the chemist's shop in the village and the family lived in the flat above it, making it very easy, according to Eric, for her to pop across the green to school each day.

His daughter Jacqueline sent me this moving appreciation of her father **CHARLES DANSON**, born 21st January 1920, who died peacefully in Hampstead on 5th April 2008.... "Charles came to England in 1936 aged 16, and studied at Great Ayton until 1937. He had many fond memories of his short time at the school, and was able to recall with minute detail the names and mannerisms of his teachers, both there and at school as a boy in Berlin. He was an intelligent, enthusiastic and assiduous scholar, with a memory second to none. It remained completely undiminished in old age. Nothing he learned was ever wasted on him; his erudition in the area of the arts was exceptional. A consummate and entrancing story teller, he could also quote at length, word-perfectly, a wide range of German and English novelists, playwrights

and poets, and used to intersperse verbatim quotations into almost every conversation so that they seemed to form a natural part of it. He was an extremely modest, intellectual man, of great wit, integrity and personal charm.

Born **KARL ERICH DANIELSOHN** in Berlin in 1920 he was intensely musical, he was surrounded by music and literature, a love of which passionately informed his being all his life. His mother Marga Neufeld was a professional concert pianist, and Arthur Schnabel's first pupil. His father, a physician, passed on to his son his passion for opera. Charles had a close relationship with his older sister Evi, and later with her children, his nephew, Anthony and niece Carol. His childhood was a blissfully happy one.

Visits to the opera were such a highlight of his young life that, aged 8, he made up his mind to become an opera singer. One of the most treasured gifts he received as a child were some 78rpm records which scratchily contained a few minutes of the world's greatest opera singers, which he would play endlessly on a wind-up gramophone. His wonder and delight was still as fresh as when he first heard them when, as an octogenarian, he re-told his daughter about these marvels. He could recall exactly which opera singer he had seen in which performance and never needed to consult the little book he kept, which listed the world's greatest singers who performed in the 30s at the Berlin Staatsoper to an audience that included an awe-struck boy who, throughout his life, would never forget the magic of those performances. Berlin was a great influence in his life and as an adult returning there he remembered the name

of every shop - all long gone - and every shopkeeper, and was able to recreate in vivid words for his family what it was like to grow up in splendid, pre-war Berlin. Historical events caused Charles to emigrate



Charles Danson (1936-37)

to England aged 16, where he spent a happy year at Great Ayton, performing in concerts there, going on a school walk to "Little Fern Deep," (as it was part of last summer's reunion schedule I was able to send Jacqueline Danson a photo of Little Fern Deep, a place she hopes to visit one day, G.J) and matriculating in 1937. He also made some life-long friends. He went on from there to study at the Royal College of Music. However, his father was interned during the war, and in 1940 Charles volunteered to join the British Army's Pioneer Corps to secure his release. He wrote a

little about his wartime experiences in the AOSA's 118th Annual Report (2007). In 1945, by then in the 3rd Royal Tank Regiment as a gunner/wireless operator, having seen action in France, Belgium and Holland, he was the sole survivor of a tank blown up during the Battle of Arnhem. He lost his right eye and was captured by the Germans. In Stalag XI B, his life was saved by a surgeon who advised him to speak German with an English accent, when translating for his German captors. In April 1945 the Fallingbistel POW camp (near Belsen) was liberated by the Desert Rats, and Charles returned to London. He was awarded a scholarship to complete his studies at the Royal College of Music and he successfully graduated from there in 1946, to fulfill his life's dream of becoming a professional opera singer. In his first professional engagement, Ralph Vaughn Williams chose him to play Master Slender in *Sir John in Love* at Sadler's Wells. He

played leading tenor roles such as Eisenstein (*Die Fledermaus*), Count Almaviva (*The Barber of Seville*), Goro and Pinkerton (*Madame Butterfly*), Don Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Faust (*Faust*), Frederick (*The Pirates of Penzance*) and Alfred (*La Traviata*). He sang with The Imperial Opera Company, and was regularly engaged at the Edinburgh Festival, and the Glyndebourne Festivals' Chorus where he understudied Richard Lewis. Unfortunately, a progressive loss of hearing forced Charles into an alternative career. In 1957 he joined the Ibbs and Tillett Concert Agency as a travel agent where he managed the travel of internationally renowned musicians, and eventually became a Director. After his retirement in



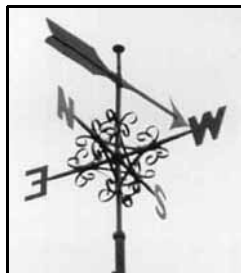
*John B (Joe) Tillott (1936-39)
President 1998-99*

1985 he worked for many years as a volunteer for the Wiener Library, identifying for and writing news articles relating to the war. He gave others much pleasure and inspiration with his 'Master Classes' on opera, and enjoyed music, literature, theatre and traveling - especially to Switzerland which he had often visited with his family as boy. These passions he passed on to the next generation through the sheer exuberance of his enthusiasm and stunning breadth and depth of knowledge. He was married to Ruth (née Boronow), whom he met at a party in England, for 58 happy years. He was very much a family man, and a wonderful father to his daughters Jacqueline and Helen, and 'Grandpa' to Helen's three children, Leo, Caspar and Cyrus. It was, perhaps, no accident of fate that ten minutes before he died peacefully in his sleep aged 88, a group of nurses gath-

ered around his bedside to listen, entranced, to a performance of him singing. The 1950s' recordings had been transferred by Ruth from fragile 78rpm records to CDs, and eventually by Jacqueline to that icon of the 21st century, an iPod. At 88 years of age, his life-long wish to entertain and enrich his own and others' lives through singing and enjoying opera, so consistently and successfully woven throughout each day that he lived, transcended even his death."

JOHN B. TILLOTT (1936-39) known to Old Scholars as 'Joe,' (a nickname he acquired at Ayton, owing so he said, because he resembled the American actor Joe E Browne) was born in 1923. Shortly after his thirteenth birthday he entered Ayton School, taking his place in form 3A. He always attained high marks in academic subjects and invariably achieved the coveted

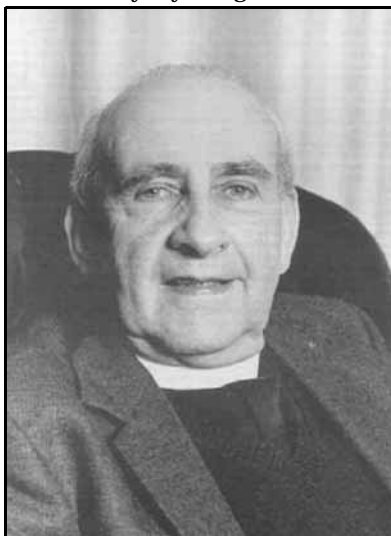
grade X (we were graded X A B C D E). In his final year Joe was the school diarist and meteorological curator. About this latter role, Joe spoke in his Presidential Address. He had been disappointed on arriving at the Meeting House to discover that the old weather vane, which had played so important a part in his youth, was no longer in its old position on top of A Dorm. Joe later found, to his relief and delight, that it had been bought by **SUE (TURNER 1964-71)** and **NEIL FOX (1962-70)** at the Sale of Chattels and was now mounted on the gable end of their garage. As a Com-



*The A Dorm
weather vane*

mittee member and with meetings post the closure of the school being held at Sue and Neil's home, Joe even had the chance of seeing his beloved weather vane once more. Joe was good at sport and was Firbank's House Captain. He was also awarded the Sir John Pease Fry Scholarship. In 1939, he left Ayton to continue his studies at Bootham School in York, from where he went to Leeds University to study for a degree in General Mining. With war breaking out in 1939, Joe's studies were interrupted, and from 1943 to 46 he served with the army in India. When he was discharged, he returned to Leeds, graduating in 1948. Joe then joined Shell and, until 1973, worked abroad where he met and married Beth; they had two daughters and eight grandchildren. On returning to the UK, he ran courses for people who were going to work in the Middle East and he also did some consultancy work, retiring in 1982. Joe was a loyal old scholar and, until 2003, when his hearing deteriorated, he was a very regular attender of reunions. Joe was President of the AOSA from 1998-1999. In his Presidential Address, he spoke of the influence which the school, and **Herbert Dennis (Headmaster 1913-39)** in particular, had upon his life. He was a Christian, not only in name, but in his everyday life. It is a privilege to have known him. Joe died on 22nd December 2008.

The Reverend **JOHN BARCLAY DOUGLAS (1937-40)**, our Association President 1992-93, died on 11th June 2008. Although a lifelong member of the Church of England - John served for 40 years as an Anglican Minister, 28 of which were as the vicar of the parishes of Thirkleby with Kilburn and Bagby - he never forgot his Quaker roots. His distant ancestor, Robert Barclay, of whom he was very proud, and after



*John Douglas (1937-40)
President 1992-93*

whom he was named, was the Quaker Apologist who along with William Penn and George Fox was one of the three great trailbreakers of primitive Quakerism. "The Apology for the True Christian Divinity," Robert Barclay's greatest work, was addressed to his cousin, King Charles II, and written in Latin. John said of it..... "The Apology holds a place unique in the Society of Friends. The Fifteen Propositions which form the fifteen chapters, embody Quaker Doctrine and, I understand, that until the early part of the 20th century the Apology was read widely and universally taught in Friends' Schools."... When he came to Ayton as a boarder in 1937 John was already fourteen and went straight into A Dorm. In his Presidential Address he commented that,..... "Baths were taken in the main school block. Those in A Dorm had to come across the playground in all weathers, clad only in pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers." He went on to say that ... "The only tuck allowed (according to the school Prospectus) was 'fresh fruit and plain chocolate', but we managed to smuggle in cakes and tinned food etc, which had a wonderful way of disappearing and then reappearing when tuck boxes were inspected. All books and magazines were subject to rigorous censorship, though I doubt if our minds were any cleaner than today's scholars.... The Manchester Guardian was put up daily in the Big Schoolroom and was eagerly read, especially in the momentous period from Munich to Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain."... **ROY GEORGE (1937-44)**, who with his twin sister **JEAN**, came to Ayton the same term as John, remembers John's many contributions to the school 'Pops' and, in particular, his rendition of the Stanley Holloway, monologue - 'Albert and the Lion.' John left Ayton in 1940, and after vol-

untary work with the Citizens' Advice Bureau, in Darlington, he went to St John's College, Durham. By his own admission, not much of a languages scholar, John was forever grateful to **HERBERT DOBBING (Languages Staff 1921-45)** who gave him coaching by post to enable him to retake and gain the credit in School Certificate French which he required for entry into St. John's. The war interrupted his studies and in 1942 he became a member of the National Fire Service, serving in Dundee, Middlesbrough and Stokesley. In 1945 John returned to Durham and graduated with a B.A in 1948. He spent the next two years reading Theology at Bishop's Col-

lege, Cheshunt. John was ordained in Durham Cathedral in 1950, an occasion Roy George well remembers. John served as a curate in Hartlepool, Huddersfield and Gateshead before moving to Kilburn. With pastoral care coming as second nature to John, and with boarders in the minority in the later years of the school's life, he undertook a sort of unofficial role of caring for pupils whose parents were overseas. John was a very regular attender at reunions and when he was became President Elect, he joined the AOSA Committee for three years, where his contributions to committee meetings were very much appreciated.

1940s

Not long before last year's reunion I received a welcome email from **DAVID ARTISS (1947-48)**... "Hi Gill, I remember corresponding with you about my outdated e-mail address a year or two ago. I just got the Annual Report and see that the reunion is coming up shortly. As luck would have it, an Ayton photo turned up this week when Spring-cleaning. I can identify the three males in the photo but the girls test me! Extreme right is **GEOFF EASTON (1943-48)**, then yours truly, then **MIKE NORTH (1943-48)**. Extreme left is **FAY FAIRCLOUGH (1940-49)**, the tall girl at the back was **ELLA HILL (WARDLE 1942-45)**. Do you think any of the girls at the reunion could place them

for me - with their life-stories? - A big question to ask! The lines beneath the photo read:

"Miss Lettice M. Jowitt of the Friends' Service Council, visitor to Ayton School's General Meeting at Great Ayton, chats with some of the prefects."

Please give my warmest good



"Miss Lettice M. Jowitt with a group of prefects. Picture clipped from a newspaper article

greetings to any contemporaries."... The best person I know to identify anyone from that era at Ayton is **MARGOT WATERS (D. M. SCOTT 1940-47)** so I emailed her, she was not long in replying... "Dear Gill, I can identify all the girls on the photo, next to Fay is **KATHLEEN CHAPMAN - NOW TAUBMAN (1941-48)** living in Sydney, then Ella Wardle who lives near Hexham and whom I see on occasions shopping here. The girl in front is **AUDREY ROGERS (1943-48)** and the tall fair girl is **JOAN WOLF (1946-49)** she had an English mother and German father and had lived in Germany but was sent over here during the war, she was/is a cousin of **TONY JEFFRIES (1944-51)** I

believe. Hope that is sufficient for David, I have Kate's e-mail address but I guess she was a year older than him, he probably hardly knew her. Sorry not to make the reunion yet again, at this time of year I am involved with Open Studio events which take up six Sundays throughout June and early July. I keep in touch with several OS, **GILL HASLAM**

(**LONGTON 1939-46**), **KC**, **JOAN JACOBS (GATTY 1944-49)** and several others including **MARGARET FULTON (BOWNESS Art Staff 1946-51)**, who was *my* art teacher. Best wishes for this reunion, I hope it goes well. Do you have an e-mail address for **PETER GILMORE (GOTTSCHALK 1942-47)** by any chance? Does he ever attend reunions and does he remember Scottie? I should really sign myself Scottie as no OS would remember me as anything else, there were two Margaret Scotts in my class!" (The other is **MARGARET LUCY SCOTT 1940-47**, sadly not on our books, can anyone out there help - GJ?)There's a challenge Peter, if you read this, why not locate Margot's snailmail address in the

latest Handbook and drop her a line? If you do happen to have an email address, we can give *you* Margot's. David was delighted with the information Scottie was able to give and sent me information about the early years of Newfoundland, where he lives,

and with a most interesting, though slight link to his own family..... "It concerns my grandmother **ANNE WAKE (1874-76)** but is only a tenuous link, insofar as it is really connected with her husband's family (the Sturges of Bristol). I have become involved recently with the people planning the Cupids' Quarter Centenary in 2010. Cupids is a small community around the Bay, which was founded as a 'Plantation' in 1610 by (Sir) John Guy of Bristol. It produced the very first child on 'Canadian' soil and was only 3 years behind the founding of Jamestown (1607) in Virginia - the very first English settlement in North America. Both Jamestown and Cupids were eventually razed to the ground, but Jamestown has been fully reconstructed at great cost and with great imagination and

the Queen went there to celebrate last May. We have called on the Federal and Provincial governments to come up with 6-10 million dollars for a proper reconstruction here (about an hour's drive from St. John's). It would be a huge economic tourist investment, much like the Viking Site at l'Anse-aux-Meadows on Newfoundland's Northern Peninsular, which has been such a success. Now this is where the tale takes a turn into pure serendipity. A colleague in the university knew that I was a Sturge as his brother-in-law is one also. When researching John Guy's Will in Bristol a while ago, he discovered that Guy had sold his Manor House Farm, Gaunt's Earthcott to my direct ancestor Thomas Sturge. Not only was I completely



Gaunt's Earthcott Manor House Farm

stunned, as I walked over the Cupids' archaeological site last year, I had goose pimples all over. And here the plot thickens. My family has known the house ever since they bought it. The first Sturge Family Reunion at the house was in 1930 (which I missed by 2 years);

they agreed to meet 50 years later in 1980, which my mother and my family also attended, and again 25 years later in 2005 which I, my South African wife Grace, my son Tom, my sister **Christine (The Mount, 1944-48)** and her family also attended. Knowing then of the Guy connection I took multiple photos of the interior and exterior of the house and used these to give lectures both to the Wessex Society and the Cupids' Historical Society. I want to stress here that I am not interested in trumpeting family connections, especially since the connection with Guy was discovered purely by chance. What is of interest that makes the connection possible is that the Sturges were among the very earliest Quakers (George Fox reputedly spent his 3-day honeymoon

with Margaret Fell in one of the Sturge homes) and they started a tradition of keeping very accurate family records. Without these there would have been no story. So we are looking forward to the Quarter Centenary in 2010, hoping that the Queen will be fit enough to share it and trusting (perhaps unwisely) that the two governments will come up with the funding! It would be great if the Federal Government would buy it, as apparently they did with Champlain's house in France but times is, I fear, a-changin in the present crisis. A local paper has accepted my proposal for a short biography of (Sir) John Guy and the Outport of Cupids in time for the 400-year Celebrations next year. You have to remember that 1610 remains in Canada are rather like Druid or Roman remains in Britain - i.e., priceless!.... Son Tom has finished his M.Phil here and has embarked on his Ph.D - an ethnological study of Labrador Inuit music (his first degree was in Music Performance - Double Bass). Daughter Katie lives in Brisbane, Queensland

with three young daughters who are too far away for comfort... All good wishes, David." Shortly after the arrival of the above, David sent a PS - "I forgot to mention how moved I was by the tributes to **MARTYN GAUDIE 1935-38**). My path had been very similar to his, going on from Ayton to Bootham and both being cricket lovers. I must confess I hardly knew him but strangely enough, my parents were quite close friends of Norman and Ruth Gaudie and I remember them very well. Both our fathers had been Conscientious Objectors in the First World War - my father was imprisoned for nearly three years and Norman had been one of those 10 CO's

who had been sent to France to be executed. I think that is what brought them so close. Although my father and Norman Gaudie were very good friends their paths had never crossed during WWI. The goal I recall my father being in for 2(?) years was Wormwood Scrubs. He was the "Editor" of the secret prison newspaper, which went around rolled in a sock and a string. They all 'spoke' to each other using Morse Code. My father wrote letters to my mother, using porridge to stick up the envelopes. One of the tricks was to bore up the table leg to conceal your illegal inkwell."

(As a PS to David's comments, and according to the programme presented by Ian Hislop on the Conscientious Objectors of

WWI, at the time of Remembrance Day 08, {see 30s' News.} there was, apparently, never any intention by the army to execute the 10, it was a rather unpleasant ploy to try to scare them into revoking their beliefs. G.J).

The following most interesting email from **J O H N FOTHERGILL (1947-53)** arrived on my desktop



Mayor and Mayoress, Mary and Arthur Dunkley meeting Mr and Mrs Newton at the Richmond Boundary. Mr Newton is wearing a chain of badges depicting every year his area cycling club attended the Richmond Meet.

shortly before the 2008 Summer Reunion..... "When I see you next weekend I will show you two photographs. The intention is to provide an interesting item for the 2009 Old Scholars' Magazine. Margaret is still sorting through letters, diaries and photographs that had belonged to her Aunt Mary who died during 2003. Recently she came across three photos that showed Mary and her husband Arthur. It was of the period when Arthur and Mary were Mayor and Mayoress of Richmond. This was at some date between 1958 and 1962. The photos were not of great importance to Margaret, but when I saw them I was most interested. They showed Arthur

and Mary with **MATTY(1946-53)** and **JEAN WATSON (1949-54)** NEWTON's father and mother. They also were Mayor and Mayoress of, I presume, Middlesbrough. Every traditional Whitsuntide, (before the government messed about with dates), Richmond held what was known as The Cyclists' Meet. Cycle clubs from all over the North East congregated in Richmond. It is in my memory that Matty and Jean's father ran a cycle business in Middlesbrough, therefore, the photo would fit very neatly with Arthur and Mary and the Newtons meeting in Richmond in their official capacities. Mr. and Mrs. Newton were very frequent visitors to Great Ayton during term time and I have strong memories of their warmth and affability to all they met at Ayton as, I am sure, many other old scholars will have as well."

Over Easter 2008, **BILL ALDERSON (1947-52)** and his wife Elizabeth were dog and house sitting in Noctorum in the Wirral. On spec, they went into the shop in West Kirby which used to be owned by **BRIAN HINTON (1947-52)**, and found he had retired. They eventually obtained Brian's home phone number, made contact and were invited round for coffee. Brian rang me (Gill Jackson) to see if I was free, sadly I wasn't, and **DAVID SIDDELL (1946-54)**, also from West Kirby, who was, and I gather despite the Aldersons having to rush back to Noctorum early as they were expecting a visit from a vet for one of the dogs for whom they were sitting, much catching up was done. Brian and Bill had not met since they both left school in 1952. Luckily for me, Bill and Liz had a moment a few days later and came over to visit me in Bromborough; it was good to see them again. Last year while visiting Harrogate, the Aldersons met up with **JOE ROWELL (1947-52)** and his wife Lesley, who farm near Prudhoe in Northumberland. By one of those strange coincidences the Association seems to make its own, Lesley Rowell (née Davidson) and I were best friends at the Haydon Bridge School I attended before I came to Ayton.

I had a welcome letter at Christmas from **ANGELA GOUGH (BRADBEER 1947-54)** who lives in France, giving me

the address of **MARY GODDARD (WHITTINGTON 1944-52 ish)**. I am not sure of Mary's actual dates as she left to live in Minneapolis, where her father taught at the University, returning to Ayton some years later. Her home is now in Paris where her husband Brian used to work for UNESCO. They have two sons and two daughters, as does Angela herself.

Not long after the 08 summer reunion **DICK** and Freda **DENNIS (1944-48)** met Princess Anne while she was over on an official visit to the Island... "Royal visit and Hospice opening went well - attached is a photo Freda and me with the Princess. It was quite an afternoon - had to get scrubbed up and looking respectable (first time like this for over two years!) and in position by just after 13:00. Princess Anne was brilliant and talked to all the patients, in-patients and day care, plus all the staff and some of the old stalwarts like 'wot I is'. Manx Radio were there with a live programme all afternoon and much to my surprise wanted me to do the last interview summarising the Hospice years."**HARRY SNALAM (1947-42)** - AOSA President 2008-09 - travelled all the way from Vancouver for the AOSA Autumn Committee meeting, and when he arrived at Manchester Airport, owing to numerous airport delays, he'd been en route for over 24 hours! A day or so before setting off for UK, Harry had suggested to **DICK DENNIS (1944-52)** that he enter "Harry Snalam" in Google, which he did and found a number of entries, several relevant to Harry's work on conversion of cars to electric power (and many others where Google had picked up Harry's contributions to the Ayton OS website). Harry's electric car conversion work had been the subject of an interview for the Vancouver media - TV and newspapers - and, it appears the interview had attracted TV coverage across Canada, which triggered the next part of this story. Harry and his wife Susan came home one day soon after the TV interview to find a rather garbled telephone message on their answerphone. With help from the Canadian version of 1471 they rang the number and found, to their surprise, it belonged to **DAVID**

ARTISS (1947-48). David, who lives in Newfoundland, on the opposite side of Canada, had seen Harry's TV interview, exclaimed to his wife, "I know him!" and promptly rang for a chat. (On reading this, I - GJ - emailed the story to David and asked him for more information)...."Many thanks for forward: that really makes a good story. Incidentally, from Harry to me is 7087 clicks or 81 driving hours! Harry remembered my school nickname of "Taffy" which I had not heard in decades. I got the family nickname from annual summer family camping trips to the Cardigan-shire coast (was it called Llyngwyr?) and my coming home as a small boy with a pronounced Welsh accent - strange reason,

when you think of it. Harry himself had this to say of his experiences with the press.... "I am a member of the Vancouver Electric Vehicles Association (VEVA), have been for about seven years. In the summer, Susan and I have a BBQ for all the members. This year it

was exceptionally big because we have so many new members. I was carrying food outside when a man approached me and said "I'm looking for Harry." 'You've found him', I said... "I'm from the Globe and Mail newspaper and I want to interview you." he told me. Well, I nearly fainted! Anyway, I invited him to stay, answered his questions, and took him for a ride in my electric car. Later I got a call from him asking for a photo session and a few days after that there was a full page article in the national paper!"

The next part of the story concerns Harry's weekend stay with Dick, at Dick's son Edward's house in Cheadle, near Stockport. Dick's grandson, 13-year old Sam, is potty about cars (he watches and records all of Jeremy Clarkson's Top Gear

programmes, and is a member of a Radio Controlled Car Club at his School.) One of the fellow members is also keen on cars but even more interestingly, the boy's father had full coverage of Harry's media excursions in Canada and seen the TV interview via the TV station's website. All this had been passed on to other members of the R/C Car Club as Harry's work on full size electric cars was of great interest to them all. Imagine then Dick's grandson Sam's reaction, on arrival home on Friday evening 3rd October 08, after R/C Car Club, to find out that Harry Snalam had been at school with, and was a friend of, his Grandpa - and then learning that Harry Snalam would be staying in his

house for the weekend. Sam's eyes opened like saucers and he could hardly get his head round all this....Sam, although surprised to see him, took to Harry immediately and was 'gobsmacked' as, over supper, Harry talked about his exploits and ad-

ventures while at school. As Dick was linked to many of these stories, Sam was looking from one to the other, wide eyed and having real difficulty in reconciling the two elderly (in his eyes) men with what he was hearing - and that did not include the fact that many of the stories might have given him ideas of which his mother and father would not have approved.

When Sam returned to school the following Monday and related all this, and when it was realised he was not telling a tall story, Sam's "Street Cred" was significantly enhanced."..... The following is an excerpt from a report on the summer reunion. **"DICK DENNIS (1944-52)** tells me **MIKE ADAM (1946-54)** has been asking for the precise location of Little Fern



Harry and Susan Snalam pose for the camera alongside Harry's electric car

Deep (LFD) for years. **HARRY SNALAM (1947-52)** our current President, borrowed Dick's SatNav and standing beside LFD, he recorded the position as follows: Latitude 54.461° N; Longitude 1.091° W. According to Mike, whom Dick contacted with the information, these coordinates seemed to indicate a location somewhere in the North Sea just off Hartlepool and he wondered just what Harry had been up to that afternoon! Confused by this, Dick,

with the aid of an Ordnance Survey Map, and corroboration by GoogleEarth came up with the following and much more accurate data - 54° 29.4' N. 1° 4.5' W. It appears that the Sat Nav coordinates are in degrees and decimals of degrees, and converting

decimals to minutes and seconds of degrees is a task too far for the average arithmetical ability these days (well our ability in this area was over 50-years ago)! This, of course will be of great assistance to others who follow, providing they carry a SatNav or sextant – or possibly even a map”..... This interesting little snippet which was as a result of a walk organised and led by **WENDY SMITH (1959-65)** on Reunion Saturday 08, generated a considerable amount of email toing and froing between Wendy, who owing to the enjoyment of the walk to LFD, set out to find out the location of Big Fern Deep (with a view to another walk in 2009), and Dick. Eventually, as Dick and Wendy asked me (*Gill Jackson*) if I could suggest others who might know the location of BFD, **CLIFF WESCHENFELDER (1943-51)**, **SUZI (CUTHBERT Modern Languages Staff 1963-68 & 1981-95)** and **CHRIS SCAIFE (Science Staff, Deputy Head, and Head 1965-94)** then became involved.“Phoned Cliff W

last night. He immediately confirmed the locations of BFD and LFD as where I suggest they are. He even walked across to BFD a few years ago. He thinks Harry may be thinking of the Blue Lagoon on the Whinstone Ridge which has been filled in – *Wendy*..... “Big Fern Deep is over the top of Gribdale Gate and down until it flattens out. Little Fern Deep is over by Kildale in a piece of rough waterlogged piece of land approached round the side of Cook's, under



Little Fern Deep from Google Earth. LFD is the black shape, top left corner, that looks like an outline of the UK. Lonsdale farm is in the bottom right corner.

the railway bridge, past Bleachmill and out of the woods to the flatter area. You can get to it by going past Big Fern Deep and continuing round. They are both part of the Whinsill Dyke Volcanic intrusion that forms a mined out valley above Cleveland Lodge. *Chris*”..... This last email (in late Sept

08) caused Dick and Wendy to have slight conniptions... “The mystery deepens and the plot thickens. How memory works is, in itself, a mystery. As part of Long Walks over the period 1944 to 1952 I went to both LFD and BFD several times and BFD was, I seem to remember, some way further into the moors than LFD - *Dick*.”... “Interesting that Chris has Big and Little in the same places but the other way round from me - I had just gone from the size of the quarries on the map for big and little. I will try and use Chris's instructions for walking to the other - *Wendy*.”... “In my book the biggest hole is the one over the top of Gribdale gate and the smaller one is over by Kildale, near Pale End grid Ref.4613.5103, on OS sheet Outdoor Leisure 26 NY Moors Western Area. You can reach LFD from Woodend Farm, or from Pale End, or Bankside Farm - *Chris*.” “In Chris's book, (*according to Mike Adam*) at least he gives the same grid ref for LFD as I suggested for BFD in my last email. The OS ref NY 613 103 is, in

full, 4613 5103. Only problem, Chris has 'em wrong way round for size as OS map shows. Saga drawing to a close I wonder? “(I think so Mike, this is the latest from Chris on about 30th Sept 08. GJ)... “Maybe I have them the wrong way round, memory fades - Chris.” ...It has been a lot of fun and I do hope it encourages Wendy to lead a walk next year, on OS Saturday, to track down the *actual* whereabouts of Big Fern Deep.

A PS to the above came from Wendy on 2nd January 2009... “Nat and I have this afternoon walked to Big Fern Deep! You have to go along paths that are not rights of way but we think we have worked out who might own them so I will write to them. Once there, it is accessible - no fencing - but quite steep and the way down is possibly dangerous. We walked right along one side - it is a little narrower than LFD but much longer. We had approached from Bankside Farm but walked back a different way, the way I think we used to take via Lonsdale Farm. We then made a circle including LFD and the route we used in between via Coatemoor Cottage. Happy New Year!” - On the 18th January, Wendy sent the following wonderful news

...“I have permission to lead a walk along both the paths I wanted to Big Fern Deep! Even dogs on leads! I have said I will limit it to 20.”

On Monday, 15th September, 08 I heard an interview which **OLIVER GILLIE (1948-50)** gave to Eddie Mair on Radio 4's PM Programme. The discussion concerned the problems which the lack of sunshine, and as a result the lack of Vitamin D, was having on the health of the people in Scotland. Oliver, a biologist, was reiterating

the case, already expressed by others, for Vitamin D to be given routinely by Doctors in Scotland.

In early June last, Dick Dennis and I both received copies of this poignant email.... “My name is **MICHAEL WARREN**. I was at Ayton from **1949-56**. The reason I did not contact you and the Old Scholars' Association is because in 2002, when I received your letter, I was diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer with bone metastases. In fact, I feel like the proverbial Lazarus; at one time a specialist gave me 3 months. This came as a great shock to me so all thoughts of contacting the Old Scholars went right out of my mind. Also, **EDDIE 'TUCKER' THOMPSON (1948-56)** contacted me at that time but I have mislaid his letter. Could you tell me his email address? (Fraid he doesn't have one Michael, hope you have now made contact via other means.) Thank the Lord I have been in remission for 5 years now. I want to contact the Old Scholars' Association and Eddie Thompson as soon as possible and hope to be fit enough to return England for a reunion in 2009.” Michael also sent me an article from a Sydney paper entitled “*Mick*



The square rigged sailing ship "James Craig" referred to over leaf

serves history tales on The Rocks” which gave details of a local walk, for which Michael is the guide. “Mick Warren has stepped out of retirement and slipped on his walking boots to raise funds for charity. The 68 year old Hornsby resident is conducting historical tours of The Rocks. The proceeds will go to the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Indian Faith Baptist Church, a Christian group, dedicated to raising funds for widows and orphans. Originally from Northern England,

Mick has lived in Australia for nearly 40 years. He has done a lot of research into the history and interesting former residents of the Rocks' area. A lot of things happened there, the first Prime Minister came from The Rocks, as well as it being home to some notorious gangs, who terrorised the area. Mr. Warren has plenty of his own tales to tell including his time spent on Goat Island, living in the seamen's barracks while working for the Maritime Services Board. 'That was interesting,' he said, 'because it was full of old convict buildings. I had this million dollar view in front of me and every time I wanted the ferry to stop, I would just raise the flag.'... The one hour historical walk includes a visit to the Sydney Observatory, Garrison Church, Sewerage Canal, West Circular Quay with a rest for lunch at the Australia Hotel. The tour runs every Saturday and Sunday from 11.00am." Michael also takes people around the 'James Craig', an old sailing ship which is moored in Sydney Harbour." Michael in a later email sent us more information about this ship..."Last Saturday as a vol-

unteer guide, I took some Korean, French and Australian tourists around the ship - it went out to sea on Sunday. They charge people \$150 for a sea trip. The ship is run by young, active volunteers, it cost \$14 million to restore. It's an exact replica because it was built of wrought iron not steel, it survived as a hulk in a bay in Tasmania. If you are interested, there are two websites to look at: www.seaheritage.asn.au/jamescraig or www.shf.org.au."

On 7th March 08, on hearing that one of her contemporaries **JAN SINCLAIR (HALL 1949-56)** was to make a visit to the north from her home in Essex, **ANN BAINES (WOOD 1949-54)** arranged a group get-together at her Sowerby home. Also present were **JILL WHEELER (RHODES 1949-56)** and her sister **JUNE (DUNN 1941-47)**, **BARBARA CLARKE (PRICE 1949-54)**, **MARGARET SHAW (WEARMOUTH 1949-54)**, **JOAN CARTER (BEARD 1951-56)**, **ANN GARDINER (BELL 1949-56)** and **BERYL QUEEN (GOODFELLOW 1948-55)**.



Back row: Those in the photo (L - R) are: Back Row: Jan Sinclair (Hall), Margaret Shaw (Wearmouth), Barbara Clarke (Price). Middle Row: Anne Baines (Wood), Joan Carter (Beard), Jill Wheeler (Rhodes); Front Row: Ann Gardiner (Bell), Beryl Queen (Goodfellow), June Dunn (Rhodes)

1950s

2008 was not a particularly good year for **THAVORN RATANAVARAHA (1951-55)** and his wife Vipha, who had to have further surgery, and I hope that 2009 brings better health for them both. In his Christmas email, Thavorn told me a little about the economic situation in Thailand, how his children are faring and how the country had been affected by the sit-in strike at the airport in Bangkok..... "As for our children, Raweevan is a government officer, she has been promoted to become head of a section within the Ministry of Sciences and Environment. Wiwat still works at the Standard Chartered Bank, and Pawaree has moved to the Australian and New Zealand Bank. All our grandchildren (five girls) are now at school and doing well in their studies. The political conflict has added to the economic problems of Thailand. The antigovernment protesters had moved from the compound of Government House to seize the two International Airports and demanded the resignation of the Government which they said was the proxy of Thaksin Shinawatta. The seizures have caused severe damage to Thailand's reputation abroad. I was very sorry for our foreign visitors who were stranded for days at the two airports waiting to go home. After this incident, the UK Daily Telegraph placed Bangkok as Number seven of the most dangerous cities of the world, even though it was recently recognized as one of the most desirable tourist cities! With the year ending, Vipha and I and our family are wishing you and your family a very happy Christmas and good health for the coming year."

In response to the Christmas appeal for News from his **DS CHRIS VODDEN (1961-67)**, **IAN CORNFORTH (1951-58)** sent the following reply "Dear Christopher, I was at Ayton from 1951-8. This means that people in my year will be celebrating their 70th birthdays during the next year or two. I would like to suggest that as many of this group as possible consider attending the 2010 reunion. Such a gathering may also interest people who were in the years immediately before or

after the 1951-8 cohort or who were on the staff during this period I think that I have attended only one reunion since I left England in 1965 and, while I enjoy reading news of Old Scholars in the AOSA Annual Reports, members of my year are rarely mentioned. (*Come on AOSA Members from that era, get in touch with Ian and/or me, tell us both what you are doing and help him to plan a get-together in Ayton and Stokesley in June 2010, his email address is: chartridge@extra.co.nz - GJ.*) I retired from my position of Director of Soil, Plant and Ecological Sciences at Lincoln University, in the South Island of New Zealand, some years ago, and I now live in Hamilton, near the centre of the North Island. My son Joe is a partner in a large medical centre in Hamilton and I am frequently called on to look after my grandsons Ethan (5) and Liam (2). My daughter Annie is in charge of the physiotherapy department in a private hospital in the West End of London. Annie and her husband visit New Zealand at roughly two-yearly intervals. I do occasional consultancy jobs for government departments, agricultural trusts and, currently, a firm of patent lawyers, but most of my time is spent looking after two elderly Pointers, gardening, woodturning and reading. Yours sincerely, Ian Cornforth."

It was good to hear from **MEL STEWART (1952-58)**, also responding to an email from Chris Vodden....."Hi Gill, Just a few lines to update you on my news. My wife Jacqui and I maintain regular contact with **EDNA BOND (CLAYTON 1953-57)** previously in Devon, when we visited Jacqui's family in Plymouth, and more recently in the Cotswolds which is where we have our summer home and where Edna and Roy have moved. They also stop over with us in Dubai on their way to and from visiting their daughter in Oz. Edna and Roy retired earlier this year and moved from Torquay to the Cotswolds to be closer to their other daughter. Before they left Devon I spent a very pleasant evening with them and **JANE DUNNING (1954-55)** who lived close by and with whom

Edna has always remained in close contact. She brought some very interesting photos of our days at Ayton which brought back many happy memories. We also continue regular contact with **JOHN (1950-57)** and Wenda **WRAY** who live close to us in the UK and who also stop over with us in Dubai on their way to and from visiting their daughter in the Far East. I retired at the end of June this year (2008) after 10 years as the Ruler of Sharjah's Engineering Advisor. HH was very generous and gave me a large plot of land on which I am building four villas for renting as my pension and he is letting us stay in our present villa on the beach. The idea is to spend the summers (three months) in UK and the rest of the year here in Sharjah doing part time work as a consultant, travelling, visiting friends etc. I have been in Sharjah thirty-four years so this is really home and where we want to spend the rest of our days. My sons, Iain and Robin, with their wives and my five grandchildren, visit us once or twice yearly for their dose of guaranteed sunshine, and of course we see them in the UK every summer. My brother **KEITH (1953-57)** continues to live in Hudswell (Richmond) and keeps in regular contact with **WILLIE WADE (1953-57)**. I hope all is well with you and hopefully we may be able to meet up at next year's reunion. Kind regards Mel."

WILLIAM PINE (1981-86), our Treasurer, sent me a note he received via Chris V from **CHRISTINE MEYER (GENT 1952-57)**, who lives in the USA, last year, while paying in her annual sub, *(why not take out a Standing Order Christine, it would be easier both for you and us? GJ)*.... "Have just returned from England where my husband and I have purchased my mother's flat in Harrogate. We had a wonderful six weeks walking in the Dales and enjoying the lovely spring flowers, the daffodils were everywhere. It was good to meet **SONIA DUNN (WADE 1952-58)** for a day in Richmond."

We were greatly saddened to learn from his daughter **CHARLOTTE SCHOCH (1982-84)** of the death of **PHILIP GOODSWEN (1953-57)** in January 08 from a pulmonary embolism.

JOHN LOWCOCK (1953-57) attended Philip's funeral, as did one or two other OS. This was all the more shocking as Philip had just got back in touch with us in 07. According to Charlotte.... "Philip left school in an ambulance never to return, he worked in the family butcher's shop but left to join the Merchant Navy and sail on the 'Cape Town Castle' to South Africa. Owing to the tragic death of his sister **STEPHANIE (1962-65)** who was killed in a car accident at 16, he returned home to run the butcher's shops in Saltburn and Marske. In the early 90s Dad retired from butchering, starting another company called East Coast Jaguars, he was Jag mad, well car mad. He married mum in 1967 I was born in July 68, James 3.5 years later. After I left school I went to a technical college and worked in local firms and the butchers' shops before joining Teesside Overhalls Group in the early 90s working on the plants at ICI as a Technical Assistant. I then left to go to work in Switzerland where I met my husband Simon. I worked for Novartis Pharma in the Infectious Diseases and Cancer Treatment Dept. We then returned to England and have set up camp in Bedale, we have a little boy called Alexander. My brother **JAMES (1983-88)** left Ayton to attend Prior Pursglove School in Guisborough. He then went on to Leeds Uni to study Mechanical Engineering, worked for various local firms before slipping into computer networking, and is now working for Morrisons, and sub-contracted to Banks. He married old scholar **KAY LEONARD (1983-87)** who trained as a nurse and worked in Middlesbrough. She is still working for the NHS but in another role. They live in Ingleby Greenhow and we bump in to old scholars from time to time but have lost touch somewhat owing to moving about so much. We send greetings to all old scholars and would love to hear any funny stories about our lovely dad."

When Dick Dennis was trying to name the players on the photo of the school orchestra in the mid 1950s, which appeared on the cover of the 2006 AR, last year, he sent a copy to **VIVIAN FLYNN (1954-61)**. This was her response... "It was lovely to

see the photo of the orchestra. I was in the Ayton school orchestra but a few years later, I'm afraid. I was there when **RICHARD ADDISON (1954-60)** was in charge of music. **RICHARD CHESTER (1953-59)** (who set up the Junior Orchestra) was

a near contemporary of mine. I did recognize most of the faces - though they were much older by the time I knew them. I was amazed to see what instruments they played! **RICHARD 'DICKIE' FEATHERSTONE (1948-56)** was the only one I knew, as a violinist, and he

went on to become a professional. (*At one time I believe he played for the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra when concerts were held in Birmingham Town Hall, and the conductor a young Simon Rattle G.J.*) a status I never achieved - though I do still play the violin. Best wishes for the reunion - I'm afraid I can't make it - I'm playing in a concert the same weekend."

Last summer we received this very moving note from **HELEN BELL (BEALE 1955-61)**... "I moved house following my husband's death (Dec 2006) but chose to stay in Dunblane. I took early retirement from the University of Stirling, spring 2005. I had been a lecturer there since 1968, first in French and later, after re-training, in French and Fine Art (French painting, sculpture, and public space). Sadly, my husband, (Dr.) Francis Bell, lecturer in Mathematics, died in December 2006. His unflinching help to students is commemorated in a Mathematics Prize endowed by the family. I'm in regular touch with my cousin **ANNE E. HOPKINS (THOMPSON 1956-64)**, with **VIVIAN FLYNN (1954-61)**, **MARGARET HALL (WADE 1960-62)** and her husband **JOHN HALL (1954-59)**, also with my

contemporaries **AGNES MOODIE (ROBERTS 1953-60)**, her sister **MARGARET VARWELL (1957-64)** and **JANET M. BLEAY (HALL 1953-60)**.

In early June 08, I contacted **KATHLEEN WHELDON (HALL 1955-57)** in



Marjorie Gaudie sweeping snow from her sister's drive in Muskoka, Ontario in December 2007

Canada to tell her that the lovely photo she took of sister Marjorie (Gaudie) sweeping snow from their drive in Dec 07, was now on the website. This led to an interesting exchange between the two of us.... "Thank you, Gill, the website came up first time. It is a great photo of Marjorie. We had 16 ins of

snow that day! She said she wanted to see snow so her wish was granted. We had so much snow last winter. It was on the ground from Nov 25th to the end of April! Ray and I live in Muskoka, the Lake District of Ontario, 2 hrs drive North of Toronto. All lakes, trees and rocks. I could tell **ROD GROSVENOR (GEOG STAFF 1951-56)** a lot more about the Canadian Shield now than I learnt at school...I did get back to England in April and went to short Meeting, then we walked to the top of Cooks, My friend, who came with me, now knows what I mean when I say there are daffodils everywhere! She had never seen so many. Thanks again. *Kathleen*"..... "Glad the photo link arrived safely Kathleen, knew the area in which you live as the Laurentian Shield and it was not until I was researching Tom Thompson and the 'Group of seven' for a talk that I looked in an Atlas and found out just where it was. Four years ago I stayed for a fortnight in Barrie with my schoolfriend **LIZ ALEXANDER (ROBERTS 1946-54)** and her Canadian husband and local lad, Bill. Loved the area, and all those wonderful birds got to see Niagara and Toronto and various other places. Where are you in

relation to Barrie? *Gill*"...... "I live in the area called Muskoka, which is the cottage country for all the yuppies!! It is about 1 ½ hrs drive north of Barrie. That is where I had my knees fixed, we are in the small village of Rosseau, 15 miles South of Parry Sound, North of Bracebridge and East of Huntsville. It is on the North end of Lake Rosseau. Unfortunately we are not by the lake but it is only three mins away and I have a few friends who have cottages so I have most of the advantages but not the property taxes. Maybe you will find it on the map. Or if you only have an atlas you may find Georgian Bay. Parry Sound is on the shores of the bay and about half way up. The Laurentians are more in the Ottawa and Montreal area I believe. *Kathleen*"...... "Thanks for this, got it wrong re Laurentians, mea culpa, I almost made it to Georgian Bay and certainly came home with a map of Ontario with all my journeys marked on it, so if I can now lay my hands on it I should be able to locate exactly where you live. Didn't realise Barrie was big enough to have a hospital of a size to do major knee surgery *Gill*"...... "Made a mistake, we are west of Huntsville. Don't know which direction I am going. Just off to Midland, which is twenty mins from Barrie, you may have gone there. We are off to our daughter Rachael's for an early Father's Day "Supper." Hot - 31deg. with a high humidity. It is supposed to thunder later today. Sarah, Rachael's 12-year-old daughter was running a 10 km race today in Barrie. Bye for now. *Kathleen*."

Later in the year, Kathleen responded to an appeal for news from her DS **CHRIS VODDEN (1961-65)**....I am writing this on a very cold evening. I can't believe it is only Nov 22nd and we have had snow on the ground for over a week. It has not been above freezing either so the snow is stuck to all the tree branches. What a truly amazing sight it is. I went to the local town last Wed. and every corner we went round I just said, "WOW." the snow was just hanging off the trees, some trees hanging over the road with the weight of the snow and glistening in the sun; it was magical. As we live in an area that is all trees and lakes you can imagine the Christmas card

scene. Of course I did not have the camera to capture it. The lakes are also beginning to freeze over. It is much too early for that. I am not looking forward to six more months of snow shovelling. We were thrilled and so proud of our Granddaughter Ainsley and her Football Team. They won a bronze medal in the Canadian National finals in October. Sister Cassie is following in her footsteps. Unfortunately because of all the high pressure commitment to the game we do not manage to see them very much. Grandson, David, enjoys playing ice hockey, and his sister Sarah is more of a marathon runner and is now developing a keen interest in the triathlons, running, biking and swimming. The youngest two grandchildren are six and four. Evan is a gifted child and is in a special program to develop his interests. He is in a split level class doing the grade 2 work instead of grade 1, and has been put into a French class to challenge him! Quinn is in Junior kindergarten and enjoying every minute of it. Ray and I were both over in Sept for the wedding of Marjorie's youngest son, Hugh. I went to the Wed. Meeting at Ayton where I met **SONIA WADE (DUNN 1952-58)**. I think I have persuaded her to come to visit us next time Marjorie does. When I got back home again I found a letter from **BARBARA VAN GEEST (BEZEMER 1954-59)**. I did know she lived in the Niagara region of Ontario. She had read last year's AOSA Mag and found my address. It turns out she has had a cottage on Otter Lake only 30 mins away from here for 17 years. We have been to some of the same functions in Parry Sound and she has been to our little village on more than one occasion. I contacted her and we have been over to see her at the cottage, It is only a short boat ride from my daughters. The next visit with her will be on Dec 6th when we are having a reading of "The Christmas Carol" in the Rosseau Village Hall. We thought about trying to contact any AOSA members who live in Ontario to have a mini reunion! Maybe when Sonia comes to visit. So if you know of any others please let us know. I know Gill's friend lives in Barrie. Barbara's email is

mum@vangeestbros.ca Her address is 11 Kerman Ave., Grimsby, Ontario, LBM 8W6. Have a wonderful Christmas, Kathleen."

It was good to hear from **LINDA HEWISON (PEARSON 1957-64)** in May and I feel really guilty at not getting back to her since, GJ..... "When I received the old Scholars' Magazine I felt rather honoured at being mentioned and rather remiss in not following up on my progress in finding my old friends. Sadly there is not much news. I contacted **MARGARET VARWELL (ROBERTS)** with a Christmas card (07), and she replied immediately, promising to write a long letter during the year, I replied via email, but as yet I have not heard any more. At least we are in touch once more, thanks to your work and encouragement. On thinking about it I will write her a long letter. We were at

College together, as well as school, and I was present when she met Adrian. We lost touch after her marriage. Margaret said she had broken a bone in her leg just before Christmas and was feeling rather frazzled. I had a letter, as always, from **SUSAN PARFRETMENT (COPPENHALL 1956-64)** at Christmas, she is still living in Peterborough. Her daughter is a music teacher and now married to a Marine Bandsman. Minnie as we called her, from Mini, as she was petite, keeps in touch with **ANNE HOPKINS (THOMPSON)** and **MARGARET HALL (WADE)** from my year group. As yet no news of **HILARY THOMPSON (1957-56)** (I am using maiden names!) We managed to meet up with **MARGARET CUMBOR (Scholar 1935-37, Bur-sar 1958-74)** last August. She was still warm from her communal hug. Loved it! Thank you so much."

1960s

An Ayton get-together took place on Malta on 12th July 2008 at the wedding of Hannah Schembri and Mark Debono. Hannah, daughter of **JANET SCHEMBRI (KIDD 1961-66)** and the late Joe Schembri, was married at St Mary's Parish Church in Attard, followed by a reception at Palazzo Parisio in Naxxar.

Janet's sister, **DIANA NEVILLE-SMITH (KIDD 1963-70)** was among the guests, as were **JUDY THOMPSON (MARSHALL 1959-65)**, her husband, Charles, and Caroline and Cat, two of their three daughters, as well as **MARY KIDD (McCLURE 1962-67)** with her husband Graeme. The day was very hot - fortunately the wedding ceremony was not un-



Relaxing after the wedding in Malta, Diana Neville Smith (Kidd), Mary Kidd (McLure), Janet Schembri (Kidd) and Judy Thompson (Marshall)

til 7.30pm, otherwise the guests, the Brits in particular, would have found the heat almost overbearing. It was a very happy occasion, though tinged with emotion, as the bride's father, Janet's husband, Joe, had died in December

2007. Mary writes " Graeme and I spent a week in Malta and very much enjoyed our get-together with Janet and Judy and their respective families. It was a great privilege and pleasure to be invited to Hannah and Mark's wedding." Mary goes on to say that since 2009 is the 60th birthday of most of her year group she, **DIZ DEXTER (1960-65)** and **SUZANNE**

POTTER (MORGAN 1960-67) are hoping to encourage as many as possible of their year to come to Ayton and the O.S. Reunion in June 2009. Janet, Judy, **HELEN MASTERMAN (MORGAN 1961-66)** and **LIZ LLOYD (RASMUSSEN 1960 -66)** have (as of August 2008) indicated they hope to be present. Mary also adds that she hopes a number of others will come, and all interested can contact Mary, Diz or Suzanne - all of whose postal and e-mail addresses are detailed at or near the back of the Annual Report, either under AOSA Executive Committee or District Secretaries' List.

JENNY YOUNG (SALSBUURY 1961-68) emailed her contemporary and our Overseas DS **CHRIS VODDEN (1961-67)** after receiving her Mag last May.... "I am coming out of the woodwork, having just read the Ayton Annual Report. Our year is very under represented. (*Very sorry to hear that Jenny and Chris, but if you want the situation to improve it is up to you to do something about it. GJ*)... Nice to hear you are enjoying life though. I live on the South coast, where I am a GP, as is my husband, we have two children who have now left home. Looking forward to retirement! After leaving school I kept up with very few. I have annual Christmas cards from **AILEEN CHURCHILL (MILNE 1961-67)**. She is married with two children and that is all I know about her! (cards not too informative, I suspect mine to her are not either!). I tried to communicate with **ALISON MACNAIR (1965-68)** but soon lost contact, BUT through Friends Reunion (*do you mean 'Friend-sreunited' ? Gill*) I did, however eventually, make contact with her and now we meet just about annually. She lives in London, married about 2/3 years ago and has just retired. We have long natters, now rarely about Ayton. Our memories were very different! She knows where **ROBERT KAIM-CAUDLE (1961-66)** is and has had contact with his sister **HELEN (1966-68)** who lives in Paris. Then last week, out of the blue, I got a long letter from **CHRISTINE NORDIN (1964-66)** who is living in Australia. Her story is

very complicated and I don't feel I can give it without asking her. She is a potter, having done many other things. Anyway, Alison and I are hoping to meet her in June so maybe I will persuade them to do their own reports for you! I also went to Australia twice, we could never decide whether to emigrate....Somewhere I have photos of Ayton but can I find them? One I remember is of **BECKY FITCH (1961-67)** gardening by the biology labs. I remember 'Antigone' by the way - **KATY HANDLEY (1961-66)** did the lead role brilliantly. Other acting I remember is being on the outside theatre dressed as a sheep; also 'Noye's Fludde'. In fact so much of the singing has remained with me as I have continued to sing in a choir, albeit only in the spring months. I am afraid I do not remember the Indian accents - how annoying! **PETER WHITTLE (English & Drama Staff 1960-79, OS President 1996-97)** was amazing with us though. I remember Sunday evenings at his house, eating flapjack (I have never had such a good flapjack since) drinking hot chocolate and reading plays aloud. Of course I went for the fun and not really the play reading! As a couple, he and **MARGARET (Sociology Staff 1974-79)**, had an immense influence on me. I wanted my rooms lined with books as theirs were (and have now got many) and I so wanted to treat children as they did theirs. They just oozed love and consideration for their children and had so many. (I found *I* could not cope with more than two!). Sometimes I did not go home for half term. Similarly, **BETH HUGHES (1961-66)** and **JANE FLEMING (1961-66)**, (we all lived in London and we loved staying as we got lots of treats and I so loved their company.) The Whittles would have us over for the afternoon and we would go for lovely rambles. Jane, by the way, left school after fifth form, but ended up as I did at Birmingham University training in medicine, she was in the year below me. She was brilliant but I have lost contact again. Must go. Lots of gardening to do!"

After one or two very interesting preambles concerning his contemporaries, OS members in District 13, the State of his

new Nation, bad backs and various other things, **CHRIS VODDEN (1961-67)** sent me an update in November, on how he and the family are progressing.... "Dalton has been accepted at two Universities. He completed his Eagle Scout project which I think is the equivalent of 'Queens Scout' (is that what it is called in England?) anyway highest scouting rank.) The presentation, to be held in the near future, is a big occasion with a crowd of well-wishers and lots of speeches and the presentation of the Eagle award itself. It carries a lot of kudos and can open a lot of doors, including scholarships to university etc. He is a member of his School's General Knowledge quiz team, and at their last competition the school finished 2nd. He was the competition's second highest individual point scorer, and goes with three others from the region to the National competition in Washington DC in April. Devon managed High Honour role for the first time on the last grading period so he is going from strength to strength. He really likes the Junior High School. He has one year left, then he will move to the High School that Dalton is now at. Of course Dalton will not be there then. Lori has not been able to obtain a full time position since she lost her job in July 07. She has been supply teaching in the meantime. Most of her jobs are with special education, which she loves. She is soon to take a teacher's course at the local university which will give her certification to teach full time. She is hoping that she will be able to take an abbreviated course and skip the teaching practice in view of all the supply teaching she has done in the last year. She is currently taking various short courses at the local tech college to give her additional credit towards her teaching certification. In June I was promoted at the hotel where I work. A Concierge position was created and I was asked to manage it. It provides an extra level of customer relations with additional support for the Front Desk, after hours, between 4 p.m. and 2 a.m. I work a ten hour day four days a week. We have two people to cover Friday, Saturday and Sunday whom I supervise. The position has put me on a salary and I

now receive full medical benefits which has provided the family with much financial relief as we were paying a lot for medical insurance. I am ecstatic with this arrangement, it couldn't be more perfect for me! I won a regional 'Stars of the Industry' award last month and will represent the region at the State level in Chicago in December. Well I suppose that is enough for now... probably too much. Well I guess you can pick through this for news for the Mag. With best wishes, *Chris*... P.S. You asked about the new President. Interesting that the election caught so much attention across the Pond. I do go to the BBC website from time to time and did notice quite a lot of coverage but did not realize the election generated so much interest. Well there was a lot of interest over here too, we had a record turnout at the polls and there is a lot of excitement over Obama being elected. McCain not only had the voters to fight but he also had the press; Obama was the darling of the press. Not only did he win convincingly, but his party has a fairly large majority in both the Senate and the House. A lot is expected. He certainly seems to want unity amongst his team, with a high level of consultation and input. I believe he is a fresh face and he has an unusual amount of charm. Maintaining unity is the key, I feel, to get us all out of the mess we are in. It's a huge task! We viewed Sarah Palin with much the same derision and scepticism as you did."

While on a holiday in Europe in early May last year with his wife Jan, my (GJ) contemporary **GEORGE HETHERINGTON (1948-56)** 'found' **GILL CLOUGHTON (PARKINSON 1961-66)**.... "It sounds difficult to believe but on my Great Train Journey holiday-we went to Florence, Venice and Rome, came back yesterday, I discovered that one of our group was an Ayton Old Scholar, her name is Gill Cloughton née Parkinson and she left school 1966. Jan and I had a great time with her and her husband Chris. Gill has never been back to a reunion but is considering it this year (needed to check out her diary when she got home). Do you know if any of her year is likely to be at the reunion this year? It would encourage her

to come if that were the case.” ... Not only did Gill attend last year’s reunion (we have a photo of her in Stokesley Town Hall deep in conversation with **DIZ DEXTER** and **SUZANNE POTTER [MORGAN]** -) but within a very short space of time, she found herself on our Executive Committee, where new faces are always needed and welcomed.

A few days ago, mid Jan 09, **JAMES SLATER (1974-78)** sent me a copy of an email he had just received from **GEOFF MILLER (1963-66)**
 “James, Hope I

am not too late for this year’s report. I met up with **ROGER ‘BUNT’ HUNTER (1963 - 68)** in 2002 at the Old Scholars’ Reunion. We had re established contact after 30 years, via the AOSA website. We have kept in contact since then and both been to the reunion regularly, but not every year. A few years ago we discovered that we were both going to be in Melbourne Australia in December 2006. Roger was going to see the cricket and I was just on holiday. Naturally we arranged to meet for a few beers and it was a superb place to have a reunion. Could be a good idea for 2010 if anyone is interested. More recently **TIM CRAKE (1961-66)** and I made contact. He lives near Kendal and I visited him in September last year. We had a good couple of hours discussing our time at Aytton and have arranged to have a game of squash this year. Hopefully we will all be able to meet up at this year’s reunion and anyone else from our era. *Meet in the Royal Oak at 1.00 for lunch.* There was quite a good turnout last year, **DIZ DEXTER, SUZANNE MORGAN, HELEN MORGAN, ROGER HUNTER** and me. I know Diz and Suzanne are trying to encourage more of their year to come back because they will all be 60 this year or thereabouts. Cheers, Geoff.”



Gill Cloughton (Parkinson), deep in conversation with Diz Dexter and Suzanne Potter (Morgan)

MELANIE DEAKIN (1964-70) contacted Dick Dennis, with the very sad news of the death, in a car crash, of her brother **ANTHONY (1964-69)** on 2nd June, 2008. Melanie was anxious to inform his Aytton contemporaries. Dick was able

to reassure her that the news of his death would be posted on the website. On our behalf he sent his sympathy to the Deakin family.

L Y N N BURDON (1966 - 73) emailed Dick with a change of address. To preempt Dick writ-

ing back to ask for news, she forestalled him.... “I am sure if I don’t offer it you will ask me for some news so here goes – I continue as managing partner of the solicitors’ firm I founded in 1986. I am proud of the innovative things we do to make work a happier place - I believe we have the most flexible working policy in the land! My lovely children (Joe 19 and Jenny 18) are at/heading for university. I have recently run a couple of marathons (very slowly) and am enjoying sailing and skiing whenever I can get away from the office.”

On the 16th Dec last, I was watching ‘Flog It’, when a piece of furniture made by Robert ‘Mouseman’ Thompson of Kilburn came up for auction. By way of augmenting an interesting item with an even more interesting story, an interview which the presenter Paul Martin had in 2003 with **IAN CARTWRIGHT (1966-70,)** who runs the business with his cousin Ian (Cartwright), was reshow. Asked whether the idea of the famous ‘mouse’ trademark had come from, Ian, grandson of the founder Robert Thompson, said that his grandfather and one of his craftsmen had been working in a local church, and one of them commented on how appropriate the setting was as they were both as poor as church mice. Ian said that his grandfather

also compared the way mice delicately gnawed their food with the manner in which the men carefully chiselled wood to make their wonderful furniture. Robert

Thompson decided thereafter to add a mouse to everything carved by the workshop. So in approximately the 1930s the famous 'mouse' image was born.

1970s

KATIE RUTHERFORD (1970-72) writes...“I am still teaching Yoga fulltime and loving it. The classes are getting bigger and there are more of them. I spend a month each year in India which I regard as a great privilege. Last year my husband Hamish came too and survived three solid weeks of yoga. I am busy organising (May 08) a retreat to Marche, east of Assisi in Italy, which will be led by my Indian teachers. It should be a wonderful experience.”

From **SAM MILBANK (WARD 1971-78)** via **JAMES SLATER (1974-78)** came news of her and her family. “It has been a year of change and some real highs and inevitable lows. Sticking with the highs, not least our first visit to Wales and ascent of Snowdon, it was lashing with rain, windy and low cloud so no panoramic views from the top but a huge sense of relief on return to hot chocolate in the cafe. We went up the Pig Trail and down Miners' Track with Med as our ever enthusiastic and encouraging guide! The girls also did their first proper rock climbing on Tryfan Bach and loved it. We've had some great surprises too. In May, a surprise birthday party for Med saw over 100 friends and family enjoying one of the few sunny and hot evenings this year: fantastic food, marvellous marquee, great games and dancing. A further surprise happened in October when we ambushed my mother one Saturday morning; having free access into her unlocked house, we were waggled welcomed by the great guard dog, Sophy. Mum coped with seeing the four of us, but was then a little fazed when **ALLY** entered the kitchen! Her real disbelief was reserved for Noel and how he managed to be involved in the secret plans for Ally's visit from South Africa. Ally's trip coincided with the delivery of a long-standing promise to mum to climb Roseberry Topping and visit Great Ayton with

Charlotte and Jennifer. It was fantastic, with the girls loving Suggitts and seeing the 'school'. We'd also arranged to meet old friends on the climb and went up with Jenny Earle, her dog, Pam Royale and her children, Pippa and Laurence, and their dog. The following day we all congregated at Jenny's and spent time with her mum Anne, children Chloe and Sam, and partner Joe (Cornish). His photography is truly inspiring, he runs his business from Stokesley! The Ayton link expanded with contact for me from **BENEDICT HURST (1972-79)**, a friend who lived in Nigeria and is now based in Portugal. He is another great photographer but not as well known as Joe Cornish. The move of our friends Allison and Simon Hosking, and their four children to New York has meant an additional holiday destination but a gap in the local circle. Med and Simon are planning to climb Mount Rainier in 2010! Med went ice climbing in Norway in February with his climbing club, plus the renowned Alan Hincks. Apparently Alan is also a great friend of Joe's, small world! **KATE (1970-74)** has settled in Devon, enjoys the pace of life and is working hard to make a home from an 8-acre smallholding, but also has a stimulating job on Exeter council. My father, Alan, is still enjoying France with the addition of new dog, Ben. We had a new nanny in September, Zara. She is in her mid 40s, and does a split shift of early morning and late finishes quite happily. House investment has seen ecologically-friendly loft insulation, a shower in the girls' bathroom, wardrobes in their rooms and study refit for me. Ongoing decoration and essential scaffolding and roof renovations means that the need for a blank cheque remains constant! I started a new job in April - as Business Development Director for Serco Health and have really become embedded into the commercial sector. It was a steep learning

curve, different life-style and culture with greatly enhanced skills. Med now leads on the 2012 Olympics for all security work, as well as his work in South Yorkshire, so is incredibly busy and is spending more time in London. Charlotte has moved easily into senior school, even with the amount of homework she has. Both girls have a good balance between study and non-curricular activities: tennis 3-4 times a week, piano and clarinet with Jen now doing Grade 4 ballet and Charlotte on the school netball team. Jen was the leading lady in a school production of Snow White, and Charlotte Harlequin in a brilliant production Pinocchio, I made both of their costumes. School trips for them included 4 days in London for Charlotte, and an Outward Bound course in Lincolnshire as an ice-breaker for the Year 7s. Jen has enjoyed trips to York and the authentic Jorvik centre, as well as the brilliant National Media Museum in Bradford. Their experience of the arts was shaped further by their first RSC production in Stratford when I took them to see 'Love's Labours' Lost' with David Tennant! Jen is a real fan, and they both just soaked up the energy and fun of the production. A trip to the Red Sea beckons for next year, as Charlotte, Med and I are all now qualified to dive. Jen is mean with a snorkel and fins and I am sure will join us soon. We've also expanded at home with the addition of 'Bisto,' a house rabbit, lop-eared and sweet, he lives in a hutch in the playroom and roams there and in the kitchen when let out and supervised! He and Fuzzy (the budgerigar) keep us relaxed and entertained. We remain, as ever, very willing to receive any visitors. Plenty of space and I'm still over catering, so plenty to eat and drink. "

RACHEL SLADE (1973-80) emailed **DICK DENNIS** last August.... "It looks like I forgot to update Ayton Old Scholars with our new address when we moved house back in 2002... I work at Oxford Brookes University as a "Data Services Manager," leading a team of Oracle Database Administrators, I've worked there

since 1990. I married Gareth Williams (in May 1986), and we have two daughters: Joanne (16) and Kim (14). My work email address is: rslade@brookes.ac.uk. Please update your records so that I can cease to be a "lost" member. I'm still in contact (exchange of Christmas cards) with: **DAVID SILLS (Maths Staff 1973-81)**, **CLAIRE PRICE (MORGAN 1973-80)**, **JANE DAWSON (1973-80)**, **ANTHONY JONES (1971-72)** and **JONATHAN VICKERS (1973-80)** - although I haven't actually seen any of them for several years. I also live near **BRIAN (1971-74)** and Helen **AULD, FRED (Headmaster 1975-84)** and **ERICA SESSA (Mistress of the Family 1975-84)** and **PETER (English & Drama Staff 1960-79, AOSA President 1996-97) MARGARET WHITTLE (Sociology Staff 1974-79)**, and have seen them more recently."

JAMES SLATER (1974-788) made contact with **PHIL WOOLER (1974-79)** last year via 'Friendsreunited' and sent news of him..."Sorry, missed your e-mail or I would have replied sooner. I was on holiday so I would have unable been to go to the Old Scholars' Reunion, I hope you all had a great time. I am determined to attend sometime! Yes, the photo is recent, last September in fact, I got married to the right girl this time, in the Lake District, it was a great day. **NICK CLEMMENT (1978-83)** attended, I am sure you will remember him. I am still working as an installation manager for Chatsworth Windows in Northallerton, having done quite a varied amount of jobs during my career. Apart from Nick I do not see anyone I used to go to school with, having given up on the Friends' website for news of anyone." *(Does he mean 'Friendsreunited' or our own website? GJ)*

WENDY SMITH (ARNOLD 1959-65) sent a snippet of news concerning **IAN ROBBINS (1974-78)**. Ian apparently runs a Leisure business in Thailand organising windsurfing and other events during the tourist season.

1980s

“After I, [**CHARLOTTE SCHOCH (GOODSWEN 1982-84)**] left school I went to a technical college and worked in local firms and the family’s butchers’ shops before joining Teesside Overhalls Group in the early 90s, working on the plants at ICI as a Technical Assistant. I then left to go to work in Switzerland where I met my husband Simon, I worked for Novartis Pharma in the Infectious Diseases and Cancer Treatment Dept. We then returned to England and have set up camp in Bedale; we have a little boy called Alexander. My brother **JAMES (1983-88)** left Ayton to attend Prior Pursglove School in Guisborough. He went on to Leeds Uni to study Mechanical Engineering, worked for various local firms before slipping into computer networking, and is now working for Morrisons, and is sub-contracted to Banks. He married old scholar **KAY LEONARD (1983-87)** who trained as a nurse and worked in Middlesbrough. She is still working for the NHS but in another role. They live in Ingleby Greenhow and bump in to other old scholars from time to time but have lost touch somewhat owing to moving about so much.” ... This news came to us in a rather sad way when Charlotte got in touch to say that her father, **PHILIP (1953-57)**, with whom we had just made contact in 2007, had died in early 08 of a pulmonary embolism.

DICK DENNIS (1944-52) was leafing through his Sunday Times Colour Supplement on 8th May 08 when he came across an article on the medical uses of Ecstasy (or MDMA). Entitled *‘Ecstasy after the Agony,’* it gave details of a young woman named Donna who had, unknowingly, been suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) following a traumatic rape, and the amazing change MDMA, made to her life. **BEN SESSA (1983-85)**, who works in Bristol University’s Psychophysiology Unit, was one of the medical contributors.... “Ben Sessa has been writing papers on MDMA for two years, ‘There’s plenty of anecdotal evidence,’ he says, ‘that it really could be useful in psychotherapy. There they are, qualified doc-

tors with experience and medical backup, giving people this tiny dose of MDMA with safeguards in place. It took them 20 years for the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, or ‘Maps,’ to get off the ground, and it cost one million dollars. The irony is that thousands of people are taking the stuff every weekend and there’s a 15 year old boy on the corner who will sell it to you for a tenner.’ ...Sessa would like to set up a programme of research in the UK. ‘For severe unremitting PTSD sufferers it could be a lifeline. What they’re seeing in the United States are people who have suffered for years suddenly saying’, ‘wow, for the first time in my life I can talk about this, I can live with it’... ‘And they are not young ravers, they are people in their thirties, forties, fifties, who have never taken drugs, it’s remarkable.’ But what about the potential for post study abuse? Might someone who felt deflated after the elation of their MDMA session find the urge to self medicate irresistible and pop to that fifteen year old on the corner for a quick fix? ‘Not at all,’ says Sessa, ‘I prescribe Valium all the time, and when the course is finished patients could go and buy Valium on the street, but they don’t. Very few people are interested in recreational drugs.’ Sessa is adamant that research into MDMA is justified. ‘Look at heroin, it’s a class-A drug that is dangerous when used recreationally, but it is used widely in medicine, and so it should be. Can you imagine saying to the Royal College of Anaesthetists that they cannot use morphine or diamorphine (heroin), pethidine or codeine or any opiate based drugs because heroin is dangerous and people abuse it? It’s culturally bound, MDMA has been demonized.’ “

I am grateful to **WENDY SMITH (ARNOLD 1959-65)** who sent in the following information... “**REBECCA HUGHES (ROBBINS 1986-91)** has represented GB in Dressage in Canada, Australia, and Japan. In March 2008 she won the National Winter Prix St George’s Dressage title, only three months after the birth of her daughter, Ruby, the previous

December. Her husband Gareth is also a leading dressage competitor. Her brother **IAN ROBBINS (1974-78)** runs a Leisure business in Thailand."

Wendy also sent me a cutting from a local newspaper from late November 08 giving details of a concert by the Teesside Symphony Orchestra at the Methodist Church in Stokesley... "The soloist will be local cellist **JANINE PEACOCK (1986-93)** who will play Bruch's Kol Nidrei and Faure's Elegie. Janine began playing at

the age of six under local teacher Hester Pearson. She studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, and graduated with a B.A in Musical Studies. She began her teaching career in Glasgow, and in 2006, made the decision to return to the area where she grew up and now teaches for Tees Valley and North Yorkshire Music Services"...**MATTHEW TRUSCOTT (1989-93)** is now joint Leader of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

1990s

Sadly, there is no 90s' old scholar's News this year. Surely, the potential from news among this group of OS is huge. Please, 90s' OS, let Gill Jackson know what's happened in the twelve or more years since you left Ayton - university, travel, careers, marriage, children, meeting up with friends made during your Ayton years. Gill's e-mail address is: ***gill-jackson@o2.co.uk***, she would really like to hear from you.

Dick Dennis (1944-52)

Staff News

In March 2008 **DICK DENNIS (1944-52)**, while on another family tree quest through Genesreunited, came across an interesting snippet connected to the Dixon family.

David Fox, 1790-1871, the father-in-law of our **RALPH DIXON (1846-90)**, had been raised a Methodist but became a Quaker. The one problem he had when he converted was that he would have to give up the cello which he had always played in the past. Believing that it would be wrong to sell it or even give it away, he decided to bury it. A play written by Clifford Bax, brother of Sir Arnold Bax, quondam Master of the King's Music, (both descendants of David) in 1933, called "The Quaker's Cello," was based on this incident!

In early June 08, **DICK DENNIS**

(1944-52) engaged in a series of most interesting emails with **SYLVIA COWLES (CLAYTON 1944-47)** and her sister **EDNA BOND (1953-57)** concerning the

life and working details of their father **J. R. (REG) CLAYTON (Electrician, Woodwork and Metalwork Staff approx 1908-53)**... "Dear Sylvia and Edna, I'm doing a lot of catching up on the Ayton OS website and one of these items includes a proper record of your father's time at Ayton. First of all, he appears in the Staff photo pages - click this line to see: http://www.manannan.org/im/aosa/archives/archives_staff/archives_staff_page1.htm I had a number of e-mails from you and photo image files of your father, one



Reg. Clayton, photographed in Home Guard uniform during WWII

of which I've used, plus scans of the Jubilee commemorative medal, and Founders'

medal, but your e-mail giving me the background to these has vanished. I also have scans of a reference letter from James Morris, Electrical Engineer, to **FRANK R. ARUNDEL (Headmaster 1895-1913)**, dated 25th May 1907. This puzzles me as the official dates for your father's time on the Staff were 1921-53. I left in 1952 and my recollection is that your father had retired before then. Could you set the record straight please? If you could e-mail with more details of your father's contribution to the School and his War years, then I'll put a separate page together to pass on the information to the WWW. (*According to the Centenary History, J.R. Clayton was drafted into the army for two years during WWI -G.J.*) (The WWW is very interested in our website with visits currently running at around 800 daily!) Dick".... "Dear Dick, Thank you for your email. I will try to answer some of the questions. Dad was born in 1880, and came to Ayton from Bolton, Lancs in 1908 with his first wife & baby son. He came as an electrician to run the turbine generator which powered the

school's 110v. electricity supply. The dam across the river, at the north end of the lake, ran the water down the sluice near the laundry to the turbine. I think the date of 1921 must have been when he became 'Staff', and taught metalwork & woodwork, which he had learnt at Summer Schools. Eventually he had to give up the teaching, as he did not have the necessary qualifications. He continued to work at the school at the request of **JOHN READER (Scripture & Maths Staff 1938-44, Headmaster 1952-74)**, and we lived in School Lodge until his death. He was in the Great Ayton Home Guard, during the Second World War, as he was over 60 years old. Edna & I were born late in his life, his first wife & son had died in the early 1930s, and he married our mother, Emily, in 1933. Best wishes, *Sylvia.*" "Dear Sylvia, Many thanks for this, fills in a few gaps. Do you have any more photos of your father? I have only the two attached (presumably the one in uniform is from his Home Guard days?). Do you know what the story was behind the Jubilee and



The Dam, photographed in 1936 after completion of a rebuild and overhaul of mechanism. The hydro-generator would still have been operational in 1936, if only as a standby for the diesel.

other medals? I remember your father well, a kind gentleman, taking Metalwork classes in the room just off the Mill Arch. I was one of his helpers, maintaining the magnificent diesel engine powered generator just round the corner from the Metalwork Room, looking out onto the Boys' Bridge. I understood a hammer was put through this engine to get it out at some time after I left and I always thought it was a tragedy. *Dick*..... "Hi Dick, I will look for another photo of Dad as soon as possible. We don't know anything about the medals, they only turned up when we cleared our mother's home after her death in 1991. Dad learnt to be an electrician in the early 1900s at Lever Brothers (Soap Manufacturers) at Port Sunlight, Wirral, and came to Ayton to run the Hydro Turbine generator to start with, then it was scrapped for a diesel, then a transformer was installed to convert to 240v. He did retire for a short period when (Mr.) **STANLEY CARR was Head (1940-51)** but when John Reader came, he was reinstated, and was still working until his death in July 1955 (nearly 75 years old). *Sylvia*" The letter of reference mentioned above by Dick is as follows: ... "*I have very great pleasure and every confidence in recommending J. R. Clayton for the situation he is now seeking. Whilst he has been in my employ, he has proved himself a most reliable and steady workman, always willing and Courteous and I believe he is also a Teetotaler. I have never had cause to make complaint either with his work or his behaviour. I will be very sorry to lose him for my own part as men like him are so seldom picked up, but we are so slack I cannot find him regular work. I am sure you will be entirely satisfied with him should you decide to give him a trial. Yours truly, J Mason.*" This delightful PS from Dick arrived just after I had printed out the staff news for proofreading.... "Reg Clayton was one of those people I like to remember and there are not too many of them. He was such a very nice man – and a very good and patient teacher. I can still smell the metal workshop, molten metal, a mini furnace, gas, and solder. I never ceased in my admiration of his skill, and the beauty of some

of the things he made. I wonder if he ever knew he'd unleashed **HARRY SNALAM (1947-52)** on his nocturnal tours of the school with passkeys made in the workshop?"

"Yesterday evening Aug 08, we, (Dick and Freda Dennis), watched a BBC3 programme – a biography of the varied life of composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams (1872-1958) I and was reminded of one of **BERNIE PORTER's (Music Staff 1948-53)** anecdotes. He said he had little claim to fame, with the possible exception, in pre-Ayton days, being stretched out in the front row of the stalls at an orchestral rehearsal of Vaughan Williams' work and not noticing the great man himself coming along, and as Bernie's legs were out in the gangway, tripping him up!" With the late **CHARLES DANSON (1936-37)**, one of our refugees from Nazi Europe, being chosen by RVW to sing in one of his operas, it as been quite a year for Ayton-related Vaughan Williams connections.

During the 2008 AGM, our Secretary, **JILL WHEELER (1949-56)** announced that our **Steward, Handyman & Gardener REG FALL (1955-73)**, who lives in the village, had celebrated his 100th Birthday on 24th June. On behalf of the Association we sent him a card with our congratulations and most sincere good wishes

JAMES SLATER (1974-78) received the following news from **MARGARET (Sociology Staff 1974-79)** and **PETER WHITTLE (English & Drama Staff 1960-79 - AOSA President 1996-97)** "We are still in north Oxfordshire, still fundraising for the local hospice and about to become Hospice Ambassadors. We have established a name for ourselves as 'Cottage Crafts'. This and theatre going takes up most of our time. Incidentally, the Old Scholars' record does not credit Margaret with having taught at the school, which she did for five years up to 1979, as well as being a 'staff wife'." (*Mea Culpa Peter, will see that it is altered in the Handbook. However, in our defence I would say that it is only thanks to CHRIS SCAIFE'S wonderful Ayton Register, that we have any records at all of the staff who taught at Ayton. GJ*) ... "We are happily in touch

with a few Old Scholars, and would welcome news from more 'though we don't get back to Ayton as often as we once, did. The family is nicely spaced around the country: **SARAH (MILES 1968-72)** and **DEBORAH (1970-72)** in education, **FELICITY (1969-72)** in two careers between the Palace of Westminster and Blue Badge Guiding. Jeremy works for the Home Office with young offenders, and **URSULA**

(WALKER 1973-80) and her husband make and sell expensive soap very successfully."

The concert performed by the Teesside Symphony Orchestra in Stokesley Methodist Church on November 22nd 08 which featured **JANINE PEACOCK (1986-93)** as the soloist (see 80s' News for details) was conducted by **MARTIN ESSEX (Music Staff 1974-94)**.

Two more Reunion photos



There have been so many photographs of the Meeting House but this one, with some of Saturday's sunshine, reflects some Meeting House peace, soon to be shattered with continuous comings and goings of old scholars rendezvousing on their arrival in the Village.

Stokesley Town Hall, our 2008 (and 2009) Saturday Reunion Evening Meal venue. This sturdy Victorian structure looks rather forbidding but inside it is very different. The main function room - our dining room - was pleasantly decorated and provided a convivial atmosphere for an enjoyable evening.



It's a postscript from him...

Officially this is my fourth edition of the Mag; how time flies. I say officially as I have had very little input to the Mag you are now reading. Last Autumn it became clear that I was going to find it difficult to put the Mag together, as changes at work meant I had to spend increasing amounts of time away from home. Fortunately, Dick Dennis and Gill Jackson stepped into the breach and took over the production. I am extremely grateful for this help, which also proved doubly important, as during what should have been the busiest time for the Mag, my wife was taken ill. As I write this she awaits a further operation and

tests that will hopefully be over and behind us by the time the presses start rolling. To quote many a politician "I wish to spend more time with my family," or to put it another way, they need more of my time. As a result, I will not be standing for re-election as the Hon. Editor at the AGM. I would like to thank Gill Jackson and Dick Dennis for their help with putting the Mags together, and especially taking over the production of this current issue; I also thank the Executive Committee for their support.

James Slater (1974-78)

..... and also from me

Although I continued to write and edit the News for James Slater since I 'retired' in 2005 I never, in a million years, thought I would ever end up back in charge. That is until October of last year and a change in James's circumstances. A case of one of those 'best laid schemes' etc.

Without the enormous amount of help I received from Dick Dennis, who has, almost instantly, transferred every article, item, photo I have sent him into PDF format (i.e. as they will appear in the finished AR), I simply could not have managed. How James coped last year when Dick's health prevented him from any involvement and he, James, had to put the entire Mag together, photos and all, entirely on his own, I cannot imagine. I take my hat off to him. James has indicated that he will not be standing for re-election at the AGM in June. I would like to thank him



Gill Jackson and James Slater - a pair of Editors, in the Memorabilia Room

very much for all the hard work he has put in over the past three and half years to ensure that members of the Association continued to receive their Annual Reports each May. I hope he and Pam and their family will still come and visit us at reunion times.

Dick's work on the website is also of enormous value to anyone editing our Annual Report; again, without it, much of the News which appears year on year, would just not materialise. After Christmas Dick sent me an

update on the 'visits' which the website received during 2008...*'the full 2008 year visitor figures on the Ayton website were 214,000 in round numbers, which is an average of 586 people visiting for each day of the year'*: a truly staggering statistic.

This year, Suzi Scaife has been working against the clock on our behalf (the birth of her third grandchild is imminent) to ensure that what I actually write makes

sense, and resembles in no small measure what I intended to put down on paper. I am most grateful for her continued vigilance and hard work.

We already have a date for a 'sort, and delivery or post,' from Wendy Smith, the printed final product has to be with her by the 5th May. Wendy is hoping that her usual team of Mary Banks, Clifford Wesch

and possibly her husband Nat will be on hand on the day to help out. Without the work done by this long-standing and dedicated team, we might as well not bother to publish a Mag at all. Thank you all very much indeed.

Gill Jackson (Hinds 1950-55)

Three AGM photographs

Biddy Stainsby (Brown), pictured top right, died on 27th February 2009. We would like to dedicate this page of the AOSA Mag to her memory, the annual publication she loved, and looked forward to, so much.

Waiting for the AGM to start, Lil Pearson (Wrightson) and Biddy Stainsby (Brown) enjoy a joke out of camera sight



Jill Wheeler (Rhodes) - Hon Sec., with all the details for the AGM to consider.



All over for another year; so let's get a cup of tea before the journey home

Changed Addresses since April 2008

(Lines in **bold** indicate new Members - the lines in ***bold italic*** indicates a Lost LM found)

Area

- LM 1 1955-61 Helen Bell, 33 Rylands Road, Whitecross, Dunblane, Perthshire,
Scotland FK15 0HN
**1 1975-76 **Helen Richardson, 150 New Ridley Rd, Stocksfield,
Northumberland NE43 7EH****
- 2 1971-76 Phil Ramsey, 9 Cleadon Old Hall, Cleadon, Sunderland,
Co. Durham SR6 7QD
- 4 1982-88 Benedikt Klemenzson, 116 Rosalind Court, Asgard Drive, Regent Park,
Salford, Greater Manchester M5 4CG
- LM 4 1937-44 Jean Waters, (George), Apartment 17, Middletown Wood,
Middletown Hall, Middleton St. George, Darlington, DL2 1HQ
- LM 5 1961-66 **Gillian Cloughton, (Parkinson), 15 Castle Wynd, Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough, N. Yorks TS7 0QB****
- 5 1948-53 Sylvia Taylor, (Buckle), 1 Sommerville Avenue, Ormesby,
Middlesbrough TS3 0PG
- 7 1950-52 Colin Schofield, Safari, Kirby Lane, Kirby, N Yorks TS9 7AL
- LM 9 1954-61 Vivien Flynn, 45 Luscombe Way, New Earswick, York YO32 4DS
- 10 1952-57 Edna Bond, (Clayton), 8 Frampton Drive, Willersey, Nr. Broadway,
Gloucestershire WR12 7PY
- 10 1976-1980 ... **Rebecca Graaff, 10 Dulverton Road, Westcotes, Leicester LE3 0S****
- 10 1975-79 Peter Tolley, 21 Pangbourne Road, Henley Green, Coventry,
West Midlands CV2 1RQ
- LM 10 1973-80 **Rachel Williams, (Slade), 8 Gauntlets Close, Bloxham, Banbury,
Oxon OX15 4NY****
- LM 11 1965-70 Elizabeth Ann Tovey, (Price), 16 Wykewane, Malvern, Worcs WR14 2XD
- LM 11 1941-45 Michael Wardell, Bell Corner Cottage, St. Michael's Hill, Milverton,
Somerset
- LM 12 1966-73 Lynne Burdon, 12 Studd Street, Islington, London N1 0QJ
- LM 13 1945-54 Michael Adam, 11 Saffron Street, Cambridge 3434 NEW ZEALAND
- LM 13 1977-79 **Karen Diamond, 2020 Franciscan Way, #211, Alameda,
California 94501 USA****
- LM 13 1947-54 Angela Gough, (Bradbeer), Boite Postale 4, La Poste,
23250 Pontarion, FRANCE
- LM 13 1947-50 Peter Sanderson, Les Chenes Verts, Impasse Riqueir, f. 83320
Carqueiranne, FRANCE
- LM 13 1943-48 Myrtle Scoble, (Tulip), 2/360 Balcome Road, Beaumaris, Victoria 3193,
AUSTRALIA
- LM 13 1943-49 Donald Stiff, 43 Cowarral Circuit, Wauchope, New South Wales,
2443 AUSTRALIA

Thinking of moving house?

If you are - or have just moved - please let the Records' Secretary know. We lose about twelve members annually who forget to advise their new address. See inside of the back cover for the address to contact.

BIRTHS

- To **REBECCA (ROBBINS 1986-91)** and Gareth **HUGHES**, a daughter, Ruby,
December 2007
- To **LOUISE (FOX 1991-95)** and Richard **SENISCAL** a daughter, Lucy Elizabeth, 3rd
April 2008
- To **CAROLINE (DRABBLE 1980-85)** and Chris **BLANCHARD** a son, Robbie, 4th
July 2008, brother to Alexander
- To **ROBERT (1981-66)** and Alison **JACKSON**, a son, Benjamin, 8th July 2008
- To **LUCY SCAIFE (1988-93)** and Craig Parnaby, on Feb. 27th 2009, a son, Oliver
Scaife Parnaby, a brother for Isobel and Elsa, and a first grandson for **CHRIS** and
SUZI SCAIFE

DEATHS

- 1933-35 **NANCY WATKINSON (PINKNEY)**, died, November 2007
- 1953-57 **PHILIP GOODSWEN**, died, January 2008
- 1947-52 **KEITH FREARSON**, died, February 2008
- 1933-39 Captain **WILLIAM (BILLY) LONG**, sometime Minister of Education for
Northern Ireland, died, 11th March 2008
- 1936-37 **CHARLES DANSON** (formerly known as
KARL ERICH DANIELSOHN), died, 12th March 2008
- 1948-54 **DAVID POTTS**, died, 18th March 2008
- 1964-69 **ANTHONY DEAKIN**, died, 2nd April 2008
- 1925-31 **HAZEL WADE (CLAPHAM)**, died, 17th May 2008
- 1971-81 **PETER HOLMAN**, Art Staff & Head of Hall,
died, 4th June 2008
- 1937-40 The Rev. **JOHN HOWARD BARCLAY DOUGLAS**,
AOSA President 1992-93, died, late June 2008
- 1930-34 **SUSIE HERON (BURDON)**, died, 12th September 2008
- 1941-47 **MURIEL WALKER**, died, October, 2008
- 1941-46 **KITTY ANDREIS (HARTH)**, died, October 2008
- 1919-22 **MARJORIE RIDER**, aged 100, died, November 2008
- 1936-39 **JOHN 'JOE' TILLOTT**, AOSA President 1998-99,
died, 22nd December, 2008
- 1947-52 **DOROTHY 'BIDDY' STAINSBY (BROWN)**, died, 27th February 2009

SPONSORSHIP

We REALLY need your continued contributions towards reunion expenses, and to enable us to publish the Mag.

PLEASE HELP US TO HELP YOU.

Very many thanks to all who have so generously contributed Sponsorship is still available – *all* contributions are gratefully received, please contact William Pine, with your donations (made payable to AOSA.)

List of Sponsors for the years 2007-08

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Dick Dennis for hosting the Website,
Louis Trotter, Angela Gough, M. Westgarth Taylor,
Mary and Graeme Kidd, Robert Kaim,
Margaret and Eric Newton, William Pine,
one anonymous donation.

Apologies to those who sent us donations since April 07 and whose names are not published. As a result of the Accounts working a year in arrears, these will be shown in the 2010 Annual Report. We do, however, appreciate your help.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

£5.00 per annum (£2 extra for partners)
or £100 Life Membership,
£50 for those joining at age 50 or over;
(20% discount for Life Membership for partners)

Those wanting Membership forms for family and friends may obtain them from Dick Dennis, William Pine, or via the website.