

SMALL BEGINNINGS

Preliminary Draft No 1

Summer 2001

The Newsletter of the pupils of the Old Barling Primary School

The Old Barling Primary School (hereafter the School) was built in 1878 and was an educational establishment until the early nineteen seventies. Since then the buildings have existed in a number of different guises.

This newsletter is aimed at all ex-pupils, teachers and friends of the School.

The Story so Far

In 1996, 1998, and 2000 there have been reunions of ex-pupils organised on an ad-hoc basis. After the 2000 reunion a small group of ex-pupils got together and held small lunchtime gatherings in local hostelrys. Indeed, an ex-pupil (Geoff Bell) who has lived in South Africa since 1967 has made available part of his personal web site for information and photographs to be stored and accessed – the URL is <http://www.geoffbell.co.za/villages/barling/barling.htm>. So it has been suggested that this is an opportune time to start formalising a group to ensure continuity of contact and exchanges of information. This newsletter will hopefully be a part of that process. Incidentally, is everyone happy with the title ? Feedback please, to Paul Abercombie (for contact details see over).

It should be emphasised that not one individual or small group will dominate the course of any activities but that everything will be a team effort.

There are so many people who have undertaken much of the original work in bringing the situation to its current point and deserve thanks. It would not be practical, on this small Newsletter, to list them all. However, they include: Vi Sivell (nee Mitchell); Pam Gregory; Betty Dobson (nee Deadman); and Den Winch. Thanks to all those not mentioned who have contributed their time and energy. - apologies, I'm sure your time will come.

Proposed future organisation

It is envisaged that, rather than the present ad-hoc system, there could be a level of organisation - in particular, for keeping contact details of former pupils of the old School and for the production of a regular Newsletter. However, to ensure that all ex-pupils and others who are interested may have an opportunity to voice their opinions on this and any related topic, a Special Meeting is being organised for later on this year, probably in September or October. This Special Meeting will be organised by a small working group of ex-pupils who may, or may not, have a role in any formal organisation in the future.

This Meeting will make decisions on the method and means of organisation via an agenda. An example agenda:

1. Does the meeting require that the future organisation be based on a more formal footing ?; (If the majority does not want a formal organisation the meeting will terminate at this point).
2. In what form should the more formal organisation take ?
3. By what means does the Meeting require that contact details are kept ?
4. By what means does the Meeting require that the next reunion is organised ?
5. By what means does the Meeting require that the next Newsletter is produced ?

Future contents of the Newsletter

The contents of Newsletters are likely to have a variable emphasis but, usually, will contain news and details of any future events, photos and comment from the past and present, and any necessary contact details. Here are just a couple of other ideas.

Current ex-pupils attended the School between 1913 and 1970. It drew pupils from within two small, friendly Essex villages with strong agricultural ties. It may be interesting to investigate and report on how ex-pupils have developed and then contributed to society, both locally and further afield.

The staff were central to the school, too. What made teachers, such as Mr Learmond and Miss Riley (to name but two), come to Barling?

Nothing is ruled in and nothing ruled out – the ex-pupils determine the contents.

The importance of photographs

Photos of your school pals and their friends are part of social history. They could contribute a lot to the liveliness of the Newsletter. Your photos can also be digitally scanned into a computer and then placed on the world-wide web (on Geoff Bell's web site - see front page) for all to see – if you should so wish.

Tracing former pupils

After many years have elapsed, it is sometimes difficult to trace former pupils. Even then it is possible that some do not wish to be reminded of their formative years. However, there are probably lots of ex-pupils waiting to be traced and willing to participate in our activities. So, a start could be made on compiling a list of ex-pupils and their contact details from our collective knowledge and enquiries. The information from this list, available to all ex-pupils, may provide a way of tracing former pupils that, hitherto, have been difficult to locate.

A few more words on the proposed organisation of activities

At the moment activities are organised on an ad-hoc basis, while any records of names and address are held personally and passed around as and when required. A centralised list could help to provide a degree of permanency. It might also be helpful to have a committee. However, any organisation formed, to organise future activities, would not be for just a few people, but would be team-based, with tasks shared among volunteers, as many as possible.

A convention on the usage of names

In the future, an editorial board for the Newsletter would have to discuss many basic things and make suggestions. For instance, a convention on the usage of names might be needed. Would it be better for my name to appear as 'Paul Abercrombie, 1949', to indicate the year I started at the school, or as 'Paul Abercrombie (1949-55)'? With married women, would it be better, for instance, to have 'Valerie Ridley, 1949, (nee Mott)' or 'Valerie (Mott) Ridley (1949-55)'? In childhood photographs, should people just be identified by their name at that time; for instance, 'Barbara Wigg'?

Contacts

Owing to the ad hoc basis of the current situation everybody is a contact point. Listing every name is not practical. However, the persons below should be of assistance.

- **Vi Sivell (nee Mitchell)**, 1a Alexandra Road, Great Wakering, SS3 0HN
Telephone: 01702 217170
- **Valerie Ridley (nee Mott)**, 34 Laburnum Grove, Hockley, SS5 4SG
Telephone: 01702 205612 email: valham@bushinternet.com
- **Peter Griffiths**, 22 Gracedale Road, London SW16 6SW
Telephone: 020 8769 6799 email: p-pgriffiths@tinyworld.co.uk
- **Dawn Bailey (nee Mumford)**, 258 Little Wakering Road, Little Wakering SS3 0LA
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