

"SMALL BEGINNINGS"

No 7

Summer 2003

The Newsletter of the former pupils of the old Barling Primary School is aimed at all ex-pupils, staff and friends of the school.

Lunchtime Gatherings

Informal lunchtime gatherings are held periodically on a Saturday, from 12.15 - 2.30pm, in local hostelrys. All former pupils are welcome including teachers, other members of staff, relatives and friends.

The remaining dates for 2003 have been confirmed as:

19 July, at the Castle Inn Public House, Little Wakering

18 October, at the Rose Inn Public House, Silchester Corner, Wakering Road.

SEASIDE GARDEN

During the afternoon of Wednesday 30 April 2003 the result of giving the surplus monies from the Reunion of July 2002 to Barling School could be both seen and inspected. A brief ceremony was undertaken by the Vice Chairman of Rochford District Council, Councillor Richard Amner, to 'open' five small areas at the rear of the school that have been landscaped with various grasses and cockleshells to reflect the nature and character of the surrounding area. The cost of the landscaping was paid jointly by the Former Pupils and Friends of the old Barling School and by School Funds.

In Attendance were Mrs S. Taylor (Headteacher Barling School), certain members of School staff and pupils, and representatives of the Former Pupils and Friends of Barling School (these included, Betty Deadman, Val Mott, June Mott, Pearl Mumford, Dawn Mumford, Bill Pavelin, John Pavelin, Graham Ridley and Paul Abercrombie). The Press was represented by the Southend Evening Echo and the Southend Times. Both newspapers published photos of the event, as did the Barling School in 'Governor Newslines' (the School Governors Annual Report to parents).

For this issue of the Newsletter, the surnames of former pupils will be as used at the time that they attended Barling School.

Memories

Betty Deadman (attended Barling School 1938 – 1946)

Betty was born in Southchurch during 1932 although within a few months had moved to 'Vera' cottage Little Wakering. Vera Cottage (although these days carries a house number) is located in Little Wakering Road about 150 metres (that is, 162 yards approx.) from the Castle Inn towards the Run corner. She started school at Barling in January 1938 and remained there until 1946 when she was 14 years of age. Throughout this time, Betty continued to live at Vera Cottage until 1955 when she married. From an early age Betty has been connected with church activities, irrespective of the denomination, ranging from the established Church of England, Scripture Union, and Methodist Churches. Even after Betty left Barling School she remained friends with Miss Riley until she died (just a few years ago) and was instrumental in getting both Miss Brown (another teacher) and Miss Riley to attend the first Reunion that was held in 1996. Indeed, Betty has always been a strong supporter (and sometimes an organiser) of Barling School Reunions. Currently, Betty lives in Great Wakering.

The Second World War took place during the largest part of my childhood and my memories and experiences of that time are dominated by this sad event. Initially, at home my father made us an air raid shelter in the back garden out of bales of straw. Many nights were spent in this shelter with my brother and I lying on makeshift beds, grandmother in a chair and dad watching the planes come and go. As a little girl, unlike most of the boys of my age, I knew next to nothing about those airplanes except the deafening noise that they made. (Even today if an an aeroplane flies overhead at a low altitude I say 'its alright its one of ours !'). Anyway back to the dark days of the late nineteen thirties and early forties, it wasn't long before we were the proud owners of a Morrison shelter that was designed to be erected inside the house on the ground floor, the advantage of being situated inside saved us having to go outside during the cold and wet weather. On Saturday 19th April 1941 when I was just 8 years old and while staying with my other grandmother in Great Wakering the war touched me personally. During an air raid I had been brought downstairs (from bed) to sit on a little seat next to the big open top black lead fireplace when at 10 o'clock there were two huge explosions making the entire house shudder which caused the windows to shatter. While, at the same time, clouds of soot shot out from the mouth of the fireplace near to where I was sitting and covered me and my yellow flannelette nightie from head to toe !!!!! Apparently two land mines had been dropped in the nearby field and we counted ourselves extremely lucky that they missed the houses. I also remember the times that two bombs were dropped in the field at the back of us and also bombs that were dropped near the School. However, irrespective of the war going on around us, life still went on as usual with, for example, having a may queen and dancing around the maypole. (Indeed, I can't remember dancing round the maypole and ever getting it right !) There were village concerts and socials to raise money for the 'welcome home fund' for those who had gone off to fight in the war. In fact, my dad used to play in the local band called 'The Jolly Millers' which raised money for the same cause. We were often reminded of the continuing war by the presence of Italian prisoners of war who worked at the, now demolished, Dam Farm, who seemed a friendly and happy bunch of men but, however, we weren't supposed to talk to them.

Immediately after the war, for just one term only, us Barling 'top' girls travelled (via two buses) to the Congregational Hall in Chapel Lane (Great Wakering) for cookery lessons. Obviously, these classes were limited by the fact that most foodstuffs and ingredients were not available owing to continued rationing and, anyway, being in short supply. However, the subject of cooking was the only one in which I ever came top of the class. While in the top class, I used to help the school dinner ladies to layout and dish-up the cooked food that was delivered to the School from Great Wakering. Co-incidentally, some years later I myself ended up as a school cook for about fifteen years. Anyway, it's not all true what they used to say about school meals – honest !!

Memories

Lynne Marshall (attended Barling School between 1952 and 1959)

Lynne Marshall was born during April 1948 and attended Barling School from 1952 until 1959. Lynne is currently a lecturer in Occupational Therapy at the Colchester Institute. Lynne is a qualified occupational therapist, possessing both bachelor and master university degrees, and for many years worked as a therapist in north London, and then later in the Colchester area. Lynne lives in north Essex.

Question: What is your greatest memory of your Barling School Days ?

Answer: *Playing group games such as skipping and Granny's Footsteps in the playground; building a huge snow fort on the playing field following a very heavy winter storm; the smell of woollen mittens drying on the fireguard in Mr Learmond's classroom; watching the film of Genevieve on many occasions; the novelty of the Christmas party; the school library which I managed to read my way through, discovering Biggles and Enid Blyton on the way.*

We lived next to the brook that leads to the Creek with our large garden backed onto Kimberley Road (which at that time, was unmade), so it was a short walk for us to the creek. I spent most of my spare time playing around or in the creek – climbing the cockle shell 'hill' next to 'Gaffer' Mumford's cockle shell crushing shed, or crossing the old wreck from one side of the creek to the other, swimming at high tide in a specifically not-too-muddy spot, scrumping in an orchard on the Barling side and watching the races at the cycle track of the Estuary Eagles. One day, I got stuck in the creek as the tide was coming in (there is something very gluey about that mud) and had to be rescued leaving my wellies behind. There is also a 2-inch scar on my leg as a result of being chased out of the orchard (while scrumping) and falling onto barbed wire.

My father kept a few pigs on our small-holding and one of them, Gertie by name, often escaped from her run and took off down the village street where my mother had to give chase with the meal bucket and a wooden spoon trying to entice her back. Another pig (Daisy) my father trained to sit and lie down. My father also grew strawberries and sold them from our front garden. To this day, I hate strawberry jam as we had jars and jars of it every year. Other very happy memories are of sports day held on the school field, fetes on the Parish meadow, and harvest suppers in the Parochial Hall, where it seemed the whole village turned out and had a good time. I consider that I had an idyllic childhood in my own adventure playground comprised of the creek, unlimited countryside, our unused pigsties, a stable where the straw was kept and a small orchard. I spent hours just playing, climbing, swimming, making little homes in the pigsties, and walking with our dog, Rusty who accompanied my brother and I everywhere. In fact Rusty was taken for lots of walks by others of my generation !!

My years in Little Wakering and Barling gave me a great love of the countryside and village life and I have lived most of my adult life in similar villages where the fete and harvest supper are still highlights on the annual calendar.

Question: Did you have a favourite teacher ?

Answer: *Miss Riley was always my favourite. I am often reminded of her when I see and hear large sheets of paper being torn neatly across, as she used to tear them, using a ruler as a guide. The sound is like no other.*

Question: Where did you live while you attended Barling School ?

Answer: *For my first 3 years, at the Police House in the High Street ,Great Waking, (alas, the police no longer have a presence) and then from the age of 7 at Dreadnought Cottage, Little Waking Road, Little Waking (where I believe 'Jummy' Groves previously lived).*

Question: **How did you get to, and from, School ?**

Answer: *By bus from the Police House in Great Waking, and walked from Dreadnought Cottage.*

Question: **What did you like the most about Barling School?**

Answer: *The smallness of the school community where everyone knew everyone else. I always felt very secure and thoroughly enjoyed all my days at Barling School.*

ODDS and ENDS

Early Warning

There is a groundswell of feeling from ordinary members who would like to see a full reunion organised during July 2004 using the same formulae (same place etc.) as in 2002. As yet nothing has been arranged or even discussed.

If you have a view on this matter then please contact any of those listed below in the Contact Box. Meanwhile, a contact list for future reunions is being constructed by Peter Griffiths. Peter would be very happy to receive names of people's classmates and, if possible, how to get in touch with them.

Practical Assistance

Some aspects of the topic areas taught at Barling School are not on subjects that the teachers have received detailed and thorough training or that they require their current knowledge to be updated. These topic areas range from, for example, astronomy, flower arranging to embroidery, that just might be the hobby or area of interest of a former pupil. The Barling School head-teacher (Mrs S Taylor) would like to be able to call on former pupils, probably by phone, to harness this expertise/experience to assist the teachers and indirectly help in the education of the current pupils. If you are interested in being included then contact Paul Abercrombie. Please remember, it is possible that your particular subject/topic will not arise so please don't be disappointed if your expertise is not called upon.

Internet and Geoff Bell

Geoff Bell, a former pupil living in South Africa, has made available part of his personal web site for old Barling School information (and photos) to be stored and accessed, you can inspect the site at:

www.barlingwakingvillages.co.uk/index.html

Internet and Geoff Bell - continued

In fact, this is the first Newsletter that will be published on Geoff's web site (as well as being produced in hard copy for those without access to computer facilities). **June Claydon** June has lived in the South West for a number of years. If you would like her contact details then please contact Paul Abercrombie. A photograph depicting all those that were in her class at school has now been placed on the Barling School website.


Your Written Contributions

This Newsletter relies on former pupils to contribute their memories of school, family, and social life when they attended Barling School. All contributions, of whatever size are gratefully received. All potential contributors are offered assistance should there be any concerns about writing such an article - especially if you have not had much recent practice. If you feel that you wish to contribute your memories then please contact Paul Abercrombie (see below).

Contact Details

Valerie Ridley (nee Mott)


34 Laburnum Grove, Hockley, SS5 4SG

Telephone: 01702 205612  01702 205612

email: valham@bushinternet.com

Peter Griffiths

22 Gracedale Road, London SW16 6SW

Telephone: 020 8769 6799  020 8769 6799

email: p-pgriffiths@tinyworld.co.uk

Paul Abercrombie

2 Coombes Grove, Rochford, SS4 1DX

Telephone: 01702 544078

email: paulabercrombie@tinyworld.co.uk