

# SCIMITAR

AUTUMN EDITION No. 137



*The journal of the Old Fincunians Association*

# OUR CHAIRMAN SPEAKS

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Dear Fincunian,

I hope you all had a wonderful summer. Welcome to the latest edition of Scimitar.

At a committee meeting, held in June, it was agreed that the increased costs of producing the Scimitar two times a year makes it necessary to increase subscriptions to the OFA for the first time in eight years. I therefore have to inform you that, as from immediate effect, subscriptions will be increased to £5 per annum - but just think what you get for your fiver! It is not just paper, printing and postage, but also the increased circulation due to the number of Old Fincunians returning to the fold, that is causing the increase in cost. Just as an example, I have recently arranged a reunion in October for my year intake (Sep'59), and of the 30 or so people due to attend over half of them asked whether they can join the Old Scholars Association - just four of us are current subscribers!

While on the subject of costs, it occurred to me that a number of Old Fincunians will have embraced new technology and have their own e-mail addresses. I have e-mail (see my address at the top of the page), as do your Treasurers Janine and Colin Luke (CLuke10624@aol.com) and, most importantly, your Editor, Les Sharp (LSharp8030@aol.com). So if you have an e-mail address send it to Les - you never know, in the not too distant future, you may be downloading and printing your own Scimitar for the price of a 'phone call'.

## Millenium Reunion

Our biennial reunion has been booked for Saturday 10 June 2000 from 1.00pm till 5.00pm. As in previous years, refreshments will be provided. To cover the ever-rising cost of hiring the school we will need to make an increased charge of £15 per head. We hope you will make every effort to support the first reunion of the new millenium. Please complete the tear off section below and return it to me as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Godfrey

.....  
Please complete and return to :

GODFREY MANN, 30 TEMPLE AVENUE, WHETSTONE, LONDON, N20 9EH

I/We will/will not be attending the OFA Reunion on Saturday 10 June 2000

Enclosed is a cheque for £..... (£15 per head) made payable to OLD FINCUNIANS ASSOCIATION.

Name(s).....

Address.....

.....  
Please list additional names and addresses on a separate sheet.

## COVER STORY

**The cover picture comes from Norman Burgess (1933/38) who writes :-**

*'...A friend of mine, (not an ex-pupil - he went to Finchley Catholic High), John Parnwell, has today sent me the enclosed photographs about the late Doug Elcome...'*

**Doug Elcome featured in the Spring Edition No. 134 when I reported that Vera M Sheffield (nee Payne 1931/36) had sent a newspaper cutting from the Finchley and Hendon Times :-**

*'COLLECTOR SETS UP EXHIBIT IN MEMORY OF CHILDHOOD FRIEND.'*

*A former student of Christ College in Finchley is paying tribute to his childhood friend, shot down over Germany 57 years ago. Roy Gibbons, aged 77, has donated his entire collection of special issue RAF silver medals to a Sussex museum in memory of Doug Elcome, a Whetstone war hero. The two men, who both served in the RAF during the war, grew up as friends and neighbours in Ridgeview Road, Whetstone. Sergeant Pilot Elcome, who attended Finchley County School, was reported missing on a routine patrol from Tangmere on October 26, 1940, aged 21. Elcome had destroyed an enemy aircraft before being shot down himself. Mr Gibbons, a retired bank manager now living on the Isle of Wight, spent more than four years collecting the medals by mail order from the RAF in Hendon. The full set is now on display at the Tangmere Military Aviation Museum Trust in Chichester, West Sussex.'*

**Doug Elcome was a well-liked and well-remembered Old Fincunian and over the years he has been often the subject of comment in these columns. One who remembers him very well is Pamela Gillilan (1930/35). I have used the following quote from Pamela on a number of occasions :-**

*'...I have a mental snapshot of him; the sun shining down through the glass roof and he's reaching to ring the bell to start afternoon school. He had the most enviable chestnut hair...'*

**In the past a number of you have mentioned the exhibit but this is the first time I have seen a photograph. I am sure that many of you have pictures and photographs which would make interesting covers for our magazine. If so please send them to me and I will do the rest, and I promise to return them safely to you if that is your wish. Even if you have no pictures, if you would like to see something particular on the cover, please let me know and I will do my best to please.**

## NOT MY FAULT, HONEST!

I receive many letters but none more startling than the email I received on 8 April this year. Little did I know then what a storm was about to break :- *'It appears some Old Fincunians may have received the latest edition of 'Scimitar' missing pages 4, 6, 7, and 11.'* A quick survey revealed that not everyone had received a defective magazine. David R Lee (1964/71) wrote by email :- *'I have received my copy and all is well - no missing pages. Having a great time living in the North Wing of a 14th Century Manor House in Somerset for six months while my wife is seconded from Salisbury to work in Exeter. I, for my sins, am sub-contracting at Yeovil on the Westlands Aerospace site and hoping for better times !!! No decent beer - but the scrumpy is out of this world !!!'*

**Mary Jacobs (nee Prokipchuk 1945/50), on the other hand :-**

*'What's the hitch - computer glitch ?*

*When I went to school, number five followed four  
but something now tells me, not any more.*

*And what of page five, six and eleven  
into thin air, yet there still is a seven.*

*May I please have a Scimitar,  
complete with all pages ?*

*And please dear Sir Les,  
let's not wait for ages.*

*I need my fix of the OFA,*

*'Cos when it arrives - make my day !*

*Does the fact that this issue arrived April 1st, mean anything ? ... My brother, Geoff Jacobs, also received an incomplete copy (did all members?)...'*

**Jacqueline Jones (1941/46 and the first secretary of the Old Fincs Netball Club) wrote :-** *'...if you have spare copies of pages 4 and 11 which are missing from my edition, I would like to obtain them ...I enjoy reading the Scimitar and congratulate all those involved in putting it together, a wonderful publication.....'*

**Worse was to come. Just my luck ! Three of the recipients of defective copies were our Chairman, Godfrey Mann (1959/66) and our Treasurers,**

**Janine and Colin Luke (1963/70). I was able to quickly pass complete copies to them by email and did the same for our Australian members.**

**Clever, eh ? Not so clever, I am afraid. Geoff Batten (1947/54) wrote electronically :-** *'I read the latest 'Scimitar' with interest but not apparently with sufficient care because I didn't notice the missing pages ! Will you send out complete versions or could you send the missing pages via email to those people who have it ?... I have just been contacted by Geoff Karet (1947/54) via Richard Colomb(1947/52) - he was in my year and then in the Sixth Form. He phoned and we spoke for the first time since 1954. I have sent him a copy (he has lost his) of the 1953 Coronation Year school photograph on which we both appear...'*

**So I sent off the Scimitar by email to Geoff Batten and waited for the thanks and plaudits, etc. He was quick to reply :-** *'...my computer has crashed following receiving your email...'* **Sorry, Geoff, and I hope you**

enjoy the new copy I sent to you by snail-mail. I gave up trying to send emails and relied upon the good old Royal Mail after that, as I did for Janet Pope (nee Munday (1954/59) who wrote :- *'...I am always interested to read the contents even when there is no mention of anyone in my school years .....I was a little disappointed this time to receive a magazine minus several pages .....I am just curious in case I miss out on a titbit !!!'*. In similar vein wrote Diane Saunders (nee Whitlock 1950/57) :- *'Many thanks for sending me the missing pages... awaiting my return from a short break on 'Hotel Narrowboat' on the Basingstoke Canal, during which I found that one of my fellow-passengers was ...you've guessed it, an Old Fincunian! She was Janet Cowan (1962/69), later than me but we managed a lot of reminiscing about staff we'd both known. Mr Povah's 'Jackdaw Talks', Mr Jones seeing us off at the end of the Final Assembly each term when we all shouted 'Dismiss', and so on. Janet now lives in Watford with her husband, Gerry Langton, who was at the school at the same time as her. She played netball with the OF's. Thanks for providing us with such an excellent magazine.'* Sue Goggin (nee Charles 1952/57) :- *'...I just want to know what I have missed !!'*, Barbara Cranfield (nee Sear 1934/39); Margaret Allan (1934/38); Joan Spurgeon (nee Liddelow 1949/54); Roy Warne (1954/60); and John Kane (1953/58); also suffered from my attack of the gremlins. But many received complete copies as did Janice Sutton (nee Ackerman 1949/54) who wrote :- *'I was pleased to receive the Spring edition of the Scimitar. I was in Australia twice last year to visit my brother, Barry Ackerman (1946/53), and was pleased to meet up with other Old Fincunians. I visited Anne and Derek Woolley (1946/53) and met up with Doreen and Jim Williams (1946/53) and Charles and Maureen Verga (nee Ritchey 1948/55) at Barry's son's wedding. I recently was able to talk on the phone with Tony Moore (1949/54) and passed on his address and telephone number to George Auger (1949/54)...'* Same for Peggy (nee Craven 1934/39) and Alan Edwards (1933/38), and for Hazel Lence (1938/44) :- *'I enclose a cheque - if anything over please count it as a donation. I would indeed be in favour of increasing the subscription to £5. There is much sterling work done on Scimitar and in other ways...'* And an email from Joy Bigwood (nee Talbot 1942/47) :- *'Thank you very much for sending me the complete version of the Spring edition... It was a very welcome surprise..I am a complete newcomer to the computer, but I have been thinking how marvellous it would be if a web-site could be set up for Old Fincunians'* Dennis Newman emailed from Canada :- *'Thanks for sending the 'missing' pages with such dispatch. By the way, I still have my FCS school cap, circa 1934'. I wonder if he still wears it occasionally ?* Peggy Hemmings (nee Emerson 1930/36) received a good copy :- *'I was delighted with the Spring edition of Scimitar. I am enclosing a few copies of items I found in my autograph album which I have not opened for years..'* There is a delightful drawing of The Old Post Office, Lustleigh, Devon by Mr Howland, the Art Master, a photograph of Mr Jones and Mr Howland, and a slip of paper. *'The piece of paper is a copy of the words Mr Jones wrote in my book - Die when I may, I want it said of me, by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow. (Abraham Lincoln). With every good wish from T S Jones (FCS 1930)'*

What can I say except 'Sorry' to everyone who received a less than complete Spring edition. We send out about 380 copies of Scimitar each Spring and Autumn. 'We' means Bryan Goulding (1947/52), his wife Barbara (not an Old Fincunian), and me. Just before printing day our regular printers declared they could no longer take on the work at any price, so a new printer had to be found quickly, and the price had to be within our budget. After much pavement pounding, many bus and car journeys, and lots of telephone calls, a printer was found. What we did not know was that the new printer would have to print the Spring edition in two batches, using two printing machines. We collected the 380, or so, copies, popped them into the addressed and stamped envelopes, and sent them off. You know the rest. I have no way of knowing how many received defective copies although about 50 of you let me know. Either you are too polite to complain, or you did not notice that four pages were missing. When the fault was discovered I did the honourable thing and tendered my resignation to our chairman. Surprise, surprise, he 'deafed it'. If there is anyone who received a defective Spring edition and would like a replacement copy, please let me know and I will send you one. It will not have a coloured cover but all the pages will be there. Our teachers got it right about me - 'Could do better.'. Bryan Goulding, who has the thankless task of putting over 380 copies of Scimitar into pre-prepared envelopes, quite unjustifiably felt guilty about the defective copies. It really was not his fault but with tongue in cheek, he insisted on doing penance :- *'Here I am doing penance. Why? You may well ask. Thinking back to my school days... I do recall ... the occasion when I was supposed to be scoring a cricket match upstairs in the pavilion, but got bored and started playing around, only to find myself back on the ground floor covered in dust and asbestos - dear old Jack was not amused. He seemed more concerned about the large hole in the ceiling than my personal discomfort. Shortly after leaving school I was invited by KAP to attend the school swimming gala and took Pat (Trish) Williams as my guest. Trish and I, together with her twin sister, Diana, all worked at Finchley Borough Council at the time. So, there we were, in all our Sunday best, honoured guests seated in the front row and facing into a pretty stiff wind. After the first line of competitors dived in, a very soggy Trish turned to me and said, rather dolefully, 'I might have guessed.'. Shortly after this incident, Trish took up Judo lessons and each week she would use me to demonstrate to the office what she had been taught the night before. I, of course, being a macho 17 years old, treated the whole thing with scorn and derision and refused to be budged, in spite of Trish's efforts. Then one day to my surprise, and to everyone else's delight, I found myself flying gracefully through the air. I hit the filing cabinets with an almighty bang and landed in a crumpled heap at the feet of the Deputy Town Clerk, who happened to be passing. Incidentally, also working with us at FBC was Jill Plumbley (an Old Woodhouseian, never mind!) who later married Phil Gillam - we did have some good laughs together in those days. Then of course I moved to Berkshire and in time, arranged for the OF's to send a Cricket XI down to my club, Wokingham CC - unfortunately when they arrived, yours truly had taken his family on holiday! ....Finally, I was delighted to see in the last issue, mention of the 81st North London 2nd Finchley Scout Troop. I, too, was a member and*

remember some very happy days at summer camp in the New Forest. However, I left under a cloud when I refused point blank to be a Japanese chorus girl in the Mikado for the second year running. The thought of being dressed up in a kimona and black wig, with a rose in each ear was just too much to cope with. It has been brought to my attention that I was, clearly, a pretty dire child and youth - my step-daughters subscribe to the view that little has changed, but my five grandchildren think I'm great - I think !! So, you will understand why I should be doing penance. The penance? Stuffing 380 Scimitars into 380 envelopes - I suppose it could have been a lot worse. It really wasn't my fault that some pages were missing from a number of copies - honest !'.

**Joy Bigwood's suggestion about creating a web-site on the Internet for Old Fincunians has been raised before. We would have to find someone to create it (don't look at me !) and only a handful of us own and use computers connected to the Internet. What do you lot think about it ? It seems from the Chairman's letter that he would be in favour. Another idea came from Derek Woolley (1946/53). It would save money if we sent each edition of Scimitar abroad by email. For example, instead of sending out 10 individual copies to Australia by Airmail and 11 individual copies out to Canada by Airmail, I could send one email to named individuals who would then send the copies out to the Old Fincs living in those countries. Again I ask 'What do you lot think about that ?' and I bet there is a deafening silence. Bob Payne, OBE, (1934/36) is never silent for long and he thought the Spring edition was splendid :-** *'...The OF's down-under newsletter gives an address for Dorothy White (nee Speechley) who was in my sister's form year (1935). I knew she was Downunder but never had an address. My wife, Audrey (nee Bradford), is now in touch with Ken Huckle of her 'years'. His sister, Joan Beech, was in the 'all girls year' which was fifth form when I left in 1936. Audrey ordered her book 'One WAAF's War' from our local library and duly received a 'much-used copy'. We have each read it and enjoyed it. I am pleased to read about the cleaning and possible renovation of the War memorial in the School Hall. I enclose a small cheque (not so small. Ed.) to help pay for the initial cleaning and hope we can provide the necessary funds for the renovation in due course - good work Norman Burgess. I would like to attend the Memorial Service this year provided it does not clash with my RBL duties with Poppy Day collections, etc. I was interested in Ruth Cusack's (nee Barstow) letter. I am sure Norman was not a prefect at the same time as EJR and Fred Holbrook. Both had left school a year or two before I was a prefect in 1936 and I remember Norman... I was terribly sorry to read about the car accident to Norman and Ruth and we all hope that Norman is responding to treatment...'. And I am sure, so say all of us. Certainly that sentiment is echoed by Norman Burgess (1933/38), who never fails to write in time for publication and he always has something interesting to say :-* *'...I was appalled to hear of Norman Cusack's accident so I immediately sent him a card and a long letter. He has replied in an amazingly cheerful letter minimising his physical disability. He wrote about Dorothy Evans (nee Gooday 1933/38) and it so happens she was a great friend of Mrs P Whitta, my wife's (Betty) mother, and both attended Finchley Methodist Church. I actually taught Madeline Evans at Manorside School, so I telephoned Dorothy Evans, who lives in Letchworth, and*

we talked about Norman as she had known him since they were five year olds.... As to the cleaning of the War Memorial, I am disgusted with the firm I approached, and met the rep from Campbell, Smith who have not even answered my letters. I suppose it was 'too small a job for them'. As I have a contact with the founder of Friends of War Memorials, Ian Davidson (Royal Marines retired) I shall sound him out and will keep you posted. This year I have been the organiser of the Mayor's Charity Cycle Ride doing all the photocopying and admin for the North London Deaf Children's Society, and cycling the 30 miles. Against my protestations I was elected Chair of Barnet Cyclists this year-I must be the oldest Chair of any London cycling group ...I photocopy one copy of Scimitar for our friend, Betty Wilson. I used to teach with her on the staff at Frith Manor School - she is an ex-pupil but does not belong to the OF's but she mentions Doris Tanner (1935/31) and Ken Huckle (1935/40). They were in the same year with memories of the 'evacuation' to Henrietta Barnett during 1939/40 .....**As I am also a member of the Finchley Cine-video Society I have access to a 'state-of-the-art' video projector, so I did just wonder if any Old Fincunians have old cine films (8mm or 16mm) of any school events in the past - there must be some somewhere we could show at our Millenium Reunion in the year 2000....My own son, Chris, is into computer non-linear editing so he would assist with any cine materials which come to light. ...Old Fincunians overseas might have video footage of either themselves or others, which we could show. ...** I have not yet heard from Stephen Lewis the author of the planned book which will include Raymond Dix (see Spring edition), and I hope you like the photographs of the Elcome exhibit at the Battle of Britain Museum at Tangmere, near Chichester. If anyone would like them to keep please pass them on with my compliments'. **Well, what about it ? Sounds like a good idea to have some historic, or even contemporary, video or cine films about The Old School, Old Fincunians here and abroad, and about anything to do with us and our school history. Doesn't have to be exciting or funny. Anyone with anything that might fit the bill, please contact Norman Burgess direct at 28, Vines Avenue, Finchley, N3 2QD, or telephone 0181 346 6337. Norman promises to return safely any material received. Gladys Rawlings (nee Macey 1930/35) has written in her usual bouyant style :-** '... I read the Scimitar on Good Friday, on my way to hear The Messiah at the Albert Hall, and composed such a chatty letter to you (in my mind). That was about six weeks ago, so I now belatedly thank you for the latest edition... It was a great edition... Mr Carr was my Head for two years. I was sent to him on a number of occasions owing to the numerous entries in the Black Book, and actually received the cane ! He lived in Church End, and often I saw him out shopping (with a little old attache case - no basket or bag !) and he always stopped and chatted. I believe he used to go in the winters to New Zealand for his son lived out there..... Three weeks ago I was visiting an old class mate, Mabel Humphrey, now called Margaret, and her husband Trevor...they had quite a family of Old Fincs - Trevor's mother was Margaret Minter; his aunt was Amy Minter; and his wife was Mabel Gooday. His sister-in-law was Dorothy Gooday (now Evans); his brother-in-law was Harold Evans, (deceased); his sister was Brenda Humphrey; and his son Graham Humphrey. All Old Fincunians.... Well, I still attend my U3A classes, and other activities, including swimming three times a



week, helps the old arthritis. One class is for Aquagym - a sort of aerobics in the water accompanied by some ghastly music - which is no more than a 'boom, boom, boom' noise. However, it helps keep the knees going faster and faster. Now I'm getting ready to go to Scotland (Aberdeen) - one of the SAGA university holidays where you stay in students' rooms (with facilities) and you go on various excursions to Deeside, whisky trail, castles and National Trust gardens. Our Summer mini-reunion went very well. A very pleasant get-together of about 14 of us in Southgate on a warm August Saturday. We passed a few photographs around and a book about 'Old Finchley and Friern Barnet', had tea and cakes, and enjoyed each other's company, but a few familiar faces were missing. Attendance register shows : Audrey and Bob Payne; Pam Johnson; David Johnson; Ken Henley; Sheila Makins; Molly Holbrook; Leslie and Beryl Royal; Joyce Hill; Margaret Brett; Cynthia (Sima) Horn; Gladys Macey; and Margaret Makins'. **Congratulations, Gladys, on winning First Prize for the 'Best Front Garden' in the Worthing in Bloom Competition. Unfortunately she was in Scotland so missed the prize presentation by the Mayor. 'I think the winners get packets of seeds!', said Gladys.**

**Helen Cooper (nee Sturdy 1924/30) broke her hip in January but I have no further details. We send her our very best of wishes.**

**You may recall that Ruth Lesirge (nee Brandler 1956/63) was arranging a mini-reunion for Old Fincunians of the 1956/63 era. Ruth emailed to say :-** *'...about fifteen of us met on June 19th..It was hugely pleasurable; most of us had not seen each other since we left school, but it only took a couple of seconds to recognise people. Mary Holmes (1949/55) has a full list of those who came. We are trying to add names through contacts, etc. Karen James (as was) is thinking about arranging another event....anyone who is interested should contact Mary Holmes at 4, Ingleglen, Farnham Common, SL2 3QA'. Arnold Brett (1935/1939) is trying to trace Geoff W Milsom (1934/40), who lived in Whetstone and later joined the RAF. The last address I have for Geoff is Dum Dum Airport, Calcutta, but that was a long time ago. Anyone know how to get in touch with Geoff? Arnold's brother, Brian Brett (1934/39), has recently moved from Australia to New Zealand. Brian wrote to tell me that his Scimitar was missing four pages and :- '..Like Doris Tanner (1935/41) I seldom see any mention of names from my time at FCS....approximately the same period as Doris. However, I met Jack Wallis (1932/38), his wife Joan (nee Thompson 1932/38) and Sandy Rawlinson (1932/37) at the Downunder Reunion 1998. Maybe Doris recalls them? It would be good to hear from the 1934/39 gang ...My sister Margaret Lee, who will be 80 this year, still occupies the house in Whetstone from which she, my brother Arnold, and myself set forth to travel by tram, trolleybus, or bicycle to attend FCS before the war.... I am always surprised and delighted when Scimitar pops through the letter-box and sets off a train of nostalgia. I suppose as one gets older the tendency is to live more and more in the past which sometimes appears to have been rosier than the present. Nevertheless I cannot complain about the latter as I am happily settled in the sunniest spot in New Zealand with my daughter and family...'*

**No sooner had I read that when another Brian Brett letter arrived :-** 'Many thanks for the reprint of the Spring edition containing pages previously missing ....As a result I shall write to Norman Burgess to request a photo of the restored War Memorial and to Norman Cusack, who I can just remember as being one year ahead of me...and his wife Ruth Barstow (as was) who I thought was in my year...It seems that they were friends of Margaret Finch (as was) & Jack Widgery, who together with Margaret's brothers , Rowland and Norman, I knew well as fellow members of the 186th North London Scout Group which used to meet in Whetstone Congregational Church Hall in Oakleigh Road.Margaret, I believe, was Cub Mistress as well as being in the Guides and Brownies.....It is amazing how missing links drop into place. On the subject of links I enclose a letter from Jack Rawlings to my sister written in January 1992..' **In that letter EJR recalls the past :-** '....I am a great long-life friend of Madeline Dunn. She very kindly brings me a nice lunch most Fridays during the year and we sit and discuss the Old School Days - very much so.... Then I learned that you were a sister of the Brett brothers, Brian and Arnold. You wont believe this, I know, but we played football together just after the war, for the Old Boys - must have been the tallest defence in the league - I was 6 feet 3 inches tall, they were even taller. They played left and right back and I was centre half....From 1947 onwards I became a member of staff too, so had the privilege of serving with many members of staff you would have known, such as Mr Jones, Mr Wills, Miss Reid, Miss Peeling, Mr McNelly.... Jonah, Mr Wills, Miss Reid, and Charles Vivian taught me - so you can imagine how deeply involved I am in FCS. My sister Doris...went to the school in 1920...'. **Charles Hale (1929/1934) also took a stroll down Memory Lane when he wrote about a few of his favourite things :-** 'I remember scaling the wall, with its convenient curved tile top, to get from the field and into Holloway County's playing field to retrieve a ball; and a thick, heavy, grey drinking cup chained to a basin in the playground; and Charlie Carr walking around the school, with his little white dog trotting behind; and what about Polly's black world globe in the Geography Room (Class 3 Form Room in my time) which hung high over her desk, as though it was in outer space, a concept quite unknown to us at the time; and Charlie Vivian's massive thick spectacle lenses with which he could give you a most demoralising look; and the annual swimming gala in the open air pool and the graceful diving of Mavis Peel; funny, I forget whether the swimming lessons were in the open air pool, but I do remember an extremely interesting fifth form visit for boys to the Carreras Tobacco Factory at Mornington Crescent with a free tin of 50 cigarettes which helped to promote a habit I was able to kick just over twenty years ago; and what about Bill Howland's method of wearing his ties, not with a conventional knot, but by sliding a gold ring up his tie, a ring that usually had a stone in it; and those very effervescent bags of sherbert from the school tuck shop; and the day that Alex James, Arsenal's star player at the time, a friend of Charlie Vivian, came to the school one winter afternoon and coached our boys' year group and joined in our inter-form game; ....the noise of trams grinding up the hill and, on the downward journey, noisily braking before the Squires Lane Stop.'. **Brian Smith (1944/49) recalls the business he started in 1966 which seemed to depend completely on FCS for its labour force :-** 'In 1966 I started a business called Ballards Plant Hire Ltd., which was sold to a national company in 1996...the following Old Fincunians footballers were employed

there - Ian Gunter, Dave George, Richard Cassese, Chris Nutting, Stan Kirkham, Alan Jackman, and professional advisers Dick Colomb, Derek Batten, Colin Luke, and Terry Woolhouse'. **Geoff Batten (1947/54) was interested in seeing the references to Wilf Hewitt :-** 'When I did my Backwoodsman badge during a summer camp near Bridport with the 4th Finchley Scouts, Wilf was the tester. We had to build a bivouac in the woods and he organised a gang to carry buckets of water up in the early morning while we were asleep inside. The water was then poured over the bivouac to test its waterproofness !...', and **Beryl Careless (nee Stitchbury 1938/44) is keen to trace an old friend :-** 'I notice your references to Jean Beaumont in the magazine. Is she the sister of Eileen Beaumont who was in my class at school? If she is, I'd very much like her address so I can drop her a line or phone her. I always thought she looked like Hedy Lamarr - probably before your time !..' And we have a new boy on the Scimitar Mailing List - **Tony Trippick** who was at the Old School from 1956 to 1961. He lives at Whetstone and if anyone would like to get in touch with Tony, please let me know. He attended the mini-reunion organised by Ruth Lesirge in June this year. Welcome back, Tony! Far from a new boy is **Peter Dewhurst (1937/42)** and he has been having a clear-out at home :- 'After much thought and many a sideways glance, I decided that my magazine rack was becoming top-heavy. (Wasn't much of a clear-out, then. Ed.) A gust of wind from an open window and over it topples. (Not all that full then! Ed.) Yes! definitely time for an investigation. Mind you, any dentist's waiting room would be delighted to own it. Sainsbury Magazine dated March 1996 is the oldest (I've got a wartime **Picture Post** in mine! Ed.)...Several copies of Country Life and their many glossy pages is probably the cause of the top heavy problem. Mind you, Saga Magazine has prime position. For some unknown reason I receive a free copy each quarter... Think I've got the wobbles. Enough, enough of all this rubbish. The point in a nutshell is that amongst these magazines I found a letter I had started to write to you. It was not dated as that is never added until I finish a letter!! I reckon it must have been about mid-December. Decided to start again as you might think I am a little peculiar if I wish you a Happy Xmas in late March? Regarding the enquiry by Molly Powell for information about the late Raymond Dix. He would have been a peer of my late brother Norman but I do not recall any rapport between them. I remember him as a very likeable chap who would always stop for a chat if we met while cycling on a summer's evening. With a few years age gap that was quite something... Watching some early black and white flash-backs on TV recently I thought of another name to add to your missing persons file. The lady in question must have had probably the largest (**steady, Norman! Ed.**) public exposure of any School years 1936 - 1941. I am not sure of the spelling but her name was Sylvia Petronzio. Her TV name was Sylvia Peters - one of the first female TV presenters. It would be intriguing to hear or read her life story... Life has been a bit of a roller coaster since Xmas. The NHS is a wonderful institution BUT the waiting to have a test or examination, and then the waiting for the result, then the waiting for a further appointment - it took over two months to be told officially that I had angina. It is no problem, had an op. and now getting back to normal..The problem is shortage of staff which somehow has caused the loss of the human touch. Patients really are just a number. Nurses have obviously

been told to address patients by their Christian names but this back-fires as much older patients accept this as a loss of respect and resent it. Patients now have the name of the nurse over the bed who is responsible for/to them. Theory OK ! but in practise you rarely see the named nurse. Sorry I must not rabbit on. Bed-time now ...'. I think I got most of that, Peter. You were clearing out your magazine rack, which brought on an attack of angina, and now you don't know the name of the lady who tucks you up in a bed with a rabbit on it ! But seriously, we send our best wishes in the hope that the millenium 2000 will not be such a roller-coaster year for you. **Joan Beech (nee Huckle)** moves around so much she seems to be 'no fixed abode' :- '...life has been hectic. My husband and I have moved from our old address at Heath House to Luddenden in Halifax. This is only temporary because we return to Canada at the beginning of October 1999, but we are coming back to England (permanently, I hope) in May 2000...I was hoping to be at Gladys Rawlings' mini-reunion, but have had to scrub that as two days before we moved, my husband Roy, thinking he was still 21, climbed onto a kitchen cabinet to remove a picture, slipped and fell onto the quarry-tiled floor. Ambulance, hospital, Xray, etc., - result, cracked pelvis bone. To cut a long story short, he has been in a wheel chair and on crutches ever since. So all of our activities have had to be cancelled while he makes a slow recovery. We had planned so much for this summer, but I am thankful it was no worse. My brother, Ken, and I do so enjoy reading the Scimitar. Several old pupils have written to me after seeing my name in the magazine, and I particularly want to attend next year's reunion at the Old School....' **Anne Mossack (nee Leigh 1966/70)** writes from Oakwood :- 'It is with great anticipation that I read the Scimitar as soon as it arrives ...Generally there isn't anyone from my era. I started FCS in 1966 and left at the end of the 4th year (in those days we didn't have to complete our GCE's). What has happened to all those who started around the same time ? I have been to two or three reunions and although I thoroughly enjoyed being back in the old building I have never met anyone from my year. Some of the people I come into contact with are Sylvia Watson, Janice and Linne Coker, Brenda Jacobs, Esther Lecash, Phil Goldberg and Laurie Wolfe. Maybe at the next reunion I can persuade some of them to come along. Sylvia, Janice and Esther have attended before...'. **Julian Wild (1951/57)** writes :- 'I am from the 1951/57 era, when Mr K A Povah was headmaster, Mr Jones his deputy and the formidable EJR always in the back-ground. I can still clearly recall my first day and my first sight of Mr Jones, who poked his head around the door to 'view' the new boys. I had never seen a master in a black gown before and it really had an unnerving effect on me... I remember the Black Book, which did, over the years, have my name included ! I remember Miss Tempkin (Geography), Mr Eldridge (Carpentry), Mr Jenkins (Chemistry), Mr Salmon (Physics), Mr Wills (French), Mr McNally (I can only recall him playing the piano on the stage). I am afraid I cannot remember who taught History, Biology, or Maths, although I did pass Biology, Maths, English, French, and Chemistry. I can see the lady German teacher in my mind but her name escapes me..... I remember Form prizes for 1-2-3 during the term and in exams. The end-of-term assembly with everybody chanting for Mr Jones, who then sang to us before we all shouted 'Dismiss'. Going to Austria with the school

and being admonished for bad language and smoking. Classmates I can recall would be Terry Bennett, Peter Bond, Roy Pierce, Terry Hatton, Roger (or Peter ?) Martin, Valerie Still, but I may have got some of them wrong. Of course, there were others but the names have gone. The sport was always to be looked forward to, under EJR. The School Song. The uniform, which I have to confess I never liked, nor wearing a cap. Then onto the Old Fincunians, where I really enjoyed playing football and cricket, particularly football - my one long-lasting memory will always be Robin Sudbury calling continuously for the ball, 'Jules, to me, to me, Jules, Jules, Jules...'. And he usually got it. So many memories and all down to FCS and OFA. I'm near to retirement now... Thanks for all those memories...'

**Leslie Victor Collins (1947/52) produces the Australian Scimitar called the Downunder Newsletter. I produce extracts from time to time. Les has written from Australia :-**

'....My sister Gillian Collins (1954/57) has emigrated from America via England and has ended up here in Australia. She attended the Downunder OF Reunion this year and was really staggered by the reception she and husband, Ronnie, got from what was initially at least, a group of strangers. Then Ron found that Jack Wallis had a son who was a friend of their best friends, through the Scout movement. Derek Woolley knew many of the staff at colleges Ron attended in Melbourne 30 years ago. Everything went really well after that and we were one big, happy Old Fincs crowd again. I am helping her in their new home on Philip Island with renovations, electrical work, putting in a staircase, etc. ....How is the latest Scimitar going, hopefully not causing too many headaches. Also has any decision been made about the date of next year's reunion ?....Well it's time for The Bill on TV.'

**Gillian wrote about that Downunder Reunion :-** 'REMEMBRANCES of THINGS PAST. On March 7, 1999, on a beautiful Autumn day outside of Bendigo, Victoria, Australia, I sat under gum trees and shared memories with six other graduates of Finchley County. Who could possibly believe it could happen? Visiting Joan Hill last year at her home in Fowey, Cornwall, was a dreamlike experience, and now this warm and welcoming crew of successful former students gathered my husband and I in and made us welcome. Joyce and Barry Ackerman were our hosts at their beautiful home. My brother, Les, enjoyed me telling Joan's story of why she remembered me so vividly. Mr Povah had warned her when he saw my name on her incoming student list that 'she wasn't to take any guff off of another Collins!'. I thought, of course, that it was my vibrant personality that had stayed with her, not my association with the notorious Les Collins, who had preceded me and made an indelible mark on Mr Povah's memory! The group was able to identify almost all the teachers I had based on their initials on my report cards. This event marked my first month anniversary back in residence in Australia, and since leaving the school the first time I came here was so painful to me, this reunion marked, I hope, a successful return.... See you all next year.'

**Margaret Lee (nee Brett 1931/36) has written three times since the last edition and I have tried to amalgamate all three letters into one piece and in so doing I hope I have not obscured the sheer delight and exuberance she always expresses about the Old School :-** 'I received 'Scimitar' and as usual sat down and read it from cover to cover....my schooldays were happy, but I was always disappointed at being in the all-girls form (1931 - 1936), back to mixed in 1932..... my two brothers Brian and Arnold Brett also

were pupils - I'm the eldest. I went to the last reunion but my friend, Joyce Hill (1931/36), was on holiday. She and I have remained friends for all these years. So I went alone and met Brian Cross (1939/45), who I had known through our local church, URC Whetstone, then Whetstone Congregational. He and his elder brother were in the Scouts. His brother, Alan, was my contemporary, killed in the Second World War. He went to Christ College. I had no idea Brian was an OF - he's a lot younger than me ... as a result of our meeting he met up with my brother Arnold and he came to morning worship at URC Whetstone. My brother, Brian Brett, is coming over from New Zealand, arriving 10 December 1999 to celebrate my 80th Birthday which is on 12 December. He will also stay for the Millenium.... I'm interested in your cover pictures of former headmasters; Mr Carr was at the school for my first year, then Mr Chalk - a very different character - his wife taught me elocution privately.... Miss Parker put on some very good plays including 'The Wind in the Willows'.... I didn't know Mr Povah but Mr Joscelyne and his family were members of our church and I was very friendly with his wife, though I've lost touch now. They moved away some years ago..... I enjoyed sport and was in the school netball and hockey teams.....went all over the place on Saturday mornings playing Middlesex schools, including Woodhouse, our great rivals... Miss Sturgeon was our needle-work mistress - I got a Black Book from her for leaving my work at home !.... The open-air swimming pool opened the year we were in the first form and I learned to swim under Miss Hunter's tuition. I've never excelled but I'm glad I learned... Well you can see from my ramblings how much FCS has meant to me ...I will write again to the Cusacks, Norman was always a very brainy boy. I was in awe of him. Ruth was a great friend of Margaret Widgery whose death you reported. I knew her very well too, a great all-rounder. Her brother, Roland Finch (1930/36) is in the USA and their younger brother, Norman, is abroad, too....And I can still recite the French verbs whose past is conjugated with 'etre' not 'avoir' - I taught it to my grand-daughter..... how much I enjoyed Miss Jacoby's French lessons. Our first book, 'Les Premier Pas', I remember well... Miss Jacoby introduced us to French poetry and the fables of La Fontaine. I have remembered the girl who led the song and dance routine 'Over my shoulder goes one care' was Vera Marsh, and very enthusiastic about it she was, too. Those happy days before the Second World War... My school friend, Joyce Hill, was in the WRNS stationed in Scotland. I was with with her yesterday, we went to a concert in aid of the KOSOVA refugees ....Our tongues wagged about Old Fincunians, former Scouts and Scotland.....I told you my brother Brian Brett is now living in New Zealand having retired from bee-keeping.....He is still a keen cyclist, very fit.... He will be bringing his folding bike to England when he comes over in December.... I have so much that I owe to FCS. Herewith the cheque which I forgot to put in my last letter. Sorry aboutthat, I am just a forgetful old lady who can remember the past but is careless about the present...' **Earlier in this edition, Norman Burgess and Brian Brett declared an interest in cycling. Brian Andrews (1965/72) also wrote about cycling :-** '...a marvellous sponsored cycle ride completed by Martin Wellsman (1965/72)... a superb effort...250 miles from Croyde to Barnet cycling over some of the steepest roads in Britain in three days with nothing but a tent and sleeping challenge was much harder than expected and after the first day of 87 miles the knees were complaining bitterly at the prospect of cycling over 100 miles on the second day...the third day spent crawling up the last Hertfordshire hills

at only three miles an hour wondering whether it would be easier and less painful to walk! ....24 hours in the saddle and now prefer to do as much as possible standing up.... The weather was kind with almost no rain and favourable winds... didn't fall off once or get any punctures...'. **Well done Martin Wellsman, FRICS Dip. Est. Man. (1965/72). Richard Nicols (1967/72) sent thanks for Scimitar, and to correct something I had written :-** 'The title of my next book, which is at present with the publishers, is 'Robert Hooke and the Royal Society'. The title as you have printed it would be a puzzle even to Mr Salmond. You may have been informed of Hooke's law of springs while at FCS. The comfort of your Vi-spring mattress operates on that principle, as does your kitchen and bathroom scales, and if you are an angler, the spring balance on which you weigh your catch.... Hooke's first book 'Micrographia' was the first to show the wonders of nature that could be revealed by using the microscope he invented... the book also includes details of the instruments which he invented for noting changes in atmospheric pressure, humidity and temperature, how these could be recorded and used for forecasting the weather.....ideas for improving clocks of that era, one of Mr Salmond's interests..... Another invention of Hooke's from which you benefit is the constant velocity joint in the transmission of your car, a development of Hooke's universal joint. The iris diaphragm in your camera is also a development from the model of an eye made by Hooke... I was very interested in the detail of the history of FCS. I always admired the foresight of the people who designed the science department'. **Hands up all those who recognised that Richard Nichols was a teacher !** **Connie Fozzard (1945/52) sent an email :-** '...I have attended the last two biennial reunions and last summer I had expected that my brother, Cyril Fozzard (1945/50), would attend but he was in China advising on commercial refrigeration. He retired five years ago and has kept mentally active with a part-time Ph.D course. Physical impairment of his speech has not deterred him....I have now retired....I worked within the National Health for forty years. The past twenty-seven years were spent as Consultant in Obstetrics & Gynaecology at the Royal Cornwall Hospital. In latter years, I represented my senior colleagues through committees of the BMA of which I was a member of Council for four years. All this and much more was crowned with the accolade of Fellowship. I have been fortunate in retirement - calls on my expertise from UNICEF & WHO. Recently I was asked by the local political party in power to contest a district seat in the May elections. I had never entered party politics during my working life on the grounds that it might be seen that medical decisions could be influenced by party political bias. One just hopes that altruism is not dead in these post-Thatcher greedy days.'. **Bill and Sheila Segal (1945/49) celebrated their silver wedding at a July party organised by daughters Emma, Anna, Rachel and Laura. Guests included Sheila's aunt, Doris; Jack and Cyril Rawlings' sister; best man of twenty-five years ago, Albert King; Sheila's brother, John Taylor and wife Janet; Bill's brother, Jack and wife Maureen; John and Shirley Decker; Ian and Maggie Gunter; Madeline Dunn; Clem Winder; Brian Smith; David Wild; Ken and Barbara Taylor; George and Pauline Auger; Judy Emerson; Derek Nichol; Margaret Haughton; Derek Nichol; Barry and Cathy Ironton; Peter and Sue Alger; Terry Woolhouse; Valerie Sparks (nee Keen); and Godfrey & Janice Mann.**

## **MONEY MATTERS - but it's still not my fault !**

It cost the Association the sum of £17.98 to rectify the defective copies sent out during the Spring. There is no way of knowing just how many members were affected by the missing pages so there may be further requests for copies of the complete edition.

Our Treasurer's, Janine and Colin Luke (1963/70), send a very big 'Thank You' to everyone who has sent in a subscription or a donation since the last edition :-

<i>R Goss</i>	<i>Peter Andrews</i>	<i>Ken Huckle</i>
<i>Carole &amp; Chris Barker</i>	<i>Linda Williams</i>	<i>Julian Wild</i>
<i>Vera Sheffield</i>	<i>Anne Mossack</i>	<i>Brian Smith</i>
<i>Peggy &amp; Alan Edwards</i>	<i>Roy Warne</i>	<i>Ann Anderson</i>
<i>Pam &amp; Ron Lence</i>	<i>Janice Sutton</i>	<i>Judy Kravetz</i>
<i>Colin Brown</i>	<i>June Barnard</i>	<i>Barbara Cranfield</i>
<i>Maisie Roberts</i>	<i>Hazel Lence</i>	<i>Don Cording</i>
<i>C Winder</i>	<i>Pat Grainger</i>	<i>Margaret Lee</i>
<i>Violet Spary</i>	<i>Geoff Karet</i>	<i>Anthony Bournier</i>
<i>Mollie James</i>	<i>Barry Ackerman</i>	<i>Molly Powell</i>
<i>Alison &amp; Donald Yapp</i>	<i>Vivian Hand</i>	<i>Brian Brett</i>
<i>Bill &amp; Sheila Segal</i>	<i>Ian Wilson</i>	<i>Tony Trippick</i>
<i>Bon &amp; Audrey Payne</i>	<i>Luck</i>	<i>Philip Montford</i>
<i>Bob Catling</i>	<i>Joan Beech</i>	

It is not possible to name those who pay by Standing Order because the Building Society does not provide detailed printouts of such receipts, but the big 'Thank You' is extended to everyone who pays in this way. Some of you have enquired about paying your subs by Standing Order or Direct Debit. The problem is that the financial accounts and system were inherited many years ago when there were Annual General Meetings, elected officers, and active committees. In today's situation it is not easy to change things. In any case, we lose track of members who pay by direct debit or standing order and we prefer the personal touch that subs and donations bring.

In the Spring edition we floated the suggestion to increase the annual subs. the response has been favourable, so after some 15 years the Committee has decided that the annual subscription will be £5 per person with immediate effect. We hope that this will not deter you from continuing to provide your invaluable financial support for the Association. Please send your subs and donations to :-

*Colin and Janine Luke,  
79, Northumberland Road,  
New Barnet, Herts., EN5 1EB*

*Cheques made out to :-  
'Old Fincunians Association'*



**Carole and Chris Barker (91953/58)** wrote :- *'Chris and I usually pay our subs at reunions but unfortunately we missed the last one and have been remiss in not paying. Please find enclosed a cheque..... which hopefully will bridge the gap until the next reunion.... If everybody is like me they forget when subs are due and a gentle reminder in the form of a separate slip of paper in the Scimitar might jog the memory and swell the coffers. Just a thought...'* **What do you think ? Do you want a separate slip enclosed with the Autumn edition reminding you that subs are due, a tear off slip inside the Scimitar, or just a sentence or two in the body of the magazine ?**

**Ian Wilson (1956/63)** went to considerable trouble to get his sub in on time :- *'Enclosed is a donation towards the Scimitar on behalf of myself and Tony Trippick (1956/61)...My daughter who has been visiting here in Vancouver will be posting it to you when she is in London.... Thanks for a job well done regarding Scimitar. Thanks to this publication I attended a class reunion at the White Lion in East Finchley on 19 June 1999 - a good time was had by all.'*

**Vivian Hand (nee Pawle 1948/53)** was very receptive to the increase in subs :- *'Please find enclosed my Scimitar sub - a little earlier this year ! I agree with the suggested increase to £5 for our sub., after all, you consider all the work which must go into producing and distributing the Scimitar. So what is £5 to someone like me, whose grand contribution to the magazine is to sit down and read it ?! (No wonder I never became an authoress!) I do hope my small donation also will help towards keeping our Memory Lane open...).*

**Barry Ackerman (1946/53)** wrote from Australia. He doesn't need a tear-off slip or even a mention about subs - just the receipt of the Scimitar was enough to remind him to 'pay up' :- *'I am inspired by the recent issue of The Scimitar to send you the enclosed cheque which I hope will, in some small way, help with the ongoing expenses of the Old Fincunians Association. I always enjoy reading The Scimitar and hearing news from school days. I am very much hoping to be at the next reunion in the year 2000..... we are here in mid-winter with temperatures below zero some nights and morning frosts (exactly the sort of weather so many people refuse to believe Australia ever has !)'*

**Mollie James (nee Delaney 1948/53)** is always happy to make a donation :- *'Having left Finchley to move to Cornwall in 1955 I heard nothing of the OFA until a couple of years ago when half-a-dozen of the 1948 entry managed to celebrate becoming OAP's. Vivian Hand (nee Pawle) kindly sent off donations on our behalf and I have been delighted to receive the Scimitar especially as it put me in touch with Bryan Goulding who had been our neighbour for many years. I've also had a most enjoyable meeting with Miss Joan Hill at her home in Fowey. Many times I have seen the name of Connie Fozzard in our local newspaper and wondered to myself, 'Is that the same Connie who told me off because my school hat blew off as I cycled down the Great North Road !' I have since discovered she is one and the same. Also the name of Mary Jacobs brought back memories. We were often thought to be alike all those years ago. It would be lovely to meet up with some of those class mates again. I really will try to make it to the next reunion and I am more than happy to make a donation to the Old Fincunians...'. Well, Mollie, you can read all about Connie Fozzard and Bryan Goulding in this edition. That is assuming that all the pages are there !!! Not my fault !*

## LEST WE FORGET

**Bob Catling (1950/55)** wrote sadly :- 'On 20th May Ted Dow died at his home in Banstead, Surrey, one month short of his 76th Birthday. He had suffered a minor stroke, but he recovered well and seemed his old self.... Ted attended FCS from 1934 to 1939 (I may be a year out) then left to start his career in Westminster Bank. At 18 he joined the RAF for war service. He gained his wings in 1942 and was a pilot instructor at various Midlands airfields. After the war he returned to his career in the bank and was promoted to Manager in the early 60's. Ted was a devoted family man, the father of two fine sons, Keith and Ian. He was a keen swimmer, and for many years he competed in the bank's gala. He has always been a good friend and cousin of the Catlings, and will be sadly missed by all.'

**Winifred M A Edwards (nee Balch 1917/1922)** died on 26 May 1999, still subscribing to the Old Fincunians Association and enjoying her Scimitar.

It seems that my report of the passing of Olive Crane (nee Furnell 1923/28) was very premature. Molly Powell (nee Holbrook 1929/35) and others wrote to tell us about Olive but then I received a parcel and a letter from Bill and Sheila Segal (nee Rawlings 1945/49), which contained some memorabilia which had been accumulated by EJR, Sheila's father - a 1938 cricket score book, an OF reunion audio tape, old photographs, and newspaper cuttings. I have sent some of those things to various OF's who have a personal interest in them, but the key piece of information was :- '... In the 'Lest We Forget' piece there is a reference to Olive Crane (nee Furnell). We received a Christmas card from Olive and she is living at Kerr Maria Nursing Home, The Retreat, Princes Risborough, Bucks., HP27 OJG. She is alive and we enclose her latest letter to us. We have checked with her daughter, Gill, to make sure....' **So Olive is alive and living in Buckinghamshire. Her letter to Bill and Sheila Segal was dated December 1998 and reads :-** 'I am keeping fairly well. I am not quite so mobile as I used to be but I still manage to walk with Gill's help. During the summer we were often out in the delightful grounds and on occasions we went up to the Garden Centre, but I find that away from the home is very noisy and I really prefer to stay at here where I have all that I need. Last year I had my fifth great grandchild - a little girl Samantha...All the family are well. It was so lovely to have your card last year, it cheered me up no end'. **Wouldn't it be good if one or two of us dropped Olive a line or two? I hope she finds a chuckle when she reads about her premature demise in Scimitar. It is not often that I can end the 'Lest We Forget' column on such a happy note. Well, that's it for the time being. Remember Norman Burgess' plea for cine and video films, remember to write to Olive Crane, and above all remember to write to me with all your news, and anything else out of which I can squeeze a few words. Till the next time, I remain yours ever,**

*Les Sharp*

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