

# "SMALL BEGINNINGS"

No 8

Spring 2004

---

The next reunion is on

July 10th 2004

At the new Barling School

From 6.30 until 9.30 pm

Everyone is welcome.

Please bring a plate of food and your favourite  
drink

A group of Barling School ex-pupils, friends and partners occasionally meet for lunch. All are welcome.

Dates and venues for the next three lunches are:

October 16th 2004 at The Cherry Tree, Stambridge

January 15th 2005 at The Castle Inn, Little Wakering

May 21st 2005 at The Cherry Tree, Stambridge

From 12.15 until 3.00 pm

# PAUL DUNCAN ABERCROMBIE

1944-2003

Paul was born in Little Wakering. His parents Lola, and Alec a seafarer, lived opposite the Post Office, but Paul entered the world at the home of his uncle and aunt, Ken and Vera Griffiths, just four doors along. He spent a lot of time with the Griffiths family during his childhood. In the 1950s Paul and Lola lived in Kimberley Road, where she was housekeeper for Sid and Geoff Bell. Later they moved to The Castle.

At Barling School Paul's teachers were Mrs Hoare, Miss Riley, Mrs Horner and Mr Learmond. In 1955 he left to go to King John School in Thundersley. He retained many lifelong friends from the villages, including Norman Snow, who he used to visit in northwest Canada.

He moved to Rochford in the early 1970s, next to the countryside that he loved. Paul and his beloved Airedale, Major Tom, were a familiar sight across the fields and around the creeks.

For some years he was an enthusiastic member of Pegasus Players, a local drama group. Later, he became a volunteer for Advocacy for the Elderly and many older

people in the area have reason to be grateful for his many kindnesses and hard work on their behalf. At work, he spent 20 years in Computing and then almost as much in Town Planning, at Southend Council. His endless generosity to his workmates made him many friends.

Paul was diagnosed with cancer in the late 1990s and was to have three operations, with subsequent chemotherapy, in the five years before his death.

Throughout this time he remained characteristically robust and cheerful. In spite of his illness, these years were among his most productive: he continued to work for the Council and for Advocacy; he completed an MA in Town Planning; he supported numerous charities and spent endless hours with former pupils, developing events connected with Barling School.

After attending the 2000 Reunion, Paul committed himself wholeheartedly to this last activity. He initiated, edited and published the newsletter; arranged the regular, convivial get-togethers in local pubs; led the team that organised the very enjoyable 2002 Reunion; and was an enthusiastic contributor to Geoff Bell's website about the school and surrounding villages.

He died suddenly on 19 November 2003. One of his bosses said: 'He was just such a good bloke'. The large number of people at Paul's funeral shows that many others felt the same. We have lost a wonderful organiser, schoolmate and friend.

*Peter Griffiths*

# JUNE CLAYDON'S MEMORIES

June attended Barling School 1933 – 1942. She was the daughter of Vic Claydon who owned Claydon's store on the corner of Kimberley Road.

In 1943 after leaving Barling School at the age of 14½ I went on a short course at Clark's College.

My first job was in the City working for a firm of insurance brokers. This was while the war was still on and flying bombs were still about. I then worked locally in the export department of EK Cole (Ecko) where I joined the drama group. My last job was in the City, where I worked for an export firm until I was expecting my first baby.

In 1950 I had married someone from outside the villages and we initially lived in Southchurch. During 1979 a job opportunity arose for my husband in the southwest and since that time have lived in that area. I have four children and eight grandchildren.

During my time at Barling School I lived at the Domestic Stores, a shop that sold groceries and domestic goods. It was part of the first property on the left-hand side of Kimberley Road when entering the road from Little Waking Road. Kimberley Road was unmade, full of ruts and potholes. I lived with my parents and sister, Beryl, and brother, Brian both of whom attended Barling School. We always walked to and from school even in snowy weather, when playing snowball fights was fun.

One of the several memories of my time at the school is during WW2 when there were evacuees billeted in the village. The normal practice as I remember, was that ordinary pupils attended school in the mornings, while the evacuees went in the afternoon, sometimes the other way round. So, the village children did not have much contact with the evacuees. The first time I heard "I Vow to thee my Country" the evacuees sang it. Coincidentally there were Italian prisoners of war temporarily housed at Dam Farm, on the other side of Kimberley Road. I don't remember them being at Dam Farm but can remember them walking through the village.

Another school memory is having to visit the toilets during the winter. They were outside by the rear playground and exposed to all weathers. Having to brave the cold, the icy cold water and the carbolic soap was an experience. On a happier note there was a shed in the playing field, next to the school in which we had cookery lessons, during which I learned quite a lot and even manage to bake a few cakes – they tasted awful.

Like Geoff Bell (Spring 2002 edition) I can also remember swimming in the creek at the end of Kimberley Road. During the long summer holidays, playing near the creek occupied most days and some evenings, not unlike Lynne Marshall many years later (Summer 2003 edition).

Sadly, we heard that June Rice (nee Claydon) passed away in Christchurch Hospital on April 19, 2004.

## **VERA MCGEORGE'S MEMORIES** BY DAVID FREEMAN

Vera attended Barling School during the 1920's, having been born in Little Wakering in 1916. She is the daughter of Rose and Henry Bennewith, the undertaker whose family, at various times, occupied Rose Cottage and Edward Cottage near Run Corner.

On Henry's death his son, Norman, carried on the business until his own death some time ago. Norman's wife Sheila lives near North Shoebury Corner and it was she who alerted Vera to the Barling School Reunions. She has seen some of the website photos and in one of them her parents are pictured.

Vera can recall most of the families who occupied the stretch from the Castle Inn to Kimberley Road.



*Paul Abercrombie produced the first editions of "Small Beginnings" and we pay tribute to his hard work and enthusiasm. Without his efforts there would not have been such a successful Barling School reunion group.*

*His legacy of "Small Beginnings" is to continue under the united editorship of Lynne Askham (nee Marshall), Bob Avery and David Freeman.*

If you would like to contribute to "Small Beginnings" please contact:

Lynne Askham  
Mulberry Cottage

48 Thomas Bell Road

Earls Colne,

Essex CO6 2PF

*Phone: 01787 224237*

*Email: [lynneaskham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lynneaskham@yahoo.co.uk)*